

POLICY DIALOGUES - A SYNTHESIS

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR OCEAN DEVELOPMENT

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ABBREVIATIONS USED

IRCAD:	Interregional and Cooperative Activities Division
WAIO:	West Africa and Indian Ocean Division
SP/CB:	South Pacific and Caribbean Basin Division
HRD:	Human Resource Development
NGO:	Non Governmental Organisations
IDRC:	International Development Research Centre
MOA:	Memorandum of Agreement
ODA:	Official Development Assistance

SYNTHESIS OF POLICY DIALOGUES

ICOD's Policy Dialogues, on a Divisional basis, were held as follows:

IRCAD: 31 May, 1990
 WAIO: 4 June, 1990
 SP/CB: 7 June, 1990

The agenda comprised three main items:

President's Questions;
 Division's Issues, Policy and Programs; and
 Divisions Issues, Administration.

The following is a synthesis of the discussions during the three sessions, under the following eight headings:

1. ICOD's Policy Objectives
2. ICOD's Image
3. Geographical Concentration
4. Theme Focus
5. Training Focus
6. Outside Funding and Inter-agency co-operation
7. Programming Approach
8. Other Issues

1. ICOD'S POLICY OBJECTIVES

Issues Discussed

- Are ICOD's current policy objectives adequate? Are they rational and consistent?
- Are they sufficiently linked to the Government's stated ODA objectives?
- Should we put more emphasis on ODA objectives such as:
 - poverty alleviation?
 - women's participation?
 - environment?
 - food security?
 - energy?
- Proactive versus responsive approach - What should be ICOD's policy position on this?

Points Arising from Discussion

1.1 Concern was expressed that ICOD may not now be reflecting adequately its mandate as specified in the Statute.

1.2 ICOD's policies and programs have evolved under the influence of its large ocean mandate on the one hand and limited budgetary resources on the other. It would be useful for ICOD to develop a clear statement of policy objectives, referring back to the mandate as stated in the ICOD Act s.e. 1985 and incorporating all the elements outlined in it. This would be a useful tool in the hands of program officers to explain the Centre to clients.

1.3 ICOD should continue to keep its target countries apprised of its policies and thematic priorities so that they will become increasingly familiar with the kind of projects the Centre would entertain.

1.4 ICOD's policies and programs are implicitly linked to ODA objectives. Therefore, there is no need to increase the emphasis on specific ODA objectives in the policy statement..

1.5 ICOD's overriding objective is to assist developing countries in the management and utilisation of their ocean resources in a rational and sustainable manner.

1.6 Underlying ICOD's development assistance is the basic objective of human resource development (HRD) for ocean resources management and development.

1.7 A blend of responsive and selective approaches are needed in ICOD programming. There could be a negative impact on ICOD's image if it is seen to be depending primarily on its own agendas and sectoral objectives.

2. ICOD'S IMAGE

Issues Discussed

- Are we devoting enough energy to telling people about ICOD? Would more information in Canada or abroad assist us? What are the promotional tools in this regard?

- What image do we want to project in Canada, with other donor agencies, target countries, consultants and other clients?

Points Arising from Discussion

2.1 ICOD needs to make further efforts to develop a strong Canadian Constituency.

2.2 ICOD needs to focus on building a greater presence locally in Halifax and Atlantic Canada generally.

2.3 The promotion of ICOD's image domestically and internationally could be addressed, among others, through the following initiatives:

- i) publication of ICOD's activities, achievements and capabilities in technical and international journals. This would be targeted at both the development community and the general public;
- ii) utilizing former ICOD consultants to promote ICOD in the Canadian media;
- iii) having ICOD's program officers appear more regularly in public fora;
- iv) developing special interest stories for regional and national magazines (i.e. Atlantic Advocate and McLeans);
- v) utilizing among others the new World Map, Project List and Corporate Brochure as promotional tools.
- vi) highlighting Canadian participation and presence in ICOD's development programs (e.g. private sector, universities, etc.)

2.4 Promotion of ICOD domestically could be a two edged sword and must be handled carefully.

2.5 ICOD must continue to enjoy a good reputation internationally as a flexible, responsive, and unique development agency.

