



# **THE MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

## **MID-TERM ASSESSMENT**

**Final Draft**



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by

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## **Covering Letter from the Consultants**

We are pleased to submit (in attachment) the final version of our mid-term evaluation of the MDP-Angola program.

Joao and I would like to thank all the staff of the implementing partners and donors who took the time to meet with us and who facilitated our work in every way possible. We greatly appreciate the candor with which everyone responded to probing and sometimes even difficult questions. We would also ask that our appreciation be extended to the municipal administrations and the community members whose time, interest, and openness were equally appreciated.

Our thanks to those who sent us additional comments after our oral presentation of the working draft. Please bear three things in mind when assessing how we have addressed your comments and suggestions:

- First, a number of comments provided updates on developments that have occurred since our field visit and data collection. These have been incorporated into footnotes.
- Second, we gave the same weight to all comments that we gave to our other interviews and data sources. Our final draft reflects a careful--and independent--weighing of *all* of the information we have gathered--and thus necessarily is unlikely to fully reflect any one of your perspectives.
- Third, in a few cases your comments suggested future courses of action for the MDP that represent a decision our evaluation can inform, but that it is not within our scope of work to make. These suggestions have not been incorporated, but should serve as the basis for your own internal discussion about the options and tradeoffs we have sought to clarify through this evaluation.

It has been our pleasure to work with you all--and to learn a great deal in the process. A final note of special thanks to Mustaque for his efforts in ensuring that the logistics and administrative aspects of this evaluation ran so smoothly and in such a timely manner.

Sincerely,

Stephen C. Lubkemann

Joao Neves

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Fundamentally the MDP had three overall objectives: to cultivate value for participatory governance amongst governed and governors and reinforce civil society by creating concrete mechanisms and institutions for productive dialogue with the state; to reinforce the technical capacity of municipal administrations; and finally to complete a select number of micro-projects that would not merely have a tangible developmental impact but most importantly would serve as the living laboratories in, and through, which the aforementioned capacities and participatory values and mechanisms could be cultivated.

The MDP has proven to be particularly successful in its efforts to cultivate new forms of participatory governance at the municipal level. The MDP has generated an impressive number of new participatory institutions (ODAs, forums) that are beginning to self-replicate and show signs of sustainability without external inducement. As significant, are the indications of the project's success in cultivating value within municipal administrations for participatory engagement -- and in merging this with popular enthusiasm to create new forms of engagement that are genuinely *dialogic*. There is unquestioned continuing relevance for this project in a country that has a weak civil society, a long history of centralist governance, and little experience with constructive dialogue between the governed and those who govern.

Overall the MDP has had considerable success in its effort to build the capacity of local municipal administrations. The Municipal Profiles and Integrated Development Plans (PDIs) have served a vital function in this effort. The timely completion of the PDIs should be a priority--albeit without compromising the MDPs distinctive method that emphasizes their production through a participatory process.

The MDPs micro-projects were primarily intended as means by which to achieve its two broader participatory and capacity-building goals. However these projects also had some significance in their own right--particularly in municipalities that--at the launch of the project--had suffered from decades of war and neglect. The project's initial strategy for using micro-projects that met even only a small fraction of the vast needs in these war-torn municipalities proved extremely effective in enticing local communities and administrations alike into participatory processes that they might have seen little reason to experiment with otherwise. The didactic functions of these projects--teaching transparency and accountability, and modelling participatory decision-making--have been and will remain important. While this function should be safeguarded, bureaucratic streamlining within the consortium's project approval process should allow for an accelerated rate of completion in the future.

Over the last two years the Angolan government has taken a number of important steps in the decentralization process that were not fully foreseen at the inception of the MDP project and have significant implications that should be considered in the second half of the project. Most notably these include the designation of municipalities as Budgetary Units with budgets of 6 million dollars each, the government's redoubled effort to recruit large numbers of new, significantly more qualified, and better paid municipal administrative staff, and a new openness to experiment with limited forms of civil society and popular participation in local development planning and management (as exemplified in the legal requirement that Consultative and Negotiating Councils on Social Development (CACS) be constituted to advise administrators in all municipalities.

These changes have not fundamentally undermined the initial rationale that made the MDP relevant at the time of its launching--nor should they prevent the program from completing its full term. However these changes should inform important adjustments to the program--most notably:

The diversification of the human capital skills-base within municipal administration staff presents new challenges and choices to the MDP's future training strategy. In particular it must take steps to improve the quality of its training and trainers in order to adequately meet the demand from more qualified municipal staff. It must also decide whether to focus on basic skills or more highly technical forms of training which would require a different staffing model than the MDP currently employs.

The project should capitalize on the fact that convergent government policies are creating a stronger demand within municipal administrations for the elaboration of Municipal Profiles and Integrated Municipal Development Plans. This provides the MDP with new forms of leverage and an unforeseen window of opportunity for broader influence, particularly in a scenario of project expansion. The project should also take a series of measures (filling vacant staff positions, developing training materials, providing training) that will ensure that local municipal administrations are able to update these instruments on their own once the project ends in two years.

The transformation of the project's municipalities into "budgetary units" has changed the relative significance of micro-projects in these municipalities. We specifically recommend that the project fully explore opportunities to re-tool new micro-projects so that these can serve new and policy pioneering functions (such as in experimenting with participatory budgeting) that will strengthen the project's impact at both the local and national level. In the municipalities in which the MDP is already present, the completion of micro-projects already in course will be necessary in order not to undermine hard-won legitimacy. In any future expansion of the MDP to new municipalities, we believe that micro-projects will still be needed to serve an "entry function" with local communities.

The project should also consider a series of specific suggestions that we have made for reconfiguring the overall project management process and for ensuring the fully qualified and stable staffing of a number of key national and local leadership positions. Finally the project should also consider practical mechanisms that will allow it to adapt systematically and proactively to a very dynamic and not entirely predictable national policy environment. These could include more concerted efforts to coordinate with other national and international policy actors in the decentralization working group, a new national staff position focused on these liaisons, and periodic internal reflection exercises.

Ultimately neither the changes in the Angolan policy environment, nor any shortcomings in implementation that we noted and recommended be addressed should prevent the MDP program from being allowed to complete its full term. In fact in our view, the non-completion of the MDP would cut down one of the more noteworthy and successful practical experiments in cultivating participatory governance in the challenging political environment that post-war Angola presents.

## CHAPTER I. ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAM IMPACT AND EFFECTIVENESS

*How effective is the municipal development model used by the project? The focus of this question is to increase understanding of the efficacy of the model with an eye to the potential for expanding use of the model*

### **Introduction:**

In the entry meeting the donors stressed that an assessment of the MDP's broader impact --as opposed to merely an assessment of the competence of promised performance-- should be the central objective for this mid-term evaluation. Consequently, we have sought to move beyond a narrow assessment that merely focuses on how and if specific activity benchmarks were met, to speak to deeper questions about the program's impact --.

Succinctly stated, the broad objectives of the MDP program are: "the development of local government capacity in a way that allows people broad voice and influence in how public funds are used".

What is most distinctive about the MDP program in the Angolan context is its emphasis on generating new mechanisms that enable local communities to participate in very concrete ways in local governance and on building their capacity to participate meaningfully in important decision-making processes. The program is also distinctive not because it seeks to build the technical capacity of municipal administrations, but because *of the manner in which it seeks to do so*--namely through a deliberate process that encourages local government officials to be more engaged, responsive, and accountable to the populations they govern.

The MDP is designed to realize both of its overarching objectives--strengthening popular participation and enhancing the capacity and local responsiveness of local administrations--through the creation of new community institutions and structured activities (e.g. ODAs, forums) that enable local communities and local administrations to engage with each other in forms of meaningful dialogue that are unprecedented in the Angolan context. These dialogues focus on the production of tangible end-products (e.g. micro-projects, municipal profiles, integrated municipal development plans). However, it bears emphasizing that it is *not* those tangible end-products in and of themselves that make the project particularly distinctive, nor do they provide the most meaningful measure of the project's success. There are, after all, other ways in which the technical capacity of municipal administrations is being improved throughout Angola (e.g. appointment of better qualified staff, training provided by government, through consultancies, technical support from various programs). Rather, what genuinely distinguishes the MDP program from the aforementioned alternatives is its production of these deliverables *through a participatory process--and--most importantly, the enhanced demand and value for participatory governance (and basic skills for realizing it) that the project cultivates within local populations and municipal administrations as a result. In this sense the project's primary product is the (strengthening of the) participatory process itself.*

In section A of this chapter (immediately below) we first review the evidence for the program's impact on fostering new and more participatory forms of governance within the municipalities in which MDP is being realized. We focus on the program's impact in

this respect on both the municipal level government officials and within local communities.

Section B of this chapter assesses how the MDP has fared in its efforts to improve the technical capacity of municipal government administrations.

In section C of this chapter, we assess the significance of micro-projects to both the project's past and future progress in realizing its overarching objectives.

Finally in section D of this chapter, we review the available evidence for the MDP's impact --in all respects--beyond the municipalities themselves, namely at Provincial and national levels.

In each section we also identify risks and opportunities, and specific recommendations.

## **A. Fostering Participatory Governance:**

### **1. Fostering Participatory Governance: Evidence of Impact on Local Communities**

The MDP program has unquestionably fostered significant new knowledge about, demand for, and capacity to realize participatory governance within local communities in all of the municipalities in which it is being implemented. Evidence for this conclusion includes:

- the relatively large number(172) of ODAs (Local Development Associations) that have been successfully constituted in the relatively short period of time since the project's inception provide impressive measure of the program's success in cultivating local community interest in participatory governance.

- the successful organization in all MDP municipalities of ODAs into federations that represent a secondary and more complex form of community mobilization.

- the successful institutionalization of the "forum" process (over 60 total forum sessions held at the comuna and municipal levels in all MDP municipalities).

Perhaps even more significant measure of success is the fact that in all project locations a number of ODAs have spontaneously reproduced themselves and created new ODAs. An increasing number are also calling their own meetings without any prompting by the MDP technical teams, and the actual organization and running of these meetings is now conducted without any technical assistance in most cases. Spontaneous self-replication without external inducement provides evidence of the combined levels of interest and capacity that indicate a high probability of sustainability that will extend beyond the termination of the MDP itself. Another aspect that contributes to demonstrating demand and reinforcing sustainability is the fact that Municipal Administrations and (somewhat surprisingly) traditional authorities have clearly supported and welcomed the ODAs, as opposed to perceiving them as a threat.

The few meetings that time allowed the evaluation team to hold in person with ODAs or

with their elected officers in each municipality generally reinforced the conclusions that can be drawn based on the aforementioned quantitative measures of participation. In virtually all of these meetings participants clearly felt that the ODAs and the forums provided them with a new and valuable method for bringing their concerns and priorities to the attention of local government officials in a way that had not been possible previously. Women in particular seemed to value the possibilities that ODAs and forums offered to highlight their concerns directly to the municipal administration, unmediated by traditional authorities or other (male) brokers. The possibilities for communicating and influencing local administrations was also particularly emphasized in at least one municipality where wartime political alignments had --according to the ODA members--created reluctance and fear to interact with officials from the government.

In several of the more extended interviews participants also highlighted concrete development benefits that they attributed to the participatory nature of the decision-making process instituted by the MDP. Thus, for example, in Cabinda, two ODA officials compared the benefits of selecting a site for a clinic's through the participatory forum process with their unfavorable assessment of a Chevron-funded clinic that had been built several years ago without any local consultation and thus evidently had been placed in a location that was not easily accessible to a significant pool of potential users. Donors may want to take note of how this example demonstrates the added value that the ODAs and forum processes can bring to their own community development planning.

Several examples raised in these meetings also provided intriguing indications of enhanced community empowerment and participation. A notable example from Andulo: one of the micro-projects chosen by the local population for MDP funding involved training and related support for traditional midwives. This choice was initially opposed by the local municipal health authorities because national health policy does frown upon any role for traditional midwives. However, after the community--and women in particular--continued to insist that this was their priority in the forums, a compromise was eventually reached: midwife training would be funded, but the training would give particular emphasis to sanitary and preventive health practice and midwives would also be expected to serve as a conduit through which municipal health providers could communicate important health information to women. This is a telling example for three reasons: 1-it provides evidence of an enhanced willingness and capacity of community members to insist that their interests be accounted for in decision-making--even when these interests do not dovetail with those of government authorities; 2-it provides evidence of enhanced participation by women; 3-it provides evidence that the form of engagement between governed and government that is being fostered through MDP's ODA/Forum process is not primarily oppositional or confrontational in nature but rather characterized by constructive dialogue and pragmatic compromise.

As might be expected there is eagerness within the communities to see the ODAs and forums produce tangible results--the most immediate of which are the MDPs promised micro-projects. While delays in micro-project implementation have generated frustration to varying degrees in different municipalities (see our more in depth discussion of micro-projects below) it is telling that these delays do not seem to have diminished enthusiasm for the new participatory institutions and processes introduced by the MDP. Thus, while ODA members we spoke with were clearly eager to see timely tangible results of this process, they were also very clear that the ODAs and forums were valued as new and useful tools in their own right that could, would, and in fact were already being by used the community for purposes other than the realization of micro-projects. Somewhat

ironically perhaps, in a number of instances forums and ODAs have been used by local communities to require some accountability for the pace of micro-project implementation from MDP and/or municipal staff. No one that we spoke to within local communities believed that either the slow pace of micro-project implementation, nor that the end of the project itself would result in a demise of ODAs or forums--a claim that seems to be supported by evidence that ODAs are already self-replicating to some extent in all municipalities.

It was also impressive to see ODAs in one municipality demanding greater accountability from the MDP project and staff themselves claiming that they were not following their own principles that were part of the training on transparency.

