

## Narrative report of activities January – December 2019

### Priority 1: Information exchange

#### 1. Ensure availability of information on cooperation programmes, publications, best practices, upcoming events and developments in international agendas and organisations

This year, six CIB newsletters have been published and shared among the CIB network. These newsletters included both contributions of individual CIB members and items on policy developments and announcements of relevant events and trainings. The [library](#) on the CIB website is updated frequently; the most relevant publications also feature in the CIB newsletter. CIB newsletters also featured in the monthly UCLG newsletter, thereby reaching a broader audience.

In Summer, the CIB secretariat made an effort to encourage members to update the [compendium](#), in view of the upcoming CIB annual meeting. Also, the secretariat updated the CIB website and its functionality, including of its back-office (incl. the distribution lists for circulars, newsletters etc.). To be able to reach a broad audience, the CIB secretariat actively uses Twitter (@UCLG\_CIB). In the run-up to the UCLG world congress, the CIB secretariat launched a CIB networking Whatsapp group, which is now available for all members.

#### 2. Enable information sharing and exchange at annual CIB meetings

This year, the Austrian Association of Cities and Municipalities and the KDZ center hosted the annual CIB meeting, on 25-27 September. In Spring, the secretariat of the CIB working group worked closely with mostly KDZ in organising this event. The secretariat and KDZ prepared a relevant programme for practitioners working in local government development cooperation, all around the world. 55 members of the CIB Working Group gathered in Vienna to discuss the latest news and developments in the field of international cooperation. Some of the important topics at this year's meeting were i) improving gender mainstreaming in work of CIB and its members; ii) enhancing policy dialogue on international agendas with national governments and iii) coordination between international cooperation programmes. This year's meeting also saw field visits (related to smart city planning and gender sensitive urban planning) for the first time.

The Working Group members also took time to reflect on the current work and position of the CIB Working Group, and on how this should evolve in the next years. We discussed the sustainability of the Working Group, its role in advocacy, and on how to share methodologies to measure the effect of our projects. The following topics were discussed with the members present:

1. (Financial) sustainability of the Working Group
2. Request related to transforming into a broader space for Local Government Associations (not only development cooperation)
3. Becoming an implementing agency?
4. A role in advocacy: need for more position papers

5. How to react to donor developments and how to connect to national governments more effectively?
6. The universality of the Working Group – how to increase/facilitate Southern participation?
7. How to increase participation from cities? (to be followed up with the city of Barcelona)
8. How to measure the effect of our work (monitoring & evaluation)?
9. How to better integrate gender equality and gender mainstreaming in our work?
10. How to better link to other networks? (DeLoG, regional sections of UCLG etc.)
11. Coordination of our projects

For more information on the CIB meeting and its outcomes, please refer to the [full report](#).

### **3. Generate (online) discussion in between annual meetings**

The CIB secretariat continued to use CIB's online community to facilitate discussion among members in between the annual meetings of CIB. However, members were not actively posting items and questions in the online community. The CIB secretariat therefore decided to cancel the online community and replace it by a CIB networking Whatsapp group, which is already showing a lot of activity.

### **4. Establish specific (online) country groups to foster coordination in selected pilot countries**

The CIB secretariat encourages groups of members to reach out to one another, in case of parallel activities in the same countries or regions. The lesson learned from this exercise is that such country coordination needs strong moderation and facilitation. Therefore, CIB organized two country coordination calls this year, together with PLATFORMA. For more information on these calls, which discussed CIB members' and donor activities in the Ukraine and Morocco<sup>1</sup> respectively, please refer to the [news item](#).

The CIB annual meeting saw a broader discussion on the need for country coordination and the available instruments for such exchange (including CIB country coordination calls, decentralisation meetings of donors, the CIB compendium etc.). Members agreed that coordination is vital and discussed the possibility to draft Local Government Roadmaps for certain countries in 2020, in reaction to the EU's roadmap for engagement with local authorities. This option will be further explored by the CIB secretariat.

CIB members used the opportunity of the South African UCLG world congress to hold a country coordination meeting with SALGA. A variety of activities taking place were discussed – participants agreed to follow-up on this first get-together in 2020.

## **Priority 2: Building a knowledge base and Learning community**

### **1. Webinar on measuring municipal capacity**

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<sup>1</sup> These countries were chosen as the CIB compendium showcases that multiple CIB members are currently active over there.

This year, CIB focused more on the organization of country coordination calls than on webinars, as was done in 2018. CIB did however organize a webinar on the topic of measuring municipal capacity, in which ICLD, the city of Barcelona and SALGA presented some of their experiences and lessons learnt to this regard. The 19 participating CIB members discussed methods of data measurement, acknowledging once more that using the right indicators is crucial for the measurement of municipal performance. For more information on the webinar, please refer to the [news item](#).

## **2. Continue to foster the exchange on Monitoring and Evaluation: a joint peer review**

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning remains a vital element of programme management, for all CIB members. Last year's CIB annual meeting saw a discussion on internal and external evaluations of programmes of CIB members. In that discussion, the idea arose to organize a peer evaluation for one or more of our programmes, in view of the mixed experiences with external evaluators.

In 2019, the Flemish Association of Cities and Municipalities (VVSG) has made it possible to include 2 peer evaluators from the CIB network, in the mid-term evaluation of its ongoing programme in Benin. The city of Ouagadougou and VNG International sent in a motivation letter and CV and were chosen to partake in the peer review exercise. They joined the VVSG and city link coordinators from Flemish cities for a one-week evaluation at the end of November, after a brief training in Brussels in October.

