

## **An Evaluation of the Efficiency of the Corrections Department's Strategic Measures: the Need for Participation from the External Environment\***

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This research report comprises four main objectives:

- (1) To study indicative criteria for measuring the efficiency of performance of the Corrections Department;
- (2) To analyze and assess various aspects of the efficiency of implementation of the Corrections Department's strategic plans;
- (3) To analyze external and internal factors influencing the efficiency of implementation of strategic plans; and
- (4) To seek appropriate means to improve and enhance the efficiency of implementation by the Corrections Department.

The conceptual framework of this research report is based on knowledge of open systems organizational theory. It views the success of the Corrections Department at three levels comprising output, outcome, and ultimate outcome. Emphasis is placed on development of those prisoners' behavioral characteristics which will enable them to return to the society. The composition of

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the indicators is comprehensively involved with the following: (1) the prisoners' knowledge and educational background; (2) their professional knowledge; (3) ethical concerns; (4) the absence of repeated wrong-doing; (5) legitimate profession after imprisonment; (6) family recognition; and (7) social recognition.

The Corrections Department's success is dependent on the condition of various *input* factors such as the number of prisoners and annual government budget; *process* factors such as prisoner control methods and the jail culture; as well as *external environment* factors including social, political and economic conditions, participation and advocacy from units involved in the judicial process, the private sector, citizens, mass media and the society in general.

The process of this study lasted 10 months from August 22, 1997. Data collection and analysis encompassed several methods including documentary research, and arrangement of brainstorming seminars among academicians and practitioners involved in the judicial process (on December 23, 1997). Questionnaires were applied to 1,540 prisoners, and interviewing of the Corrections Department's 176 administrators and officers in both central and regional areas using systematic random sampling was conducted. Data were both quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed.

The conclusions from data collection and analysis were utilized for evaluation of various aspects of the efficiency of the Corrections Department's strategic measures. The framework used for exhibiting the evaluation score consisted of 4 levels 1-4 which have the following meaning:

- Score 4 means very good;
- Score 3 means good;
- Score 2 means fair;
- Score 1 means improvement needed.

The research output welcomed criticism from the Corrections Department's administrators and academicians as well as from representatives from the judicial process. The critical session was arranged on July 21, 1998. Suggestions and criticism obtained were utilized to improve the findings as follows:

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1. Indicative criteria of the Corrections Department's strategy comprise 3 key indicators, 16 minor indicators, and 65 sub-minor indicators which can be categorized as the following:

1.1 Key indicators for efficiency of imprisonment comprise 5 minor and 19 sub-minor indicators.

1.2 Key indicators for achievements in developing prisoners' behavioral characteristics comprise 7 minor and 32 sub-minor indicators.

1.3 Key indicators for the enhancement of administrative capability comprise 4 minor and 14 sub-minor indicators.

(See Figure 1.)

2. The analysis and evaluation of various aspects of the efficiency of implementation of the Corrections Department's strategic plans revealed that efficiency of the Department's strategic measures scored 2.27 which means fair to good. The efficiency of development of prisoners' behavioral characteristics scored 2.32; and the efficiency of enhancement of administrative capability scored 2.34. (See Figure 2.)

