



HUB for Innovative Partnerships



GUIDE TO THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF DECENTRALISED COOPERATION PARTNERSHIPS
IN THE FRAMEWORK OF ART GOLD PROGRAMMES

The ART initiative

ART helps local communities and their regional and local authorities in the South and the North to set up alliances and partnerships in support of local development and governance processes prioritised by countries through ART GOLD programmes. The ART GOLD Programmes operate in Albania, Cuba, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Sri Lanka, and Uruguay. More than 300 decentralised cooperation partnerships operate in different countries and, in the North, include regional and local governments of Belgium, Canada, France, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain, and Switzerland.

ART maximises the active role of local communities in development processes. Local communities, with their natural, historical, and cultural resources and know-how, their government institutions and systems, are a fundamental political element in development, which can make commitments and take on responsibilities, talking actively with central state structures and international organisations.

ART was launched in 2004 and stems from the human development framework programmes developed since 1989: APPI, ATLAS, CITY TO CITY, HEDIP, PASARP, PDHI, PDHL, PRINT, PRODERE, SEHD, SMALP, UNIVERSITAS. These programmes operated in the following countries: Albania, Algeria, Algeria, Angola, Belize, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Gabon, Guatemala, Honduras, Libya, Morocco, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, Serbia and Montenegro, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Tunisia and Uruguay. The governments of Belgium, Canada, Italy, United Kingdom, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the European Union have cooperated in these programmes. The following United Nations organisations are involved: UNDP, UNESCO, UNIFEM, WHO, HABITAT, IFAD, ILO, PAHO, UNEP, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNICRI, WFP and UNOPS

ART - support to territorial and thematic networks of human development cooperation - is an international co-operation initiative that brings together programmes and activities of several United Nations Agencies: UNDP, UNESCO, UNIFEM, WHO, ILO, UNCDF, UNAIDS, UNITAR, UNOPS and others. It promotes *a new type of multilateralism* in which the United Nations system works together with governments to promote the active participation of local communities, their regional and local authorities and social stakeholders in the South and the North. ART strives to fulfil the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals.

ART promotes and supports national cooperation framework programmes for local development and governance, known as ART GOLD. They are called framework programmes because they create an organised institutional context to help different national and international stakeholders contribute to the human development of a country in an articulated and complimentary manner. Donor countries, United Nations agencies, regional and local governments, cities, decentralised cooperation organisations, associations, universities, private and non-government organisations all take part. Each of these stakeholders can use the framework programmes as an instrument to increase sustainability and the impact of their own initiatives, without sacrificing identity or visibility. It is within the framework of these programmes that ART promotes decentralised cooperation partnerships between the local communities of the South and the North.

Local communities of the North, and their public and private stakeholders, can make an important contribution to local development processes in the countries of the South, not only by providing new funds, but also and above all by making their knowledge and experience available for priority areas of common interest for local development, such as the millennium development goals. In this way, decentralised cooperation projects not only fit into a country's local development strategies but also constitute workshops for innovation in the different fields of human development activity, inspired by a spirit of reciprocal respect, dignity and mutual learning. The projects are also used to promote initiatives of solitary, scientific, cultural, professional, educational, economic and commercial exchange that foster an open and internationalised view of development. It represents a new model of international co-operation, which sets out to achieve the Millennium Development Goals through a relationship of *partners and colleagues* rather than the traditional *beneficiaries and donors*.

The basic characteristics of ART GOLD programmes are illustrated in Appendix 1.

Below is a description of the implementation phases of decentralised cooperation partnerships with UNDP and the way they fit into ART GOLD country framework programmes. This is followed by a description of the contributions made by ART and a list of the services that may be contacted by regional and local governments interested in taking part.