2.6 ICOD is in a transition from a small to a medium size donor agency. During this process and as the Centre establishes financial and administrative procedures, it will appear to clients as more bureaucratic. This to some extent is unavoidable.

2.7 ICOD needs to maintain a "human face" to employees, consultants, recipients, and public at large. Protecting ICOD's image as a quick and responsive agency is the responsibility of all staff. However, there are several improvements that could be made which would facilitate this. Suggestions included: improved work instruments in french, more simplified legal documents, greater flexibility and improved administrative procedures for consultants, a more client oriented rather than process oriented approach, executive presence at high level meetings in the region, more careful advance planning and more realistic deadlines.

2.8 In some quarters, ICOD is perceived primarily as a fisheries development agency. Therefore, there is a need to be pro-active in promoting the multi-sector ocean development approach of ICOD in the regions.

3. GEOGRAPHICAL CONCENTRATION

Issues Discussed

- Is the present geographical scope too broad/too narrow?
- Should we reconsider the rationale for the existing focus? If so, what should be the criteria?
- Should we consider expanding our focus in cases where we could be contracted by other agencies?
- Is the current geographical division split too lopsided? If so, how should we change it?

Points arising from discussion

3.1 ICOD's present focus is appropriate for its mandate and budget. If the budget level increases, the Centre should look at expanding within the current geographic focus in the first instance. Future consideration would be expansion of beneficial links from the target regions into regions such as South America and South East Asia.

3.2 With respect to the Caribbean, it was suggested that ICOD consider potential expansion into Honduras, Guatemala, Panama and Suriname. Haiti is not a prime candidate for consideration pending clarification of the political situation. Additionally, Haiti is not a participant in any regional organisation. Thus, for the time being it was suggested that Haiti not be considered as a target country.

3.3 Consideration should be given to the selection of Equatorial Guinea as one of ICOD's target countries.

3.4 If ICOD is approached by another agency to execute a project in areas outside its present geographical focus, ICOD should ensure adherence to its own principles and not be subsumed in the agendas of contracting agencies.

3.5 Any such expansion should be considered on a case-by-case basis with preference for projects in ICOD's present target regions, and always subject to the Centre's internal administrative capacity.

3.6 Secondary focus countries can serve a useful purpose by enabling the development of regional programs, needed for ocean sector management. Rather than dividing countries on a language basis (francophone vs. anglophone) to achieve a balance in the disposition of development assistance funds, it would be preferable to adopt a regional approach to institution building. In Africa for instance, to be fully effective, certain regional initiatives such as the fight against ocean pollution and stock management should include contiguous countries of the region, such as Gambia, Sierra Leone, Ghana together with Sénégal, Ivory Coast, Togo and Benin. For these types of initiatives, anglophone countries should also be eligible for ICOD's assistance.

3.7 The "Secondary Focus Countries" category may eventually disappear as scholarship activities become more tactical and directly linked to projects.

3.8 It was emphasized that territories/dependencies of industrially developed countries should not be eligible for ICOD's assistance.

3.9 There is, presently, an imbalance in terms of program delivery between the two geographical divisions of ICOD. This is due primarily, to differences in the characteristics of the target regions. The long term goal of achieving a balance in ocean development disbursements between ICOD's target regions was recognized, however, this can only be achieved gradually and not at the cost of reducing the quality of programming.

3.10 ICOD should be cognisant of possible adverse implications of reduced program development activity in the SPCB Division arising from budgetary restraints while trying to achieve parity with the WAIO Division.

4. THEME FOCUS

Issues Discussed

- Should ICOD aim for the same mix or balance of themes in all geographical areas?
- Does concentration on the seven themes unduly limit ICOD's flexibility? Should we expand to others?
- Is it useful to develop projects in each of the seven themes in each region? or should programming be guided by the priority needs of target countries and regions as well as current programming?

Points arising from discussion

4.1 The present thematic breakdowns are comprehensive and useful in providing an analytical description of ICOD's activities in ocean development, in all regions. They are consistent with ODA objectives.

4.2 Due to inter-regional differences, it would be unrealistic to expect a balance in all themes in each of ICOD's regions. For example, all the themes are not applicable or suitable at present for programming purposes in the West Africa and Indian Ocean regions.

4.3 While the themes are useful for reporting past activities, care must be taken not to force the themes on recipients for the purpose of ICOD program planning where other recipient priorities may exist.