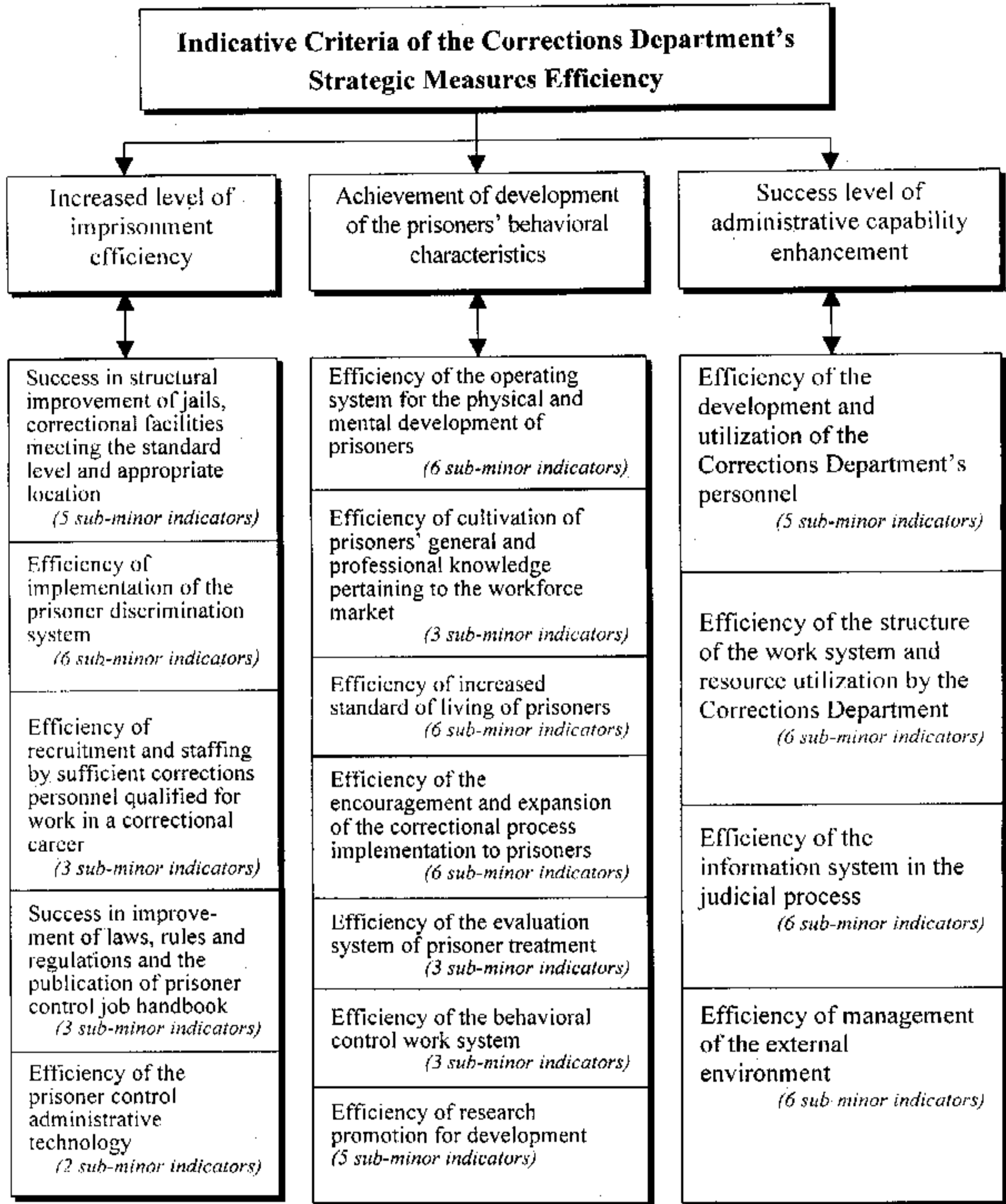
3. The key factor for establishing efficiency of the Corrections Department's strategic measures is the efficiency in managing its external environment, which may be observed from Figure 3.

The findings for sub-minor indicator evaluation showed the average value of external environment management efficiency to score 1.96, which means improvement needed to fair. Figure 3 illustrates the efficiency in coopting the private and citizen sectors to participate in the Corrections Department's implementation to score at a level of 2.5, falling within the range of fair to good. The findings revealed that campaigns should be increased in the following areas:

