

# Asian Regional Workshop on Locally-Led Cooperation through the lens of PGE and Cluster Green

## Onboarding online event – 22.01.2025

1. Welcome
2. Getting a sense of the participants' knowledge on LLC
3. A brief introduction on the SDC Guidance on LLC
4. Participants' view on key questions to be addressed during the workshop
5. Logistical aspects

### 1. Welcome

- ⇒ Change of title within SDC: from Locally-Led Development to **Locally-Led Cooperation**
- ⇒ Expectations from the Organizational Team were shared (Benoit, Adrian, Ursula, Shamshod, - Lisa Gampp excused)

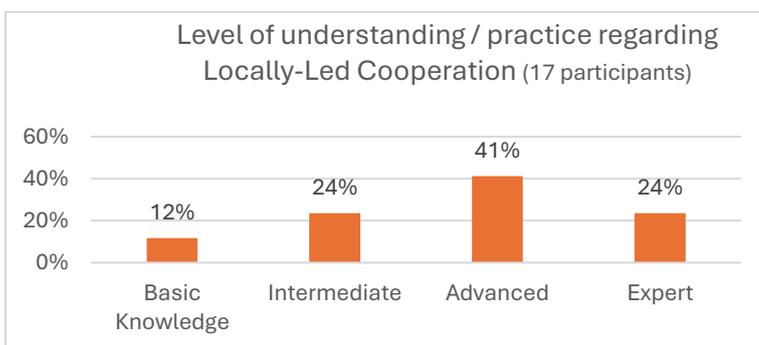
### 2. Getting a sense of the participants' knowledge on LLC

- ⇒ Polls' results (3x)

How would you rate your current level of understanding / practice regarding Locally-Led Cooperation?

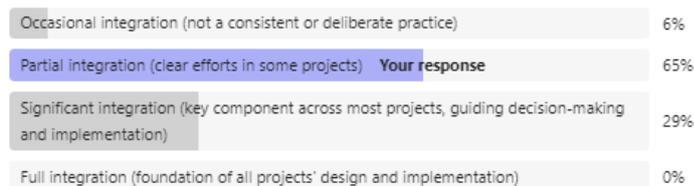


17 responses



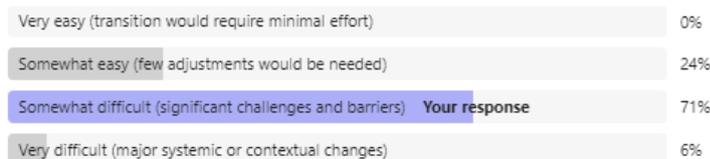
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Considering your current project's portfolio, how would you rate the actual integration of Locally-Led Cooperation approaches into your work?



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How easy or difficult do you think it would be to take a step toward greater integration of Locally-Led Cooperation approaches in your work?



17 responses

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### 3. A brief introduction on the SDC Guidance on LLC (video: 22')

⇒ See PPT, presentation from Pascal Richard (full presentation on the Guidance during the workshop)

#### Questions & Answers (video: 1h.03')

##### Q: Do you think there will be any surprising aspects in the new guidance?

A: No big surprises, but two important points:

- Why not local should be a default question that we should ask ourselves.
- It's maybe less about the tools than about the mindset – how do we incentivize our mindsets?

##### Q: What is finally new out of all this?! Why now?

A: Three reasons that are both internal and external. The demand for a greater role for local actors has propelled this issue more on the agenda. It is now also in the new Swiss International Cooperation Strategy (not in the past one) – internal drive. We never set ourselves goals on it.

##### Q: Why are we struggling to work with local actors? Why are we not there yet?

A: It is contextual. Some are already almost there, others are still lower. The goals are at SDC global level. Five areas considered as obstacle:

1. Financial/financial modalities/tools => not the tools but how we use them
2. Risk management => the way we use the partnership risk assessment itself for example
3. Lack of goals on localization
4. Role of intermediaries => we don't engage with them on how they can do better
5. People/Culture/Skills => we don't provide enough opportunities for national staff to take up more responsibilities and to encourage that

##### Q: How to factor in spoilers/risks in difficult context?

A: The idea is not to work with local actors in the same way everywhere and achieve the 20% goal of funding going to local actors everywhere. Key questions are: if we want to reach this overall goal, where can we be active? In which ways can we support that? We need to build on the realities of the ground while having the role of local actors in mind.

