



## Guiding Principles for Addressing Environmental Issues

Icelandic International Development Agency



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**Icelandic International Development Agency**

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# Table of Contents

<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>ABBREVIATIONS.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>1 INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2 ICEIDA’S ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS .....</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1. GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND OVERALL OBJECTIVES .....	9
2.2. PRIORITY THEMES.....	10
2.3. BILATERAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AND SECTOR WIDE APPROACH.....	12
2.4. COOPERATION WITH NGOS.....	13
<b>3 FROM GUIDING PRINCIPLES TO ACTION.....</b>	<b>13</b>
3.1. ORGANISATION AND AREAS OF FOCUS.....	13
3.2. COUNTRY ENVIRONMENTAL PROFILE AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT.....	14
3.3. ROLE OF ICEIDA PERSONNEL .....	16
<b>4 PERFORMANCE AND FOLLOW-UP .....</b>	<b>17</b>
4.1. PERFORMANCE REVIEW AND IMPACT EVALUATIONS .....	17
4.2. EXPERIENCE AND LESSONS LEARNED.....	18
<b>5 ACTION PLAN TO 2014 .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>20</b>

## Abbreviations

CEP	Country Environmental Profile
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
DAC	OECD's Development Assistance Committee
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EU	European Union
FCCC	Framework Convention on Climate Change (UN Programme)
ICEIDA	Icelandic International Development Agency
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
REDD	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (UN Programme)
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## Summary

The Icelandic International Development Agency's (ICEIDA) guiding principles for addressing environmental issues are based on two main perspectives. Firstly, ensure that all projects which the Agency carries out and is responsible for, are implemented with consideration for the environment. Secondly, ensure that efforts made to improve the living standards of poor people do not compromise opportunities and quality of the environment for future generations. Therefore, ICEIDA's guiding principles concerning the environment and natural resources are: respect, protection and sustainability.

ICEIDA's key environmental considerations are the following:

- Promote environmental protection and sustainable development by prioritising economic, social and environmental needs of people in the partner countries while simultaneously alleviating poverty.
- Strengthen awareness and knowledge about the environment, build capacity, promote cooperation of stakeholders and enhance institutional ability for integrating environmental concerns into development programmes.

ICEIDA will endeavour to integrate environmental aspects into its activities as much as possible. The underlying premises are that the Agency won't provide support without taking environmental considerations into account. Consistent with Iceland's comprehensive environmental policy, as well as the Government's focus in development cooperation, ICEIDA concentrates its environmental efforts on three thematic priority areas. These are:

- a. Sustainable use and protection of natural resources
- b. Water resources, water and sanitation
- c. Climate change

The three priority areas reflect international emphasis in development cooperation. Furthermore, they are in accordance with Iceland's key policy for development cooperation, primarily the Strategy for Iceland's International Development Cooperation 2011-2014 which was approved by Althingi in 2011, as well as ICEIDA's priority areas in recent years.

Strengthening social infrastructure such as education, training and dissemination of knowledge as well as supporting people to meet their basic needs are priorities in all ICEIDA operations. The Agency participates in various projects related to natural resources, particularly in the fields of fisheries and energy. ICEIDA's guiding principle is to ensure that the projects supported by the Agency are implemented in harmony with the environment, with a focus on sustainability.

In its operations, and according to ability, ICEIDA aims to:

- Integrate the fundamentals of sustainable development into its work and endeavour to ensure that the projects supported by the Agency are environmentally sustainable.
- Strengthen the capacity of partner countries to address environmental threats, for example caused by ecological and climate change, and promote the participation of women in environmental protection and sustainable utilisation of resources.

- Assist ICEIDA's partner countries, where possible, to adapt to changing environmental conditions while at the same time making efforts to reduce any negative impacts caused by such changes, particularly among the most vulnerable members of society who are most exposed.

