

# Sustainable Infrastructure Requires Sustainable Institutions - a Role for Universities

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# *Acknowledgement*

- ▶ This paper is based on the personal experience of the first author and the insights provided by the second author.
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# *Introduction*

- ▶ International Development Banks (IDBs) such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) - part of the World Bank Group are providing billions of dollars of loans for infrastructure on an annual basis. In addition, they provide technical assistance and grant aid.
- ▶ Technical assistance is usually contracted to an international consult with an associated local firm to strengthen the capability of the executing agency, usually a Government ministry responsible for delivery of the project.



# The Investment (2017)

<b>International Financial Institution</b>	<b>Grants &amp; Technical Assistance (\$US billion)</b>	<b>Loans Approved (\$US Billion)</b>
African Development Bank	-	7.66
Asian Development Bank	0.20	20.01
Asian Investment Infrastructure Bank	0.002	1.61
CAF- Development Bank for Latin America	-	1.65
European Bank for Reconstruction and Development	-	13.98
International Fund for Agricultural Development	0.06	1.24
Islamic Development Bank	0.0014	9.8
World Bank	3.17	38.89
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.43</b>	<b>94.84</b>

In addition, many developed countries provide bilateral aid. For instance, in 2016 the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) one of the world's largest donors provided \$US 5.59 billion in grant aid and \$US 1.42 billion in loans.

## *The issue*

- ▶ The processes of the banks ensure that the specifications are robust and that provided they are followed the infrastructure is fit for purpose.
- ▶ The work will be overseen by the agency's Project Management Unit (PMU) with consultant support. It is critical that there be an informed client.
- ▶ During the planning and preparation stage this is particularly critical as the consultants are working on behalf of the client agency and the agency needs to ensure that the requirements of both in many developing countries is that many of required professionals are not employed by the organization and if they are they are too busy to commit the required time to the project. the client agency and all associated laws and regulations are met.

# *Staff skills of government staff*

- ▶ To be able to effectively cooperate with the international team local project staff need to be suitably qualified and experienced. Unfortunately, many local staff lack knowledge and experience. This is compounded by the fact that their study background is often inadequate for the current needs of a developing country.
- ▶ The international consultants and contractors have the required technical skills and are keen to train the agency staff but their time in-country is limited and in the end they do the work in isolation without required immersion of the staff in the process.

## *A key role for universities (1)*

- ▶ Ensure that the tertiary education syllabus is relevant to the country's and industry's needs. This is not a call for a “dumbed-down” degree but rather that it be relevant to the development goals of the country;
- ▶ Work with stakeholders to provide on-going short courses and extension activities to enhance staff skills and competencies. International guest lecturers should be engaged as required.
- ▶ Provide ongoing mentoring and guidance to staff in the various agencies.
- ▶ It must be borne in mind that in-country training that reaches large numbers of staff is of much greater benefit than sending a select few overseas for training. You can guess what the government officials prefer!

## *A key role for universities (2)*

- ▶ Sorry that I have to say this as I only speak one language
- ▶ Encourage all students to undertake intensive courses in spoken and written English. Our connected world requires such skills.



## *Who pays?*

- ▶ This requires the universities to build on their strengths and develop strategic partnerships with government agencies and seek their support. It is highly likely that the agency has limited funding.
- ▶ The key is to seek the funds and not wait until an opportunity arises.
- ▶ Even a small allocation from a donor budget would bring significant benefits to the country. The donor may be an international development bank, a non-government organization, a foreign government or even a philanthropic organization.

*Little will happen unless  
universities are proactive and  
drive the initiative!*