

THE EXTERNAL ACTIONS OF FRENCH LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS

STUDY ON THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF A CROSS-SECTORAL PUBLIC ACTION

This publication is based on the doctoral thesis of Mary Gely, "The external actions of French local and regional governments: study on the implementation of a cross-sectoral public action, a vehicle for connections between territories and the outside world", published in 2016 at the University of Grenoble Alps (France).

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In her thesis, the author states that she chose the semi-structured interview as a qualitative method of research. The semi-structured interview "*allows the respondents to express themselves freely*", "*to collect the subjective point of view of everyone on how [external actions] are conducted in their local or regional government*". This is why the quotations in this study retain an "*oral*" style.

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FOREWORD

There are many terms and concepts to describe and consider international relations at the local level: decentralised cooperation, town twinning, external actions of local and regional governments. PLATFORMA is a concrete illustration of this: the coalition brings together local and regional governments and their associations who are invested in development cooperation between Europe and the partner countries, each party bringing with them their own concept and approach to international actions carried out by local governments.

Not much academic research has been conducted on this subject in Europe. Yet, it is an area in constant development that is receiving new attention, notably in connection with the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development and its new approach to global development. This is why the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR), by way of PLATFORMA, wishes to encourage research on this topic to have more substantive debates on the issues and practices of decentralised cooperation.

This publication, which originated from thesis work on the external actions of local governments in France, seeks to address the many problems shared by most local governments in Europe. Why conduct an international action amidst a context of local governments facing budgetary constraints? How can we get citizens and local stakeholders involved and be assured of their support for the international policy being carried out? What impacts can be expected from decentralised cooperation for the European territory? What are the new expectations of local elected representatives with respect to international actions? What factors are driving decentralised cooperation forward, or on the contrary, hindering it for European local governments today?

This work invites us to take an in-depth look at the external action practices and policies of local governments in France, highlighting key issues along the way for further thought on the future of decentralised cooperation. We hope that this study will help to enrich the discussions and activities of PLATFORMA and its partners.

Frédéric Vallier,
Secretary General of the Council
of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR)



INTRODUCTION

The work presented here is based on the doctoral thesis¹ "*The external actions of French local and regional governments: study of the implementation of a cross-sectoral public action, a vehicle for connections between territories and the world outside*", and summarises the major queries and findings of this thesis. This doctoral study, carried out from July 2011 to September 2015 (and submitted on 25 January 2016), centres around the French territory and its local and regional governments. All of the different French administrative levels of local and regional governments have therefore been taken into account: municipalities and inter-municipal associations, departments and regions.

This publication thus highlights the trains of thought and conclusions resulting from the main lines of questioning underlying the doctoral research:

- Why does a French local government decide to carry out external actions? Why initiate and/or continue to carry out such actions against a background of (economic, social) "tensions" on the national territory?
- What types of impacts/returns are expected and sought from these actions in France, both for the local territory and the administrations? Were the actual returns obtained in line with those expected, in terms of both their nature and scope?
- Lastly, how are these external actions actually conducted within and by local and regional governments? What are the conditions for their implementation? Who are the actors involved and how? What are the rationales and vision underpinning them?

The research was carried out using a methodological approach structured around three pillars:

- It is grounded in large part on an immersion work placement focusing on the subject "external actions of local and regional governments" (AECT), since the thesis came about under an industrial agreement for training through research (CIFRE - *Convention industrielle de formation par la recherche*) conducted from 1st July 2011 to 30 June 2014. During this period, the author was the task officer for "decentralised cooperation" at the Isère General Council². This position made it possible to acquire a thorough grasp of the research subject "from the inside". It gave direct and exceptional access to a wide range of professionals, documents and information. This active immersion or participatory observation also ensured that any premises or recommendations could be "tested" against the day-to-day realities of implementing external actions in a local government. In addition to working in the "milieu" of the AECT, thereby receiving constant input from informal exchanges with other professionals working in this field (at meetings, during trips or missions abroad), active involvement in ARRICOD (French Association of professionals active in the European and international actions of local and regional governments) made this immersion even more complete.
- A study was also made of the organisation charts of 150 local and regional governments³ on the French mainland (all the regional councils, all the general councils, the 17 largest cities and their respective metropolitan areas).
- Lastly, interviews were conducted among 56 AECT⁴ professionals, 52 of whom were elected or "administrative" officials working in 33 distinct local and regional governments (from different levels). From the interviews that were recorded and transcribed, a body of analysis was put together based on interviews involving 44 professionals from 29 local and regional governments. The analytical elements used (particularly the numbers unless otherwise indicated) in this publication were also extracted from this body of interviews.

¹ GELY, M., 2016, *The external action of French local and regional governments: study of the implementation of a cross-sectoral public action, a vehicle for connections between territories and the outside world*, doctoral thesis, University of Grenoble Alps, 392 pp.

² The name of this departmental level was actually changed by French Law No. 2013-403 of 17 May 2013; however, in the interests of uniformity and consistency with respect to when this study was completed, the term general council will be used here (and not departmental council).

³ Organisation charts compiled in 2012.

⁴ See the list of professionals interviewed pages 50 to 53.

⁵ It is to be noted that the statements of those interviewed as a whole have been made anonymous (a number was randomly assigned to each respondent). Any explicit references made to a particular local or regional government received prior authorisation.

It should be noted that it is “external actions of local and regional governments” that is being focused on here. This term, adopted by the legislature⁶, allows for a better summation of all the different actions carried out at the international level, or in connection with the international level, by French local and regional governments. It encompasses formalised partnerships (often associated with the term “decentralised cooperation”), as well as actions that are more one-off in nature, involvement in international networks or even promotional actions and territorial marketing abroad. The actions in question therefore touch on all the competences (mandatory and elective) of French local and regional governments; whether it is a matter of international solidarity, actions with an economic purpose for the French territory or partnerships based on reciprocity. All of these actions are taken into account here, including partnerships and actions with other European local governments, with the exception of actions arising from cross-border cooperation and/or resulting from the implementation of the “European territorial cooperation” policy (cross-border, transnational or interregional cooperation); these forms of cooperation being linked to specific distinct rationales (in comparison with all the other actions with an international dimension).

The research was thus intended to provide the prospective obtained from a direct link to the everyday reality of the AECT even if, by its very nature, it does not claim to be exhaustive or to represent explicitly the practices and situations particular to each local and regional government. It should also be noted that while this publication takes a critical look at the AECT carried out and the implementation procedures used within different local institutions, its objective is not to present an “inculpatory document” but rather to highlight the reality as far as it can be observed and analysed in its entirety, including any negative aspects.

Furthermore, it is only by being conscious of these elements as a whole (both positive and negative) that external actions will be able to achieve their full “potential” and make sense for the local territories (French and foreign), and that local and regional governments will truly be able to become central actors in an increasingly globalised and interdependent world.



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⁶ Framework Legislation No. 2014-773 of 7 July 2014 relating to development policy and international solidarity.

KEY FINDINGS AND POINTS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS



Concerning returns in France, the study revealed a **gap between what was expected in terms of the impacts of the external actions of local and regional governments (AECT) and those actually produced**. This deviation, between projected and actual outcome, concerns as much the internal returns within French local and regional governments as those produced on the local territories, both with regard to their nature and scope. For example, while “economic” impacts were expected for the most part, the effects produced were mainly of a socio-cultural nature and were not as cross-sectional within civil society as hoped.

In our opinion, the political trade-offs and technical conditions behind the implementation of these AECT can partly explain the discrepancies noted. In fact, there **does not always seem to be necessarily any strategic vision of the international level or of internationalisation at the local level underlying these actions**. Yet, without such visions, how can the AECT interlink with other local public policies being carried out and thus have a genuine impact on the local territory? In the same vein, without a specific vision, how can they work coherently with other French territories’ lines of reasoning regarding internationalisation?

Accordingly, based on the study completed (presented in greater detail below), several recommendations can be made with a view

to producing “real” impacts in France arising from the external actions carried out by local and regional governments. One of them in particular should be singled out: the need to have a **built-up and integrated strategic vision of the international stage**. This is indeed a central other elements to be taken into account.

- First of all, **the “international” theme needs to be effectively linked to the realities and issues of the French local territory**. This is done by performing a territorial diagnostic of internationalisation at the local level, with queries focused around the following themes: Who are the local stakeholders with a connection to the international dimension? What are the distinguishing features and characteristics of these connections? What potential is there for development (economic and other) of the territory in connection with the international level? This cross-cutting diagnostic, broadly associating actors from the territory and from local government, is the cornerstone to uncovering not only a clear view of the international scene but also promoting the integration of the “international” component in the overall strategic vision of development that each local government is adopting and implementing. Incorporating this dimension into the local government’s global strategy is instrumental to creating synergies in line with territorial dynamics and the actions carried out by local governments, thus encouraging the genesis of real impacts in France.

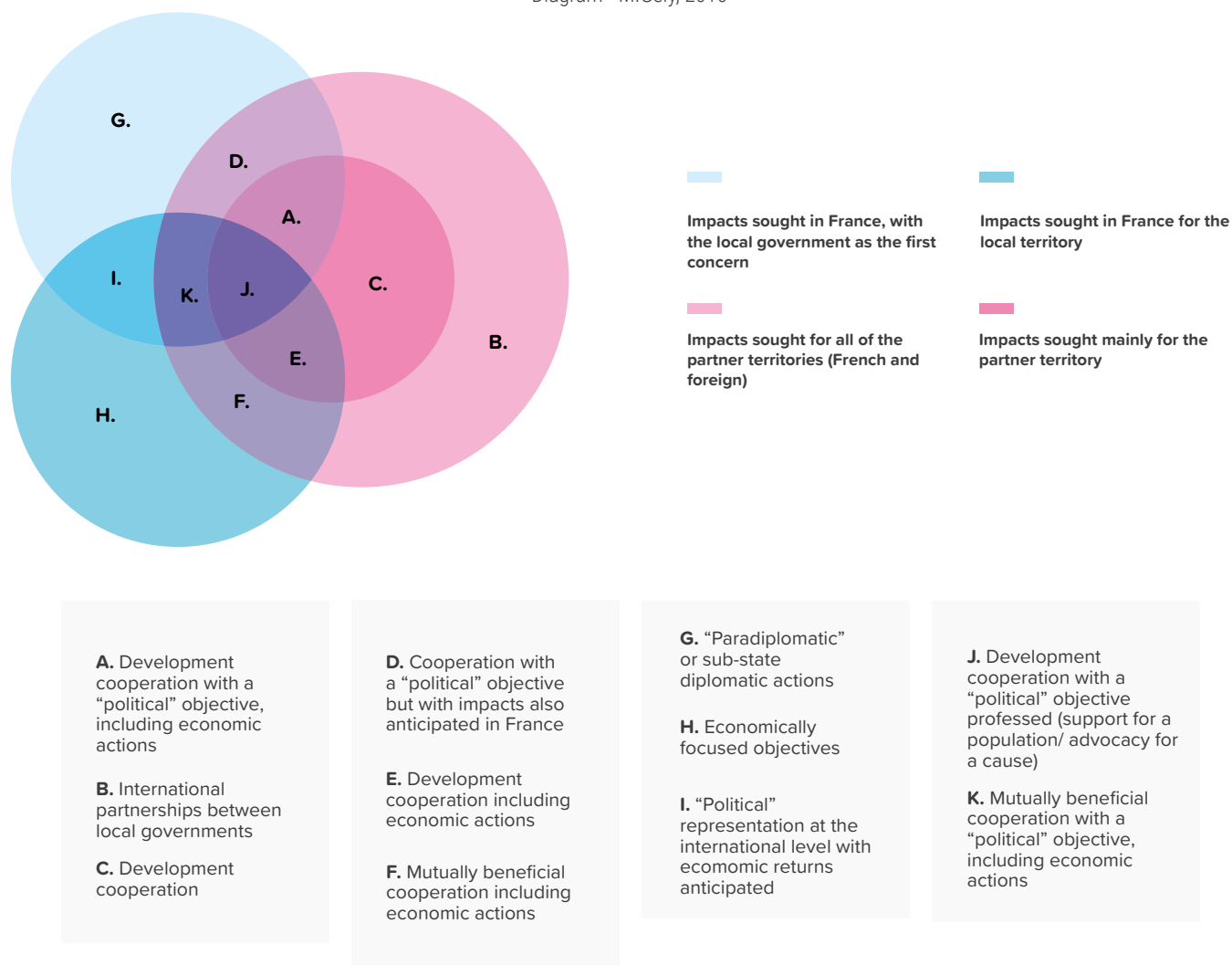
- Secondly, for each local government to come up with a strategic international vision, they must first identify a “common thread” linking together all the external actions carried out, regardless of their nature, the type of relations developed or even the geographic origin of the partners. For instance, if a local or regional government were to simultaneously conduct “international solidarity” and international marketing actions, this would really only make sense and the full potential of these actions could only be achieved if they were to be conceived and carried out in a coordinated and integrated manner. It is therefore not a matter of saying that only one method of action or approach to internationalisation should be focused on alone but rather **going beyond the juxtaposition of the programmes** and actions, by identifying an overall vision. The diverse schools of reasoning relating to the international dimension are not mutually exclusive (see Figure 1 below); but need to be thought of as a whole and implemented in an interlocking manner.

From this identification of a strategic vision (cross-cutting and integrated) of the international dimension, other recommendations follow:

- Ensure cross-sectional **political support** for the international dimension that is shared and accepted.
- Develop **an effective and cohesive mainstay for this international dimension within the local government**. This implies having a dedicated administrative entity with an administrative attachment that corresponds to the vision adopted of the international dimension. An effective foothold is also ensured by effectively associating and mobilising other departments in the local government for the entire duration of the external actions.
- Cultivate an **involvement that is jointly built up** by actors from all the different strata of local **civil society**.
- Forge **genuine partnerships with foreign local government** partners (in the case of bi- and multilateral relations).
- Develop **communications** (internal and external) regarding the AECT that is accessible but not minimising.
- Develop solid practices to **evaluate** the AECT carried out, in the partner territories as well as in France.

– Figure 1 –

Rationales for implementing the external actions of local and regional governments and different possible combinations.
Diagram - M.Gely, 2016



CHAPTER 1

IN FRANCE, A GAP BETWEEN THE IMPACTS
OF EXTERNAL ACTIONS EXPECTED AND THE
ACTUAL ONES OBSERVED IN REALITY

CHAPTER 1

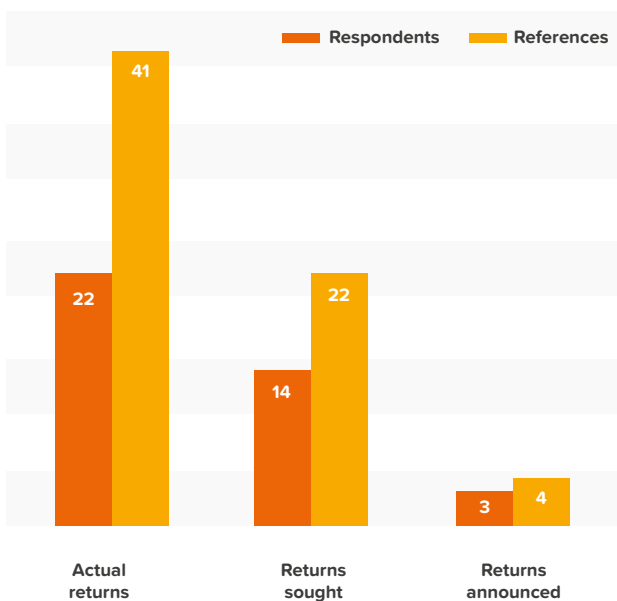
How many stakeholders on the French territory are affected or involved in the international projects and at what level? How many jobs on the French local territory are financed by the actions carried out? These are some of the questions that local elected officials and professionals involved in the external actions of local and regional governments (AECT) have increasingly been called on to answer.

So, even while it is no longer a formal obligation⁷ for French local and regional governments to identify **local public interests**, they have been addressing this subject more than ever. For local elected officials, it is a question of being able to remain accountable to citizens who sometimes view the actions carried out at the international level in a negative light. Faced with daily hardships, the principle of international solidarity often is no longer sufficient in “justifying” or “legitimising” the outlay of expenditure. Symbolising this growing awareness, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs⁸ began to include, starting in 2013, “outcomes and returns expected in France” in its call for proposals “in support of decentralised co-operation”.

Local and regional governments were then urged to specify “in the projects, their expectations regarding local outcomes in terms of creating value, economic activity and jobs as well as the returns anticipated for local and regional governments” (MAEDI/DGM/DAECT, 2013, p.7). The pursuit of local interests in France also needs to be shown in correlation with the principles of reciprocity of the external actions carried out and the creation of “win-win” partnerships. Still, beyond the official speeches and communications, it is interesting to get a fuller picture of the reality of these impacts in France. While the returns, in both their nature and reach, are specific to each AECT carried out, the present study has identified and underlined certain major trends.