Initially, particular emphasis will be placed on strengthening the knowledge of ICEIDA staff and the Agency's partners on the importance of environmental mainstreaming in development cooperation and its methods and procedures. Staff members' level of expertise to identify and address environmental issues in their work shall be increased, including the application of criteria for environmental impact assessment. Education and training play an important role, which makes cooperation with environmental agencies and universities essential. Further, it is important that ICEIDA directors and other staff espouse the environmental component through their work – by promoting it and making it operational.

In line with ICEIDA's focus on the environment, environmental concerns shall be taken into consideration in project evaluations and in cooperation with partner countries. This includes conducting, where applicable, evaluations of the Agency's performance in environmental mainstreaming. In carrying out these evaluations, international standards shall be applied and the experience of other development partners considered.

# *Guiding principles and focus*

## **1 Introduction**

Iceland's development cooperation is based on international agreements that specify focus and aid modalities. These include the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the Paris Declaration, the Accra Agenda, and the Busan Partnership Agreement on aid modalities. Together, these agreements describe the objectives of international development cooperation and the methods for achieving them. The environment and natural resources figure prominently in all these agreements.

ICEIDA's guiding principles for addressing environmental issues are based on Iceland's main priorities regarding the environment, on environmental legislation and regulations as well as international environmental agreements to which Iceland is a signatory. The principles are also consistent with Iceland's focus in development cooperation as determined by Althingi. The aim is to make environmental concerns an integral part of decisions and activities related to development cooperation. Through cooperation with the partner countries, ICEIDA endeavours to provide support that increases sustainable use of natural resources and ecological restoration, where applicable, while at the same time improving the income and living standards of the poor.

ICEIDA emphasises that its directors and staff are guided by concerns for environmental protection and environmental sustainability when conducting the Agency's work, both internally and externally. At the same time, ICEIDA makes efforts to get all partners, in Iceland and abroad as well as in the partner countries where ICEIDA works, to integrate the environment and sustainability into the development projects supported by the Agency.

## **2 ICEIDA's environmental considerations**

### **2.1. Guiding principles and overall objectives**

ICEIDA's three guiding principles for addressing environmental issues are: **Respect, protection** and **sustainability**. Respect refers to showing consideration for the environment and nature across the full spectrum of the Agency's work. Protection refers to ensuring that activities in which the Agency participates do not result in harm to the environment, and sustainability means that the Agency works according to the principle of sustainable use of the nature and natural resources, enabling future generations to utilise them.

ICEIDA's overall environmental objectives are twofold:

- Promote environmental protection and sustainable development by prioritising the economic, social and environmental needs of people in the partner countries while simultaneously reducing poverty.

- Strengthen awareness and knowledge about the environment, build capacity, promote cooperation of stakeholders and enhance institutional ability for mainstreaming the environment into development programmes.

To achieve these key goals, ICEIDA intends to:

- Integrate the principles of environmental sustainability into its activities and strive to ensure that the projects in which the Agency participates are environmentally sustainable and that good practices and professionalism are followed in managing environmental issues.
- Strengthen the capacity of target groups to address environmental threats, for example caused by changes of ecosystems and climate, reduce adverse effects, especially on groups that are the most vulnerable to such changes. Promote in particular the participation of women in environmental protection and sustainable use of natural resources.
- Support, where possible, measures to address global issues on the basis of international environmental agreements and cooperation between organisations, and enhance the understanding and knowledge of the relationship between the sustainable use of natural resources and improved living standards of people.

## 2.2. Priority themes

Environmental mainstreaming is the core of ICEIDA's efforts to shape and implement its environmental principles. With view of Iceland's comprehensive environmental policy and the Government's focus in development cooperation, ICEIDA will concentrate its environmental efforts on three main themes. These are:

- a. Sustainable use and protection of natural resources
- b. Water resources, water and sanitation
- c. Climate change

The three priority themes reflect international commitments in development cooperation. They are also consistent with Iceland's overarching development policy and ICEIDA's emphasis in previous years. The themes are essentially interconnected.

Strengthening social infrastructure such as education, training and dissemination of knowledge as well as enabling people to meet their basic needs are ICEIDA's priority, but at the same time the Agency takes into account the policy, focus and needs of its partner countries.