How to take part in ART GOLD programmes

The first step for regional or local governments wishing to take part in the ART Initiative and ART GOLD Programmes is to make manifest an interest in a letter addressed to the respective ART Contact. In agreeing to join the ART Initiative, each regional or local government authority undertakes to:

- Take part in the development of an ART GOLD Programme, specifying the country, the region or municipality with which it wishes to establish a partnership of decentralised cooperation, and then, on the basis of territorial marketing documents and prioritised action plans, distributed by the ART GOLD Programme, the target area of activity (governance, education, health, economy, environment).
- Set aside a budget to fund the decentralised cooperation projects in the framework of the ART GOLD Programme.
- Identify, mobilise, and place at the disposal of the programme, the best technical, technological, educational, productive, and management experiences of its territory to share them with their counterparts, with a view to developing and putting into effect innovative quality projects in ART GOLD areas, where national government, UNDP and donors focus governance and development efforts.
- Conduct, through the UNDP Hub for Innovative Partnerships support, a mission to the country to identify the decentralised cooperation projects in conjunction with the participative working groups of the target regions or municipalities.
- Receive delegations from the country made up of representatives of the government and local administrations, to exchange and share views with the public opinion of the territory on the results that have been achieved.
- Identify the person in the organisation/administration that will guarantee project development, constant technical assistance, monitoring and sustainability of the results.

ART has also established cooperation agreements with major local government networks that have agreed to promote participation in ART GOLD Programmes (CRPM-Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions, NRG4SD – Network of Regional Governments for Sustainable Development, REDES – European Network of Cities and Regions for the Social Economy, Spanish and Italian networks of municipalities). In this case, interest can be channelled to the HUB for Innovative Partnerships and the ART GOLD Programmes through these networks.

On the basis of the letter of interest, direct contact is established with the partners with a view to organising the first exchange mission. The Hub for Innovative Partnerships guarantees distance monitoring of the next steps needed to establish a decentralised cooperation partnership.

An example of a letter of interest is in appendix 2

The first mission in the framework of the ART GOLD Programmes

The first decentralised cooperation mission is organised in common agreement with the local administration concerned, the hosted government, the UNDP Country Office, the ART GOLD Programme and the working groups concerned. The objective of the mission is to formulate

specific projects, and for this reason the delegation will have to include representatives of the territorial stakeholders interested in taking part in decentralised cooperation activities.

The mission, under the guidance of the ART GOLD Programme Coordinator, includes:

- An official meeting with the officials of UNDP's office in the country, who are responsible for the realisation of the ART GOLD Programme, with the participation of officials from the other United Nations agencies taking part in the programme;
- An official meeting with representatives of the national institution responsible for coordinating the ART GOLD Programme;
- 'Thematic Days' to get to know respective characteristics, strengths, areas of excellence, priorities. Territorial stakeholders involved in services and with experiences in various areas of activity are invited to take part in these Days, convened by local governments. Representatives of working groups put forward local development strategies, priorities, and initiatives that can be undertaken with outside technical and financial help. Jointly agreed territorial marketing documents and local action plans are utilised to identify the first ideas/projects. Depending on the duration of the mission, the Days provide an opportunity to look into institutional, technical, methodological and financial aspects of the projects to be implemented in the framework of the partnership.
- Field trips to gain direct knowledge of the services and stakeholders involved in the ideas/projects and the people that are to benefit from the initiative.
- Formulation and preparation of the projects, using the standard ART GOLD Programme formats.
- Drafting and signing a partnership agreement which specifies: the projects that have been identified, institutional commitments, the financial commitments of the various parties concerned, the stages for implementing the activities.
- Final meetings are arranged at the end of the mission with the embassy of the country concerned, in which a presentation is made of the agreements signed and the stages for implementing the activities.

Project management procedures

Once the joint formulation phase is over, the respective local administrations take the necessary steps for the competent institutions to approve the projects that have been identified and make the necessary funds available.

The local administrations concerned can choose the procedures for the administrative management of the funds assigned to them for the implementation of the projects.

For example they could entrust the management of the funds to territorial cooperation organisations that have financial management capacity and experience in developing countries. In other cases, depending on the laws of the country, the funds may be channelled directly to the local administration partner.

