

# Assessing the Impact of Decentralization Policy on Governance Functions in Rwanda: A Comprehensive Review

Gakire Bob, Senay Kebede

Office of Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Local Government, Kigali, Rwanda  
Email: [gakireb@minaloc.gov.rw](mailto:gakireb@minaloc.gov.rw), [senay.kebede@minaloc.gov.rw](mailto:senay.kebede@minaloc.gov.rw)

**How to cite this paper:** Bob, G., & Kebede, S. (2025). Assessing the Impact of Decentralization Policy on Governance Functions in Rwanda: A Comprehensive Review. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 13, 468-480. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2025.133032>

**Received:** February 13, 2025

**Accepted:** March 18, 2025

**Published:** March 21, 2025

Copyright © 2025 by author(s) and Scientific Research Publishing Inc. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0).

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>



Open Access

## Abstract

Rwanda's decentralization policy, initiated in 2000, was a pivotal response to the need for enhanced local governance and community engagement with instruments of power, voice, and accountability following the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. This policy aimed to foster democracy and improve service delivery by transferring authority and resources to local governments. Over the years, Rwanda has made significant strides in local governance, achieving over 80% citizen participation in local forums and improving gender representation. Establishing a multi-tiered local government structure has facilitated better service delivery in health, education, and infrastructure, promoting community ownership and accountability. Despite these achievements, Rwanda's local governance faces several challenges, such as insufficient capacity and resources to address trending demands and inadequate infrastructure that limits the potential for efficient service delivery. Recently, an assessment was conducted by the Ministry of Local Government, and after reviewing several related documents and reports, the study suggests the following recommendations. These include improving training programs for local officials to develop practical governance skills, strengthening citizen engagement through awareness campaigns, and reviewing the Joint Action Development Forum (JADF) for better stakeholder collaboration. Furthermore, reassessing the organizational structure of local governments and revising revenue frameworks are also essential. In conclusion, while Rwanda's decentralization efforts have led to notable improvements in governance and service delivery, achieving sustainable progress requires addressing ongoing challenges.

## Keywords

Decentralization Policy, Local Government Entities, Impact on Governance,

---

## Service Delivery

---

### 1. Introduction

Scholars have examined decentralization and governance from various angles, highlighting their importance for effective administration and improved citizen services. Governance refers to the ability of an administration to create and enforce rules while delivering services to citizens. It involves exercising authority, managing stakeholder relationships, and addressing societal, economic, and policy issues (Saito, 2008; Wahhab, 2006). Additionally, governance encompasses the government's regulatory power to develop and implement strategies, integrating public choices into the administrative process (Fukuyama, 2013). Decentralization significantly shifts from traditional governance models to more corporate-like structures to improve governance quality (Bannink & Ossewaarde, 2012). By fostering transparency and efficiency (Dreher, 2006), decentralization can help restore public trust in government (Aoki, 2008). This transition includes several characteristics that underscore its relevance in modern governance.

Decentralization has been a crucial aspect of Rwanda's governance and development strategy, particularly following the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi. The Rwandan government recognized that effective decentralization could enhance local governance, promote community participation, and facilitate economic development. In 2000, the Rwandan government initiated a decentralization policy to transfer authority and resources from the central government to local governments (MINALOC, 2017). This was part of a broader effort to promote democracy, increase accountability, and improve service delivery. The policy was designed to empower local authorities to address community needs more effectively and foster citizen engagement in governance processes. The policy was implemented in a phased approach till 2015, and thereafter, the approach changed to having District Development Strategies/DDS every five years.

Key milestones in this process include the establishment of local councils and the introduction of performance-based budgeting, which aims to improve service delivery at the local level. The government emphasized the importance of participatory governance, encouraging citizens to take active decision-making roles. This shift aimed to mitigate the concentration of power and promote transparency and accountability. Rwanda's decentralization has successfully improved service delivery in health, education, agriculture, and infrastructure. However, challenges remain, including resource constraints that impede service delivery and inadequate training for local officials. Overall, Rwanda's approach to decentralization reflects a commitment to rebuilding the nation and fostering sustainable development through local empowerment.

