



Non-state actors in Madagascar

From support for local development to support for governance

Caroline Valette

This new series of briefs is designed to facilitate an exchange of information on the role played by non-state actors (NSAs) in implementing the Cotonou Partnership Agreement between the ACP and the EC. Their aim is to cite examples of innovative practices and to demonstrate the challenges facing NSAs as development partners in different countries.

Context

Economic and political situation

Since independence in 1960, Madagascar has had three Republics, the last two of which were established after institutional crises leading to relatively long transitional periods in some cases requiring intervention by the armed forces. The Third Republic, inaugurated in 1992, is a parliamentary regime. Constitutional reforms in 1995 and 1998 successfully introduced a semi-presidential system. Proper polling methods, a policy of decentralisation of authority to municipalities and provinces which moved decision-making powers closer to citizens, and a genuine desire to consolidate the rule of law, helped to usher in a degree of political stability that lasted for a number of years.

The deep political crisis brought about by the disputed results of the Presidential election in late 2001 illustrated the great fragility of Malagasy democracy, but also helped to raise national awareness of the need for its consolidation. The political crisis of the first six months of 2002 was resolved in July 2002 and the government was able, with the support of its main partners, to introduce emergency measures and embark upon a plan for economic and social recovery. Early legislative elections, observed by a team from the European Union, were held in late 2002 and their official results confirmed and consolidated the political base of the new President of the Republic, Marc Ravalomanana (the Presidential majority winning 125 of the 156 seats). His first achievement has been to bring the process of drafting a Poverty Reduction

Strategy Paper (PRSP) to a close and thus to regain the confidence of financial partners, whose attitude had become very cautious as a result of the previous regime's economic management. The PRSP, finalised in June and endorsed in November 2004 by the Bretton Woods institutions, is structured around three key areas (better governance, improved economic growth with a large social base and systems to improve security and social protection) and aims to halve poverty by 2010.

With a GDP of some USD 300 per inhabitant, Madagascar is one of the world's poorest countries. About 80% of the country's population live in poverty, especially in rural areas where over 3/4 of the population live. The picture emerging from indicators of the population's state of health and nutrition is worrying. The infant mortality rate is 84‰ and half of Malagasy children suffer from malnutrition. One adult out of two is illiterate and access to basic social services continues to be very poor.

Fact File

- Human Development Indicator Rank : 150/173
- Human Poverty Index Rank : 2002 : 58/173
- Total Population (millions), 2002 : 16.9
- Urban population (as % of total), 2002 : 26.3
- GDP per capita (US\$), 2002 : 740
- Life expectancy at birth (years), 2002 : 53.4
- Infant mortality rate (per 1000 live births), 2002 : 84
- ODA received per capita (US\$), 2002: 22.0
- Total debt service (as % of GDP), 2002 : 79

Source: Human Development Indicators 2003, UNDP website



Source map: ECDPM

Following a period of political instability and economic stagnation, Madagascar experienced a period of relative stability between 1996 and 2001, during which the economy revived and grew. During this period, the Malagasy government pressed ahead with a programme of macroeconomic and structural reforms and benefited from a Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) granted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the aim of which was to reduce external and internal viability. However, the benefits of growth and these reforms were not really felt in practice, explaining the 'wind of change' which blew through Madagascar and triggered the political crisis of 2002. This crisis paralysed the institutions and the economy during the first half of 2002 and the socio-economic situation worsened. Macroeconomic indicators declined sharply: GDP fell by 12.7%, inflation, which had spiralled to over 25% in the first half of the year, grew to 13.5%, industrial output from the free zones, the frontrunners of growth, fell by 80% causing exports to drop by 50.5%, and there was also a decline in direct foreign investment.¹

Following the crisis, a conference of 'Friends of Madagascar' was organised in Paris in July 2002 at which the international community pledged USD 2.3 billion (including EUR 577 million from the European Commission) to help the country recover.

The new government, having secured its position in the legislative elections of December 2002, is trying to stabilise the macroeconomic framework, revitalise public services and breathe new life into the private sector. It is also working to improve transparency and governance at all levels of the public administration.

Medium- and long-term prospects depend on four fundamental objectives: the reduction of extreme poverty, the fair distribution of the benefits of growth, the withdrawal of the state and a far-reaching programme of reforms with assistance from the country's partners.