While the community mobilization and education component of the MDP is showing significant signs of success, there are several adjustments that we recommend:

The MDP field teams must remain constantly vigilant against the danger of fostering unrealistic expectations about the tangible deliverables (infrastructure) it can provide, and about what participatory governance involves. This requires very clear and continuously repeated messaging that emphasizes the modeling role of micro-projects (i.e. in teaching communities how to assess, organize, and plan to meet developmental priorities); and that participation involves productive, two-way dialogue with local government officials that involves articulating concerns and learning about constraints (and not just the creation of "wish lists"). MDP field teams must also be particularly careful not to sell the project as an alternative to local government. While most of the teams have done a reasonably good job on both of these messaging tasks, there has been at least one municipality in which less care has been taken in this respect--which we believe can nevertheless be remedied with some specific repair work perhaps under new local team leadership. However, in all municipalities redoubled efforts are warranted because by any measure these are challenging messages to effectively convey in an environment where many communities have become accustomed to being given assistance rather than given the skills to assist themselves, and in which the forms of participation that MDP is introducing are quite novel.

Apart from the micro-projects, the PDIs have served as a particularly powerful and effective point of focus for the organization of ODAs and forums. While ODAs and forums are likely to continue after PDIs are completed, some thought might be given by the project about whether it can provide any specific "post-PDI" focus<sup>1</sup> that could further strengthen community interest in, and capacity to meaningfully contribute to, participatory governance. One possibility that could be considered would be to use the remaining (i.e. hitherto unbudgeted) micro-projects to introduce communities to participatory budgeting and provide them with the requisite skills. Another possibility worth exploring would be to allow the Federations of ODAs to manage the micro-project funds directly, relegating the MDP team to a monitoring role and thus also providing an important opportunity for responsibility and transparency to be

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<sup>1</sup> Feedback from the presentation of our earlier draft of this report indicates that some steps are already planned that address this suggestion. Specifically a forum session is planned in Andulo in early December will focus on that has been done with the PDI, and that reports on what projects have been implemented or are being implemented. In our view MDP should incorporate this experience into a concerted effort to develop a more systematic post PDI strategy for the project as a whole.

responsibly exercised. Yet a third role for the ODA Federations might be the monitoring of the PDIs implementation and annual budget in a constructive way--thus further cultivating a culture of transparency, responsiveness, and meaningful participation in local governance.

While providing clear objects of focus for ODAs and forums after the PDI's completion such measure could extend the impact of the project in several ways and at several different levels:

First, they could cultivate a more mature form of community participation that moves beyond simply identifying needs and organizing demands, but engages communities in the more difficult and complex process of weighing demands against real constraints. This would arguably improve dialogue with municipal administrations by educating the governed about the resource constraints within which governing decisions must be made.

Second, they would re-tool the function of micro-projects to allow the MDP to once again pave new ground in terms of modeling meaningful experiments for national policy-makers. In our assessment maintaining the legitimacy and credibility of the project (with municipal administrators and communities alike) still requires delivering on the original commitment to realize micro-projects--accordingly the project should first ensure that it delivers on micro-projects already in process; and second, seek whatever opportunities are available for strengthening the project's local and national impact by considering adjustments for future purposes in this project component's focus. Completion of what has already been committed to will require expedient attention to a number of the management issues we highlight later in this report including a renewed commitment on the part of the consortium's Country Directors to intervene in a timely fashion as requested by the COP in order to break through bureaucratic logjams.

When it comes to future adjustments to the micro-project component we think there are several opportunities for amplifying the MDPs local and national policy impact that should be given careful consideration by the implementing partners and donors.

One opportunity is that of shifting additional decision making authority for micro/project fund management --perhaps on a partial basis--to MA authorities at the local level. Donors and implementing organizations alike must be aware that the road to ownership and sustainability eventually requires this type of careful, yet genuine, risk taking. Risks can be mitigated by good monitoring systems, but cannot be entirely removed--as any parent knows at some point you must let go of the bike and let the child ride on their own even though they might--and sometimes do--fall... In any trials the important didactic functions of the micro-projects in trying to help MAs create and follow a model that is deliberate, participatory, and transparent must still be kept front and center. A reasonable litmus test for allowing MAs to manage at least a portion of the micro-project funds independently might be their full involvement in the completion of at least two or three of the ongoing micro-projects in a manner that fully meets the process criteria already established for the projects. In any shift of micro-project fund management the role of the local MDP team would change to that of a careful monitoring of all steps of the implementation process.

Originally, the micro-projects were fairly conventional decentralization tools, designed to (temporarily) serve in lieu of the type of direct government funding that few outside

observers expected to see flowing directly to municipal coffers any time soon. When these unexpectedly materialized--at least in municipalities designated as budgetary units and now in all of them --much, of the substantive rationale for these projects arguably dissolved. However, the government's fiscal deconcentration policy has not yet contemplated community involvement in budgeting. Given the limited scope of micro-projects these might well be seen as non-threatening experiments worthy of observation by the government. Since the government does not yet seem prepared to undertake such experiments itself--and none of the other major actors in this arena (FAS, UNDP) have contemplated this possibility either--this would seem to provide the MDP with a unique opportunity to take a leadership role that could eventually have significant bearing on policy at the national level.

A final lesson to be registered for any scenario of MDP expansion to new municipalities is the need for the national leadership team to be less rigid in its approach to the social composition of ODAs. In at least one municipality the adamant insistence of the national team on a uniform approach to how ODAs were constituted ran up against stiff resistance because it did not take sufficient account of already existing forms of local social organization and identity. In this particular case communities were particularly resistant to being grouped together in ways that did not reflect their own sense of how local communities defined their own social borders. While there is merit in the novelty that ODAs represent--the strategy for their introduction should seek to maximize the extent to which these dovetail with existing social formations in order to minimize resistance and maximize participation and not reinvent the wheel. This objective can be accomplished by respecting and utilizing the participatory principles and processes MDP promotes in the organization of ODAs themselves (rather than dictating rigid guidelines) which allows local communities to sort out in their own specific way how participation best works for them and what are the best strategies for accounting for and incorporating potentially threatened interests. Thus, for example, we found that different communities have found somewhat different solutions for incorporating traditional authorities into ODAs and the forum process in ways that still respect the new participatory and inclusive nature of decision-making in these new institutions (and similarly so with their selection of different voting procedures for electing ODA and forum officials). At the same time that MDP should remain mindful of the differences in how local communities define their organic borders, it should continue the very good work it has done in actively encouraging broad gender representation within the ODAs.

## **2. Fostering Participatory Governance: Impact on Municipal Government**

Ideology, pervasive patrimonialism, and the exigencies of Angola's particularly prolonged civil war all conspired to forge the particularly strong centralist tendencies that have long characterized Angolan governance. Within this system, few if any, governance decisions of any consequence were relegated to administrators at the municipal level, and much less to local populations. Within this context the notion of "popular participation" when invoked was primarily a signal for mobilizing local communities to *realize* directives that had been generated at the provincial or central government level and transmitted through municipal administrators, rather than a signal that local populations should actually participate in decision-making itself.

It is against the heavy inertia of this history that this evaluation team was frankly surprised by the receptiveness--and in some cases outright eagerness--with which municipal administrators seem to be embracing the participatory process introduced by

the MDP (rather than only the financial resources or technical training provided by the project). Without exception the five municipal administrators with whom in-depth interviews were conducted, clearly and unambiguously expressed their high regard for the ODAs and the forum process introduced by the MDP--and provided very concrete and pragmatic reasons for this rather surprising assessment, including:

--municipal administrators see the ODAs and the forums as providing important forms of information about local needs and priorities that are not available through other sources--in particular through traditional authorities.

--municipal authorities seem to value the opportunity that both forums and ODAs provide to communicate their own decisions more effectively to the local populations and to educate and explain the rationale for these decisions. Overall the municipal administrators that we interviewed seemed cognizant of and sensitive to the practical benefits of cultivating and enhancing their own legitimacy vis-a-vis the local population--and specifically identified the ODAs and forums as mechanisms that were useful in this respect because they provided their constituents with an opportunity to be heard and a "responsible" way to participate in decision-making. In at least two municipalities administrators were very candid that they had initially been quite skeptical about what forms of pressure the forums in particular might generate ("unrealistic wish lists"; "large and unrealizable expectations"). But in both cases they described themselves as "converted" because they had seen that the forums not only provided valuable information about local communities that had hitherto been unavailable to them, but also afforded them with an opportunity to help constituents gain a less parochial understanding of difficult decisions that had to be made about resource allocation. As one municipal administrator explained: "before (the forum) everyone wanted a school and a clinic for their comuna and did not see the needs of other comunas...(but) because of the forum they came to see that everyone has needs...this is why they agreed that the housing for the medical staff (in the municipal sede) would help all of them. Now they won't see this as something that is a preference for the sede, but understand that it benefits everyone."

--all the municipal administrators that we interviewed clearly value the Integrated Development Plans (PDI's) produced through the MDP process. On one hand this interest was clearly attributable to the role they believed the PDIs would play in helping them respond to the requirements for realizing their recently acquired budgetary unit status (Andulo, Cabinda, Chitato), or eventually acquiring that status (Chicala, Cuito Canavale). However on the other hand--and more surprisingly-- they also explicitly saw value in producing the PDI's through the participatory processes the MDP had introduced. Thus, when asked to compare the advantages of producing the PDI through a participatory process as opposed to just hiring consultants they emphasized the following advantages of the former over the latter:

--benefitting from local knowledge that could help administrators avoid blunders that might be unforeseeable to them as outsiders. For example one administrator highlighted 2 cases in which information gathered through the forums led to the re-siting of a public works projects that would have otherwise (unintentionally) been built on important local sacred groves and might have thus inadvertently generated popular resentment and resistance.

--the ability to gain insight into the genuine priorities of the local population. All of the municipal administrators were able to specify several issues and priorities of the local population that they were surprised to learn about through the forum process and believed that they would not have learned of otherwise. Of note: interestingly in three cases (one municipal administrator and two comuna administrators) women's priorities and concerns were highlighted as "surprising information" that was revealed through the forum process.

--in at least three of the municipalities in which the project is active the history of relations between the governing party and significant portions of the population has been (or to some extent still is) politically adversarial. In these districts the municipal administrators were quite candid that they believe the creation of ODAs and forums has significantly improved dialogue and trust between the governing administration and the local population.

Tellingly, all of the municipal administrators interviewed explicitly expressed their commitment to utilize the PDI as their development blueprint for allocating *whatever* resources they received *regardless of the source of these funds*. In other words they did not see the PDIs produced through the participatory process as only applicable to the funds provided by the MDP-- preferring to allocate resources from other sources (most notably the government itself) through the long-established top-down decision-making process. A notable example of action backing up words: in Andulo the municipal administrator is not only using the PDI to allocate the resources (6 million USD) the municipality is receiving from the government as one of Angola's first 68 designated "municipal budgetary units" but she has gone a step further. She has used the PDI to successfully convince a major private donor (Exxon-Mobile) to re-allocate funds they initially offered for building a municipal sports complex to support other more pressing needs identified in the PDI (a hospital and a school). She was also able to use the PDI to successfully lobby this donor to more than double the amount of pledged funding altogether (from 600,000 to 1.8 million USD).

Much as ODA self-proliferation provides some promising evidence of the sustainability of participatory processes and values within local communities, the use of the PDI by municipal administrators for purposes other than those narrowly dictated by the project provide some indications of the sustainability of the MDP and of its possible multiplier effects. The decision to remain committed to the MDPs participative model for producing PDI's rather than turning to more technocratic alternatives also indicates that municipal administrators genuinely value the participatory process itself. Thus, for example, when asked whether it would not simply be less of a hassle to use outside consultants to create PDIs the Cabinda municipal administrator was explicit in highlighting the inability of such consultants to identify the population's own priorities in as effective or thorough a way as that afforded by the MDP approach. Instead he saw a useful division of labor in which the MDP forum-based process would produce a first draft of the PDI, after which an outside consulting firm would review provide an outside technical evaluation of that draft. Similarly, when asked whether the proposed CACS should or could not replace the forums, at least four of these administrators resisted the suggestion, stating a belief that each had different roles--the CACS in advising the administrator on issues s/he might raise, and the forums in bringing issues of concern to the community to the municipal administrators' attention. In short the municipal administrators were fairly consistent in not biting at the "autocratic apple" when easy opportunities to do so were afforded to them in our interviews. A sense that this reflects

more than simply deft impression management was reinforced by the fact that all of the administrators that we interviewed were quite candid in expressing in articulating criticisms (see the note on training) when they felt these were warranted.

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## **B. Capacity Building**

While the enhancement of the technical capacity of municipal administrations is an important MDP objective in and of itself, it also provides a key means through which to teach, and foster value for, more participatory and transparent forms of governance amongst municipal administrative staff.

If municipal administrators required some convincing in order to overcome their initial skepticism about the value of the participatory institutions that the MDP sought to create within local communities (ODAs, forums), they were generally much quicker to embrace the opportunities the project afforded for enhancing their staff's technical capacity and improve their strategic development planning. There are good reasons for this:

The surprisingly rapid steps taken by the government towards administrative--and in particular a measure of fiscal--deconcentration, has increased the performance demands placed upon municipal administrations, highlighting the extent of their technical capacity needs and intensifying the urgency of demands to meet these same needs.

In particular, those municipalities that were designated in the first wave of 68 "budgetary units" are under intense pressure to develop plans for using the funds the government is willing to allocate (up to 6 million USD) that demonstrate a rational, deliberate, and strategic approach to development with each municipality.

This national policy development, though unforeseen at the MDPs inception, has dramatically increased the relevance of the project's technical capacity-building component and has significantly strengthened its ability to cultivate a more participatory approach to governance amongst municipal-level government officials

### **1. Municipal Profiles and Integrated Development Plans**

MDPs capacity building efforts have proven most effective in achieving the project's multiple larger goals when these efforts have strengthened technical capacity in ways that municipal officials immediately recognize as helpful to their own governance mission through methods and activities that encourage these officials to more actively engage the local population they govern in the decision-making process. It would be difficult to identify activities with the potential for fulfilling this dual function more effectively than the project's efforts to help municipal administrations create Municipal Profiles (MPs), and--even more so--to develop Integrated Municipal Development Plans (PDIs).