4.4 Projections of disbursements by theme in the corporate planning process were considered indicative only, and less precise as projected into future planning years.

5. TRAINING FOCUS

Issues Discussed

- Do we have clear objectives? Are they valid/understood/practical?
- Should we be more flexible on funding students from ICOD target countries to attend conferences or training courses sponsored by other Agencies?
- What should be the critical considerations for ICOD in where training for students should take place?
- Should we maintain the "secondary focus" category for funding scholarships?
- Do we need a HRD policy at ICOD?
- What should be ICOD's approach in developing Twinning Linkages?
- What are the merits and demerits of contracting out administration responsibility for scholarships management?
- How should the alumni database be managed?

Points arising from discussion

5.1 IRCAD needs to develop a human resource development planning framework and training policy document identifying the kind of

HRD programs it would undertake, the institutions it would support, geographical areas of concentration and relationship to program themes.

5.2 This policy document should deal with training under two categories:

- Strategic: development of broad training programs in Canada and abroad which would ultimately be incorporated into the curriculum of universities in the developing world.
- Tactical: training as an adjunct to technical assistance projects in ICOD's target regions.

5.3 ICOD's "strategic" training policy should be driven primarily by regional needs assessments or based on specific requests. The following are some of the considerations in this context:

- i) the first priority is for courses or training within regional institutions in ICOD's target countries or regions;
- ii) the second priority is for courses or training in other developing regions; and
- iii) the third, for courses or training within Canada or in other developed countries.

5.4 There should be closer links between "tactical" training related to projects and strategic training, with emphasis on target countries and ICOD's program themes. Consideration should be given to each project having a training component. This should be identified sufficiently early in project formulation. Separate training projects should, as much as possible, stem from needs assessments. In the future, training programs of ICOD should be characterized by more flexibility and regional focus.

5.5 Training should be undertaken where it is most appropriate. Before deciding on the locus of training, it is essential to examine the capabilities of institutions in their respective locations in the region and Canada.

5.6 Training in regions will assist in strengthening regional institution's infrastructure and profile. It could also provide the opportunity for the training of individuals who normally would not be able to participate in out-of-region courses.

5.7 It is not advisable to develop target numbers for training purposes between Canada and regional institutions. Decisions on these matters should be based on needs assessments and institutional capabilities in Canada and regions. IRCAD needs to work with the geographical divisions in order to bring this

about.

5.8 Twinning of institutions can assist in shifting the focus of training to developing regions but should not be forced on regional institutions prematurely. IRCAD was tasked to work with the geographical divisions and bring forward appropriate policy recommendations in this area. IRCAD will launch a consultancy this summer to undertake a twinning framework.

5.9 It was noted that there could be potential future conflicts between regional and Canadian training institutions with respect to recruiting.

5.10 For ICOD to get value from sponsoring attendance at conferences, the following factors should be taken into account:

- i) the conference should be relevant to an ICOD theme;
- ii) it should relate to the candidate's job or participation in an ICOD project; and
- iii) the candidate should be included, if possible, as a speaker or contributor to the conference and deal with issues relevant to regional or national needs in the oceans area.

There might be instances where ICOD could consider sponsoring key individuals from a secondary focus country or associated with a regional organisation for attendance at a conference. This could yield long term results through the establishment of networks for future contacts. However, funds could best be spent in financing follow-up training activities for ICOD's alumni. Funding attendance at conferences is not a priority for ICOD.

5.11 Visits to ICOD's Head Office by ICOD scholars should be considered as part of the termination/exit interview process if this is considered to be cost effective.

5.12 Tracking ICOD alumni is an important objective. ICOD's program staff should make time available to meet with the alumni/award holders while in Canada; they should also meet past alumni when they have returned to their home countries in order to ensure continued future contacts.

5.13 The Director of Finance and Administration and the Corporate Management Advisor have the overall responsibility for the development of an alumni data base and IRCAD should work closely with them to bring about improvements/changes as needed in the alumni data base.

5.14 IRCAD should develop and bring forward draft policy guidelines and options relating to contracting out Study in Canada and Scholarship Programs.