This assessment sought to evaluate the current status of decentralization functions, identify challenges, and recommend strategies for improvement. Accord-

ingly, this study aims to often assess the impact of decentralization policy on Governance by addressing three critical research questions that have received insufficient focus:

- 1) What is the decentralization policy's effectiveness, and how does it impact governance at various administrative entities?
- 2) What strengths and weaknesses have been observed in governance since implementing the decentralization policy in Rwanda?
- 3) What are the actionable recommendations for enhancing the decentralization policy and improving governance effectiveness in Rwanda?

Furthermore, the findings of this study help MINALOC better understand the status of decentralization policy in Rwanda and its impact on local governance. The study would also be of paramount significance for policymakers. So, appropriate policies would be designed to encourage local governance practices in Rwanda. Moreover, the study would be critical in expanding the practice of global decentralization policy.

## **2. Methodology**

The assessment utilizes a document review of pertinent policy documents, reports, and studies on decentralization in Rwanda, along with interviews involving key stakeholders such as government officials, local leaders, and community members. Additionally, field visits to selected districts were conducted to observe the implementation of decentralization functions.

Interview stakeholders were selected based on their governance relevance and expertise, prioritizing those in authoritative roles to ensure influential perspectives. The selection process emphasized diversity by including government, civil society, and local community representatives while ensuring geographical representation to capture various socio-economic contexts and demographics. Field visits were strategically conducted in districts that highlighted specific governance challenges or successes.

Several strategies were adopted to ensure non-bias in interviews. These included designing open-ended and neutral questions to avoid leading responses and guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality to encourage honest feedback.

## **3. Findings**

The Rwandan Constitution of 2003 and the Organic Law on Local Administration established the legal foundation for decentralization in Rwanda. These documents delineate the roles and responsibilities of local governments, ensuring that authority is distributed across various tiers of governance. Furthermore, the Vision 2050 development strategy underscores the importance of local governance in achieving sustainable development, emphasizing that local entities must play a pivotal role in the nation's progress. The Rwandan government has adopted various policies to transfer authority and resources from central to local governments. This decentralization policy seeks to empower local governments, enhance service delivery, and

improve accountability. By redistributing power, the government aims to create a more responsive and participatory governance structure that reflects the needs of local communities. By implementing the Decentralization policy in Rwanda, the following remarkable achievements have been made (MINALOC, 2024):

### **3.1. Improving Citizen Participation**

Platforms for citizens' participation have been expanded and are more inclusive, contributing to citizens' empowerment. The Governance & Decentralisation sector facilitated mobilization and effective participation by citizens in these spaces, enabling them to contribute to thinking and decision-making about development activities and enhancing the spirit of patriotism, self-reliance, and social accountability. As a result, participation rates exceed 80% in citizens' forums, problem-solving-focused interactions, volunteering, and others (RGB, 2023) from an average of 65.63% in 2018 (RGB, 2018). Local Government (LG) entities were instrumental in mobilizing communities for agricultural production, increasing basic education, and leading the campaign to improve human security. These included providing shelter for the most vulnerable households and those most affected by climate-related disasters and combating malnutrition and child stunting. More infrastructure, such as classrooms, cell and village offices, health posts, etc., at the local level, has been constructed with substantial input from Umuganda (communal work), while primary health care provision is significantly supported by high subscription rates in community-based health insurance (CBHI), among others.

### **3.2. Considerable Progress That Has Been Made in Realising Gender Parity in Decision-Making**

Significant strides have been made toward achieving gender parity in decision-making within local governance structures. Women hold 30% of mayoral positions, marking a substantial increase in female representation in leadership roles traditionally dominated by men. This shift empowers women and brings diverse perspectives to local governance, enhancing decision-making.

Furthermore, women occupy 46% of seats in District Councils, reflecting a growing recognition of the importance of gender inclusivity in political representation. This near parity in council seats indicates a commitment to ensuring that women's voices are heard and their contributions are valued in shaping local policies and initiatives.