The MPs and the PDIs offer municipal administrations precisely the kind of framework for development planning and expenditure that they are now rather suddenly under such pressure to produce in order to meet new central government expectations and demands. While this pressure is most immediate and intense for those municipalities that have already been designated as budgetary units, administrators in other municipalities that have yet to attain this status have clearly

seen the writing on the wall, and thus know they need to be ready (and in some cases apparently also believe that having a PDI may help ensure their municipalities are included in the next wave of designations).

The project's strategy of beginning first with MPs was very sound, inasmuch as MPs were generally viewed as both politically neutral and administratively useful--thus offering an excellent opportunity to build confidence with municipal administrations as a basis for further collaboration. While the MPs that were produced represented a step in the direction of fulfilling this potential their management was not in all cases as strong as it should have been. In some --if not all--cases the Municipal administration did not have as strong a sense of ownership as might have been achieved if they had participated more thoroughly in all aspects of the MP's production. Thus, while they generally collaborated in the collection of data, important opportunities were missed to build capacity and enhance a sense of ownership by more fully including the municipal administrations in all the technical aspects (such as the use of GIS). A more thorough process of dialogue with, and final review by, the municipal administrations would have prevented a few situations in which --as one Municipal administrator described it "he was 90% in agreement--but unhappy with certain specific points of the profile". While MA staff feedback was in fact solicited by the MDP for all Municipal Profiles, there should be an additional final step that ensures a stronger sense of ownership and full satisfaction on the part of MA authorities, namely: in our view no MP should be posted online without a final sign off by the Municipal authorities--and those currently posted on line should be labeled "provisional drafts" until this sign off is assured. These sign off should be secured without delay.

One of the key factors that some capacity-enhancement opportunities were lost in the production of the MPS traces directly back to the pressure to get tangible results from the national management team and by extension the leadership of implementing partners and donors alike. The comparable pressure to complete the PDIs as soon as possible runs a similar risk of forfeiting the most important tool in the MDPs pedagogic and motivational arsenal.

While the evident strong enthusiasm for MPs and PDIs was initially driven by pressure to respond to new national policies, the generally positive experience that municipal administrators have had with the participatory process MDP used to produce MPs and PDIs has generally convinced municipal officials of the merits of that process itself. In our view the MPs and PDIs are thus at once: 1- the project's most significant and valued capacity-building measures; 2- its most effective means for modeling and for convincing municipal administrations of the merits of more participatory forms of governance; and 3) its most enduring and consequential developmental impact (in that it establishes a proactive framework for pursuing development, that is more aware and responsive to local demands, and based on a process of systematic and inclusive deliberation--all of which should deliver significant efficiencies ). The PDIs represent perhaps the essential core that enables all of the other project's activities to work together achieve the program's multiple objectives most effectively--and it is what makes the MDP model highly relevant for replication within the current Angolan context.

The timely completion of the remaining 4 PDI's should thus be an immediate priority for the MDP. There is evidence of some impatience among these 4 municipal

administrators that the PDIs have not yet been completed--and field staff feel similar pressure from the MDP core leadership team (which may in turn reflect pressure from donors). However we offer a crucial cautionary note regarding these pressures: while every effort should be made to complete PDIs in as timely a manner as possible, *even greater caution should be taken to avoid short-circuiting the participatory process of PDI development itself in an effort to complete the PDIs more quickly.* To allow this would ultimately undermine the broader core objective of the project which make it so distinct--*which is to enhance participatory governance,* and not simply to produce PDIs, enhance technical capacities, or build tangible infrastructure. In our view the MDP field staff in a number of the municipalities have kept their eye on the right ball in this respect by insisting on safeguarding the participatory and transparency aspects of the PDI production process in the face of mounting pressures to simply complete the final PDI product itself. This has been a contributing factor in at least some municipalities to delay in reaching this benchmark (especially given a number of other important mitigating contextual factors we discuss in Chapter II). The fact that municipal administrators are one source of such pressures is to be expected for reasons we have already expounded upon. However, in our view the national leadership of the MDP and the senior leadership of the implementing organizations may need to be more proactive in reacting to donor pressure for timely completion by continuously reminding them that the process is the top priority--rather than simply channeling those pressures down the chain to the field offices. Similarly, donors should be more open to accommodate flexible timelines when it can be convincingly shown that such flexibility safeguards the participatory process.

The project would also benefit from a brief “pause and learn exercise” which would allow all the local teams and the national leadership to review and learn from the PDI production process in Andulo. While the bar for safeguarding participation and capacity-building should be even higher for the remaining four municipalities than was the case in this first “model effort”, it seems to us that there are important lessons to be gleaned-especially about the need for concerted support from the national MDP core team. Given that this level of reinforcement may be even more needed in some of the more remote and difficult municipalities, a top priority for the project must be to fill current positions that are vacant at the national team level needed for precisely these purposes.<sup>2</sup>

In the current production of the PDI the participatory decision-making process has been effectively and convincingly modeled for all key local stakeholders, and the institutions (ODAs, forums) have been created that should allow for the processes sustained use in future updating efforts. However, only some of the technical skills necessary for such updating have been effectively imparted -- in part through active hands-on collaboration between MDP field staff in the production of the PDIs, and in

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<sup>2</sup> Since this evaluation was conducted, the MDP has hired on a half-time basis a Community Development Advisor and Municipal Development Advisor. These should be seen as temporary solutions - and particularly in the MDA case priority should be placed on finding a fully qualified full time replacement without delay. Recognizing that suitable candidates are difficult to find we would insist that this is such a priority that additional resources should be dedicated to this position in order to create the incentives that will lead to its being filled quickly.

part through stand-alone MDP training workshops and exercises. A very clear metric for MDP success that we believe should be used to orient future training strategies should be to ensure that the municipal administrations have *all* the technical skills they need to fully update MPs and PDIs on their own without external assistance. One possible way of doing this is to use legislation 02/07 as the framework for an institutional assessment in (see our discussion in Training) order to determine the gaps between administrative roles and responsibilities as required by law and the on-the-ground capacity to of municipal administrators to deliver them. This would not only be a useful element to incorporate within the PDIs, but--as we discuss in the relevant section--for planning a more relevant capacity building strategy.

At the same time that we would encourage a greater safeguarding of the PDI process, we would also strongly caution against the temptation to try to make these into exhaustive and "perfect" development plans. Again the primacy of didactic and participatory functions here dictate a caution against an excessive level of technical elaboration that not only unnecessarily delays production even further, but delivers a product that will be so far ahead of the technical capacity that can be reasonably cultivated that it will simply foster continued dependence on outside expertise. There are some worrisome signs that some of the implementing organizations are becoming so enamored with a "hyper-robust" PDI that simply sets the bar too high with its many technical "bells and whistles". These PDI's should be recognized as important first steps that bring participatory governance and technical capacity from stasis to a solid stroll--but should not make the mistake at this stage of trying to move too quickly to an outright sprint, or allowing the goal of perfection to frustrate the achievement of moderate progress.

Finally, the local ownership of the MPs and PDIs should be more clearly emphasized in the future as well. Thus while the logos of the donors and implementing partners may be present on the website and paper versions they should be listed less prominently than that of the municipal administration and clearly labeled as playing a supportive role (e.g. "produced with the financial and technical support of X,Y,Z"). Also: all primary information used to compile the MP and PDI alike should be recognized as the property of the municipal administrations and copies of all final MPS and PDIs in electronic and hard copy versions should be left with them. In line with the participatory goals of the project a systematic effort must also be made to ensure that every ODA receives a copy of these documents.

## **2. Other Technical Training**

This eagerness with which municipal administrators receive--and even demand--the training that MDP offers to their staff stems from their own recognition of how low levels of human capital hamstring even their most basic administrative functions. Case in point: in one of the municipalities MDP staff had to adjust initial plans to provide database management skills to the local administration's "IT specialists" upon discovering that these "specialists" did not even possess basic word processing skills (and this in one of the municipalities that had more resources and arguably better qualified staff overall!) All of the municipal administrators are keenly aware of this challenge and highly receptive to whatever assistance they can get that will help improve this situation. Without exception, their comments (and those of their senior staff) evidence strong demand for more and better technical training for their staff.

The feature of MDP training that was consistently highlighted as most valuable was its practical, hands-on--as opposed to "theoretical" -- nature. At the same time at least three municipal administrators were not hesitant to criticize the inconsistent quality of the MDP training and of its trainers. In our view this is a criticism that MDP would do well to respond to--and that points to several key issues that should be taken into consideration in a re-thinking of MDPs training strategy.

If MDPs training programs have had an impact on the technical capacity of municipal administrations it is arguably because improving very basic skills goes a long way in a context in which the basic skills bar is exceptionally low to begin with. However, there is evidence that this bar is rising. Over the last year a number of the MDP municipalities have experienced a dramatic influx of new staff (e.g. according to the Municipal administrator, 138 new staff in Chicala alone since January). A significant number of these new staff are appointed at higher rather than merely entry levels and have higher levels of educational and professional qualifications. Whereas the opportunity to be part of the structures of governing power has always provided a unique competitive incentive, for Angola's public sector, rapidly rising wages and recent access to credit have made public jobs increasingly more attractive and will likely mean that a more significant portion of municipal officials will be as --or sometimes even more--qualified than some of the staff the MDP is able to field in the municipalities. Such are likely to require more advanced forms of training and more qualified trainers. Nevertheless, at the same time the need for very basic skills training is likely to still persist for many other less qualified municipal staff. In at least some of the municipalities MDP is thus beginning to confront a much more diverse continuum of staff qualifications and by extension of training needs.

MDP needs to make a decision about how it can best contend with this continuum. It may be useful to give thought to the implications of the following choices:

One choice would be to focus primarily on the very basic-skills end of the continuum. Advantages to this route would include only minimal re-tooling of the training model and staff and guaranteed impact in terms of building what is admittedly a needed "skills floor" within municipal administrations. Potential disadvantages to this route would probably be reduced impact on the higher-level decision-makers who are increasingly likely to be better educated and more qualified.

A second choice would be to focus on the higher-and-more-technical skills end of the continuum. The advantages would include more impact at the leadership level and on key decision-makers, and helping raise the ceiling on administrative performance (of note: this is what the PDI arguably does). Disadvantages would include neglect of basic-skills that are still very much needed. Perhaps most importantly this route would almost certainly require a fairly extensive redesign of the MDPs technical training strategy as described below.

The third choice would be to attempt to cater to the whole training needs continuum.

In our view any decision to focus upon (option 2) or include (option 3) the higher-skills end of continuum will require at least the following fundamental shifts in the MDPs approach to training and capacity building:

--a reconfiguration of the “training menu” that MDP offers that is “needs based” rather than “supply-driven”. As far as we can tell the current menu of workshops and skills training that MDP offers municipal authorities is based on some combination of what the implementing organizations can offer and have experience and interests in, and a somewhat amorphous notion of what skills are needed to ensure “good/participatory governance”. While this basis may provide an adequate basis for civic education infused basic-skills building, it is inadequate to the higher level technical requirements that municipalities increasingly are confronting. Thus, for example municipalities increasingly need more than just general accounting or financial management training, but rather training in *public* financial management based on *Angola’s specific* legal and policy framework<sup>3</sup> There would probably be at least two pre-requisite exercises to the development of an adequate “needs-based” training and capacity menu: First--an intensive analysis of the requirements that the government is imposing on municipal administrations as a basis for determining what specific capacities are required; Second--empirical assessments of how short particular municipalities fall from meeting those requirements. Interestingly enough in Cabinda, the MDP team has carried out a survey of administrative staff skills at the behest of the municipal administrator that could serve as a model for the type of empirical assessment we are suggesting---although it will be given far more meaning when cast against an intensive analysis of government requirements.

--it is unrealistic to expect any single field staff member to be able to provide quality training in as wide a range of specific technical skills as the aforementioned “needs based” approach would certainly require. Even at a more basic-skills level the national MDP staff has begun to recognize this fact and responded through the occasional use of external consultants in situations where field or national staff are not sufficiently qualified. Although the local team member responsible for training could probably continue to provide a basic skills core curriculum him- or herself (especially if provided with more support--see below) this role would need to be reconfigured into one that focused more on the identification of needs, the effective facilitation of other trainers, and on follow-up impact assessment--rather than on their direct provision of training and skills.

--By extension of the previous point, the MDP would need to develop a strong pool of consultants that could be drawn upon to provide more specialized and technical training--potentially inclusive even of IFAL and other government staff (Ministry of Finance for example). Given the mixed reaction that we witnessed from municipal and MDP field staff regarding the quality of the consultants that have been tapped on an ad-hoc basis by MDP so far, we would strongly recommend that this “consultant stable” be constituted through a careful and thorough vetting process--inclusive of continuous assessments of their performance for MDP itself. It is worth noting that the development of such a “consultant stable” could potentially offer an important opportunity for productive collaboration and cross-fertilization with other actors active at the national level in the decentralization debate (e.g. FAS, the decentralization discussion group).

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<sup>3</sup> Our understanding from feedback to the first draft of this report is that steps have already begun to be taken by the project in this direction since our evaluation was conducted: namely a plan is being developed to use Catholic University (which has trained Min Fin staff) to develop a training curriculum and subsequently to provide training to the MA staff in the five MDP municipalities.

In our view there are also at least three important measures that should be taken to bolster the effectiveness and impact of MDPs training and capacity-building efforts regardless of which of the aforementioned routes is pursued. These include:

--a more thorough development of the curricula that MDP field trainers are supposed to deliver. In some cases fully developed curricula have been provided; however in others MDP field staff in the municipalities have simply been given a list of themes to cover and expected to fully develop the curricula themselves. The national core support team should move quickly to ensure the demise of the latter scenario. While there should certainly be room for site-specific tailoring, it is far easier to do this by adapting a well established curricula rather than generating one from scratch.

