



# Decentralised Governance For Citizen Empowerment



**Reference Manual**



**Citizens Forum**



**European Union**

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## 1.0 What is Decentralisation?

### 1.1 Decentralisation

The term decentralization refers to the transfer of authority, responsibilities and resources for provision of public functions from the centre of government to subordinate, quasi-independent government organisations or private sector. Decentralisation can take four forms namely:

- a) Deconcentration - the transfer of functions and resources to lower level units of the same administrative system while authority over decision-making and use of such resources remains with the centre (i.e. from the headquarters of an institution or administrative system to the lower levels). In the case of government administration, this would entail the transfer of some functions performed at the headquarters of the ministry to provincial, district and/or sub-district offices while power and authority are retained by the centre;
- b) Devolution - the transfer of some powers and authority, functions and resources by legal and constitutional provisions to the lower levels. The transfer is within formal political structures and is institutionalised by constitutional means.

For example, when the central government transfers some of its powers and authority to democratically elected councils, local authorities or regional governments, empowering them by law to determine local taxes, raise own revenue and decide on how to use it. Under this form of decentralisation leadership is accountable to the local population through a system of elections;

- c) Delegation - the transfer of functions and resources to a subordinate authority with the capacity to act in the behalf of the superior authority without a formal transfer of authority in the same structure. An example is when an office of lower level is assigned to perform some duties or tasks by the higher office. However, the lower office will still be required to consult the higher office on matters that require decision-making; and
- d) Privatisation - the divestiture of state interests in public enterprises and the subsequent sale of such to the private sector (e.g. when a Parastatal national airline is sold off to private shareholders). In the case of public administration however, privatisation cannot be applied since local authorities and related public offices cannot be privatised.

### 1.1.1 Decentralisation in Zambia

Since the attainment of its independence, Zambia has initiated several decentralisation reform programmes that have entailed a mix of deconcentration, delegation and devolution.

Deconcentration in Zambia has occurred through the strengthening and extension of the inherited system of field administration, whereby various central government ministries are represented in the provinces and districts by local staff. Such staff are accountable to their respective district and provincial heads, who are in turn accountable to departmental or ministerial headquarters in Lusaka. Deconcentration has also occurred through the development of provincial and district government. Ideally, provincial and district government in Zambia has been maintained for the purpose of coordinating government work at district and provincial levels while also permitting the performance of responsibilities for which no special agency has existed or for which a special agency might exist but lacks local level representation by its own staff.

Delegation of specific functions has mainly occurred through the creation of statutory boards such as the National Housing Authority (NHA) (to provide housing); the Dairy Produce Board (DPB) (to market dairy products and promote the dairy industry); and the now defunct National Agricultural Marketing Board (NAMBOARD) (to market agricultural products and promote agriculture). The Zambian government has at times delegated certain functions to nongovernmental organisations. For example, when NAMBOARD was disbanded in 1987, the marketing of agricultural produce was delegated to the Zambia Cooperative Federation (ZCF), a non-governmental apex organization which was created by voluntary "primary" cooperative societies in order to coordinate and promote the activities of cooperatives in the country.