Poor people in developing countries are more dependent on the environment and natural resources than people living in industrialised countries. Their living conditions are to a large extent dependent on environmental factors. The poor are often vulnerable to the deterioration of natural resources, in particular water resources, environmental degradation, climate change and natural disasters. The guiding principles of ICEIDA's are, according to ability, to promote:

- Respect for the fundamental rights of local communities to access local natural resources such as water, land, forest and energy sources, and for the equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of natural resources.

- Sustainable use of natural resources where the Agency works, with focus on access, good management and well defined local ownership of natural resources.
- Integration of environmental aspects into the projects and plans in which the Agency participates.
- Active cooperation with respective authorities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and agencies to make environmental concerns an integral part of the undertakings supported by the Agency.
- Good governance with emphasis on collection and dissemination of information on the environment, environmental knowledge and democratic decisions.

Iceland's policy in the fields of energy, fisheries, climate change etc. influences, ICEIDA's selection of projects and activities in the partner countries, although these are always based on the partner country's environmental concerns and considerations for local contexts. The Agency wants to promote conservation and long-term sustainability of the environment and natural resources. If differences and contradictions arise between the environmental objectives of the partner and ICEIDA, the Agency will search for ways to resolve these and create synergies in the development cooperation.

With regard to the sustainable use and protection of natural resources, ICEIDA's activities will respect and be guided by Iceland's core values. This includes:

- Formulating international agreements on the sustainable use of natural resources.
- Sustainable utilisation of energy and living marine and freshwater resources.
- Enhance and/or maintain biological diversity.
- Measures based on the Convention to Combat Desertification.
- Local communities' right to access natural resources such as water, land, forest and energy sources. Furthermore, promote the equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of natural resources; the preservation and sustainable use of important ecosystems, and promote the ecosystem approach to natural resource management.

Water resources, water and sanitation constitute important areas in ICEIDA's work, as access to clean and safe water is a fundamental component of all life and a prerequisite for improving the living standards of the poor. In this area, ICEIDA intends to:

- Participate in locally-owned projects that improve access to water and increase water quality and hygiene.
- Support, where applicable, formulation of plans for an integrated approach to the utilisation of water resources based on principles of the ecosystem approach and sustainable development.
- Provide assistance for capacity- and competence-building of local authorities and the general public in order to enable them to plan, manage and implement locally-owned and sustainable improvements in water and sanitation.
- Endeavour to raise awareness and provide information about the importance of clean water and hygiene and its relation to health through collaborative projects as well as promote changes in hygiene practices where needed. In addition, emphasise education and dissemination of information about improved water resources management and the relationship between using water responsibly and sustainable development at a local level.

Climate change poses various threats to poor people's livelihoods. Mitigation and adaptation measures are amongst the priority areas for most donor countries' development assistance. It is clear that due to the extent of this subject and the vast funding required, an agency such as ICEIDA can only provide modest direct support. ICEIDA, according to its ability, aims, however, to cooperate with others to:

- Strengthen understanding of the importance of integrating climate change adaptation into development cooperation.
- Identify opportunities that the partner countries may have to adapt to climate change.
- Explore in what ways Iceland can assist the partner countries in reducing the negative effects on communities resulting from climate change.

In the integration of climate related issues into ICEIDA's development cooperation, and the measures ICEIDA intends to support, efforts will be made to identify how climate change can or does affect the progress and outcomes of the projects or sectors supported by the Agency. In this context, ICEIDA highlights:

- Recipient country's ownership of and responsibility for the climate related assignments undertaken shall be clear and ensured that these are in accordance with the long-term strategy and future vision of the partner country.
- Recipient country's systems shall be used to coordinate all adaptation measures.
- Potential climate change effects, risk and benefits shall be taken into account in all projects supported by the Agency
- Involve all stakeholders from the start in the integration of climate change into projects or plans.
- Engage the private sector to take action and provide as much support as possible

### **2.3. Bilateral development cooperation and Sector Wide Approach**

ICEIDA's guiding principles are to ensure that appropriate emphasis is given to the environment in all projects in which the Agency participates. In its relations with relevant authorities, ICEIDA will endeavour to promote the the priority environmental concerns deserve to have. In this context, the Agency will emphasise the following:

- Analyse the relationship between environmental factors and poverty in ICEIDA's programmes.
- Respect the partner country's environmental considerations as expressed in its policy documents and national strategies.
- Collaborate with other donors to encourage the integration of the environment and the sustainable use of natural resources into policy documents, plans and project implementation.
- Participate in the collaboration of Icelandic stakeholders who are involved in policy-making in development cooperation (Government, ministries and organisations, universities, NGOs, etc.)