--more investment in imparting pedagogic skills to trainers. The field level trainers need more than developed curricula (i.e. "what to teach") in order to respond to the criticisms posed by the municipal administrators--they also need to be taught "how to teach", to be given specific training and facilitation techniques, and feedback on communication skills.

--the basic participatory skills (SWOT analysis etc...) provided to ODAs represent a solid core of training that should also continue to be offered. Some consideration should be given to expanding these offerings to traditional authorities and CACS as well. This core should be expanded to include new skills that will be required for participatory budgeting, basic project financial management. Focus in the community training and capacity-building strategy should be kept on core skills that reinforce the ability of communities to participate effectively in governance. Care should be taken to prevent these exercises from becoming a diffuse menu that reflects the capacities and interests of the implementing organizations rather than the core mission of the MDP itself. Thus, for example, if a training with a gender or health or land-rights focus is implemented it should be designed to clearly and directly enhance the ability of community levels to engage in participatory governance as it relates to these--or any other--issues.

--the project should also consider implementing a second wave of training for ODA leadership and key municipal staff that focuses on the training of trainers--with a view towards leaving in place individuals who can teach others what they have learned when the project comes to the end of its second half-life<sup>4</sup>.]

--finally municipal, ODA leadership, and MDP field staff need access to more training materials--in particular ones that can be left with trainees after training is done. To the extent training materials exist more effort and resources should be allocated by the national MDP leadership team to getting these in a timely way to the municipalities; and to the extent that appropriate material is not available resources should be allocated without delay to their development and production.

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<sup>4</sup> Our understanding from feedback to the first draft of this report is that steps have already begun to be taken by the project that begin to address this recommendation since our evaluation was conducted, namely: CARE's Civil Society Advisor has been hired on 50% basis to reinitiate training for ODAs on leadership development, advocacy, strategic planning.

### C. Micro-Projects: Past and Future Significance for MDP Objectives

In contrast to more typical development projects, the tangible “bricks and mortar” products of the project are not the principle products of the MDP, but rather serve as a means through which to realize the higher objectives of the MDP--in particular fostering interest, experience, and skills in participatory governance. From this perspective our evaluation necessarily focuses on the past--and potential future--effectiveness of micro-projects in serving those larger ends, rather than on their immediate developmental impact (i.e. infrastructure and/or social services).

As we understand it, the micro-projects are intended to contribute to the MDP’s larger objectives by fulfilling two primary functions:

First, they are meant to serve a *motivational* function, by presenting local communities and municipal administrations tangible and concrete benefits that they can achieve through the participatory institutions and processes that MDP has asked them to adopt. In this sense they are the “bait” that encourage engagement and experimentation with participatory processes and institutions.

Second, the micro-projects are meant to serve a vital *didactic* function by providing a “hands-on” opportunity for communities and administrations to learn skills, acquire tools, and for the first time actually realize the many steps involved in participatory decision-making and more transparent governance.

It bears emphasizing that--in terms of the broader MDP objectives--the direct *developmental* effects of the micro-projects (i.e. their impact on infrastructure and services) are rather meaningless in and of themselves *unless the process through which micro-projects are brought into being effectively fulfills the motivational and didactic functions*. Consequently, our assessment below focuses on:

- the effectiveness of micro-projects in fulfilling motivational and didactic functions so far.
- how national policy shifts, unforeseen at the beginning of the MDP, seem likely to affect the role and relevance of micro-projects in serving these functions in the future.
- the relevance of micro-projects to what is arguably a third “latent”--yet still crucial--function: securing and maintaining essential levels of trust and credibility with key stakeholders --including local communities and municipal administrations.
- identifying adjustments that could increase the effectiveness of motivational, didactic, and credibility functions.

The micro-projects seem to have effectively served their initial motivational function with both local communities and municipal administrations alike. There is little doubt from the interviews that we conducted with local community members that their initial interest in participating in ODAs and forums had largely to do with their hopes for gaining concrete, tangible benefits (schools, clinics etc...), rather than because of a deep interest in participatory governance per se or in acquiring basic organizational and analytical skills. The micro-projects therefore served as the primary focus for these expectations and aspirations. From the perspective of the communities the micro-projects served their initial motivational function admirably and probably indispensably.

Prior to the decision by the Angolan government to provide funds directly to at least 68 municipal administrations, the micro-project funding also served as an important “hook” that motivated the participation of municipal authorities. The potential developmental

impact of even the modest funds afforded through the micro-projects is put into useful perspective by the fact noted by the Andulo municipal administrator that: "prior to being designated as a budgetary unit, her entire municipal budget 'leftover for development' amounted to less than USD \$50." In this light, the modesty of the micro-project sums has not so far diminished their value in motivating the participation and engagement of municipal authorities---although obviously more so in the municipalities that have not yet become budgetary units. However, even in those that are budgetary units all municipal administrators went out of their way to emphasize that they not only valued the resources that MDPs micro-projects provided but were hopeful that greater sums would be forthcoming--particularly so in municipalities such as Andulo where the post-war developmental and reconstruction needs present as so overwhelming. Again therefore in our view the promise of micro-projects effectively served the function of effectively kick-starting engagement by municipal authorities.

In most of the municipalities the MDP field teams have done a good job of maintaining a focus making sure that the entire participatory and decision-making process is realized. With some exceptions, they have by and large thus effectively safeguarded the *didactic* functions of the micro-projects. However, this insistence has resulted in a number of delays in the implementation of some of the micro-projects that were ultimately selected by local communities. Consequently, both local administrators and local community members expressed some frustration with what they view as an overly slow pace of micro-project realization. For example, one traditional authority observed '*... I said at the beginning, if the project provides what it says it will, I will contribute with an ox! They have not kept to their commitments (yet) ... so they owe us an ox instead*'

In our view, to some degree this frustration should actually be seen as evidence that the MDP field teams are effectively safeguarding the didactic functions as top priority by forcing communities and public officials alike to go through a series of steps that ensure the forms of more thorough participation and transparency that are supposed to be taught by the micro-projects. We also expect that some of this frustration will dissipate as a far greater number of the micro-projects are actually brought into being in the second half-life of the project. As we have noted in our discussion of the PDIs, the goals of participation and rapid implementation are to some extent at odds with each other and donors must be aware of pushing too hard for one at the expense of the other.

In our view addressing the overly heavy bureaucratic and centralized decision [making process for approving micro-projects --at the national level that involves interaction between the MDP core leadership and the implementing organization's leadership --is one place where the project could help save time in the process without sacrificing important didactic and participatory objectives. There is some irony to a heavily centralized structure at the consortium level that counteracts the very principles it is supposedly trying to preach: i.e. of decentralization, local prioritization, ownership and management by ODAs/MAs of micro project funds. Decisions on which type project to approve and the amount of money has been centralized to an extreme--requiring considerable input and action beyond the core MDP leadership by the lead implementing organization itself, and sometimes by the other implementing organizations as well--making the process less nimble and less responsive to local interests. For example, the process of opening bank accounts in some municipalities and which signatures were included was highly confused and unnecessarily undermined local confidence in transparency. Some of the delays at the consortium level do however reflect the pressures for accountability that implementing partners feel from donors. Donors

therefore need to be aware of the tradeoffs involved when they create that forces implementing partners to use structures of accountability that are so centralized in their effort to avoid risk that they undermine the very messages the project is trying to convey. In our view, experiments with cultivating accountability are by definition an exercise that requires some risk-taking--measured as that should be.

At the moment the system for approving even the most minor micro-project requires sub project proposals to go through an Executive Committee, Technical Committee and Technical Sub Committees--and this at the municipal level before winding its way through the internal bureaucratic levels of the MDP itself. This process may make sense for larger funding disbursements, but a more streamlined and less cumbersome procedure might make more sense for smaller projects--and represent an acceptable amount of risk to take in a meaningful experiment that tests out the skills and values inculcated to date. Perhaps an effort should be made to incorporate these bodies into the Municipal Administrations systems themselves with a view towards allowing the MAs to channel at least some limited funds directly for a number of future micro-projects--with the MDP team playing more of a monitoring rather than managerial role.

Some of the delay in micro-project implementation so far is also attributable to a lack of clarity in communication between the national core MDP leadership and the field teams; and to procedural confusion and logjams within the consortium and the lead agency in particular--all of which should be definitively resolved in order to prevent adding unnecessary delay to that which may be inevitable (and even justifiable). Thus for example, some delays have occurred because the transfer of funds between consortium partners has been needlessly bottled up in a bureaucratic logjam that senior leadership in partnering organizations has simply not prioritized. Also, more than one MDP field office received successive inconsistent messages about the amount limits for micro-projects, resulting in false-starts and re-starts. More than just resulting in additional delays, the "changing rules" for micro-project implementation forced local team to renege on or at least modify earlier commitments to local communities and municipal administrators. Although these did not deal a fatal blow to the credibility of the project they did undermine it and needlessly heightened local frustration. Most field teams have done effective "social repair work", although in at least one municipality stronger local MDP leadership and specific additional measures may be warranted in this respect . Although the "mixed message" problem is apparently now resolved, the national MDP leadership team would do well to continue to reinforce the *definitive* parameters for micro-projects with all MDP field staff--with special attention to any new staff recruited into the project., The senior leadership of the implementing organizations should also make a much stronger commitment to breaking bureaucratic logjams when these are identified by the COP.

In the future micro-projects seem likely to still be important motivators for community--and even more so municipal administrative-- adoption of participatory mechanisms and institutions in municipalities that have not been designated as budgetary units. However, there is absolutely no doubt that the credibility of the project would be very seriously undermined in all municipalities if the MDP does not at a very least complete the micro-projects that it has actually started as well as those in the pipeline to which commitments have already been made. As one municipal administrator put it: "to withdraw from the micro-projects would be a betrayal".

Despite the modesty of sums involved, it also seems evident that any future scenario

that involves MDP expansion to other municipalities would still need this --or a comparable resource accessing "hook"--in order to kick-start the ODA and forum process within local communities (as discussed previously the PDI may offer an alternative vis-a-vis municipal administrations. Consequently we recommend that the micro-project component of the MDP be allowed to play itself out rather than be either eliminated or expanded.

Our recommendations about how to improve the didactic effectiveness of the micro-projects are subsumed under our previous discussion of "Other training" in the previous capacity-building section of this report.

Our observations about new didactic opportunities that the micro-projects could be used for and how these might reinforce the objectives of the project at the municipal level and the MDP's broader policy impact at the national level have are discussed below in our section below entitled Recommendations for Amplifying the MDPs Broader Impact.

Moving forward, greater thought also needs to be given to how the micro-projects relate to the PDIs and focused effort to explaining that relationship to local communities. Some ODA members thus expressed some confusion about why the top priorities that they identified in discussions contributing to the PDI were not prioritized for funding as micro-projects (the answer is because the top priorities are almost always too expensive--roads, hospitals etc...). Communities need to be better informed up front about the funding parameters for MDP-funded micro-projects and emphasis needs to be placed on the micro-projects are not intended to comprehensively address the needs they identify.

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## **D. Provincial and National-level Impact**

*To what extent – and in what ways – does the project demonstrate influence beyond the five direct target municipalities of the project? Municipal development is an objective of a number of donor and government efforts beyond MDP; understanding how and where the project engages this broader discussion is the intention of this question? Assess influence of MDP on MAT/national government policy development*

### **1. Caveats**

We feel it is important to reiterate the limitations we outlined during the evaluation entry meeting that characterize our assessment of the broader--and in particular national level--impacts of the MDP. These limitations stem from at least three factors:

First--the project's own inherent focus is on transforming governance at the *municipal* level (to which this evaluation has already spoken extensively). The fact that by definition, the MDP's point of entry is local rather than national suggests that we must perforce consider less direct and overt forms of influence on national policy than would be the case for a project that took a national ministry --for example--as its direct object of action. Inasmuch as possible we will discuss the evidence for this type of influence that we have been able to muster for, as well as specific activities undertaken by the MDP that explicitly targeted provincial, national, or international actors. We will also reflect on what in our view are some of the specific advantages that the MDP may have in terms of influencing national policy-makers in the specific Angolan context because its approach is indirect, low-key, and bottom-up.

Second--in our view a mid-term evaluation that is realized less than two years into the de-facto realization of a project (particularly one with the aforementioned municipal-level focus) cannot realistically expect to yet see dramatic “trickle-up” effects at higher levels. At this stage we would rightly expect the bulk of this type of project’s efforts to be focused on getting the project going and having an impact at its immediate level of realization--namely the municipalities. Broader effects and activities that contemplate national impact would perforce depend on the successful implementation at the municipal level first. We would therefore expect a final evaluation to be in a far better position to speak to the question of broader and higher level impact than is possible in this mid-term evaluation.

Third--because the evaluation was realized shortly after Angola’s recent national elections, and during a period in which the new government was in the process of being formed, this limited our access to key government officials at the national level.

Keeping these limitations in mind, we nevertheless were able to find intriguing and potentially significant evidence that the MDP is already having influence beyond the five municipalities targeted by the project.

## **2. Evidence of Broader Impact (Provincial, National, International)**

At the provincial level of government there were some clear signs that the MDP is being noticed as a model worthy of emulation. Specifically:

The governor of Bié was quite explicit in favorably comparing the MDP’s effects on administrative performance and development planning (the PDI) in Andulo to the less favorable outcomes in a neighboring municipality receiving UNDP support. He expressed particular satisfaction with the superior budget reports and planning that the MDP had enabled Andulo to realize--and which he stated he had circulated to other municipalities as a model they should strive to emulate.

At least two municipal administrators in MDP municipalities discussed visits they have received from other municipal administrators in their provinces seeking to get more information about the PDIs and who expressed an interest in receiving comparable support from MDP.

In Kuito a municipal administrator actually intensively solicited one of the evaluators on this team with a request that the MDP be realized in her municipality--based on her assessment of the benefits the program had produced for neighboring Andulo. While promising to convey this message to the implementing organizations and donors the evaluator was forced to clarify several times in the face of her persistence that his role did not include making such decisions.

