

**Regional Partnership
For
Decentralization and Local Governance
In the Americas**

**USAID Quarterly Report V
October 1, 1999 – December 31, 1999**

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International City/County Management Association

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1. Partnership Activity Summary

The *Regional Partnership for Decentralization and Local Governance* will serve as a vehicle with which to implement the Summit of the Americas Plan of Action II, Strengthening Municipal and Regional Administrations. The *Partnership* will contribute to the LAC Regional Sustainable Development Office's Strategic Objective #5 (SO5): "Reinforcement of regional trends that deepen democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean." The *Partnership* will also contribute to LAC's Intermediate Result #2 (IR2): "Strengthened regional mechanisms to improve public sector legitimacy."

1.1 Component 1: Donor Consultation

The international donor community will establish a Donor Consultative Group (DCG) for Decentralization and Local Governance in Latin America and the Caribbean. ICMA will serve as the DCG Executive Secretariat.

Activities and Accomplishments this Quarter:

A number of Forum follow-up activities were conducted during this Quarter:

Website

Although the creation of a website for the LAC Forum was not anticipated under the original cooperative agreement, it has become increasingly evident that it is the most appropriate vehicle for promoting dialogue among the Forum members. ICMA has decided to outsource the creation of the LAC Forum website and will be drawing up a subcontract agreement in the next quarter. Even though a basic structure had been established for the site, ICMA felt that, in order to create a site with enough relevant and interesting materials for the users, it would need to engage in an intense search for information, which is not possible given its existing staffing structure. Furthermore, this search would have to be ongoing, as members provide input into the content of the website and request information. Annex I contains the proposal from Net Assessment for the development of the information platform. Annex II contains the justification for using Net Assessment as the subcontractor.

Best Practices

A subgrant in the amount of \$21,500 was provided to HABITAT-LAC to expand the Best Practices activities in LAC to specifically target municipal projects (through the Ibero American and Caribbean Forum Network). HABITAT-LAC will contribute \$34,000 of its own funding for this activity, which also includes the elaboration of 25 case studies on municipal best practices. HABITAT has issued a press release (See Annex III) in English and Spanish to announce the formation of the Municipal Forum on Best Practices.

Meetings

ICMA International Task Force Meeting/OAS Sub-regional Meeting

The ICMA International Task Force Meeting and OAS Sub-regional Meeting in the Caribbean will be held the week of May 15, 2000 in Montego Bay, Jamaica. The program will include panel discussions in three areas: citizen participation initiatives, local economic development and association development/networking. Corinne Rothblum, Program Manager at ICMA and liaison with the ICMA International Task Force will be coordinating with Anne-Marie Blackman, in the Unit for the Promotion of Democracy at the OAS to organize the program and choose speakers. It is anticipated that speakers will include ICMA members and local government officials and/or professionals from the Caribbean Region. A local organization will be identified to provide logistical support to the event.

OECD's Development Assistance Committee's Decentralization Conference

In October, Maureen Pearce and Jorge Otero of ICMA, along with Paul Fritz of USAID/LAC, held discussions with the Bolivian Ministry of the Interior in La Paz to begin to define the agenda for the Decentralization Conference. **In a meeting at the Vice Ministry of Public Investment and External Finance (VIPFE), representatives of the GOB announced that they no longer felt that the workshop would be a priority use of its time if it had to highlight decentralization. The possibility of locating the sponsorship in another GOB entity was raised, however this option never resulted. The Conference was cancelled pursuant to these discussions.**

Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Annual Meeting: March 27-29, 2000

Discussions were held with Priscilla Phelps of the IDB and the USAID LAC Bureau to determine the kinds of activities that both organizations could organize at the Conference that would promote local government initiatives and bring the issues that local governments grapple with to the attention of Conference participants. Priscilla Phelps offered to look into the possibility of suggesting speakers from local governments for the panel presentations of some of the official seminars. Because New Orleans has several sister city partnerships in Central America and Mexico, another idea was to have the mayors from these cities, and others, go to New Orleans to attend the Conference and participate in special activities organized by the IDB and the City of New Orleans, to highlight the City's local government initiatives.