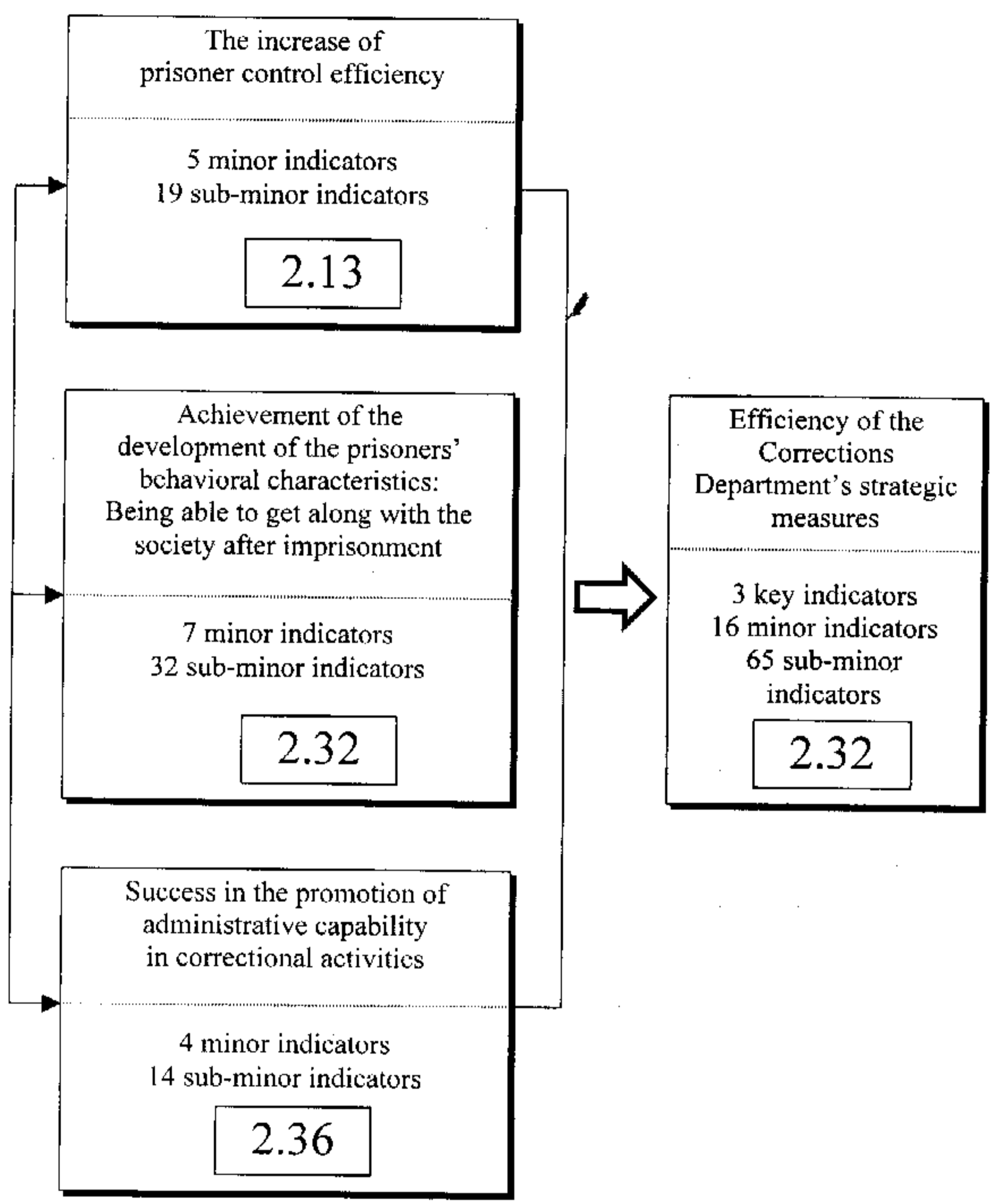
- finding work;
- recruitment to the work force after imprisonment;
- empowerment and utilization of behavioral control volunteers.

Public relations with the society to promote understanding of the Corrections Department's responsibility and roles have been continuously implemented. The result is in the range of fair to good, a score of 2.5. The findings suggest that more concern is needed in terms of:

