GFA GROUP
Your purpose
Our expertise

GFA CONSULTING GROUP

GOVERNANCE

CIVIL SOCIETY AND DEMOCRACY
URBAN DEVELOPMENT
PUBLIC FINANCE POLICY AND REFORM
PEACE AND SECURITY
DECENTRALISATION SERVES PEOPLE'S NEEDS
E-GOVERNANCE
SOCIAL PROTECTION
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM

CIVIL SOCIETY AND DEMOCRACY

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Democratic states have proven successful in building stable societies with competitive economies and functioning public service systems. In established democracies, civil society acts as a watchdog for human and people's rights and it has a substantial influence on setting or questioning the political agenda.

CHALLENGES

For decades, support for young democracies was high on the agenda of international development organisations. The focus in supporting civil society (CS) lay primarily on assisting in the creation of a legal framework, in mapping, training and capacity building for non-state actors. As a result, a vibrant CS has developed in many countries. In recent years, however, an authoritarian backlash can be observed. The space for CS is shrinking globally. This gradually changes CS support programmes as related explicit and implicit measures are now strategically intertwined.

GFA CONCEPT AND SERVICES

GFA has been involved in a variety of projects supporting CS, from capacity building and training of non-state actors to fund management. This comprises the promotion of trust between state and non-state actors through structured dialogue and the strengthening of links between CS organisations (CSOs) and their constituency. Consequently, CSOs are supported in their involvement in local and regional development planning. In addition, GFA implements communication and visibility programmes for stakeholder engagement, and promotes human and people's rights.

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URBAN DEVELOPMENT

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CHALLENGES

An estimated 68% of the global population will live in cities by 2050 while 70% of the needed urban infrastructure is yet to be built. Hence, urban areas face multidimensional challenges such as rapid population growth, inadequate infrastructure, environmental degradation, and scarcity of affordable housing. Social inequality and economic disparities within cities further exacerbates the complexity of both urban development crises and problem solving initiatives.

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GFA CONCEPT AND SERVICES

GFA supports governments and organisations worldwide in their engagement to implement the New Urban Agenda promoted by UN Habitat III, and to create livable, inclusive and resilient cities. GFA promotes an integrated and holistic urban development approach across all its business units using a wide variety of methods and tools.

More specifically, GFA services comprise but are not limited to capacity development support for local and national governments to strengthen institutions that plan, build, expand and govern cities. This includes networking and international exchange among cities and policy makers as well as policy making and promotion of innovative, inclusive and participatory spatial planning. Moreover, infrastructure building and management support includes sustainable transportation and the provision of basic services.

PUBLIC FINANCE POLICY AND REFORM

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CHALLENGES

Governments worldwide face fiscal imbalances and risks in public financial management (PFM) systems. Public finance institutions such as ministries of finance face challenges when addressing the impacts of macro-economic policies on growth, poverty, inequality, climate change, and infrastructure finance. Mobilising public finance effectively is crucial for inclusive development. GFA therefore strengthens PFM systems through comprehensive sector reviews as part of broader public administrative reforms (PAR) and the reinforcement of PFM structures while aligning them with international standards.

GFA CONCEPT AND SERVICES

GFA works with ministries of finance to become strategic policy makers that act as guardians of effective government spending as well as revenue generation and management. This approach focuses on strengthening fiscal discipline, increasing effectiveness in expenditures and revenue management, and ensuring further alignment towards the implementation of SDGs. GFA experts analyse and strengthen PFM processes through standard diagnostic tools such as Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) that further enhance budgetary processes, financial reporting, auditing, and transparency. In their work with governments, GFA addresses fiscal vulnerabilities, improves PFM functions, and fosters a "collect more – spend better" approach.

GFA's core expertise in the development and implementation of macro-fiscal frameworks sets a roadmap for fiscal sustainability and economic stability, including the integration of medium-term budget structures. In pursuit of inclusivity, GFA assists governments in mainstreaming gender- and climate-sensitive budgeting principles, ensuring that budgetary decisions consider the diverse needs and priorities of all citizens and the environment.

The advisory services of GFA encompass strengthening PFM systems and macro-fiscal policies as well as the modernisation of PFM structures through an end-to-end reform. This is accomplished by developing human resources capacities and helping ministries of finance in their transition to a policy setting approach and an improved revenue administration.

PEACE AND SECURITY

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Sustainable development cannot exist without peace and security. Today, the lives and livelihoods of millions of people worldwide are threatened by violent conflicts and crises. To recover from and prevent such calamities, GFA aims to help partners achieve the SDGs. To this effect, accountable and resilient institutions make citizens feel safe and secure in their everyday life. The structural causes of violent conflicts need to be addressed and capacities for peaceful conflict transformation have to be developed.

CHALLENGES

Conflicts and security threats are becoming more and more protracted and intricate. Related problems are not only often linked to weak governance and rule of law, poverty, inequalities, lack of public participation, but also to discrimination and gender inequalities, radicalisation and violent extremism, forced displacement and migration, climate change, and environmental degradation.

GFA CONCEPT AND SERVICES

GFA is not only experienced in operating in fragile environments but focuses on the concept of state-building. Through our experts seek to overcome fragile statehood in a process based on a constructive and inclusive relationship between state and society. Based on experience, the NGO landscape of a state often reflects the challenges faced by the respective society. Therefore, GFA is convinced that civil society and the private sector are indispensable partners in reform processes to root institutions in society, and eventually to make state-building processes sustainable beyond mere institution building. In many projects, GFA has contributed to the creation of effective public space for dialogue so that citizens have an opportunity to gain experience in democratic processes through their participation in such platforms.

