

Chapter 3 Project Evaluation

Evaluation

Assess the relevance and effectiveness of cooperation and implement better projects



Evaluation team interviewing local people (Niger)

Outline of Project Evaluation

Objectives of Project Evaluation

JICA carries out project evaluation at each stage of the project cycle in order to assess the relevance and effectiveness of a project as objectively as possible and to implement better projects. The objectives of evaluation are to utilize evaluation results for subsequent project management, to feed lessons learned from evaluation back into the learning process of JICA and other organizations concerned, and to disclose evaluation results widely to ensure transparency and accountability of JICA's operation. Thus, JICA intends to gain support and understanding in implementing effective and efficient cooperation.

Types of Project Evaluation

JICA's project evaluation can be categorized based on several perspectives. The classification according to evaluation focus (what to evaluate) and stage within the project cycle (when to evaluate) is as follows.

1. Evaluation Focus

ODA evaluation can be classified into three levels—policy, program and project levels—among which JICA conducts project- and program-level evaluations.

Project-level evaluation covers individual projects and is conducted by JICA's departments and overseas offices responsible for project implementation. Using the evaluation results, JICA works to plan a better project, offer recommendations useful for revising projects at the mid-point, and make decisions on whether to complete or continue cooperation. It also works to draw out lessons for similar projects, and secure transparency and accountability.

Program-level evaluation evaluates a set of projects in a comprehensive and cross-sectional manner. It is also directed at specific cooperation schemes such as Volunteer Program and Disaster Relief Program. Meanwhile on a trial basis, JICA is evaluating JICA program, which was introduced to promote more strategic implementation of projects. Evaluation results are used for improving JICA Country Programs and thematic guidelines, modifying JICA programs, formulating new projects, and revising planning and management of ongoing projects.

2. Evaluation within Project Cycle

Project-level evaluations are classified into four types based on the perspective of when to evaluate: ex-ante, mid-term, terminal, and ex-post (Figure 3-12).

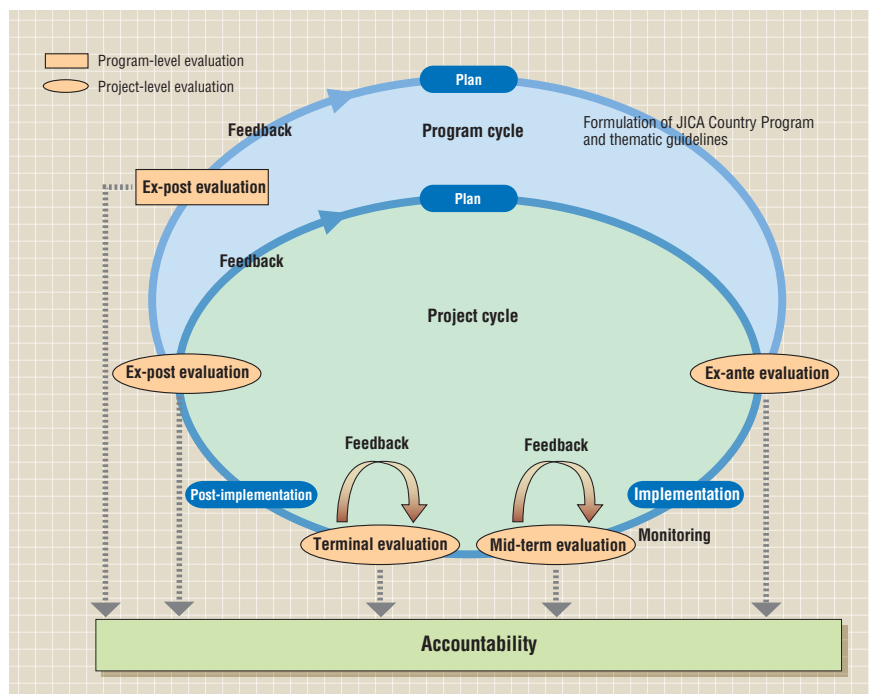
1) Ex-ante evaluation

The ex-ante evaluation is carried out prior to the implementation of a project to check the priority and necessity of implementation and clarify the project content and expected cooperation effects for the purpose of evaluating the relevance of the project comprehensively. Evaluation indicators of a project set at the ex-ante stage will be used to measure the progress and effect of cooperation in subsequent evaluations at each stage.

2) Mid-term evaluation

The mid-term evaluation is conducted at the mid-point of a project in order to evaluate the project mainly by focusing on relevance and efficiency after clarifying the achievements and implementing process. Results of the mid-term evaluation are utilized to revise the original plan or improve the operation structure.

Figure 3-12 Position of Evaluation within JICA's Project Cycle



3) Terminal evaluation

The terminal evaluation comprehensively analyzes a project from perspectives such as the achievement levels of the purposes, efficiency, and prospective sustainability of the project. Based on the result, it is comprehensively decided whether to complete the project as scheduled or whether follow-up such as extension of cooperation is necessary or not.

4) Ex-post evaluation

The ex-post evaluation is conducted a few years after completion of the project from perspectives such as impact and sustainability. Evaluation results are used as recommendations and lessons that will help plan and implement effective and efficient projects.

Methods of Project Evaluation

Project-level evaluation conducted by JICA is structured with three frameworks: (1) assessing performance; (2) making a value judgment based on the five evaluation criteria; and (3) making recommendations, drawing lessons learned, and feeding them back to the next stage.