The governor of Huambo requested that the Chicala MDP team organize a presentation about the MDP for the Provincial government, in order to explore how the program can coordinate with IFAL to develop training and capacity-building models for municipal government staff. In considering potential national-level impact it bears noting that this is the governor who was appointed the Prime Minister of Angola during the field visits carried out for this mid-term evaluation.

The MDP field teams vary significantly in the extent to which they recognize the importance of the provincial level in municipal development and are making efforts to address it through their activities. In particular, project staff --at all levels--have not yet focused sufficiently on the GEP (Gabinete de Estudos e Planeamento) at provincial level --although some initial steps have been taken in some MDP sites. and the GACAMC (Gabinete de Apoio e Controlo das Administrações Municipais e Comunaais) which both support and significantly influence processes of municipal planning. It should be the responsibility of the MDP national leadership team to develop a strategy for strengthening interaction between the MDP field teams and these Provincial-level organizations--and for supporting the field teams in their efforts to realize this strategy.

The production of the PDIs offers a concrete opportunity in this respect since the field staff of the MDP teams were asked to go to sectors (or actors!) at Provincial level and request existing plans that support sectoral planning at the municipal level. The fact that these plans do not yet exist yet in most Provinces, may represent a provincial-level opportunity analogous to that already discussed at the municipal level for meeting an existing demand--and amplifying the project's national impact. (Of note: it also represents an additional challenge for completing the municipal PDIs that must be acknowledged)

The MDP's level of engagement with the previous vice minister of Territorial Administration has been particularly positive. The Project was able to provide several meetings and one presentation on process and results and the VM was well informed about achievements.

In the early stages of the project, FAS (Fundo de Apoio Social) was actively engaged and the aim was to ensure complementarity. FAS participated in the selection panel of the bidding process. However, over the years this relationship has drifted into neglect, and each project has been more concerned with their own outputs, paying limited --and in our view insufficient--attention to coordination, the development of a joint strategic vision, or to identifying concrete ways in which to reinforce each other's efforts.

The life of the project coincided with a particularly difficult period for the Decentralization Working Group. While the group had been effective in coordination at an earlier stage and although MDP made consistent efforts to revitalize this group, members of the group have effectively developed separate agendas. However, given the scale of issues related to decentralization that require further debate in Angola, continued efforts to press this group towards a think tank role would be valuable in spite of the difficulties and time required.

In a rewritten TOR the donors may wish to require that MDP develop a proactive national coordination and collaboration strategy with its own dedicated funding line for the second half-life of the project. This strategy should support and dovetail with efforts currently underway in the DWG.

While the aforementioned signs provide intriguing signs--especially of potential broader influence, it is ultimately premature to comprehensively assess the broader impact of the MDP, especially on national policy. However, the past patterns that have characterized the Angolan government's reactions to international programs and partners strongly

suggest that the MDPs low-key, non-confrontational, and locally-focused approach to fostering decentralization and participatory governance is likely to be the most effective and sustainable approach in the Angolan context. The international community frankly tends to have far less leverage in Angola than it is accustomed to enjoying in other developing and post-conflict country contexts; and it confronts a state that is both secure in its victorious political status (now consolidated by an election) and its resource leverage--and has thus not shied away from confronting international pressure and more often than not overcoming it. If there are opportunities for leverage these will come through the provision of technical assistance.

Thus while the MDP is cultivating participatory governance, it is doing so in a manner that dovetails in important ways with national deconcentration policy and that contributes in a genuinely valued way to national development planning (note again the PDIs). Finally in our view the MDPs scope is arguably large enough --especially when seen in conjunction with comparable efforts by FAS-- to constitute a significant enough social experiment for generating generalizable lessons and for catching the careful attention of the Angolan government, without necessarily being so ambitious that it seems threatening.

### **3. Recommendations for Amplifying the MDP's Broader Impact**

In previous sections we have already alluded to a number of possible courses of action that might amplify the MDP's influence on national policy:

First--the government's fiscal deconcentration measures are likely to foster a growing demand from municipal administrations for PDI-type frameworks. Given the effectiveness of the PDI in simultaneously achieving the MDP's multiple objectives this development potentially presents a window of opportunity for MDP expansion to other municipalities. It bears noting that this demand can be filled through other means--most notably the growing number of private consulting firms active in this area. However, in contrast to MDP these firms do not usually foster participatory values or capacities through the methods they employ to produce PDI's, and in fact might arguably reinforce highly technocratic and non-participatory governance tendencies. To the extent that MDP is able to leverage its advantages (being "free" from the perspective of municipal authorities) to fulfill this demand in other municipalities it will clearly broaden its impact.

Second--as already discussed extensively, adjusting the micro-projects to include participatory-budgeting could significantly strengthen participatory governance at the municipal level while also carving out a new and notable front for the MDP in the national decentralization policy debate.

Third- In order to scale up and replicate in any second phase more resources will need to be allocated during this phase to training, advocacy, and dissemination --and a comprehensive strategy developed in order to better inform provincial and national level government sectors--and other municipalities--about the strengths, opportunities, and potential usefulness of the MDP model! Such an effort may also require an additional national core leadership staff member—who in our view should be Angolan--to focus on such liaisons.

## II. CHAPTER 2: ASSESSMENT OF PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION:

*What issues, if any, exist with regard to the implementation of the project? Particular attention should be paid to the quality and effectiveness of coordination between the three members of the “implementing partners consortium.” How effective is coordination and collaboration between (a) the project’s funding partners (Chevron and USAID/Angola) and (b) the funding partners and the implementing partners consortium?*

### A. Performance Overview:

Overall the project has succeeded in carrying out the activities it was committed to realizing. There were, however, delays, some of which were due to unforeseen circumstances and were reasonable, others that were under the control of the project and should be avoided in a possible future phase. We review and analyze unforeseen constraints, contingencies, and missteps to be avoided in the future in detail below:

#### Overview of Principal Project Outcomes (TOTAL and Broken down by Municipality)

MUNICIPALITY	Andulo	Chicala	Cabinda	C. Canavale	Chitato	TOTALS
Number of ODAs established	58	28	36	25	25	172
Number of Forums realized : at Comuna level--	10	17	6	7	6	46
at Municipal level-	3	3	3	1	7	17
Number of Community (in/for ODAs) Trainings realized	21	20	22	21	24	108
Number of Trainings of Municipal Admin. Staff realized	12	9	9	10	11	51
Baseline Date of Completion	12/ 07	09/07	07/08	12/ 07	08/ 07	5
Municipal Profile-Date of Completion (or expected date)	07/07	07/07	07/07	07/07	07/07	5
Integ. Dev. Plan (PDI) Date of Completion (or expected date)	03/08	(12/08)	(12/08)	(12/08)	(11/08)	1
Microprojects Completed:	1	1	0	1	0	3
Microprojects initiated (partial funds disbursed but not completed)	2	4	3	4	4	17
Microprojects in pipeline (approved and budgeted BUT not started/no funds disbursed)	6	3	3	5	3	20

## **B. Key Implementation Challenges and Considerations:**

### **1. Contextual Effects:**

There is a certain degree of unevenness in the project's implementation when we compare different municipalities to each other (thus for example as of the date of the evaluators field visits (October 1-10) only one PDI had been completed (Andulo) although the completion of at least two more in other municipalities were expected imminently). A great deal of this unevenness is attributable to differences in the specific implementing environments rather than to any lack of competence or failure in the efforts of the implementing field teams--as well as to greater amounts of support that have provided to some field teams by the national core staff to some municipal field teams than to others (see Staffing)

Some of these differences are important to highlight because they do more than merely explain the different stages the project has reached in each location, but also identify key enabling and constraining factors that should not inform an adjustment of expectations about what can be accomplished in the five current MDP municipalities. These factors should also be taken into consideration if and when other municipalities/provinces are selected in any scenario of future project expansion. Thus:

--there was more progress in achieving pre-established performance benchmarks in municipalities in which the implementing organization already had a presence prior to the MDP's implementation (Andulo, Chicala Cholahanga) than in those municipalities in which implementing organizations were establishing themselves for the first time (e.g. Chitato, Cuito Canavale, Cabinda). In Andulo and Chicala the MDP program was thus able to benefit significantly from well-established lines of communication and trust that the implementing organizations had already established with local populations and municipal administrations through a long history of prior programmatic activity. In the other municipalities, these forms of social capital had to be generated from scratch--even as other more mundane, but time consuming, issues also required first-time attention (for example setting up offices). Thus, while there may be good substantive reasons to establish MDP programs in municipalities in which implementing organizations do not have a prior presence, a lesson learned from this evaluation should be that the expectations about the pace of project progress should be adjusted to account for the additional social and logistical "entry work" required in such contexts.

--in at least two municipalities the launch of the project was significantly delayed due to factors that were entirely external to the program itself. In Cabinda a significant delay was occasioned by a lengthy six month disagreement between the Provincial government and the Ministry of Territorial Affairs over which should be the municipality in which the MDP would be implemented. This delay was compounded by the replacement of the municipal administrator soon after the project was finally launched. In Cuito Cuanavale, the sudden death of the municipal administrator early on also set back the project's implementation timetable. The replacement of administrator was particularly consequential in these cases because these were municipalities in which the implementing organization was active for the first time (and thus in which the aforementioned "social entry work" was required).

--Cabinda also provides another important lesson to consider in any future scenario that involves an expansion of the MDP to new municipalities. Among the five current

MDP sites, Cabinda and Chitato are municipalities in which the capital city of a province is also located. These Municipal administrators explained that this had an important effect on his own decision-making since he felt obliged to confer with the governor (or other relevant provincial authorities) on all decisions that had any bearing on the capital city. The operational significance of this for the MDP is that it adds another layer of administrative bureaucracy to contend with. This presents potential challenges but also potential opportunities. On one hand the additional layer of actors involved has clearly slowed the pace of government reaction time to program initiatives and thus the overall pace of project progress. On the other hand, there may also be an opportunity to more directly extend the reach and influence of the program to the provincial level in municipalities of this type. Given the fact that the program has really only been fully operational in Cabinda<sup>5</sup> for slightly over a year (for the reasons already given) it is still too early to identify whether the MDP's influence is being felt more extensively at the provincial level than in the other municipalities. However, we identify this as an opportunity that bears further focused consideration in the strategic planning by the project implementers.

-- The fact that the Municipal Administration in Cuito Cuanavale was UNITA run presented another set of unique challenges, UNITA Administrators had great difficulty in leading largely MPLA staff teams, subjecting decision-making to another level and form of political dynamic that has delayed the implementation of projects.

## **2. Staffing Challenges: Quality and Retention**

Securing adequately trained and competent staff and guaranteeing their continuity has been a challenge for the project that has had a noticeable, albeit not debilitating, effect on project implementation to date--although the challenges in recruiting top level staff in the two most remote sites (Chitato and Cuito Cuanavale) is still an ongoing issue. The project is likely to confront even greater challenges in staffing over the next two years, and these are likely to be more consequential to implementation now that the project is hitting its full stride.

A number of the staffing challenges the MDP has confronted are fairly typical of a ramping up phase of any major new project, especially one that involves activities that represent something of a departure from the more conventional fare of most development agencies. Overall the project has dealt with these "birth pains" as adequately as might be expected. Thus for example, the project has generally made the right moves to replace particular individuals who have not proven themselves inadequate for the tasks to which they were assigned--albeit at times somewhat more slowly than might be desired. Quicker reaction time to such problems would be facilitated by providing the MDP Chief of Party with the final say over some of these decisions rather than relegating these to each implementing organization's Country Director (see our more detailed discussion of this in the Consortium and Management section below). This would reverse the current structure of decision-making by allowing each organization to nominate or recommend candidates for particular positions but allowing the MDP COP to have final say--rather than the reverse. In particular, this measure would prevent staffing decisions from being subjected to potential conflicts of

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<sup>5</sup> Though Cabinda provides examples of several types of extraordinary hurdles the project has had to face, it also bears noting that the progress the project has made there nevertheless is actually rather remarkable.

interest in which broader organizational interests are pitted against those of the MDP. Other challenges that have confronted the MDP--and that are arguably becoming even more acute--are related to the rather unique operating environment in which NGOs operate in this country. In Angola, implementing organizations already face a much steeper level of competition for qualified personnel than is the case in most developing countries in Africa--and that competition is increasing. Whereas other NGOs are likely to be each other's primary competitors for qualified talent in many developing (and especially post-conflict) countries, in Angola both the private sector and increasingly even the public sector are able to offer equal or higher salaries than international NGOs. Moreover, the short-term nature of NGO contracts places them at a significant disadvantage relative to private and public sector alternatives that offer longer-term job security prospects.

This competitive environment has created significant challenges for the MDP in its personnel recruitment and retention efforts alike. A number of field staff have left the project for better paying private employment, and --ironically-- several field staff have actually been poached by the municipal administrations they were assisting through the MDP program. It is thus entirely likely that the Cabinda municipal administrator was engaging in more than a metaphorical gesture of appreciation, when he twice expressed a desire to recruit the entire Cabinda MDP team into his permanent administrative staff.

(On the other hand this may be a very interesting opportunity for the project to consider as part of an "viral form" of exit strategy that amplifies and sustains its impact...

The solutions to this challenge pose a series of tradeoffs that must be carefully considered. Higher remuneration of MDP staff would certainly help, but might also create thorny dilemmas for the implementing organizations. All of these organizations are particularly wary of the effects that higher pay for MDP staff might have on their other personnel working on other projects--either sparking an inflationary wage trend across the board, or --in their view--creating an undesirable form of hierarchy among their projects. In our view, this tradeoff can probably be best negotiated through a targeted approach, in which higher remuneration is provided for a select number of key positions (key core national leadership staff, and the local field leader in each municipality) and to those MDP staff that are located in the most remote and logistically challenging municipalities (. Some form of "hardship pay" that takes into account the extraordinary difficulties occasioned by family separation and far more challenging working conditions in locations such as Chitato, Cuito Cuanavale would help in the recruitment and retention of qualified personnel in these locations.

