

# Local Government Capacity Programme

LGCP | Country programme 2012-2016

## > Benin



<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	Local Economic Development on the basis of agriculture and food security
<b>TARGET GROUP</b>	21 local governments in 3 districts, local government association ANCB and 3 regional associations
<b>INTENDED RESULT</b>	Local governments will be able to promote agricultural entrepreneurship
<b>ACTIVITIES</b>	Benchmark project, workshops, training and on-the-job coaching

The government of the West African country of Benin wants to strengthen the agricultural sector in the country. This as a large part of the agricultural potential is not utilised. At the same time, a substantial part of the farmers live in poverty.

The Netherlands supports Benin in the implementation of the new agriculture strategy, in which local governments play an important role.

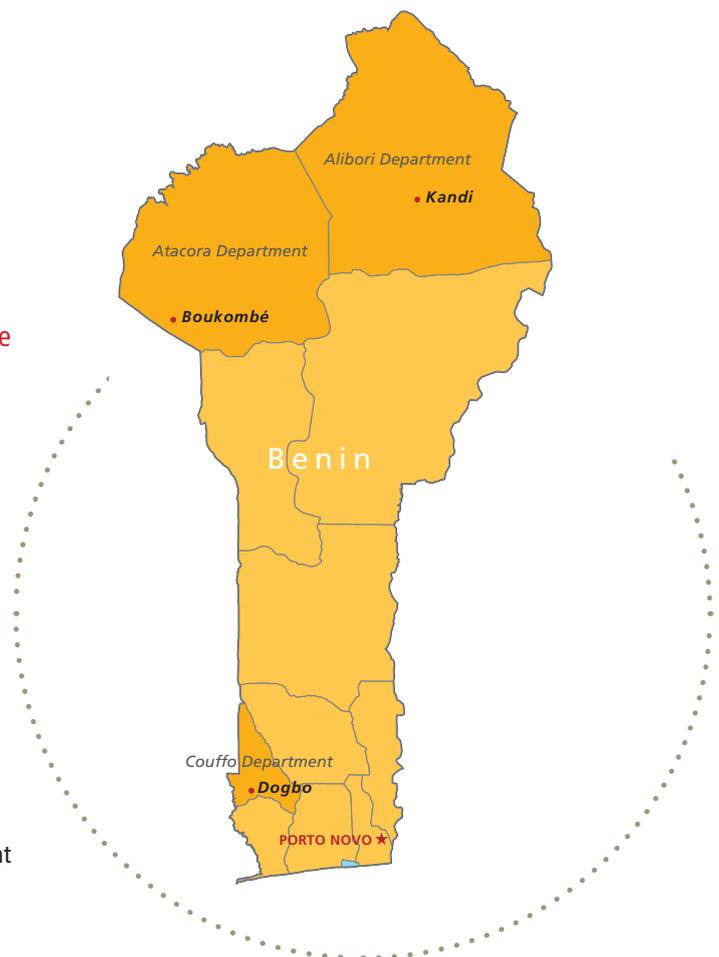
Local governments are expected to support the agricultural sector in their municipalities, regulate ownership rights of agricultural land and provide a good infrastructure so that the farmers can get their products to the market. Many local governments are currently not able to do so.

- The potential for economic – and in particular agricultural – development is fully present in Benin. The LGCP Benin programme wants to help local administrators and local council staff realise these opportunities. •

### AGRICULTURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

In Benin the LGCP focuses on enhancing local government capacity. In the future, elected representatives and the local council staff must be better able to stimulate and facilitate agricultural entrepreneurship in their local government areas.

Six local governments are offered intensive support. Neighbouring local governments are being involved as much as possible. ANCB, the Benin sister organisation of VNG, receives support to improve its professionalism which is necessary to better represent the interests of local governments.



# Benin

• **'The benchmark is the common thread. We hope that this gives local governments greater insight into their own functioning. We are particularly looking for very concrete solutions which local governments can apply relatively easily.'** Dagmar Verbeek, Country Programme Manager of LGCP Benin •

## Background

Agriculture is the motor of the economy in Benin. Cotton is an important export product. The agricultural sector is good for one-third of the gross national product. Two-thirds of the population live from farming.

However, the agricultural potential is greatly under-utilised. Only 17 percent of the potential agricultural land is cultivated and small-scale agriculture is dominant. Many farmers can barely keep their heads above the water. Over a quarter of the population suffers from malnutrition.

The new national agricultural plan aims for the professionalisation of small-scale agriculture and promoting enterprises. Local governments must provide a stimulating local enterprise climate.

## Aim

The programme intends to increase the capacity of local governments to stimulate economic development. The emphasis is on the agricultural sector.

Local governments can do a lot to promote (agricultural) activity in their region. Important supporting activities are, for example, the organisation and the management of markets, the promotion of regional production, taxation and land registration, and infrastructure such as access roads, slaughterhouses and storage warehouses.

## Activities

The LGCP helps local governments in Benin to make a quality advance in the development and implementation of their local long-term development plan and the annual investment plans based thereon.

Activities consist of on-the-job training and advice for the municipal apparatus in matters such as policy formulation, stakeholder analysis and project management. There are also training opportunities for the selected local administrators.

Benchmarking (comparing and learning) is an important starting point in the programme. Administrators and local council staff of different local governments exchange information relating to specific topics, to broaden their insight and learn lessons. Training courses are then organised to tackle the bottlenecks which have been noted.

Training and coaching must also enable the national umbrella organisation, ANCB, and the regional associations to better support the affiliated members. Representing the interests of local governments with the central government contributes to more coherence in the policy. The experience of, and lessons learned by the LGCP will be nationally distributed via these associations.

## → What do we want to achieve?

- **21 local governments have the capacity to develop good plans for Local Economic Development.**
- **6 local governments are able to execute such plans.**
- **6 local governments and their national association ANCB can adjust their plans and policies to changing circumstances or on the basis of experience which has been gained.**
- **21 local governments are able to involve all stakeholders in Local Economic Development.**
- **The ANCB has the capacity to promote the quality and cohesion of municipal plans for Local Economic Development.**