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DECENTRALISATION SERVES PEOPLE'S NEEDS

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CHALLENGES

Decentralisation is at the heart of empowerment and participation in local political processes that improve public services and match citizens' needs. Where democratic statehood comes under pressure, strong local governance structures play a crucial role in safeguarding power vested in the people and civil society.

Decentralisation is a cornerstone of reforms in many transition countries. It strengthens democratic governance, responds to local demands, delivers better citizens' services and, hence, increases legitimacy. Yet, despite a transfer of power and competences to sub-national levels, regional and local administrations often lack capacities, institutionalisation and efficiency of procedures and workflows. The generation of financial resources is insufficient and their allocation inefficient. Consequently, local governments often do not meet citizens' expectations that jeopardises people's support for reform.

GFA CONCEPT AND SERVICES

GFA accompanies change processes and offers services in decentralisation for local institutions, civil society and other beneficiaries. Goal-oriented dialogue is considered key to designing successful reform processes as a mix of client-oriented, customised tools and state-of-the-art methods. GFA's advisory services range from new approaches of local administration management via development-oriented planning to the cooperation between local stakeholders and departments at different levels. The elaboration of vertical financial transfer mechanisms is complemented by the improvement of local revenue and tax administration for more local financial autonomy. Human capacity development and the GFA Unit Digital Learning for Impact (DLI) for adult education and on-the-job training is at the heart of the company's interventions, while human-centred digital tools and workflows supplement these services.

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E-GOVERNANCE

CHALLENGES

E-governance is a key element to modern administrative reform and citizen engagement while it also presents complex challenges. Integrating information and communication technologies into government operations demands substantial infrastructural investments and skilled human resources. In addition, ensuring data security and protecting citizens' privacy on digital platforms is a significant concern. Digital divides persist worldwide and increase inequalities in access to e-governance services. Resistance to change within government institutions and among citizens can hinder the adoption of new technologies. Moreover, establishing interoperability between government systems and keeping pace with technological advancements require ongoing efforts and adaptations.

GFA CONCEPT AND SERVICES

GFA promotes an integrated and holistic e-governance approach that follows the Principles for Digital Development. By recognising the transformative power of e-governance in fostering inclusive, efficient, and transparent public administration, GFA supports governments and organisations worldwide in developing and implementing citizen-centred digital governance solutions.

GFA makes sure that digital services are user-friendly and accessible through:

- Capacity Development: Training programmes, workshops, and virtual learning platforms to enhance digital governance skills.
- Policy and Strategy Development: Assisting in the formulation of comprehensive digital governance strategies and frameworks.
- Implementation Support: Providing technical assistance in deploying digital platforms and ensuring system interoperability.
- Stakeholder Engagement: Promoting international exchange and collaboration among policymakers and experts.
- Co-Creation and Human-centred Design: Facilitating collaborative processes to design and prototype tailored digital services.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Tracking progress and impact of e-governance initiatives.

SOCIAL PROTECTION

CHALLENGES

Over 70 percent of the global population lack any form of social safety net. Thus, social protection systems are a necessity to elevate poverty and to reduce the economic and social exposure of poor, vulnerable and marginalised groups. The majority of the latter are working in the informal sector, which further exacerbates structural poverty. While some emerging economies have initiated social protection policies and programmes, many low-income nations struggle due to underfunding and fragmented systems that lead to low coverage among the poor and vulnerable. Despite these obstacles, there is a growing recognition of social protection as a success factor in stimulating productivity and inclusive growth. The debate now centres on how best to design and finance related systems, considering universal versus targeted coverage. In the post-2015 agenda, social protection is recognised as a human right and essential for sustainable economic development and achieving global goals. In addition, its role in responding to crises, conflicts, climate change impacts and migration highlights its increasing relevance in a variety of contexts.

GFA CONCEPT AND SERVICES

GFA supports governments worldwide in strengthening their social protection policies and mechanisms to empower people and administrations. Related measures to develop and implement more efficient systems will increase social protection coverage.

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With its in-house expertise and wide network of experts, GFA offers technical assistance in strengthening social health protection or establishing conditional cash transfer systems and social assistance. Teams of consultants make policy advise and institutional development available to governments as well as capacity development and training and awareness raising for government officials, non-governmental actors and local communities. Monitoring and the analysis of social protection mechanisms are also part of the company's portfolio.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM

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CHALLENGES

Public administration reform (PAR) has been on the agenda of international cooperation from its beginnings. While the focus has varied over time, the major reform challenge remains: how to support states and their administrations in delivering better services for their citizens. In many countries the public administration has to fulfill other functions than meeting the above mentioned key task. Hence, reform efforts need a deep understanding of the political economy they are embedded in and should lead to systemic and political changes in the administration. Reforms from within may be complemented by measures to mobilise constituencies exerting pressure from the outside. Reform agencies, parliaments, local governments or civil society as well as compliance with international agreements may wield such pressure.

GFA CONCEPT AND SERVICES

GFA understands PAR as improving procedures, processes, structures and management skills in order to enhance the integrity, efficiency, effectiveness, and legitimacy of state action. PAR aims at enabling partner countries to improve service delivery, and makes it more efficient and geared towards citizens' needs. This will result in better access of vulnerable groups to such services and in meeting the criteria of public integrity, legitimacy and the rule of law.

GFA offers assistance in three major categories of PAR support measures, i.e. institutional framework and structure, human resource management, and organisation and procedures.

A variety of donors have trusted GFA in assessing and developing the capacities of actors at the national level, e.g. central government entities and key ministries, state agencies such as public service agencies or public administration reform units, independent oversight institutions such as supreme audit agencies or ombudsmen, or public administration schools. The GFA teams of experts also have been commended for the implementation of reform efforts at sub-national levels, e.g. regarding capacity development of municipal administrations, service delivery or human resource development.

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