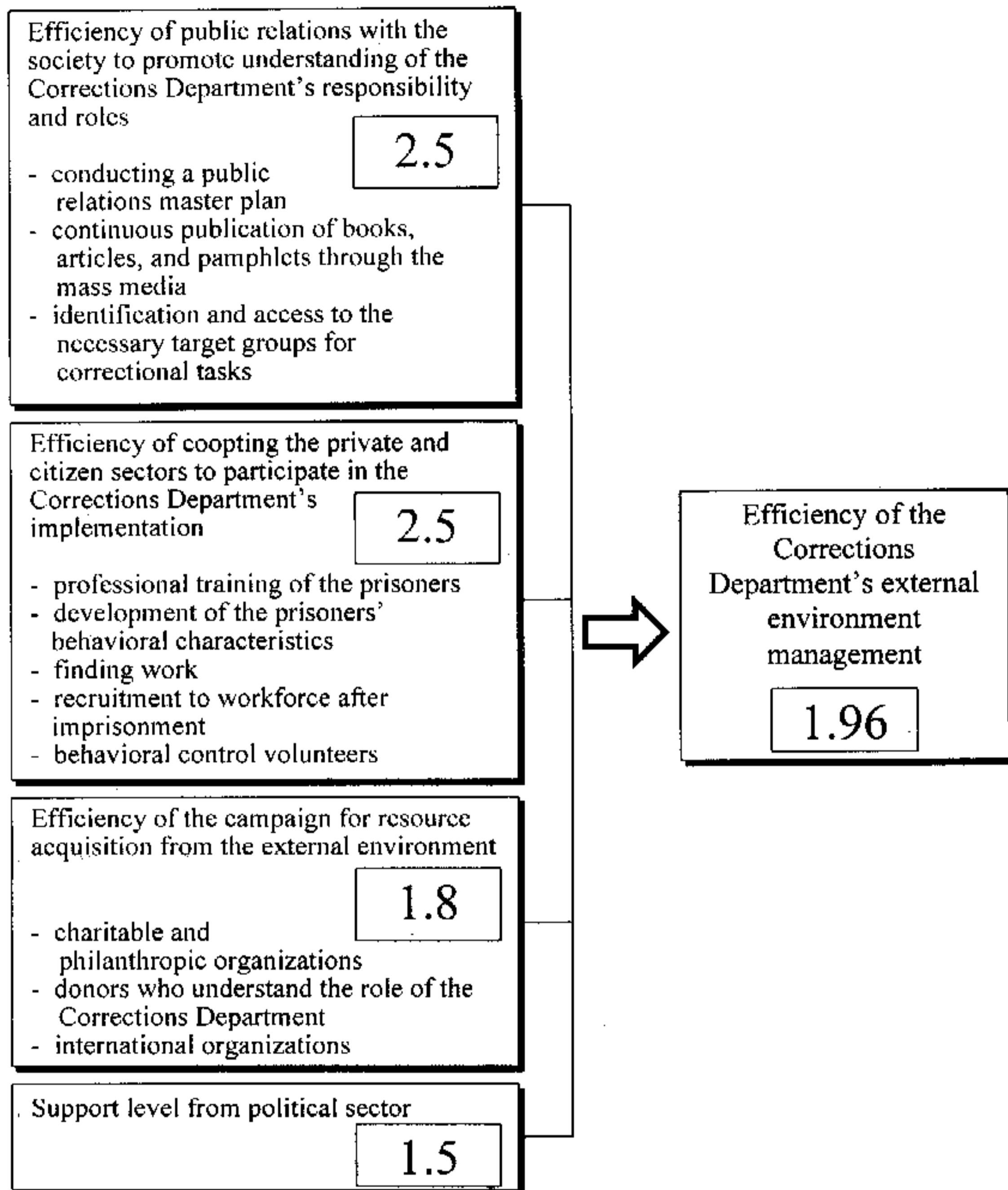
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*Figure 1 : Indicative criteria for efficiency of the Corrections Department's strategic measures comprising 3 key indicators, 16 minor indicators, and 65 sub-minor indicators*



*Figure 2: Indicative factors for the evaluation of the Corrections Department's strategic measures*



*Figure 3: Efficiency of the Corrections Department's management of the external environment*

- conducting campaign projects through continuous publication of books, articles, and pamphlets through the mass media;
- identification and access to the necessary target groups for correctional activities over main issues, such as local or private sector organizations who are willing to participate in projects for recruiting ex-prisoners into the workforce, and the cooperation of the organizations with the Department over behavior control.

Efficiency of the campaign for resource acquisition from the external environment had a score of 1.8. This means that the Corrections Department must work harder in seeking collaboration from charitable and philanthropic organizations, or from donors who understand the role of the Corrections Department, as well as from international organizations for human rights, to help develop correctional activities.

Social, political and economic conditions (evaluation score 1.5) are the main limitation, especially the current economic crisis, as well as increasing social problems. The Corrections Department needs to transform these limitations into possible opportunities.

Political support needs to be improved since its efficiency score was 1.5. The Corrections Department still lacks politicians who support the Department in Parliament. Charisma and support from the Deputy Minister of the Interior, who monitors the Corrections Department, are rather limited, discontinuous, and ineffective.

