

Mid-term evaluation of the GLoBe programme of the VVSg



THE PROGRAM

The GLoBe (Good Local Governance) programme runs from 2022 to 2026 and is coordinated by VVSg. The financial resources come from the Belgian Federal government (DGD). The programme builds on the tradition of twinning between Flemish municipalities and local governments from the Global South. GLoBe wants to contribute to good local governance by focusing on strengthening administrative capacity and stimulating policy participation by civil society. In several countries, VVSg works together with umbrella associations of local governments to optimise conditions for cities and municipalities. Finally, in Flanders, this programme focuses on making municipal policies more sustainable through the local translation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The direct beneficiaries of the programme are all local governments from Flanders, as well as 15 twinings and 3 umbrella associations of local governments from Benin, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Senegal, South Africa¹ and Rwanda.

This synthesis summarises the results of the mid-term evaluation of the GLoBe programme. The evaluation ran from January 2024 to January 2025 and examined how the actions of partners in six countries and the support to Flemish municipalities contribute to the intended changes towards good local governance.

Self-assessment using Outcome Harvesting

A guided self-evaluation was used as a method for this mid-term evaluation. For external guidance, the VVSg could count on Voices That Count. Through training sessions, a manual and a digital tool, the methodology of Outcome Harvesting was used. The theory of change of the GLoBe programme was used to measure what changes among local authorities and citizens caused by the programme contributed to good local governance. This process consisted of:

1. Identification of demonstrable changes (outcomes²).
2. Evaluating the significance and impact of these changes on good local governance.
3. Reflect on these insights and adjust future activities.

¹ The programme in South Africa was completed by the end of 2023. In South Africa, there are collaborations between Essen and Witzenberg, Heist-op-den-Berg and Bergvliet and VVSg and SALGA. As a function of this exit, these partners also participated in this mid-term evaluation, either in a condensed version or not.

² An Outcome = an observable and significant change in behaviour, practices, relationships or the actions of one or more social actors, influenced by an intervention or the activities of the project team, as part of the GLoBe programme. This differs from an Outcome (formerly specific objective) as defined by DGD and used as such in the Logic Framework of the GLoBe programme.

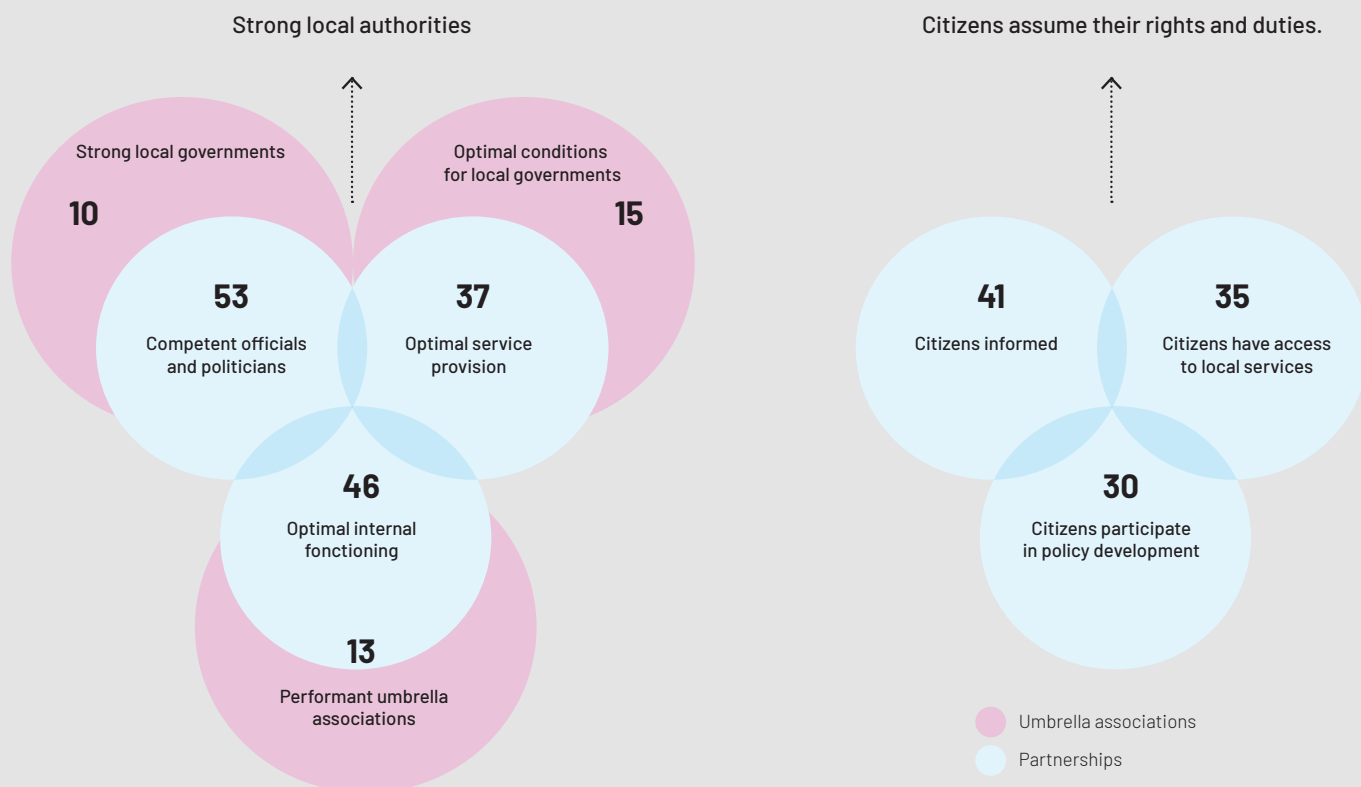
General trends in good local governance



The evaluation of 153 identified outcomes shows mainly two areas of improvement: the behaviour of officials and politicians (53 outcomes) and the internal functioning of administrations (46 outcomes). The analysis of 51 outcomes considered “highly significant” shows that GLoBe mainly contributes to good local governance through better service delivery, improved access to services and stronger cooperation between citizens and government. Transparency, accountability and rule of law are less explicitly mentioned, as is inclusion of vulnerable groups. Inclusion does show up in the selection of target groups within the programme.

