

Executive Summary

Establishing strategies in development cooperation began in the 1990s, when domestic emphasis on civil monitoring and scrutiny of tax expenditure by public institutions coincided with international discussions on improving aid effectiveness due to aid fatigue. Leading donor agencies, including the World Bank and USAID, have established Country Assistance Strategies for bilateral cooperation, followed by regional development cooperation strategies(RDCS) to address cross-border development issues. KOICA first established a regional development cooperation strategy for Africa in the mid-2000s, but it was not until 2019 that it was fully extended to all the regions.

More specifically, the reasons why other donor organizations develop RDCS are to enhance development impact in the region with similar cultures, and to support foreign policy or provide regional public goods in regions with high political, economic, and diplomatic interests with their home countries. However, KOICA's RDCS consists of simply implementing Country Plans(CP) by grouping KOICA country offices regionally. This paper examines the purpose, actors, developing process, evaluation, and coordination with bilateral cooperation strategies of other organizations' RDCSs, compares them with KOICA's, and makes recommendations for improving some of KOICA's RDCSs that are due for revision.

A comparison of KOICA's RDCSs with those of the four major DAC donor agencies with two or more RDCSs, USAID of US, AFD of France, Sida of Sweden, and SDC of Switzerland, shows that KOICA's RDCSs differ significantly from those of the other donors in terms of purpose and process. First, main actor of RDCSs formulation and implementation in all four agencies is a regional office, but KOICA's RDCSs was formulated by regional department in headquarter and implemented by country offices. Second, with the exception of AFD, the RDCSs are located at the same hierarchy with bilateral cooperation strategies, mainly

addressing transboundary development issues in the region and serving to focus on issues that could not be resolved through bilateral cooperation. In addition, RDCSs were also used as a tool to group and support countries without country offices. However, at KOICA, the RDCS was ranked above the CP and was used as a guideline for project identification rather than for implementing government policies or linking to KOICA Strategic Plan. Third, all four organizations had formal guidelines for strategy formulation, and their strategies were evaluated through the annual report. KOICA, on the other hand, did not have guidelines for strategy formulation and lacked an evaluation plan for strategy implementation.

To improve the effectiveness of KOICA's RDCS, first, a common understanding of the strategy document is needed within the organization and a implementing mechanism should be established. Second, the purpose, implementing actors, and evaluation scheme of the strategy should be clarified to restore its function as a strategy. Third, guidelines for strategy formulation should be developed to ensure uniformity in formulation, implementation, and management. Fourth, similar to other agencies, if KOICA wants to use the RDCS as a strategy for providing regional public goods or collaborating with regional multilateral organizations, it should first create enabling environments in advance, such as opening regional offices.