In this case, the local administration concerned informs the UNDP Hub of the funds that have been disbursed and the organisation selected to manage them; the said organisation then establishes working procedures in close collaboration with the ART GOLD Programme and with the working groups concerned.

In another procedure that is frequently adopted, the local administration entrusts the UNDP with the responsibility for managing the funds. In this case, the funds may be deposited in the Trust Fund of UNDP Geneva's Hub for Innovative Partnerships, specifying the reason for doing so why and enclosing project documentation. The Hub will channel the disbursed funds to the ART GOLD Programme interested as soon as possible. The cost of the management of administrative services by the UNDP Hub is 5% of the total. The regional and local governments concerned can also channel the funds directly to the country's UNDP office.

On the basis of the communications received on the disbursement of the funds and on the procedures adopted for managing them, the ART GOLD Programme produces the necessary documentation to include the decentralised cooperation projects in the ART GOLD Programme's

annual action plan. UNDP agrees to produce a financial report only for the funds that are under its administrative responsibility.

Project implementation monitoring and reporting

ART GOLD Programmes are designed to act as a management, operational and programmatic framework which maximises the technical and financial contributions of different partners interested in supporting middle to long term local development and governance strategies and processes.

The projects are carried out by the territorial services and local and economic stakeholders involved in the working groups of the ART GOLD Programme. The programme guarantees an institutional and programmatic framework and technical assistance from United Nations coordination and development experts.

Regional and local governments can also include a decentralised cooperation Focal Point in the project and the funds set aside for the project. This operates in the framework of the ART GOLD Programme, accompanying the development of the projects that have been identified, facilitating relations among the territories and working towards the identification of new joint initiatives.

Decentralised cooperation projects can encompass all or only some of the areas of activity in the framework programmes: governance, economic development, the environment, health and well-fare, education and training. What is important is that they are defined in collaboration with the local working groups, on the basis of the diagnosis made in the territorial marketing map and that they are part of regional and local development strategies.

Decentralised cooperation projects formulated in collaboration with the working groups and which have a strategic role in the processes of local development can count on co-funding sources mobilised by the UNDP ART GOLD Programmes and by national and local institutions. In this way, the programmes enable decentralised cooperation to carry out initiatives that can have a significant impact on the territories, reducing fragmentation and guaranteeing greater sustainability in terms of results.

The partners can undertake formal missions to evaluate the development of the projects, in agreement with the UNDP Country Office and the ART GOLD Programme. The ART GOLD Programme will be responsible for drafting an annual technical and financial report on decentralised cooperation projects, which will be given to the respective regional and local governments.

ART GOLD Programmes envisage joint monitoring of the activities, which involves: consultative committees, the organisation of joint technical missions in the country, consultation over the choice of Focal Points, the adoption of jointly agreed mechanisms for monitoring and assessment, the organisation of national and international information events, and other activities defined by common agreement.

Strategic framework agreements with ART

Regional government and local government networks can establish strategic framework agreements with the ART Initiative, so they may take part in the development of ART GOLD Programmes in various countries and support ART's international thematic initiatives through centres of excellence, universities and other specialised territorial stakeholders.

The following international thematic activities are organised by ART, with the collaboration of regional and local governments:

- Specialised technical assistance for implementing local economic development agencies and organising them into networks; promotion of partnerships and alliances with local economies that generate projects of common interest, mixed capital companies, commercial and technological exchange and capacity building activities for technicians and entrepreneurs;

- Identifying innovations of greatest impact for human development and promoting them in the countries where the programmes operate in collaboration with international scientific institutions; mobilising technical assistance from the authors of the innovations to transfer them to interested countries, through South-South and North-South cooperation mechanisms;
- Promoting collaboration between the universities of the North and South, encouraging them to take part in the innovative practices of international cooperation for human development; formulating and organising university and refresher training courses for the operators involved in the programmes and action research activities to acquire and spread the knowledge of quality experiences.