Democratisation and decentralisation

Assisted by a strong economic performance (based on high growth and low inflation), President Ravalomanana's regime seems to have managed to gain legitimacy over the last two years. The municipal elections in November, in which TIM, the Presidential party, won 56% of local councils in rural areas and 62% in urban areas, confirmed the people's ongoing support for the

regime and in particular for the President of the Republic. The Malagasy political climate seems to be set fair at present. However, there are growing calls for greater progress in the fight against corruption, improved security in rural areas and, more broadly, for concrete results in the area of poverty reduction.

From the point of view of decentralisation, a number of laws on decentralised territorial authorities and autonomous provinces have been drawn up and adopted in Madagascar since 1994. They have paved the way for a new three-tier territorial organisation: the region, the department and the municipality. The 1998 Constitution defines the autonomous provinces as public authorities with legal personality. The autonomous provinces include the regions and municipalities.

The main advance in decentralisation over the last ten years has been recognition of the institutional legitimacy of the municipalities, which are at present the only operational decentralised territorial authorities. The legal status of municipalities is based on the 1994 law, which sets out important principles on decentralisation, i.e. non-interference by the state representative in the internal affairs of decentralised territorial authorities and the legally binding nature of municipal decisions. In addition to these principles, important powers are assigned to mayors whose election by direct universal suffrage has improved their legitimacy and given them a great deal of operating freedom in terms of municipal management.

Unfortunately, the delay in installing the regions has generated a major institutional gap and a lack of strategic vision at regional and sub-regional levels. This has not prevented, however, the creation of a number of regional consultation structures, in most cases as a result of the implementation of specific measures or development programmes in a particular sector. Their respective statutes and ad hoc nature mean, however, that they do not always foster proper and effective decision-making processes. These structures include the regional development committees (RDCs), regional planning committees (RPCs) and rural development working parties (RDWPs), whose institutional links depend on the ministries to which they are answerable. The RDCs run general development activities, the RDWPs deal with rural development and the RPCs deal with environmental protection.

The creation of a ministry within the President's Office responsible for decentralisation and development of the autonomous provinces and municipalities has recently borne out the importance attached to municipalities. This initiative clearly reflects the will of the new government to breathe new life into these territorial authorities so that they lay the foundations for decentralisation and development. The 'suspension' of the establishment of the autonomous provinces highlights the particular importance attached to municipalities. Municipalities now seem to be the only pertinent partners in local development and as a result are being viewed with considerable interest by the financial partners.

Non-state actors

Although Malagasy civil society has always existed in various forms, the actual concept of civil society is still very new and is not defined in a unanimously accepted way. Generally speaking, this concept continues in the main to be linked with the fabric of associations involved in local development and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), which proliferated in the 1980s. A whole range of factors combined to bring about this development, which is generally seen as the emergence of a civil society. First, a redefinition and reduction of the role of the state, which is tending to provide fewer and fewer public services and is therefore less opposed to the development of non-state organisations. This trend has been underpinned, since the 1990s, by the commitment to political and administrative decentralisation. Supported by the donor community, this change of attitude by the state has enabled many civil-society organisations (CSOs) to get off the ground and take part in project design and implementation and has paved the way for a large number of decentralised partnerships (donors-CSOs).

Decentralised partnerships have emerged in two ways:

- through funds awarded to NGOs from the North to run decentralised actions in partnership with Malagasy organisations;
- through direct funding of decentralised actors, such as municipalities or civil-society organisations in rural areas.

¹ Source : IMF, march 2003

From a sociological point of view, Malagasy civil society is often described as highly compartmentalised and hierarchical, highly consensual and lacking in critical spirit. Extreme poverty and a level of education which is low and varies considerably from region to region mean that Malagasy civil society is still very piecemeal and unstructured and lacks influence in the national political arena. The various groups of actors suffer, moreover, from major structural weaknesses. Most of them have limited institutional capacity and very few are democratically run. The lack of any shared vision, clear identity or a capacity for planning and coming up with new initiatives mean that Malagasy civil society does not in general make its voice heard.