ICMA, as Technical and Executive Secretariat of the LAC Forum, offered to look into the possibility of setting up a booth in the exhibit hall of the Conference which would feature the LAC Forum website, as well as information about the local government initiatives of the Forum members. In December, ICMA sent out a message to the Forum members asking for input and information for the booth and inquiring as to who would

be attending the Conference. Should a significant number of Forum members express interest in attending, ICMA would make an effort to organize a meeting. However, at the present time, it is felt that the booth would accomplish much more to promote not only the Forum, but also highlight the role and importance of local governments.

WEXCOM Conference

The International Union of Local Authorities World Executive Committee Conference (WEXCOM) meeting, which will be hosted by AMMAC, the Association of Mexican Municipalities, will take place from April 10-13, 2000 in Merida, Yucatan, Mexico. This meeting will be a gathering of mayors and other local government officials from throughout the world.

Activities for Next Quarter:

- ICMA will launch the LAC Forum web site.
- ICMA will work with the OAS in establishing an agenda for the ICMA/OAS Event in Jamaica.
- ICMA will continue planning for the IDB Conference in March, the Inter-American Local Government Conference in April, and the ICMA/OAS Event in May.

1.2 Component 2: Information Exchange and Networking

ICMA will work with regional entities to establish sustainable mechanisms for the exchange of information and experience between and among regional organizations, municipal associations and local governments, and NGOs throughout the Americas.

Activities and Accomplishments this Quarter:

An agreement with IULA/CELCADEL for their participation in the Bolivian Training Diagnostic was negotiated and signed in October and two consultants were selected to assist ICMA in implementing the Diagnostic. At the final event of the Diagnostic, ICMA invited IULA to send an individual to Bolivia familiar with its USAID-funded REDCOMUN Initiative. This was intended to enable IULA to share with the participants at the final event its vision for ensuring that the information gathered during this Diagnostic, as well as other local government programs, would be shared among the local governance community. (See Component 1.3 below for more details)

An agreement with a local NGO, CEPAD, was also signed, for the organization of the events associated with the Diagnostic in the field. (See Component 1.3 below for more details).

Collaboration with other regional entities on future diagnostics

ICMA has been in contact with FEMICA to discuss the relevance of the Training Diagnostic to Central America and will be sharing the methodology and results of the Diagnostic with FEMICA's leadership.

1.3 Component 3: Local Government Training

ICMA will provide leadership in collaboration with U.S. and Latin American and Caribbean universities, regional and national associations, and municipal support NGOs in designing and implementing practical, affordable, needs-driven and results-oriented local government training programs in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Activities and Accomplishments this Quarter:

The main activity for this Quarter under the LAC Cooperative Agreement was the implementation of the Pilot Bolivian Training Diagnostic. The main objective of the Training Diagnostic is to provide an integrated vision of training practices, models and approaches currently available in Latin America. In October, Isabelle Bully-Omictin and Sergio Cambronero traveled to Bolivia to select an organization or group of individuals to carry out the field activities of the Training Diagnostic. ICMA met with the Chief of Party and several staff members of the Democratic Development and Citizen Participation (DDCP) Program, funded by USAID and implemented by Chemonics International, Inc. The DDCP staff was very helpful in providing suggestions with regards to possible implementing agencies for the Diagnostic.

After several interviews, ICMA decided to subcontract the services of a local NGO, Centro para la Participación y el Desarrollo Humano Sostenible (CEPAD). **CEPAD, a NGO based in Santa Cruz, Bolivia provides technical assistance at the national, departmental and municipal levels throughout Bolivia. Carlos Hugo Molina, the former Bolivian Vice-Minister for Popular Participation, founded this NGO.**

As previously indicated, ICMA had already identified the participation of two consultants from IULA/CELCADEL prior to this trip to La Paz. These two consultants traveled to La Paz in October to participate in preliminary meetings with Isabelle Bully-Omictin and Sergio Cambronero to discuss the design and calendar of activities for the Pilot Training Diagnostic.

The specific activities designed for this Pilot Training Diagnostic entailed three regional workshops, interviews with key informants, and a final forum meeting. With substantial input from the local counterpart, six focus categories were selected for the diagnostic. These areas included: (1) institutional development, (2) local economic development, (3) citizen participation, (4) land use planning and organization, (5) environment and natural resources and (6) inter-municipal consortia.

