

Effectiveness as Our Model, Sustainable Development as Our Inspiration

In modern times, nations have regularly employed ODA as part of their basic approach toward building political, economic and diplomatic relations with other countries. These methods, manifested mostly through multilateral or bilateral aid projects, have improved recipient countries' overall political, social and economic environments, as well as local people's quality of life, but often also come with the purpose of achieving the political and economic interests of donor countries.

In view of this, in responding to partners' development needs, many international aid agencies have been focusing on improving the effectiveness of their development and assistance projects so as to ensure that they get results. This has meant drastically adjusting their organizations and transforming certain processes.

As Taiwan's dedicated professional development assistance agency we have introduced a number of reforms to our work in recent years, and engineered a further number of breakthroughs and innovations through 2013 in pursuit of our objective of aid effectiveness.

Improving Management Processes, Phasing Over Projects

In terms of operations, in the past couple of years various countries have submitted a considerable number of project proposals to us. To ensure the proper cohesion between old and new projects, we've been active in carrying out project appraisal missions. Management processes for projects are running in accordance with all of the phases of the project cycle and we've introduced a design and monitoring framework, and implemented project-orientation. These measures are not only winning us support in our partner countries, but are also raising project effectiveness.

As for phasing over projects, we've conducted fieldwork to understand the results of project implementation, and held discussions with stakeholders. We've also evaluated the likely sustainability of each of our projects following transfer, in terms of whether a project would achieve its plan for sustainable development, and whether cooperating units already have the capacity to take on the project. All of these procedures have enabled us to draw

conclusions from the relevant experiences and make recommendations, to help shore up any shortcomings which still remain.

At the end of 2013 we have 31 projects which have reached their objectives and which will now be transferred to local cooperating units. It's only when techniques and skills have really been transferred to partner countries – used as part of national mechanisms, incorporated into partners' operating cycles and given full rein – that they will truly assist partners to build and develop. That's the only kind of assistance that can really be said to be effective.

Creating a Learning Organization, Improving Efficiency through ICT and Online Services

To improve the TaiwanICDF's operating efficiency and support the promotion of our operations, the past year saw us initiate a second round of organizational reforms. This included the establishment of our Research, Development and Evaluation Office, a move designed to strengthen our strategic planning and performance evaluation functions. We also transferred the operations of new technical assistance projects to our Technical Cooperation Department and then divided the department into two divisions based around the appraisal and implementation phases of the project cycle, integrating all of the organization's technical cooperation operations. This consolidation and renaming of units and functions will improve digital administration and management, and deepen professionalism.

In addition, we have been actively building capacity among our own personnel, moving toward our goal of creating a learning organization. Our operations cover a wide range of industries and sectors; projects entail interdisciplinary cooperation involving many levels of financial, environmental, social and technical analysis, so the people implementing these operations must have a well-integrated skillset and be able to look at things from as wide a perspective as possible.

Creative thinking is essential in this, so we have been organizing tailor-made courses to address colleagues' different working needs, and started to offer general education for new staff. We also strengthened second-language skills, starting our first intensive Spanish training program during

the past year because many of our projects are being implemented in Spanish-speaking regions. Language skills will facilitate project missions and their supervision and implementation.

Meanwhile, through the promotion of ICT and digital services, including the construction of a work plan management system, we are simplifying project-related processes. The implementation of real-time controls according to project cycle concepts and the construction of a cloud-based storage platform provide for the exchange of information between our headquarters and units anywhere in the world, making communications faster and more efficient.

Moving Forward through Innovation, Widening Regional Influence

With development aid having gradually shifted toward emphasizing results-based benefits more than the allocation of resources, innovation is becoming the key to how we employ limited resources and broaden our influence.

To this end, we continued to pursue breakthroughs and progress in our projects through 2013. In terms of technical assistance, in order to promote greater project effectiveness, this meant emulating international development organizations, adapting higher-level policy and advisory technical assistance (PATA) among the types of technical assistance we provide, through which we assisted partner countries to tackle the root causes of problems from the top down.

In the agricultural sector, to assist various Central American countries to control an outbreak of coffee rust, we have cooperated with CABI to establish lending mechanisms for the disbursement of funding, and have also worked with the OIRSA to organize a major international seminar, where we shared Taiwan's substantial experience in disease prevention and treatment, epidemic reporting and tracking management, and in training farmers' organizations. We have also employed Taiwanese satellite resources, land-use analysis techniques and GIS technologies in cooperation with Central American regional development agencies.

In education, after running our International

Higher Education Scholarship Program for over a decade, we departed from the practices of previous years, bringing the program more into line with actual needs and future prospects for carrying out planning and project work.

In public health we are cooperating on a project with Luke International Norway, an organization with many years of experience of working in southern Africa. This joint initiative is responding to the sixth MDG, "combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases," as well as focusing on chronic diseases identified as part of the post-2015 development agenda.

To seek diplomatic breakthroughs and widen regional influence, we have taken the initiative in other locations by working with international organizations, such as with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development through our joint Green Energy Special Fund, and by attending the African Development Bank's annual meeting for the first time as observers. We also participated in a seminar in Thailand and a lighting exhibition in Myanmar, strengthening interaction between Taiwan and ASEAN countries, and establishing a basis for future dialogue regarding joint projects.

Looking ahead to 2014, we will pursue even more improvement and progress in line with our vision to "become the best partner for sustainable development by 2022" and by continuing to transform and reform. With sustainable development as our inspiration, we will gradually put the principle of ownership into practice, improving the benefits of aid. By remaining alert and spurring ourselves onward, we can become a rising force within the international community, and thereby make an ever greater contribution toward international cooperation and development.



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