Closely linked to the policies of the financial partners, the development organisations (NGOs, CSOs) which dominate the Malagasy scene are relatively volatile and are rarely based on a membership system. These NGOs are often set up by a group of individuals who have pinpointed a priority sector (often one made popular by donors) and their staff lack professional skills. These organisations generally opt, moreover, for multi-sector programmes not specialising in a particular area and are to a large extent confined to towns (60% of NGOs are in the capital). Associations are, however, proliferating in Madagascar in the areas of local development and decentralisation; their vitality is being shaped by the need to band together for mutual help in reaction to the shortcomings and frailty of the public sector.

The private sector is undoubtedly the most effective, active and best-structured aspect of the non-state sector. Economic operators were very much behind the emergence of non-state actors on the Malagasy public scene in the early 1990s, seeing them as a new opportunity to protest against the stranglehold that the state had on the economy. The private sector has thus opted for a policy of friendly cooperation with the public authorities and is keen to forge partnerships with the state in order to draw up and implement economic programmes based on free trade. The Malagasy private sector is dominated by the four main employers' organisations: the GEM (Malagasy Enterprises' Group), the SIM (Union of Malagasy Industries), Fivmpana (Organisation of Economic Operators of Madagascar) and Conecs (National Economic and Social Council).

Religion occupies a fundamental place in Malagasy culture and society and membership of a religious faith is a key social factor. Churches are therefore an integral

part of the Malagasy landscape and, although their real influence is impossible to quantify, their presence is undeniable. Their highly developed structures and networks give them a social coverage that is unparalleled in civil society. Religious associations and organisations consequently dominate the Malagasy fabric of associations and, via these associations, the churches are running an increasing proportion of the education and health systems. This explains why the church occupies such an important position in Malagasy political life; over the years, the Federation of Christian Churches of Madagascar has become a key player in political debate.

Participation by non-state actors in EC-Madagascar cooperation

Some tradition of participatory approaches before Cotonou

Under the previous Lomé conventions, participation by non-state actors was generally restricted to one-off actions either to pinpoint EDF programmes or to implement them. Some programmes of the 8th EDF, however, especially in the concentration sectors of rural and road development, have particularly interesting participatory strands.

In the road sector, the road rehabilitation programme includes a social back-up programme (worth 1-2% of the value of the works) making it possible to study the programme's impact on roadside populations and users. The purpose of this strand is also to help them to take part in locating and carrying out a number of actions directly linked with this sector. All actions are implemented by international and Malagasy NGOs, enabling various types of concerted action between local actors (social micro-projects, leadership, AIDS awareness and prevention).

The 9th EDF takes a similar approach

Although the EC and the government have become more aware of the importance of involving non-state actors in the various stages of EU-Madagascar programming since the Cotonou Partnership Agreement was signed, such initiatives are very few and far between. The disruption of the programming exercise by the political events of 2002 and the change of government did little, moreover, to foster a coherent and consistent policy on non-state actors.

Box 1: Integration of non-state actors in the rural development sector under the 8th EDF

Overall, the rural development programme focuses on institutional reform, local development and the structuring of the rural world. One of its main features is the wide range of partners. A substantial proportion of financing is implemented directly or indirectly in cooperation with civil society: rural and multi-industry organisations and national and international NGOs. For instance:

- the PAIR (Rural Initiative Support) Programme with funding of EUR 1.9 million, whose activities are run in cooperation with five rural development working groups;
- the PAICAL Programme (Support Programme for Municipality and Local Association Initiatives) with funding of EUR 8 million. Designed originally as a micro-project programme, it includes aspects of social engineering which distinguish it from conventional micro-projects. The drafting of municipal development plans provides a basis here for forging and constructing a social dynamic between elected officers and the populations concerned. This Programme, which is scheduled to end in 2005, should provide a basis for the future Support Programme for Municipalities and Rural Organisations for the Development of the South (ACORDS), which is to be financed under the 9th EDF.

The lack of any well-defined approach or support programme for non-state actors and civil society in particular should not, however, be seen as a lack of resolve to involve them more closely in the development process. Several strands involving non-state actors (i.e. capacity-building, support for consultation, dialogue and process back-up) are contained in the programmes of the 9th EDF in the sectors of rural development, food security and human resource development.