Local government networks can establish framework agreements with the ART initiative to promote, together with their associates, decentralised cooperation partnerships in the framework of the ART GOLD programmes.

Regional governments and networks interested in establishing framework agreements can contact UNDP Geneva's Hub for Innovative Partnerships to programme jointly the specific content of the agreements. The content is agreed and described in the action plan, which is part of the agreement.

THE BASIC CHARACTERISTICS OF ART GOLD PROGRAMMES

National and local co-ordination structures

At a central level, the framework programmes are managed by a **National Co-ordinating Committee** (NCC), formed by the government with the participation of the UNDP, other United Nations agencies and the donors involved. The NCC orients various projects and contributions towards a programme logic, thereby generating marked improvements in the outcome and impact of international co-operation. The framework programmes provide the opportunity to translate the donors' willingness to co-ordinate – expressed insistently at various institutional levels – into an effective operating strategy.

The NCC identifies which regions in the country are to be involved in the framework programme. It does so on the basis of national priorities and interest expressed by the donors involved. Within the regions (or departments or provinces) and their municipalities, **local work groups** are formed. Public, associative and private actors from the area participate in the work groups along with local representatives of the central ministries and state structures. The local work groups are responsible for drawing up action plans for funding through international co-operation contributions; these are brought together in the periodic national operating plan of the framework programme.

The NCC and the local work groups programme the use of resources made available through international co-operation, working to make them complement resources included in the public budget. In this way, the projects acquire greater sustainability, while the methodologies adopted for bringing actors together progressively influence current modes of programming public expenditure, and also help to orient private investment.

The NCC ensures that local initiatives are in line with national development policies. It is also responsible for disseminating the most effective work methods to other parts of the country and for promoting the involvement of new donors. The local work groups co-ordinate how initiatives are carried out in order to avoid overlaps and gaps, and they maintain contact with those donors present in the area.

Areas of action

ART works in the following complementary areas using an intersectoral approach:

- **Governance:** improvements in public administrations; support to local institutions for programming territorial development; training of local administrators and technicians; advocacy for rights and for active citizenship; concertation mechanisms to improve the rapport between institutions and social actors; promotion of a gender approach and of innovation in all areas of action.
- **Environmental protection and territorial planning:** plans and projects for the valorization of the territory's historical and cultural heritage; plans and projects for the sustainable and rational use of natural resources, for the improvement of the urban habitat, for the production and distribution of clean energy, for communications and transport, for the reduction of vulnerability to natural disasters.
- **Local economic development:** devising of plans for valorizing local potential and of projects capable of creating employment opportunities for all social groups and improving the territory's competitiveness; promotion of collaboration between public and private actors through the economic development agencies, which provide integrated services to local enterprises and co-operatives, strengthen the territory's chain of competitive value and promote international partnerships and outside investment.
- **Local health and welfare systems:** devising of integrated plans and projects for improving the population's health and social wellbeing; improvement of the organization of basic services

and programmes in order to make them accessible to rural populations, to people lacking social security coverage and to the most vulnerable groups.

- Local basic education and training systems: devising of integrated plans and projects for facilitating access to school for all children; creating links between schools and the territory; adapting education programmes to specific cultural settings; improving professional and university training; disseminating the culture of human development.

Local-level work methods

The regional and municipal work groups play a fundamental role in promoting participation in the programming and management of development activities. The work method involves the following stages:

