

Annual Results 2022

A year of building better futures



Foreword by our director

It is my pleasure to present to you our annual results 2022 for VNG International. It is for the first time we use a selected number of corporate indicators that capture our work and aggregate achievements from all our ongoing projects. The numbers are further illustrated by inspiring case studies.

The year 2022 represents my first year as director of VNG International and I had a chance to meet our network in full at the UCLG World Congress in South Korea, at the tenth anniversary of our daughter company CILG in Tunis and in various meetings with our main funders, such as the Netherlands' Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In fact 2022 marked the first year of implementation of our new strategic partnership with the Ministry, coined as the Sustainable Development through improved Local Governance (SDLG) programme, which aims to strengthen the resilience of local governments in 10 partner countries.

As I have spent most of my career within local governments in the Netherlands and their association (VNG), my personal commitment is to involve Dutch municipalities even more with the work of VNG International. Cities in The Netherlands often have long-lasting international relations, however, these relationships are nowadays less structured in traditional city-to-city twinning relations, but more structured along new functional relationships. Important challenges related to climate adaptation, the energy crisis and the digital revolution call for regional and global city networks to exchange, to learn and to co-create. The expansion of our programme in the Dutch Caribbean with Dutch, European and World Bank funding perfectly illustrates this.

It cannot go unmentioned that the shrinking space for local democracy is a great worry for me. Russia's ruthless invasion of Ukraine and the rise of autocracies in countries where we have long standing relationships is alarming. As a consequence we are fulfilling our mission in an increasingly unstable and fragile social & political contexts and are more exposed to safety and security related risks impacting the progress of our work. It does, however, also underscore the importance of our work. With our partner local governments, their associations worldwide and befriended organisations that work on democratic governance we stand tall for our mission.

I wish you happy reading.

