



Strategic Planning and Direction

Projects: From the Millennium Development Goals to the Post-2015 Sustainable Development Agenda

During the 42nd Session of the United Nations General Assembly, convened in 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development noted that humanity was facing a series of major economic, social and environmental problems, recognizing for the first time the threat that economic development poses for the environment, and appealing to all countries to re-examine their development strategies and direction. At that time, the term “sustainable development” was defined as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” This also set in motion the organization of the UN Conference on Environment and Development, also known as the Earth Summit, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992.

Twenty years after the Earth Summit, the 2012 United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20) was held in Rio de Janeiro. Besides examining the progress and challenges involved in promoting sustainable development around the world, it was also expected that the summit would urge countries to forge a new political commitment to sustainable development.

Faced with the imminent 2015 target date for the MDGs, the UN Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals announced 17 draft Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in July 2014. At this time, the TaiwanICDF also actively identified the advantages of intervening, under the principle of sustainable development, in order to conform to the spirit of these SDGs. In recent years, the TaiwanICDF has since taken the initiative of promoting climate change mitigation and adaptation, environmental protection, the conservation of biodiversity, the development of renewable energy and other projects and operations related to sustainable development, helping the organization to follow international development communities and agendas.

The post-2015 SDGs also emphasize global public goods, proposing six general and

overarching “essential elements” – dignity, prosperity, justice, partnership, planet and people – and pursuing a course of integrated development toward mutual human prosperity, fundamental human rights, and economic, social and environmental sustainability. The SDGs serve as a continuation of the development agenda of the MDGs, considering human development to be the ultimate development goal, and global public goods to be the engine that drives the attainment of such development results. This development agenda, which combines human development and sustainable development, is focused primarily on solving issues of poverty, hunger, health, the use of water resources, energy production, urban housing, and the modes of production and consumption. It takes into consideration human-centered needs such as affordability, safety and accessibility, stresses the continuing effects of global climate change, and reaffirms the importance of maintaining ecosystems of all forms and of using resources sustainably. Moreover, in pursuing each specific goal, the agenda pays particular attention to minority groups and overall enabling environments, stressing tolerance for differences in gender, age, religion, occupation and disability, and the

integration of multiple disciplines and resource channels, as well as the strengthening of support to underdeveloped countries, landlocked nations and small island developing states, and fragile or war-torn countries, through financing, appropriate technologies, knowledge and information. It strives to end inconsistencies in the development and progress of different global regions and countries, in turn facilitating the prosperity and growth of all of humanity: “leave no-one behind.”

In other words, the post-2015 SDGs have redefined poverty as a multifaceted development issue, which, besides emphasizing impoverishment in terms of personal economics, health and capabilities, should also incorporate a holistic, institutional- and governance-oriented approach to social security, and should stress new global goals, so that responsibility is not limited to developing countries, but rather to all countries.

Deploying Integrated and Multidisciplinary Projects for Post-2015 Agenda

In terms of the TaiwanICDF’s current development work and compliance with the post-2015 development agenda, with respect to global public goods we will continue



to pursue projects and operations aimed at developing economies, job security, ensuring good governance and maintaining global partnerships; in terms of human development, we will continue to pursue projects and operations aimed at reducing poverty, ending hunger, providing education, and promoting health and environmental sustainability.

Regarding the TaiwanICDF's overall development strategy, our organization sees the policies set out in Taiwan's White Paper on Foreign Aid Policy: Partnerships for Progress and Sustainable Development as forming its vision for long-term development, and implements a mission to strengthen international cooperation and enhance foreign relations through the promotion of economic development, social progress, and the welfare of all mankind, while our core strategy is to respond to international development trends, draw on Taiwan's comparative advantages, integrate public and private sector resources, and strengthen cooperative partnerships. By boosting operational performance and organizational efficiency, we strive to transform the output of

our work into outcomes, applying the three foreign aid principles of adhering to appropriate motives, due diligence and effective practices.

We continue to pursue our operational priorities according to long-term strategies already established, while our new projects have gradually moved toward a more integrated, interdisciplinary approach. In addition, the TaiwanICDF fully respects the importance of the overall "institution" in development, and so, as we continue to help our partner countries develop economically, we consider institutional improvements to be a key component of project capacity building, starting by helping to improve public institutions for our partner countries so that it is possible to tackle development problems at their roots.

