

III MASTER PLAN OF  
THE VALENCIAN  
COOPERATION

VALENCIAN  
GOVERNMENT (SPAIN)

(2014-2017)

INTERMEDIATE  
EVALUATION

EXECUTIVE  
SUMMARY

**EvaluanD** 

**EVALUATION DATA:**

<b>Evaluation Unit:</b> III MASTER PLAN OF THE VALENCIAN COOPERATION (Intermediate Evaluation)	
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## 1. ANALYSIS OF THE EVALUATION UNIT

### 1.1. Background of the Evaluation

The evaluation focuses on the III Master Plan of the Valencian Cooperation for the years 2014-2017. The particularities of this topic require establishing a conceptual definition of what is meant by Master Plan. On the one hand, it is as a planning tool to guide the principles, strategies, and resources related to its programmatic period. On the other hand, it comes as a result of a collegial process and thus it should incorporate the diversity of voices, interests, knowledge and experiences of all the agents involved in the Valencian Cooperation. The latter is part of the Valencian Decentralized Cooperation system together with the regional public administration.

The III Master Plan 2014-2017 defines as a general objective: *"To promote the eradication of poverty, thus contributing to the integral development of individuals, people and impoverished countries, and to the awareness and responsible commitment of the Valencian society to this urgent task. All of this is done through a transformative, coordinated and coherent policy, adopted from the viewpoint of promoting the rights that seeks the empowerment of excluded sectors".*

Based on this overall goal, the specific objectives are:

- To contribute to the human and sustainable development of the communities living in poverty, social exclusion or are victims of violations of human rights, through programs and projects aimed at improving their opportunities and living conditions.
- To promote a sensitive Valencian society committed to the development cooperation, boosting citizenship behaviors responsible for ethical and ecological consumption, fair trade, ethical finance; and a general culture of respect and tolerance towards people, gender equality and the environment.
- To promote the involvement of organizations and Valencian institutions in the development cooperation tasks, and awareness and education for development.
- To consolidate and to improve a model of cooperation based on effective tools that facilitate an intervention in various forms (development, humanitarian action, education and social awareness), and define geographical, sectoral and horizontal priorities, from a 'Management for Development Results' perspective, with a focus on quality.
- To strengthen the Valencian cooperation agents institutionally, favoring building specialized human resources, and increasingly encouraging the networking among them.
- To enhance evaluation as an instrument of transparency, which also contributes to learning, for all the cooperation stakeholders. All of this done with a constant

commitment to improve the quality of interventions and to promote collaborative good practices.

To achieve these objectives, the Master Plan has received reduced funding. Despite the fact that the available budget for the first two years was € 7,225,330, the executed budget was € 3,214,751 in 2014, followed by € 2,400,629 in 2015. Thus the budgetary allocation for cooperation has been of 5,615,380 € for the two years of the Master Plan under evaluation. This amount reflects the total expenditure of the public policy of the *Comunitat Valenciana* (Valencian regional government); being € 1,800,330 allocated to finance the structure of the local administration, and the remaining available € 3,815,050 allocated to cooperation activities through various instruments.

### **1.2. Background, scope and objectives of the evaluation.**

The evaluation assignment highlighted the purpose of improving the quality of the cooperation system, conceived in terms of increasing the effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the Valencian Cooperation. The analysis of the Master Plan's capacity to promote this quality improvement provides suitable information for accountability to citizens and organized civil society in the framework of democratic societies. It has also been requested for the evaluation to determine a set of lessons learned based on evidence and verified findings. It was expected that these learnings could help to improve the Valencian Cooperation model and to adjust it to the new challenges of the current local, national and international contexts.

The scope of this external evaluation covers the years 2014 and 2015. However, the evaluation period takes also into account 2012 and 2013, which corresponds to the previous Master Plan evaluation. This evaluation has also included the diagnosis of the Master Plan that is being evaluated in order to clarify the background and contextual design. The timeframe considered for the evaluation includes activities undertaken until February 2016, since the actions and strategic directions taken by the new administration<sup>1</sup> represent also sources of findings, as they are elements that contextualize the current situation and help to establish a prospective view in terms of recommendations and lessons learned.

The objectives of this evaluation were as follows:

- To know the internal and external degree of adequacy of the III Master Plan design.
- To determine whether the structure, and the management and participation mechanisms provided by the III Master Plan are appropriate to contribute to their goals.

To address the first objective, the evaluation focused on valuing the quality of the diagnosis and design (its implicit logic and intentional causality). The second objective has been addressed through valuing the quality of the processes developed in terms of management and implementation of the allocation of resources.

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<sup>1</sup>The new local administration started its mandate after the regional and municipal elections of May 24, 2015.