Pieter Jeroense
Director VNG International



**Discover our key
figures for 2022 below**

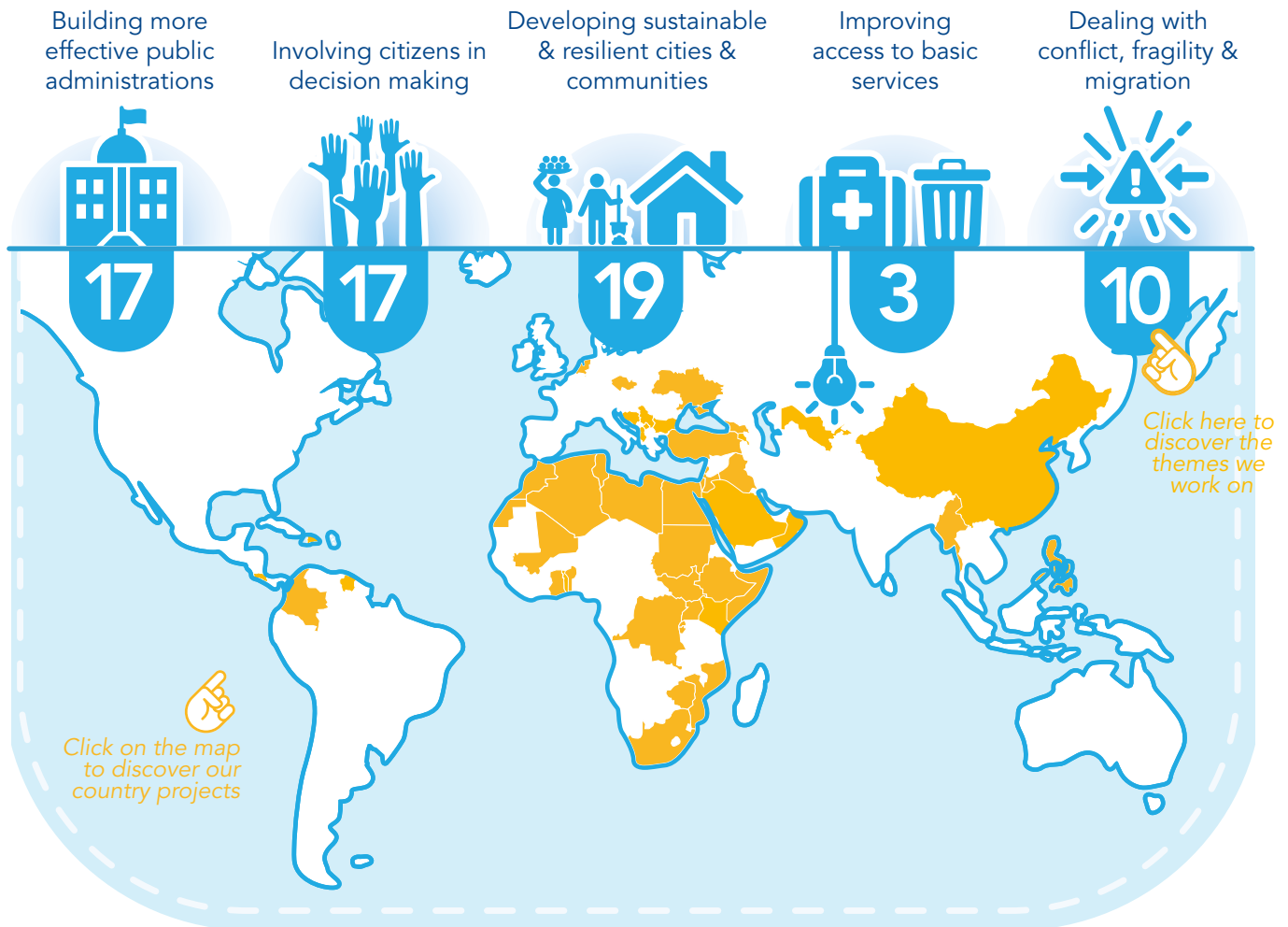
OR

**Jump straight to our
achievements of 2022**



VNG International in key figures:

In 2022 VNG International supported local governance through **66 projects** across the world:



We contribute to the following SDGs:





21

Dutch municipalities actively contribute to our work

Amsterdam
Culemborg
Delft
Den Haag
Eindhoven
Enschede

Hollands
Kroon
Heerlen
Opsterland
Oss

Pijnacker-
Nootdorp
Rheden
Rotterdam
Rhenen
Soest

Utrecht
Vught
Waalwijk
West Betuwe
Zeist
Zoetermeer



4

Innovative approaches piloted this year