These achievements are indicative of broader societal changes and efforts to promote gender equality in governance. They demonstrate that when women are included in leadership, communities benefit from more comprehensive and inclusive approaches to addressing local issues. Continued support and initiatives are essential to maintaining this momentum and striving for even greater representation in the future.

### **3.3. Building Institutional Capacity**

Rwanda has established a tiered local government structure comprising districts,

sectors, cells, and villages, each with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. This framework allows for a more organized approach to governance, facilitating effective service delivery and local administration. Each tier is tasked with specific functions contributing to overall community development, ensuring that local needs are met efficiently. To enhance the capabilities of local officials, continuous demand-driven training programs are implemented, focusing on essential skills such as financial management, planning, and service delivery.

Local governments have significantly improved their capacity for public financial management (PFM), reflected in increased accountability and compliance with prudent financial management procedures. The number of decentralized budget entities (districts and the City of Kigali) receiving unqualified audit reports rose from zero in FY 2018/19 to 25 (89.3%) in FY 2022/23. This is attributed to improved financial reporting because of the roll-out of IFMIS at the sector level. Sectors and other expenditure centers, such as hospitals, health centers, and schools, are non-budget agencies (NBAs). The rolling out of IFMIS to NBAs, which now cover hospitals, health centers, and sector offices, enables Chief Budget Managers (CBM) to supervise effectively and monitor the planning, expenditure, and reporting of these entities as all financial and related transactions are undertaken within the system that they control, while financial reports are automatically generated.

The increased PFM capacity at the LG level has removed the disincentive created by capacity constraints to fiscal and financial decentralization and instilled greater confidence in devolving more resources to sub-national entities. These capacity-building initiatives are crucial for ensuring that local governments can operate effectively and meet the demands of their constituents. Additionally, mechanisms for inter-governmental relations have been established to promote coordination between central and local governments.

### **3.4. Improving Service Delivery**

The decentralization framework has strengthened local governments to be effective governance and service delivery entities. Comprehensive Local Government legislation has enhanced citizen participation and empowered District Councils to engage in meaningful discussions and ensure accountability. Lower-level councils, including sector cell and village levels, are now more legitimate and legally recognized. Decentralization has led to significant improvements in health and education services at the local level. By empowering local governments to manage these services, Rwanda has seen enhanced access and quality of care. Local authorities are better positioned to identify community needs and tailor services accordingly, resulting in more effective health and education outcomes.

Infrastructure development is another critical area where local governments have made strides. With the authority to manage infrastructure projects, local entities have improved rural connectivity and access to essential services. This empowerment has enabled communities to undertake development projects aligned

with their unique needs, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility. Citizen feedback mechanisms, such as the “Umushyikirano” (national dialogue), promote accountability and responsiveness in service delivery. These platforms allow citizens to voice their concerns and provide input on local governance, ensuring that officials remain attuned to the community’s needs. Such initiatives enhance transparency and foster trust between citizens and their local governments.

### 3.5. Improving Local Economic Development

Local Economic Development (LED) continues to be a flagship priority area of the Governance and Decentralization (G&D) Sector. LED is a core component of Rwanda’s decentralization process. The most significant contribution of the G&D sector in the context of national economic transformation is ensuring equitable economic growth across the country, creating jobs for the youth, women, and rural communities, and expanding the local revenue base for districts. Investments in LED-related activities over the **National Strategy for Transformation (NST-1) (2017-2024)** period contributed to equitable growth across the country, helping to create 942,324 jobs during the period 2017-2021. This represents 87.95% of the targeted (1,071,425) jobs during the first 5 years of NST-1. Corporate income tax (CIT) payers, an indicator of formal enterprises actively engaged in business, more than doubled from 64,856 in 2018/19 to 135,031 in 2022/23. Equally important was the increased spread to provinces outside Kigali (from 51% to 60%).