These objectives and levels mainly determine the formative nature of the evaluation, as they have contributed to orient the improvement axes in order to guide the structure and processes for achieving the objectives of the Plan. To a lesser extent, the evaluation had a summative purpose since despite the fact that the evaluation has not been able to measure achieved and consolidated results, prospects for achieving the goals and deadlines for these first 2 years evaluated have been established. This summative nature becomes more relevant as it is publicly known that the local administration is proposing the closure of this Master Plan before the end of the validity period which, as planned, should be extended until 2017.

## **2. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE EVALUATION**

### **2.1 Evaluation perspective: Program Theory**

The theoretical and methodological framework of the evaluation has been guided by the Program Theory (Pth). To this end, the Theory of Change and Theory of Intervention of the III Master Plan were reconstructed based on the supporting documentation. More specifically, building the PTh implies defining the logical skeleton of this Master Plan. The main components follow:

- The factors that may influence the unit of evaluation, that is to say, the exogenous contextual elements that affect the functioning of the model and the production of results
- the assumptions that exist around the unit of evaluation, understood as conditions and assumptions of the expected change
- the cause-effect sequential logic, covering the items that form the structure required to implement the Master Plan and the processes towards the achievement of the results.

The Program Theory represents the evaluative framework from which the evaluation questions have been developed, which allows:

- To illustrate the assumptions, conditions and success factors involved in shaping strategic plans guiding the Valencian Cooperation
- To contribute to shape a converging vision towards the Master Plan among all the agents involved in the Valencian Cooperation and the local administration.

### **2.2. Program Theory construction: Dimensions**

The construction of the PTh has started over the analysis of the dimensions of context, structure, processes and results. The identification of the following two levels of analysis constitutes the starting point of this process:

- The strategic level has been defined according to the elements of the inter-institutional system architecture of the Valencian Cooperation, its mechanisms and principles, which are governed by the Master Plan.

- The operating level includes all the developmental actions that have been implemented by the different agents and supported by the local administration through the instruments defined in the III Master Plan.

Graphically, the contents of both levels of analysis is defined in diagram 1.

**DIAGRAM 1.** Level analysis of the processes addressed by the Master Plan



### 2.3. Evaluation questions

The evaluation has responded to the following questions:

- **TABLE 1.** Questions addressed by the evaluation

EVALUATION QUESTIONS AFFECTING THE MASTER PLAN'S GLOBALITY (structural dimension)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Has the design of the Master Plan maintained an adequate internal coherence between its overall objective, specific objectives, priorities, instruments and procedures?</li> <li>▪ Have the necessary resources for achieving the intended objectives of the Master Plan been committed and finally allocated?</li> </ul>

- Are the cooperation agents involved in the Master Plan adequate and sufficient to achieve the objectives?
- Was the Master Plan accompanied by the necessary program plans and mechanisms for the proper development of the policy of the Valencian Cooperation?

**EVALUATION QUESTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE STRATEGIC LEVEL (the questions cover the 4 dimensions)**

- Is the Master Plan properly articulated for the new development scenarios based on the current regional, national and international situation?
- Has the Master Plan had sufficient consultation mechanisms for decision-making between the Valencian regional government and the agents of the Valencian Cooperation?
- To what extent has the Master Plan succeeded in promoting dynamics of learning (knowledge management and evaluation) between the Valencian regional government and the Valencian Cooperation agents?
- Has the Master Plan developed an appropriate policy of accountability for the cooperation agents and the Valencian citizens?

**EVALUATION QUESTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE OPERATIVE LEVEL (the questions cover the 4 dimensions)**

- To what extent has the Master Plan correctly managed the actions related to the horizontal priorities?
- To what extent has the Master Plan implemented adequate mechanisms and procedures for achieving the sectoral targets proposed?
- Have the geographical priorities established in the Master Plan made possible to reduce the dispersion of the actions in the area of development?
- Are the instruments and procedures developed in the Master Plan suitable for the intended purposes?

**2.4. Methods and techniques of data collection**

The evaluation has used qualitative methods and techniques in order to extract the discursive logic from informants. In operational terms, this analysis was performed based on the triangulation of information sources -both between informative sources and the subjects' discourses - as a principle to confer rigor to the evaluation findings. To this purpose, two types of analytical strategies have been distinguished: 1) description of milestones and events (considering the overlapping and consistency of data), and 2) inter-subjective valuing.

The evaluation has used mainly semi-structured in-depth interviews. In total, 83 interviews, a focus group, 4 written questionnaires, and a virtual interview were conducted. Overall, 90 respondents (50 women and 40 men) have been engaged by the evaluation.

The interviewed institutions have been selected according to the following criteria: 1) Institutions represented in the Council of the Valencian Cooperation, and in the Committee of Humanitarian Action and Emergence, 2) institutions which have benefited from the call for subsidies (with financed projects approved, and with projects not funded due to lack of resources), 3) institutions that have received a nominative subsidy, 4) and relevant Valencian Decentralized Cooperation experts, according to its recognition by the local administration and the NGO Valencian Coordinator Network.