Programming of the 9th EDF

Although non-state actors have not been invited to take part in this programming in any structured way, the preparation of the Country Strategy Paper (CSP) by the Delegation of the European Commission (EC) and the department of the National

Box 2: Where does EC-Madagascar cooperation money go?

With total funding of EUR 267 million, the National Indicative Programme (NIP) is divided between the following sectors:-

- Transport: EUR 135 million
- Rural development and food security: EUR 60 million
- Macroeconomic support: EUR 60 million
- Non-concentration: good governance, etc.: EUR 12 million

Authorising Officer (NAO) provided an opportunity for debate and an exchange of views, thereby enabling a dialogue to be pursued with certain non-state actors, especially at the decentralised level.

For instance, two joint EC Delegation and NAO missions, extended to representatives from the concentration sectors of the 9th EDF (rural development, food security and infrastructure), took place in February 2001. They visited the working groups on rural development in the provinces of Fianarantsoa and Toliara in order to discuss the various priorities. The same participatory approach was adopted in the infrastructure sector and private operators and civil-society organisations were invited to attend the 'Malagasy Road Congress'.

These missions were organised with a view to:

- informing and raising the awareness of elected local authorities, rural organisations, NGOs and local officers responsible for public services of the new directions of EC cooperation policy;
- finding about their experiences with local organisation and structuring;
- drawing up a list of priority needs, problems encountered, etc

EC support for non-state actors

In contrast to what is happening in many countries, EC support for non-state actors in Madagascar is not based on a specific strategy or programme with a financial package, but rather on several strands and back-up measures aiming to introduce a participatory approach and ownership of the various programmes, especially in the concentration sectors. These various strands concern the various actors of cooperation (i.e. central government, local

authorities and non-state actors). Although very conventional, the programmes in these sectors show that the EC is keen to move towards more participatory approaches, centred on multi-actor dialogue (i.e. between central government, local authorities, civil society and the private sector) and geared towards ownership in the long term.

Review of the EU-Madagascar partnership

The opportunity for dialogue with non-state actors offered by the annual review which took place jointly between the Malagasy government and the EC Delegation in July 2003 was not taken up. However, it improved awareness of the

need to involve them in the mid-term review scheduled for November 2004. The annual review also confirmed the need 'to provide, in a transverse and complementary manner, support for human resource development and for specific actions intended to involve non-state actors more closely'. The mid-term review should therefore provide an opportunity to think about ways of involving non-state actors more closely in the partnership.

Box 3: Types of support for the non-state actors in the 9th EDF concentration sectors

a. Types of support

Support for non-state actors in the concentration sectors of rural development and road infrastructure takes various forms, depending on the needs identified:

- building the institutional and human capacity of all the actors of the partnership, with a view to developing their capacity to organise management and action (i.e. rural development, food security, human resources, good governance, etc.);
- improving spaces for concerted action in connection with decentralisation (rural development and food security);
- supporting social engineering (rural development);
- making actors and beneficiaries more responsible (roads);
- ensuring consistent approaches (local rural development).

b. Types of programmes

- The rural development programme (ACORDS), with funding of EUR 60 million, focuses on municipalities and local development organisations, enabling wide-ranging dialogue with those non-state actors promoting social engineering and process logic approaches. Ensuring that the approaches taken by the various municipal actors are consistent is a further focus.
- The PASA II food security programme, with funding of EUR 18 million, is intended in particular to build the capacity of regional structures for concerted action (rural development working groups).
- The specific objective of the training programme in support of development action management (Formged), with funding of EUR 4 million, is to build the capacities of state and non-state actors in development process management. One of the expected results of the programme is 'the structured participation of civil society in dialogue on the programming, monitoring and evaluation of the EU-Madagascar partnership'.
- Two programmes with overall funding of some EUR 10 million have been approved in the area of support for good governance:
 - a programme to support the consolidation of the democratisation process (EUR 1.95 million) in the form of support for the Malagasy Parliament and support for more transparent electoral procedures;
 - a second programme to support the consolidation of the rule of law (EUR 8 million) aims to promote good governance and consolidation of the rule of law by improving the way in which justice functions, in particular through increased participation by civil-society organisations.