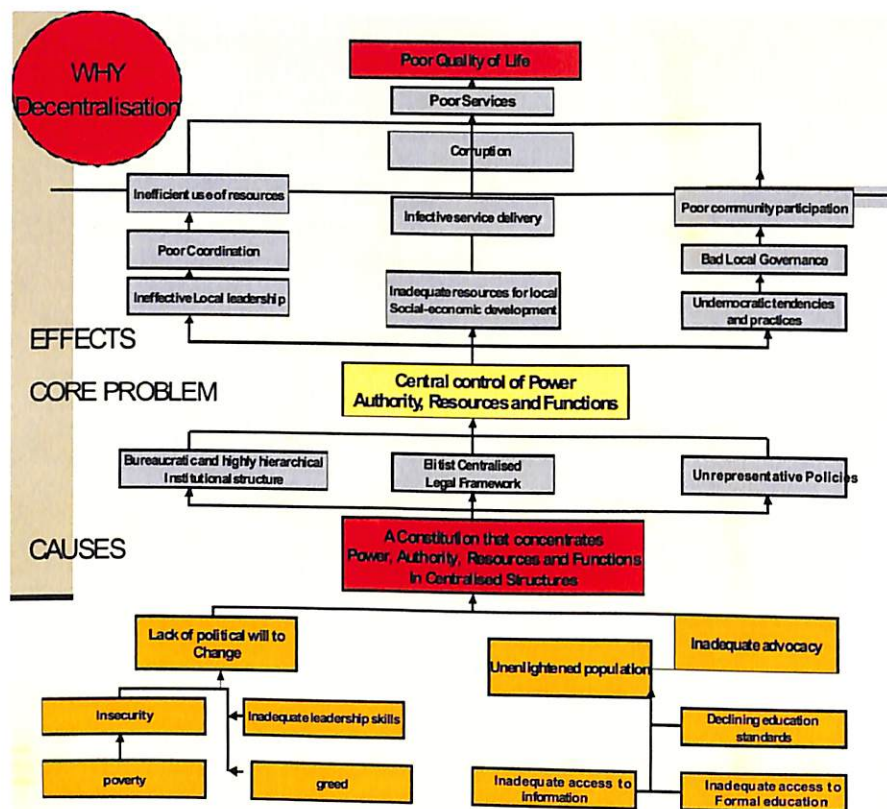
Devolution in Zambia has taken place through attempts to bolster the role of multipurpose local authorities governed by local councils. Membership on local councils has been through election, selection and appointment of one form or another.

At independence, Zambia inherited a fragmented administrative structure: a diffuse collection of government departments enjoying a large measure of autonomy and only loosely controlled by any central, coordinating body, whether bureaucratic or political (Dresang, 1975, p.92). The situation in which Zambia found itself at independence whereby field officers operated under the double supervision of the all-purpose district secretary (the reincarnation of the former district commissioner) for coordination purposes and their own professional head for technical purposes was thus a direct colonial legacy (Subramaniam, 1971). In other words, the problem of double supervision and ineffective coordination at the district level was a creation of the colonial system of administration in place at independence.

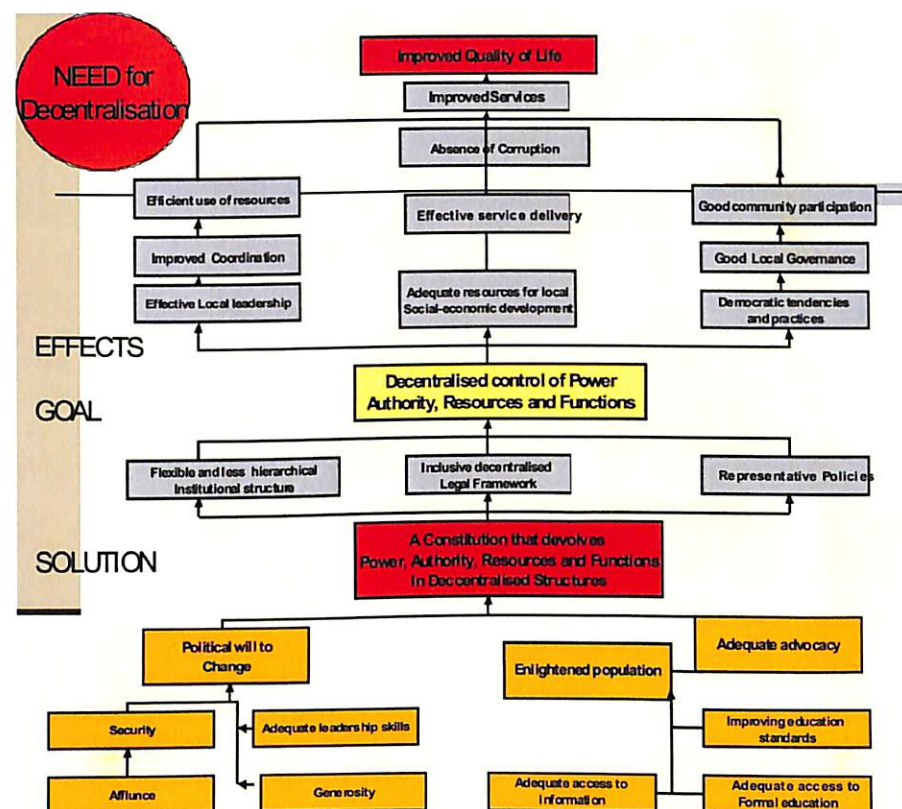
Decentralisation reforms in Zambia have been driven more by unstated political considerations than administrative concerns, as was the case with Zambia's Local Administration Act of 1980. Indeed, contrary to the officially stated concerns for improving the operations of local authorities, the 1980 Act appeared to have been driven more by the ruling UNIP's desires to cement its control over the administrative machinery and - through the fusion of local party and council structures - to provide remuneration to local party officials who hitherto had been unremunerated. Due to these overriding political considerations, it was not surprising that the 1980 Act resulted in the collapse of the local government system following the ensuing over-politicisation of the system; under this Act, political interference in the day-to-day operations of local authorities became the order of the day.