Due to the nature of the evaluation and the time constraints, the evaluation team has not considered appropriate the application of quantitative methods and techniques to extract primary information. Instead, it has analyzed the quantitative data of the secondary sources available and linked to the Master Plan, as well as its monitoring tools. This type of information has been particularly useful to define the features and characterization of the evaluation unit and to provide rigorous evolution of indicators linked to operational response levels.

### 2.5. Evaluation limits

The main evaluation constraint has been the lack of time to develop a process according to wider collective spaces and feasible schedules by all agents. This situation, coupled with the lack of anticipated introduction of the evaluation to the agents, has hindered a joint planning of the evaluation process.

Consequently, the evaluation process has been complicated, but it has not prevented the incorporation of a wide diversity of voices, interests and institutional positioning towards the evaluation. This has been possible thanks to the efforts of the local administration by providing the required information, as well as the willingness and commitment of all stakeholders to participate in the evaluation within the narrow deadlines, especially the Valencian Coordinator NGO network, the NGOs, and the local agents located in Alicante and Castellón.

## 3. CONCLUSIONS

### ➤ Conclusions associated with DESIGN:

Conclusion 1: The context of institutional crisis (primarily motivated by the "Blasco court case"), and economic crisis (triggered by a budgetary reduction of the Valencian Cooperation to its historical minimum), caused a drastically abnormal operating stage, especially in the relationship between the cooperation agents and the local administration. Therefore, the design of the III Master Plan occurred in a strongly stressed climate, which started from a rupture of dialogue. The dialogue among development agents is the key element from which to build the governability of the Valencian Cooperation in terms of inter-institutional participation, accountability and learning.

Conclusion 2: The III Master Plan has represented a common attempt to maintain the survival of the Valencian Cooperation. That will has acted as the main unifying element to approach interests and reach minimum agreements; despite the different strategic visions of



development processes represented in the negotiating positions, and the heterogeneity of the co-existing organizational models. The development of the design of the III Master Plan was framed in a consultation process with the Cooperation agents, who participate in the Valencian Council of Development Cooperation, from the basis of a pre-defined draft made by the local administration. In that time, this particular context determined that the workspace became a negotiation, based on placing the priority issues on the quadrennial agenda of the Valencian Cooperation. The lack of a diagnosis of the added value and comparative advantages of the Valencian Cooperation detracted from the capacity to generate relevant information that could have guided the design of the Plan.

Conclusion 3: The III Master Plan maintains a preponderance of the normative elements beyond the technical and political content. In that sense, it has a greater proximity to a Cooperation Law than to a Master Plan. Moreover, the document is formally correct at the different planning levels, but technically compartmentalized, indefinite and strategically weak.

- Formally correct: The vertical logic of the chain of expected results presents a reasonable consistency between the levels (general objective, specific objectives, priorities and instruments) - although with certain omissions - that would enable to explicitly link horizontal priorities and instruments to the specific objectives. The planning establishes a difference between the inward-working orientations, and guidance for the external work of the Cooperation sector, which contributes to structure and clarify both axes. For the first time, the III Master Plan includes a monitoring framework of the expected results, but it is still limited in its capacity to measure results and impact.

- Technically undefined and compartmentalized: Although it contains formal definitions of priorities, instruments and agents, these definitions do not denote a reflective operationalization of its setting in the Valencian Cooperation. In fact, it is possible to discern some links between instruments, agents and issues, all of which could bring light to the joint changing strategy and action proposed.

- Presents a fragile strategic view, by lacking both a reflection of the added value provided by the Valencian Decentralized Cooperation, as well as the comparative advantages provided by each of the cooperation agents and the public administration.

➤ **Conclusions associated with RESOURCES:**

Conclusion 4: The III Master Plan was published without a reference to the budgetary framework. This budget would have served as an indicator of the resources for its planning and development. This gap shows the difficulties to program the Plan's objectives and the possibility that the Valencian cooperation entered into collapse.

Conclusion 5: The budget devoted to development cooperation by the *Generalitat Valenciana* represents a 0.0196% in 2014 and a 0.0213 % in 2015. These figures represent the smallest quantity in all the years of decentralized cooperation of this region. With this budget it has not been possible to comply with the commitments made with the Valencian Citizens, the agents of

the sector and the host countries of the aid. This budget has been executed in the year 2015 and has only been used by a 61.91%.

Conclusion 6: In 2014 the budget allocated to development cooperation for each Valencian citizen has been of 0.49 cents. This places the Valencian Community on the eleventh place in the ranking of the 17 autonomous communities and two autonomous cities of the Spanish Autonomic map. In the year 2015, the lack of calls for subsidies for development cooperation projects, as well as for projects on awareness-raising and education for development has reduced the amount allocated for cooperation to 0.34 cents per person.