Coordination and structuring of the NSA sector

Towards a national platform

Up to now, Madagascar has not had a credible, democratic and transparent platform for non-state actors or civil society. The country does, however, have several thematic platforms, a platform for private-sector organisations and the 'Cotonou' platform chiefly involving organisations of Malagasy employers.

Since the recent political changes, civil society has revived to some extent and some organisations are keen to organise nationally so that they can enter into a dialogue and exert a genuine influence on decision-makers. In 2003, for instance, concerted action between several civil-society organisations, with the support of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation (FES), resulted in the formation of a National Preparatory Committee (CNP) to discuss the establishment of a national platform for civil society.

The keenness of many CSOs to set up a platform for Malagasy civil society and the organisation of a national preparatory workshop were unprecedented in Madagascar. It is too early to say whether these initiatives have gained any real legitimacy since the process was set in motion predominantly by organisations based in Antananarivo. The conflicts of interest and leadership which have come between them up to now and the lack of commonly accepted definitions of the identity, vision and remit of CSOs have unfortunately often slowed down and undermined any initiative to structure civil society in Madagascar. Representing the interests of grass-roots CSOs at a national level is one of the major challenges that may face this type of process. An analysis of various key aspects connected with the principles and mechanisms of representation should help to place the current process on a more legitimate footing (see section on 'Challenges').

Thematic platforms

The sectoral platforms existing in Madagascar have considerably added value in comparison with a national platform claiming to bring together all sectors of civil society. In practice, these sectoral platforms have a broader membership base and the programmes and projects that they have been implementing in the field

Box 4: The National Preparatory Committee (CNP): establishing a national platform for civil society

Stage 1: 1994-1996

- Creation or consolidation of existing groups

Stage 2: 1997-1999

- Review of problems affecting Malagasy civil society
- Stressing the importance of strengthening Malagasy civil-society organisations and the need for a common charter

Stage 3: from 2000

- Creation of several national, regional, sectoral and thematic platforms.
- July 2003: official formation of the CNP with the support of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation.
- March 2004: 'presentation, information and discussion' meeting to review the progress of work on the establishment of a national platform.
- June 2004: national preparatory workshop for the national platform.

Remit and missions of the CNP

Organising the strategic, technical, organisational and financial aspects involved in the creation of the national platform for civil society in Madagascar

- preparing, running and following up the national preparatory workshop;
- preparing, organising and running the national convention of Malagasy CSOs;
- preparing, organising and running the various regional workshops;
- creating a structure for the national platform of Malagasy CSOs.

The objectives of the national preparatory workshop (June 2004)

This workshop, whose aim was to sketch out the outlines of the national platform, was held with the support of UNDP and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. Its specific objectives included:

- making participants aware of the concept of civil society and the platform;
- defining the role of Malagasy CSOs in national and international development;
- raising awareness among local government representatives, thereby encouraging them to work in partnership with civil society;
- discussion and approval by delegates of the CNP and the common charter.

for many years have given them credibility. At national level, these include, for instance, a platform bringing together women's organisations (VR3), a platform focusing on the environment and development (Comode), a platform on civic education (CNOE), a platform on human rights (UNA Civiles), etc. At regional level, platforms to promote and improve human rights have been set up as part of a programme of good governance financed by UNDP. A national platform on human rights is also being set up.

Despite a degree of credibility, none of these platforms has up to now been financially viable and all receive financial support from a donor.

Dialogue mechanisms

National development

President Ravalomanana's populist attitude, openness to dialogue and concerted action and resolve to forger close links between the people and elected politicians have paved the way for various interesting dialogue initiatives:

- During the drafting of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). A more participatory approach was used for this process. During the last exercise, various social groups were consulted at provincial, regional and national level, chiefly on key areas and sectoral actions. Wide-ranging consultation also took place to validate the paper. The government also made substantial use of communication resources to raise the public visibility of this exercise.