Also, even in the Third Republic, the central government, introduced measures that appear to have been driven more by political considerations than the need to improve the performance of local government. Examples of these measures include the membership of MPs on local councils, the introduction of the Constituency Development Fund under the control of MPs and the appointment of District Commissioners.

### 1.1.2 Why Decentralisation?



### 1.2 Need for Decentralisation



### 1.2.1

#### The objective of Decentralisation in Zambia

To transfer real power to lower structures in order to reduce excessive work loads on central officials who in most cases are not fully funded;  
To promote control (political and administrative) over the delivery of services in an effective manner thereby improving accountability and transparency;  
To promote peoples' feeling of ownership of local programmes and projects executed;  
To allow local managers, programmes and people identify problems, plan and implement local projects in order to promote more balanced development;  
To design more realistic projects and programmes that take into account local potentials and constraints;  
To allow a step-by-step devolution of powers and functions in order to develop structures tailored to the local environment and needs;  
To improve financial accountability by allowing the involvement of local people in decision-making process; and  
To promote effective coordination of development activities at various spatial levels and boost mobilisation of local resources.

### 1.2.2

#### Form of decentralisation Zambia is taking

Decentralisation, when properly implemented is expected to lead to efficient and effective delivery of services. Decentralisation through devolution is the form Zambia has chosen. It would be most effective as it ensures technical efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery and enhances popular participation. The fundamental reasons for adopting "devolution" as the form of decentralisation in a unitary state like Zambia are varied.

- (a) Firstly, the 1996 Constitution of Zambia recognises the equal worth of men and women in their rights to participate and to freely determine and build political, economic and social systems of their own choice. The Constitution further resolves to uphold the values of democracy, transparency, accountability and good governance.
- (b) Secondly, the Government's approved Public Service Reform Programme (PSRP) and the National Capacity Building Programme for Good Governance emphasise the need for effective decentralisation of selected functions and responsibilities from the central government to the

provinces and districts and ultimately the Councils to facilitate democratic governance and delivery of quality and demand-driven services to local communities.

### 1.2.5

The following are the expected benefits from the devolved system of decentralisation:

- (a) Political stability will be secured by active participation of the local people in development activities and in politics through voting and other practices such as civic education, which will strengthen democratic accountability;
- (b) Lower level participation in development and politics would be a basis for training in political leadership which would create a seedbed for prospective political leaders to develop skills in policy-making, political party operations and budgeting with the result that the quality of political leadership will be enhanced;
- (c) Accountability will be enhanced because local representatives will be more accessible to the local populace and will thus be held more closely accountable for their policies and outcomes than distant national political leaders (or public servants). A vote at local elections would be a unique mechanism for the local community to register its satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the performance of its representatives;
- (d) Responsiveness of government will be improved because local representatives will be best placed to know the exact nature of local needs and how they can be met in a cost-effective way;
- (e) Locally specified plans will be tailor-made for local areas using detailed and up to date information; and
- (f) Motivation of field-level personnel will be enhanced when they have greater responsibility for the programmes they manage.

