Togo is a unitary state with a three-tier structure of decentralized governance. The first tier of local government comprises 354 municipalities among which 21 urban units, and 333 rural. The second tier of subnational government is constituted by 30 prefectures, which gather several municipalities. The prefectures are the divisions of the 6 regions of the country, with the municipality of Lomé also having the status of a region. Regions and prefectures are mainly administrative constituencies of the state authorities without significant financial means. Decentralization is enshrined in the Constitution of 1992 and is backed by the 1998 law on decentralization, further amended by the law of 2007. According to the law, each of the local authority is headed by an elected executive, however, the autonomy of LGs is not fully effective. As of today, head of prefectures (prefets) are directly appointed by the central government and depend from the Ministry of Interior. Globally, the corpus of texts detailing the implementation of laws on decentralization have not been taken yet, then undermining local governments autonomy.

Main subnational governments responsibilities. Since the law on decentralization of 13 March 2007, the mandatory responsibilities currently required of urban municipalities in Togo include provision of basic services for the population and managing the internal budget and tax administration. The law on decentralization provides for the competences of local governments and include local development and urban planning; housing; support to the local economy; potable water provision and distribution; waste management; public safety; primary education and primary health care; sport, culture and tourism; transport. Each tier is responsible for the implementation at its level.

Subnational government finance.

Most local expenditures go to operating costs, even though local public investment is in theory set at 20% of local budgets. To increase accountability in local spending, the political participation of the population is increasing. Budget decisions on expenditures are now publicly displayed, and public meetings of the municipal council are being organized to discuss budgetary matters.
The uneffective competences and the scarcity of local financial resources have led to a decreasing trend of local capital spendings in the last 10 years, and corresponding decrease in the quality of provision of basic services, such as waste disposal, due to a lack of knowledge and resources. Therefore, municipalities intervene in priority, depending on the resources at their disposal, in the sectors of waste and sanitation, street lighting, infrastructures and roads. The sectors of urban planning, education and health remain highly centralized.

The Law on decentralization of 2007 has transferred several revenue sources to local governments. Nevertheless, LGs are facing major difficulties to collect resources they have been assigned, and the State appears to be too weak to properly support its decentralized units. Taxes and charges are levied arbitrarily rather than based on actual performance.

**TAX REVENUE.** According to the law, local governments can raise a number of taxes, and set their rates within the limits defined by the law. The fiscal chain is fully controlled by the central government administration, letting few autonomy to the local authorities. Recently, a few towns have set up their own tax registers, and thereby have increased their tax revenues by twice or even three times. The tax handbook improve tax compliance from the citizens through dialogue and transparency.

**GRANTS AND SUBSIDIES.** Due to the decreasing trend of the State financial resources, subsidies have almost disappeared since 1998. Moreover, the allocation criteria are not clearly determined. The FACT (Fonds d’Appui aux Collectivités Territoriales) is taking long to be implemented.

**OTHER REVENUES.** Municipalities have the power to collect fees and charges for public services.

According to the law, local governments can contract domestic loans, to fund their municipal development plans. One prefectoral and two municipal development plans have already been drafted.

---

**A joint- study of:**

UCLG

UNESCO

OECD


**Publication date:** October 2016