- In the private sector, the Minister for Trade has launched public-private dialogue through the CAPE (Support Committee for Steering Enterprise Revival) whose objectives are to harmonise and coordinate all actions promoting the development of the private sector, provide support for project structures and pave the way for a climate of confidence and measures to promote investment. CAPE includes various ministries (i.e. Industrialisation, Trade and Development of the Private Sector, Economic Affairs, Finance and Budget, Employment and Industrial Law, Agriculture, Stockbreeding and Fisheries) and all trade unions, confederations and other professional groups in the private sector. CAPE's partners are the EC, UNDP and France.
- Various dialogue processes involving various types of non-state actor in an ongoing and consistent way have been developed in the area of decentralisation and support for local development. In November 2003, the minister responsible for decentralisation and development of the autonomous provinces and municipalities drew up a 'strategic framework for decentralisation and local development' enabling the financial partners better to target and coordinate their action. Dialogue and concerted action between civil-society organisations and local politicians (especially when drafting municipal action plans) have been set in motion under the various local development programmes financed by donors. The purpose of this type of dialogue is to set, by consensus, priorities for local development. Although they are often organised in ad hoc way, some programmes, financed by GTZ or the European Commission, are increasingly endeavouring to place this interactive dialogue on an institutional footing.

EC-Madagascar cooperation

The various programming exercises which followed one another in Madagascar prior to the 9th EDF have all been closely supervised by the Malagasy government. Despite the opportunities offered by the Cotonou Partnership Agreement and political changes, the 9th EDF programming exercise has not included any national initiative for structured dialogue between the State, the EC and non-state actors. Up to now, however, the Malagasy political environment has not really offered much scope for this dialogue and there have been very few calls from non-state actors to take part in it.

Recent political changes may well show that movement towards a constructive and transparent tripartite dialogue (involving the State, the EC and non-state actors) on key questions linked to the country's development is possible. In return, this dialogue may well help to restore a climate of confidence between the partners and the enforcement of the various provisions of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement on non-state actors.

Key issues and comments

New political parameters

The new government, which has built up a sense of confidence and a degree of credit with the international donor community, seems determined to improve the quality of governance in the country. In July 2003, the EU-Madagascar political dialogue, as set out in Article 8 of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, was launched after its methods and content had been decided by the EU Member States and the European Commission. Immediate agreement on the proposed methods was reached at the first meeting with the Malagasy delegation, thus enabling the dialogue to start. A second meeting, attended by European Commissioner Poul Nielsen, during his official visit to Madagascar, provided an opportunity to pass on a number of views on sensitive issues such as the reform of judiciary powers and the fight against corruption. At present, both sides (especially the Malagasy authorities) consider this dialogue to be a regular, balanced and open process. It has also been cited as a reference model by the Africa Group of the Council of the EU.

The establishment of a small number of key ministries for 'rapid and sustainable development' aiming to make the State apparatus more efficient, and the various dialogue and development initiatives underway, are a clear illustration of the will to move practices in the direction of concerted action and greater participation by the various actors (elected officers, civil society and the private sector) in the country's development. These encouraging signs of openness should in practice help these actors to gain more recognition and to become more involved in strategy formulation and development programme design.

Non-state actors still have a long way to go

The government's openness to the principles of dialogue and concerted action has helped to usher in a new political climate paving the way for new dynamics within the community of non-state actors. Despite interesting initiatives, such as the establishment of the CNP, which is trying to set up a national platform for civil society, they tend not to be seen as important actors and partners in the political arena. In terms of structure and coordination, trends in civil society in 2004 have borne witness to a growing national awareness of the need to work together and become a partner in dialogue in order to gain greater credibility. Unfortunately, this process seems to be slow and chaotic; support from the financial partners is essential for many of these actors as what is really needed is to build their capacity for analysis, negotiation and dialogue.

Capitalising on local development approaches

A particular feature of development approaches and programmes in Madagascar is that they are strongly geared towards local development and decentralised partnerships as a result of the legitimacy enjoyed by municipalities, which have been a particularly strong institutional linkage point since the mid-1990s. Many local development support programmes have therefore been set up over the last ten or so years. Interest in this kind of programme continues to run high, since transparent and democratic management practices that would be difficult to develop at a macro-economic level can be developed and tested at a micro-economic level.

In practice, it is at a local level that concerted action, structuring and dialogue processes have been set up. In some municipalities, there has been a shift away from project-based approaches to process-based approaches enabling exchanges between and concerted action by the various actors, especially as regards the drafting of municipal action plans. Ad hoc consultation committees have also been set up and local organisations have learnt to represent the interests of grass-roots populations.

