



Asia-Pacific and the Middle East

The Asia-Pacific region is vast, covering parts of Southeast, South, and Northern Asia, the Pacific Islands, and the Central Asian republics that split from the former Soviet Union. Given the enormous differences in interests, cultural backgrounds, political systems, economic development levels, and industrial structures, the TaiwanICDF's policies and cooperative models must be tailored for each specific sub-region. Many places in the region have faced financial crises in recent years. Countries have also had to deal with numerous challenges such as



the transition to a free-trade economic system, terrorism, and rapidly spreading contagious diseases. Nonetheless, common core objectives include reducing poverty, strengthening the economy, and ensuring stable economic growth, social stability, and health care provision. As countries around the world assist the region in reducing poverty, the TaiwanICDF also works to strengthen farming and fisheries industries, MSME activity, and public health systems.

Upgrading and Diversifying the Agriculture and Fisheries Industries

Despite the diversity within the region, most economic activity still revolves around

the agricultural sector. The TaiwanICDF designs regional assistance strategies based on each country's level of development. For example, in the economically-stable gulf countries in the Middle East, TaiwanICDF

projects focus on upgrading production technology and product diversification. In Saudi Arabia, for instance, tissue culture technology is being used to create economically viable crops. Another project in Bahrain focuses on landscaping and developing the floriculture industry. These projects help to diversify the economies of these two nations that presently rely on oil production. Most Southeast Asian countries are geographically close to Taiwan and already have relatively well developed agricultural sectors. As a result, the TaiwanICDF focuses on creating local production and marketing systems for these nations and promotes investment, seeking to commercialize agricultural production. This approach boosts incomes of farmers and fishermen, and also introduces investment from Taiwan, creating a mutually beneficial relationship.

The Pacific Island nations have economies that focus on farming, fishing and tourism. Despite abundant marine resources, small markets and a lack of infrastructure and technology often impede development on these islands. In fact, most countries need to import agricultural products and only have enough seafood for their own consumption. This situation creates a

fiscal burden on local governments and keeps commodity prices high. In response, the TaiwanICDF projects focus on increasing staple crops and diversifying horticulture, which helps to reduce imports and save foreign exchange. This tactic also boosts the nutritional intake of the residents in these nations. The TaiwanICDF helps these countries to use their existing resources to achieve stable and sustainable development. In Kiribati and Tuvalu, for example, the technical missions instruct farmers how to make compost out of local materials. This process not only makes the land more fertile, but also promotes recycling. In addition, seminars on near-shore fishing and aquaculture are held, assisting these countries to better maintain their marine resources and achieve sustainable growth. In order to train local agricultural and fisheries specialists, the technical missions carry out a variety of training courses. The TaiwanICDF also offers scholarship programs for these countries so promising students can come to Taiwan to study for master's or doctorate degrees. Human resource development will help these countries reach self-sufficiency.





Fostering Private Sector Development

The TaiwanICDF has promoted private sector development since its inception. Projects that used to focus on SME development have now been expanded to include micro-scale enterprises. Credit projects were initially held in conjunction with local development banks (such as agricultural development banks). These projects are now being extended to commercial banks and NGOs. In the Central Asian republics, whose economies are in transition, cooperation is primarily carried out with international multilateral organizations on credit projects, ensuring that local residents obtain the best financial

services possible. Boosting private sector development raises incomes and the quality of life.

In addition to providing capital, human resource development and training in specialized fields are crucial to carrying out industrial development. The successful development experience of Taiwan's SMEs is well known throughout the world. In order to introduce this model, the TaiwanICDF organizes various seminars and training courses to share Taiwan's achievements with others, including policy planning, trade promotion, and micro-credit. This knowledge is crucial to a country like Mongolia, which is presently transforming into a market economy.



