

# Helping friends in need

**By ABDULWAHAB A AL-BADER**

DIRECTOR-GENERAL, KUWAIT FUND FOR ARAB ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



**ABDULWAHAB A AL-BADER** holds a Bachelors Degree in Economics and was appointed Director General of the Kuwait Fund in 2005 after having served as Deputy Director of the Fund since 1986. He has also served as Governor of Kuwait to the OPEC Fund (1986-Present) and as a Member of the Board of the Arabic Bank of Economic Development in Africa (1982-1994) and on the boards of many Kuwaiti companies. Over the last fifty years the Kuwait Fund has disbursed almost 800 loans in over a 100 countries in support of development worth approximately US\$ 15 billion.

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**Established at Independence, over the last half century, the KFAED has established operations in more than 100 countries around the globe, including many where there is no Kuwaiti embassy, acting with local agencies to promote development. To what extent does KFAED reflect Kuwait's foreign policy goals?**

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Kuwait Fund development operations around the globe express Kuwait's solidarity with developing countries and its support of their development objectives. Kuwait's foreign policy aims at establishing strong and friendly relationships with other countries, based on mutual understanding and respect. By supporting countries through the provision of development assistance, the Kuwait Fund contributes to people's livelihoods and well-being in the recipient countries. These efforts and their outcome, especially in countries where there is no Kuwait embassy, have over the years supported and enhanced Kuwait's foreign policy goals, and promoted friendly relations between Kuwait Fund partners in development and the State of Kuwait.

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**Has the Kuwait Fund had to reassess its priorities in the light of the global economic downturn? What problems, if any, have you encountered with repayments?**

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Over recent years, the Kuwait Fund has respected the development priorities set by recipient countries, provided their proposals meet our criteria. Nevertheless, the Fund encourages its developing country partners to accord higher priorities to projects with potential to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), especially poverty reduction. Despite the financial crisis in recent years, Kuwait has increased its development assistance by 25 per cent to assist countries in financing projects conducive to alleviating poverty, promoting food security, and creating job opportunities.

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**Each year the Kuwait Fund budgets for some 25 new projects, as well as receiving proposals from recipient countries. How do you assess and decide on the projects you eventually implement?**

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Projects supported by Kuwait Fund are considered for financing on the merits of their contribution to development in the recipient countries, and the prospects they hold for improvement in people's livelihoods and welfare. Decisions on projects to be eventually

financed by the Kuwait Fund take into account all the factors considered to be necessary for the successful implementation of projects. As long as a country's overall economic policies are not counterproductive to the successful implementation of projects, then projects are decided on their technical, financial and economic merits.

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**In recent years the KFAED has increasingly focused on projects with a clear social impact, as well as aiding economic growth. The organisation works closely with local development partners in carrying out projects. Once a project has been completed, how does the KFAED evaluate its social, as well as financial outcomes?**

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The Kuwait Fund follows up on projects during their implementation, especially through progress reports submitted to us by public entities in control of such projects and the consultants in charge of monitoring progress and reporting on it. In addition, a completion report is submitted to the Fund, and is reviewed by staff to assess and evaluate its outcome against expected results and perceived objectives. On occasions, certain projects are selected for evaluation after completion in order to draw lessons and employ best practices in the implementation of future projects.

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**Over the last two decades, organizations working in the development and aid sectors have increasingly come to recognise the need to understand the obstacles that prevent countries from realising their developmental goals, while enhancing the abilities that will allow them to achieve measurable and sustainable results. How does the KFAED incorporate capacity building, or capacity development into its projects?**

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Capacity building is essential for enhancing development, and the Kuwait Fund normally supports it as a component of the financed projects. To ensure that projects are well managed and operated, the Kuwait Fund assesses the skills and capabilities available in the country concerned. Often, certain countries lack the kind of technical skills required to manage and operate projects, in which case the Fund provides the necessary funding to finance training programmes locally and abroad. In other instances, the Fund provides financing for expatriates to help in economic planning and in providing development advisory services.