A. IMPACTS FOR LOCAL TERRITORIES INCREASINGLY ON THE FOREFRONT

– Figure 2 –
Sub-themes relating to “returns for the territory”⁹
M. Gely, 2016



First, with regard to the French territory, it is striking to note that the actual outcomes are focused on much more by the respondents than the returns sought (as illustrated in Figure 2 on the left). As for the announced/listed returns, they are cited even less.

What is the reason underlying this difference? Does it prove that French local and regional governments implement their external actions without having precisely identified beforehand the potential strategic returns of these projects for their territory? If this is the case, to what extent are AECT the expression of a real cross-cutting strategic policy vision of the international scene and how it ties in with the local territory and its stakeholders? This line of enquiry seems all the more significant given that only four respondents referred to announced returns. Why would local and regional governments, and therefore the respondents, not make the strived-for outcomes public if they were precisely identified and in line with the local territory’s development axes, even as the official communications are increasingly centred around principles of “reciprocity” and “returns on French territory”?

The study of the impacts announced by regional councils on their websites offers up elements that substantiate these queries. Even though 15 out of 22 regional councils¹⁰ post the expected returns for their AECT, they are often rather vague, even in the statements referring to a specifically identified sector. The Poitou-Charentes and Centre Regional Councils respectively listed for example, as

⁷ The law of 7 July 2014 largely safeguarded the different AECT practices. It also lifted the obligation to identify a local interest in France for the carrying out of AECT.

⁸ During the period of our research, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) became the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development (MAEDI in French); however, out of a desire to keep the text consistent, the MFA acronym will be used here.

⁹ For example, this graph shows that 22 respondents – over the course of their interview (and not in response to a specific question) – made comments referring to the ‘real returns’ for the territory 41 times.

¹⁰ Study based on information obtained from websites of regional councils (mainland France) on 24 and 25 September 2014.

objectives for implementing their external actions: “promote the development of values of international solidarity”¹¹ and “build strong relationships and open up more to other cultures”¹². This finding can also be observed in the case of local and regional governments with economic objectives. It should also be underlined that the impacts mentioned are either exclusively economic or socio-cultural in nature, as if the two types of impacts could not be interlinked (through internationalisation programmes conceived using an integrated approach).

“It is a 'living together better' on the French local territory that is being sought”

1. Impacts sought mainly for economic reasons...

As the impacts publicly announced depend not only on the AECT carried out but also on the trade-offs made in terms of communication, it is necessary to take a closer look at those which are sought. Fourteen professionals (coming from 13 local and regional governments) referred to this theme of strived-for impacts 22 times (see Figure 1). It should be noted that of these 22 references, only 7 mentioned non-economic returns. In this respect, the respondents focused on impacts stemming from cultural exchanges and/or the EDDSI project (education for sustainable development and international solidarity), through the implementation of external actions involving youth and cultural structures in particular. In broader terms, by addressing a variety of local actors

(schools, cultural associations, ...), it is a **“living together better”** on the French local territory that is being sought.

These AECT are also a tool for seeking a deeper understanding of global interdependencies. One respondent expressed it in this way: “[it is also a] way of approaching global solidarity [...] there is also the idea of an action of solidarity that compels us to take another look at both the way in which [we] work, and to adjust it to take in the world with its complexities”. In the same way, returns can also be strived for regarding the inclusion of diaspora communities on the territory. This would consist of promoting their integration in French local civil society or even of improving how they are taken into account at local level. However, beyond these objectives put forward by the respondents, there might be another issue at stake for the French local and regional governments concerned in terms of communication. By cooperating with the regions (or municipalities) from where the diaspora communities present on their territory originated, are the French local and regional governments attempting, among other things, to “make a good impression” among these populations?

Along with socio-cultural returns, which are “traditionally” associated with and sought in France as part and parcel of carrying out AECT, **economic returns** are now what is hoped for the most. For instance, 13 out of 22 replies from respondents concerning strived-for returns referred to economic ones. This was clearly underlined by respondents 22 and 28: “For us, it is always a question of influence and attractiveness; that is obvious”; “each time I leave, I include some expertise and an economic and commercial proposal in my luggage and in my speeches”. Moreover, as reiterated by several respondents, the economic returns hoped for can come in different forms: “The first return is employment – it’s rather negligible – part of our actions should promote the creation of jobs, activities, attractiveness and investments, student mobility, which gives them additional skills along their professional journey[,] jobs for the non-governmental organisations on the territory as well with



¹¹ “International cooperation” webpage of the Regional Council of Poitou-Charentes: <http://www.poitou-charentes.fr/vivre-ensemble/europe-international> (page visited on 24.09.2014).

¹² Presentation brochure on “international cooperation” available on the website of the Regional Council of the Centre Region: <http://www.regioncentre.fr/files/live/sites/regioncentre/files/contributed/docs/cooperation/plaquette-cooperation.pdf> (page visited on 24.09.2014).

staff made up of permanent employees, volunteers" (respondent 21). Given the importance of this issue and the economic stakes, some local and regional governments have acquired specific tools. The Rhone-Alps Region thus set up the ERAI structure¹³ and the Midi-Pyrenees Regional Council adopted the 2013-2016 Regional Plan for the internationalisation of businesses¹⁴.

However, this predominance of economic considerations must be qualified. Certain local and regional governments appear reluctant to link, even partially, the international dimension and the economy, as one respondent stated: "Our mission is not to conduct economic forms of cooperation". While, for some (especially at the departmental level), this stance is connected to trade-offs consistent with their policies, it may also be a tell-tale sign of the absence (or of a weak) strategic political vision of external actions and their possible ties with the local territory and its development.

2. ... But actual impacts are often primarily socio-cultural in nature

While the impacts sought in France give an indication as to the rationale underlying the AECT, their correlation with the effects actually produced provides precious information when it comes to analysing the real situation surrounding these public actions. It is important to note that 22 respondents (representing 19 distinct local and regional governments) refer, on 41 occasions, to real returns for their territory. Aside from these figures, what first seems curious is the fact that only 6 of these 41 references to "real returns" for the territory coincide with "returns desired". A distortion therefore exists between the impacts counted on and those actually generated. A gap therefore exists, visible in Figure 3 on the right, between the types (economic in nature or not) of the different returns.

So, although economic returns are the ones most highly sought, they very rarely feature in respondents' remarks when actual situations are being discussed. Besides this **difference in the nature** of the impacts mentioned by the respondents, it should be noted that remarks relating to economic impacts can be vague and lacking in detail. Of the four respondents (who mentioned actual economic returns), only one provided details and figures concerning these real economic returns. Inversely, we can quote the comments of respondents 10 and 21: "Of course, there are some, and the effects can be felt in the different fields [...] The list is extremely long and extremely varied [...] The returns are very concrete"; "this will benefit us [...] I think that the activity is effective in this respect". Given the foregoing, it may be wondered why respondents only rarely refer to specific returns. Is it because they do not have any specific information on this matter? Is this situation partly due to a lack of communication between the body in charge of implementing the AECT and the one in charge of public actions pertaining to the economy? Or is it that the economic impacts do not meet up to expectations? Are they (too) weak compared to expectations? If positive returns on the French local economy do exist, why would the professionals not highlight them?

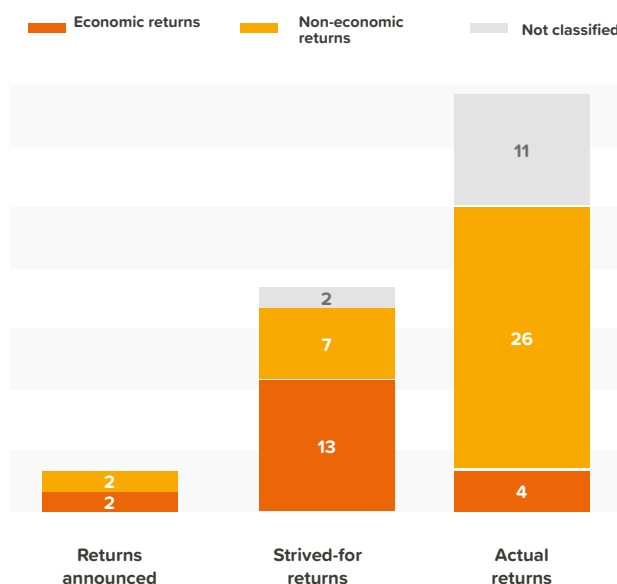
¹³ The "Entreprise Rhône-Alpes International" (ERAI), created in 1987 at the initiative of the Rhone-Alps Regional Council, is the region's secret weapon for international economic development and for increasing the attractiveness of the Rhone-Alps". ERAI website: <http://www.era1.org/decouvrir-era1/nosmissions/> (page visited on 27.09.2014).

¹⁴ Plan régional d'internationalisation des entreprises 2013-2016; Presentation brochure - Midi-Pyrenees Regional Council: http://www.midipyrenees.fr/IMG/pdf/PRIE_PLAQUETTE.pdf (page visited on 28.08.2015).

– Figure 3 –

Respondents' remarks on the impacts of the external actions of French local and regional governments on their territory¹⁵

M.Gely, 2016



However, there is another question that still needs to be answered: even if it is what local and regional governments seek to do, are they really the most suited, and the most "legitimate" actors to carry out external actions that aim to secure economic returns in France?

In contrast to economic returns, **socio-cultural returns** in France are, according to the respondents, less sought after but are what transpire in reality (26 references made by the respondents). These impacts are not homogeneous though on the whole. Three types of impacts have been identified through this study. First, there are the references to a **cultural opening**, to development education. Respondent 38 indicated: "There is an impact on the territory here as well. We have opened up youths to the international dimension; this might inspire new careers or change minds". However, as emphasised by respondent 11, the extent of these impacts may be limited: "Support is given [...] to associations that are international in scope for events that they organise [...] so yes, there is an impact on the territory. It has an impact, on the vitality of the territory and a cultural agenda at least, even if they are not really big impacts. We are still small players, no one really cares about international relations". Thus, broader returns such as "living together better" and in particular, the inclusion of diaspora communities on French territory, even if they were posited as objectives, account for only a small part (or not at all) of the real impacts mentioned. This minimal acknowledgement of returns linked to "living together better" is all the more puzzling given that, in general, it is this type of impact that receives emphasis in the

¹⁵ For example, this graph shows that, of the remarks made by 22 respondents mentioning strived-for returns (see Figure 3), 13 concerned economic returns and 7 non-economic returns.



research and studies focusing on links between the AECT and local territories "in the North". Louis Favreau, Lucie Frechette et René Lachapelle noted that: *"among the [...] benefits linked to this type of cooperation, we have only to think about the issues linked to the management of cultural diversity (providing reasonable accommodations, integrating immigrants, using knowledge and networks of contacts to good effect and associating them with diaspora community projects)"* (Favreau et al., 2008, p.110).

"We help to make the most of territorial expertise"

Secondly, 12 of the 17 professionals who mentioned non-economic returns for their territory referred to impacts on relations with local actors carrying out projects of international solidarity. One of the returns for the territory is therefore the **networking**, or coordination, of these local actors active on the international scene.

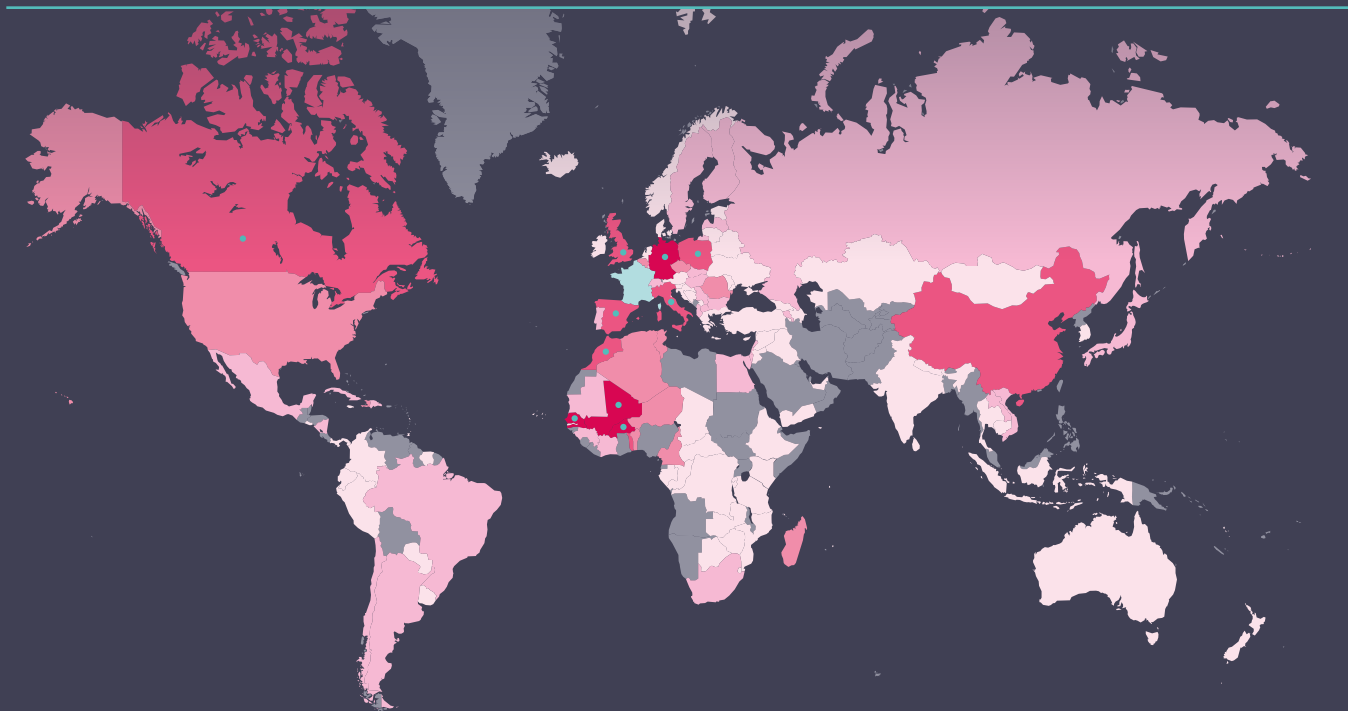
Lastly, aside from this networking, the respondents mainly underlined **the internal developments** that local structures underwent as a result of their participation in the AECT. Being involved in international projects allowed these actors to capitalize on their knowledge, skills and expertise. This is notably what was indicated by respondent 44: *"we help to make the most of territorial expertise, they are very aware of this and are delighted to be able to show how they work, and in turn... it reflects favourably on them and contributes to enhancing influence"*. What is more, local actors can see what improvements can be made to their own practices through their contacts with foreign counterparts. However, it seems to be more specific individuals involved in the project that benefit from

the returns and not always the structures as a whole. Without addressing the question of whether this return has significance on an individual level or a structural one, it may be wondered to what extent they have or could have a more "wide-reaching" effect on local population.

This initial analysis in terms of the impacts of the AECT on French territory therefore emphasises that there is a difference in nature and scope between the desired (and announced) impacts and those actually produced. Is this **dual dichotomy** due solely to the (real) difficulties of evaluating the impacts, which are often diffuse, qualitative and dependent also on other factors? In our opinion, other elements, particularly those linked to the current building and implementation methods of the AECT should also be taken into account to explain these gaps.

Finally, it should be underscored that, contrary to "win-win" narratives, several respondents noted that the "contributions" are unbalanced between the French territory and the partner territory: *"We don't get feedback on the ground. In the real world, the transfer of know-how is not very effective, to say the least. We do get feedback in the form of exhibits, short films, but this remains marginal, very very marginal. This aspect of cooperation, strictly speaking, does not exist"* (respondent 16); *"we still have international solidarity in mind and I think that it even holds true a bit, like in a one-way relationship: we contribute something over there. It is difficult for us to go even a little beyond this state of things"* (respondent 15). While this situation can be attributable in part to the nature of the relations between French and foreign local governments, can it also be the manifestation of overly vague internationalisation strategies that are not based on actual local and regional diagnostics (which can help to identify possible existing links between French local actors and international ones)?