Local governments operate in an ever changing world and we therefore also need to constantly adapt and reinvent our approaches. This year we piloted 4 innovative approaches, the **example below** showcases one of them.

Developing procedures for timely and accurate data collection on properties an example from the occupied Palestinian Territory

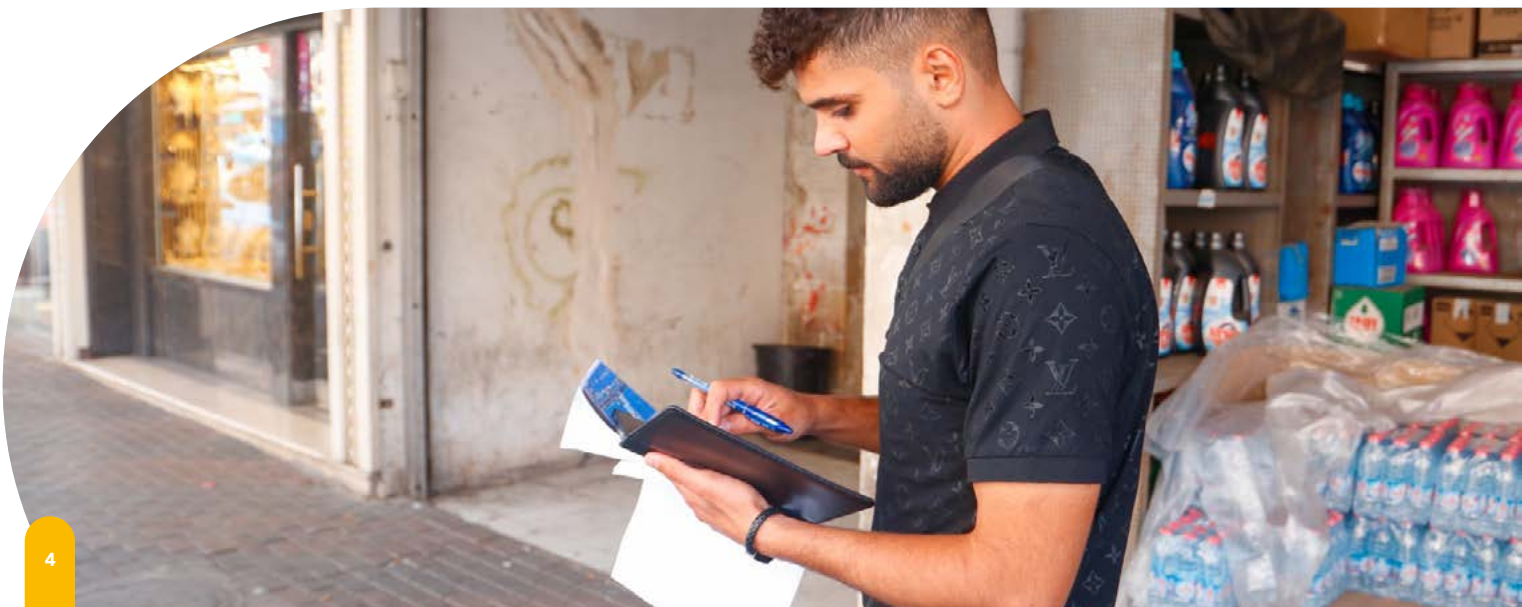
Local governments ideally use data on properties & land for analysis and decision-making in (urban) planning of municipal services and tax collection. VNG International assists them by providing digital innovations for collection, storage, analysis and visualization of data.