#### *Municipal-level staffing*

Ensuring the high quality of field staff --and their continuity-- in MDP municipalities will arguably be more consequential to project implementation and impact during the second half-life of the MDP project.

At the field level we recommend that particular attention be paid to ensuring the quality and continuity of the team member tasked with organizing and coordinating training and capacity-building for the municipal administrations. This is a particularly critical position--and a more difficult one to adequately and continuously staff-- for the following reasons:

--the technical and educational requirements are generally higher for this position because of what this type of capacity-building involves. As already discussed in our review of Capacity Building and Training the rising quality and qualifications of at least some new municipal administration employees is raising the bar for this task.

--Whereas the creation of ODAs, the institutionalization of the forums, and cultivating basic participatory skills within communities were arguably the most fundamental and foundational tasks during the beginning of the project, training and capacity-building within municipal administrations is arguably more crucial to the project's continued progress and ultimate success in its subsequent half-life.

--This role also typically involves responsibility for the local team leadership within each municipality. Strong local team leadership is likely to be particularly important in identifying, adapting to, and navigating the particularities of each different MDP context --and it is the ability to deal effectively with these devilish details that will matter most in the successful fine-tuning of the project from here on out

--As already noted, several municipal administrators were quite explicit (if nevertheless polite) in requesting that the MDP take measures to ensure more consistency in the quality of the training the project provided to their staff and clearly identified a need for stronger and more qualified local team leaders.

We conclude that this is an opportune--and necessary--time for the program to thoroughly review this key leadership position in all five municipalities. In some cases the primary measures that should be taken are ones that secure already competent staff members and reinforce their capacity and identification with the MDP program by providing them with more training, guidance, and support from the national level office (see our previous discussion about Capacity Building and Training). In other cases new local team leadership may well be warranted.

In addition to remunerative considerations, there are a number of other measures that the MDP should consider taking to strengthen the capacity and effectiveness of its municipality team leaders -- and to safeguard their retention:

--Several of the measures we have recommended in our prior discussion of the options for re-configuring the municipal staff training strategy will help considerably in this respect (e.g. increased focus on training trainers, providing more fully developed core curricula and training materials, moving towards a "training facilitation" model). It bears noting that some of these were in fact measures planned for by the project initially but that have yet to be adequately realized.

--Regularly scheduled (as opposed to ad-hoc) meetings that bring these local team leaders together--either in Luanda or perhaps alternatively in each of the MDP municipalities--would provide an important opportunity to share lessons learned and discuss emerging challenges with each other and with the core national leadership team. Though perhaps less vital, such lessons-learned and mutual assessment exercises could also benefit other local MDP team members (in this second stage the grant officers in particular).

--A concerted effort to regularly update local team leaders (through the aforementioned regularly scheduled meetings and otherwise) on the rapidly

changing contours of national decentralization policy (and even to provide them with additional education about decentralization debates and programs outside of Angola) would go a long way towards cultivating an important sense of identification with the project as something more than merely a “job” Ad-hoc initiatives of this sort that have already been pursued by at least one of the implementing organizations with key local MDP staff indicate to us that there would be significant benefits from pursuing these forms of capacity- and team-building activities on a systematic, MDP-wide basis. Even a practical letter; and/or some form of “internal correspondence course” could go a long way towards providing vital information and cultivating a stronger sense of identification with the project’s mission.

#### *National Core Team Staff*

It is absolutely imperative that at least one of the two key positions in the national core leadership team that have been vacant<sup>6</sup> for several months be filled by a qualified persons on a full time basis without further delay. The two vacant positions in question are the Community Development Advisor and the Municipal Development Advisor.). Both of the individuals occupying these positions left for other positions within the consortium’s lead implementing partner. While the ultimate decision to make these moves was an individual (rather than organizational) one, in our view more should have been done to create incentives which would have encouraged them to remain in these positions--and in the future the incentive structure should secure these staff (once recruited) for the remainder of the project--and all implementing partners should take measures that ensure they do not undermine the continuity of these positions from within their own organizations.

Fortunately the ODA creation and forum institutionalization process had already been successfully launched and gained momentum in all five municipalities before the Community Development Advisor position was vacated. Thus, while the local team members who work on these tasks within the municipalities would benefit from the continued support this latter national position could provide, they --and the communities with which they are working--are already able to continue to support existing ODAs, foster the creation of new ones, and continue the forum process without the levels of central support they initially required. It would be more urgent to fill this position if any expansion of the MDP to new municipalities/provinces should be contemplated since the ODA/forum formation process would need to start anew in those locations.

In contrast to the Community Development Advisor the recruitment of a replacement for vacated Municipal Development Advisor position should be a top priority This person will play what is arguably THE essential role in carrying out the project’s reconfigured training strategy based on the choices the implementing partners make after considering the recommendations and tradeoffs laid out by this evaluation (see our specific discussion about Training Strategy options). A competent, qualified and dynamic leader in this position will also play a key role in ensuring that the team leaders/ administrative trainers in each of the municipalities receive the enhanced forms of support that we have recommended.

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<sup>6</sup> Since this evaluation was conducted, the MDP has a hired on a half-time basis a Community Development Advisor and Municipal Development Advisor. These should be seen as temporary solutions --and particularly in the MDA case priority should be placed on finding a fully qualified full time replacement without delay.

The project may also want to consider creating another national core staff position with primary responsibilities for closer coordination with national (IFAL, FAS) and international partners, that would work closely with the National Training Coordinator in particular, and tasked specifically with seeking scaling-up opportunities for technical training and for the dissemination of the MDP model. This individual should, in our view, be an Angolan.

### **3. Monitoring and Evaluation:**

The MDPs monitoring and evaluation tools and system have only recently reached a level of adequacy --although consistency in reporting is still not at a desired level.. This delay is partly attributable to the decision to develop these instruments and systems in step with the operational development of the project (rather than before operations as is more conventionally the case--somewhat understandable however, given the novelty of this program in the Angolan context. However, in our view this delay is also attributable to the challenges confronted by the project in finding adequately experienced staff--and to missteps in ultimately providing enough technical guidance and support to the staff they ultimately got.

Someone with a full command of the Portuguese language and significant M&E experience should have been selected from the start to occupy the Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator on the national leadership team (although we recognize that such a person is a challenge to find in the Angolan context). The lack of command of the language not only created entirely avoidable problems in the formulation of questions that forced later re-tooling (and thus delay but played a role in hindering much needed clarifying communication about M&E between the national and field level . This has been remedied to a large degree by new support staff working in M&E at the national level and also because the project has, albeit belatedly, taken the time and created the atmosphere of dialogue that has allowed the field teams to have more substantial input into a joint analysis of what has worked and what has not worked.

More significantly, lack of experience is likely to have played a role in the creation of an M&E regime that, in our view, was unnecessarily overambitious in scope. In our view greater emphasis should have been (and in the future should be) placed on acquiring *selective* information that clearly serves well defined *tactical and strategic* purposes, rather than in obtaining *excessively comprehensive* information.

The tactical and strategic purposes of M&E in this project that should be kept front and center should be:

- metrics that clearly and *meaningfully* measure the extent to which the project's various primary and secondary objectives are being achieved. In the view of at least one of the evaluators --who is by training both a quantitative and qualitative methodologist--some of the instruments that are being used simply do not provide meaningful metrics. Others would benefit from significant input from a professional, especially given the challenges posed in operationalizing measures of intangibles such as "participatory engagement".
- metric and reporting systems that measure the performance of staff, yet fully capture the all important backdrop of contextual contingency.
- finally metrics that more clearly serve the explanatory needs of both implementing organizations and their donors. This project poses particular explanatory

challenges because many of its outcomes are less tangible than is typically the case in development programs. One of the important subsidiary functions of M&E should therefore be to give as concrete an embodiment as possible to these intangibles--in a way that helps donors "tell the story". More dialogue between the M&E staff and the donors might help in this regard.

Although the MDP field offices have improved the rate of their compliance with M&E requirements it is still uneven and inadequate--particularly with respect to the timeliness of reporting. We recommend three immediate steps to improve this:

1. A clear and consistent reinforcement by the senior leaders of the implementing organizations of messaging from the COP to the field teams that compliance with M&E requirements in a timely fashion is mandatory. Especially during the next quarter the MDP COP and national M&E coordinator assistance from the top leadership of all implementing organizations in dealing with specific cases of non-compliance.
2. Continued efforts should be made to clearly and fully explain the rationale for M&E to every MDP field member accompanied by additional "on hands training" that concludes in performance testing. It is important to realize that this intensive level of M&E reporting is more novel in the Angolan context than in many other comparable development contexts--and that this context therefore requires additional effort in order to cultivate a culture of M&E among project staff. The M and E core team should itself participate in this on-hands training.
3. There may be some advantages to maintaining the M&E instruments that have been developed without further alteration for the remainder of the project--if only to avoid the confusion that successive changes to date have already produced. However in any scenario of project expansion we would recommend an overhaul of the M&E tools and system guided by a person with the right qualifications. Their charge should be to simplify tools and procedures as much as possible while remaining oriented to the criteria for meaningful metrics outline above; and it is imperative this overhaul should be informed by specific and extensive feedback from the MDP field teams themselves. If any additional changes are made in the current instrumentation/ system (and there may be some benefits to this) they should involve simplification (rather than full re-elaboration) and perhaps in some cases the elimination of any instruments that are less useful altogether (a concrete example would be the scorecard).

Of note: our comments do not speak to financial monitoring which is beyond the scope of work of this evaluation.

#### **4. The Consortium: Coordination and Project Management**

This assessment of coordination amongst implementing partners and donors and of the MDPs management systems and effectiveness must immediately be qualified by reference to what this evaluation does not involve and by who these evaluators are not:

First, it must be noted that the scope of work did not include any form of financial audit, nor an audit of disbursement and accounting systems--neither would we the best qualified evaluators to speak to performance in this area.

Second, his evaluation is not a full-blown internal assessment of any of the implementing partners per se -- which is a task that lies beyond our scope of work. Rather, as called for in that scope of work this evaluation focuses on the relationships amongst consortium members and to a lesser extent between donors and implementing partners. We address those aspects of the relationship between the MDP national management team and all the implementing partners that--in our view--should be addressed in order to improve the implementation of the MDP. Inasmuch as the core leadership team is a sub-unit within one of the three implementing partners, some of the interactions and dynamics between MDP leadership and that partner are by default also internal to that organization. However, our observations and recommendations should be read as a focused and narrow assessment of how to improve MDP performance and not as a more general assessment of internal dynamics within that organization as a whole.

Third, the technical expertise that the evaluators on this team bring to this assessment stems from their experience in analyzing development and public policy, and not from a technical background in management per se. Thus, while we identify a number of processes that could bear improvement, our suggestions for their solution are limited and suggestive--and should be taken as a point of departure for further candid and careful deliberation by the implementing partners and donors themselves (perhaps with the guidance or mediation of someone else with stronger qualifications and experience in this area).

This consortium of implementing partners has an established record of collaboration that spans two successive previous large programs and that has served the MDP project well in several ways:

--Each implementing organization brings important skill sets, experience, and social capital into the consortium that compliments those of its partners in important ways. Thus, for example CARE has invaluable experience in pioneering the development of the ODAs and the forums; Development Workshop brings technical skills that are particularly relevant to the development of the Municipal Profiles and a broad overview understanding of the Angolan context and SCiA a strong understanding of children's and women's rights, as well as a specific long-term knowledge of Huambo.

--Each organization also brings its own set of contacts with key national government officials into the mix--thus expanding the potential policy reach and impact of the project, and increasing the channels for monitoring policy developments that impinge upon the MDP.

--The mutual trust and familiarity generated through by the long history of collaboration among these implementing organizations also provides important added value to the project that is nevertheless difficult to neatly quantify, but that all the implementing partners recognize as significant--particularly in ensuring that lines of communication remain open at the senior leadership level. They also had the experience of other modalities of managing a partnership that had problems, like the technical unit in LUPP<sup>7</sup>.

--In the deceptively competitive environment of the development industry, this

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<sup>7</sup> Luanda Urban Poverty Programme.

consortium also provides a symbolically significant example of voluntary inter-agency coordination that adds weight and gravitas to the MDP in forums like those of the decentralization discussion group (which brings together NGOs, state-linked organizations (such as FAS), and donors to share perspectives and attempt to voluntarily find common ground for coordination). The consortium of three different international NGOs is a unique experience in Angola and with all the difficulties, it has proved the importance of working together and of creating synergies.

--the consortium also represents a far better than average effort to respond to the Angolan government's own demands for more coordination amongst international organizations in the country--which by some accounts garners some degree of enhanced legitimacy with senior government officials.

To varying degrees the senior leadership of all the implementing organizations profess a similar philosophy for their organizations that stresses the value of ensuring a high level of integration amongst the activities and the staff of the various different projects and programs they implement. This is a rather different perspective than that of the donors who tend to see the MDP as a stand alone project that should not be affected in any way by other activities carried out by the organization. While neither of these perspectives is a more inherently valid one than the other, it is important to recognize that they tend to inform operational decision-making in somewhat different ways. In particular we have noted that tensions tend to arise from the different ways in which the use, and allocation of resources (cars, office space), is understood from these different perspectives.

We would note that it is exceedingly difficult to provide an objective assessment of how the operationalization of an integrated approach has affected the operational effectiveness of the MDP, simply because this approach has the ability to cut both ways. Thus, in one instance it potentially allows another project's priorities to impinge upon and constrain the MDP's operations, but in another provides backup and fills in for unforeseen needs when these arise for MDP (and thus allowed the MDP to "impinge" upon the needs and priorities of other programs). A better understanding of the exact balance of such exchanges and the de-facto symmetries (or asymmetries) of reciprocity would require a comprehensive assessment of all the programs implemented by these partners in relation to each other--and not simply a narrow assessment of any one of them alone. This is a task that lies beyond our own scope of work, and which has not--to our knowledge--been undertaken by any of the other donor assessments or evaluations of the MDP to date.