Although ICEIDA usually focuses its efforts on specific priority areas or development plans, a so-called Sector Wide Approach (SWAp) has become common. The approach entails that the focus shifts from support to individual projects to collaborative efforts for strengthening a particular sector. This methodology requires broad consultation and close cooperation

between partner country's representatives, international organisations and other donors. It is expected that development plans and SWAp, will make development assistance more effective. In addition, development cooperation follows the sectoral plans of the recipient country which is in charge of implementation and financial management. The objective of SWAp is to strengthen local ownership, simplify development cooperation procedures and promote enhanced efficiency in financial management for project implementation. With regard to the environment in sector programmes, ICEIDA places emphasis on:

- Collaborating with the authorities of the recipient country and other donors to integrate environmental concerns into the cooperation.
- Supporting organisations, where applicable and when required, to introduce environmental integration into sector programmes.
- Strengthening the competence of ICEIDA staff to identify the link between different sectors and the environment and establish relevant criteria.
- Implement environment indicators in the preparation of development projects and plans and in reviews and evaluations.

## **2.4. Cooperation with NGOs**

The operational procedures for the cooperation of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and ICEIDA with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in the fields of development cooperation, humanitarian and emergency assistance, stipulate that gender equality and environmental considerations shall be taken into account in all NGO projects that receive grants. Support to projects implemented by NGOs is dependent on, among other things, that NGOs can, where applicable, demonstrate that the projects are sustainable and consistent with the overarching goal of development cooperation, namely poverty reduction (refer to the Operational Procedures for the Cooperation of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and ICEIDA with NGOs working in the fields of international development cooperation, humanitarian and emergency assistance, 2011).

## **3 From guiding principles to action**

### **3.1. Organisation and focus areas**

The Strategy for Iceland's International Development Cooperation 2011-2014 focuses on three key areas: *natural resources*, *human capital* and *peace*. These areas are all linked to environmental protection and the principles of sustainable development. Natural resources cannot be utilised responsibly without taking environmental considerations into account, development projects such as education and health will not succeed unless the close link between the environment and people's living conditions is considered and durable peace will not be established unless the environmental conditions enable people to have decent standards of living, sustainable use of natural resources and equitable sharing of the benefits from their utilisation. ICEIDA's environmental efforts are therefore consistent with the Strategy for Iceland's Development Cooperation.

Iceland's partner countries in Africa (Malawi, Mozambique and Uganda) are signatories to Africa's Environment Action Plan, NEPAD<sup>1</sup>, which was created by the African Union in 2001. The NEPAD Environment Action Plan reaffirms the need to "ensure that the continent is able

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<sup>1</sup> New Partnership for Africa's Development, NEPAD.

to confront its short-term economic growth challenges without losing sight of the long-term environmental, poverty eradication and social development imperatives (article 11)".

ICEIDA primarily participates in bilateral development cooperation. Multilateral cooperation often involves support to particular sectors and themes and ICEIDA's involvement in such collaboration is generally managed by larger organisations, although cooperation in certain areas where Iceland possesses expertise (utilisation of geothermal energy, fisheries, etc.) can be led by Iceland. ICEIDA's environmental actions/measures should adhere to clearly defined management and responsibility and follow well defined procedures. The measures have to be in accordance with the nature of the tasks associated with the environmental mainstreaming and finally be shaped by the Agency's circumstances at the time, notably its financial resources, capacity and prioritisation of activities. Initially the Agency will place emphasis on establishing formal procedures and strengthening the knowledge and competence of its staff to integrate environmental concerns into development projects. Subsequently, a plan will be prepared detailing how the environment will be integrated and prioritized into the Agency's focus areas.

