

Outline of the JICA Standard Indicator Reference and Typical Lessons Learned in Technical Cooperation Projects (Guidelines)

1. Aim of this Reference

JICA have organized standard indicator examples according to development theme or problem types to serve as a useful reference for clarifying cooperation effects “objectively” and “quantitatively” at the phases of project formulation and ex-ante evaluation in JICA’s technical cooperation projects. We have also organized typical lessons learned to make it possible to reflect lessons from success or failure cases of past similar projects in project plans, aiming at improving or upgrading in terms of the quality of technical cooperation projects through learning from these lessons.

2. Composition and outline of this reference

In this reference, indicators and lessons learned are classified and organized based on the development objectives chart¹ to be connected with development thematic issues. This is meant to allow recognition of which development thematic issue or problem type each project corresponds to. This reference was prepared by soliciting technical comments from thematic departments concerned, and it is expected to be used as a practical reference in setting indicators and referring to lessons learned from similar projects at the phases of project formulation and ex-ante evaluation in particular.

(1) Organization based on the development objectives chart (thematic guidelines)

By presenting standard indicator examples at the program level (mid-term objectives) and the project level (sub-targets of mid-term objectives) according to development theme types, based on the development objectives chart shown in thematic guidelines, we intend to enable a practice of “setting a definite thematic issue.” By presenting “proposed model description” of overall goals and project purposes in addition to the indicator examples, we also intend to enable clarification of a “logic model” to produce development effects through the proposed description.

(2) Standard project models

The “standard project models” that we have organized (hereinafter called “models”) mean “technical cooperation project patterns (examples)” made as a result of reference and analysis of mid-term objectives and mid-term sub-targets. By presenting “proposed model description” of overall goals and project purposes, we intend to enable clarification of logic models with a chain of output, outcome, and impact of individual projects for development².

(3) Standard indicator examples

In order to clarify cooperation effects “objectively” and “quantitatively,” we have organized standard indicator examples according to development theme types. In setting indicators at a “mid-term sub-target” level (corresponding to a project purpose level), we prepared more appropriate indicators by referring to indicators, etc. used by other donors or administrative bodies in Japan after gathering and analyzing indicators actually set in past projects. We also set indicators at a “mid-term objective” level (corresponding to a program goal level) by referring to macro-indicators in the “basic check lists” of the thematic guidelines.

¹ In order to understand the whole picture of development issue frameworks in developing countries by taking a panoramic view in a cross-sectoral manner, each development issue is broken down into “development strategic objectives,” “mid-term objectives,” and “mid-term sub-targets,” and the relation between “aims and means” is organized in a tree-shaped structure.

² We just made models from the patterns based on the past project results. It is necessary to add standard project models with future development of new cooperation approaches.

(4) Typical lessons learned

We picked out (partly processed) and presented typical lessons learned and risks whose use and reflection seem important at the phase of project formulation and in on-going management, aiming at reduction in time for access to large amounts of cases information. These lessons are drawn by consulting and analyzing thematic guidelines, research reports of various projects, reports of the mid-term review and terminal evaluation, ex-post evaluation, etc.

(5) Reference projects

We presented concrete project pictures and good cases to be referred to as reference projects for each standard project model.

(6) Others

We excluded SATREPS (the Science And Technology Research Partnership for Sustainable development) and technical cooperation for development planning from our analysis because in some points they should be treated differently from setting the logical frameworks of standard technical cooperation projects.

3. How to use and points to remember

(1) How to use

- 1) “Set a definite thematic issue” based on the “development objectives chart” and confirm the position in cooperation programs
- 2) Set the overall goals, project purposes, and objective and measurable indicators of individual projects
- 3) Consider reference to and use of typical lessons learned
- 4) Get the project picture in project purpose examples and refer to similar project cases among reference projects

(2) Points to remember

1) “Basic” indicators and “supplementary” indicators

“Basic” attached to indicator examples means that the necessity of the indicator is generally recognized irrespective of the properties of projects while data on the indicator can be gathered. Meanwhile, “supplementary” is attached to those which may be necessary depending on the properties or components of projects or those which are necessary but for which gathering data is pretty difficult. In setting indicators for each project, it is not necessary to set all basic indicators concerned, but to determine if setting them is appropriate or not, according to the properties of projects, and to utilize supplementary indicators as needed. Further, if there are any appropriate indicators other than the examples in the reference, addition should be made in a proper manner. These kinds of practices and other approaches are preferred.

2) Position as a reference

This reference is made based on the organized and presented indicator examples and lessons learned to be useful in particular consideration of indicators for technical cooperation projects and reference to lessons learned from similar projects. We request that you will use our reference while paying sufficient attention to its not showing the analysis frameworks or techniques to produce effects. In examining project plans, please set appropriate indicators for individual specific circumstances properly in accordance with the overall goals or project purposes set based on analysis on the realities and development thematic issues of individual countries, instead of automatically using indicators in this reference.

In addition, we will further improve this reference by upgrading the reference or increasing target thematic issues/sectors while receiving advice from those concerned who use this reference. Since we would like to select target thematic issues/sectors in sequence, please express your hope if you would like for any thematic issues/sectors to be covered.