The process-based approach is becoming increasingly widespread in Madagascar. Its results vary greatly, however, depending on the type of technical and financial support provided by financial partners, which means that the approach still needs to be optimised. It is important to draw conclu-

sions from experiences at a local level in order to promote a long-term vision and encourage an inter-municipal or regional dimension of development.

The attitude taken by financial partners

Despite an open political climate, the attitude taken by financial partners as a whole continues to be overcautious and conservative as regards national non-state actors. The opportunities offered by the recent political changes do not seem to have led in practice to new strategic approaches. Interest in non-state actors from some EU Member States and the European Commission has up to now taken the form of one-off support, in most cases under locally-based programmes in sectors such as rural development and food security. The Formged programme is opening up interesting prospects for the integration and participation of non-state actors in EU-Madagascar policy, but these have yet to be explored. Up to now, no strategy has been drawn up to consult the actors about, or systematically include them in, national development policies and programmes. Similarly, there has been no initiative for dialogue, as is borne out by the lack of participation of non-state actors in the annual review of EU-Madagascar cooperation. Despite a desire to support local multi-actor approaches, the donor community continues to be rather reluctant to take a 'strategic' approach at national level.

Challenges

A new role: non-state actors as partners in national dialogue on development

Long considered as little more than service-providers, non-state actors now have to make sure that they become fully-fledged partners in development. In the new Malagasy political landscape and under the provisions of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, their role and the conditions under which they take part in the various development processes that are underway need to be rethought.

If this is to happen, working methods and practices will have to change. Financial partners are not used to entering into a dialogue with representatives of civil society. This task is often delegated to an international NGO, which acts as an intermediary and is responsible for choosing a

local partner for project implementation. Unfortunately, these practices mean that donors are unable to establish a sustainable dialogue and institutional relations with civil society. Moreover, local organisations are confined to a secondary role, with the result that they cannot try out their capacity for dialogue or establish a relationship of trust with the donor.

EU-Madagascar cooperation should be seen as a learning framework within which the various ongoing programming exercises (i.e. annual or mid-term reviews) should pave the way for a structured and progressive dialogue between the government, the EC and non-state actors. It is therefore important for the financial partners to grasp these new opportunities and help the various actors take part in a coherent and strategic way in both the earlier stages (i.e. dialogue and identification) and the later stages (i.e. implementation and evaluation) of development processes.

Interactive coordination based on the principles of governance

If they are to take on the role assigned to them in the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, non-state actors will first have to carry out major coordination and structuring work nationally in order to demonstrate their added value, make their work

more visible and, in the long term, turn themselves into more credible partners in development. Effective participation by non-state actors in national dialogue will only become a reality if appropriate, efficient, transparent and genuinely participative mechanisms for coordination and concerted action can be found. Moreover, the needs of representativeness, transparency and democratic management set out in the Cotonou Partnership Agreement call for an overhaul of the way in which most civil-society organisations are run. Setting up mechanisms for concerted action in Madagascar between the various levels (i.e. local, regional and national) is a major challenge, given the various organisations' lack of capacity and the country's geographical fragmentation.

The National Preparatory Committee's (CNP) plan to establish a national platform of CSOs is a key strategic step in this respect, but will have satisfactory results only if the various preparatory workshops planned nationally and regionally enable in-depth thinking about the role, vision and remit of this national platform. The production of a list of the most appropriate representative organisations acting as intermediaries between the various levels will also be essential if this structure is to have any legitimacy and to gain recognition. Over and above the notion of structure itself, the principles and mechanisms of governance will be key factors in efficient and credible interactive coordination in future years.

Box 5: Some possible guidelines for a programme to support governance

1. Draw up a strategy on non-state actors setting out guiding principles, target groups and levels of action which should enable a consistent approach within well-defined national policies: decentralisation, good governance, food security and rural development.
2. Capitalise on projects, processes and expertise acquired at local level, i.e. from local development, and establish links with regional and national levels.
3. Launch a process of targeted and regular information and dialogue with non-state actors.
4. Provide a forum for deliberation and discussion, by setting up an informal working party on the Cotonou Partnership Agreement tasked in particular with thinking about effective ways in which non-state actors can participate.