① The Horticulture Project and Landscaping Project in Bahrain ② Children in the Marshall Islands showing off their fresh catch ③ A technician from the technical mission in the Marshall Islands introduces the concept of home horticulture to local students

Strengthening Medical and Health Services

Abject poverty and disease is still endemic in Asia. Over 800 million people in the region still have a daily income of less than US\$1. Diseases of poverty continue to be seen throughout the region. In addition, considering the SARS and Avian Flu epidemics of recent years, multinational public health management is crucial. As such, the TaiwanICDF in recent years has focused on public health projects and humanitarian medical assistance in the region, again using Taiwan's expertise as a basis for these initiatives. The TaiwanICDF works with international organizations, local and foreign NGOs, and specialized medical institutions to provide technical assistance and donations of equipment, helping to assist local communities in creating grassroots medical and public health systems. The TaiwanICDF sponsors outreach and mobile clinics to provide medical care to areas that are not covered by normal medical systems. It also provides assistance to improve the quality of machinery in grassroots clinics. In addition, projects work to improve the state of public health and sanitation,

which decreases the incidence of disease. Furthermore, reducing the waste of medical resources helps to ensure that each person has access to medical care.

In 2004, the TaiwanICDF implemented projects within 18 countries, focusing on agrobusiness development, private sector growth, and medical assistance. In addition to guidance provided by the stationed technical mission to assist in agrobusiness development, specialists were also sent to the Marshall Islands to hold a regional seminar on sustainable near-shore fishing and aquaculture development. Participants had an opportunity to exchange opinions and better understand Taiwan's background in these sectors. Private sector development projects primarily focused on micro-credit, assisting enterprises to obtain capital to which they otherwise might not have access. In addition to participating in public health projects implemented by the ADB and WHO, humanitarian and medical assistance was carried out with local and foreign NGOs. Outreach and mobile clinics were used during the execution of these projects.





Key Projects

❖ Tuvalu Horticultural Crop Development Project

Goals and Benefits | Tuvalu has a population of about 10,000 people, and its natural environment is not conducive to farming. To assist the people of Tuvalu to improve their diets and reduce fruit and vegetables imports, which require foreign currency, the TaiwanICDF's technical mission has established an experimental farm to find suitable crops that thrive in Tuvalu's environment. The technical mission also instructs farmers how to grow these items, helping to diversify crops and achieve the goal of self-sufficiency.

Status | Given Tuvalu's limited arable land and the problem of soil salinization, the technical mission has assisted locals in improving planting techniques by developing a soil-less culture method that plants crops in bags filled with compost created from local materials. The mission also instructs residents to have family gardens and become self-sufficient in vegetable production. It also raises farmer incomes and reduces the need to import fruits and vegetables. Extension work is being carried out and new crops are being tested at the experimental farm. About a dozen crops are gradually being extended to local farmers.



▲ The technical mission in Tuvalu promotes vegetable cultivation by preparing sample dishes for locals

❖ International Conference on Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture Development in the Pacific Islands

Goals and Benefits | Taiwan has a strong foundation in near-shore fishing and aquaculture. It also has abundant experience in utilization and maintenance of marine resources. In 2004, the TaiwanICDF staged an international conference in the Marshall Islands to share Taiwan's experiences and help countries in the region promote the advancement of these sectors and work toward sustainable development.

Status | The international conference was held in September 2004. Seven experts from Taiwan were invited as speakers, providing their opinions on the topics at hand. Over 40 people from the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Palau, Kiribati, Fiji, Nauru, and Taiwan took part in the discussions, which focused on Taiwan near-shore fishing and aquaculture development, participant reports, sustainable development, and future cooperative possibilities.

A number of conclusions were reached in the course of the discussions, including that clear policies need to be formulated at the national level. In addition, participants agreed that

further training is needed, along with infrastructure development. For example, marketing, distribution channels, and transportation and shipping need to be expanded. Genetic improvement of various fish species used in aquaculture also needs to be undertaken. The participants agreed that regional events should be held so that information can be exchanged, and that training and technical assistance can be carried out.

❖ Mongolia SME Workshop

Goals and Benefits

The TaiwanICDF was commissioned to hold this workshop by the EBRD's Mongolia Cooperation Fund, hoping that Taiwan could share its expertise in SME development with mid- to high-level corporate managers in Mongolia. This will help enterprises improve executive management skills and will also help to spark private sector development in Mongolia, helping the country continue down the path of economic diversification and reform.