Conclusion 7: The institutional crisis and the scarce resources available have affected the local administration resulting in an image of discredit with regard to the sector and the administration itself. This situation has led to a continuous rotation of staff, a very tense and pressed work environment, and a lack of technical, human and economic resources. Fortunately, the Valencian Government has decided to maintain the development cooperation policy.

Conclusion 8: NGOs have suffered the most serious crisis since there is decentralized cooperation. This crisis has been a result of the lack of economic resources and public difficult situation lived by the Local Administration of Valencian Community. NGOs have had to drastically reduce the staff, have lost technical capabilities, and have had to abandon processes of change. Uncertainty has also been created among local partners regarding the future of projects. In spite of this, the feeling of satisfaction of having survived and that the Valencian cooperation has not disappeared predominates among NGOs.

Conclusion 9: Likewise, the Valencian Public Universities have suffered a drastic reduction of resources obtained through conventions, as well as the lack of the call of subsidies for research. However, the Universities have continued to maintain the training in cooperation through the masters and publishing minor internal calls for research projects and university voluntary service in development issues.

➤ **Conclusions associated with AGENTS:**

Conclusion 10: The Master Plan makes a wide recognition of the agents of cooperation, although the capacities of action and interrelationship of agents have been cut by the lack of budget and activities. The capabilities of the actors of the Valencian cooperation have only been exploited in 1/3 of the cases.

Conclusion 11: The Master Plan establishes no role to give recognition to the whole of the societies in which it is intended to produce the change in favor of development. This reinforces a model of vertical cooperation and strong hierarchy.

Conclusion 12: There is a set of topics between the agents of Valencian Cooperation which should be the subject of study and debate to enrich the visions and to deepen the quality of the cooperation. The principal topics are:

- What is the model of decentralized cooperation pursued? To do this it is necessary to know the current state of Valencian Cooperation and to define where it wants to lead. This will be the basis to define who should be agents of cooperation together with their roles and commitments.
- How to build a model of cooperation that may be cooperative and not competitive? The challenge of the goals of sustainable development, the need to harmonize actions and increase the effectiveness of aid should encourage the search for collaborative solutions.
- Must the private sector have a role in cooperation actions, and if so, how should its governance be?
- What is the role of the various social groups and the linkage between sectors of social mobilization in relation to new models of cooperation?
  
- **Conclusions associated with HARMONIZATION**

Conclusion 13: The Declaration of the SDGs has been carried out to half of the duration of the III Master Plan. Not modifying the Master Plan would mean that the years 2016 and 2017 would fall outside the international guidelines for the policy of development inspired by the framework of the United Nations.

Conclusion 14: The III Master Plan is harmonized with the public policy on issues of development cooperation, complying with its principles and sharing its commitments through the Framework of Cooperation Agreement. Likewise, the Valencian Decentralized Cooperation is articulated with the other Autonomous Communities through the annual meetings. Even so, during the period evaluated no actions or decisions have been generated.

Conclusion 15: The harmonization between the Valencian administrations has been nonexistent during the validity of the Master Plan. The causes that explain the lack of harmonization have been the internal crisis of the local administration, the reduction of resources to a minimum, and the practical disappearance of the local entities as funders of development projects. The Interdepartmental Committee and the Inter-territorial Committee have not been summoned, hindering coordination among the different sectors and levels of administration.

- **Conclusions associated with JOINT PARTICIPATION (GOVERNABILITY):**

Conclusion 16: The existing spaces of formal participation (Council of Valencian Development Cooperation, and Committee of Humanitarian Action and Emergency) have been proved as insufficient, as they have represented the only formal and informal mechanisms available for channeling the participation of all actors and agents that are part of the Valencian System of Cooperation. Consequently, they have been the only pillars on which to base its governance.

Under this consideration, their calls have resulted dispersed (3 calls in the period of 2 years in the case of the Council), all of which have been exacerbated by the absence of Permanent Working Groups dependent on them.

Conclusion 17: The lack of Working Groups has undermined the possibilities of reconstructing the technical dialogue by eliminating work dynamics, and keeping the technical profiles largely out of the Cooperation discussion. These profiles are aware of the needs, barriers and difficulties affecting Valencian Cooperation. In practice, given the limited budget available and capacity of advocacy that could be exerted, the efforts of participation of the entities in a structural limitation context have been focused on their mission objectives. For this reason, they have been rejecting their participation in the Permanent Working Groups which have been convened by the public administration.

Conclusion 18: The Valencian Cooperation Council has played a limited public accountability work, very marked by hierarchical power dynamics, in response to formal obligations under their respective regulatory rules. In fact, the issues put on the agenda, times, channels and methodologies of participation have been set by the Presidency, held by the public administration. All of this has resulted in a continuation of the low collaborative inertias, sustained by confrontational -rather than cooperative- relationships.