Financial support is needed to help non-state actors to become more structured

The way in which work to structure non-state actors can be financed is a tricky issue requiring some thought. In most cases, only limited funding is available for this work, often preventing the organisations concerned, which often have limited capacity, from developing a long-term strategy.

The National Preparatory Committee, for instance, has received only a single grant to complete its thinking about ways of coordinating Malagasy non-state actors and involving various kinds of actors at various levels. In addition to this thinking, it is important, even essential, to provide financial support ('conditional' financing) for a number of initiatives that are vital to the success of the process until it has sufficient credibility to be viable. The following actions should therefore be financed: the production of a map of non-state actors, the state of play, institutional and organi-

sational strengths and weaknesses, obstacles, etc.

- think-tanks, using exercises to locate what has been decided at various levels (i.e. micro-economic, meso-economic and macro-economic), on the role, vision and terms of reference of non-state actors;
- think-tanks on structuring needs (i.e. vertical, horizontal and thematic structuring) to help the partners to understand their added value, their expertise and their complementary nature.

Rather than opting for an approach which focuses chiefly on the capital, this enables the process to be decentralised and to gain greater legitimacy and coverage.

A programme to build the capacity of non-state actors as part of support for the national governance programme

Participation by non-state actors in EU-Madagascar cooperation is not yet solidly rooted and it is to be hoped that the introduction of interactive consultation mechanisms and a more political conception of their role by the financial partners will make it possible to launch a dialogue on the governance of the country.

Up to the last programming exercise, the EC has chosen to adopt a sectoral approach to the question of non-state actors, by building their capacity chiefly at a micro-economic level. The current political context lends itself, however, to an integrated strategy geared more to promoting good governance and multi-actor partnerships. While maintaining the support provided under the sectoral programmes, it would be a good idea to finance a national programme or national complementary actions in order to build the institutional and structural capacities of non-state actors in a targeted way. In the current political context, these actors should be considered as important partners in and actors of governance. The lack of a consistent and coordinated policy among donors

and the multitude of actions and practices as regards these actors are prolonging a situation from which no one is likely to benefit.

Acknowledgements

The ECDPM and the author gratefully thank officials, individuals and organisations interviewed, and acknowledge their useful suggestions and comments. A special word of thanks is due to Gwénaëlle Corre, the coordinator of this InBrief series, for her support in finalising the brief.

Contact details

National Preparatory Committee (CNP) for the national platform for civil society
Coordinator:

Mrs Randriamampionona Lalao
E-mail: ecclpl@dts.mg

Cotonou Platform (private sector)

Interim President:

Olivier Landry-Rabe /Fivmpama
E-mail: galaxie@dts.mg
fivmpama@simicro.mg

Delegation of the European Commission
Programme FORMFED/ EDF Training Unit
Head of Unit:

Mrs Voahangy Razafialivony
E-mail: formfed@dts.mg

Additional resources

Madagascar-EU Country Strategy and Cooperation Document 2001-2007:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/body/csp_rsp/csp_en.cfm

Preparation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper in Madagascar: Status Report
<http://www.imf.org/External/NP/prsp/2001/tcd/01/113001.pdf>

UNDP in Madagascar:
<http://www.onu.mg/pnudmg.html>

The series is coordinated and edited by Gwénaëlle Corre. Any suggestions and comments should be addressed to: nsa.brief@ecdpm.org

'InBrief' provides summarised background information on the main policy debates and activities in ACP-EC cooperation. These complementary summaries are drawn from consultative processes in which the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) engages with numerous state and non-state actors in the ACP and EU countries. The Centre is a non-partisan organisation that seeks to facilitate international cooperation between the ACP and the EC. Information may be reproduced as long as the source is quoted.

The ECDPM acknowledges the support it receives for the 'InBrief' from the Department for International Development in the United Kingdom, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs in Sweden, Finland and the Netherlands, the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation in Belgium, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and the Instituto Português de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento in Portugal.

European Centre for Development Policy Management
Onze Lieve Vrouweplein 21
NL-6211 HE Maastricht
The Netherlands

Tel +31 (0)43 350 29 00 Fax +31 (0)43 350 29 02
info@ecdpm.org www.ecdpm.org

ISSN 1571-7445