1. Assessing Performance of a Project

The project evaluation first examines achievement with regards to what has been achieved in the project and whether the achievements are satisfactory. It then learns about and analyzes the implementation process with regards to what is happening in the process toward its achievement and how it affects the achievements. Furthermore, it examines the causal relationships between the project and the outcomes to determine whether or not what is achieved is the result of the implementation of the project.

2. Value Judgment Based on Five Evaluation Criteria

A value judgment is made based on the results of the performance assessment of the project. JICA has adopted “Five Evaluation Criteria” (relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability) for conducting an evaluation, which were proposed by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC)

of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1991 (Table 3-13).

3. Extraction of Recommendations and Lessons for Feedback

Based on the results of an evaluation study, recommendations should be proposed on specific actions for the project stakeholders, and lessons should also be formulated to provide information for future similar projects. Evaluation results are reported to those involved in the project and disclosed publicly. Feedback of evaluation results to projects is important in improving the project and enhancing its effectiveness.

Table 3-13 Perspectives of “Five Evaluation Criteria”

Relevance	“Relevance” examines, for example, integrity and necessity; whether the project purpose meets the needs of the intended beneficiaries; whether it is consistent with the partner country’s policies and Japan’s aid policies; and whether the project approach is appropriate.
Effectiveness	“Effectiveness” examines, for example, whether the project purpose has been achieved to benefit the beneficiaries and target societies.
Efficiency	“Efficiency” examines, for example, whether input resources have been utilized effectively, mainly by focusing on the relationship between the costs and outputs.
Impact	“Impact” examines, for example, long-term effects and ripple effects brought by the implementation of a project, including the achievement level of the overall goal and unintended positive and negative effects.
Sustainability	“Sustainability” examines, for example, whether the effects achieved in the project are sustained even after the completion of cooperation.

Evaluation System

JICA’s current evaluation system is composed of the Evaluation Study Committee, the Advisory Committee on Evaluation, the Planning and Coordination Department (Office of Evaluation), and the project implementation departments (headquarters and overseas offices). Major functions and activities of each group are shown in Figure 3-14.

Enhancing and Expanding the Evaluation System

JICA has made the following various efforts for enhancing and expanding evaluation in order to implement the projects more effectively and efficiently, as well as execute accountability.

1. Consistent Evaluation from Ex-ante to Ex-post Stages

In order to implement projects effectively and efficiently, JICA reviews project plans and improves management through

continuous evaluations at various stages of the project cycle. Additionally, in order to achieve better planning and operation of similar projects in the future, the lessons obtained from the evaluations are fed back. To run the evaluation system along with the cycle of a project appropriately, JICA has developed various guidelines in relation to evaluation and provided training to people involved in projects to improve their evaluation capacity.

Also, to further promote feedback of lessons obtained from evaluation results, various efforts have been made, such as sharing systematic lessons that are easier to feed back, in light of future project implementation. In fiscal 2006, JICA cross-cuttingly compared and analyzed results of terminal evaluations and those of ex-post evaluations. As a result, the following lesson was obtained; The implementation of projects that are effective for sustaining and expanding cooperation effectiveness requires government policy consistency between the needs of beneficiaries and cooperation sector, and selection of appropriate target areas and

organizations. Other lessons obtained in relation to ex-post and terminal evaluations were that it is necessary to draw specific and feasible recommendations at the time of terminal evaluation, and that it is also necessary to confirm the utilization of the recommendations at the time of ex-post evaluation. These results are included in the JICA Annual Evaluation Report 2006 to be shared among concerned parties.

2. Evaluation Covering Various Schemes

In addition to technical cooperation projects, JICA has various other cooperation schemes, including the Disaster Relief Program and the Volunteer Program. For these programs that differ from technical cooperation projects in nature and objectives, JICA has developed evaluation methods appropriate to the characteristics of each scheme and has made efforts to introduce systematic evaluations.

As part of the efforts to develop and improve evaluation methods, JICA examined the evaluation methods for community participatory approach jointly with NGOs in the midst of a focus on assistance directly reaching people. As a result, viewpoints necessary for evaluation and lessons to implement projects effectively were drawn out. In addition, in response to the strengthening of a program approach that has been promoted recently in JICA, a new evaluation method of JICA programs was developed. The method has been improved through a series of trial applications,

and in fiscal 2006 four JICA programs were evaluated. The introduction of program evaluation continues.

3. Securing Transparency and Objectivity in Evaluation

Project evaluation is usually conducted by JICA as internal evaluation. Internal evaluation has merits; for example, evaluation based on accurate understanding of actual situations is possible and the evaluation results can be fed back easily to the subsequent decision-making process. However, transparency and objectivity may not necessarily be secured when compared to external evaluation.

In response, the Advisory Committee on Evaluation has conducted secondary evaluation, paying attention to ensuring transparency and objectivity in results of JICA's internal evaluation (terminal evaluation). Secondary evaluation is performed to evaluate the quality of internal evaluation as well as confirm project performance using primary evaluation results. As a result, both quality of evaluation and project performance has certainly been improved.

Additionally, JICA discloses the results of various evaluations in a timely manner by uploading the results to its website and including them in its Annual Evaluation Reports and other publications as well as holding open seminars.

Figure 3-14 JICA's Evaluation System