6. OUTSIDE FUNDING AND INTER-AGENCY CO-OPERATION

Issues Discussed

- Should we devote more energy to seeking outside sources of funding? Should ICOD seek outside funding where it has the potential of competing with Canadian business?
- Do we have the in-house response capacity to pursue new funding sources?
- Should ICOD forge closer links with Canadian business and institutions to jointly seek external funding? What guidelines should be established to respond to the above to ensure no conflict of interest?

Points arising from discussion

6.1 While ICOD appears to be moving in the right direction in this area, it is essential to evaluate in house as well as other Canadian capabilities/expertise required for executing agency projects. ICOD should be cognizant of the demand such initiatives could place on its present limited human and financial resources as well as administrative capabilities.

6.2 Outside funding should be sought only if it is in accord with the mission of ICOD. Further, ICOD should not place itself in a position where it is subservient to the objectives of another agency especially where it may be in conflict with its ocean mandate/thematic thrusts.

6.3 The fundamental benefits to ICOD in seeking to execute projects on behalf of other agencies are:

- i) increased profile as a donor agency in the oceans sector; and
- ii) augmentation of ICOD funding as insurance against possible future ODA cuts.

6.4 Three possible approaches were suggested to address the issue:

- i) marketing ICOD's services to donor agencies as an evaluator or executor of projects;
- ii) developing and packaging ocean related projects for specific developing countries for submission to donor agencies, with ICOD undertaking to execute the project; and
- iii) carrying forward or marketing, as a broker, ocean related projects to donor agencies on behalf of developing

countries.

6.5 ICOD should not consider entering into formal relationships with Canadian private sector companies which are bidding for international projects from Development Banks and the UNDP as such a step could place ICOD in a conflict of interest situation and might be seen to give an unfair advantage to certain companies.

6.6 Other bilateral aid agencies (example: Japanese agencies) could be good targets for ICOD's promotional effort, in addition to the ongoing efforts aimed at multilateral agencies.

7. PROGRAMMING APPROACH

Issues Discussed

- Should ICOD be more proactive in guiding its program development in target countries?
- Should the Centre focus more effort on the private sector or local groups such as cooperatives, women's organizations, NGO's etc?
- Should we adopt better guidelines on recipient contributions, local costs, capital costs etc?
- Should ICOD take a more active role in fostering the cooperation and interaction of Canadian and developing country NGO's, universities etc?
- Should there be more emphasis on assessing the social impacts of all ICOD projects?
- How can ICOD enhance and quantify its social impact assessments on a program/project basis with respect to ICOD target groups (i.e. the poor and poor women)?
- How can ICOD assure itself that the environmental impact of proposals is properly assessed?

Points arising from discussion

7.1 A blend of proactive and responsive approaches are needed in program development. For example, because many of ICOD's target countries in West Africa are under structural adjustment schemes imposed by development Banks, their governments tend to cut support for projects at the community level, and to limit social investment generally. In some cases, ICOD must explore avenues of cooperation with the private sector, as well as local groups and Women's organisations. ICOD should be ready to expand its cooperation with new partners such as NGO's, and other donors

(UNIFEM) in order to reach target populations. Any possible linkages with the private sector should be carefully reviewed in advance and, indeed, all relationships with non-government agencies should be examined on a case by case basis recognising in the former case, that the over-riding objective is profit and not necessarily development.

7.2 The sustainability of projects after the termination of outside funding should be a key factor in project approvals. Recipient contributions and declarations of commitment by governments of target countries concerned are useful indicators. The practical difficulties of properly costing local contributions in a meaningful way were noted. There is a need for guidelines for ICOD's program staff with respect to quantification and costing of recipient contributions.

7.3 Unlike the other geographical regions of ICOD, West Africa and the Indian Ocean are lacking in regional institutional mechanisms. Further, most of ICOD's target countries in the region fall in the least developed country category and are undergoing structural adjustment at present. Many are experiencing open conflict with their neighbouring countries. Thus, the special problems and characteristics of the region call for new and innovative approaches and solutions. Therefore, program development and implementation are, relatively, more difficult than in other target countries of ICOD. As a result, there is a need to increase the number of person years in the WAIO Division.