Conclusion 19: The Committee of Humanitarian Action and Emergency, as a space for joint Emergency Humanitarian Action of the Decentralized Valencian Cooperation, has played a relevant role. However, it requires a reform in order to properly assume its role of providing fast, transparent and harmonized funds, to face the humanitarian crises more effectively.

Conclusion 20: The centralization of spaces and decisions in Valencia (the capital city of the Valencian Community) does not help the inclusion of the needs of the development agents from other territorial realities within the framework of the Valencian Decentralized Cooperation; specifically, those located in Alicante and Castellón (the other 2 provinces).

➤ **Conclusions associated with LEARNING:**

Conclusion 21: The Knowledge Management (KM) in the Valencian Cooperation is still incipient. The absence of jointly planned dynamics of work has prevented a rebuilt trust between the agents and the public administration itself. Ultimately this situation impedes polishing a joint vision of the future, as a prerequisite for promoting the construction of collective knowledge with a strategic sense. In addition, there are no shared sub-systems of data collection through which to provide tangible and useful information. This type of evidence is capable of being interpreted as a learning, by means of being included inside the thinking matrix of the Valencian Cooperation.

Conclusion 22: Despite the considerable effort and strong impetus given to evaluations linked to projects by the local government, the evaluation culture of the Valencian Cooperation remains weak in terms of learning because of:

(1) the centrality of the prescriptive evaluations,

(2) the compartmentalization of the evaluation resources (low technical quality and no strategic direction or improvement)

(3) lack of strategic evaluations

(4) lack of meta-analysis of evaluations, which prevents comparative analysis of sectoral intervention models or successful instruments,

(5) the limited availability of resources and of evaluation culture do not allow to propose mixed evaluations,

(6) the lack of means to promote performance improvement plans arising from the evaluations.

Conclusion 23: In the Valencian Cooperation there is a low learning-oriented evaluation culture, mainly because of the underutilization of the evaluation tool in this sense. Thus, evaluation has been turned into a mere administrative formality. In this scenario, creating a system of institutionalized evaluation has acquired a greater sense in terms of supervision and control. Beyond the operative lessons that may arise from evaluations linked to a specific project, there has been largely squandered resources and evaluation efforts in a sense of learning. Moreover, a misconception of the evaluation has remained among agents and local administration, in which mistakes and failures are not conceived as learning opportunities.

Conclusion 24: There has been perceived an improved effort and intentionality by the local administration in boosting mostly the recommendations arising from the evaluation of the II Master Plan. However, the lack of budget to promote them, as well as a sufficient strong action have limited and prevented its complete incorporation.

➤ **Conclusions associated with ACCOUNTABILITY:**

Conclusion 25: The public transparency of the Valencian Cooperation has resulted in deficit in the period evaluated, especially when taking into account the facts of Valencian corruption recently sentenced in court. For this reason, it is necessary to incorporate a higher standard of transparency as is the general rule in democratic societies. Rebuilding the confidence of agents and citizens requires an ambitious opening, which goes beyond compliance with the Law on Transparency, Access to Public Information and Good Governance, and allows to respond to the legitimate demands of citizens and / or organizations.

Conclusion 26: The administrative transparency of the agents towards the public administration is mediated by an audit from an administrative perspective, focused on the expenditure control. This administrative communication has focused the efforts and dominated the interlocutions of all the stakeholders and the public administration. To that extent, the technical communications are fully diluted and subordinated within the administrative controls and procedures.

Conclusion 27: The accountability has been nearly non-existent during the period under review, as there have been neither inter-agency processes, nor by the local administration unilaterally. The reported experiences of accountability in the Valencian Cooperation represents isolated

cases carried out by the agents, which are not known or not used as inputs to generate learning from which to enhance this common priority.

➤ **Conclusions associated with PRIORITIES:**

Conclusion 28: The establishment of the horizontal priorities identified in the Master Plan (Human Development, Human Rights, Gender and Environment) is interpreted as the way to make it operational, in spite of the fact that the reality is holistic and global. Therefore, development actions that include all the horizontal priorities should be planned.

Conclusion 29: The use of horizontal priorities has been limited to its consideration as a criterion that counts toward the ex-ante evaluation of projects to subsidize. The importance and relevance of its use in the projects of cooperation has not been reinforced with complementary activities for their empowerment.

Conclusion 30: The selected sectoral priorities virtually cover all areas in which they work in cooperation. This breadth of sectoral priorities favors a significant amount of organizations through their areas of specialization. However, it does not grant any priority or selection that can be defined as a specialty of the Valencian Cooperation.

Conclusion 31: The inclusion of the awareness and education for development within the sectoral priority of quality, reduces the visibility of work in these areas. This is especially the case in the decentralized cooperation due to the proximity existing between the agents and the citizens. Humanitarian Action has been diffused within the Master Plan, and is thus not included in any priority.