ICEIDA's priority themes are education, social projects and health, including water and sanitation, as well as fisheries and energy, notably the utilisation of geothermal energy. The environment plays a pivotal role in all these areas and the integration of environmental sustainability into all of the Agency's projects is therefore essential.

The Agency emphasises maintaining a strong knowledge base on the environment and utilisation of natural resources. In addition, ICEIDA seeks to cooperate with actors which possess expertise in these areas, both in Iceland, among foreign sister agencies and in the partner countries. The Agency is responsible for ensuring that its staff members are well informed about issues that affect environmental sustainability and for strengthening their capacity so they will be able to identify the linkages.

### **3.2. Country environmental profile and environmental assessment**

Implementation of environmentally related projects in the partner country requires various analysis and assessment. General analysis involves description and identification of the main environmental issues in the partner country<sup>2</sup>. This work is usually carried out in the planning phase of the development cooperation and its purpose is, on the one hand, to prevent any potential direct or indirect damage to the environment that might result from the cooperation and, on the other hand, to identify possible opportunities for environmental improvements or benefits that may arise. Strategic plans on the most significant environmental themes and/or policy areas may be formulated on the basis of these factors<sup>3</sup>. However, it is important to keep in mind that in this context the extent of the environmental considerations has to be proportional to the scope and size of the projects supported by ICEIDA. Hence, the Agency draws on available assessments as it does not in general have the resources to conduct them on its own.

Development projects supported by ICEIDA should be screened to determine whether an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required. The purpose of this study, carried out in the preparatory phase of the project planning, is to determine whether the project requires formal EIA or not. According to such preliminary assessment, projects are usually classified into three categories (see for example World Bank guidelines):

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<sup>2</sup> *Country Environmental Profile (CEP)*

<sup>3</sup> *Country Strategic Paper (CSP)*

- a. Environmental assessment always required
- b. Unclear whether environmental assessment is required, additional data collection required to reach a decision
- c. Environmental assessment is not required

<b>Common definitions for environmental classification*</b>	
<b>Category a:</b>	The project is likely to have significant adverse impacts – social and environmental – that can be extensive, irrevocable and unprecedented.
<b>Category b:</b>	The project could have limited but adverse impacts that are limited in scope, generally site-specific and can for the most part be reversed and mitigated against.
<b>Category c:</b>	The project has little or no adverse environmental or social impacts.
* This classification is used by multilateral development banks as well as many bilateral agencies.	

Normally, environmental impact assessments should be carried out by external consultants based on terms of reference. The environmental assessment is based on data and information from a variety of sources. It would be advantageous to have available an analysis and, where applicable, an evaluation of the environmental effects of proposed policies and plans<sup>4</sup>, but ICEIDA does, however, not perform such tasks.

It is the role of relevant ICEIDA staff (Country Directors and Heads of Programme) to ensure that a pertinent environmental assessment is fully considered. A variety of methods can be applied to conduct an environmental assessment; the following table lists its main components:

Key stages	Description
<b>1. Screening and scoping</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify all factors that need to be addressed by the assessment. Key stakeholders should be involved during this stage and their opinions and views captured.</li> </ul>
<b>2. Environmental study</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describe the environmental conditions of the proposed project site prior to implementation (baseline).</li> <li>• Assess long-term environmental impact of a project and also the effects of not implementing it.</li> <li>• Study and assess the evolution of the relevant environment with view of changing preconditions and design of the project.</li> <li>• Recommendations, mitigation measures and environmental benefits of the project.</li> <li>• Proposals on implementation, management and follow up on environmental action.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Review and decision-making</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project or the plan is assessed on the basis of research and proposals.</li> <li>• Decision-making on whether to approve the project or not, with or without changes.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Articulation and dissemination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate the conclusions of the assessment and consult with all stakeholders, taking into account the considerations of the local population.</li> </ul>

