

Preface

The Commonwealth Secretariat Local Government Reform Series was launched by the Commonwealth Secretariat's Governance and Institutional Development Division (GIDD) to present contemporary trends, thinking and good practices in local government to local government practitioners, public sector policy-makers and all those working at sub-national level in the Commonwealth and internationally. As governments in developing countries decentralise, there is an urgent need for capacity building in local government.

This book aims to bring good practices in local government finance to the attention of public sector executives who deal with sub-national finance and of the local government finance community. The first book in the series, *Managing Change in Local Governance*,¹ concerns key issues that are central to managing change at the sub-national level in the context of emerging global trends in governance. Both books are essential reading for senior officers in local government and other officers in national and state governments who are leading strategic change in local governance in their countries. They are especially relevant for countries which have recently embarked upon the introduction of decentralising reforms.

The Commonwealth Secretariat's Governance and Institutional Development Division (GIDD) has developed an executive programme on finance for sub-national and local governments for Commonwealth member countries. So far, three sessions have been held in the UK. The programme incorporates practical examples and case studies, and field visits to UK local authorities to observe current practices. This book is based on the course material and modules developed for the programme by the University of Birmingham over the past three years.

GIDD is grateful to the Department of International Development at the University of Birmingham, and especially to Nick Devas, for their collaboration and the valuable contribution they have made to these books. It is hoped that policy-makers and practitioners will find the series a useful tool in guiding their local government reform strategies and processes in their own countries.

GIDD is also grateful to Guy Bentham, of the Secretariat's Communications and Public Affairs Division, for assisting in the preparation of this volume and for his helpful advice throughout the process of publication.

1 *Managing Change in Local Governance* was first published in the Commonwealth Secretariat's 'Managing the Public Service – Strategies for Improvement' series and will be rebranded in subsequent editions.

The Authors

Nick Devas is Director of the International Development Department, School of Public Policy at the University of Birmingham, UK.

Munawwar Alam is Adviser on Sub-National Government and Administration in the Governance and Institutional Development Division of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Simon Delay is a consultant and lecturer at the School of Public Policy at the University of Birmingham, UK.

Roger Oppong Koranteng is senior lecturer at the Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration, Accra, Ghana.

Pritha Venkatachalam is a financial specialist and senior consultant at Cambridge Economic Policy Associates, UK.