7.4 The WAIO has opted for a program which does not necessarily have large disbursements. They question many of the type of projects that ICOD has approved and suggested "sustainability" as a major factor in project approvals and also more critical analysis at the Project Review Committee. It was suggested that this should be done at the Project Identification Stage. This should be pursued further amongst Divisions.

7.5 It was agreed that SPCB Division will develop a first draft of guidelines to be used as a planning tool to sensitize program officers during the project development phase with respect to social and environmental impacts.

8. OTHER ISSUES

Issues Discussed

- ICOD and Human Rights
- Information Kits
- Experimental Initiatives

- Project/Program Documentation
- Evaluation
- Administration

Points arising from discussion

8.1 Human Rights

8.1.1. While subscribing to Canada's position in this respect, it was noted that ICOD does not have a precise policy on this matter. In target countries where there are human rights violations, it might be necessary to pursue alternate routes for eliciting project proposals and channelling funds (e.g. NGO's) in order to reach target populations.

8.2 Information Kits on ICOD

8.2.1. An Information Kit on ICOD including "Fact Sheets" on major programs such as scholarships is needed by program officers. It was noted that a Corporate Profile Brochure was already under preparation.

8.2.2. Such an Information Kit will be a useful tool for program officers during their field visits and will also serve as instruction/reference material during ICOD's staff development and training programs.

8.3 Experimental Initiatives

8.3.1. Namibia

ICOD's approach for possible involvement in Namibia's Fisheries development should be decided only after an in house study of what Namibia needs and subsequent to a fact finding mission on the subject. The inclusion of Namibia could lead to the opening up of a completely new geographical area for ICOD. At this stage, the potential of Namibia's fisheries appears extensive, but little is known about the fishery infrastructure and human resources. A pilot project would provide opportunities for inter-agency cooperation. It was important to determine at the outset, Namibia's own aspirations and needs for fisheries development.

8.3.2. IRCAD should give consideration to experimental pilot initiatives and bring them forward in consultation with the geographic divisions. One possible initiative is the development of a manpower training needs assessment (marine sector) for Namibia.

8.4. Project/Program Documentation

8.4.1. It was recognized that there is a need to clarify the role of Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) in project development. It was noted that LFAs could not replace a narrative project summary; however, its usefulness in planning and evaluation was stressed.

8.4.2. A Project Identification Paper serves several useful purposes including:

- a) alerting PRC to initiatives;
- b) signalling corporate services regarding future workload;
- c) serving as vehicle for decision on new policy issues.

8.4.3 Project summaries should be a blend of advocacy and analysis, identifying the pros and cons. With respect to project summaries and Memorandum of Understanding (MOA's), it was agreed that a standard format, guidelines and a checklist of relevant considerations should be developed for use by program officers.

8.4.4. The project summaries (appraisal/constraints section) should refer to the relevant ODA objectives and mandate statements. Projects should not negatively impact on ODA objectives.

8.5 Evaluation

8.5.1. Evaluation should be cost-effective and consequently focused, preferably, at the program level. At the project level, there should be an "end-of-project management assessment" by program officers as opposed to a full evaluation.

8.6 Administration Issues

8.6.1. Program officers often find themselves in the position of spending a lot more time in administration related work rather than in program development and implementation. If this continues, it could adversely affect program delivery and thereby reduce the effectiveness of ICOD's developmental assistance to target countries.

8.6.2. The need for identifying career paths and professional development for ICOD's officers was noted. In this connection, it was confirmed that priority is being given to development of job descriptions and position classification. Travel policy and benefits packages will be addressed thereafter. Staff will be involved in the exercise.

8.6.3. The setting of realistic goals for staff and the maintenance of adequate communications on an intra and inter-divisional basis was essential to ensure productivity, teamwork

and the morale of employees.

8.6.4. The development of administrative systems and procedures had not proceeded in tandem with the growth and expansion of ICOD's activities. As a consequence, this area required development of appropriate systems on an urgent basis. A list of administrative issues requiring urgent attention had already been completed. An Administration Dialogue, on the same lines as the Policy Dialogue, was being planned given the intensity and frequency of the problems that are encountered by staff at all levels.

8.6.5. Board approval had already been given for the principle of secondment of a trainee from the regions to ICOD on a developmental basis. Staff were asked to bring forward their suggestions of suitable candidates. The same request was made for suggestions regarding Canadian visible minority candidates for ICOD positions.