4. The key factors influencing the efficiency of implementation of the Department's strategic plans include the following: (1) the shortage of budget for strategy implementation; (2) the nation's economic downturn; (3) lack of sufficient and continuous support from the political sector; and (4) lack of an integrative system with units involved in the judicial process, and insufficient support from the external environment, each of which can be elaborated as follows:

4.1 The shortage of budget for strategy implementation is the vital obstruction leading to an inability to perform the following:

- Improve the standardized structure and the appropriate location of the jails. The construction of standardized jails in each region cannot be completely conducted. Budget is unequally allocated. The improvement of old jails is not successfully finished according to schedule. The removal of old and delapidated jails from the community fails due to lack of the budget for construction.
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- Increase imprisonment efficiency, because of problems of limitations and obstruction, in addition to the physical condition of the existing jails and the ever-increasing number of prisoners.

- Provide adequate manpower for social welfare. Sometimes there is sufficient manpower but lack of budget.

- Fully utilize administrative technology in controlling imprisonment.

- Effectively increase the prisoners' standard of living.

- Establish the Corrections Department's information center and LAN network between the Department and the jails dispersed throughout the country, which must be terminated on account of budget shortage. This impacts the re-imprisonment investigation project which is related to the improvement of the computerized prisoner bio-data system, and results in a lack of progress in the establishment of a data connecting network and in cooperation from judicial process units.

4.2 The nation's economic downturn is the key external factor that causes the sharply decreasing budget. It affects various strategic development projects, that need to be cancelled, slowed down or cannot be implemented according to schedule as indicated in Item 4.1.

4.3 The lack of sufficient and continuous support from the political sector. The Corrections Department lacks support from politicians who understand and support the Department in Parliament. Charismatic support from the Minister or Deputy Minister of the Interior, who monitor the Corrections Department, is limited, discontinuous, and ineffective.

4.4 The lack of an integrative system with units involved in the judicial process and insufficient support from the external environment has induced limitations and increased the workload of the Department. It is unable to make a campaign for needed resources for long-term development, nor to involve the private sector and the people in cooperating broadly with the implementation of the Department's strategy.

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## Suggestions

From the research findings, the development of the Corrections Department's strategic measures in the future needs to put more emphasis on seeking strategic improvement, in order to enhance success in the following aspects:

- The improvement of the structure of the standard prisons and appropriate locations.

- The increase of the prisoners' standard of living in prisons, particularly to reduce the density of prisoners per square metre, the budget received per prisoner, and the removal of prisoners to alleviate the density problem.

- The development of the prisoner evaluative system, both during imprisonment and after imprisonment.

- The increase of the efficiency of the information system in the judicial process context, which includes the establishment of an information center, the establishment of a data networking system, and cooperation among units in the judicial process to achieve a complete bio-data information system, and a system for investigation of re-imprisonment.

- The increase of efficiency of external environment management. This involves aspects of seeking for political support, a campaign for resource acquisition, the establishment of private sector and citizen cooperation, as well as the establishment of social understanding of the Corrections Department's scope, roles and importance, which will enhance long-term support of the Department.

Since the limitations on the successful implementation of the aforementioned suggestions deal with the shortage of government budget for strategic implementation, the key and urgent strategies need resource acquisition support from the external political environment. The following are proposed:

1. The Corrections Department establishes a work team, a group of people from both within and outside consultants, to participate in the negotiation process of co-opting political party leaders, secretary-generals of key political parties, members of Parliament, and target senators to become its representatives in the budget allocation process. In addition, a long-term integrative budget for development, and the extension of the long-term budget for the Department should be included in the proposal.