One of these projects are in the Occupied Palestinian Territory aiming at developing a reference guide for property data management together with the Palestinian Ministry of Local Government. The reference guide entails a detailed procedural manual for municipalities to collect and administer data on properties. For the collection of data, VNG International developed an IT tool based on open source geo-referenced app (ODK) that allows the municipal staff to collect data with handheld devices. Data are uploaded to a tailor-made GIS portal making them visible and ready for use for urban planning purposes, service

delivery and for data driven citizen interaction through a citizen portal. Also the data allow for optimizing revenue collection.

Based on the reference guide, operational manuals and training materials have been developed. In the municipalities of Salfeet and Qalqilia the guide has been piloted by municipal staff with support of the project team. The deliverables of the project have been made available for roll out to other Palestinian municipalities.

This project involves both the Palestinian central authorities by high level coordination as municipalities through pilots. In a relatively short period of time relevant stakeholders have worked together in a technical working group on the details of the property data reference guide, which is therefore widely supported by the Palestinian counterparts.





18

VNG International offices in partner countries

Tunisia
Algeria
Benin
Burundi
DR Congo
Egypt
Ethiopia

Iraq
Libya
Mozambique
Lebanon
Occupied Palestinian
Territory
Puntland

Somaliland
South Sudan
Sint Maarten
Togo
Uganda



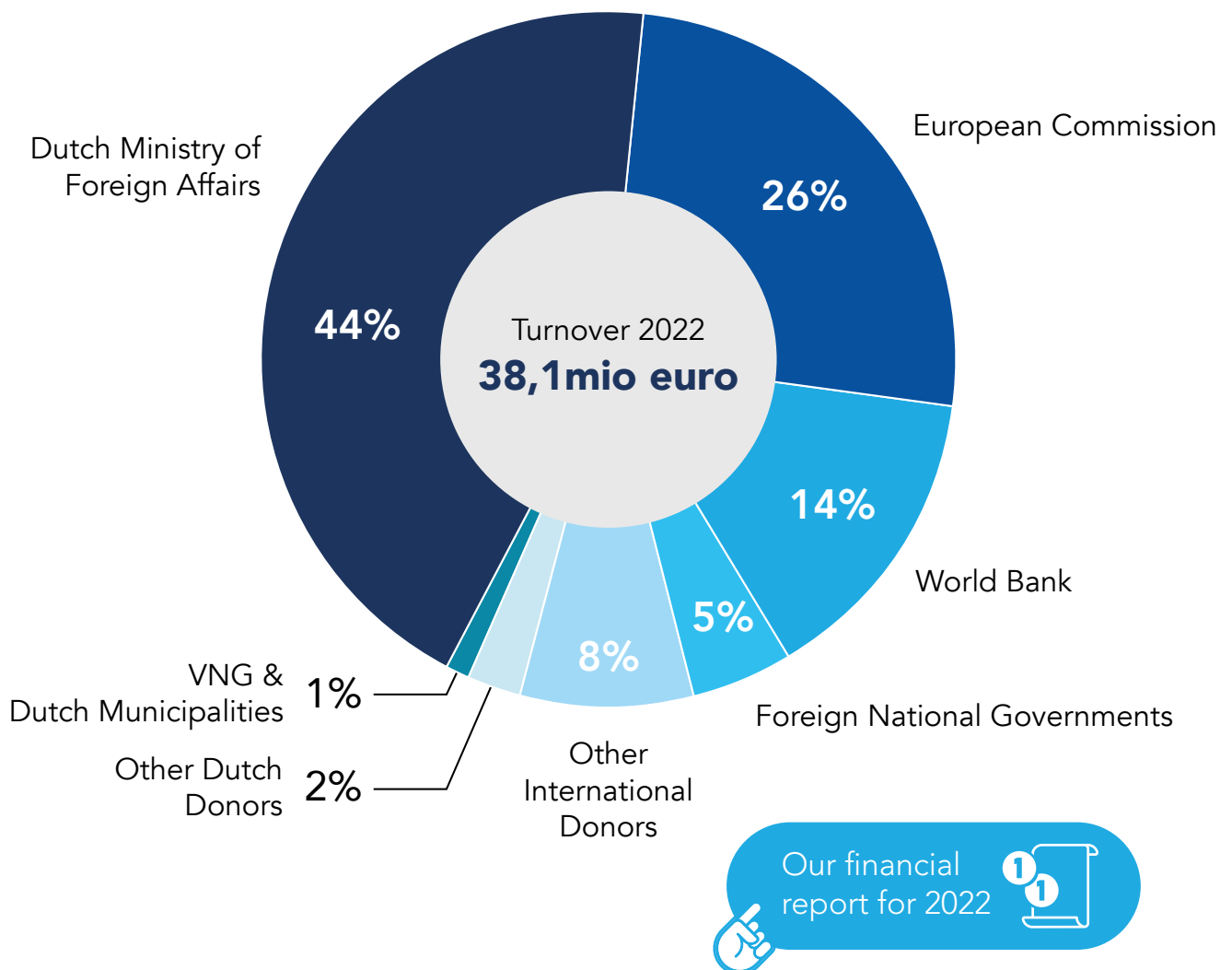
255

VNG International staff members

In-country staff: 196 ♂ 120 male ♀ 76 female

The Hague staff: 59 ♂ 18 male ♀ 41 female

Our turnover by donor in 2022





What we achieved in 2022:

In 2022 VNG International's projects continued to build better futures by promoting local governance worldwide. In this section we outline our achievements and some cases of the past year.

Our impact

We partner with local governments to take up their leading role in local democratic development and with their constituencies to have them benefit from good service provision.

We do this in three ways:



Creating enabling environments

We work with local governments and their associations - both on national and international level - to ensure a proper mandate with concomitant funding as recognition of their pivotal role in development.



Facilitating capacity strengthening

We support local governments in developing strong technical and political leadership, setting up participatory processes for citizens to meaningfully influence decision making, improving their capability to implement decisions against high standards, and raising sufficient resources to do so.



Encouraging citizen engagement

We encourage citizens and their leaders, and especially groups in a marginalised position, to come forward to express their needs, wishes and ambitions towards local governments and service providers.

As a result, we contributed to:

285

local governments take up a pro-active role in local or regional development

Service delivery by local governments reached

69mio
citizens



VNG International's interventions on the above described pathways have led to tangible changes across the world. The figures below speak for themselves: **the year 2022 was once again an impactful year for VNG International!** This impact is not the result of a handful of bold actions, but rather the accumulation of the countless hours of hard work and dedication from VNG International's teams in The Hague and worldwide. Though many - if not all - merit an honorary mention, we included but a handful of examples showcasing VNG International's impact. The examples can be accessed by clicking on the respective pathway.