### 4. Participants' view on key questions to be addressed during the workshop

⇒ Expectations from the workshop (see PPT)

⇒ Mad tea chat (1 to 4)

<p><b>1. ONE MESSAGE THAT I TAKE FROM THE HQ GUIDANCE ON LLC WHICH CAN BE USEFUL FOR ME IS....</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Who do we understand as Local Actors</li> <li>● It is definitely worth investing (much) more efforts into promoting LLC</li> <li>● That SDC is willing to invest in localization and ensure the resources and instruments to do so!</li> <li>● that there is an HQ guidance now...</li> <li>● more core contribution to local partners</li> <li>● that we theoretically have the tools to be better</li> <li>● Targets and practical ways to reach it</li> <li>● How to integrate LLC as strategic approach in our country / regional program</li> <li>● It remains to be seen, so far nothing new.</li> <li>● Shaping the future portfolio/programme</li> <li>● Models (best practices)</li> <li>● Local ownership and local led solutions</li> <li>● Just do LLC</li> <li>● more strategic engagements with local actors</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. THE BIGGEST OPPORTUNITY I SEE FOR ADVANCING LLC IN MY CONTEXT...</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● talk with others who are on the same journey</li> <li>● give more support to civil society</li> <li>● SDC's commitment at HQ level and the field's interest to do so</li> <li>● My advising role to all interested country offices and connecting it to the parallel work on transversal governance going on in 2025 for the whole SDC</li> <li>● Having a mechanism what will provide capacity and compliance support to local actors to ensure transparency</li> <li>● new phases to be prepared in 2025 can be bolder on LLC</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• establishing funding mechanisms with / for local actors</li> <li>• is the absence of international / Swiss implementing partners</li> <li>• core contribution to specific actor for LLC and targeting the government as key actors</li> <li>• Ensuring equitable partnerships with our strategic intermediary / international partners</li> <li>• ... raising awareness within my team (Section Water) and with our partners i.e. becoming a LLC Ambassador</li> <li>• making tender rules easier (the one about existing projects of the same size, scope and budget), at the moment they are unrealistic for local actors</li> <li>• willingness of counterparties</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. WHAT I FIND CHALLENGING ABOUT IMPLEMENTING LLC IS...</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• compliance of SDC for financial management and requirement for partnership</li> <li>• funding modalities</li> <li>• SDC's limited risk appetite and the compliance mechanisms in place</li> <li>• local actors are not always ready in terms of capacity and understanding of core contributions</li> <li>• to change our mindsets and to observe also negative consequences of LLC to prevent risk.</li> <li>• Compliance, government policy influencing</li> <li>• The mindset of several Swiss colleagues in management positions (Ambassadors and Head of Cooperation) has been developed more towards focussing on Swissness than on LLC. Hence, mindset change is the biggest challenge. Next: risk appetite.</li> <li>• closer follow up with local partners and increased workload for our PCM (especially financial controlling/support)</li> <li>• SDC internal processes and compliance demands, combined with lack of HR (LLC requires more engagement /HR)</li> <li>• If we can be coherent in advancing this (alignment of instruments, leadership directions and political developments in Switzerland and in countries we work in)</li> <li>• ... ensuring coherence between the concept/theory and the implementation i.e. walking the talk</li> <li>• having options to support small initiative at community level rather than just transferring money to big local NGOs which we often do</li> <li>• supporting local actors with nascent institutional setup</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. A SPECIFIC SKILL OR KNOWLEDGE THAT WOULD HELP ME CONTRIBUTE MORE EFFECTIVELY TO LLC IS...</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Always getting more precisely the diverse contexts and approaches.</li> <li>• more timely contextual/political knowledge to better understanding operational challenges faced by our local implementing partners on the ground</li> <li>• to rightfully and honestly ask the question "why not local?" for any project intervention</li> <li>• models/lessons learnt from other countries with similar context (!) who have already done it</li> <li>• Operational LLC Guidance</li> <li>• Better understanding of how it has been done, or tried and failed, in different contexts and on different themes</li> <li>• approach and guidance which enable the LLC process; also the negotiation skill</li> <li>• ... defend this idea/approach more strongly against internal resistances and excuses for not moving forward</li> <li>• strong trust and connection with local actors</li> <li>• More time to think through and load for potential local actors, authority to design programme and not to be overburdened with administrative tasks at work which often kill innovative idea</li> </ul>