In 2014, the TaiwanICDF implemented a total of 74 projects and general operations. Of these, 42 were agricultural projects, accounting for about 57 percent of the year's projects, four involved public health and medicine (5%), six involved education (8%), four involved ICT (5%), and four involved

environmental protection (5%), while the remaining 14 projects touched on other disciplines (19%). In the future, we will continue to focus our resources on development projects prioritizing agriculture, public health and medicine, education, ICT and environmental protection. Managing for results, we will approach the content of projects and their implementation from a more comprehensive angle, supporting our partner countries with a mixture of assistance methods and tools, such as technical cooperation, lending and investment, grants and training. At the same time, we will synergize the power of NGOs and private organizations to continue deepening different bilateral and multilateral aid models, rapidly replicating and promoting successful project experiences. We will make full use of Taiwan's development experience and knowledge in carrying out our aid work, broadening the beneficiaries of our projects and pursuing more equitable distributive justice, and inclusive growth.

Management: Activating Management Tools and Improving the Operations of Our Organization

Reform is a process involving the continuous pursuit of progress. To seek innovation in our work and management mechanisms, the TaiwanICDF continues to accumulate lessons learned with regard to the project cycle, making immediate revisions and adjustments to project content and implementation direction through implementation monitoring and performance reviews. In addition to this, we are constantly introducing management tools supporting organizational management and project design. This year we continued to pursue a course of organizational reforms, enhancing our use of appraisal, project management and performance evaluation tools in accordance with our strategic goal of facilitating the effective implementation of international aid programs and pursuing sustainable development.

Regarding the accumulation of project management knowledge and experience, after taking into consideration the nature of our aid tools, the recommendations of Taiwanese embassies and overseas representative offices, and the differences in the conditions in our partner countries, we have reviewed all of our working regulations and dynamically adjusted existing methodologies according to the characteristics of Taiwan's foreign aid work. This has included activating project management tools, drawing up draft regulations about mission directors, improving the effectiveness of budget utilization, and encouraging colleagues and enhancing professional training, all with the aim of integrating our core capabilities so that we may continue developing foreign aid-related working methods that are suitable for the TaiwanICDF, and that are realistic

and feasible, and thereby render current management tasks all the more pragmatic.

Regarding the activation of project management tools, to reduce project implementation thresholds and raise the efficiency of planning activities, we have adapted feedback from staff, simplifying the format of our design and monitoring framework (DMF), helping and guiding our staff in completing the design of projects. In addition, to enhance our flexibility in responding to needs proposed by our partner countries, we have revised guidelines regarding work plans and adjusted internal control procedures, applying a rolling structure for the proposal of projects and strengthening the connections between work plans and budgets.

Regarding mission directors, taking the characteristics of Taiwan's foreign aid work into consideration, the TaiwanICDF is working in a spirit that recognizes the need to transform its technical cooperation. We have responded to problems involving horizontal links and coordination between project managers, as well as the recommendations of Taiwanese embassies, by appointing general coordinators for technical cooperation. After weighing opinions, available resources and startup costs, we have integrated the framework governing project managers and overseas technical missions, and drafted a proposal to appoint a "director" at each technical mission, whose presence would be helpful in boosting the management efficiency of our overseas teams.

Regarding improvements to the effectiveness of budget utilization, considering the administrative procedures of some of our partner countries, and following an assessment of our partner countries'

capacities, institutional integrity and willingness, we have revised the utilization of expenditures according to the conditions in each country. This will expedite disbursements made for new projects and boost the efficiency of implementation.

In terms of encouraging colleagues, to raise staff morale and foster team unity, we have revised year-end performance appraisal and continue to manage personnel performance. We also convened a conference with overseas technical mission leaders and project managers, building a consensus and proposing reforms to technical cooperation projects.

In terms of enhancing professional training, we continue to strengthen our personnel training, arranging professional skills training for staff returning from abroad in order to improve their abilities in new areas.

We have also taken measures to increase income and reduce expenses. By investing in exchange-traded funds, we increased operating resources more effectively, creating a surplus in our 2014 budget. We will continue to increase the efficiency of our annual budget and strive to reduce management expenses, thereby practicing more effective financial management.

In conclusion, we at the TaiwanICDF will do our utmost to fulfill our duties as a foreign aid organization. Giving consideration to our characteristics and expertise, we will actively respond to the requirements of our diplomatic mission and carefully assess the feasibility of projects to ensure that the operations of our organization are sustainable, striving to provide a long-range contribution to development topics of global concern.