Regional Workshops – November

During the second week of November, the regional workshops were held on separate days in La Paz (November 8th), Cochabamba (November 10th) and Santa Cruz (November 12th). The objective of these workshops was to bring together both

training recipients and providers to examine the particular conditions and characteristics of training programs in Bolivia. Participants were assigned to groups that focused exclusively on one of the six different focus areas. The local counterpart assigned each participant to a specific group according to the individual's area of interest or expertise. A facilitator led each group through a series of exercises designed to learn about the strengths, weaknesses, potentials and threats related to current training activities in Bolivia.

Final Forum – December 14, 1999

The Final Forum meeting for the Bolivia Training Diagnostic was held in La Paz on December 14, 1999. Members of the international donor community, university representatives, training providers along with training recipients attended this half-day forum. A summary of the outcomes from the regional workshops was presented. Six different individuals were selected to comment on the different focus areas. In addition, a representative from the DDCP Project spoke about the role of this municipal development project in Bolivian municipalities.

Activities for Next Quarter:

- The IULA/CELCADEL consultants will be finishing the background study for the Bolivia Training Diagnostic.
- Preparation of final products of Bolivia Training Diagnostic.
- Commence web site design to post final products of Bolivia Training Diagnostic.

1.3 Component 4: Other Related Activities

Meeting of Special Committee on Inter-American Summits Management, Permanent Council of the Organization of American States

October 12, 1999

ICMA's Maureen Pearce attended this Special Committee meeting that was held to initiate the process of information exchange and dialogue regarding the six Summit mandates. The most relevant mandate for ICMA and the work performed under the Cooperative Agreement is the mandate for Strengthening Municipal and Regional Administrations.

At this meeting, Margaret Sarles USAID/(title??) gave a brief presentation that highlighted among other activities ICMA's role as the Technical and Executive Secretariat for International Forum for Cooperation on Local Government in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Meeting with Chilean Representatives

October 13, 1999

Mr. Rodrigo Flores, Director for the Program on Local Government at the Instituto Libertad and Mr. Patricio Vidal, Executive Secretary for the Association of Municipalities of the Araucania Region, visited ICMA's office and met with Maureen Pearce on October 13, 1999. They were very interested in learning more about ICMA, the council-manager form of government, ICMA training programs offered to city managers and ICMA's programs in Latin America. Ms. Felicia Logan, ICMA's Director of Professional Development, gave a brief presentation regarding the ICMA University Program. She shared promotional materials with both visitors.

This meeting at ICMA was very relevant for Mr. Flores and Mr. Vidal considering that Chile recently passed legislation approving the creation of a city manager position in all municipalities. Both gentlemen were very enthusiastic about exploring the possibility of future collaboration between ICMA and their organizations.

International Foundation for Election Systems (IFES)

Haiti Elections Update

October 27, 1999

Linda Siu attended the briefing and discussion on the upcoming elections in Haiti. The local and legislative elections have been scheduled for March 19, 2000. The main speaker was Micheline Begin, IFES Project Manager in Haiti. She was part of a panel that discussed the election calendar, the voter registration process, the national voter ID card, and other preparations for the upcoming elections

Mr. Jeff Fischer began by introducing the attendees to IFES' work in Haiti, which began sporadically in 1987, leading to sustained programs by 1994. He noted that during his time there, some of the challenges he encountered with working in Haiti were: indecision, illiteracy, poverty, weak government infrastructure, low citizen participation, a fragmented body politic, and lack of campaign finance. According to Mr. Fischer, the civil registry program was a particular challenge because of issues dealing with security and administration. Mr. Fischer said that one of the greatest issues was trying to approach the donor community which, at that point, had become cynical and fatigued by the lack of progress in Haiti. However, by developing indicators of progress, they have been able to combat donor cynicism and fatigue. Ms. Micheline Begin gave a brief overview of the project, including new accomplishments since the last meeting. She discussed IFES' plan of action and took questions from the participants.

Among the organizations that were represented were the Inter-American Development Bank, the United States Agency for International Development, the World Bank, the U.S. Department of State, the U.S. Department of Defense, and the Organization of American States.