- At the regional level, work groups launch a process to deepen knowledge of the territory, its resources and potentials, and of the problems that need resolving; they organize thematic subgroups for the various areas of action, and research and studies deemed necessary are conducted; they organize seminars and training courses to improve the skills of public, associative and private actors in participatory planning and management of development.
- At the municipal and grassroots level, work groups carry out a similar process for acquiring knowledge of the territory and defining priorities, using methods that favour the participation of urban and rural populations and of vulnerable groups; documents are produced for programming the use of international resources, which include improvements in services in order to make them accessible to the entire population, and development projects that enable the valorization of local resources as a whole.
- A synthesis of the municipal programming process is carried out at the regional level, where a document is drawn up to plan the use of available and potential international co-operation resources (*regional and local plan for international co-operation*). In this way, international co-operation contributes to the processes of strategic and participatory planning.
- During the programming process, there is also a document produced for distribution that describes the territory's characteristics, highlighting out its natural resources, human potential, historical heritage, culture and main problems (e.g. unemployment, migration, disadvantaged areas, vulnerability within the territory and its social structures). The document also indicates those initiatives, identified in the plan, for which the local community would like to establish development partnerships with international actors in order to work toward the Millennium Development Goals. The document is called *territorial marketing* and is used to attract and direct international partners.
- The projects identified through this process are implemented valorizing local management skills.

The local work groups co-ordinate and guide visits of representatives of co-operation organizations interested in establishing development partnerships: bilateral donors, decentralized co-operation partners, universities, private-sector enterprises, NGOs and others. In the course of the visits, the parties agree on specific projects to be carried out in the context of the regional and local plan for international co-operation.

LETTER OF INTEREST FOR A REGION

Addressed to the ART contact with whom the administration has already established a preliminary relationship

Subject: Participation in the ART GOLD PROGRAMME in (country/countries), as part of the ART multilateral Initiative.

Whereas, the Regional Administration of.....

considering that UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and UNESCO, in collaboration with UNIFEM, WHO, UNOPS and other United Nations organizations have constituted a multilateral cooperation initiative entitled "ART" (Appui aux réseaux territoriaux et thématiques de coopération au développement humain), whose goal is to promote democratic governance, human development, peace and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It does so through initiatives which establish collaboration between regions, provinces and municipalities (local entities) from the north and south of the world and their social actors such as universities, public institutions, social and health services, businesses, associations, NGOs and others;

recognizing the importance of the ART initiative for strengthening the role of local authorities towards a new multilateralism;

deeming valid the United Nations proposal to establish - with the participation of local governments from [...] and other countries, governments, authorities and local communities of the several southern partner countries - a permanent network of cultural, economic and social relations that are equitable, complementary, non-competitive and mutually advantageous within a framework of peace, stability and cooperation;

assessing very positively the concerted and participatory methodology used by the ART GOLD Programmes which enables local actors (institutional, economic and social) from the north and south of the world to be protagonists in integrated local development processes, coordinated by their local authorities;

having examined the documentation related to the ART GOLD (country) Programme managed by UNDP;

considering that the ART Gold (country) Programme provides a excellent opportunity for implementing (the Region)'s commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals;

expresses its intention to collaborate with multilateral partners within the framework of the ART Initiative and in particular the ART GOLD (*country*) Programme, in order to realize international partnerships for human development and to encourage the internationalization of the Region's own development, expanding and enhancing the opportunities for the several social actors (from the province/s of) interested in establishing economic, scientific, technological, cultural, commercial, educational and solidarity relationships with the public and private actors of (*country*);

In order to participate actively in the ART GOLD (*country*) the regional administration of **agrees to:**

- establish a decentralized cooperation partnership with local partners (in the country) in one or more areas where the ART GOLD (*country*) Programme is active;
- promote the participation of its local entities and of the many institutional, social and private actors throughout (the Region) in the ART GOLD (*country*) Programme;
- create a regional coordination body for decentralized cooperation with (name of the country) in which the public administration and the different actors of the territory will take part;
- chair the regional coordination body of decentralized cooperation with (name of the country) and ensure its functioning;
- make available its own technical, human and other resources of the different departments of the regional administration for activities of international cooperation, exchanges and training in the sectors addressed by the ART GOLD Programme and of common interest to the partners;
- facilitate, including through special procedures, the participation of services or institutions that collaborate with the regional administration in specific joint initiatives within the programme's framework, including through short-term secondment< of its own staff;
- together with local partners, identify decentralized cooperation projects and support their implementation within the ART GOLD (*country*) Programme framework;
- mobilize financial resources coming from its own budget or from other sources available to the regional administration for cooperation projects which are agreed upon with the partner;
- support exchange missions by providing hospitality to the delegations (of the country) where these missions are envisaged in the joint partnership programme;
- promote and develop regional initiatives of public information and education on human development and raise public awareness about the internationalization of local socio-economic development;
- coordinate its cooperation activities with the ART Services for International Partnerships Office, based in Rome.