However, we do believe that the donors and implementing organizations would benefit from an in-depth discussion that seeks to clarify the benefits of an integrated approach, and at the same time establishes a very clear common understanding about what the specific permissible limits for inter-project resource pooling should be.

This conversation should also more clearly establish the rules, and unambiguous singular lines of authority for making specific determinations that are key to the MDPs managerial effectiveness. At the very least these determinations include those regarding the use of project resources, fund disbursement, and project staffing. These points should be formalized in an MoU that would help to counter issues of short institutional memory caused by the rapid turnover of staff within all stakeholder organizations.

Also: from an operational perspective it is not clear that the senior leadership of the implementing organizations are fully aware of how their integrated approach has generated dilemmas for staff operating at the field level. We thus collected more than a handful of examples from staff at that level who feel they are at times faced with contradictory messages about what should be prioritized--one sourced from the MDP leadership team and the other from their "mother organization" (and strangely enough this in the case of the lead organization as well). We do not possess sufficiently full knowledge of the intricacies and demands to which each organization responds to offer a well-grounded solution to this problem. However, this problem of "serving two masters" has had some negative operational effects (delays in micro-project implementation in particular) and, at times, undermined the authority of the national MDP leadership team. While the challenges this structural issue presents have been mastered on an ad-hoc basis without unduly jeopardizing the overall performance of the MDP to date, we do believe that current effectiveness would be improved if it were frontally addressed. Moreover, the negative effects of this structural problem would certainly be amplified if the program were ever expanded to include new--and thus a larger overall number of--municipalities.

At the end of the day, whatever measures are taken should ensure that MDP field staff are clear that they respond up a *singular* line of command. To us, this would seem to indicate that all the implementing organizations should make a clear commitment to not circumventing the MDP national leadership, and to engaging with any decisions that involve negotiating between MDP priorities and other ones *at the level of the MDP COP*--and *not* at the municipality team level.

Also: a clearer delineation of the MDP COP's roles and authority in hiring and firing would attend to the sensitivities of having staff by one organization managed by those of another while also allowing the MDP leadership to ensure the hiring of staff best qualified to get the *MDP's* work done. Thus while the implementing organizations should play a first role in the recruitment process and have the power to vet candidates acceptable to their organization as a whole--the final hiring approval should reside with the MDP leadership team. Put in another way, no organization--including the lead organization--should have the power to impose staff on the MDP because it serves the organization's interest over and against those of the MDP itself; and conversely the MDP should not have the power to impose staff of its choosing on any organization either. The MDP leadership team should also retain the power to dismiss (from the MDP) any staff whose performance is determined as lacking--without prejudice to the organizations should they choose to reassign that staff elsewhere. In short the "rules of engagement" and mechanisms of decision-making should ensure that hires be required to *equally and continuously* meet two sets of *independent* requirements, neither of which can be subsumed to the other.

While the MDP leadership--and specifically the COP and CFO--should be required to provide full accountability for the allocation of resources, operational decisions, and for the program's overall implementation, it would be more effective for this accountability to be required strategically through periodic review--rather than exercised tactically on a day-to-day basis. Once an (quarterly? or otherwise periodic) operational plan of action is approved--inclusive of resource allocation--it would seem most effective to fully empower the COP and his national support team to carry out those responsibilities in a direct and unmediated fashion with the expectation that full accountability would be demanded at the next periodic review.

This modus operandi would represent a “natural progression” for a consortium that has established a certain level of mutual trust. Moreover, the only alternative would probably be to require that each implementing organization’s Country Director dedicate a far greater amount of their own time to regularly scheduled (weekly? bi-weekly) meetings than has hitherto been the case.

Inevitably there will be tradeoffs involved in all choices about how to adjust management, and these will involve factors beyond those we have identified here from the narrow perspective of the MDP (rather than the organizations as a whole). In our view, all of these should at very least be given full consideration in a frank and comprehensive discussion amongst Country Directors, MDP leadership, and donors.

Other recommendations we pose for strengthening the effectiveness of the national MDP leadership team:

- placing a priority on replacing the two key staff, the effect of whose loss we have already discussed previously in the Staffing section;
- addressing monitoring and evaluation as per our previous recommendations

#### **5. Two final and concluding observations about the future effectiveness of MDP implementation:**

- In our view much of the fine-tuning in implementation that can help the project improve performance over the next two years will accrue at this stage from greater attention to several key differences between the municipalities:
- Donors and implementing organizations alike should recognize that the pace of implementation of micro-projects, PDI’s and other “tangible outcomes” need to continue to be dictated first and foremost by the *didactic* objectives of the MDP--as it seeks to cultivate participatory values and technical capacity. While measures should be taken to hasten the pace of implementation so that these activities also serve important motivational and legitimacy functions, any other sources of pressure to get “bricks-and-mortar” in place are excessive and may actually prove detrimental since they can inadvertently lead to implementation processes that short-circuit the distinctive primary goals of the program.

### **III. CHAPTER 3: THE CHANGING CONTEXT OF DECENTRALIZATION IN ANGOLA-IS MDP STILL RELEVANT?**

The framework for decentralization in Angola was established by the Constitutional Law of 1991 and elaborated by the Decentralization Strategy of 2001. In the last two years deconcentration gained further momentum with the publication of Decreto-Lei 02/07 that established “budgetary units” at the municipal level. Since this is an explicit plank in the program of the party whose governing status was overwhelmingly endorsed in the September 2008 elections, it seems likely that this momentum will be sustained. It may even lead to more comprehensive decentralization measures and reinforces the likelihood that local elections will be realized in due time--though the Angolan government’s gradualist approach, suggests this may not occur within the remaining lifetime of this project.

The steps that the government has taken over the first half-life of the MDP --though measured--have been dramatic enough to have surprised most of even its most astute outside observers. It seems likely that a government that professes a gradualist --“try and see”--philosophy will eventually choose to carefully monitor the results of the measures it has put in place before proceeding dramatically apace. However at the moment, there are indications that the current wave of change is still in course.

All of the most important measures taken by the government so far were not fully foreseen at the inception of the MDP project and have significant implications that should be considered in its eventual second half-life.

The first measure of note in the government’s deconcentration efforts --and that represents a genuine and significant change in direction from past policy--was its initial designation of 68 municipalities (notably including a significant majority of the country’s whole population) as “budgetary units” . Each of these received a 1 million USD budget as well as a special fund of 5 million USD. Three of the municipalities in which the MDP is active were budgetary units in 2008 but for 2009 all municipalities (nationally) have become budget units. For the future, it is not yet clear how municipal budgets will function i.e. whether all municipalities will continue to receive equal amounts (socio-economic and demographic differences aside)--especially absent any legal framework for local financial administration.

Another significant change that bears on the MDP’s relevance and the operational challenges it confronts, is the government’s recently redoubled effort to recruit large numbers of new and significantly more qualified municipal administrative staff, and to otherwise enhance the overall human capital of the public sector through a growing variety and number of training programs, most notably supported by IFAL. The recent statutory classification of municipalities into three types differentiated by their state of development, serves as an important backdrop for imminent legislation that will address the geographic mobility of public functionaries and that is expected to include a packet of incentives which will encourage postings to less developed municipalities.

Despite these first steps, significant existing human resource challenges remain to be overcome and new ones promise to emerge. In particular there is growing recognition of the need for a systematic and comprehensive nation-wide plan for training new public functionaries and a strategy of re-tooling those who lack skills and qualifications. IFAL’s role in such efforts has yet to be fully defined. Other questions of concern include the

future role in public administration of current municipal administrators once autarquias are created and local elections eventually realized. The fact that there are now more higher quality functionaries in the municipalities, even as very basic skills are still to be found wanting in many others is significant to the future of the MDP program in ways we discussed at some length in the section of this report that focuses on Capacity Building. Similarly, in our Recommendations for Amplifying the MDPs Broader Impact we discussed the need for the program to strengthen its relationship with IFAL and actively seeking new forms of collaboration that allow it to contribute to and influence the direction of national training strategies.

In the wake of Decreto-Lei 02-07 there are strong signals from the central government that municipalities will be required to significantly improve their planning and budgeting procedures. The municipal administrators we interviewed during our field site visits have all clearly seen the writing on the wall--a fairly sagacious reading given the overall trends. Notable examples that indicate which way the wind is blowing include the central government's detailed elaboration of its Plan for Development to 2025, the mandated shift in Provincial Government and Ministerial Programming from a bi-annual to a five year cycle; the consolidation of the Integrated System for the Management of State Finances(SIGFE) , and the creation of an Integrated System for the Management of State patrimony (SIGPE). New legislation on neighbourhoods and towns is also being prepared that may have significant implications for public planning.

The challenges that Angola confronts in its efforts to improve planning and budgeting at all levels are by any measure momentous--and perhaps particularly so at the municipal level, not least of all because of the deficits in human capital at this level of public administration in particular. Reform efforts will also continue to be complicated by the chronic lack of coordination --both horizontally amongst the different government sectors; and vertically between its different levels--as well as amongst the external agents that are involved in "facilitating" this process. The paucity of any and all forms of data--even of the most basic kind--that are a prerequisite for rational planning is another huge challenge.

As we discussed in some detail in the Capacity Building section of this report the mounting pressure to improve planning and budgeting at the municipal level has potentially made the MDP even more relevant to the Angolan deconcentration process - -and may afford it important new forms of operational leverage and opportunities for amplifying its broader policy impact--than was the case when MDP was launched.

Finally, perhaps the most surprising break with historical inertia, has been the steps taken by the Angolan state that indicate a genuine willingness to move beyond rhetorical pronouncements, to experiment with limited forms of civil society and popular participation in local development planning and management. The legal requirement that *Concertação* (Consultative and Negotiating) Councils (CACS) be constituted at the municipal level comprised of different representatives of civil society (though notably not political parties) potentially represents a step in a new direction towards institutionalizing participatory principles in local governance. On the one hand, the choice of the word "*Concertação*"--albeit not entirely ambiguous-- suggests legislative intentions that aim for some degree of active involvement and agency rather than merely passive symbolic status. On the other hand, there are still no specific policy guidelines that secure the representativeness of CACS against cronyism. Absent such policy CACS may easily come to reflect the interests of municipal administrators alone and reinforce autocratic

tendencies rather than open spaces for genuine popular participation. Legislation on traditional authorities is also in the works that will ostensibly clarify their roles--and which may have very significant implications for how potentially competing spaces of participation and authority will be configured in practice at the local level.

The aforementioned lines of change are--in our view--the most significant ones that must be considered in assessing the current and future relevance of the MDP program and in making future adjustments---especially since these changes were not fully foreseen when the MDP was designed and launched. We would however note that while these trends display a reasonably predictable pace of change, there are many unknowns that could intervene and either stall the speed of development (witness the recent collapse of global oil prices which is bound to have an impact on Angola's national budget) or conversely might lead the government to unfurl change at a pace that once again outstrips the expectations of even its most astute long-term observers and analysts. It very much remains to be seen if the pace of change in Angola will be characterized by acceleration in the rate of change, or by a more punctuated form of incrementalism that leads eventually to a pause during which stock is taken. One factor that will certainly influence change is the Presidential elections to be held in 2009, coupled with the fact that these will be followed by a gap until the next parliamentary elections in 2012. Unless all the regulatory and political parameters are set and municipal elections are initiated earlier. With all of these factors in play, our sense is that while acceleration may still prevail in the immediate future, in the not too distant future caution will dictate a period of pause and reflective assessment.

### **MDP-Staying Relevant**

Throughout this report we have specifically detailed what some of the aforementioned changes mean in terms of the challenges and opportunities they represent to the MDP. We have also suggested a number of adjustments beyond those that the program has already made in its efforts to adapt to this changing environment.

Ultimately however, we can confidently state that the contextual changes that we have discussed above have not fundamentally undermined the initial rationale that made the MDP relevant at the time of its launching--nor should they prevent the program from completing its full term. In fact in our view, the non-completion of the MDP would cut down one of the more noteworthy and successful practical experiments in cultivating participatory governance in the challenging political environment that post-war Angola presents.

Fundamentally the MDP had three overall objectives: to reinforce the technical capacity of municipal administrations; to cultivate value for participatory governance amongst governed and governors and reinforce civil society by creating concrete mechanisms and institutions for productive dialogue with the state; and finally to complete a select number of micro-projects that would not merely have a tangible developmental impact but most importantly would serve as the living laboratories in, and through, which the aforementioned capacities and participatory values and mechanisms could be cultivated.

In our view, the changes in the policy context that we have discussed have not made the MDP any less relevant to, or capable of addressing, these fundamental challenges than was the case at its inception.

There is still a huge deficit in the technical capacity of municipal administrations in which

MDP is active. MDP remains as relevant to solving these challenges as it was at the beginning of the project--although as we discussed in some detail, the diversification of the human capital skills-base presents new challenges and choices to the MDP's future training strategy. At the same time, there are very strong reasons to believe that some of the MDP's activities--such as its support for the elaboration of Municipal Profiles and Integrated Municipal Development Plans-- make it even more relevant and provide it with new forms of leverage and opportunity in the current context than originally so..

The MDP has proven to be particularly -- in our view even surprisingly--successful in its efforts to cultivate new forms of participatory governance at the municipal level. The shallowness and weakness of Angolan civil society is news to no one; nor is the paucity of spaces of meaningful and constructive dialogue between society and an Angolan state that has generally embraced a highly centralist model for exercising power. There is therefore unquestioned continuing relevance for a project that has been successful in generating a level of local enthusiasm for new participatory institutions (ODAs) and mechanisms (forums) that is reflected in both an impressive number of new participatory institutions generated, and in the observable beginnings of a dynamic of their self-replication without external inducement. As significant, are the indications of the project's success in cultivating value within municipal administrations for participatory engagement -- and in merging this with popular enthusiasm to create new forms of engagement that are genuinely *dialogic*. As long time observers of the scene, we are hard pressed to find a more timely, or fully flowering, participatory experiment in Angola.