The peer evaluators returned enthusiastically to their own association or municipality. After all, it was a great opportunity for the peer evaluators to learn from the way municipal international cooperation is organised by other actors. The evaluators got inspired and learned lessons that are also useful for their own work. Working with an international group offers learning opportunities not only from the partnerships that are evaluated, but also from the other peer evaluators. Moreover, the peer review offered the opportunity to improve their evaluation skills and to further master evaluation techniques.

A more thorough evaluation of the peer evaluation technique will still take place. Also, a second evaluation with peers from CIB is planned for March 2020, in Ecuador. This will make it easier to build a case for adding peer reviews to the options when evaluating local government development cooperation programmes.

## **Priority 3: Support the implementation of and reporting on international policies**

### **1. Support UCLG in the process to assist other Local Government Association in the SDG implementation, monitoring and reporting**

In the run-up to the UN's High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2019, the CIB Working Group once more supported UCLG in gathering the experiences of local governments and their associations in relation to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and in their involvement in the reporting process to the HLPF.

CIB actively promoted the survey for the research. In the months prior to the HLPF the CIB Working Group secretariat also proactively reached out to other/more LGAs of countries which were to hand in Voluntary National Reviews in July 2019 and asked them about their involvement in the reporting process – this information was taken into account in the statements of UCLG at the HLPF, as well as in their report to the UN.

The data of the research also contributed to the [GOLD V report](#), which was launched by UCLG in November. CIB reviewed different chapters, to assure that the results of development cooperation by local governments were taken into account.

## **2. Map the contributions, inform the strategies and coordinate the actions of CIB members on the SDGs**

The SDGs stood central in different sessions at the CIB annual meeting in Vienna. Almost all members are working on the SDGs in their organizations and/or in their programmes. There seems to be a (slow) transition towards integration of SDGs in the design phase of programmes. At the same time, primarily using SDGs as a communication tool is a valid objective too, as it might increase awareness and support among the general public. All in all, it is still a lot of ‘learning by doing’, but different members have elaborated interesting tools and strategies in the meantime. Some members are worried about insufficient knowledge of the SDGs by their members, caused by a lack of funding to engage in SDG training.

The Region of Catalonia facilitated the presence of an expert from La Mundial, a research organization. La Mundial disseminated a survey on the interface between the SDGs and decentralised cooperation, and how these are changing each other. The study will be published early 2020, in close collaboration with UCLG and CIB members.

### **Priority 4: Shared narrative and evidence building**

CIB members discussed the way they dialogue on international agendas with their national governments at the CIB meeting in Vienna. Prior to the meeting, the secretariat sent out a survey, asking if members are engaged in policy dialogue on the Sendai framework, the Climate agenda, the Finance for development agenda, the New Urban Agenda and the SDGs. The answers gave an insight in the existing experiences in some countries, and the lack of capacity to negotiate with and influence national governments (and donors) on the implementation of international policies.

Members agreed that this discussion needs more time and attention; it will definitely be continued and intensified in 2020.

### **Priority 5: Alignment and collaboration with UCLG**

#### **1. Strengthen collaboration between CIB and the UCLG secretariat (incl. raise visibility of CIB)**

The CIB secretariat has strong relations with the UCLG secretariat, including the learning and research teams. As was the case in other years, the CIB secretariat invested in strong presence and visibility at various UCLG events in 2019.

Besides the presence at the Retreat and the World Congress, CIB also participated in the Executive Bureau meeting in Spring 2019. The UCLG secretariat was present at the CIB meeting in Vienna, which also helped to further strengthen collaboration with and exchange between CIB members and the headquarters of UCLG.

## **2. Contribute to the GOLD V report on localizing the SDGs and creating an enabling environment**

As was mentioned under Priority 3 in this report, CIB made a large contribution to the [GOLD V Report](#), which was launched at the UCLG World Congress. This resulted in a variety of case studies and examples in the different regional chapters, coming from the CIB network.

## **3. Analysis of possibilities for gender mainstreaming and specific gender activities within CIB Working Group, for period 2020-2022, in line with overall UCLG gender strategy**

In 2019, CIB hired an expert to explore possibilities for gender mainstreaming and specific gender activities within the CIB Working Group, in the years to come. This assignment followed the announcement of the elaboration of a UCLG Gender Strategy. It was also a logical activity to undertake as CIB, as many members already work on advancing gender equality at the local level, in various countries around the world. After discussions at the CIB meeting and various in-depth interviews with CIB members, the expert published recommendations and conclusions to make the CIB work plan of 2020 more gender-proof. Many of these have been taken into account.

The expert also worked on a publication on the gender work of CIB members, which is almost ready but needs a last round of validation by the members. The CIB Working Group secretariat will do the final editing in the first months of 2020.

## **4. Assure continuity of the CIB Working Group/financial sustainability**

At the end of the year, a letter of the Chair of the CIB Working Group was prepared, to be sent out in January, with the final work plan. The letter addresses the CIB network and encourages them to remain/become involved in the CIB Working Group and to provide a financial contribution for the coming year. Furthermore, the CIB secretariat used its presence at UCLG meetings and other related events to inform local governments and their national and regional associations about the Working Group, which has led to some new faces in the network and some new interest in attending the CIB annual meeting.

The following partners have agreed to providing a financial contribution for the year 2020: Federation of Canadian Municipalities, City of Barcelona, Region of Catalonia, VNG International. The UCLG contribution remains to be confirmed. VVSG has committed to an in-kind contribution, by hosting the CIB meeting in Flanders.