

Sustainability of Community Investment and Inclusion Fund (CIIF) projects

Purpose

At the meeting on 10 December 2007, Members considered the paper “Community Investment and Inclusion Fund: Progress Report” [CB(2)495/07-08(03)] and requested the Administration to provide -

- (a) the number of CIIF projects which could sustain on their own after the expiry of the funding period and the reasons attributed to their success; and
- (b) the number of CIIF projects which were unable to sustain and the difficulties faced by the project operators.

This note provides the requested information for Members’ reference.

Sustainability of CIIF projects

2. The CIIF Committee has always stressed the importance of achieving sustainability of the projects beyond the funding period. The Committee takes a broader view on sustainability. It does not have to be the continuation of service provision in a prescribed form. Nor does the Committee expect the projects to simply seek alternative sources of external funding to replace that of the CIIF.

3. In general, the CIIF encourages project teams to apply social capital building strategies that are more likely to achieve sustainability, in terms of social outcome, including:-

- (a) building the capacity of, and transforming, vulnerable individuals so that they may become confident contributors and project organizers;
- (b) developing mutual support networks in the community; and
- (c) creating opportunities for social and economic participation through tripartite partnerships.

4. If these strategies are effectively applied, then the social outcomes produced by the projects should be able to sustain themselves. The community networks and human capital developed through the projects can continue to flourish. Activities and services to continuously engage the participants can be integrated or mainstreamed into the agency’s ongoing operation, or be able to self-manage and/or self-finance through further partnerships with their local stakeholders.

Overview of the latest position

5. As of February 2008, the CIIF had allocated over \$160 million in support of 176 projects. CIIF funding has expired for 63 of them.

CIIF projects that are able/unable to sustain

6. The table below indicates how CIIF projects are able to sustain their social outcomes in different ways as at February 2008 -

Ways in which CIIF projects are sustained	No. of relevant CIIF projects ¹
(a) merge into the agency's mainstream services	12
(b) become self-managed and self-financed	26
(c) proceed to a second-phase development ²	32
(d) support by other funding schemes	5

7. Factors that can affect the sustainability of these projects include: how social capital strategies are applied; the quality of project staff; the way in which project participants are engaged; and the strength of social network of the implementing agencies. For instance, dedicated and committed project staff can help promote social capital through creative strategies/means; while good local network and brand image of the agencies concerned can also help mobilize local support and partnerships.

8. There are, nonetheless, four CIIF-funded projects which failed to sustain the networks established during the project period, mainly because of movements in project staff, project participants not fully prepared for self-management, and the lack of meaningful programmes to sustain the motivation and interest of the core participants. In one of the cases, the agency was dissolved.

¹ CIIF projects may have more than one way to sustain.

² CIIF encourages second-phase developments of projects which are able to add new elements or innovation.

9. An independent evaluation to study the effectiveness of social capital strategies adopted by the Fund was commissioned in 2004. It confirmed that CIIF funded projects had been effective in building mutual help networks and promoting mutual trust relationships amongst people from different generations and socio-economic backgrounds. CIIF is planning to conduct a second evaluation this year to critically review the impact of the CIIF projects and assess the success factors involved in the sustainability of the projects.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
March 2008