## 2.0 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

### 2.1 Vision

2.1.1 The vision of Government is to achieve a fully decentralised and democratically elected system of governance characterised by open, predictable and transparent policy making and implementation processes, effective community participation in decision-making, development and administration of their local affairs while maintaining sufficient linkages between the centre and the periphery.

### 2.2 Objectives:

2.2.1 In order to achieve the Government's vision, the following policy objectives will be pursued:

- (a) empower local communities by devolving decision making authority, functions and resources from the Centre to the lowest level with matching resources in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of services;
- (b) design and implement a mechanism to ensure a "bottom-up" flow of integrated development planning and budgeting from the District to the Central Government;
- (c) enhance local political and administrative authority in order to effectively and efficiently deliver services;
- (d) promote accountability and transparency in the management and utilisation of resources;
- (e) develop the capacity of Local Authorities and communities in development planning, financing, co-ordinating and managing the delivery of services in their areas;
- (f) build capacity for development and maintenance of infrastructure at local level;
- (g) introduce an integrated budget for district development and management; and
- (h) Provide a legal and institutional framework to promote autonomy in decision making at local level.

## 3.0 POLICY MEASURES

### 3.1 National, Provincial, District and Sub-District

#### 3.1.1 Institutional Arrangements

3.1.1.1 In order to achieve the stated vision, Government will establish a new decentralised structure of governance, backed by law, through which services will be delivered.

3.1.1.2 The new structure will comprise four levels, namely: National, Provincial, District and Sub-district.

3.1.1.3 In this decentralised structure the Province will be streamlined because it is an important link between the centre and the district. The District shall be the focus for development and service delivery, thus empowering local communities to play an effective role in national affairs. At the district level, there shall be a system of Local Government based on democratically elected council on the basis of universal adult suffrage. The sub-district level shall be introduced.

#### 3.1.2 Functions

3.1.2.1 Decentralisation will not necessarily imply that all authority will be transferred to local authorities. The Central Government (including line ministries) will retain a core of functions over essential national matters and ultimately, have the authority to redesign the system of government and to discipline or suspend decentralised units that are not performing effectively. The responsibilities of the Central, Provincial and District Government level are summarised in the table below:

| Central Government Level                                                                                                              | Provincial Government Level                                                                                                   | District Government Level                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. General and legislative Policy formulation, monitoring and evaluation and provide advice to Councils on their operations;          | Co-ordinating and consolidating district plans into provincial development plan for submission to the centre;                 | Coordination of decentralised structures, including Health and Education Boards; |
| 2. Setting national performance standards;                                                                                            | Monitoring the utilisation and resources and implementation of development programmes in the province;                        | Disaster management;                                                             |
| 3. Controlling arms, ammunition and explosives;                                                                                       | Coordinating and auditing of local institutions;                                                                              | Community development;                                                           |
| 4. National defence and security;                                                                                                     | Preparing provincial progress report For the central Government on the implementation of development programmes and projects; | Primary health care;                                                             |
| 5. Regulating banks and financial institutions, promissory notes, currency and exchange;                                              | Ensuring implementation of Central Government policies and regulations;                                                       | Primary and basic education;                                                     |
| 6. Citizenship, immigration, emigration, refugees, deportation, extradition and designing of passports and national identities;       | Implementation of National development projects and programmes which cut across sectors;                                      | Water and sanitation;                                                            |
| 7. Copyrights, patents and trademarks and all forms of intellectual property, incorporation and regulation of business organisations; | Ensuring proper utilisation and maintenance of Government buildings, equipment, plant and other infrastructure; and           | Rehabilitation, maintenance and construction of feeder roads;                    |
| 8. Control of state land and minerals;                                                                                                | Any other functions delegated from the centre.                                                                                | Infrastructure development and maintenance;                                      |
| 9. Declaration of public holidays, working and shopping hours;                                                                        |                                                                                                                               | Planning and implementation of development projects and programmes;              |
| 10. Preservation of national monuments, antiquities, archives and public records;                                                     |                                                                                                                               | Mobilisation of local resources;                                                 |
| 11. Foreign relations and trade, regulation of trade and commerce;                                                                    |                                                                                                                               | Preparation of progress reports for the province;                                |
| 12. National and local government elections;                                                                                          |                                                                                                                               | Management, Conservation of Natural and Wildlife resources;                      |
| 13. guidelines on national census and statistics;                                                                                     |                                                                                                                               | Environmental services;                                                          |
| 14. Control of publications of national surveys and mapping;                                                                          |                                                                                                                               | Provision and maintenance of public amenities;                                   |
| 15. Control and management of epidemics, pandemic and disasters;                                                                      |                                                                                                                               | Land allocation and utilisation;                                                 |
| 16. Airports, aerodromes and air strips;                                                                                              |                                                                                                                               | Trade and business licensing;                                                    |