8.6.6. The needs of staff in terms of educational leave policy, language training, medical clearance and follow-up tests after foreign travel will be considered and appropriate policies developed in accordance with federal government standards and practices.

8.6.7. Further thought will have to be given to long term service awards and merit awards for staff.

8.6.8. The need to evaluate the performance of consultants was recognized. The consultant roster which provide a list of the projects/activities completed by each consultant should serve as a basis for the review.

8.6.9. ICOD should consider steps to economize and reduce paper flow. Using both sides of paper would be a good start. The Director of Finance and Administration will be asked to review and report on the matter, starting with reducing costs on ICOD business cards.

8.6.10. ICOD will re-visit the issue of standardisation of computer software, and in particular WordPerfect 4.2 and WordPerfect 5.1. It was suggested that ICOD's Fiji office shift to WordPerfect 5.1 from Wordperfect 5.0.

8.6.11 ICOD's approach to consultant/co-operants selection should be based on a team approach comprising a Canadian and a counterpart, where appropriate. In the event that only one person was required, the priority would be to select a regional candidate first, secondly a representative from other developing countries and lastly a Canadian.

8.6.12. The need for inter-divisional meetings was stressed. This was supported by the Executive and staff were urged to strengthen inter-divisional communications, as required.

LIST OF FOLLOW-UP ISSUES

Policy Objectives

- ⑥ Develop a clear and precise statement of Policy Objectives
- ⑥ Keep target countries apprised of ICOD's program thrusts
- ⑥ Continue a blend of responsive and selective approaches to programming

ICOD's Image

- ⑥ Make further efforts to develop a strong Canadian constituency
- ⑥ Focus on building a greater presence in Halifax and Atlantic Canada generally
- ⑥ Be proactive in promoting the multi-sector ocean development approach of ICOD in the regions to correct the perception that ICOD is primarily a fisheries development agency
- ⑥ Promote ICOD domestically and internationally using initiatives suggested during Policy Dialogues (see para 2.3 on page 6)
- ⑥ Bring about the following improvements to protect ICOD's image as a quick and responsive agency: improved work instruments in French, more simplified legal documents, greater flexibility and improved administrative procedures for consultants, a more client rather than process oriented approach, more executive presence at high level meetings in the region and more careful advance planning and more realistic deadlines.

Geographic Concentrations

- ⑥ ICOD may consider potential expansion into Honduras, Guatemala and Panama at some future time.
- ⑥ Consideration should be given to Equatorial Guinea as one of ICOD's target countries.

Training Focus

- ⑥ IRCAD should develop an HRD planning framework and training policy document

- ② Consideration should be given to each project having a training component
- ② IRCAD was tasked to work with geographical divisions to bring forward policy recommendations on twinning linkages and future student training.
- ② IRCAD should develop and bring forward draft policy guidelines on contracting out Study in Canada and Scholarship program.

Outside Funding and Inter-Agency Co-operation

- ② One approach to seeking outside funding is to develop and package ocean related projects for specific developing countries for submission to donor agencies.
- ② Bilateral as well as multilateral agencies would be good targets for ICOD's promotional work.

Programming Approach

- ② Use "sustainability" as a key factor in project approval.
- ② Develop guidelines for ICOD's program staff in the quantification and costing of recipient contributions.
- ② The number of person years in WAIO needs to be increased.

Other Issues

Information Kit

- ② Develop an Information Kit on ICOD

Namibia

- ② Consider an experimental initiative in Namibia after a feasibility study.

Project/Program Documentation

- ② Clarify the role of LFA's

Evaluation

- ② At the project level, program officers should undertake an "end of project management assessment".

Administration Issues

- ② Progress should be made on job descriptions, job classifications, travel policies and benefits packages.

- Convene an Administration Dialogue on the same lines as the Policy Dialogue.
- Staff should bring forward suggestions on suitable regional candidates for secondment to ICOD: Similarly, staff should bring forward names of Canadian visible minority candidates for ICOD positions.
- Give further thought to long term service awards and merit awards for staff.
- Consider reduction of paper flow.
- Revisit the issue of standardisation of computer software.
- Program Officers may convene inter-divisional meetings for exchanging information and experience.

ICOD

11/7/90