**Table 1. Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)**

<sup>4</sup> E. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

When a preliminary assessment indicates that an impact assessment study is required for a project, the following should be considered:

- The purpose of the study has to be well defined to prevent repetitions during the assessment process. It is necessary to distinguish between whether the project is feasible with regard to environmental opportunities/threats (specific environmental project) or whether the project causes external environmental effects that require an EIA. In this context, detailed terms of reference are essential.
- Coherence and consistency have to be maintained when carrying out an EIA. This means, among other things, that the same factors of a theme are studied and assessed whether in the context of environmental or economic impact, for example.
- Ensure access to sufficient technical data and that the implementation of the EIA outlines different options in the project, which will determine its final design.
- EIA should be conducted prior to an assessment of the economic impact so the potential environmental effects and mitigation measures can be incorporated into it.

To ensure that the environment is successfully mainstreamed into development projects, all planning and assessment activities need to be well prepared. Similarly, the outcome of environmental intergration should be monitored by conducting evaluations to determine whether the environmental impact is in accordance with agreed plans and environmental assessments of projects or plans. This should be considered as an inherent part of general results measurements of the development cooperation supported by ICEIDA.

### **3.3. Role of ICEIDA personnel**

All ICEIDA staff has an important role to play in ensuring that the Agency's environmental considerations are implemented. Training, education and instruction are thus key factors in the Agency's efforts to improve performance in environmental affairs.

ICEIDA employees, both in Iceland and in partner countries, need to have the knowledge and competence to carry out environmental mainstreaming into projects, plans or sectors supported by the Agency. The staff has to be able to seek the relevant information, ask pertinent questions which will then be incorporated into appropriate measures. To support its staff in achieving environmental competence, the Agency will, according to ability:

- Ensure that staff members have an opportunity to participate in available training programmes for development workers, e.g. organised by the United Nations.
- Participate in designing exercises, where applicable, where the focus is on the link between the environment and specific sector programmes, e.g. in consultation with foreign sister agencies.
- Participate in or organise seminars and trainings on environmental issues in development cooperation with the participation of foreign and Icelandic experts.
- Establish relations with other donors, e.g., Nordic development agencies, to exchange information and experiences of mainstreaming the environment into the agencies' areas of focus.

The general responsibility for the implementation of ICEIDA's Guiding Principles for the Environment is in the hands of the Director General. It is vital that all ICEIDA directors and personnel espouse the environmental component through their work – by promoting it and ensuring its visibility in all aspects of the operation.

As a rule, Country Director in collaboration with the Head of Programme Preparation should be responsible for the implementation of environmental mainstreaming.

The Agency and all ICEIDA personnel shall endeavour to uphold good environmental practices and act as a role model where possible. Particularly with regard to the utilisation of land, energy consumption, water consumption and waste management.

## **4 Performance and follow-up**

As previously stated, the environment will be mainstreamed into all ICEIDA operations. Plans, working papers, terms of references, and results measurements shall be prepared in line with the Agency's objectives and the partner country's national policies. This means that environmental considerations vary from one focus area or sector to another. The same applies when the outcome of the mainstreaming is assessed. The scope of such assessment is determined by the nature of the cooperation and how it is carried out.

### **4.1. Performance review and impact evaluations**

Assessing the implementation of environmental components in projects is a part of ICEIDA's general quality assurance plan. Two different approaches are applied when carrying out such assessment. In cases where the link to the environment is minor, project performance review is usually sufficient. Specific circumstances require a formal impact evaluation. Performance review is conducted by ICEIDA staff in cooperation with the recipient country's representatives. The extent of such review is relatively limited. A performance review can be carried out during implementation of a particular project or plan (e.g., every second or third year), usually in parallel with or as part of a general review of project progress. As regards reviewing project's environmental performance, emphasis is placed on:

- Comparing main objectives on the one hand and their implementation on the other.
- Assessing environmental performance in terms of quality and scope.
- Seeking views from key participants, both in Iceland and abroad.

