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Nota di contenuto	TABLE OF CONTENTS; Abstract; Acknowledgments; Acronyms and Abbreviations; Executive Summary; 1. Introduction; 2. Today's Decentralization Agenda-Challenges and Institutional Determinants; The Legal Framework; Deconcentration and Decentralization; Control System; Regional Planning Bodies; Towards a More Service-oriented Administration; 3. Fiscal Framework; The Fiscal Gap; Expenditures; Revenues; Transfers; Improving Madagascar's Fiscal Framework; 4. Communes; Institutional Arrangements at the Commune Level; Measuring Commune Finance: Sample and Methodology Commune Needs and Overall Flows of FundsCommune Revenues; Commune Expenditures; Improving Service Delivery at the Commune Level; Annexes; Annex A: Matrix of Policy Recommendations; Annex B: Distribution of Ministerial Functions; Annex C: Revenue Assignment in the 2000 and 2001 Budget; Annex D: Deconcentration of Expenditures; Annex E: The Local Financing Gap Methodology; Annex F: The Representativeness of the 232 Commune Sample; Annex G: Local Government Organigram; Annex H: Local Government Revenue Assignments; Glossary of French and Malagasy Terminology; Bibliography; TABLES 2.1 Administrative Parallelism2.2 Personnel and Budget Functions in the Social Sectors; 2.3 The Control Framework; 3.1 Possible

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#### Sommario/riassunto

Decentralization faces many constraints in poor countries like Madagascar, however many positive lessons can be drawn from the Madagascar case which point to the potentials of the decentralization process.. As has happened in many other developing countries, particularly in Africa, Madagascar's decentralization process has seen reversals, uncertainties and lack of clarity all along. This explains why Madagascar, despite the experience with decentralization, remains a highly centralized country with only about 3-4 per cent of expenditures spent below the center and with very few prerogatives decentralized to the local level. Decentralization in Madagascar identifies some of the constraints, such as the structural centralization of public finances, weak capacity at the local level and inappropriate institutional frameworks. It argues that a lot can be gained from simplifying administrative arrangements and fiscal relationships. These recommendations are based on a detailed empirical analysis of more than 300 local governments' budgets and also applies a methodology for measuring local financing needs ("local financing gap").

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