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The 'Partnership for Democratic Local Governance in Southeast Asia (DELGOSEA)', a regional project supporting best practice exchange in local governance, recently held its third transnational conference in Battam, Indonesia, from 27-28 September 2011. It was followed by a one-day training workshop on monitoring and evaluation. DELGOSEA is co-funded by the European Commission and Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) of Germany through the German Ministry for Development Cooperation.

Participants came from 16 pilot cities in Cambodia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam and included representatives of Local Government Associations (LGAs), local governments, civil society organizations, academia and media. Apart from main participants from the five partner countries, the conference was attended by representatives of the European Union- Mr. Erik Habers, First Counsellor and Ms. Novianty Manurung, Project Officer, EU Delegation to Indonesia and Brunei Darussalam. The project partners – the Association of Cities of Vietnam (ACVN), the Local Government Development Foundation, Philippines (LOGODEF), the National league of Communes/Sangkats of the Kingdom of Cambodia (NLC/S), the Thailand Environment Institute (TEI) and the United Cities and Local Governments – Asia Pacific (UCLG-ASPAC), were all excited about this opportunity to strengthen the network.

The two-day conference was split into two thematic sessions, covering the midterm review, evaluation and lessons-learned in the first part, and looking at the issues of sustainability aspects at the second part.

The programme included amongst others a 'marketplace' session where all 16 pilot cities presented their projects and which was open to the media, as well as a succession of round-table discussions looking in detail at the challenges the replication process had in store for the individual towns. The various LGAs from the five partner countries- important stakeholders in the implementation process –gave their perspective on the progress so far. The invited government officials presented their plans and initiatives for better local governance and at the same time provided first comments on the policy recommendation papers of DELGOSEA.

Finely balanced between looking back and venturing forward was the presentation of the results of the mid-term evaluation – giving suggestions for moving forward based on what has been done so far.

“This is an exciting moment in the lifetime of the DELGOSEA project”, said director, Dr. Peter Koppinger, KAS, “the foundations have been laid and the pilot cities are moving forward to the implementation phase. This conference presents a great opportunity to get everybody together, to take stock and look at what should happen next and how we can sustain good local governance beyond the lifetime of the project.”