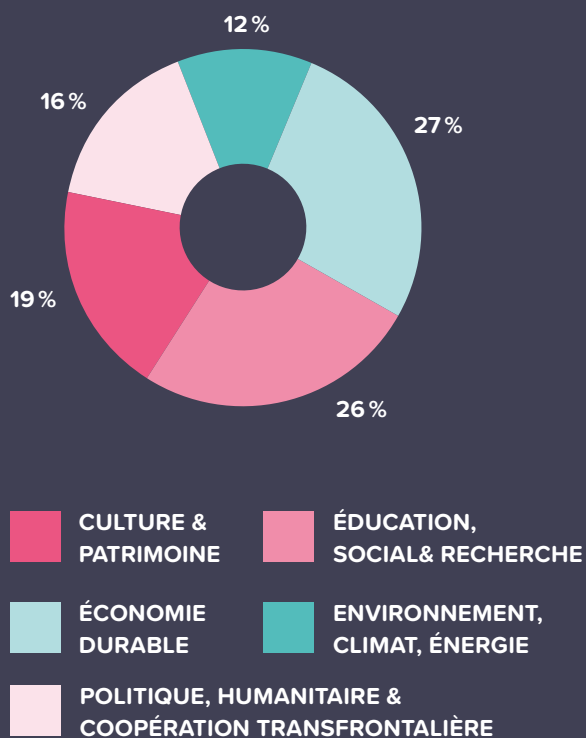
NOMBRE DE PROJETS DE COOPÉRATION DÉCENTRALISÉE PAR PAYS*



LES 10 PAYS OÙ SONT MENÉS LE PLUS DE PROJETS *

- 325 ● ALLEMAGNE
- 267 ● MALI
- 235 ● SÉNÉGAL
- 224 ● BURKINA FASO
- 170 ● ROYAUME-UNI
- 160 ● MAROC
- 150 ● ITALIE
- 143 ● POLOGNE
- 131 ● ESPAGNE
- 127 ● CANADA

RÉPARTITION THÉMATIQUE DES PROJETS DE COOPÉRATION DÉCENTRALISÉE



* HORS JUMELAGES

B • THE IMPACTS FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS: LESS SOUGHT AFTER BUT VERY MUCH A REALITY

Even if viewed as less important than those affecting the territory, the AECT can and do have internal repercussions in local and regional governments; and these impacts in turn can bring about concrete changes on the territory.

1. Impacts that are rarely mentioned by local and regional governments

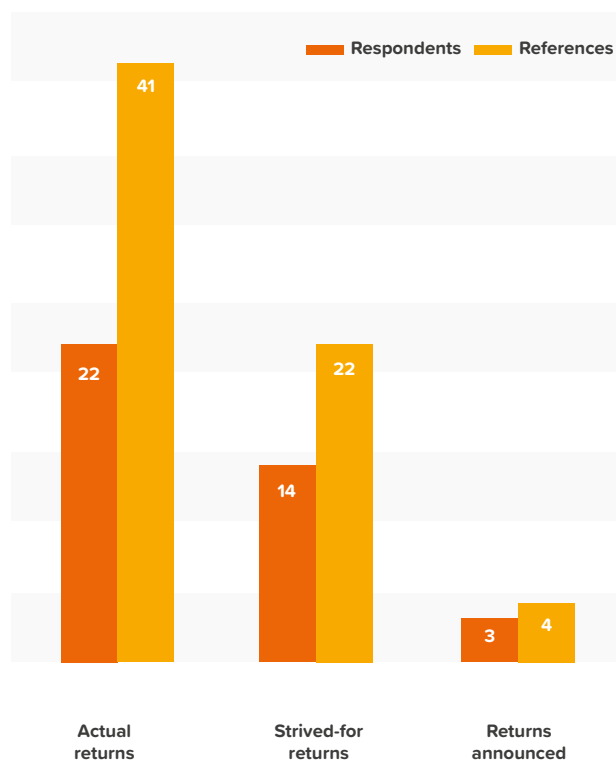
While more respondents referred to the returns of external actions announced for their administration than for their territory, this sub-theme still goes relatively unmentioned. Only six respondents referred to this, and each one only one time. Before going over what these remarks consisted of, a correlation can be made between its near omission in the answers of the respondents and the almost total absence of this theme on the website of the French regional councils. Only one regional council explicitly refers to possible benefits for the institution, indicating that the development of external actions *"promotes encounters and exchanges of experience between communities the world over"*.

"It's not all win-win, but we are becoming more known"

This relatively low number of references to any benefits in local and regional governments can be partly explained by the fact that the latter prefer to focus their external communications on international solidarity or possible benefits for the French territory and its population (rather than on potential internal benefits which do not have a direct impact on the population).



– Figure 4 –
Sub-themes relating to the "returns for French local government"
M.Gely, 2016



If we look at the statements of the respondents, there seem to be two types of internal returns disclosed by local and regional governments. First, there are the **"exchanges of experience"** mentioned in the preceding paragraph. The possibility of "taking a step back" was underlined by respondent 37: *"We are going to contribute our own practices, but by comparing them and putting them out there next to others, of course we will start asking questions, and we might suddenly take a step back to be able to then take two steps forward, guided by the experiences that we could witness elsewhere. And that is exactly the essential aspect of this type of cooperation that needs to be a key selling point"*. Secondly, the respondents made a reference to returns in terms of visibility, enhancing the stature and promoting the local government, as indicated by respondent 38: *"It's not all win-win [...] but we are becoming more known"*.

2. The spread and development of practices as the primary benefits pursued in local and regional governments

Even when the types of impacts sought out internally within local and regional governments tally up with those announced, only 10 respondents, on 15 occasions, mentioned these impacts sought by their local government. If this proportion actually reflects the discussions held in local and regional governments when external actions are being implemented, it would seem that international action programmes are rarely viewed as an inherent part of the daily reality of French local and regional governments, thus signifying that visions of the international dimension, and more specifically the external actions carried out by local and regional governments have not yet totally progressed (a vision of “international solidarity” has not shifted to one of all actors, foreign and French, sharing in the stakes and objectives).

Analysis of the remarks made by the respondents who actually mentioned the impacts sought after in their local government with respect to the external actions carried out reveals three types of expectations: the evolving of practices (seven references), influence and visibility (seven references as well) and gaining new resources (two references). First, and in keeping with one of the two types of objectives stated, the respondents pointed out that their local government was hoping that the **external actions** developed would have an impact on day-to-day internal practices. Respondent 07 summarised it as follows: there is “interest in going to see what is being done elsewhere in order to improve our practices”.

Likewise, respondent 04 explained: “the fact that agents are allowed to go, to leave on a mission, to participate in a structured project is considered to be a management tool, in terms of broadening the mind, motivating the agent, training... because the agent inevitably comes back with a different perspective of his own field”. Besides providing added perspective and changing the daily work habits of agents, a respondent stressed that a broader objective being pursued was to have an impact on the implementation of local public policies: “I am convinced of this [...] we are also trying to improve our policies” (respondent 38). An interesting note is that these strived-for impacts (much like the returns for French territories) of evolving internal practices or even public policies were still discussed in relatively general terms by the respondents.

Still in line with the announced returns, the second type of internal returns for local and regional governments that was given some prominence by the respondents was the local administration’s aim of seeking **influence and visibility**. Taking part in external actions “was also a way [for the local government] to be more visible, well-known and recognised” (respondent 06). This quest for greater visibility and the promotion of a certain image of the local government ties in with the goal of promoting and increasing the attractiveness of the territory that it administers.

Finally, the last internal return that was mentioned by two respondents: obtaining **new financial resources**. Even if this return is not dwelled on by the respondents, their comments seem

particularly enlightening. Respondent 38 stated: “The European programmes allow us to carry out large-scale projects, financed at 50% or even 80% during the golden age. So yes, that is definitely interesting”. Similarly, respondent 07 explains: “those [departments] that worked very closely with us completely understand the interest of cooperating, i.e. the interest of going to see what is happening elsewhere in order to improve our practices, the interest of mobilising lenders – European and maybe even international backers – because it might even be possible to secure World Bank funds”.

So, while the objective of complementary financing is only brought up by two respondents, it may nonetheless be imagined that it is possibly a return more broadly sought in local and regional governments, particularly when external actions are built up jointly by the department in charge of international issues and other relevant department(s). In addition to helping their practices to evolve, the financial cost of this international commitment can be compensated – at least in part – by external lenders. In this way, if an overall cross-cutting strategy is implemented beforehand, the external actions and their returns in France (as much for the local government as its territory) can be partly financed by outside actors. There may however bring up the question as to whether, in this context, certain actions would run the risk of being “influenced” by motivations specific to each financial backer.



3. Very little actual evolving of public policy stemming from external actions but rather from practical developments

As mentioned previously, the impacts of external actions in French local and regional governments are primarily seen by the respondents as having actually occurred (25 professionals raised this sub-theme 71 times). It may also be stressed that the three types of impacts sought after are also the ones cited by the respondents as having been achieved.

– Figure 5 –

Actual internal returns. According to the statements of 25 respondents who mentioned this topic¹⁶
M.Gely, 2016



As was the case with **new resources**, the respondents who spoke about the impacts sought in terms of the **visibility** and **influence** of their local government were also among those who emphasised the effectiveness of such returns. Thus, there is a certain coherence between the local governments seeking these kinds of returns and those who benefit from them, or at least those who attribute importance to this type of return.

¹⁶ In particular, the graph illustrates the fact that 25 respondents mentioned actual internal returns (see Figure 4) and made comments concerning the "evolving of practices" 59 times.

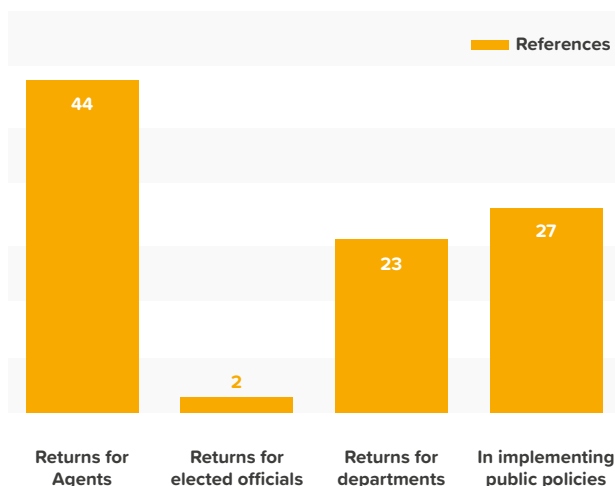
Beginning with taking advantage of specific technical expertise through the implementation of similar projects at the international level or through integration in local government networks, the objective is to "make [the authority] shine abroad"; "for elected officials, it is a success for them as well". This burgeoning influence of an authority on the national or even international scene therefore seems to have an eminently political nature to it, giving a boost to the projects carried out by the local institution but to the elected officials who are conducting them as well. However, it is not known to what extent this boost goes beyond the context of a specific project or a given public policy and produces an impact that affects the local institution and its territory as a whole.

Inversely, certain French local and regional governments develop internationally recognised expertise, yet neglect to give them prominence at the local, national or international level (preferring the development of communications consisting of only one type of message, e.g., structured around international solidarity).

Alongside these first two types of impacts effectively present in French local and regional governments, a third type is quantitatively alluded to much more often: the evolving of practices. This accounts for 83% of the remarks pertaining to returns for French authorities. Even more significantly, the 25 correspondents mentioning real impacts from external actions for their local government cite these evolving practices. However, as illustrated in the following figure, these developments are not uniform.

– Figure 6 –

Sub-themes relating to "actual returns within the authority" pertaining to evolving practices¹⁷
M.Gely, 2016



¹⁷ This graph illustrates in greater detail the 59 statements relating to "evolving practices" (see Figure 5): for example, on 44 occasions, it is a matter of "returns for the agents".



It may first be noted that, according to the respondents, these developments concern only the administrative actors (returns for the agents and for the departments) for the most part as well as the concrete implementation of public policies. Inversely, only two respondents mention this type of impact in connection with elected officials. Respondent 07 stated: *"I think that broadening the minds of our elected officials, giving them fresh motivation, providing them with more skills by sending them abroad is very important. I think that all this has galvanised our elected representative, the fact of taking an interest in the international context; it gives him an even greater willingness to go into action for his territory"*.

Setting aside the tact shown by certain administrative respondents in mentioning their elected officials, this situation whereby **the elected officials only rarely seem to be directly or effectively affected by the AECT** can, in our opinion, be explained by looking at the cause at another level. The notion may be posited whereby elected representatives, whether in charge of external actions or another theme, are not specifically identified beforehand as being able to "derive" any benefits from the AECT. To what extent can this situation be explained, at least in part, by the practical details of implementation in place internally? In fact, except for the final trade-offs, are "theme-focused" elected officials truly involved in the longer process of discussions and the management of external actions? Furthermore, in a process constantly spiralling downward, to what extent can elected representatives, who are not greatly affected, be the driving force behind the development of a cross-cutting strategy for internationalising the territory involving all sectors of activity of local and regional governments?

"This obliges them to adapt their expertise"

These relatively limited consequences for elected representatives also need to be seen against the context of the second (in number of references) type of internal developments that can be brought about by the AECT: **evolving local public policies**. As pointed out by respondent 19: *"[the external actions] can have an impact on our public policy as they can inspire new ideas, redirect certain actions within our territory"*. However, only 17 respondents, or 39% of the professionals interviewed, mentioned this type of actual impact (referring to it 27 times). The respondent from the Nord General Council noted: *"The Ageing better in Europe, different perspectives of local governments project provided the opportunity for an exchange between public and semi-public actors involved in assistance or care for the elderly and [to] respond to the needs of the elderly by working for their social inclusion"*. However, this respondent was the only one who spoke about developments in local public policy in detail. The other respondents either made vague remarks and/or commented on elements linked to changes in concrete administrative practices. Without dismissing the importance of these technical developments at the administrative level and their impact on the provision of public services, they do not directly concern the direction of policy or the significance at-

tributed to different public policies. It may be pointed out that this is consistent with one of the findings from the study conducted by the ENEIS Conseil firm and Cités Unies France, which looked at the links between social action and the AECT, and stated: *"contrary to our initial hypothesis, the cases of cooperation we studied did not provide any examples of provisions that were developed on the territory of French local and regional governments after drawing inspiration from the experiences that had been implemented in the partner territories"* (ENEIS Conseil, 2015, p.36).

It is interesting to see that the second half of this document shows that this situation of local public policies only being affected "marginally" is mainly the result of the weak political support of the "international" theme in all sectors and to visions often lacking in clarity and integration regarding the internationalisation of French local territories.

With respect to the impacts on **administrative practices** and **technical implementation details** mentioned previously, the respondents' comments refer to two distinct types of situations that occur when conducting AECT.

The first type of impact on the technical details of implementing local public policies stemming from the external actions that was mentioned by the professionals is connected to the **exchange of best practice** between French professionals and their foreign counterparts. This is therefore compatible with part of the desired returns identified previously. According to the professionals interviewed, as a result of dealing with actual situations involving different constraints and working methods, the participating agents are prompted into putting into perspective or even questioning their own practices. This is essentially what respondent 43 reported: *"what colleagues have been saying is that they are compelled to come up against territories where the environment is not the same, where the modes of operation are different. This obliges them to adapt their expertise. And that breaks them out of any complacency that they might have and so, when they go back to their usual habits, they have added perspective"*.

"From my point of view, it is an excellent tool for management and recognition"

This questioning of the "ways of doing things" and these brushes with other realities can also lead the agents involved to make adjustments to the ways they work, regardless of whether the partners are actors from developed or developing countries. Respondents 04 and 38 thus relate: *"we have a health and safety engineer who went into the field in Madagascar [...] Unsurprisingly he tells us, when carrying out his activities now, he first tries to think simply, and then to gradually deepen or increase the complexity of the thinking process"; "after going to Sweden for a conference on disabilities and after seeing the Nordic Swedish system and after discussing the matter a bit with Anglo-Saxons, we realise that 'there are plenty of ideas but we've never thought about them'"*.

The respondents also raised the subject of possible returns as a result of introducing concrete methods for mobilising other departments in external actions. The professionals noted that external actions can promote communications between the French actors involved, particularly between units from a same local government. Respondent 31 expressed it in this way: *"With respect to the departments, the international projects helped me to notice that you could take advantage of mediation by a third party. By holding a round table, involving a local government's internal departments, incorporating the cross-sectional and multi-partner approach of international departments [...], making them work out of their element in cooperation projects facilitates a certain degree of mediation within the local government's departments"*. By facilitating the internal communications between actors within local and regional governments, external actions can promote a certain decompartmentalisation, a sort of cross-disciplinary approach, between departments. These habits of working in tandem can then extend beyond the international project framework and be applied to everyday public policy development, *"clearly, we are largely improving public policy"* (respondent 42).

We would like to underscore here that these two types of impacts regarding the technical details of implementing local public policy discussed by the respondents concern agents from other departments (operational or functional) involved in external actions. Therefore, to ensure that French local and regional governments can benefit from such returns when exercising their powers (including obligatory ones), one prerequisite is that other departments (in addition to the one specifically in charge of international affairs) are truly involved in the external actions being carried out.

"I have the feeling they benefit from this through a broadening of the mind, they have less prejudices"

Finally, the latest changes in French local and regional governments' practices identified returns that specifically concern **agents** and **departments' internal organisation**. According to the remarks made by the respondents, the developments in this regard are perceptible at two levels.