Conclusion 32: The reduction in priority countries has been one of the most questioned by agents. This is so mainly because it affected their historical links with local partners in processes of long term development. The true geographical reduction as a result of the cuts has made possible the finance of projects in 9 out of the 13 selected countries, although none in the countries identified as of specific temporary attention.

Conclusion 33: The geographical concentration does not ensure "per se" the coordination between agents, projects, or strategies. Moreover, the reduction of the geographical space has not generated a greater effectiveness and better management of the Valencian Cooperation.

➤ **Conclusions associated with INSTRUMENTS and PROCEDURES:**

Conclusion 34: In 2014 the most frequently used instruments have been the economic cooperation followed by the Education for Development and Awareness, and Humanitarian Action. The research and training and the strengthening of cooperation agents have had a very minor role. In 2015, the lack of call of subsidies to development projects and development education and awareness raising, alters the proportionality with respect to the previous year, giving greater prominence to the Humanitarian Action. Technical cooperation has not been funded through any mechanism nor subsidy.

Conclusion 35: The financing of annual projects is contrary to the nature of the development

processes that require time, planning and coordination. This model of call obliges NGOs and administration to permanent bureaucratic processes that absorb all the work capacity and prevent the development of studies, reflection, and participation. These processes are very important to generate a policy of decentralized cooperation and oriented to produce changes in depth.

Conclusion 36: The delay generated in the revision and justification of the projects of development and awareness-education for development, during the period of the previous administration, is leading to a very complex and untimely process. This evidences the need to find more modern and agile mechanisms for financial control.

Conclusion 37: The decline of resources has reduced the use of other instruments (Technical Cooperation, Research and Training and Humanitarian Action). The management of these instruments generates differences in opinions between the agents who consider that it is required to clarify its use before advancing in its financing.

#### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

##### ➤ Recommendations associated with DESIGN:

Recommendation 1: The design of the Master Plan must focus on accomplishing 2 functions that conform it as a strategic planning document: 1) establishing consultation processes capable of bringing out a strategic shared definition, based on what is understood by the Valencian Decentralized Cooperation, and 2) defining a four-year work framework. The first function requires a diagnosis of the comparative advantages (of the experiences and capabilities of the Valencian Cooperation agents), and of the value added (of the framework and strategic vision of the Valencian Cooperation). Both inputs need to guide a decision-making process related to the next Master Plan.

Recommendation 2: Incorporating into the Master Plan document a clear strategic vision of a technical nature, allowing to elucidate not only the regulatory aspects that are expected to develop in the four-year period (lists that define the margins of action), but also capture the interrelationships between the main agents, instruments, procedures, etc.

Recommendation 3: Maintaining and improving the definition of a framework of expected results in the design of the next Master Plan. The indicators defined within this system allow to make available to the local administration and all the agents, useful, timely, complete and clear information to guide the sectoral decisions.

##### ➤ Recommendations associated with RESOURCES:

Recommendation 4: The Master Plan must be accompanied by an economic report to anticipate and plan the policy of cooperation, as well as to have the political commitment.

Recommendation 5: Valencian cooperation policy must keep the horizon of 0.7 stated in Law 6/2007 and the Valencian ombudsman's report, as an achievable goal with a deadline and schedule. While this occurs, as a minimum, it should establish a budgetary commitment

according to the population and GDP of the Valencian Community in comparison with the rest of the communities.

Recommendation 6: Work must be done in the reconstruction of the administration through the generation of professional teams in sufficient quantity and technical expertise in the area of cooperation. It would be advisable to make a study of different administrative models according to other autonomous communities and the Spanish State. It is necessary to recognize the effort that has been made by the team of the local administration that has developed its functions under such adverse conditions, and to improve their capabilities from spaces of continuous training.

Recommendation 7: The flow of resources needed to recover the Valencian Cooperation should also include support to the improvement of technical capabilities and staff of the NGOs. It is possible to provide direct support for these concepts from the study of the distribution of financial items in the calls for subsidies. Similarly, consideration should be given to the possibility of proposing calls for the strengthening of the organizations through access to thematic or sectoral technical assistances.

Recommendation 8: It is necessary to recover the resources for the financing lines of the Valencian public universities in order to ensure training in cooperation. Likewise, there should be discussion talks to explore other funding instruments and support based on their needs.

➤ **Recommendations associated with AGENTS**

Recommendation 9: The skills and capacities of the Valencian agents of cooperation are wide and varied. All instruments considered as appropriate must be developed in order to reach their full potential. In addition to the organization of the work of the agents, it is necessary to seek mechanisms of articulation that avoid the fragmentation and dispersion of aid.

Recommendation 10: The presence of the Valencian administration in the aid recipient countries must be promoted as a means of mutual recognition, understanding of the problems and support to the agents and not only for fiscal control. Likewise, it is recommended to seek procedures for transferring the voice and presence of the representatives of the groups to Valencian territory. All this contributes to the process of construction of global citizenship.