In the last seven years, critical economic infrastructure has been expanded and modernized across districts in the sectors of transport (road networks), agriculture and rural development (establishment and maintenance of radical terraces and irrigation systems), trade and youth employment (integrated crafts production centers), and other strategic infrastructure in districts. Considerable infrastructure and other economic investments have been made to modernize the eleven cities and position them as regional innovation and growth centers.

The Local Administrative Entities Development Agency (LODA) has contributed immensely to mobilizing and coordinating local development financing and facilitating investments in local development priorities across districts. From starting as the Common Development Fund (CDF) in 2003 with only **Government of Rwanda (GoR) (2012)** financing commitments amounting to 1.5% of the previous year’s revenue, LODA has coordinated significant resource mobilization and provided diversified financing support for infrastructure and other development domains across LG entities (**MINALOC, 2024**).

### 3.6. Increasing Intergovernmental Fiscal Transfers and Local Government’s Own Source Revenues

Over the last seven years, despite economic challenges at the local, national, and international levels, worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic and the intensification of climate-related disasters. Local Government Own Source Revenue (OSR) collections increased from Rwf 60.6 billion in 2018/19 to 86.5 billion in 2022/23

(RRA, 2023). Several reforms and innovations brought this about, including co-operation arrangements with the Rwanda Revenue Authority (RRA), which improved revenue forecasting and assessments, taxpayer mobilization and education, and efficient recovery powered by ICTs. Local Government actors have, however, pointed at gaps, underscoring the need to review and adapt the collaboration framework to ensure that LGs retain responsibility for OSR collection and use as part of strengthening fiscal decentralization.

In the medium-term expenditure framework (MTEF) for 2019/20-2022/23, block grant transfers were marginally increased from Rwandan francs (Rwf) 59,215,473,965 in 2019/20 to Rwf 70,939,802,042 in 2022/23.

### **3.7. Leveraged Information and Communication Technologies to Deliver Essential Services to Citizens**

This has enabled the country to reap dividends through consistently high satisfaction levels with public services. It has enabled efficient execution of some public sector transactions and improved decision-making. The infrastructure capacity gaps, notably unreliable electricity, internet affordability, inadequate coverage of basic infrastructure for ICT services in some areas, and, more importantly, low levels of digital literacy, with only 31.5% of the population aged 15 years and above being considered digitally literate, could slow down the vision of ensuring universal access to services. The local Government's capacity to deliver full-scale digital services remains a challenge, especially at the cell level.

Digital expansion has significantly expanded access to services for the Rwandan community abroad (RCA). In 2023, Rwanda developed the Rwanda Community Abroad Management Information System (RCA-MIS) to provide Rwandans living abroad access to information and opportunities while improving service delivery. This platform aims to enhance communication and support for the diaspora community, ensuring their needs are met efficiently. A portal developed for self-registration and consular card requests by RCA members through embassies and the Diaspora Unit has helped streamline member registration.

Local Governments have improved data collection and storage infrastructure by introducing multiple automation systems. They include management information systems ranging from integrated financial management information (IFMIS) and land management information systems (LMIS) to social data and education management information systems. These digital tools strengthen the evidence base, which could be further enhanced when further integration of these information systems is realized.

### **3.8. Increasing the Participation of Civil Society**

Civil society is a critical partner and has significant potential to contribute to advancing good governance, citizens' mobilization, awareness raising, and empowerment. This would lead to meaningful participation by citizens in governance processes and development efforts and promote transparency. The National Pol-

icy on Civil Society (MINALOC, 2018) recognizes the contribution of CSOs across the spectrum in the transformation journey of the last three decades, from emergency humanitarian support and psycho-social and basic welfare support to citizens' mobilization, service delivery and empowerment processes.

Many civil society organizations, including faith-based groups, have been working to complement LGs in service delivery, while some, albeit very few, are involved in policy advocacy and activism. The impact of CSO-supported interventions on citizens' participation, rights-based programming, and local accountability, especially around policy implementation and decentralized budget monitoring to enhance efficiency and citizen-centered service delivery, needs to be documented and used to inform the formulation of progressive governance and development policies.