The respondents started off by strongly highlighting the returns of external actions in the departments and for the agents in terms of *"management"*. First, the active involvement of departments in the external actions gives *"added value"* to their actions and *"expertise"*. This *"added value"* can then shine through internally, according to respondent 07: *"perhaps it allows the department concerned to include a more substantial international component in its end-of-year activity report, demonstrating that it remains in touch with all sorts of issues, which are shared by others all over the world"*. It can also be seen in the exchanges with foreign actors. Respondent 29 noted: *"[participation in external actions] gives the other specialised departments the chance to highlight the value of*

their action and profession somewhere other than their own territory. From my point of view, it is an excellent tool for management and recognition". Furthermore, alongside the overall *"added value"* of the skills and expertise of a department, this *"recognition"* can concern more specifically an agent(s). Respondent 07 in particular related: *"I was able to detect that certain technicians began to acquire a new esteem in the eyes of their department head. We noticed that so-and-so suddenly spoke English very well, that he was capable of leading an outside mission, of coming back with lots of new ideas, it is all part of good human resource policy in fact"*. What is more, in connection with this professional *"recognition"*, the respondents reported that the participation of agents in external actions could also serve as an impetus providing (new) motivation. Even though this impact is not one necessarily or truly sought out ahead of time, the AECT still provide positive returns in **management** terms within French local and regional governments. It can be seen that this idea is increasingly taken up and highlighted, including by the directors-general of services¹⁸.

Secondly, and relating to the previous point, seven of the respondents, while discussing the actual returns for the agents involved, underscored impacts using terms such as **broadening of the mind**, as noted by respondent 34: *"It is a very enriching and always very positive human experience"*. While these returns operate more on an individual and personal level, it can be implied that they can also influence certain aspects of these agents' professional lives, as explained by respondent 07: *"I have the feeling they benefit from this through a broadening of the mind, they have less prejudices, they also have more assurance when telling their partners or colleagues 'we might be able to do it differently, look at how the Croats handle it, how the Chileans manage'"*.

Thus, the returns in France, as much for the territories as within the local and regional governments, are very diverse. Furthermore, certain returns are the direct result of links and exchanges at international level while others stem from concrete implementation procedures in France (ensuing effects).

Moreover, without negating the importance of impacts actually produced, it should be noted that they only partly correspond to those being sought.



¹⁸ Regarding this point, see in particular the Proceedings of the 10èmes Universités de l'ARRICOD, Evry, 6-8 November 2013, p. 18; http://www.arricod.fr/IMG/pdf/UA_2013_Les_ACTES_VF.pdf (in French only)

CHAPTER 2

ACTIONS REQUIRING AN AFFIRMATION
OF POLITICAL SUPPORT AND AN
EFFECTIVE PRESENCE IN THE LOCAL
ADMINISTRATION...

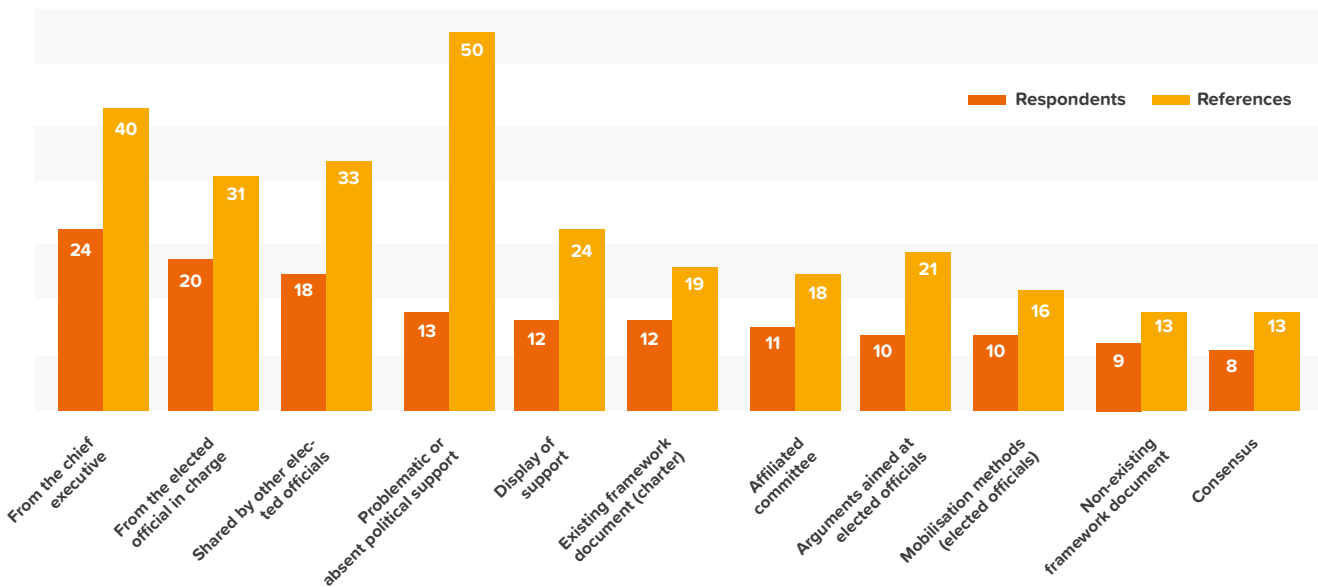
CHAPTER 2

In our opinion, the factors that can explain the double discrepancy (nature and scope) of the impact in France, both on the territories as well as on the local and regional governments, are broadly linked to the initial and implementation phases of the external actions of local and regional governments (AECT). Four major aspects are outlined here. This section will go into further detail regarding the two types of central actors involved in the process of putting together and implementing the AECT.

A • POLITICAL SUPPORT THAT WILL BE A DETERMINING FACTOR FOR LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS' EXTERNAL ACTIONS

– Figure 7 –

Sub-themes relating to "political support"¹⁹
M. Gely, 2016



¹⁹ For example, this graph shows that – out of all the remarks made relating to "political support" during the interviews (and not only in response to a specific question) – 24 respondents mentioned the "chief executive" 40 times.

As the officials in charge of defining local public policy, local elected representatives can naturally be found at the heart of the respondents' remarks. Consequently, 38 of the 44 respondents made a reference to this topic 221 times. The figure on the previous page summarises the different sub-themes associated with it.

1. The key role of the chief executive in backing the external actions of local and regional governments

Mentioned by 24 respondents (representing 20 of the 29 local and regional governments where interviews were held), the involvement of the chief executive appears to be a key factor in the decision-making and implementation of the external actions in French local and regional governments. Given the optional character of these actions, their implementation is very strongly linked to a political choice, notably at the **instigation** of the chief executive. Respondent 20 emphasised: "*[the chief executive] decided to take up a strong stance and to align the authority with that policy [...] It is a fragile policy that remains entirely dependent on the discretion of the elected officials to stand behind it or not*". Consequently, a local or regional government with a president or mayor with a strong conviction and vision of the international dimension will commit to greater international involvement. On this point, respondent 14 indicated: "*We are enormously lucky to have a president of an urban community who is an extraordinary supporter[,] an actively invested president*". The reverse also holds true since a local government with a chief executive who is reticent in this area is unlikely to initiate international actions or even to pursue the actions already undertaken with the same insistency and consistency, as



respondent 40 commented: "*the change in mandate did not play in our favour because [the former president] was comparatively quite committed to these issues and therefore carried them forward himself [...] Today, [with the new president], it is not the case; [he] has other priorities, so [he] is a lot less present*". Accordingly, while the existence of a strong link between the chief executive and the internationalisation of the local government can boost any steps taken on this issue, this situation carries with it a **double risk**. First of all, "too" strong of an **identification** with the chief executive can be an impediment to the involvement of other elected officials on these issues, including those with responsibilities relating to this theme. This is essentially what was underlined by respondent 39: "*Our elected official in charge of international cooperation, it is a bit complicated [...] Now, everything has to go by [the Department Head] first*". Secondly, an overly strong **personal connection** between the chief executive and these actions also carries the risk of a "loss of credibility" for these actions and/or their "symbolic" end following a change of majority in the government.

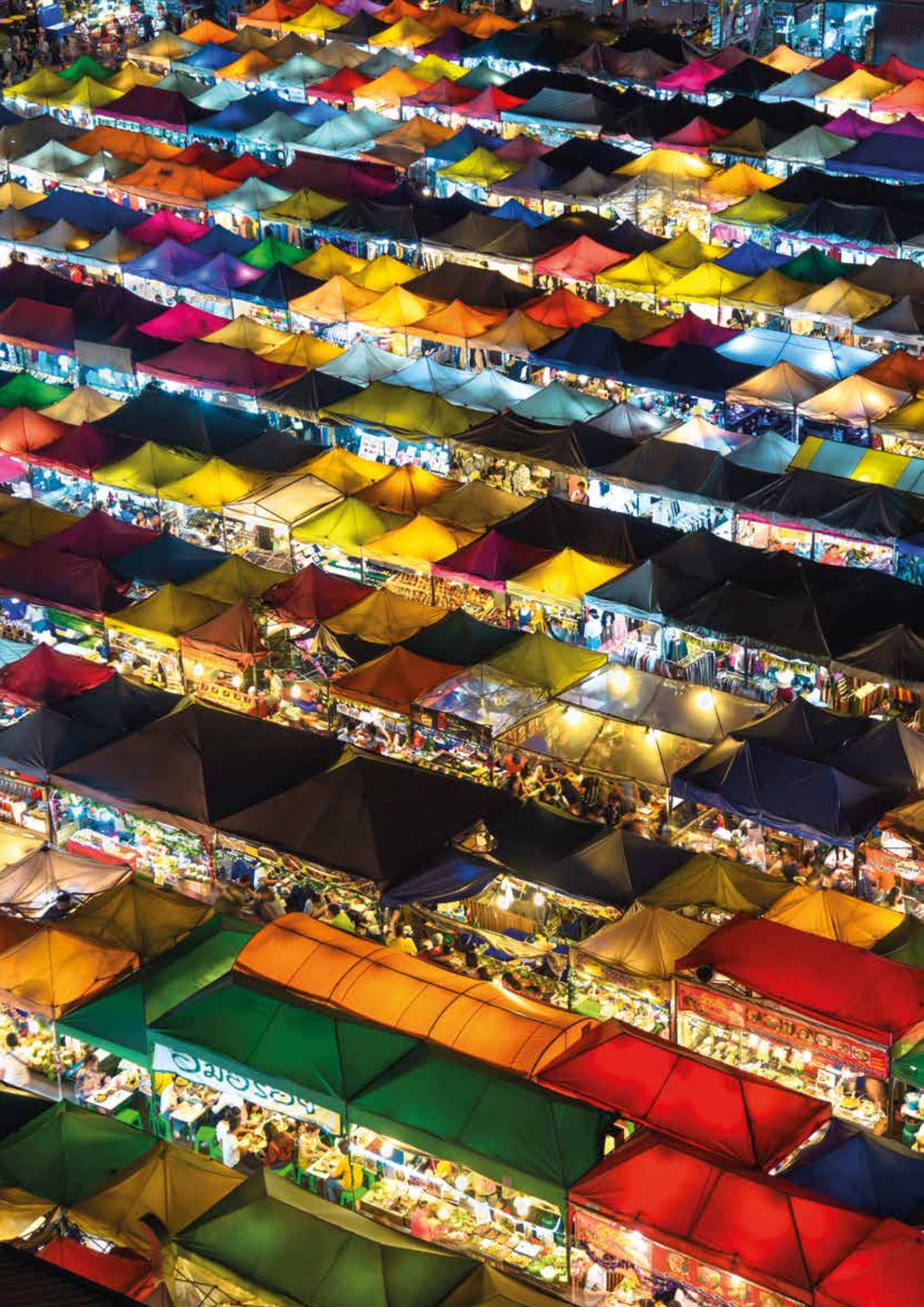
Hence, while the chief executive can play a pivotal role in developing external actions, wide political support within the local and regional governments also seems recommended, and this can be ensured through the presence of elected official(s) who are specifically in charge of this theme.

2. Backing of the elected official that is necessary but insufficient

The fact that elected officials in charge have their place was underscored by 20 respondents. It may be noted that 19 of them bringing up this theme in fact had one or more elected officials in charge of external actions within their institution. This should be correlated with the presence of at least one elected official in charge of international affairs in 25 of the 29 local and regional governments where the interviews were recorded. More generally, the majority of French local and regional governments conducting external actions had a dedicated elected official in charge of international issues.

This presence also attests to the **will**, or at least the **display** of a political will, to carry out projects with an international component. The presence of an elected official in charge can thus send a signal to the local civil society (particularly the associations active on the international scene and/or the diaspora communities) that the "international" dimension is truly taken into account by the local government.

The **multitude of delegation titles** assigned to these elected officials in charge of the AECT should also be noted. For example, denominations such as "decentralised cooperation" or "Europe and international" can be found. While it may only be a question of titles, it nonetheless gives an idea of how the vision of the international scene is understood by the majorities in place in the different local administrations. In some of them, the choice has been made to have the elected official in charge of the external actions also oversee other themes. It can prove interesting to com-





pare the combination of themes put together. They can give some indication, even symbolic, of the associations made between the international aspect and other public policies carried out by local and regional governments. Within certain general councils for example, the vice presidents in charge of international actions may also oversee "child and family services", "rural development" or even "heritage and culture". Besides giving an idea of the vision accorded to the international dimension by political officials in each local government, this juxtaposition of themes can prompt elected official to establish bridges between them. Respondent 05, working with an elected official who is also in charge of "child and family services" points out that *"it truly makes sense in terms of building up the political will that our international cooperation efforts be redirected towards the field of social services for the population"*. While positive benefits can come about as a result of certain thematic associations, others seem to symbolise rather less "structured" visions of international actions. This might be the case for example when an elected official is responsible for international affairs as well as communications. To what extent can external actions go beyond mere "image campaigns" (term used by a respondent)? More generally, in these local and regional governments, what is the underlying vision for the external actions carried out? What vision(s) do elected officials have of the international scene and the de facto connections that exist with their territory? What is their vision of the interactions between the local and global levels?

Taking an opposite approach, certain local and regional governments made the choice of designating **several elected officials to be in charge of international affairs**. In this case, one of the most common ways of dividing up responsibilities is to have one elected official responsible for international matters and one for European ones. In this case, Europe is seen as outside of French territory without however being part of the international fold.

“ *On paper, there is an elected official responsible for international relations. But the reality is different* ”

Another slight distinction exists between an elected official in charge of international solidarity and one in charge of "other" international actions, by which it is understood the ones that promise and seek impacts for the French territory. Besides the operational difficulties that this might cause internally, even though these distinctions might respond to certain specific political rationales (which often lie outside the strict framework of the international theme), they often raise questions concerning the vision that the responsible political officials have of the possibilities for actions and relations at the international level, as well as the place that the foreign partners might have, not to mention the links that can exist between the international level and their local territory. Indeed, what is the basis used for separating "arbitrarily" beforehand the rationales to be applied to international relations according to the geographic origin of the local government partners? What should be the predefining criteria for partnerships likely to produce returns in France and those which, in contrast, are grounded on motivations involving international solidarity?

In addition, it is necessary to underline that while some elected officials in charge of external actions can ensure real support and impart a genuine vision of the actions to be undertaken, the professionals interviewed nevertheless identified **limitations**. This is notably what respondent 17 summarised: *"on paper, and in reality, there is an elected official responsible for international relations, who is a vice president, who has a portfolio [...]* So effectively, based on that, I could not say that there is no support [but] the

reality is different". This may be the consequence of several factors. First of all, as explained in detail previously, certain elected officials in charge might not have sufficient room to manoeuvre, particularly when the chief executives are particularly (even excessively) invested in these questions. What is more, without getting into "sidelined officials" or of a "gift" handed to others, as can be the case in some local and regional governments, it should be noted that there are sometimes problems regarding the positioning of these elected officials. Respondent 15 explained that one elected official "is part of the green majority, so that allowed the president to be elected but afterwards, we don't concern ourselves much with them. She is not in a very strong position in the executive, nor does she have a strong temperament. So she tries her best but she is not in the easiest position". Finally, if the elected official in charge of these issues lacks a personal vision, this can also limit the political support they can bring. It should be noted here that elected officials in charge of other themes can also be faced with these limitations. It may however be assumed that this can be improved because of the non-mandatory nature of external actions and the proportionally small budgets that they require from local governments.

3. Political support for the external actions of local and regional governments that rarely cuts across all sectors

Besides the chief executives and the elected officials in charge, other elected officials, by virtue of their availability and/or skills and/or willingness, are called on to get involved and support the external actions developed by their local government. For all that, it is important to point out that 30% of the respondents made remarks emphasising political backing that was problematic. Similarly, the sub-theme "problematic or absent political support" was the one most often cited by respondents with regard to political support (see Figure 7). We will therefore come back to these difficulties in further detail.

Three levels of concrete **involvement** by elected officials in the AECT have been identified based on the remarks made by the respondents.