Number of collected outcomes per change domain during the midterm evaluation.

GOOD LOCAL GOVERNANCE



Observations 'governance strong local governments'



The evaluation shows that there are changes in cooperation between the administration and civil society. There is more synergy, and decision-making is less unilateral, with greater involvement of different groups and more underpinned by studies and data.

“Since 2022, the councillors of the KeMoPoDi municipalities provide information, are involved in the smooth running of the programme and act as a point of contact between the municipalities, neighbourhoods and villages. They express their opinions on waste management, share information in their respective villages and neighbourhoods, and participate in waste management committee meetings since February 2024.” (From reflections Deinze-Lievegem-KeMoPoDi)



The internal functioning of the municipalities is also changing. Many municipalities are structurally embedding programme activities in their operations and are taking more ownership. This is done through:

- Integration of programme resources in the proper budget (e.g. Guaranda)
- Co-financing of programme components (e.g. processing unit in Toucountouna, outlets in Santo Tomás)
- Provision of municipal services (e.g. for distribution of trees and fertilisers in Ciudad Dario)
- Initiatives in coordinating activities (e.g. organisation of multistakeholder consultations on water in Ecuador)
- Empowering neighbourhood committees (e.g. around waste management in Mountain River)

A minority of outcomes describe a change in practices or decisions of key figures in governance, such as mayors.



In Flanders, two clear changes can be observed regarding governance capacity: policy planners are independently using SDG data and tools, and local triggers of Sustainable Municipality Week are increasingly making connections with policy and internal operations. This shows the potential to strengthen governance capacity, but how widely this pattern spreads is still unclear.

Observations 'citizens assume rights and duties'



The evaluation shows that citizen participation plays an important role in improving local governance. This manifests itself in better communication between government and citizens, active policy feedback and greater involvement in service delivery.

- **Better communication:** several partnerships organise forums or conclude charters between governance and citizens. In Karongi (Rwanda), for example, the deputy mayor participated in a live radio programme to engage in dialogue with citizens on district policy and cooperation opportunities.
- **Increased use of services:** citizens are increasingly using both public services (such as land registration and market infrastructure) and services provided by civil organisations (such as drinking water committees in Ecuador and sanitary brigades in Senegal). In some partnerships, citizens also pay for these services, such as waste collection in Senegal and cassava processing in Benin.
- **Strengthening and embedding structures:** setting up new and strengthening existing civil structures ensures sustainable participation with a clear positive impact on the population beyond the programme goals (e.g. water committees in Ecuador). It is less clear whether this also contributes to strong local governance, but initiatives such as the Waste Forum in South Africa show the potential.

"Relationships between the municipality and economic actors were improved by facilitating the 'Waste Forum'. These regular meetings made local recyclers (economic actors) more willing to engage with the municipality's recycling plans during forum meetings at municipal meeting points. This contributed to a growth in mutual trust. The meetings took place quarterly and there were active discussions and interventions to equip them." (From reflections Essen-Witzenberg)

FINAL CONSULTANTS' RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **Adapting the theory of change:** The wording around how local governments should ensure that citizens are better able to take up their rights and duties needs to be adapted and clarified so that the link with governance capacity is clarified.
2. **Internal coherence and strengthening moments of exchange:** The GLoBe programme is a 'mosaic programme' guided by a generic theory of change. Thematic differences within a country or sometimes different focus of the umbrella association complicate country- and programme-level exchanges. Harmonise themes and organise more structural exchanges between different twinning associations at country level to share good practices and promote coherence.
3. **Focus on Good Local Governance:** Maintaining a focus on governance capacity requires a more critical review of programme activities. Some Outcomes describe a clear impact on improving the quality of life of a particular group of residents or a change leading to stronger or better governance within civil society organisations, but the impact on increasing local government capacity is sometimes less clear. To this end, it is necessary to speak more often the same language regarding the concept of "Good Local Governance" and to exchange good practices. In addition, partnerships could identify which aspects of Good Local Governance they have the opportunity and capacity to influence. This exercise could lead to a sharpening of programme focus by country or partnership.

4. **Learning process mid-term evaluation:** VVSG partners and key persons indicated that the exercise was (too) heavy. On the other hand, the evaluation helped them to think more consciously about exactly which actors they want to influence and what exactly are the effects of their work. They are more aware of the need to focus on changes/ outcomes rather than outputs and activities.

'The general conclusion is that we need to be more results-oriented and not just carry out actions for the sake of it. Most actions are motivated by good intentions, but are not sufficiently monitored to enable us to really assess what the change entails toward good local governance.' (from reflection report Sokone-Zemst)

A learning process and awareness was initiated thanks to the evaluation, but this requires further support and repetition. Harvesting and describing Outcomes saw a shift where people started to think more in terms of effects of the programme.

5. **Update on M&E efforts:** VVSG needs to revisit what the purpose of monitoring & learning is, and with and for whom. And this for the different levels. Depart from existing reporting and reflection moments to identify which learning question is answered when. Re-examine the information needs: what exactly do we need to answer the learning questions?

Want to read the full evaluation report? This can be found via this [link](#).