




International Development Research Centre

Centre de recherches pour le développement international

Investing in **solutions**

A light blue world map is positioned in the background, centered behind the text.

**Strategic
Plan**

2015-2020

Canada 



FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

It is with great pride that I share with you IDRC's strategic plan for 2015-2020 — pride not only as its chairperson, but also as a Canadian. In my six years serving on IDRC's Board, I have seen the significant results of the Centre's work around the world, in areas including health, agriculture, and security. This plan seeks to multiply that impact, positioning IDRC to bring knowledge, innovation, and solutions to even more people in developing countries. I believe this is important not only because it reflects our Canadian values, but because we are all better off when we live in a more prosperous, healthy, and secure world.

I have long appreciated IDRC's commitment to results and accountability, its respect for taxpayer dollars, and its emphasis on fostering self-reliance. This plan's strong focus on investing in solutions, building leaders, and developing new partnerships speaks loudly to this philosophy and culture. It is also a winning proposition for Canada, as the relationships we establish through our investments create opportunities long into the future.

This plan spells changes for IDRC — perhaps most significantly that the Centre will focus its programming in fewer areas, while pursuing its work in more ambitious ways, so as to reach more people. I am confident that this approach will take IDRC to its 50th anniversary, in 2020, as a strong institution of which Canadians can continue to be very proud. I look forward to the successes we will be able to celebrate.

The Honourable Monte Solberg, P.C.
Chairperson

FROM THE PRESIDENT

I am very excited about the opportunities ahead as we embark on realizing IDRC's strategic plan for 2015–2020. Building on our strengths, we are sharpening our focus on people, networks, and solutions, in order to enhance our impacts in the developing world — a developing world that is changing rapidly, and is increasingly connected to our lives at home. Working in concert with the Government of Canada, as well as with like-minded donors, and institutions adhering to good governance principles, we are well positioned to make those impacts.

More than ever, this plan aligns the Centre's ambitions with Canadian priorities, as well as the needs articulated in developing regions. This will ensure that Canada's contributions around the world are recognized, especially as we work alongside the private sector to find, test, and deliver solutions. Throughout all of this, we will continue to learn and adapt as we advance ideas and innovation through to large-scale implementation.

In developing this strategic plan, IDRC has listened to the insights and advice of a multitude of experts from the public, private, and academic sectors, both across Canada and in the regions of the world where we work. The management team and I have also drawn heavily on the grounded knowledge of IDRC staff, who have engaged enthusiastically in the development of this strategy. For these contributions I am very grateful.

Investing in solutions is not new for IDRC, but the time has come to take our work to the next level. I firmly believe that our greatest opportunities and impacts are ahead of us.

Jean Lebel
President

As IDRC approaches its 50th year in 2020, the global context in which the Centre works continues to change.

Development assistance is in transition as emerging economies play a more significant role, non-state actors are more active, and foreign, trade, and development policy are increasingly aligned. Demographics and the distribution of wealth are changing as urbanization and aging intensify, inequality continues to rise, middle-income countries become home to the majority of the poor, and an increasing share of the poor live in failed and fragile states. A shift is also underway in how development takes place, with growing expectations on the part of citizens.

Through these changes, knowledge and innovation remain key drivers for improving people's lives in the developing world.

IDRC has consistently invested in knowledge and solutions that have had lasting impacts. For example, IDRC was instrumental in the creation of the international agricultural research system, the transition to democracy in South Africa, the strengthening of economic policy in Africa, and the improvement of health outcomes in East Africa and Southeast Asia.

These investments, reflecting Canadian values and interests, have also benefitted Canada, resulting in new opportunities for Canadians and advancing foreign affairs and trade priorities.

A faint, light blue world map is visible in the background of the entire page. The map shows the continents and is centered on the Atlantic Ocean.

VISION

Knowledge, innovation,
and solutions to improve
the lives of people
in the developing world

IDRC will realize this vision by working toward
three strategic objectives across its programming:

-
- 1** Invest in knowledge and innovation for
large-scale positive change

 - 2** **Build the leaders** for today and tomorrow

 - 3** Be the **partner of choice** for greater impact

1

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Invest in knowledge and innovation for large-scale positive change

IDRC supports the generation of knowledge and innovation for positive change. The Centre will seek to enhance the well-being of larger numbers of people through these investments, accelerating development research on its way to big impact. This will contribute to improvements in areas such as food security; maternal, newborn, and child health; employment for women and youth; and science and innovation.

IDRC will:

- Generate, identify, and test scalable ideas and innovations, further supporting those with implementation potential
- Connect solutions with actors who can help advance those solutions to achieve large-scale impact
- Examine early wins in scaling up, in order to identify and share critical success factors

Within five years:

- Across its programming, IDRC will be working with public and private sector actors who can **advance ideas and innovation** through to large-scale implementation
- IDRC will have supported at least 20 initiatives that deliver **solutions at scale**
- IDRC will be recognized for **sharing its learning** in scaling up solutions, helping position Canada as a leader in innovative approaches to development

Example | Food Security: farmers reached

2008	2014	2019
5,000	100,000	300,000

scale

2

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Build the leaders for today and tomorrow

Enabling leaders in government, research, and business in the developing world strengthens societies, and builds important relationships for Canada. The Centre will increase its focus on emerging leaders, who can contribute in areas such as sustainable economic growth, and governance.