Recommendation 11: It is necessary to create spaces of joint reflection to define the main strategies of cooperation. The main issues to deal with would be the definition of Valencian cooperation, the cooperation between stakeholders, how to manage the presence or not of the private sector, and how to link the social movements to the cooperation.

➤ **Recommendations associated with HARMONIZATION:**

Recommendation 12: The Master Plan needs to be updated in order to incorporate the new Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

Recommendation 13: It is interesting to know the work developed by the AECID and SGCID (Spanish cooperation institutions), and to deepen relations with the development agencies of



other autonomous communities because of the shared nature of the model of de-centralized cooperation. The Valencian Community should continue to participate in a more active manner in the annual meetings and even consider the possibility of hosting it, a fact that has not taken place to date.

Recommendation 14: As reflected in the Master Plan, the *Generalitat Valenciana* (Valencian Government), has the responsibility to coordinate the local administrations of the municipalities and generate spaces between them. These needs should be met, searching for the most effective mechanisms to achieve a joint work of all the administrations that deal with the work in development cooperation. It is considered a great need for the recovery of the Inter-territorial Committee and the Interdepartmental Committee.

➤ **Recommendation associated with JOINT PARTICIPATION (GOVERNABILITY):**

Recommendation 15: Reversing the confronted dialogue, deeply rooted in the relational history of the Valencian Cooperation, to one characterized by a more collaborative nature. This requires a permanent technical work, which must be held over the participative reactivation of a particular agenda of themes and rhythms, with a common definition of goals and urgent issues to be pursued by all the agents. These elements must be built on new dynamics of knowledge and mutual respect. The collaborative spaces should be streamlined according to a continuous improvement of dynamics, with participation of de-centralized mechanisms throughout all the Valencian Community (Alicante and Castellón).

➤ **Recommendations associated with LEARNING:**

Recommendation 16: The impulse of a data collection and information subsystem is necessary but not sufficient for a Knowledge Management oriented by learning. It requires a design of subsystems and information categories that responds to a shared strategic vision and common interests, whose content should be accessible by all agents.

Recommendation 17: The creation of inter-institutional learning mechanisms must come from a mutual understanding and exchange of information and experiences between the cooperation agents and the local administration. Ideally, these mechanisms should emerge from a diagnosis of the comparative advantages of each of them. This phase would approximate positions, and at the same time, would clarify and legitimize the cooperation agents from their previous work, contributing with rebuilding trust in the sector. Formal and informal working spaces with clear purposes, designed to address specific needs must also be promoted. To this end, it is necessary to acquire and/or activate existing capacities between the agents of the Valencian Cooperation in order to boost processes of collective construction of learning, for which the use of participatory methodologies related to the collective construction of knowledge (Participatory Action Research, Systematization of Experiences, strategic, participatory and use-oriented evaluations, etc.) should be promoted.

Recommendation 18: Reversing the low evaluation culture with a learning purpose requires giving the evaluations a sense and tangible use, from the design, promotion and dissemination

of pilot experiences of strategic evaluations capable of showing how other types of evaluations (designed by and for the learning) can contribute to improving the quality of the Valencian Cooperation.

Recommendation 19: Creating a performance improvement plan aimed at implementing the recommendations arising from the evaluation report. This plan should be interinstitutionally defined between all actors and the local administration, from a collective analysis of the relevance of incorporating each of the recommendations regarding the added value from each of them to the Valencian Cooperation. In addition, the plan must contain a list of the improvements prioritized, with their corresponding actions, responsibilities, resources and schedules.

➤ **Recommendations associated with ACCOUNTABILITY:**

Recommendation 20: Publishing the information requirements of the agents, as listed below:

- (1) reactivating the database of the funded projects
- (2) publication of the minutes of all the participation spaces (Council of the Valencian Cooperation, Humanitarian Committee, Interregional and Interdepartmental Committees), including non-formal spaces,
- (3) developing and publicly releasing an annual report of activities of the Valencian Cooperation,
- (4) making publicly available the information related to public contracts,
- (5) Disclosing fully and easily interpretable annual budgets collecting the full funding for the Valencian Cooperation; according to the guidelines of the Official Development Assistance.

Recommendation 21: Developing procedures and mechanisms for an increased transparency of the public management, through:

- (1) minimizing the nominative subsidies and subjecting them to exceptional cases that should be analyzed and revised by the Council of Valencian Cooperation
- (2) improving the transparency of competitive bidding processes, through an adjustment of the ex-ante tool, and a process of public control over the profiles of the local evaluators
- (3) creating interagency mechanisms to ensure transparency and to insert them into the decision-making processes of the Council of Valencian Cooperation, the maximum governance body.