#### 4. Participants' view on key questions to be addressed during the workshop

Group 1 (Renate, Adrian, Many, Shamshod)	Group 2 (Benoit, Nepal, Shirin, Davide)	Group 3 (Elena, Richard, Thanakone, Daniel)	Group 4 (Firuz, Ursula, Viviane, San)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We would like to have a <b>common understanding of LLC</b> and what would the <b>approach be in Asia</b>? What could be <b>improved for the own programme</b>?</li> <li>What is in the guidance and what do I do now? What <b>tools</b> do we have to implement LLC in future? How do we translate it in <b>practice</b>?</li> <li>What had been <b>hindering us in the past to localize</b>? Why are we still struggling?</li> <li>How can we advocate for LLC internally and <b>counteract possible pushbacks</b>?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discuss <b>challenges</b>, esp. our SDC's institutional constrains</li> <li>How to relieve local staff from admin/PCM tasks towards <b>more time for identification of local actors and support to them</b>: need for good practice examples.</li> <li>How can we ensure more funding to local actors =&gt; discussion on <b>modalities and possible funding size</b> to local actors: learn from experience (e.g. Myanmar?)</li> <li>How to get our <b>financial counterparts</b> on board with LLC?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What will be new for me in LLC which I'm already applying in my daily work / responsibilities?</li> <li>What could be my <b>role</b> in the future? Including role of SDC local field staff</li> <li>How can we improve <b>quality</b> (not only quantity) of LLC work</li> <li>learn purposefully from each other to see that/<b>how LLC is done and reflect on how to improve</b> and build on what people are already doing <u>Comment</u>: important to value the people for their expertise level, to keep motivation level high and to make everyone progress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fruitful exchanges and <b>joint ownership among governance &amp; water people</b></li> <li>Clear idea on how to be more <b>inclusive</b> (whole system approach) on LLC, and <b>include others, namely also finance, admin and management</b></li> <li>Our wish is also to <b>connect with the other members</b> (of the governance, or water, across the networks), and between representations</li> </ul>

#### Additional questions (from earlier discussions)

1. What do we mean by equitable partnerships?
2. HQ: expectations are growing (also to size of CPs, etc.) - how does this conflict/match with the localization agenda?
3. How can we avoid potential spoilers/risks in fragile and also authoritarian/centralized governance contexts?
4. How to facilitate the contribution to local actors? What are the mechanisms?

#### Traveling to Samarkand and additional preparation information

- ⇒ See PPT
- ⇒ Majority has not yet booked the transportation
- ⇒ Several don't know yet whether they need a visa
- ⇒ Passport copies are needed for all
- ⇒ Link to excel for flight details will be shared
- ⇒ Shamshod (shamshod.yunusov@eda.admin.ch) will send the new link for the visa application (old link does not work anymore)
- ⇒ Instructions for the case studies will be sent end of January; questions to be addressed to Adrian ([adrian.scherler@eda.admin.ch](mailto:adrian.scherler@eda.admin.ch))
- ⇒ We would like to know you better in an informal way => Fill in your bio on [Padlet](#)
- ⇒ The Swiss Embassy in Uzbekistan needs to clarify if they can organize a visa on arrival for the ones who cannot obtain a visa before. Invitation letters needed (e.g for Nepali) will also be provided by the Embassy.