The first way relates to representation activities on French territory with an international dimension: "we had a delegation from Quebec, so there were elected officials from Quebec who came [...] And in practical terms, there were eight elected officials, including four vice presidents from our Department [who took part]" (respondent 17). A second way of getting involved is when elected officials in charge of a specific theme travel abroad on missions. It should be noted that these two types of mobilisation, as hands-on as they are, run the risk of only being one-off occurrences. Another type of involvement for elected officials in charge of a specific theme can consist of taking part, for a longer period of time, in international exchange networks, as touched on by respondent 06: "the president gave a mandate to the elected officials, saying 'you are going to represent [the authority], you will receive a mission letter, you will be the one to represent [the authority] in these working groups, and you will be asked to report on your international missions'. So there was an official and political referral". Since this kind

of mobilisation involves representation or one-off actions, if work is not carried out beforehand or in follow-up, these activities are not likely to have any impact on elected officials, and more generally, on how public policies are conducted. Finally, these concrete forms of involvement can appear to be too "limited" as a basis for real shared political support for the "international" dimension in the local government.

So, while respondent 10 related: "When I arrived in the city, I was told 'you will not have one, or two or three elected officials at the international level but fifty-nine' and that was about right. There are around 59 elected officials in charge of international matters who have my mobile number and who are not shy about using it", this type of local government with political backing for the international dimension that is shared is more of an exception among the respondents. Indeed, while 18 respondents spoke of shared support for international actions, most of them did not mention cross-cutting support among all elected officials or support that was on display and taken for granted.

Several respondents mentioned only **political backing shared by certain elected officials** from their local government, specifically identified. Respondent 22 explained notably that: "it's according to theme. For example, for Romania, I worked a lot with the elected official in charge of housing policy. Other elected officials, for example the one in charge of urban planning, when there are activities on





urban planning, he will travel". Hence, elected officials who support opening up internationally are frequently officials with portfolios that touch on or that can be affected by the development of external actions. Furthermore, political support, even shared, for external actions, is not synonymous with a uniform perception of the international stage and of the interests it represents. Respondent 10 acknowledged as much: "I am not saying that they all look at it the same way or have the same vision. Some seem to have differing interpretations of what it means and only see it through the lens of the project that they are supposed to lead or support". Taking steps to align these visions and expectations with respect to the international dimension would therefore benefit these local and regional governments.

It also appears that the involvement of a few elected officials is not enough to generate real committed support among elected officials from local and regional governments overall. Several respondents spoke of a **"loose political consensus"** regarding external actions (for example, when decisions on requests for grants or decentralised cooperation programmes only require a couple of minutes to be taken, without any real debate taking place), even if budgets and deliberations concerning international actions are adopted by a majority or even unanimously. An elected official in charge of a specific theme can therefore develop an international vision through the prism of actions affecting their specific policy directly without having to invest any extra effort on political backing within the authority for the "international cause" or in support of these actions. It is not certain whether this absence of commitment to actively support external actions is the result of a deliberate choice or the consequence of an unspoken compartmentalisation of the different policy areas. In fact, is this not both the symptom and the cause of a weak, or absent, internationalisation strategy over the long term?

4. A political vision of the international scene that is not always very clear

The involvement of several elected officials in external actions is not proof of cross-cutting political backing; neither does it signify that there is a genuine strategic international vision, with the commitment and shared support of the deliberative assembly. This divide is emphasised by several professionals. The respondents spoke of the difficulties caused by this **weakness or absence of political vision**: "*the elected official's vision and political support, it's really what I am missing*", "*it's a real concern*". Without a political vision, it is not easy to implement external actions and/or to give them significance, as well as ensure that the AECT carried out are in line with the realities of local territories, thereby making it possible to bring about a real impact in France. In the same way, while this absence of an overall policy vision of the international dimension does not prevent AECT from being carried out, it can show up as an *"overlap"* or *"juxtaposition"* of projects and programmes without there being any general guideline or common thread detectable among them.

The absence or the weak strategic international vision of the international should first be correlated to **local and regional governments' partial understanding of the dynamics of internationalisation of their territory**. This explains why even though there have been progressive changes towards a more sophisticated understanding of local actors interacting at the international level, it is sometimes tricky for local and regional governments to have a comprehensive view of the proliferation and the diversity of links being formed between their territory and the international level. One consequence of this fragmented understanding: "*whether political or technical, the expectations of French local and regional governments are often still too ambivalent when they engage at the international level*" (ARRICOD, 2012, p.75).

The lack of a strategic international vision, particularly with respect to links with the local territory and possible impacts that might occur in this context, is also reflected in and affects the type of **relations maintained with the foreign partners**. While the foreign partners play a role in the type of relations forged (for example, some remain in the position of "recipient"), the positions and visions of French local and regional governments also influence these relations. Indeed, by only partially identifying the links between their local territory and the international level, by only having an incomplete idea of what the different international partners can effectively bring to their territory and its actors, French local and regional governments contribute to fostering unequal relationships where the French side *"helps"* its partner but receives little from the exchange being conducted. Respondents 30 and 40 summed it up as follows: "*Our departments always went there to analyse the local situation and offer their expertise. It never worked in the other direction*"; "*It is not enough to say that we want reciprocity, it is after all a complete change in the way of perceiving both the southern partner and the content of the project*".

Moreover, this absence or weak strategic international vision among local and regional governments can also be correlated to the **relative weakness of tie-ins between the international dimension and the other competencies of local and regional gov-**

ernments. Indeed, only 7 of the 44 respondents mentioned the actual existence of any such links. A respondent from a regional council pointed out: *"I think it is more strategic to focus on the economy than to focus on NGOs. It's simpler when dealing with a competence over which we have full power"*. Inversely, other respondents underlined the absence of such links. Respondent 07 stated: *"Today, the difficulty that we have with this cooperation concerns strategy; we are finding it hard to justify that we are taking part in or supporting cooperation with a scientific aim, given that this does not fall at all within the competency of the department"*. This situation offers insights into why there have been only limited changes in public policies following the introduction of the AECT. Similarly, like a backwards domino effect, the fragility of these ties in with other competencies does not bode well for cross-cutting support of the international dimension by local elected officials, nor does it promote the forming of a genuine comprehensive strategic vision on this subject. Under these circumstances, how can the "international" theme be truly integrated into the overall general policy programme of each local government?

It must however be pointed out that even if it remains incomplete and present at different levels in French local and regional governments on the whole, there seems to be a trend towards a realignment of external actions based on the specific competencies of the local and regional governments developing them. Respondent 05 confirmed: *"We are in the midst of a very decisive reorientation of our decentralised cooperation towards our field of competencies"*. This shift in focus might in time trigger returns from external actions that affect other public policies, from the point of view of both the technical aspects of implementation as well as the associated trade-offs.

Lastly, it should be noted that in the absence of a real shared cross-cutting and integrated vision of international policy and the internationalisation of the territory among local elected officials, the AECT are even more vulnerable to changes in direction coming from the principal lenders. Eight respondents specifically stated that the relations between their local or regional government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) were asymmetrical. Local

"We adhere to the major guidelines defined by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs"

and regional governments could therefore be "influenced" in their choices pertaining to external actions insofar as the **MFA's guidelines** determine which financial subsidies they are entitled to, mainly in accordance with choice of working themes and foreign partners. Respondent 19 indicated: *"We adhere to the major guidelines defined by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In any case, we don't have much choice seeing that the money is not given to us if we don't follow their guidelines"*. This influence emanating from the MFA concerning the external actions developed by some local and regional governments can even go so far as to have an impact on the decision to stop or continue certain programmes. One respondent related: *"As soon as Chile became an emerging country in 2011, it disappeared from the lists of the MFA, the DAECT, and suddenly we had to secure full financing from our own funds, which we could no longer allow"*. So, while the MFA does not impose constraints on which actions local and regional governments can or cannot carry out, its guidelines, which appear notably in the selection criteria for the different calls for projects, influence the political trade-offs made within local and regional governments on which external actions will be carried out. We may assume that this influence will become all the more prevalent since the international vision is not fully shared across all sectors and is only partially integrated in the general policy programme of the local and regional governments.

It may thus be concluded from the analysis of the political support for the AECT that, despite the existence of a globalised context and the development of a variety of exchanges between territories, the international theme is only partially supported and seen as a key issue among local elected officials. This has ramifications for the AECT carried out but also for the nature and scope of their effective impacts, particularly in France.



B. EXTERNAL ACTIONS OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS SET UP BY BODIES AT THE CENTRE OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIONS

In addition to the international vision and support of elected officials, administrative bodies that oversee the actual implementation of external actions play a central role in how these actions are conducted. The many remarks made by the respondents in this regard underscore the importance these bodies can have, and also reveal the many different types of situations existing in French local and regional governments at this level.

1. External action bodies of varying importance

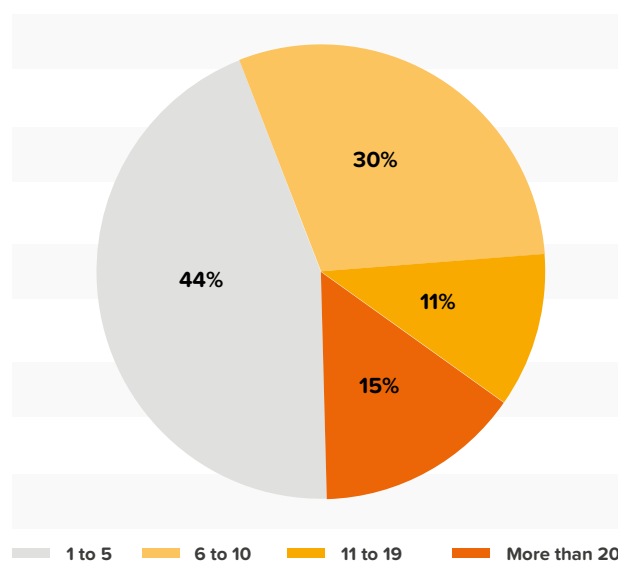
It should first be said that 60% of the regional and general councils in mainland France include such a body on their organisation chart. There are however disparities between these two levels of territorial government. So while 100% of the regional councils have an integrated "external action" body on their organisation chart, this only applies to 51% of the general councils. Moreover, among the 49% of general councils without a specific "external action" body on their organisation chart, 81% of them state on the MFA's website that they do conduct actions at the international level.

Even though certain organisation charts do not necessarily show every single "small body" (units or missions for example), it seems nonetheless that in many cases, this **non-inclusion of a body** specifically in charge of external actions on the organisation chart corresponds to an absence of such an administrative entity in reality. Hence, we can find local and regional governments (general councils in this case, but this also applies to municipalities or inter-municipal associations) where external actions are developed and followed by an agent of the authority attached to a given sectoral unit or the cabinet. These agents are sometimes even allotted a specific percentage of their working time, give or take a few hours, to implement them, in addition to their main activities. This specifically allotted time is more or less made official depending on the local government. Such situations were referred to (in our panel) by two respondents from general councils. For example, this was the case of a technician in charge of social action, and 20% of his working time was allocated to his official responsibilities of coordinating the external actions of the local government. It may be questioned whether one person is even capable of really developing, coordinating and fully keeping up with projects at the international level (especially if this area is only supposed to take up a certain percentage of his working hours). Does this not present a "risk" that the international actions end up concentrated in only one thematic area (the one covered by the body to which the agent is assigned)?

Consequently, this type of affiliation seems to be a limiting factor in terms of ensuring that external actions produce greater cross-cutting returns benefitting local authorities as a whole, its public policies and the actors from its territory.

– Figure 8 –

Number of agents by "external action" body. Among the 27 local and regional governments where interviews were recorded and which have an "external action" body
M. Gely, 2016



We would also like to emphasise that the presence or absence of an administrative entity specifically in charge of external actions usually stems from the combination of two factors. First, the question of size must be taken into account. The regional councils, with more substantial staff and budgets to match, have much more leeway to establish a dedicated service. However, this threshold effect cannot be the only underlying factor given that there are smaller local and regional governments, municipalities with 60,000 inhabitants for example, that do have bodies dedicated to external actions. A second factor that will be examined here is the political will to effectively carry out such actions at the international level, which inherently implies giving the administration the technical means necessary to develop them.



المسوق المركزي للزرايين
LE SOUK PRINCIPAL DE TAPIS
LA VENTE AUX ENCHERES
LE PRINCIPAL MARCHÉ DE CARPETS
LE MARCHÉ PRINCIPAL DE LA PERSIE

المسوق المركزي للزرايين
LE SOUK PRINCIPAL DE TAPIS
LA VENTE AUX ENCHERES
LE PRINCIPAL MARCHÉ DE CARPETS
LE MARCHÉ PRINCIPAL DE LA PERSIE

It is also important to note that while there are bodies responsible for external actions in 60% of the regional and general councils, there is no uniformity among these units, particularly in terms of the **number of agents assigned**. The differences in size of these bodies, at the human resources level, is visible among the 29 local and regional governments where the interviews were held, as can be seen in the figure page 31. So, while in a majority (44%) of local and regional governments, specifically attributed services consist of one to five people; in contrast, more than 25% have more than ten agents. It may also be seen that the 15% of local and regional governments with bodies made up of 20 agents or more represent the four levels of territorial administration (municipalities, inter-municipal associations, departments and regions). This underlines once again that the threshold effect linked to the size and level of the local or regional government cannot be the only factor explaining the presence or importance of a body specifically in charge of external actions in an authority. While there is of course no "ideal" size for these bodies, we may speculate on the factors that lead to such disparities as well as the technical need to have – at times – such large bodies in terms of numbers.

Besides the choice to establish, or not, such administrative bodies in local and regional governments, another significant decision involves whether or not to **"delegate" the steering and the management of all or part of their external actions to associations**. During our study, it was revealed by three respondents that such practices existed in their administration. Even though the advantages to be gained from having this type of arrangement were emphasised ("flexibility", ability to obtain and mobilise funds, proximity with the citizens), it raises questions, particularly when the associations ensure the management but also the outsourcing of the projects. This might be cause for confusion between the local and regional governments and the association, particularly for the foreign partners, which may be detrimental in terms of the communication and conduct of joint projects. There is also the consideration that the authority might find itself "relieved" from its stewardship over these actions.

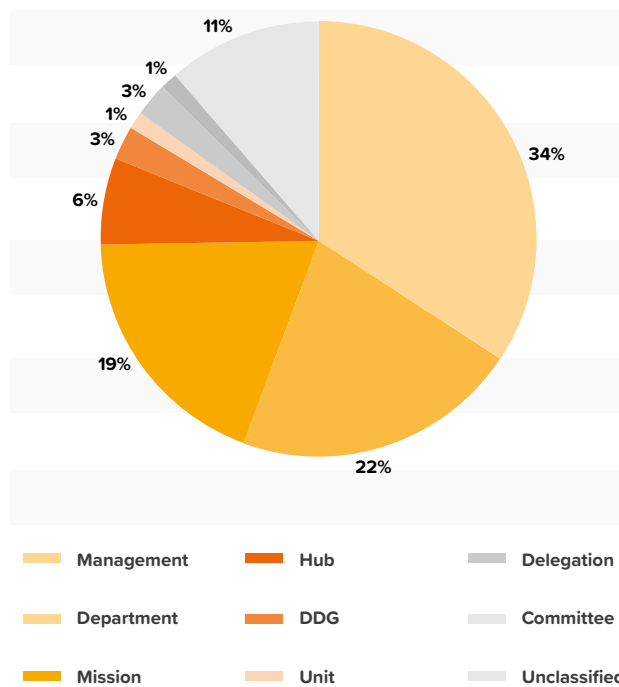
Essentially, what role is left for the local or regional government, particularly in terms of political trade-offs, especially when all of the external actions are entrusted to one association? Are possible de facto management scenarios a cause for concern in certain specific cases? Out of awareness of these risks, different local and regional governments set up various safeguards: specific agreements linking the authority and the association, structural changes in the association among other things. One of the three respondents, while expressing satisfaction with this method of functioning, indicated nevertheless that *"a good relationship is necessary because we are on edge all the time [...] Basically, the day when things go really bad, agreements won't hold"*. Lastly, it should be noted that when a local or regional government entrusts all or part of the management of its external actions to associations, the process of (re)taking control at a later stage is not without obstacles and requires real political will.

In addition to the weight given to these bodies in charge of external actions, the professionals interviewed also stressed the importance they assign to the **working logic** they use within their body. Respondent 21 spoke of the importance of having a *"matrix ap-*

proach"/ The connections mentioned are discernible in the names of the bodies responsible for external actions, and the terms "international" and "Europe" are commonly used. Titles such as *"International Relations"*, *"Europe and International"* or *"European and International Affairs"* can be found. While these groupings make sense in practical terms, the juxtaposition of words from the lexical groups "Europe" and "international" is puzzling. Is Europe not to be considered part of the international grouping? Does it occupy an intermediary position? If the working logic used is similar for both, why specifically include both terms in the name of the body? It may also be pointed out that setting these two lexical groups aside, the use of "decentralised" in the name occurs much less frequently. The classic terminology of "decentralised cooperation" therefore seems to be losing steam. Looking at the changes in the names of the bodies in charge of external actions, even if this has no significance officially, attests nevertheless to how actions carried out at the international level have evolved, becoming increasingly diverse, with aspects that no longer fit within the identity of the term "decentralised cooperation".