|                                                       |  |                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------------------|
| 17. National development projects and programmes;     |  | Agriculture extension services                    |
| 18. Correctional policy and maximum security prisons; |  | By-Laws;                                          |
| 19. Trunk roads and highways;                         |  | Community Police Service;                         |
| 20. Prosecutorial functions;                          |  | Community Prisons Service;                        |
| 21. High school and tertiary education; and           |  | Youth and juvenile delinquency; and               |
| 22. Any other functions delegated by Parliament.      |  | Any other functions as delegated from the centre. |

- 3.1.2.2 The Government shall decentralise with matching resources, some of its functions to the district, which shall perform these functions through democratically elected councils. The Councils will raise part of its own revenue and receive grants from central treasury and line ministries to perform the devolved functions.
- 3.1.2.3 The Government will build capacity of Councils to perform core management functions such as planning and budgeting, personnel and financial management as well as delivery of public services.
- 3.1.2.4 The Government will contribute towards the provision and delivery of some public services while developing capacities of the Councils. When the management capacity has been built. Councils will be given more authority and a higher degree of autonomy while maintaining sufficient linkages with the centre as demanded in a unitary state. However, this is a long term task requiring an evolutionary approach.
- 3.1.2.5 Government will ensure that sub-district structures are established for the effective and efficient delivery of services. The functions to be performed will include promotion of community participation in decision making, development planning and implementation.

#### 4.1 Reporting Relationship

- 4.1.1 The Provincial Administration will be the link between the national and the district level.
- 4.1.2 At District Level, the Council and the Government representative will report to the Provincial Administration.
- 4.1.3 The sub-District Level will report to Councils.

### 5.0 The Decentralisation Policy Implementation Plan

#### 5.1 Purpose of the Policy Implementation Plan

##### 5.1.1 The broad intentions of the Decentralisation Implementation Plan are:

To provide a road map to guide stakeholders' efforts and articulate their roles in the implementation of Decentralisation policy  
 To articulate the various components of the Decentralisation Policy that have been articulated to accomplish objectives of the Policy and fulfil its vision  
 To provide a background and rationale for proposed interventions, their timing and duration  
 To give stakeholders estimates of the resource requirements to effectively implement the Policy, and  
 To provide the institutional framework for implementing the policy and how the implementation process will be coordinated, monitored and evaluated

#### 5.2 Key Components of the Plan

There are ten key components of the Decentralisation implementation plan:

These are derived from Objectives of the Policy;  
 The Presidential launch speech;  
 The committee of Permanent Secretaries' Report on creation of Decentralisation Secretariat'; and  
 Experiences from other countries.

### The Ten key components of the Decentralisation Implementation Plan

| Component                                                                                 | Aimed at                                                                                                                              | Objective                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Main Activities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Component 1: Sensitisation, Civic Education and Consolidating a Democratic Culture</b> | Creating awareness and understanding among the stakeholders, and Dissemination of information on the Policy for smooth implementation | To increase Awareness, Knowledge, understanding, participation and ownership of the Decentralisation Policy and Process by all stakeholders to achieve smooth implementation of the Policy                                                                                                              | Conduct Decentralisation sensitisation activities at National, Provincial, district and sub-district levels                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Component 2: Legal Framework</b>                                                       | Harmonizing current legislation with principles of devolution                                                                         | Reviewing existing laws and policies to ensure compatibility with Decentralisation Policy                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Reviewing existing laws and policies to ensure compatibility with Decentralisation Policy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Component 3: Institutional Development</b>                                             | Developing structures and systems to support the decentralised institutional roles and implementation process                         | <p>To Create and strengthen institutional capacities to implement, manage and support Decentralised governance, development and service delivery.</p> <p>Define the role of traditional authority and its relationship with other institutions in the implementation of the Decentralisation Policy</p> | <p>Harmonize multiple/parallel administrative structures at the district level so that the district, guided by its democratically elected Council, becomes the focus of development activities and service delivery</p> <p>Redefine roles of public service commission, police and prison service commissions, teaching service commission, provincial local government appeals board etc, in recruitment, placement, promotion, transfers, and handling of grievances vis-à-vis roles of the Councils</p> |

