

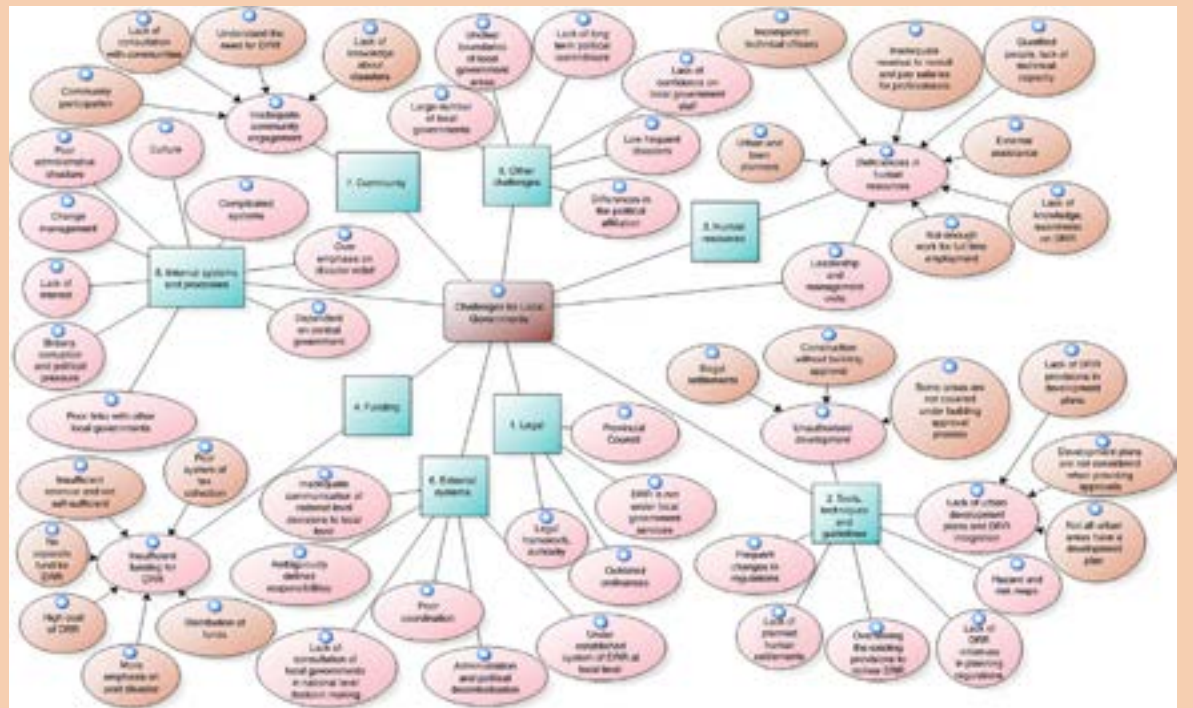
# The IGR Initiative

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As the closest administrative authority to local people, local governments are the extension of the hand of the state and promote law and order at the grassroots. This responsibility also comprises providing basic social amenities for the well-being of local people. Consequently, they must advise the state governments on economic planning based on their jurisdictional and grassroots experiences. Local governments also have several regulatory functions, including the regulation of slaughterhouses, slaughter slabs, markets, motor parks and public conveniences, the movement and keeping of pets of all descriptions, outdoor advertising and holding, shops, kiosks, restaurants, bakeries and public food businesses, laundry and the sale of liquor. As a regulator for many of these activities, it also charges associated fees, fines and rates where applicable. Others include assessing privately owned homes or tenements to levy them appropriately. Some of their constitutional developmental responsibilities include establishing and maintaining cemeteries and homes for the needy, construction and maintenance of roads, street lights,

Manifestly inadequate revenue is the most touted culprit for these less-than-below-average performances of local governments in Nigeria. Underneath and powering this inadequacy are state government interference and poor leadership. These two factors explain the kindred reasons provided for the inability of most local governments to generate sufficient independent revenue to meet their needs. State government interferences start from the point of installation of local government chairpersons. In Nigeria, the political party in power at the state government level always wins virtually all local government chairmanship seats. Of course, it never happens because of any genuine democratic process. State governments control the state's electoral bodies mandated to organise local government elections. And because in Nigeria and other heavily corruption-laced countries, he who

# Local government and the challenges of IGR expansion



Again, the revenue-sharing for-

Wrecked by those paid to make them prosper, local governments slide into dependency paralysis. They hardly auto-orchestrate any meaningful activity without looking for handouts. Again, being unable to improve the socioeconomic lots of the citizens within their jurisdiction, the poverty level balloons and rebounds in poor revenue receipts. This situation is the unfortunate vicious cycle faced by most local governments. Poverty prevalence, majorly at the rural level, consti-

The freedom and eventual high performance in independent revenue generation for local governments can only be in sight when they have reasonable financial autonomy and are conveniently delivered of their umbilical relationship with state governors. An excellent way to start is by including local government chairpersons' elections as part of those handled by the Independent National Electoral Commission. This proposal is the most fundamental that can release chairpersons from the stranglehold of their governors. The second necessary amendment is for the state legislature to actively monitor and evaluate local government chairpersons' performance and the available funds. Part of this oversight function should also ensure they receive 10 percent of state governments' internally generated revenue.