A formal project evaluation is preferably carried out independently of the Agency and in accordance with accepted guidelines, standards and recommendations, e.g., from OECD-DAC, by an expert body that is specialised in project evaluations. Such an evaluation is often extensive in scope and generally conducted towards or in the end of the implementation of a particular programme or component. One of the evaluation's objectives is to assess whether planned outcomes have been achieved. Of equal importance is to systematically build knowledge for both enhancing outcomes in the future as well as draw on gained experience for other areas of focus. Evaluations emphasise in particular the following:

- The evaluation addresses the environment and sustainability as a cross-cutting issue in a clear and well defined manner.
- The evaluation team possesses the required expertise in environmental issues.
- Active participation of stakeholders in the theme assessed by the evaluation
- Identify sustainability of the environment and natural resources within the project as well as resulting environmental benefits.

There are a number of other important aspects to consider which may vary from one evaluation to another.

The results of reviews and evaluations will be made accessible to the general public.

## **4.2. Experience and lessons learned**

Experience of other nations shows that action on the environment in development cooperation, as well as follow-up, are often inadequate, the reasons for this are varied. Experience reveals that the following is essential for achieving positive environmental outcomes in development cooperation:

- Good education, guidance and training for employees, in particular, among project managers.
- Clear responsibility for implementation and follow-up.
- Managers give priority to environmental issues.
- Consider the positive aspects of environmental issues (benefits) rather than the negative ones (damage).
- Design guidelines and checklists for environmental mainstreaming.
- Focus efforts on numerous smaller improvements rather than large overall solutions.

It is clear that follow-up and impact assessments constitute an important component of the implementation of the considerations prioritised by ICEIDA. A systematic follow-up of environmental issues should therefore always be a part of ICEIDA's individual project plans.

## **5 Action Plan to 2014**

The following is ICEIDA's environmental action plan that outlines the measures which the Agency aims to initiate or complete during the period of 2012-2014. These measures are consistent with *Iceland's Strategy for International Development Cooperation 2011-2014*, approved by Althingi in June 2011, and with ICEIDA's guiding principles for the environment. The objective of the plan is also to ensure consistency with ICEIDA's gender considerations and thus integrate the key cross-cutting issues into all of ICEIDA's development cooperation.

The plan aims to define the following tasks establish their timeframe, prioritisation and scope, taking into account the human resources and financial capacity of ICEIDA in the aforementioned period.

The core components of the plan are:

### **1. Education and training**

It is essential that ICEIDA staff and consultants are familiar with ICEIDA's environmental emphasis and how it affects their work and areas of focus. In 2013, the aim is to draw up a plan for education and training, which will be implemented as the Agency's financial situation and other circumstances allow.

### **2. Environmental assessment of current projects**

Environmental aspects and impacts of the projects already undertaken by the Agency should be formally identified and assessed, although without embarking on

extensive work. Such an assessment should be made an integral part of other project follow-up, e.g., mid-term reviews. It is expected that this can for the most part be accomplished before the end of 2014.

**3. Clear systems and procedures**

Establish procedures when conducting an initial assessment of the environmental effects of new collaborative projects to determine the scope of the environmental assessment and/or mitigation measures. A plan should be formulated and procedures specified for the monitoring and evaluation of how successfully ICEIDA's guiding principles for the environment have been integrated into the Agency's activities. The plan is to complete this task before the end of 2013.

**4. Sustainable energy**

The Agency will assist partner countries in developing sustainable use of energy, where applicable and in cooperation with other organisations, in connection with energy research and utilisation of energy. At the same time, ICEIDA places emphasis on mainstreaming gender equality in energy.

**5. Environmental impact of fisheries and aquaculture**

ICEIDA will, according to ability, call for support to assist authorities in the partner countries to address the environmental impact of fishing, aquaculture and other matters related to fisheries. In addition, ICEIDA wants to strengthen research in this area, including on the effects of climate change on fisheries and aquaculture. As in the fields of energy and climate change, gender equality should be mainstreamed into fisheries plans and activities.

The Icelandic International Development Agency will make concerted efforts to put the above measures into action in the next three years. However, their progress will depend on the budget allocations assigned to the Agency and its operating conditions during this period.

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