Recommendation 22: It is necessary to reach consensus oriented to create a decree that univocally orients the administrative justifications for the subsidies, through which to reduce arbitrary interpretations. Moreover, it should creatively seek and propose control mechanisms aimed at reducing administrative burdens, both for the administration and the agents. These mechanisms should be adapted to the wide and complex casuistry of the development cooperation while avoiding an opaque transparency and incompatibilities with higher order

laws.

Recommendation 23: Improving the institutionalized accountability between agents of the Valencian Cooperation and the local administration requires:

- (1) the promotion of a shared strategic inter-institutionally vision, oriented towards generating a common message and built over diverse but convergent spaces and communication channels
- (2) creating informative inputs for thinking over the accountability in an inter-institutional manner. This requires the improvement of the participatory and institutional learning processes
- (3) establishing channels of monitoring and technical dialogue, to bring the public administration closer to the problems and difficulties faced in the projects, with the intention of expanding its managerial perspective
- (4) promoting pilot projects of supra-programmatic technical character, such as a meta-evaluative analysis from which to create communicable messages, communication strategies and spaces oriented to the accountability,
- 5) clarifying suitable paths of accountability, according to previous successful experiences, in order to guide and inspire agents and the local administration,
- (6) incorporating accountability toward the citizenship, the local organizations and the recipients of the cooperation actions, as a criterion for project financing,
- (7) opening the sector to the environment, innovation and an inclusive conception of North and South, based on a vision of global citizenship. This vision will be able to interpolate processes of "glocal" change, and crosscutting learnings towards solidarity will emerge as an expression based on social justice.

➤ **Recommendations associated with PRIORITIES:**

Recommendation 24: The horizontal priorities (Human Development, Human Rights, Gender and Environment) must be promoted as a whole, to be aligned with the sustainable development paradigm. The Master Plan must emphasize the importance of horizontal priorities through the establishment of strategies for ensuring their full and rigorous mainstreaming in the projects.

Recommendation 25: Sectorial priorities must be organized according to the definition of strategy adopted for the Valencian Cooperation. It is important that the sectorial priorities be adapted to the capacities, resources and comparative advantages offered by the Valencian Cooperation.

Recommendation 26: It is necessary to rethink the awareness and EPD, as well as humanitarian action within the Valencian cooperation policy. Its recognition as a sectoral priority must be a work prior to its development as an instrument.

Recommendation 27: The establishment of geographical criteria must be done through a rigorous study of the consequences that it generates, using for them criteria of quality and effectiveness. This should be a transparent and public process within a comprehensive strategy to guide the coordination between agents and administrations.

➤ **Recommendations associated with INSTRUMENTS and PROCEDURES:**

Recommendation 28: The challenge posed by the incorporation of the sustainable development goals and increase of resources for Valencian cooperation imposes an in-depth review of the cooperation instruments. It is important to think if the fragmentation of the instruments and its distribution between agents is necessary. In contrast, it should encourage the interrelationship between them, perhaps by sharing instruments according to the capabilities of each agent and institution.

Recommendation 29: Cooperation instruments appropriate to the needs of development are required, in the line of favoring multiannual and long-term programs, in which the changes are interpreted as progress or processes of complex strategies.

Recommendation 30: It is necessary to find mechanisms that allow to modernize the instruments of accountability. This affects the entities that have the obligation to prove the impeccable use of public resources. The administration should also implement appropriate mechanisms in policies of cooperation within their administrative structures.

## 5. LESSONS LEARNED

Lessons learned bring together the main ideas that must be taken into account in the drafting and implementation of a Master Plan. They transcend the recommendations aimed at improving the plan to convert them into experiences that can be considered useful in a wider spectrum of interest.

1-The Master Plan must be born from a strategic consultation process among all the actors of cooperation. The document must be based on the real capacities and the agreement on the nature of the Valencian cooperation.

2-The Master Plan must translate the vision of change that is expected. Furthermore, the document must include the strategies, mechanisms and actions which the various agents and institutions must exercise in order to carry it out. The master plans require a defined and politically approved budget.

3- The team in charge of the Master Plan implementation must be sufficient in number. They must have knowledge and experience in the field of development cooperation in addition to their training as officials of the Administration. This requires specialized training, languages, knowledge of the international framework, and awareness of the nature of the problems to face.

4- The distribution of the resources among the instruments of development must be consistent with the objectives pursued by each of them. It must ensure that all have a share proportional

to their needs.

5- The development of the Master Plan must recognize the differentiated nature of the cooperation agents, promoting their capacities. The implementation must promote the coordination between the stakeholders in order to strengthen a more coordinated and efficient cooperation.

6- The *Generalitat Valenciana* must play an active role as a promoter of processes of information and coordination between the various Valencian public administrations. Simultaneously, it must be coordinated with other Autonomous Communities to develop policies of international cooperation for development.

7- The collegiate participation of development agents and institutions requires common spaces, shared agendas and agreed objectives in order to promote the development of strategic processes of inclusion.