### **3.9. Increasing the Role of Media in Citizen Participation**

Vibrant independent media are an essential actor and catalyst in promoting civic education, enabling and enhancing citizens' access to information, and compelling local governments to be transparent and accountable. Over the last seven years, diverse media platforms have evolved with varying editorial orientations, ownership, and geographical spread. Records from the Rwanda Media Council (RMC) and the Rwanda Utilities Regulatory Authority (RURA) indicate that, as of January 2023, there were at least 19 Television (TV) stations, 33 radios, and 148 registered online publications, among others. There are, however, questions about how they contribute to creating awareness about LG issues among citizens and, as a result, to promoting or enhancing accountability.

### **3.10. Expanding Diplomatic Reach**

Rwanda has expanded its diplomatic reach, enhancing its visibility, positioning, and contribution to international peace, security, and global trade. It has also enhanced service delivery to citizens abroad. Rwanda championed the signing of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA) Agreement in 2018, which entered into force on 30 May 2019. As of August 2024, 54 out of 55 countries had signed the agreement, while 47 countries had ratified it.

In addition, the GoR has, since 2019, established 14 new diplomatic missions in Accra, Amman, Bangui, Budapest, Conakry, Doha, Harare, Islamabad, Jakarta, Maputo, Rabat, Warsaw, Prague, and Riyadh. This increased the number of Rwandan diplomatic missions to 47, significantly enhancing the country's global presence, capacity for international engagement, and provision of essential services to citizens and potential visitors in different geopolitical landscapes. The Diplomatic missions are increasingly positioned to enhance inclusive, accountable governance and catalyze accelerated socioeconomic transformation through mobilization platforms for citizens abroad and potential visitors and investors, showcasing cultural, social, and economic opportunities, facilitating institutional twinning and cooperation at different levels, among other services.

Rwanda pursued new bilateral partnerships and strengthened existing ones with various countries across different regions, focusing on trade, investment, security, and development cooperation. This has opened opportunities for business and employment and enhanced youth access to knowledge and skills development. Over 66 Joint Permanent Commissions were established with various countries, including inaugural sessions with Mali, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Angola, and Senegal. These triggered enormous benefits reflected in the numerous MoUs and agreements signed, such as General Cooperation Agreements, Double Taxation Avoidance Agreements, Bilateral Air Services Agreements, etc.

Rwanda is host to at least 45 resident foreign diplomatic missions and 72 non-resident diplomatic missions. This has further expanded opportunities for international cooperation in various development domains. As a result, the various international meetings and conferences hosted in Kigali are expected to support LED positively. Rwanda has expanded and sustained its multilateral engagements through, inter alia, active membership in at least 201 international organizations, of which it hosts 35 regional and international organizations. It has also actively engaged in various multilateral forums relevant to the sector. These include the East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), African Union (AU), United Nations (UN), and Commonwealth and Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), among others.

### **3.11. Local Governments That Remain Central to Rwandans' Achieving Their Long-Term Aspirations**

The central government and non-state partners have depended significantly on LGs to make public investments in health care, education, agriculture, and infrastructure, contributing to the remarkable economic growth and progress in human development under NST-1. However, some gaps in the policy and institutional environments undermine their performance and sustained progress, particularly in the coordination framework with line ministries and other agencies.

## **4. Discussions**

### **4.1. Citizens' Participation in Planning and Budgeting**

Despite progress in citizen participation, significant improvements are still needed to incorporate citizens' roles into planning and budgeting fully. Citizen Participation in planning and budgeting is currently low (65.6%), which affects funding priorities. The participation of diverse groups like youth, women, and people with disabilities in planning and budgeting must increase.