Although the tangible development projects that the MDP proposed to bring to fruition were primarily intended as means by which to achieve its two broader participatory and capacity-building goals, these projects were arguably still important in their own right--particularly in municipalities that--at the launch of the project--had suffered from decades of war and neglect. The needs of local populations in most of the MDP municipalities were legion and the viable options for meeting these negligible. Municipal administrations had no resources of their own with which to make any visible difference in local lives that might help them establish the moral underpinnings for governing authority or legitimacy. The project's initial strategy for using micro-projects that would meet even a small fraction of these vast needs in contexts where none of these needs were being met proved extremely effective in enticing local communities and administrations alike into participatory processes that they might have seen little reason to experiment with otherwise. The transformation of the project's municipalities into "budgetary units" has changed the relative significance of micro-projects in these municipalities--however only after they had already served an essential purpose in securing entry. In any future expansion of the MDP to new municipalities,. we believe that micro-projects will still be needed to serve an "entry function"--at very least with local communities. In municipalities in which the MDP is already present, the primary function of the micro-projects --at least those already committed to--will now be to secure hard-won legitimacy. However, there are also opportunities to re-tool micro-projects to serve new and policy pioneering functions (such as in experimenting with participatory budgeting) that can strengthen the project's impact at both the local and national level. In this regard, the MDP should plumb its own experience: thus strategy in the municipalities that are newly budgetary units should learn from what has happened in those MDP municipalities that have been Budgetary Units for over a year now.

A final note: whoever conducts the final evaluation of this program two years hence will encounter an environment that will have continued to change -- most likely at a

significant pace and in ways that we have not entirely foreseen. It is therefore imperative that the project remain closely attuned to the changing legislative and policy environment. Some of the measures we have suggested may allow it to adapt more nimbly to changes that emerge from imminent legislation (e.g. on traditional authorities, on the geographic mobility of public functionaries), from the crystallization of new policies (national training plans; IFAL), and even from the new constitution, the 2009-2012 government plan, and the upcoming debate about municipal elections.

This project must ultimately be one that is constantly reflecting and learning in order to adequately adapt and remain relevant. It should consider whether there are any practical mechanisms it can create that will allow it to adapt systematically and remain proactive rather than merely reactive. At very least it may wish to consider holding a “senior reflection and lessons learned” retreat on a bi-annual basis in which the core MDP national leadership, the five field team leaders, donors, and the Country Directors of the implementing organizations all participate. This retreat should look inwards at the project’s performance and also consider broader trends and developments--juxtaposing the two in order to revamp overall strategy in the timely manner this dynamic environment will continue to require.

## **ANNEX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **Municipal Development Program (MDP)**

#### **Draft Terms of Reference Mid-Term Evaluation April 13, 2008**

##### **I. Summary**

The Municipal Development Program (MDP) has been ongoing since July 2006 implemented through a consortium of NGOs: CARE (as lead agency), Development Workshop (DW) and Save the Children (SCiA) with support from USAID, Chevron and LKI. The program supports a larger, multi-donor effort to assist the Government of Angola in achieving decentralized planning and budgeting at the local government level with broad community participation, while at the same time providing basic infrastructure to meet community-determined needs. The program is implemented in five municipalities in five different provinces of Angola. The implementing agencies and their operational municipalities are as follows: Andulo (Bie) –CARE; Cuito Cuanavale (Kuanza Kubango)- CARE; Chicala Cholahanga (Huambo)- SCiA; Chitato (Lunda Norte)-DW; and Cabinda Sede (Cabinda)- DW.

The MDP is a three-year program, with the potential for extension to five years, estimated to provide \$10.9 million through a partnership between USAID and Chevron Corporation in four provinces and between USAID and Lazare Kaplan International (LKI) in one province.

The country's ability to provide citizens with the infrastructure and services essential for growth, to create a vibrant, diversified economy and to make progress toward improved governance is weakened by an underdeveloped human resources base and insufficient institutional capacity, particularly at local levels of government, and by low levels of trust and participation in government by the people. Development of local government capacity in a way that allows people broad voice and influence in how public funds are used, coupled with progress on the Government's local government decentralization plans, is a major step towards increasing responsiveness and accountability, meeting basic community needs, and building trust and participation. The purpose of the MDP, hence, to establish spaces in which different actors can come into contact to build their common interests, targeted communities can organize themselves effectively to make decisions, feed into local issues and demonstrate basic skills in participatory planning, management and evaluation, and completed projects demonstrate social inclusion and give value to the community – including sufficient community support to give evidence of sustainability

In 2001, the Government of Angola's Council of Ministers approved a Strategic Plan that calls for successive steps to achieve deconcentration and decentralization of local government. The Local Administration Act (Decree Law 17/99) defines the structures and responsibilities of provincial, municipal and communal administration but does not transfer the financial authority and human resources needed for local government, particularly below the provincial level, to carry out these responsibilities. The Ministry of Finance transfers resources to the provincial government to carry out government services in the province. The provincial government then determines how resources will be used. The provincial planning and budget agency (GEPE) reviews municipal data

when allocating the budget, but because of lack of capacity, many municipalities make no substantive input into this process. Some municipal administrations include the advice of Municipal Advisory Councils, consisting of local leaders, in their administrative decisions, but this is not universally done.

The Government of Angola was aware of these issues and planned further reforms. In particular, the Ministry of Territorial Administration (MAT), the government ministry charged with implementation of sub-national government and preparation for elections, is committed to moving the decentralization process along. In February 2007, MAT issued Decreto Lei 02/07 that focused effective community-municipal strengthening models. The new law changed the focus of development from provincial levels to municipal as a unit for planning and budgeting. The law mandates the municipalities to create participatory decision making space through the establishment of Conselhos Municipais de Auscultação e Concertação Social (CACs) co-opting members from civil societies, communities, churches and private sectors. This law opens the opportunities to facilitate CACS in their decision makings considering the larger outputs from municipal forums established by the MDP. The new law also mandates the municipalities to create their longer term development vision through the establishment of municipal plans –an added opportunity for the MDP to assist targeted municipalities.

## **II. Linking with Other Decentralization Programs:**

The community-municipal development approaches represented by FAS and the DLG (UNDP's decentralization program) project support the same ends but through different strategies. FAS begins with community organization and allows for local projects, with supervision by FAS, even if the municipal administrations do not yet have the capacity for participatory planning and development. DLG, on the other hand, starts with the municipalities as the initiators of the participatory planning process and places responsibility for local infrastructure projects on them.

The MDP field teams at the targeted municipalities coordinate their respective field activities with locally appointed representatives of FAS and DLG project. In addition, the program is regularly represented in the decentralization discussion group which periodically meets in Luanda where agencies working in the decentralization shares their experiences as well as develop common synergies.

## **III. Objective and Purpose**

The objective of the mid-term evaluation is, jointly with the project staff, to carry out a rigorous and in depth assessment across the program to look into its relevance, based on its successes and weaknesses, in the current context of the country. This should serve as a backward looking evaluation with a view to the future so that gains are maximized and the program achievements and impact are evidenced and documented.

The midterm evaluation will be driven by two primary purposes. First, to review project performance and effectiveness to date in order to allow USAID and Chevron to make a decision regarding on-going support to the project (USAID has a fourth and fifth option year for the project). Second, if a decision is made to continue to support the project, the evaluation will inform a re-scoping of the project and/or adjustments to project design and operations in order to optimize the project's relevance, effectiveness and sustainability.

Within the above objective and purpose, the following evaluation questions will be addressed:

- 1) How effective is the municipal development model used by the project? The focus of this question is to increase understanding of the efficacy of the model with an eye to the potential for expanding use of the model.
- 2) To what extent – and in what ways – does the project demonstrate influence beyond the five direct target municipalities of the project? Municipal development is an objective of a number of donor and government efforts beyond MDP; understanding how and where the project engages this broader discussion is the intention of this question. Assess influence MDP has had on MAT/ national government policy development
- 3) What are the implications for the project of the new (and changing) legal/regulatory and political environment? This question is most directly related to the recently passed law which provides for the transfer of central government funds to selected municipal governments. Considering the above, what are the most productive adjustments to project processes and management systems that can be made?
- 4) What issues, if any, exist with regard to the implementation of the project? Particular attention should be paid to the quality and effectiveness of coordination between the three members of the “implementing partners consortium.” How effective is coordination and collaboration between (a) the project’s funding partners (Chevron and USAID/Angola) and (b) the funding partners and the implementing partners consortium?

**Key areas of Responsibilities and Tasks of the consultant:**

The consultant will work closely with Chief of Party (COP) of the MDP and will be responsible for preparing an evaluation report that addresses all of the above specific questions. Answering these questions will be based on a literature review, and data collection. While the process will be led by the consultant, s/he will be expected to meet at least three times (entrance, interim, exit) with an evaluation working group (members from implementing agencies and donors).

The COP of the MDP will have the following responsibilities:

1. ensure the purpose and other key information about the evaluation is communicated in advance of the commencement of field work
2. ensure consultants have timely access to information,
3. assist consultants in identifying key stakeholders, and assisting with contact/access to stakeholders
4. arrangements for accommodation, if consultant requests
5. provision of transportation of consultant to field sites, and co-ordination with agency field staff
6. provision of a work space if required
7. schedule working sessions with the consultant to address:

- a. engage stakeholders in interpreting data
- b. solicit feedback about initial evaluation data
- c. provide input for recommendations

#### Methodology and responsibilities:

##### Literature review

- Review relevant documents related to program design (proposals), implementation (work-plans, monitoring reports), baseline, and specific monitoring documents
- The municipal profiles, MDP report for MAT, bulletin, etc.
- The key source of program information will be collected from the program website ([www.mdp-angola.org](http://www.mdp-angola.org))

##### Data collection

- Determine the need for additional data collection from key stakeholders, in order to address the evaluation questions
- Develop and document a framework for additional data collection
- Implement and oversee collection of additional data.
- Incorporate findings into the evaluation report, along with an appendix that documents the framework, sampling, and process.

##### Final evaluation reports

- Circulate a written draft of the evaluation reports one week before the formal feedback meeting.
- Present a first draft of the main findings (powerpoint) to the evaluation review committee.
- Incorporate feedback from the circulated drafts and annual meeting, into a final report (to be submitted in hard and electronic copies)

## **Qualifications**

### **Candidates for this consultancy position will have the following attributes:**

- Education background in Social Sciences, Development and other related field;
- Proven minimum 5 years of experience working in evaluation of programs;
- Strong understanding of good governance and decentralization processes in the African context;
- Demonstrated ability in the use of qualitative methods (PRA);
- Strong analytical skills and research skills;
- Demonstrated excellence in writing and communication;
- Experience in editing, documentation and creative report presentation
- Superior oral communication in Portuguese and interpersonal skills for phone and in-person interviews/information gathering

### **Duration of the evaluation**

20 working days from June 30<sup>th</sup> to July 30<sup>th</sup>, with time in Angola.

Candidates interested by this evaluation should submit the following documents:

- Detailed technical proposal;
- CV of all members of the proposed team, as well as company profile if necessary;
- Detailed agenda;
- Financial proposition.

These documents should be submitted not latter than June 6<sup>th</sup> to COP – MDP by e-mail to [mustaque192@yahoo.com](mailto:mustaque192@yahoo.com)

Only selected candidates will be contacted for interview

## ANNEX 2: EVALUATION TEAM BIOS

**1. Stephen C. Lubkemann** is Associate Professor of Anthropology and of International Affairs at The George Washington University. Dr. Lubkemann received his Ph.D. (2000) from the Department of Anthropology at Brown University, where he subsequently received post-doctoral training in Anthropological Demography from the Populations Studies and Training Center, and where he retains an adjunct research appointment at the Watson Institute for International Studies. He has done extensive fieldwork in Mozambique, South Africa, Liberia, and Angola and among African refugees and other migrant groups in Portugal and in the U.S. In 2003, with research grants from the United States Institute for Peace, the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation, and the American Council of Learned Societies he initiated a long-term (and still ongoing) research project that examines the political and socio-economic influence of displacement diasporas in their war-torn countries of origin through a study of Liberians in the US, Europe, and in Ghana. He is currently concluding another project initiated in 2005 (with the support of a MacArthur grant) that focuses on wartime internal displacement and urbanization, urban social governance, and informal economic activity in Angola. Since 2007 he has served as the PI on the USIP-sponsored policy research project Customary and Informal Legal Systems in Liberia: Rule of Law Options for the First Post-Conflict Decade. He has published numerous articles in journals including the *Journal of Refugee Studies*, the *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, *Anthropological Quarterly*, the *Journal of Peace Research*, and *Diaspora*, and he is the author of a number of book chapters including the chapter on "Refugees" in the award-winning volume *World at Risk: A Global Issues Sourcebook* (CQ Press, 2002, revised edition forthcoming in 2009). His recently published book *Culture in Chaos: An Anthropology of the Social Condition in War* (University of Chicago Press, 2008) examines the relationship between displacement, violence, and socio-cultural change in protracted conflict settings. Dr. Lubkemann served as a core consultant for the Humanitarianism and War Project (1998-2005), was appointed to the first Roundtable on Forced Migration of the National Research Council (1999-2001), and currently serves on the Technical Advisory Board of the GWU African Center for Health and Human Security (2005--). He has also served a consultant and evaluator for a variety of development and policy programs in Mozambique, Angola, and Liberia. Dr. Lubkemann is also one of the co-founders of the GWU Program on Diaspora Policy Identity and Development (2006--), and has served since 2005 as the associate editor of the peer-reviewed journal *Anthropological Quarterly*.

**2. Joao Neves** is a development consultant who has been a Director of JMJ International since 1997. He has undertaken a wide variety of projects in economic and social development but has consistently had a particular focus on issues of local governance and decentralization. He has experience of development projects in many regions of the world including Central America, many African states, India, Sri Lanka and Indonesia. However, Angola has remained his principal focus since 1990. He has undertaken projects with the World Bank, DfID, USAID, NORAD, UN agencies (UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF), many NGOs, the corporate sector in social responsibility (Chevron, BP, Cadbury) and directly with national government agencies.