– Figure 9 –

Different hierarchical levels of "external action" bodies Among the 22 regional councils and 48 general councils with such bodies
M. Gely, 2016



In addition to the specific types of working logic, the **hierarchical level or grade** of these administrative bodies should also be taken into account. The implementation of the AECT may be impacted by this, as explained by respondent 8: *"It is a unit. We didn't want to create a department, in order to stay outside of the administrative hierarchy"*. Inversely, respondent 10 stated: *"It's a managerial body and that's important [...] That allows us to stay in permanent contact*

²⁰ A deputy directorate general can be defined as a thematic "super directorate" inside an administration. Generally, it is made up of administrative sub-bodies (directorates, departments, ...).

with the other directors, to be able to stay updated on what is going on in the local government, at least at the strategic level, and to be able to nurture, using formal and informal means, the action of the city". These two accounts show that there is not a typical grade for bodies responsible for external actions, with each one depending on the context (internal and external) specific to each local or regional authority. This wide variety of situations can be seen in Figure 9 on previous page. Similar to what was noted previously regarding their staff, there is also a multitude of grades of different types that can be assigned to the bodies in charge of external actions. While the fact of having a body of a "superior" grade (centre, deputy directorate general - DDG²⁰ - or unit) does not necessarily translate into "better" managed actions, it may however be assumed that these actions are not kept "sidelined" in this type of administration, but are instead given visibility and a prominent place within the internal organisation.

2. Bodies in charge of external actions that occupy different administrative positions in local and regional governments

While the characteristics of the bodies in charge of external actions provide indications as to what the international vision of the different local and regional governments is and how it may impact the technical aspects of implementing these actions, these bodies are not lone islands within the territorial administrations. Their positioning and **administrative attachments** are even considered to be a real issue by the respondents (35 respondents referred to this 79 times).

The study done of the organisation charts of regional and general councils highlighted the fact that, contrary to what could be believed, the bodies in charge of external actions attached to the "political" level are very much in the minority since this was only applicable to 6% of the organisation charts studied. These bodies are therefore subject to the same administrative rules as all the other services that make up the "classic" administrative hierarchy.

As the organisation charts are "the fruit of history", the result at times of "no choice" or a decision "by default", it does not seem sensible to try to decrypt here the rationale and possible choices that led to such-and-such a positioning; however, "the impacts on the projects and policy are enormous" (respondent 31).

The respondents first stressed that **physical, organisational and/or thematic proximity** fostered closer links with the other departments and directorates attached to the same unit. This direct contact also made it easier to get these departments involved in the external actions, as mentioned by respondent 24: "It is much easier to rely on each other, to put together reception programmes, to set up missions". However, depending on the local or regional government, these proximities do not always concern the same policies or departments. The remarks made by respondents 43 and 38, who both work in general councils, illustrate this. The first stated that "the advantage of working in this directorate might be getting to work more

closely on ties to the economy and tourism" while the second asserts that in "this DDG, there is culture. The first contacts are generally made with a country through the doorway of culture". The many administrative attachments mentioned in the preceding paragraph thus lead to a variety of close thematic associations depending on the local or regional government. Having the same administrative attachment can make it easier to mobilise other departments/directorates on external actions through relationships of proximity but also as a result of a "simplification" of the usual hierarchical hurdles, as explained by respondent 42: "It is definitely an obvious advantage because there is only one DDG". As interesting as they are and simpler, these "internal" mobilisations within one macro administrative body do not however prevent departments and agents "outside" of this body from being solicited and mobilised to ensure that the AECT can be carried out in an efficient and suitable way.

Moving beyond the possible relationships of proximity that might be encouraged within the same administrative body, the respondents felt that the administrative positioning had an impact on the implementation of external actions owing to its more or less "**cross-sectoral**" nature. Respondent 15 indicated in particular: "I think that for the international relations department to work, there has to be a cross-sectoral approach when it comes to the other departments and it has to be supported politically and administratively". According to the respondents, this cross-sectoral approach receives even more support when the body in charge of external actions is close to the director general of services (DGS). Nineteen respondents (of the 35 who made remarks on the administrative organisation of their authority) highlighted a **direct attachment to the DGS**²¹. Respondent 16 related: "We felt it was more appropriate to remain at the level of the DGS because the DGS can send out a certain number of department memos to the directors and deputy directors general. In terms of hierarchy, it's more productive, whereas if the mission had been placed under a DDG, it would be frowned upon to have a DDG send department memos to other DDG colleagues". Thus, in addition to adopting an across-the-board positioning, a direct attachment to the DGS would allow for "a vision that cuts a bit through all the intermediary stages, thereby giving it a little bigger boost" (respondent 05). "Having a unit directly linked to the DGS is one factor which helps things to progress more quickly" (respondent 08), since this positioning enables "short cuts in terms of the decision-making process" (respondent 21). Finally, "it is [also] the only way to have the hierarchical authority necessary to be able to legitimately insist upon a certain number of shared initiatives" (respondent 12), thus attesting to the fact that the international component still "needs" to be made legitimate as well as supported by the superior administrative officer within local and regional governments.

It should however be noted that even if the respondents prefer an attachment close to the DGS, 60% of the bodies (in regional and general councils) are ranked two or three levels under the DGS and therefore have no direct and immediate administrative relationship with it.

Consequently, putting aside the diversity of political and administrative situations specific to each local government, the AECT require, like all local public actions, real political as well as technical and administrative support.

²¹ The Director General of Services can be found at the "top" of the hierarchy of the local government. He plays a managerial role but also works to steer and drive things forward within the local administration.

CHAPTER 3

... ACTIONS THAT ALSO REQUIRE THE
INVOLVEMENT OF A WIDE RANGE OF
DIFFERENT ACTORS



The professionals “seek” and “mobilise” other “departments”, “directorates” or “specialist” “colleagues” for their “**competencies**” and “technical” “expertise”. This mobilisation seems however to respond to “needs” for specific “projects”. It seems then that the involvement of other departments internally is done more on an ad hoc basis rather than from a real overall vision that is shared and cross-sectoral with long-term aims. This element needs to be looked at against the context previously mentioned of the relatively weak formal links that exist between the international dimension and the other competencies of local and regional governments. For example, some external action professionals seem to seek out their colleagues to respond to specific and/or one-off technical needs rather than by holding a real discussion on the competencies available in their authority and the synergies to be developed. If in practice this mobilisation of other departments turns out to be mainly one-off in character, done in response to specific technical “needs” identified by the body in charge of external actions, this could be a factor that accounts for the weak internal returns from the internationalisation process on the public policies traditionally carried out by local and regional governments.

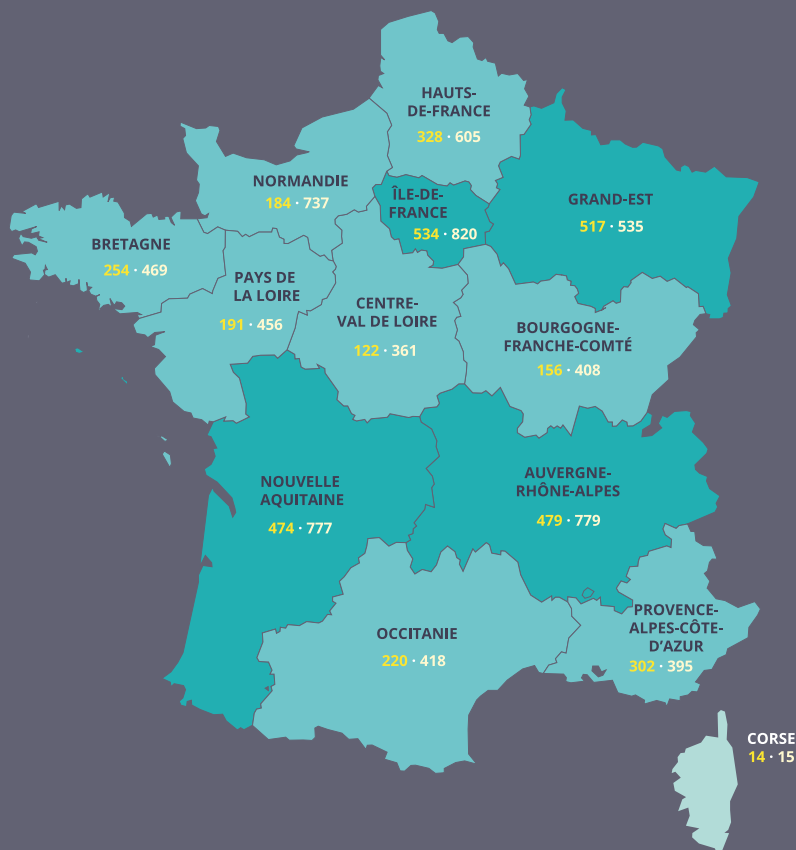
It should be noted that beyond the “essentialist” cause, the mobilisation of the departments should be increasingly sought out in connection with the existing processes (previously mentioned) taking place in local and regional governments to realign external actions towards their own competencies.

2. A mobilisation of other departments that comes with its own obstacles

While the mobilisation of other departments for the implementation of the external actions of local and regional governments seems to be appropriate, even necessary, it seems to involve some **difficulty**. Two types of limiting factors could be identified based on remarks made by the respondents.

The first difficulty to be overcome involves the **perception of external actions held by other agents** and departments of local and regional governments. This aspect was addressed by 22 respondents (or 50% of the professionals encountered), from 21 different authorities (out of 29). It should be stressed that this view of external actions seems mostly pejorative since among the 22 respondents, 16 professionals from 15 authorities expressed negative views while only 3 mentioned positive perceptions. It is important to specify that the perceptions reported mainly concern the form rather than the substance of the external actions carried out. Accordingly, the respondents’ perceptions (positive or negative) did not concern the fact that their local and regional governments were conducting international actions but focused on the practical aspects of their implementation, particularly those relating to travel abroad or technicians. However, if the other agents and departments did not express any opinion touching on the substance and principles that underlie these external actions, is this not proof in itself that they do not have a deep understanding of this subject?

NOMBRE DE PROJETS DE COOPÉRATION DÉCENTRALISÉE ET DE JUMELAGES PAR RÉGION

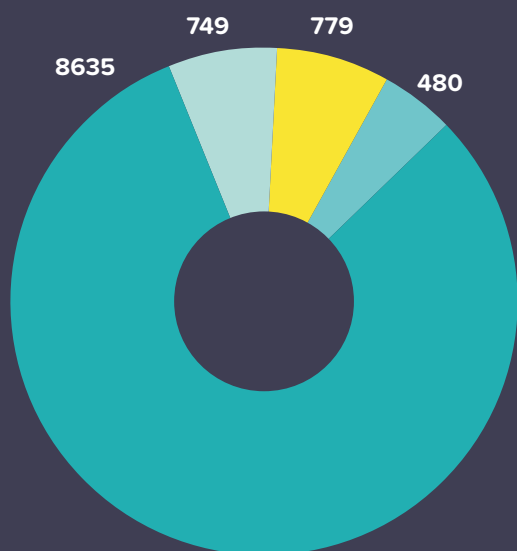


NOMBRE DE :

- projets en cours
- jumelages en cours

TOTAL :

- > 1000
- 100 à 1000
- 0 à 100



NOMBRE DE PROJETS PAR TYPE DE COLLECTIVITÉ

- COMMUNES 81,13 %
- RÉGIONS 7,04 %
- STRUCTURES INTERCOMMUNALES 7,32 %
- DÉPARTEMENTS 4,51 %

“The idea still persists that working at the international level is just a way to get a free trip abroad”

This seems to be specifically corroborated in respondents' remarks concerning “negative perceptions” of other departments with respect to external actions. Eight respondents brought up negative or mistaken assessments: “There are some who think this is a run-of-the-mill tourist office. There are many who think we don't do anything” (respondent 11); “the idea still persists that working at the international level is just a way to get a free trip abroad, to have a good time, that it's just for personal enjoyment” (respondent 43). These distorted visions seem to be the result of a misunderstanding of the work being done, as explained by respondent 04: “when you start discussing how our programmes work with some people, they tell us ‘I wasn't at all aware of everything that it involved’”. One challenge, or perhaps even an imperative, for the bodies in charge of external actions is therefore to communicate more and/or differently on the actions carried out as well as on what exactly the “international” component entails in the local government, its underlying vision and the stakes associated, for the institution and its territory.

Besides these incomplete or mistaken impressions of other departments and agents involved in the external actions carried out in local and regional governments, other **impediments** limit the effective involvement of these actors in international projects. Such obstacles were mentioned by 26 (of 44) respondents from 23 authorities. Consequently, there do seem to be obstacles to mobilisation in a majority of local and regional governments. According to the respondents' remarks, there are three main types of impediments.

The respondents first emphasised the pervasiveness **of technical and material problems**. The first of these is linked to time constraints and the lack of availability of the departments concerned. In fact, getting involved in external actions is usually done in addition to agents' principal activities. Time constraints and agent availability are arguments often used by department heads when they are asked to get involved in external actions. This issue is even more sensitive given that many French local and regional governments are currently undergoing staff shortages. This human resource obstacle must also be seen in the light of the budget constraints and tensions that local governments and some specific departments are facing. Trying to get appropriations from other public policies and/or departments for external actions is therefore a sensitive matter. Respondent 02 confirmed: “The second obstacle is that, financially, I don't consider cooperation actions to be very expensive [...] but at the same time, we still have to stay within a budget equation, which means that we can't go beyond the job possibilities that are offered to us”. Finally, the respondents emphasised a last technical impediment: the linguistic barrier.

These “material” impediments singled out by the departments asked to take part in the external actions show that the international dimension is seen as “overload”, and thus requiring more time and human means. It may be noted that the impediments invoked



are consistent with those reported by Antoine Vion in his doctoral research in 2001: “Two major limitations have thus come to light. The first concerns constraints relating to working relations in the administrations [...] The second concerns the strong inclination to avoid having any disorder in the departments. [And] added to these limitations are financial constraints owing to local budget negotiations” (Vion, 2001, pp. 200-201). Seen against this perspective, it would seem that the perception and the place of the AECT in French local administrations has evolved little over the past decade.

Besides the technical constraints brought up by the departments solicited and reiterated by the professionals interviewed, other impediments linked to the internal organisation and the management of the projects should also be taken into account. Much like with the elected officials, there is a **compartmentalisation among the technical departments** within the local governments. This compartmentalisation, by limiting exchanges between entities and professionals from the same institution, complicates the dissemination and sharing of information, which is a prerequisite for developing any non-mandatory cross-cutting actions, and external actions in particular. Respondent 05 highlighted this point: “I believe that it is a recurring problem, so much so that sometimes, it is simpler to work with outside consultants rather than internal staff [...] We're in our cubicles, working on things distinctly separate”. Even though this situation is a common one among all the departments of a local government, it is up to the body in charge of external actions, conscious of the relevance or even need to have a cross-cutting approach, especially when it comes to the management of its projects, to adopt tools, methods and procedures to overcome this limiting factor. This is how a cross-cutting way of approaching work, increasingly cited as one of the returns of external actions sought by French local and regional governments, just might develop in the internal organisation.

While this administrative compartmentalisation is a “technical” difficulty to be overcome in order to get other departments involved in international projects, it is sometimes enough to prevent external action professionals from setting up thematic international projects together with other departments, even when the latter have the specialised skills and knowledge necessary for said projects. As a result, the other departments are often only solicited further along in the process, which can limit their involvement, as pointed out by respondent 07: *“Yes, impediments... it’s often that when you go and propose a project, it’s projects that we have already concocted with our partners, and [the departments called on] say ‘we are going to have additional work’; so often, they have the tendency of first saying ‘we can’t’”*. As **the bones of the projects are determined beforehand**, the external actions proposed to the other departments are not necessarily a natural match with the programmes and policies that they work on or which might interest them. The latter therefore find it all the more difficult to discern any interest which they might derive from getting involved, all of which adds up to another impediment preventing their mobilisation on such actions. So, in addition to the first impediments discussed that concern the other departments directly, others entail a “responsibility”, which falls to the external action professionals themselves.

3. The means employed to ensure the effectiveness of this cross-sectoral mobilisation in local and regional governments in terms of external actions

In order to limit or pre-empt the impact of the impediments identified, the AECT professionals have developed lines of reasoning, a method of approach and working methods. These elements appear to be key in the comments made by the respondents with a total of 67 references (made by 28 respondents from 23 distinct local and regional governments).

The respondents first pointed out the need for **better communication and mutual understanding between departments**. This requires a “dissemination” of information from the external action department to the other units of the local government. As part of a reverse approach, in the aim of compiling information on other public policies and/or knowledge and skills from other agents in the local governments who have or might have a connection with the international dimension, several departments have introduced information gathering or “surveys”. Concrete steps in this direction could include a *“survey of languages spoken by the agents”* (respondent 26) or a calculation of the “international budget” of local and regional governments (respondent 25).