| Component                                                    | Aimed at                                                                                                                 | Objective                                                                                                                                                                                                | Main Activities                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Component 4: Human Resources Capacity Building</b>        | Developing a holistic approach to Human Capacity building in all key institutions for effective implementation of Policy | To develop the management and technical capacities of the human resources of key institutions responsible for implementing the Decentralisation Process so that they can effectively perform their roles | <p>Conduct a comprehensive capacity building needs assessment for Central Govt. Provincial Administration, Councils, and sub-District Structures</p> <p>Develop and Implement Decentralisation Capacity Building Programme</p> |
| <b>Component 5: Local Development Planning and Budgeting</b> | Designing and implementing a 'bottom-up' integrated development planning and budgeting mechanism                         | To develop and implement a new integrated planning and budgeting system that is congruent with the National Decentralisation Policy                                                                      | <p>Synchronize district and national planning and budgeting processes</p> <p>Introducing participatory development planning and budgeting at District and sub-District levels in all districts</p>                             |
| <b>Component 6: Financial Management and Accounting</b>      | Promoting accountability and transparency in management and utilisation of (financial) resources                         | To develop an appropriate and computerized Financial Management and accounting system for use by District Councils                                                                                       | <p>Develop Financial Management and Procurement procedures to enhance accountability and transparency in District Councils</p> <p>Computerise Fin. Mgt. and Accounting systems for District Councils</p>                       |

| Component                                                                | Aimed at                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Objective                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Main Activities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Component 7: Financing Decentralisation and Resource Mobilisation</b> | Providing a financing mechanism that facilitates the transfer of resources from Central Government and cooperating partners to District Councils                                                                                      | To establish and operationalise a comprehensive local government financing system and at the same time enhance district councils capacity to mobilize resources and to enlarge their economic base for effective service delivery | <p>Reviewing current revenue sources and devising sharing formula between the two levels</p> <p>Redressing imbalances in tax assignments between central and local government</p> <p>Studying revenue potentials of districts and developing revenue mobilisation strategies for District Councils</p> |
| <b>Component 8: Sector Devolution</b>                                    | Empowering local communities by devolving decision-making authority, functions and resources from the centre to the lower levels with matching resources in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the Delivery of services | To Achieve timely devolution of designated functions from sector Ministries to Councils                                                                                                                                           | <p>Preparation of guidelines for Ministerial sector devolution</p> <p>Establishment of Sector devolution Task Forces</p> <p>Transfer affected Central Government staff to Local Authorities</p> <p>Rationalise staff establishments in both Central Government and Local Authorities</p>               |

| Component                                                     | Aimed at                                                                                                                         | Objective                                                                                                                                                                   | Main Activities                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Component 9: Infrastructure Development and Management</b> | Building capacity for development and maintenance of infrastructure at the local level                                           | To develop a comprehensive plan for development, provision and management of infrastructure at all the three levels of government                                           | <p>Develop an infrastructure development and management policy</p> <p>Develop and implement an infrastructure development, provision and management plan</p>                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Component 10: Monitoring and Evaluation</b>                | Making stakeholders know progress made, constraints/challenges faced, and proposed solutions in the implementation of the policy | To develop and institutionalise an appropriate Monitoring and Evaluation system that will facilitate Monitoring and Evaluation of implementation of Decentralisation Policy | <p>Review current National Monitoring and Evaluation systems in Ministries and Local Authorities</p> <p>Design and institutionalise an effective National Results based Monitoring and Evaluation system</p> <p>Develop appropriate criteria and indicators for monitoring and performance measurement of Activities</p> |



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