### **4.2. Need for Restructuring of Local Government Structure**

Currently, Local Governments are overwhelmed by heavy workloads amidst frequent demands from multiple stakeholders, particularly central government institutions. They continue to be logistically constrained. The local government structures need restructuring to perform their functions properly. The cities re-

cently increased to nine with the addition of Kayonza, Kirehe, and Karongi, and the two satellite cities of Rwamagana and Bugesera have unchanged organizational structures. This implies that these districts need to adapt their structures and functions to the needs of the envisioned urban hubs of business and varying economic demands.

### **4.3. Budget Constraints**

Local governments in Rwanda often face budget constraints that can impede service delivery. Limited financial resources restrict their ability to implement projects and meet the needs of their constituents. This challenge underscores the necessity for a more equitable allocation of resources to support decentralized governance. Local governments (LGs) struggle to address citizen-identified priorities in their annual action plans due to budget constraints, which limit their financial autonomy.

### **4.4. Gaps in Local Government Capacity Development**

The Gaps in Local Government Capacity Development are institutional, organizational, and individual gaps:

#### **a) Institutional Gaps**

Local Government Capacity Development struggles with institutional gaps, which hinder effective governance. Additionally, the lack of a National Qualification Framework and insufficient budgeting for capacity initiatives obstruct professional development and progress, underscoring the need for a more supportive capacity-building environment.

#### **b) Organizational Gaps**

Organizational gaps, including overlaps in job descriptions and inadequate infrastructure, hinder LGCD's effectiveness by causing confusion and reducing productivity. Furthermore, lack of coordination in capacity development, budget constraints, and inefficient application processes limit access to training opportunities, ultimately stifling local governance growth and efficiency.

#### **c) Individual Gaps**

Gaps in training and orientation lead to inadequate preparedness among local government staff, as inconsistent onboarding and specialized training often overlook their unique needs. Additionally, weak leadership capabilities and a mismatch between training content and relevance hinder effective decision-making, highlighting the need for tailored interventions that address the specific demands of local governance.

### **4.5. Digital Literacy, Inadequate Support Infrastructure Coverage, and Limited Digital Capabilities of Local Governments**

Low digital literacy, inadequate infrastructure, and limited local government capabilities hinder the scaling up of digitalized service delivery despite high mobile phone penetration (95.3%). Initiatives like the Connect Rwanda Initiative aim to

improve access by providing smartphones to marginalized groups, but challenges such as poor internet connectivity and insufficient local government resources continue to impede effective service delivery. Infrastructure limitations significantly hinder the implementation of decentralization policies due to inadequate technological and physical resources and skill gaps.

#### **4.6. Civil Society Still Faces Lack of Resources**

Civil society in Rwanda has seen growth and clearer roles, yet it still faces significant challenges, particularly at the local level, where its contributions are underwhelming. Local CSOs grapple with internal governance issues, and face resource constraints, hindering their ability to engage effectively in public policy initiatives despite a more supportive operational environment.

#### **4.7. Media Capacity Deficit**

Despite diversification, media struggles with limitations that hinder its effectiveness in policy dialogue and citizen engagement, as highlighted in Vision 2050, which envisions a vital role for media in promoting participation and accountability. A new National media policy has been elaborated. It aims to enhance access to information and address digital platforms' challenges. Still, significant capacity gaps among media institutions and practitioners remain obstacles to leveraging opportunities for governance transformation.

#### **4.8. Coordination and Integration**

Some LG officials have difficulty coordinating between different levels of government, which can lead to potential overlaps in responsibilities and inefficiencies. Inadequate coordination and integration severely impede decentralization, causing fragmentation of efforts, inefficient resource allocation, and communication barriers, ultimately undermining local governance's goals.

#### **4.9. Monitoring and Evaluation System**

The M&E system needs to be more efficient so as not to hamper decentralization by undermining accountability and resource allocation, leading to inefficiencies and corruption. Additionally, it limits feedback mechanisms and data-driven decision-making, which can erode public trust and hinder capacity building in local governance.

Solving these challenges is essential to ensure Rwanda's decentralization policy.