The ----- Region has nominated ----- as focal point for the activities mentioned in the present letter of intent.

President/ Regional Councillor -----

LETTER OF INTEREST FOR A MUNICIPALITY

Addressed to the ART contact with whom the administration has already established a preliminary relationship

Subject: Participation in the ART GOLD programme in (country/countries), as part of the ART multilateral initiative.

Whereby, the Municipality administration of

considering that UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) and UNESCO in collaboration with UNIFEM, WHO, UNOPS and other organizations of United Nations have organized a multilateral cooperation initiative named ART (Appui aux réseaux territoriaux et thématiques de coopération au développement humain), whose goal is to promote democratic governance, human development, peace and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals in all the countries, by means of initiatives based on collaboration between Regions, Provinces and Municipalities (local entities) from the north and south of the world and between their social actors such as universities, public entities, social services, medical corps, enterprises, associations, NGOs and others;

recognising the importance of the ART initiative for strengthening the role of local authorities for a new multilateralism;

deeming valid the United Nations proposal to set up -along with the participation of local independent entities from [...] and other countries, and with the participation of governments, authorities and local communities of the several countries where cooperation takes place- an ongoing stable network of cultural, economic and social relations that are equitable, complementary, non-competitive and mutually advantageous within a framework of peace, stability and cooperation;

assessing very positively the joint and participatory method of the ART GOLD Programmes which enable local actors (institutional, economic and social) from the north and south of the world to be protagonists in local development processes within an integrated and systematic approach to all the activities, secured and coordinated by the local authorities;

seen the documentation related to the ART GOLD (country) Programme carried out by UNDP for supporting decentralization processes and for the local socioeconomic development through international partnerships between local communities;

considering that the ART Gold (country) Programme provides a favourable opportunity for realising our territory's commitment of achieving the Millennium Goals;

expresses its own desire to collaborate with multilateral partners within the framework of the ART initiative and in particular the ART GOLD (*country*) Programme, in order to realise human development international partnerships and to encourage the internationalization of its own development, expanding and enhancing the opportunities from the different social actors interested in establishing economic, scientific, technological, cultural, commercial, educational and supportive relationships with the public and private actors of (*country*);

In order to participate actively in the ART GOLD (*country*) the administration of.....
engages to:

- promote the participation of the public administration and the multiple institutional, social and private actors of the territory in the ART GOLD (*country*) Programme;

- create a board/committee for decentralized cooperation with (name of the country) in which the other public administrations and the different actors of the territory will take part;
- lead and coordinate the board/committee for decentralized cooperation with (name of the country);
- make available its own technical and human resources for undertaking activities related to cooperation, exchange and training in the areas in which the administration (and the other administrations involved) are competent;
- establish the decentralized cooperation partnership with local partners (in the country) of the intervention areas of the ART GOLD (*country*) Programme;
- jointly with local partners, identify decentralized cooperation projects and support their achievement, within the ART GOLD (*country*) Programme framework;
- mobilise financial resources coming from its own budget or from other local entities and institutions and/or other sources which the administration of and the members of the board/committee may access, for undertaking cooperation projects which shall be agreed upon with the partner;
- assist the missions providing hospitality to the delegations (of the country) whenever requested from the joint partnership programme;
- develop initiatives in order to inform and educate on human development in its own territory, and raise public awareness about internationalisation of local socioeconomic development;
- coordinate its co-operation activities with the ART Services for International Partnerships Office, based in Rome.

For undertaking the above mentioned commitments, the appointed referent of the decentralized cooperation in the administration ----- from ----- will be Mr./Mrs. ----- .

President/ Mayor /Town Councillor