IDRC will:

- Support high-potential individuals through grants and fellowships, as well as access to networks that will help increase their influence and impact
- Strengthen think tanks and other institutions that can make transformative development contributions

Within five years:

- IDRC will have identified and supported at least **500 individuals** whose leadership potential merited special investment
- At least 50 IDRC-supported individuals and organizations will have made **significant advances** in their fields, emerging as knowledge leaders, exerting influence, and bringing solutions to large populations

Example | Think Tanks: leaders supported

2008	2014	2019
5	50	150

leaders

3

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE

Be the partner of choice for greater impact

Partnerships and networks are key to development impact. With a focus on broadening the Centre's growing partnership base and brokering new relationships, IDRC will foster collaborations that generate powerful ideas, integrate expertise from the private sector, and multiply resources devoted to development solutions.

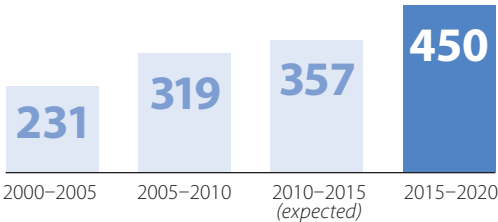
IDRC will:

- Broaden further its partnership base to include the private sector and emerging funders
- Enable new access to international opportunities and collaboration for Canadian and developing country researchers

Within five years:

- IDRC will be working with **partners from all sectors**, generating new ideas and implementation opportunities
- IDRC will have supplemented its Canadian Parliamentary appropriation with **\$450 million** in additional resources from partners

Value of donor partnerships (\$M)



partnership

AGENDA FOR ACTION

Achieving IDRC's strategic objectives will require hard work and discipline. IDRC will take action in six significant ways to ensure that the Centre is best positioned to make its mark:

Focus the Centre's programming



IDRC will focus its programming to help Canada meet its foreign affairs and development goals, and where the greatest opportunities for impact exist in relation to the Centre's strategic objectives. These areas of focus will be:

- Agriculture and environment
- Inclusive economies
- Technology and innovation

Work alongside the private sector



IDRC believes the private sector has a key role to play both in innovation and in the delivery of solutions. Across its programming, IDRC will build relationships that bring new and traditional players together to achieve results, and pursue opportunities for solutions to be applied at scale.

Communicate strategically



IDRC will increase the visibility and recognition domestically and internationally of Canada's development contributions, informing Canadians about the significant outcomes of the Centre's investments. This will also help position the Centre as a partner of choice.

Leverage the Centre's international presence



IDRC's global staff, who work closely with Canada's missions abroad, will continue to contribute substantially to the relevance and effectiveness of the Centre's programming. This will particularly be the case when connecting solutions with local actors, identifying and supporting emerging leaders, and fostering multi-sectoral partnerships.

Be smart with resources



IDRC will continue to plan responsibly and find efficiencies as it focuses its programming and advances Canada's foreign affairs and development objectives. The Centre will remain prudent with resources and agile in its processes, maximizing the use of resources for delivery of impact.

Invest in staff development



As IDRC's effectiveness is closely linked to the competencies and expertise of its staff, it will invest strategically in the professional development of its employees. This will allow the Centre to mobilize the talent it needs to reach its ambitious objectives.

ACHIEVING SUCCESS

Success in carrying out this strategic plan will rely on IDRC's continued ability to learn and adapt. As the context in which the Centre works continues to change, and as experience working toward the strategic objectives is built, the Centre must remain nimble and adaptable.

IDRC will:

- Regularly discuss the implementation of the various elements of the plan with its Board of Governors, and adjust course as needed
- Share progress with Canadians about the plan's strategic objectives and the Centre's results
- Continue to evaluate the Centre's programming in a rigorous manner, learning from successes and failures
- Evaluate implementation of the plan overall, in order to inform the next strategic planning cycle

This planning, monitoring, and reporting will keep the Centre focused on the impact of its investments — and ultimately on knowledge, innovation, and solutions to improve the lives of people in the developing world.



Part of Canada's foreign affairs and development efforts, IDRC invests in knowledge, innovation, and solutions to improve lives and livelihoods in the developing world.

Bringing together the right partners around opportunities for impact, IDRC builds leaders for today and tomorrow and helps drive change for those who need it most.

IDRC was established by an Act of Canada's Parliament in 1970 to help developing countries find solutions to their challenges. A leader among the world's top funders of development research, IDRC wields considerable influence in this field, and boosts Canada's reputation as an innovative and important player on the world stage. The world's most prominent government and private donor agencies consistently seek out IDRC for collaboration, and these donor partnerships account for a significant and increasing share of the Centre's programming.

The *International Development Research Centre Act* describes the Centre's mandate: "to initiate, encourage, support, and conduct research into the problems of the developing regions of the world and into the means for applying and adapting scientific, technical, and other knowledge to the economic and social advancement of those regions."

The Centre is governed by a board of up to 14 governors, whose chairperson reports to Canada's Parliament through the Minister of International Development.

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