### **5. Conclusion**

#### **5.1. Summary of the Main Findings**

Rwanda's decentralization journey has shown promise in enhancing governance and service delivery. The efforts to empower local governments and promote citizen engagement reflect a commitment to inclusive development. However, addressing the challenges and leveraging opportunities will be crucial for achieving

sustainable and inclusive development at the local level. Rwanda can continue strengthening its decentralization efforts and fostering resilient communities by focusing on capacity building, resource allocation, and citizen empowerment.

## 5.2. Recommendations

**Enhancing continuous training programs for local officials** is essential to improving the effectiveness of decentralization in Rwanda. Focusing on practical skills and management on-the-job training will better equip them to tackle the challenges they face in governance and service delivery.

**Strengthening citizen engagement** through targeted awareness campaigns is crucial for encouraging active participation in governance. Educating citizens about their rights and responsibilities can enhance community involvement and accountability in local decision-making processes.

**A comprehensive review of JADF's operations** as an instrument of voice and accountability is essential to identify factors affecting its effectiveness and to improve collaboration among civil society, local government, and other local actors.

**Reviewing the local government organizational structure** is essential to align its framework with functions, plans, and trends, enhance the capacity of service delivery entities closest to citizens, and improve responsiveness and efficiency in meeting community needs.

**The institutional framework for local own-source revenue (OSR) needs to be reviewed** to put LGs at the center and improve revenue administration efficiency and maximization.

**Civil society organizations (CSOs) should enhance their technical capacities and strategic communication** while collaborating with local governments and stakeholders to effectively complement government services, analyze policies, disseminate information, provide civic education, and monitor policy implementation.

**Establishing robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks** is vital for assessing the effectiveness of decentralization initiatives. Regular evaluations can provide insights into successes and areas for improvement, guiding future policies and practices, including consideration of the AI era and digitalization.

## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

## References

- Aoki, E. (2008). Entangled Democracy, Decentralization and Lifeworld in Flores under Global Trends. In *Foundations for Local Governance* (pp. 47-74). Physica-Verlag HD. [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-7908-2006-5\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-7908-2006-5_3)
- Bannink, D., & Ossewaarde, R. (2012). Decentralization. *Administration & Society*, 44, 595-624. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095399711419096>
- Dreher, A. (2006). Power to the People? The Impact of Decentralization on Governance.

- SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.881542>
- Fukuyama, F. (2013). What Is Governance? *Governance*, 26, 347-368.  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/gove.12035>
- Government of Rwanda (GoR) (2012). *National Decentralization Policy for Rwanda*.  
<https://www.minaloc.gov.rw/>
- Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN) (2023). *Annual Report 2022-2023*. <https://www.minecofin.gov.rw/>
- Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) (2017). *Assessment of the Impact of Decentralization Policy Implementation in Rwanda (2001-2017)*. <https://www.minaloc.gov.rw/>
- Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) (2018). *Annual Report 2017-2018*.  
<https://www.minaloc.gov.rw/>
- Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) (2024). *Evaluation of the Governance and Decentralisation Sector Strategic Plan*. <https://www.minaloc.gov.rw/>
- Rwandan Government Board (RGB) (2018). *Annual Report 2017-2018*.  
<https://www.rgb.rw/>
- Rwandan Government Board (RGB) (2023). *Annual Report 2022-2023*.  
<https://www.rgb.rw/>
- Rwandan Revenue Authority (RRA) (2023). *Annual Report 2022-2023*.  
<https://www.rra.gov.rw/>
- Saito, F. (2008). Decentralization and Local Governance: Introduction and Overview. In *Foundations for Local Governance* (pp. 1-24). Physica-Verlag HD.  
[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-7908-2006-5\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-7908-2006-5_1)
- The National Strategy for Transformation (NST<sub>1</sub> 2017-2024).  
<https://www.minecofin.gov.rw/>
- Wahhab, M. A. (2006). Problems of Governance and the Need for Political Decentralization in Bangladesh. In *Paper Presented at the NAPSIPAG Conference on Innovation, Policy Transfer, and Governance: How They Can Best Contribute to Social and Human Development* (pp. 4-5). University of Sydney.