Besides this unilateral communication, the respondents spoke of the importance of sharing information among departments on a wider basis. This can be achieved by organising, formally or informally, “**representatives**” or “*point people*”. The latter could act as a resource providing information on international issues and as a contact link between the “external action” department and the other thematic directorates. Respondent 12 stated: “*to go even further, a contact person for information in the directorate should be designated who will also be our contact, our bridge with the directorate, who will help us to better understand their organisation, their way of functioning, any taboos, because it so happens that we also come with our preconceived ideas that are not constructive*”. In the interests of exchanging information and of establishing a bridge with other thematic policies, contact persons can also be designated in the “external action” departments, as described by respondent 10: “*in International Relations, we have a gateway to the other sections. We*

“It is necessary to convince people that we will make things easier, that it won’t be too time consuming”

have one person who specifically handles Youth, we have a person who specifically handles Culture and who ensures that the link with these other public policies is strong”.

This better mutual understanding helps to limit any existing misconceptions about the external actions and the working practices of the professionals conducting these programmes. On the other side, it helps the external action professionals to stay informed with regard to their colleagues’ current realities and working practices. These two elements can foster mutual discussions and lead to collaboration on the construction of international projects involving other departments and expertise from within local and regional governments.

In other respects, while excessively rigid administrative frameworks can be seen as an impediment to the involvement of other departments in external actions, several respondents stressed that simple **administrative and political formalities** can be a factor promoting the mobilisation of other departments. Respondent 03 noted for example: “*We put an emphasis on formalism. It is rare to see a department like that. Every time I had to get something done, it was all extremely formal*”. Political and/or administrative formalism can limit some of the impediments mentioned earlier since it “legitimises” the request from the “external action” department. Besides



its “vehicular” nature, this formalisation can pave the way for the inclusion of the external actions in the work plan of the department or agents solicited. As stated previously, hierarchical influence (particularly from the DGS) is one of the elements able to “facilitate” cross-sectoral mobilisation for international themes.

Finally, the last element presented by the respondents to counteract the impediments to the mobilisation of other agents and departments in local and regional governments is **making the project “attractive”**. This entails having the respondents present what advantages the departments being solicited can obtain from becoming involved, from both a technical and financial perspective. The difficulty here concerns the fact that even if such returns are possible, they are undervalued and/or not used as a selling point. Moreover, several respondents reported that the external actions proposed to other departments could be made to seem even more “attractive” since the agents solicited would not have to deal with the complexities of the project’s overall management alone: *“it is necessary to convince them that we will make things easier, that it won’t be too time consuming”* (respondent 15), *“their job is really just to use their skills at the given moment”* (respondent 31).

“It’s all very well discussing projects, but when we’re on the ground and actually meet our counterparts, it’s really a lot better”

Faced with the “reluctance” of certain departments and agents to get involved in external actions, the bodies in charge of implementing these public actions have been developing a wide range of methods to ensure the effectiveness of this **involvement**, an involvement which can take on a variety of forms.

Besides a possible one-off involvement at conferences or seminars, the agents and departments of local and regional governments can be called on to participate in **receiving delegations** or to conduct **technical missions abroad**: *“I made sure to also take my colleagues into the field, even if it meant reducing the delegation from my directorate [...] It’s all very well discussing projects, but when we’re on the ground and actually meet our counterparts, it’s really a lot better”* (respondent 38). Yet, while this hosting and travel abroad makes sense and responds to specific needs, this mobilisation will have even greater returns, both for the partner and in France, if it is part of an exchange held over a longer period of time. While some professionals stress the importance of a relatively long involvement to ensure real returns, none of them explicitly stated that a longer involvement is important because it increases the sense of project ownership among the French professionals solicited, even if the latter is a prerequisite for greater returns with respect to the implementation of their day-to-day practices and policies. This element recalls the paucity of remarks regarding the co-construction of projects with the agents and departments solicited.

Only two professionals explicitly mentioned **joint responsibility** for external actions involving other departments. The respondents focused more on coordination but also the steering of these projects by the “external action” department, only calling on other departments for their primary expertise. As we mentioned before, for the respondents, such steering methods would help to limit certain impediments to the mobilisation of other departments. However, by only associating other departments occasionally on technical aspects, even for a project with a broad scope, this restricts the participation of the agents and departments solicited to a small role in the discussions and construction of the action at the international level. Calling on other actors in the local or regional government therefore seems to mainly occur on a case-by-case basis; this makes it harder for these departments and agents to take ownership of these international actions in their entirety (for the duration of the project at the international level and including all of its thematic components). Consequently, while this way of working and mobilising is in response to certain needs (real or assumed), it also perpetuates the one-off nature of the mobilisation of the agents and departments solicited, thereby limiting the impacts for the agents, departments and public policies concerned.

It may however be noted that there is an opposite trend whereby certain departments are carrying out sectoral projects with an international dimension without necessarily notifying the “external action” department of this beforehand. In the interests of consistency, coordination, but also the optimisation of spending, several local and regional governments have been developing tools to build up an **overall vision** of the actions implemented with an international component. This is the case in several regional councils, as explained by respondent 21: *“I technically set up a group with all of the directorates concerned by mobility. We created a summary table with all of the programmes on this subject and evaluated them financially”*.

It is therefore apparent from this analysis that the mobilisation of other departments for external actions remain rather ad hoc and rarely cut across other sectors. As we highlighted before, this is mainly due to a mutual lack of understanding between the external action body and the other local and regional government units. It therefore seems vital that communication practices (formal and informal) be improved in the local administrations with respect to the theme of internationalisation, the detailed rules possible for implementation as well as the existing impacts from the projects already developed. This might help to unleash a “virtuous circle” since the exemplary nature of the mobilisation of a department in external actions and the returns for the latter can encourage other departments to become involved. This improved interaction and familiarity across services (regarding each other’s actions, working processes, short and long-term objectives...), by promoting more frequent and integrated mobilisations as part of a broader dialogue across all sectors, can lead to an increase in the different agents taking ownership of the international theme as well as greater consistency with the public policies traditionally developed by local and regional governments, with the possibility of more pronounced impacts in the local administration and on French territory. Lastly, the genesis and consolidation of an international “culture” in local and regional governments could limit the impact of technical and political trade-offs based on the point of view of one agent (or elected official) alone.

B RELATIONS WITH TERRITORIAL STAKEHOLDERS BEING SOUGHT BY LOCAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS AS PART OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THEIR EXTERNAL ACTIONS

Besides the internal mobilisation of actors in local and regional governments (elected officials, other agents and thematic departments), the external actions also involve a wide range of actors from the French local territories. Key aspects of their involvement are therefore also elements that explain the disparities highlighted between the expected and actual impacts from the AECT in the French territories. This theme of links with territorial stakeholders was raised by 34 respondents from 25 local and regional governments. Mobilisation of these local and regional actors in the international projects was also mentioned in the official communications of French local and regional governments. For example, the Nord-Pas de Calais Regional Council included on its website: *"The development of regional actions at the international level by mobilising the territory's civic forces and social actors, whether they be local governments, associations, universities, hospitals, economic stakeholders, is one of the Region's ambitions"*²². Thus, local and regional stakeholders can signify local associations but also, for example, public institutions (notably hospitals or schools), private companies or foundations or even other local and regional governments.

Without going over the characteristics, rationales and motivations specific to each actor, it seems wise to focus on the point of view of local and regional governments. Why do they wish to have such diverse actors take part in the external actions? What forms can these mobilisation actions take? To what extent are these mobilisation actions and their forms a critical element in the search for local returns in France from external actions?

1. Involvement of civil society as a sought-after prerequisite for the external actions of local and regional governments

It must first be emphasised that while the **involvement of local and regional stakeholders** in France was raised by the respondents and seems to correspond to an observable reality, it depends on two distinct lines of reasoning. The latter are not mutually exclusive and can be presented concurrently in French local and regional governments. It is also interesting to note that, despite their differences, they lead to similar responses from local and regional governments.

First of all, the respondents pointed out that the mobilisation of actors from French local civil society can be a **response to a need** specifically identified on a foreign territory. This is the case in particular of the decentralised cooperation partnerships or when French local and regional governments have regular or instituted links with foreign local governments. As French local and regional governments are not always able to respond to the different requests, either because they do not have the right skills internally, or because they do not have the human and/or material resources required to carry out the follow-up necessary, they then turn to local actors. Respondent 07 explained: *"If we don't find the skills we need internally, we look for associations, like what we did with [association Z], which is working with us on the scientific portion"*.

Secondly, the involvement of local and regional stakeholders in the external actions of French local and regional governments can be



²² The Nord-Pas de Calais Regional Council's webpage on "international" issues: http://www.nordpasdecalais.fr/jcms/c_5334/l-international (page visited on 26.08.2014).

a response to a **"request from the field"** (respondent 10) in France. This is then the manifestation of a *"political will [...] to help the [local] community network working internationally"* (respondent 16). Indeed, there are many territories with a dynamic civil society made up of actors developing, or wishing to develop international actions. This element was also highlighted in the official communications of local and regional governments. The Rhone-Alps Regional Council included on its website: *"Two-thirds of French NGOs have their head office in the Rhone-Alps"*²³. In this way, local and regional stakeholders took action, either to respond to a "request", a "need" of the French local or regional territory (in the context of its own relations with its foreign partner institution), or because they have their own international actions and receive support (financially usually) from the French local or regional government.

Whatever the rationale leading the sub-national government to involve actors from the territory at the international level, this mobilisation can be seen as a **"driving force animating the territory"** (respondent 31). This territorial animation can take the form of a coordination of these actors and their actions as described by respondent 01: *"[we play] a role of coordination and interaction so that we don't step on each other's toes"*. While some local and regional governments make the choice of handling this coordination internally, others prefer to delegate, all or in part, this animation. This is the case in the twelve regions where *"multi-actor regional networks"* were created. As noted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "each of these networks has its own different history, status and context" and brings together *"associations, local and regional governments,*

*educational institutions, public institutions"*²⁴; however, they are all developing actions in four areas: *"identification of actors, information, support for project leaders, organisation of exchanges and coordination between actors"*. Regardless of whether it is delegated to an external structure, the animation of the network of actors mobilised at the international level by local and regional governments therefore seems to be an essential element for external actions.

According to the respondents, in addition to this role as conductor, this territorial animation carried out by local and regional governments also involves specific relations with each actor; this is *"supporting the project leaders"*. This **support** can be technical and/or financial. From a technical point of view, respondent 17 indicated: *"[the] role of advising and supporting the projects of the local and regional actors helps in staying abreast of the real situation, all the association presidents have to do is knock on my office door and say, 'I'm having problems with the provisional budget'"*. This should be seen in connection with the returns from external actions actually observed on the French territory. While this territorial animation is one of the external action returns that can in fact be observed on French local territory, it was not actually sought beforehand in and of itself (the socio-cultural objectives mainly concerned the themes of "opening up to the world" and "living together better"). This territorial animation is therefore more the result of the working methods and ways of interacting between the local and regional governments and the actors on their territory. Thus, it appears to be a knock-on effect, ensuing from the concrete implementation of the external actions.



²³ The Rhone-Alps Regional Council's webpage on "international solidarity" issues: <http://www.rhonealpes.fr/176-solidarite-internationale.htm> (page visited on 26.08.2014).

²⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs webpage for multi-actor regional networks: <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/politique-etrangere-de-la-france/action-exterieuredes-colonne-droite21470/liens-utiles-21461/article/reseaux-regionaux-multi-acteurs> (page visited on 28.08.2014).

While technical support is provided, the respondents mainly stressed the importance (political and for the local and regional stakeholders) of the **financial support** that local and regional governments can provide the local project leaders. The financial aspect was mentioned by 14 of the 18 respondents with respect to the rationale used for the support and animation of the territory. These financial support mechanisms usually take the form of calls for projects that are open to actors from the territory. To a lesser extent, in the context of decentralised cooperation partnerships formed, when the local or regional government is seeking a skill specific to civil society, public procurement procedures can be implemented. Out of 22 regional councils examined in mainland France, 20 mentioned at least one call for proposals involving the international level (not including regional internationalisation plans and/or plans to develop cultural actions at the international level), according to a study of the 22 regional councils in mainland France carried out by the author²⁵.

While the selection criteria for projects differ from one local/regional government to another, the majority of them refer to the conditions for implementing the actions on the partner territory (for example, involvement of a local operator on the partner territory, list of eligible countries, minimal duration of the programme on the ground). At the same time, 13 of the 25 calls for "international solidarity" proposals do not include any criteria regarding the actions to be developed, in parallel, on the French territory. The ones (12) that specifically refer to this only mention actions linked to "information", "communication", "awareness" or "development education". How then can the local and regional governments highlight any returns for the French territories if this element is not part of the pre-selection criteria for projects that receive financial support? Furthermore, by only including a few selection criteria, or none at all, in this respect, the local and regional governments do not really encourage local actors to develop part of their actions with an international dimension on French territory. Does the near absence of this type of criteria also reflect the fact that few local and regional governments have introduced any real changes in their vision of the international scene and of possible links with the territory and the local actors?

While the regional councils' calls for proposals involving actions with an international dimension mainly list criteria focusing on the running of the project on the partner territory, another important discriminatory factor to be taken into account is the relation between the actor respondent and the French local territory. Among the 25 calls for proposals identified, only two did not explicitly specify that the actors must have their head office (or a large part of their actions) in the region concerned. The "**location**" criteria of the actors is therefore particularly significant; more so than the actions developed on the same French territory. We can therefore wonder about the underlying rationales of these calls for proposals. Is their implementation really intended to promote "territory to territory" cooperation involving French "local civil society" on a large scale? Or on the contrary, are they a means of financing, in part, the functioning of certain local operators? One respondent stated: "*they see [a response to a call for proposals] also as a means, only to a certain extent of course, of financing their operations [...]. An international project does not require a surge in payroll expenditures but the small*



added value, which will also affect the organisation of the team, will be able to finance part of their operations". If the location criteria for the actor receiving financial assistance from a local or regional government can seem like a way of "guaranteeing" the local **public interest**, it may be wondered what is used to determine to what extent it qualifies as a public interest or a **special interest**. In fact, a public interest requires that the returns from an action and/or that the way in which a product is managed involve the local civil society on a large scale and not just the actor in question. Should other criteria relating to the substance and technical conditions for the implementation of external actions in France be developed in order to promote the creation and taking into account of a real local general interest? In addition, with certain regional councils including on their website the amounts allocated to local actors and the payrolls impacted, are the location criteria of the actions used in part as an argument by the local and regional governments to justify the legitimacy of their external actions and, more broadly speaking, their international involvement?

It would seem that the procedures and criteria for allocating this type of financial aid are becoming increasingly "objective" with increasingly formalised procedures. Perhaps this development might help to reconcile the actual impacts with those desired on the territory for the AECT.

²⁵ Study carried out by the author on 26-27 August 2014.

2. Willingness to coordinate with other French local and regional governments on these actions connected to the international level on display

Along with associations, schools or businesses, sub-territorial communities are also actors that need to be taken into account by local and regional governments carrying out external actions. More than 50% of the respondents speaking about the involvement of actors in the territory in their external actions mentioned those from other decentralised communities.

Even though each local or regional government is free to carry out the external actions they want, there have been more and more calls to seek greater **coordination on the actions** "here and there". One type of connection, regarding the international theme, between French local and regional governments from the same territory, is described in the remarks of a respondent: "Almost all of the larger local and regional governments in the Nord-Pas-de-Calais [have a partner in Saint-Louis du Senegal] and certain municipalities also have partnerships, not necessarily with Saint-Louis du Senegal but, for example, with Ngor, right next to Dakar, or with cities along the Senegal River. So, that creates a net, at least between all the levels of local and regional government there, and each one takes action in the area of their expertise and with the means at their disposal". In this case, more than objectives of legitimacy and impacts in France, these links seem to be primarily prized and/or displayed in order to strengthen the coherence of the projects carried out on the partner territory. Besides the initial objectives geared towards the partner territory, there are also impacts produced in France. Respondent 04 remarked: "We have the possibility of being a partner on a large-scale project with inevitable impacts [here] in terms of technical questions, transfer of experience, expertise, visibility, market value, experience in terms of exchanges with colleagues on these sorts of issues and it doesn't even cost us much". Even though the pressures and budget cuts are increasingly frequent and/or severe in local and regional governments, these alliances, on all or parts of external action programmes, can offer a certain new appeal. In addition, still from a financial perspective, these coordination movements can also ensure that the financial resources available are used in a more efficient manner. When the same French territory is involved, close communications between different levels of local and regional governments can ensure that the subsidies allocated to a local actor also involved at the international level are coherent and complementary, thereby limiting duplication risks.

Basically, three types (and levels) of **interconnections and integration** can be found.

The first level of coordination concerns **the pooling of resources and exchange of information** on the external actions carried out between local and regional governments from a same territory: Which civil society actors are involved? What are the fields of action, with which foreign partner(s)? It should be noted that, in certain specific cases, the sharing of information is a legal "obligation", like for the EPCI (a public body for intermunicipal cooperation).