26

National reforms with a positive impact on the role of local governance



22

Lobby trajectories by LGAs for decentralisation reforms



54

International cases which strengthened the role of local governance in development



We create **enabling environments** wherein local governments can fulfil their pivotal role in development



By facilitating **capacity strengthening** we build local governments that are more capable, effective & participatory



234

Local governments improved their services



733

Local governments supported by VNG international



10.039

Local government staff strengthened



58

Revenue collection processes improved



Click to discover stories from our projects

295

Plans created through citizens participation



By encouraging **citizen engagement** local governments can ensure services respond to local needs





Creating enabling environments

Please find below two cases how VNG International is working with local governments and their associations - both on national and international level - to ensure a proper mandate with concomitant funding as recognition of their pivotal role in development.

Gemeenten4GlobalGoals in the Netherlands

an example of an international cases which strengthened the role of local governance in development

Our Global work in the Netherlands: enhancing the role of local governance in sustainable development with the "Gemeenten4GlobalGoals programme"

One of the VNG-I programmes directed towards the Dutch local governments is 'Gemeenten4GlobalGoals'. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2030 is an internationally recognised agenda providing a clear, actionable framework to use as a guide when developing and reviewing policies. As such, the SDG agenda gives additional legitimacy to municipal policies.

The Global Goals programme facilitates and encourages local governments to focus on the bigger impact of local sustainability initiatives and on the local relevance of international sustainability efforts. It offers municipalities the tools to connect the global SDG agenda to local issues and a network of Global Goals municipalities that are cooperating and exchanging on local SDG implementation.

Thus far, 123 (out of 342) municipalities, have chosen to adopt the SDGs as a guiding set of goals for local policy. One good example is the municipality of Aalten, one of the winners of the Global Goals awards in 2022. In redesigning two main roads in the municipality the SDGs were used as the basis for the whole process and implementation. As many sustainability goals as possible were applied and interlinked. This ensured an intensive participation process, knowledge sharing and connection with local parties as much as possible. For instance, the construction team saw an opportunity to link an education programme for nearby primary schools to this project, where primary school children learned about biodiversity in the immediate area and got to work creating flowerbeds themselves. The result of this co-creation process are two green, climate-adaptive streets to which residents and local entrepreneurs contributed.



Click here to discover the MUEVE project, which contributes to both an enabling environment & capacity strengthening





Facilitating capacity strengthening

Please find below four cases of how VNG International is supporting local governments in developing strong technical and political leadership, setting up participatory processes for citizens to meaningfully influence decision making, improving their capability to implement decisions against high standards, and raising sufficient resources to do so.

MUEVE project - Addressing citizens mobility needs in Latin America

a case from Costa Rica

VNG International together with the Spanish Municipality of San Sebastian partners with the Costa Rican Local Government Association Unión Nacional de Gobiernos Locales (UNGL) to implement a 5 million Euro project to ensure sustainable and future proof urban mobility. The overall aim is to address the mobility needs of 2,2 million citizens in the Greater Metropolitan Area (GAM) of San Jose and adjacent municipalities.

The scope of the project requires the establishment of an urban intermunicipal governance entity (autoridad interurbana) involving 15 municipalities and implies a substantial shift in the responsibilities and mandates of the national government and the municipalities involved. A first major step was made in 2022 with a wider intermunicipal agreement to create a network structure for the

development of public transport infrastructure around the major railway crossing all municipalities. The next milestone is the development of an appropriate legal modality for the network structure within the existing governance framework of Costa Rica allowing funders to invest in urban development plans.

Meanwhile a number of pilot projects is launched to experiment with new approaches on mobility. One such an initiative is "comprehensive streets" which transcends the idea that the street is for cars only and considers streets as integral part of the urban environment. It redefines the street as part of the public space that encourages social encounter, recreation and access to services and shops. The "comprehensive street" vision promotes social equity and social cohesion.

