

Innovating for Development

Strategic Framework 2010–2015

Since 1970, IDRC has helped researchers and innovators in developing countries find new ways to overcome poverty, improve health, promote democracy, and protect the environment. The Centre promotes research in developing countries, carried out by the people of those countries, for the purpose of applying knowledge to the economic and social advancement of their societies.

Now in its fifth decade, IDRC continues to fund applied research and foster the creation of knowledge, engaging with researchers and innovators to improve their scientific and technical capabilities. It also links researchers, practitioners, and decision-makers in vibrant networks to confront the challenges of the 21st century.

In carrying out its mission, IDRC builds significant partnerships with Canadian and international organizations, increasing the resource base for research and focusing attention on the problems of developing countries.

A New Research Framework

In October 2009, IDRC's Board of Governors approved a Strategic Framework to guide the Centre's programming during 2010–2015. This Framework builds on the Centre's strengths and addresses today's pressing environmental, social, economic, and political challenges. It reflects continuity and change, balancing research in hard science with public policy concerns.

IDRC will focus on four broad fields of enquiry: agriculture and the environment; science, technology, and innovation; social and economic policy; health and health systems. In doing so, it will balance the priorities of Canada's international development, innovation, and science and technology agendas with the priorities of developing countries.

Agriculture and the environment

IDRC will provide leadership in supporting research that links better agricultural and environmental management to human development and economic growth.

This will be addressed through the lens of:

- Health and the environment, with an emphasis on building the field of ecohealth;
- Sustainable agriculture and food security, to ensure that the poor benefit from new technology, markets, and policies, and provide fresh options for producers and consumers;
- Adaptation to climate change by increasing resilience and identifying clean development options;
- Energy supply and use, including policy options and the promotion of sustainable energy technologies.

Science, technology, and innovation

IDRC supports research to find practical ways of strengthening the framework for developing, adapting, and using science and technology. It also aims to ensure that innovation promotes growth and reduces poverty.

Research will seek to:

- Increase the contribution of biotechnology to growth and equity;
- Strengthen the ability of developing-country granting councils to set research agendas and fund priority research;
- Better understand the role of universities in innovation systems;
- Shape economic and intellectual property rights regimes to increase the economic contribution of creative industries.

Social and economic policy

IDRC will build on past research aimed at equitable, sustainable social and economic development by focusing more closely on governance and institutions — formal and informal rules, norms, and organizations that shape prospects for economic and social progress. IDRC supports research to understand the impact of institutions and identify opportunities for strengthening or reforming them. The goal: informed public debate on key public policy issues related to poverty reduction, social equity, and human rights.

Research in this field will:

- Promote inclusive, sustainable growth through well-regulated trade, investment, and entrepreneurial activity;
- Foster more democratic, accountable governance, as well as public security, in countries emerging from conflict and authoritarian rule;
- Advance the equal inclusion of marginalized groups in the development process, particularly women and girls.

Health and health systems

Based on its experience in strengthening health systems, IDRC will focus support on research that helps preserve health and well-being.

This includes:

- Improving governance to ensure equal access to health, particularly for women;
- Enhancing health information systems to improve healthcare delivery and policies;
- Investigating alternative means of providing care in resource-poor areas;
- Better understanding emerging chronic diseases, such as mental health problems, diabetes, and substance abuse;
- Identifying risks posed by aging, urbanization, and migration, as well as the need for special programs to address such demographic shifts.

Common research threads

Woven through these four fields of enquiry is a focus on gender issues, ensuring that men and women can contribute equally to the search for solutions and benefit from advances. The Centre will also build on its vast experience in information and communication technologies by integrating research on their uses in the fields of agriculture, the environment, health, and social development and economic growth. In addition, it will focus on the information society. Research questions include, for example, ways of ensuring that all benefit from open products and services.

Because good governance and institutions, such as regulatory and legal frameworks, are crucial for development in all spheres of activity and regions,

research will seek to understand the impact of existing policy and regulatory environments. Addressing the international relations and global governance implications of research in all programs will also be an important element of the Centre's work.

During 2010–2015, IDRC will continue to make the results of the research it supports available around the globe. It will also promote partnerships and collaboration between researchers, development organizations, funders, policy-makers, and others.

IDRC will strengthen the capacity of individuals and organizations for research and analysis through hands-on and formal training, as well as a fellowships and awards program for Canadian and developing-country researchers. It will enable its research partners to better communicate research results with a view to influencing policy and practice. And it will help Canadians engage in international development and global issues.

To read IDRC's *Strategic Framework 2010–2015*:
www.idrc.ca/strategic_framework

For more information

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The **International Development Research Centre** is a Crown corporation created by the Parliament of Canada in 1970 to help developing countries use science and technology to find practical, long-term solutions to the social, economic, and environmental problems they face.

Support is directed toward developing an indigenous research capacity to sustain policies and technologies developing countries need to build healthier, more equitable, and more prosperous societies.