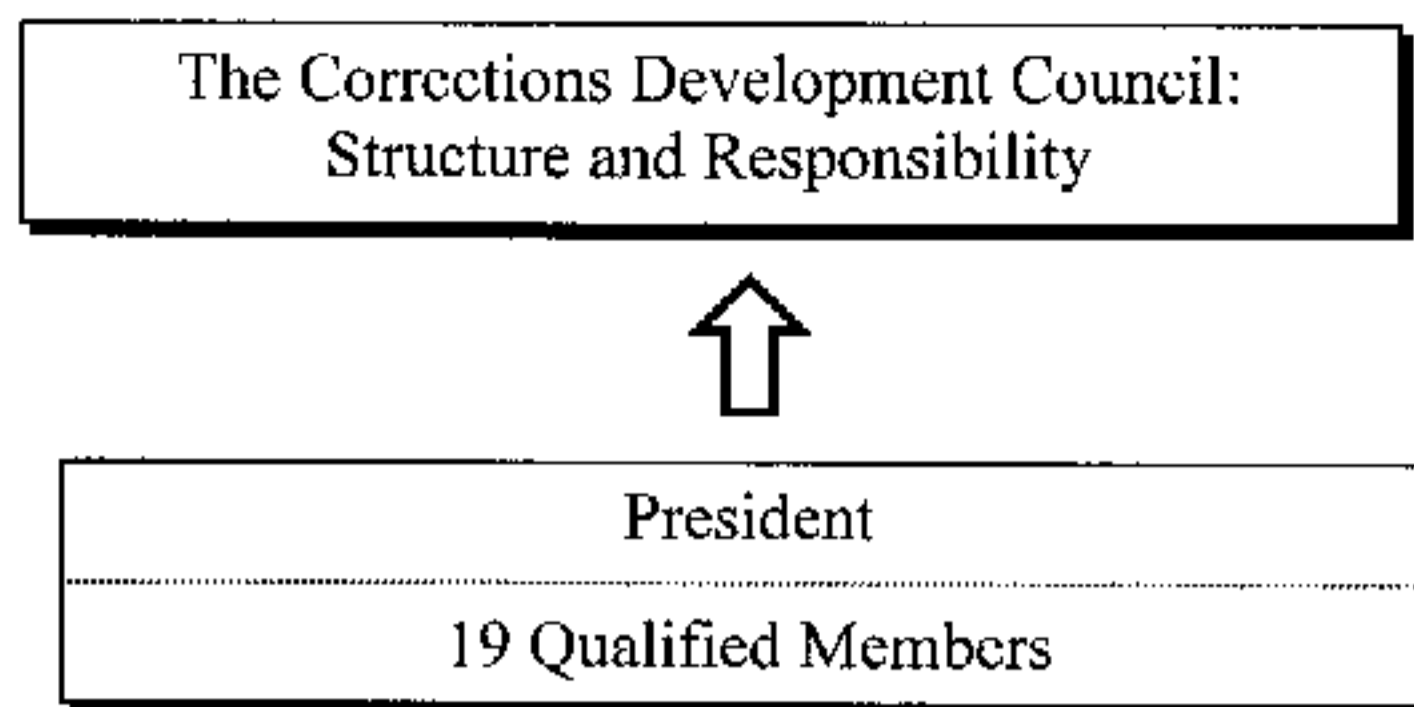
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2. The Corrections Department represents the core unit in the establishment of the so-called "Corrections Development Council" to help support prisoner development and help ex-prisoners return to the society to become good citizens and valuable human resources. The components of the Council should consist of qualified personnel from the public sector, judicial process, private sector, philanthropic institutions, citizen representatives of reputable performance, representatives from the mass media, and international organizations in both development and human rights. These organizations will assist in performing a key contribution to campaigning for necessary resources for developing correctional activities both in the short-term and long-term perspectives.

The structure and responsibility of the Corrections Development Council is illustrated in Figure 4.

However, when the Corrections Development Council is successfully established, structural design should be conducted at the provincial and local levels in order to encourage various interest groups to participate in correctional activities. Correctional activities should be efficiently expanded to welcome volunteers and citizen coworkers in the future.

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Structure of the qualified committee	Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Qualified personnel from the judicial process units (Police, Attorneys, Court of Justice, Corrections, Lawyers' Council not exceeding 6 persons;</li> <li>- Qualified personnel from the private sector and philanthropic institutions such as the Social Welfare Council, the Employer Council, the Employee Council, not exceeding 4 persons;</li> <li>- Qualified personnel from mass media representatives not exceeding 3 persons;</li> <li>- Qualified personnel from among citizens who possess reputable performance not exceeding 3 persons;</li> <li>- The 19 qualified personnel will select a President of the Corrections Development Council, with a 4-year tenure.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Suggest policy and criteria in developing correctional activities within the context of the judicial process, Thai society, and the global village.</li> <li>2. Support the development of prisoners and ex-prisoners to return to the society as good citizens and valuable human resources.</li> <li>3. Conduct a campaign to assist correctional activities both in short-term and long-term perspectives.</li> </ol>

**Figure 4: Structure and responsibility of the Corrections Development Council**

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