The MUEVE project also contributes to our work building a more enabling environment for local governance



Fostering intermunicipal cooperation for natural resource management

a case from Mali

VNG International works with dozens of local governments in the south of Mali that have decided to join forces in 4 alliances (intercollectivités) to deal with conflicts related to the management of natural resources such as water and land. These conflicts are at times difficult to be handled by local authorities as there is a low level of trust between local government and citizens due to a low level of service delivery, low level of citizen inclusion in decision making and a lack of communication.

VNG International facilitates restoring the 'social contract' between citizens and local governments by working on inclusive and accountable policies and procedures, promoting good leadership, foster increased civic engagement and strengthening

local governments in relating to national government and raising their voice.

The year 2022 featured a thorough participatory process with citizens in developing a local action plan with the Intercollectivité du Basin de Sankarani and setting priorities on what to work on in the years to come. This already led to clear commitments; the board of the intercollectivité agreed to combat the use of dredges for traditional gold panning by banning them as part of the measures in their regional development plan. Another is incorporating support for the creation and management of small businesses as a priority action into the same plan; this in response to the demands of youth representatives during the planning process.

Our project in Mali also contributes to our work encouraging citizen engagement



MASAR & LOGOREP projects - Strengthening resilience of local governments in dealing with migration

A case from Iraq

The Syrian conflict and the presence of Islamic State had a devastating and lasting impact on Syria and the neighbouring countries across the region including Iraq. The influx and settlement of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees in Iraq over the past decade have posed substantial challenges to local governments to secure service delivery to host, refugee and IDP populations and plan for it against several possible scenarios. Iraq in 2021 hosted about 254,000 refugees and 1,2 million Iraqis continue to be internally displaced.

To this effect, VNG International implemented two projects (MASAR and Logorep) in Iraq for strengthening resilience of local governments in serving the different groups in the last five years. This happened with concrete actions to improve service delivery such as completing water supply systems in four villages providing water to over 3.000 people of the different groups. Another action is improving waste segregation and investing in the operations & maintenance of the Solid Waste

Plants in the different areas where host, refugees and IDP communities are residing.

At the same time efforts were made to support local governments for arriving at integrated area plans for accommodating current settlements of host, refugee and IDP communities, as well as preparing contingency plans for accommodating new influx of IDPs/refugees. In this context, the projects contributed to strengthening intergovernmental relations as mandates and responsibilities for area planning and development are with national ministries and the latter have become more participatory by involving local governments into their planning processes.

One particular challenge to the projects was dealing with land ownership (in absence of a register of land entitlements) when implementing service delivery actions. Setting the resulting conflicts delayed timely service delivery significantly.



Click here to discover the DEALS programme, which contributes to both capacity strengthening & citizen engagement





Encouraging citizen engagement

Please find below two cases of how VNG International is encouraging citizens and their leaders, and especially groups in a marginalised position, to come forward to express their needs, wishes and ambitions towards local governments and service providers.

DEALS PROGRAMME - Engaging with citizens for sustainable development

a West-African example from a global programme

In 2022, the 5 year programme entitled 'Governance of Inclusive Green Growth in Cities' (DEALS) came to an end covering six fast-growing cities in Benin, Colombia, Ghana, Mozambique, Myanmar and The Philippines. It aimed at to establish new forms of cooperation between local government, companies, social organizations, knowledge institutions and funding partners as to facilitate the transition to inclusive and sustainable development.

The results of the programme are to be summarised as: "It takes courage to do things differently, break with old routines and invite new faces to the table. Are you ready?" One example is the city of Kumasi in Ghana where efforts were made towards decongesting the city's Central Business District, upgrading satellite market

infrastructure, and improving the quality of life of slum residents through circular economy initiatives. Together with city departments, citizens, traders, teachers and students data was collected on market functions, mobility and living conditions in slum areas. This resulted in an integrated cross-metro plan for mobility and economic activity.

One concrete and innovative action was the design and construction of a footbridge for the Moshie Zong slum area, using waste from the community as a resource. The design was a cocreation process between students from Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology and community members. The resulting low-cost construction included the use of 6.000 water bottles as well as a number of used car tires.



Visit the DEALS programme
AKVO RSR website



The DEALS project also contributes to our work
facilitating capacity strengthening for local governance