"An international project does not require a surge in payroll expenditures"

A second level involves the dynamics and/or regroupings of local and regional governments promoting **dialogue** and mutual understanding between them on international questions. These dynamics sometimes result in a genuine process of pooling resources together on projects carried out at the international level. These processes can be driven by one local government or, in the beginning, organised using a multi-partner approach. One example of this is the "Plate-forme des collectivités du Nord-Pas de Calais engagées à l'international" (Platform of local and regional governments from the Nord-Pas de Calais committed to the international level), officially launched on 17 September 2012 and which aims to be a "forum for exchange and dialogue between the local and regional governments of Nord-Pas de Calais"²⁶.

Besides exchanging information, some local and regional governments also choose a closer association through external action programmes. An example of this is IRAPA (an "Inter-cooperation" platform of local and regional governments from the Rhone-Alps for Armenia) through which "the towns of Goris, Sevan and Vardenis as well as the Prefecture of Guegharkunik, in collaboration with their French partner territories, respectively the towns of Vienne, Grenoble, Romans-sur-Isère and the Isère General Council, have pledged to establish a concerted programme"²⁷. Accordingly, since 2007,

²⁶ The Nord-Pas de Calais Regional Council's webpage on the launch of the Platform: http://www.nordpasdecalais.fr/jcms/c_33022/cooperation-internationale-lescollectivites-du-nord-pas-de-calais-engagees-lancement-une-plate-forme-de-travail (page visited on 08.09.2014).

²⁷ IRAPA's official presentation brochure. 2010 edition.

joint actions have been carried out between the four Rhone-Alps towns and their respective Armenian partner. In IRAPA's case, they decided not to create a new structure with its own entity in order to avoid weighing down the decision-making processes. This kind of organisation also ensures that the executive body of the four local and regional governments is not divested of its decision-making responsibilities. This also helps to preserve the visibility of each local government. IRAPA is therefore a good case study of an advanced stage of consultation under the external action programmes involving several French local and regional governments, with a **pooling of resources** occurring at two levels: in terms of the sharing of expertise specific to each local authority but also financial means. In other cases (which seem to be the majority), the collaboration between local and regional governments only seems to operate under one or the other of these two aspects.

Despite these positive impacts on French and foreign territories, this establishment of closer bonds between local authorities from the same territory for external action projects is not undertaken without hesitation. One-third of the respondents who spoke on forms of consultation between local institutions mentioned **possible impediments**. First of all, regardless of the fact that these local and regional governments are all from the same territory (with their central administration sometimes located in the same city), *"there is not necessarily a natural, regular link that will eventually transform into a partnership [...] There has to be a complicity between elected officials for it to work. It's not possible otherwise"* (respondent 04). Once again, a strong political will and trade-offs are central to the process. However, the protagonists are not always in favour of

closer ties, as disclosed by respondent 26: *"I know that between technicians, we all agree that we have to work together. Having said that, for reasons of visibility..."*. Along with the political differences in positions, opinions and objectives that can exist from one local government to another, it is mainly issues linked to a preoccupation with *"visibility"* and *"display"* that primarily seem to explain the hesitation of some elected officials. An elected official might be more supportive of having its local government carry out an international action programme alone in order to be the sole party to benefit from the potential positive returns, particularly in terms of image.

"Between technicians, we all agree that we have to work together"

Thus, while the establishment of ties, or even coordination, among French local and regional governments involved in external actions, particularly those from the same territory, can produce positive impacts for all of the actors and partners and territories concerned, it is not at all seen as "natural". The political "rivalries" between local authorities must be set aside and each local government must have a real strategic vision of the international stage. Inversely, the reluctance of certain local and regional governments to work together can partly explain the low level of coordination among local actors on French local territories, which can limit in turn the impact of it being a driving force for momentum on the territory.



PROSPECTS

The current context of strengthening interactions and interdependencies between territories and actors, whatever their national framework, as well as the porous nature of national borders, compels local and regional governments to reconsider their public policies by taking this global scale into account, particularly by carrying out external actions. However, to ensure that these actions live up to their full meaning and produce real impacts in line with those desired, there can be no savings by skimping on discussions or foregoing the construction of a strategic vision of the international dimension and its links with the local territory. In this regard, it may be judicious to go beyond the mere “think globally, act locally” and to pair it with “think locally, act globally”. In addition to doing away with certain ambiguities, this line of thinking seems more in line with the character of the external actions being carried out and their underlying political philosophy. Moreover, it does not seem realistic nowadays to contemplate a

territory and its development without taking external factors into account (national and international). Working, insofar as possible, on these factors (economic, social...) and/or their causes (whether on themes like climate change at the global level or directly with the territories of foreign partners), is therefore consistent with the general action programmes of local and regional governments. Finally, at the international level, such developments could contribute to the trend of going beyond donor-recipient relationships. While established relations might not necessarily become more egalitarian (which would amount to denying the existence of certain gaps, particularly in terms of level of development), they might perhaps become less “paternalistic” occasionally; as territorial development (including in France) is only possible by becoming part of our now globalised world through exchanges with local governments and foreign territories.



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LIST OF ACRONYMS

AECT: External action(s) of local and regional governments

ARRICOD: French Association of local and regional government professionals working on European and international actions

CIFRE: *Convention industrielle de formation par la recherche* (industrial agreement for training through research)

DAECT: *Délégation pour l'Action extérieure des collectivités territoriale (au Ministère des Affaires étrangères)* (Delegation for the external actions of local and regional governments at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

DDG: Deputy Director General

DG: Directorate General / Director General

DGS: Director General of Services

EA: External action(s)

EDDSI: *Education au Développement durable et à la Solidarité internationale* (Education for sustainable development and international solidarity)

EPCI: *Etablissement public de Coopération intercommunale* (Public institution for intermunicipal cooperation)

IRAPA: *Inter-coopération de collectivités rhônalpines pour l'Arménie* ("Inter-cooperation" of local and regional governments from the Rhone-Alps for Armenia)

MFA: Ministry of Foreign Affairs (France)

LIST OF THE PROFESSIONALS WHO WERE INTERVIEWED

PROFESSIONNEL	FONCTION
Sylvain Cals	Chargé de mission Europe
Mattieu Danen	Chargé de mission Coopération décentralisée
Pierre-Marie Blanquet	Vice Président délégué aux Relations Internationales et à la Coopération Décentralisée
Christiane Eckert	Adjointe au Maire en charge des relations internationales de la coopération transfrontalière
Estelle Mangold	Chef du service Relations internationales et Coopération transfrontalière
Gaelle Le Bardu	Chef du service des Relations Internationales
Elisabeth Bildstein	Directrice du développement économique territorial et internationale
Stéphanie Delalande	Chargée de Mission Coopération Décentralisée et Solidarité Internationale
Dominique Lorrette	Directeur du secteur ingénierie européenne
Mikael Roux	Chargé de mission coopération décentralisée et aide au développement
Abderrahim El Khantour	Responsable Pôle Relations Internationales
Claude Poulet	Directeur des Affaires Européennes et Internationales
Agnes Chek	Responsable solidarité internationale
Cécile Bellaud	Responsable Mission Relations Internationales
Valentin Magord	Chargé de mission Coopérations internationales et affaires européennes
Jacques Aumasson	Directeur Coopération Internationale
Marielle Buisson	Chargée de Mission
Gracienne Damman	Vice-Président chargée de la culture et des relations extérieures
Sylvie Delatte	Directrice stratégie, international, portuaire
Nathalie Cos	Chef de service relations internationales
Aouaichia Farid	Chargé de mission
Pauline Dubois	Chargé de mission
Stéphane Clerc	Chargé de mission Europe
Pauline Gessant	Chef de mission Coopération Territoriale Européenne
Laurence Canal	Chef de mission coopération internationale. Directrice Europe et international par intérim
Stéphane Louhaur	Chargé de mission Détroits d'Europe
Grégory Blin	Directeur des Relations Internationales et des Programmes Européens
Delphine Vandecandelaere	Chef de projet coopération et solidarités internationales
Jean-Marc Buisson	Directeur des Relations Internationales et des Programmes Européens
Isabelle Bonnin	Chargée de Mission Décentralisée
Anne de Maximy	Chargé de mission
Aline Mandeix	Responsable coopération décentralisée et francophonie

COLLECTIVITÉ	DATE DE L'ENTRETIEN	MODALITÉS DE L'ENTRETIEN	ENTRETIEN ENREGISTRÉ	ENTRETIEN RETRANSCRIT	ENTRETIEN DESTINÉ À L'ANALYSE DE CONTENU
CG Tarn	22-mai-13	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
CG Aveyron	22-mai-13	Individuel	Non	Non	Non
	23-mai-13	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
Ville de Mulhouse	03-juin-13	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
	04-juin-13	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
CG Bas Rhin	05-juin-13	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
	05-juin-13	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
CR Lorraine	06-juin-13	Groupé	Oui	Oui	Oui
	06-juin-13			Oui	Oui
	06-juin-13	Individuel	Non	Non	Non
CR Champagne Ardenne	07-juin-13	Individuel	Non	Non	Non
	07-juin-13	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
CG Loire Atlantique	11-juin-13	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
CG Maine et Loire	12-juin-13	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
CR Poitou Charentes	13-juin-13	Individuel	Non	Non	Non
CG Vienne	13-juin-13	Groupé	Non	Non	Non
	13-juin-13			Non	Non
Communauté Urbaine de Dunkerque	18-juin-13	Groupé	Oui	Oui	Oui
	18-juin-13			Oui	Oui
	18-juin-13			Oui	Oui
	18-juin-13	Groupé	Oui	Oui	Oui
	18-juin-13			Oui	Oui
	18-juin-13			Oui	Oui
CG Pas de Calais	19-juin-13	Groupé	Oui	Oui	Oui
	19-juin-13			Oui	Oui
	19-juin-13			Oui	Oui
CG Nord	20-juin-13	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
Lille Métropole	19-juin-13	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
CG Bouches du Rhône	7-janv-14	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
CG Hérault	7-janv-14	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
Ville de Marseille	8-janv-14	Groupé	Oui	Oui	Oui
	8-janv-14			Oui	Oui

LIST OF THE PROFESSIONALS WHO WERE INTERVIEWED

PROFESSIONNEL	FONCTION
Pauline Dubois	Chargée de mission Affaires internationales
Jean-Phillipe Brossard	Directeur des politiques internationales européennes et contractuelles
Jean-Claude Gayssot	Vice-Président délégué Relations Internationales, Europe, Francophonie
Laetitia Morel	Directrice des Relations Internationales
Valerie Dumontet	Collaboratrice de cabinet
Hervé Baro	Elu en charge de l'action internationale
Christine Cote	Chargé de mission
Mathilde Bedrune	Chargée de Mission Coopération Décentralisée
Lamarque Corinne	Chef de service coopération décentralisée
Jean Michel Larroche	Directeur de la Cohésion Territoriale et la Coopération Internationale
Samuel Caillaut	Responsable
Magali Agosti	Directrice
Pascale Savoye	Chargée de Mission
Véronique Herupe	Chargée de coopération
Céline Boulineau	Responsable du Service Coopération internationale
Rachel Haab	Directrice Europe, Relations Internationales et Coopération
Eric Recoura	Directeur des relations internationales
Noémie Quere Bonvarlet	Chargée de programmes
Gonzague Gobert	Chef de projet Coopération européenne
Suzanne Page	Chef de projets
Christine Crifo	Vice-président en charge de la coopération décentralisée
Bertrand Gallet	Directeur Général
Robert De La Rochefoucault	Chargé des relations avec les collectivités territoriales et les acteurs de la coopération décentralisée
Pierre Pougnaud	Conseiller technique à la Délégation pour l'action extérieure des collectivités territoriales

Nombre de professionnels enquêtés	56
Nombre d'entretiens (individuels et groupés) enregistrés	39
Nombre d'entretiens individuels (ou individualisés) retranscrits	48
Nombre d'entretiens individuels (ou individualisés) destinés à l'analyse de contenu	44

COLLECTIVITÉ	DATE DE L'ENTRETIEN	MODALITÉS DE L'ENTRETIEN	ENTRETIEN ENREGISTRÉ	ENTRETIEN RETRANSCRIT	ENTRETIEN DESTINÉ À L'ANALYSE DE CONTENU
CR Languedoc Roussillon	9-janv-14	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
	9-janv-14	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
	9-janv-14	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
Ville de Montpellier	9-janv-14	Individuel	Oui	Non	Non
CG Aude	10-janv-14	Groupé	Oui	Oui	Oui
	10-janv-14		Oui	Oui	Oui
	10-janv-14	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
Toulouse Métropole	13-janv-14	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
CR Midi-Pyrénées	13-janv-14	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
CG Hautes Pyrénées	14-janv-14	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
Ville de Chambéry	30-janv-14	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
Pays de Savoie Solidaire	30-janv-14	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Non
CG Savoie	30-janv-14	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
CG Allier	17-fév-14	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
CR Auvergne	17-fév-14	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
CR Rhône-Alpes	21-fév-14	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
Ville de Grenoble	24-fév-14	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
CG Hauts de Seine	14-mars-14	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
CG Seine St Deniws	19-mars-14	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
Grand Lyon	26-mars-14	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Oui
CG Isère	11-avr-14	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Non
Cités Unies France	18-déc-13	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Non
Agence Française de Développement	18-déc-13	Individuel	Non	Non	Non
Ministère des Affaires étrangères	19-déc-13	Individuel	Oui	Oui	Non

LIST OF PLATFORMA's PARTNERS

PLATFORMA is the European coalition of local and regional governments – and their associations – active in city-to-city and region-to-region development cooperation. Since its creation in 2008, PLATFORMA has been representing more than 100,000 local and regional governments. All are key players in international cooperation for sustainable development.

The diversity of PLATFORMA's partners is what makes this network unique. PLATFORMA reflects the diversity of local and regional governments' realities in Europe and across the world.

The aim of PLATFORMA is to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and mutual learning, but also to strengthen the specific role of local and regional governments in development policies.

In 2015, PLATFORMA signed a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) with the European Commission. Its signatories commit to take actions based on common values and objectives to tackle global poverty and inequalities, while promoting local democracy and sustainable development.

The Secretariat of PLATFORMA is hosted by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR).

www.platforma-dev.eu



AEXCID: Extremadura Agency for International Cooperation for Development
www.juntaex.es/aeexcid



CALM: Congress of Local Authorities from Moldova
www.calm.md



AFCCRE: French Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions
www.afccre.org



CCRE/CEMR: Council of European Municipalities and Regions
www.ccre.org



AICCRE: Italian Association of the Council of European Municipalities and Regions
www.aiccre.it



CLGF: Commonwealth Local Government Forum
www.clgf.org.uk



AIMF: International Association of French-speaking Mayors
www.aimf.asso.fr



CPMR: Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions
www.cpmr.org



ALAL: Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania
www.lsa.lt/en



CUF: United Cities France
www.cites-unies-france.org



ANCI: National Association of Italian Municipalities
www.anci.it



DIBA: Province of Barcelona
www.diba.cat



AUC: Association of Ukrainian cities
www.auc.org.ua/en



EEL: Association of Estonian Cities
www.ell.ee



Euskal Fundoa: Basque Fund - Association of local authorities from the Basque country for international cooperation
www.euskalfondoa.org



Nantes métropole: Nantes Metropolis
www.nantesmetropole.fr



Famsi: Andalusian Fund of Municipalities for International Solidarity
www.andaluciasolidaria.org



Région Sud-Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur: Region of South-Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur
www.maregionsud.fr/



FEMP: Spanish Federation of Municipalities and Provinces
www.femp.es



Regione Toscana: Region of Tuscany
www.regione.toscana.it



Fons Mallorquí: Majorcan Fund for Solidarity and Cooperation
www.fonsmallorqui.org/ca



SMOCR: Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic
www.smocr.cz



Generalitat de Catalunya: Autonomous community of Catalonia
www.gencat.cat



UCLG/CGLU: United Cities and Local Governments
www.uclg.org/fr



KDZ: Centre for Public Administration Research - Austria
www.kdz.eu



Ville de Paris: City of Paris
www.paris.fr



LALRG: Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments
www.lps.lv/en



VNG International: Cooperation agency of the Association of Netherlands Municipalities
www.afccre.org



LBSNN: National Town-Twinning Council Netherlands-Nicaragua



VVSG: Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities
www.vvsg.be



NALAG: National Association of Local Authorities of Georgia
www.nala.ge



ZMOS: Association of Towns and Municipalities of Slovakia
www.zmos.sk

This publication, based on a doctoral thesis, aims to highlight the reasons and the ways in which external actions of French local governments are currently implemented. Indeed, despite a "strained" context, local and regional authorities continue to develop international actions. While the concepts of reciprocity and "win-win" partnership are emphasised in official speeches, what about the impact of these foreign actions for local French territories?



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