Status

The workshop was held at the end of November. The EBRD selected 15 SME managers and important executives to participate in the two-week workshop. Coursework integrated both theory and practical experience. Eleven people from the industrial, government and academic sectors in Taiwan took part in the project. Participants visited 22 outstanding SMEs from various industries, enabling the Mongolians to understand Taiwan's SME development and operational methodologies/models. A number of the students have initiated further contact with companies from Taiwan, providing the potential for further cooperative opportunities.



▲ The Mongolia SME Workshop

❖ Central Asia Public Health and Medical Care Project

Goals and Benefits

This is the first medical humanitarian project carried out by the TaiwanICDF in Central Asia. Medical and health education campaigns are being carried out in conjunction with the creation of public lavatories. The project hopes to improve the state of public health and promote a more sanitary lifestyle among the residents of 12 communities in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan.

Status

Over 7,800 residents of the 12 communities in the three-targeted countries use the public lavatories erected under the project. In addition, over 25,000 people are reached through the public health and education campaigns. Improvement in sanitation habits is already being seen, which is helping to reduce the spread of disease. The project is helping to strengthen local awareness on promoting healthy living environments.

Cooperating Countries and Projects in Asia-Pacific and the Middle East

1 Georgia

Taipei-EBRD Financial Intermediary Investment Special Fund—Micro-credit Bank of Georgia

2 Azerbaijan

EBRD Financial Intermediary Investment Special Fund—SME Re-lending Project

3 Saudi Arabia

Agriculture and Fisheries Project
Transportation Technology Cooperation Project
Printing Technology Cooperation Project

4 Bahrain

Horticulture Project and Landscaping Project

5 Kyrgyzstan

Taipei-EBRD Financial Intermediary Investment Special Fund—MSE Finance Facility

6 India

Medical Infrastructure Project for the Tibetan Community in India
The Tibetan Refugee Self-help Center Medical Infrastructure Improvement Project
Taiwan Overseas Volunteers

7 Mongolia

Horticulture and Animal Husbandry Extension Project
Mongolia Cooperation Fund
XacBank Project
Mongolia SME Workshop
Children's Scholarship Program
Ulaanbaatar Oral Hygiene Project

8 Myanmar (Burma)

Flying Eye Hospital Humanitarian Assistance Project

9 Thailand

Northern Thailand Horticulture and Agricultural Product Processing Development Project
Taiwan Overseas Volunteers

10 The Philippines

Subic Bay Industrial Park Development Project—Phase II

11 Indonesia

General Agriculture Management Project
Livestock Project
Aquaculture Project
Taiwan Overseas Volunteers
Taiwan Youth Overseas Service

12 Palau

Horticultural and Crop Extension Project
Taiwan Youth Overseas Service

13 Papua New Guinea

Cereal Grain Production Project

14 The Solomon Islands

Rice Project
Livestock Project

15 The Marshall Islands

Horticulture Crop Development Project
Livestock Project
Taiwan Overseas Volunteers
Taiwan Youth Overseas Service

16 Kiribati

Aquaculture Project
Horticulture Project
Livestock Project
Taiwan Overseas Volunteers

17 Tuvalu

Horticultural Crop Development Project
SME Credit Project
Taiwan Overseas Volunteers

18 Fiji

Off-Season Vegetable and Fruit Tree Extension Project
Taiwan Youth Overseas Service



Regional Cooperation Projects

- Emergency Regional Support to Address the Outbreak of SARS
- International Conference Sustainable Fisheries and Aquaculture Development in the Pacific Islands
- Central Asia Community Health and Sanitation Project
- TaiwanICDF Scholarship Program — One student from one country in the region is studying for a master's degree in agriculture.
- International Human Resource Development Workshops — One hundred and thirty participants from 18 countries in the region attended 12 workshops including agriculture policy and rural development, WTO customs modernization, and trade promotion.