Feature

Part 1

Part 2

Part 3

Part 4

Reference Section

Chapter 3
Project Evaluation

Residents being interviewed by an evaluation team
(Sri Lanka)

Evaluation

Assess the relevance and effectiveness of cooperation and implement better projects

Outline of Project Evaluation

Objectives of Project Evaluation

JICA carries out project evaluations 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 evaluations are to utilize evaluation results for subsequent project management, to feed lessons learned from evaluations back into the learning process of JICA and other organizations, and to disclose evaluation results widely to ensure transparency and accountability of JICA's operations. Thus, JICA intends to gain support and understanding in implementing effective and efficient cooperation by utilizing its evaluation results.
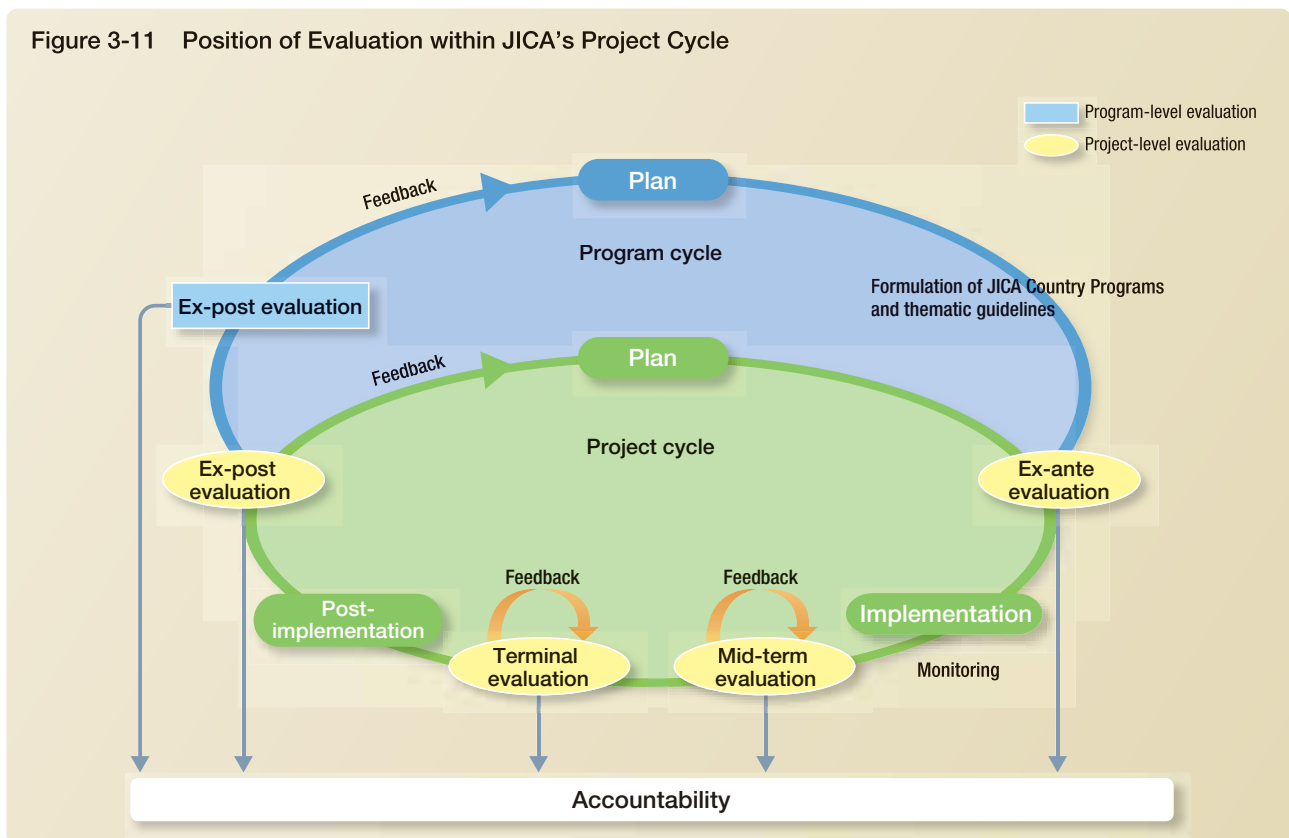
Types of Project Evaluation

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 program- and project-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

Figure 3-11   Position of Evaluation within JICA's Project Cycle

- Program-level evaluation
- Project-level evaluation

Feedback — Plan — Program cycle — Formulation of JICA Country Programs and thematic guidelines

Ex-post evaluation

Feedback — Plan — Project cycle

Ex-post evaluation — Ex-ante evaluation

Post-implementation — Feedback — Terminal evaluation — Feedback — Mid-term evaluation — Implementation — Monitoring

Accountability

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 the Volunteer Program and the Disaster Relief Program. Meanwhile, JICA has also commenced JICA program evaluations, which were 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 improving 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 3-11).

(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.

(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 a follow-up such as an extension of cooperation is necessary.

(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 project 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 assesses 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 3-12).

3. Drawing of Recommendations and Lessons and Feeding Them Back for Improvement

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 recommendations and lessons to projects is important in improving the project and enhancing its effectiveness.

Evaluation System

JICA's current evaluation system is composed of the Evaluation Study Committee, the Advisory Committee on Evaluation, the Office of Evaluation, and the project implementation departments (headquarters and overseas offices). Major functions and activities of each group are shown in Figure 3-13.

Enhancing and Expanding Project Evaluations

JICA has made the following various efforts in order to implement the projects more effectively and efficiently, as well as to 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 each stage of the project cycle, namely, ex-ante, mid-term, terminal and ex-post. 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

Figure 3-12	Perspectives of "Five Evaluation Criteria"
Relevance	"Relevance" examines 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 whether the project purpose has been achieved to benefit the beneficiaries and target societies.
Efficiency	"Efficiency" examines whether input resources have been utilized effectively, mainly by focusing on the relationship between the costs and outputs.
Impact	"Impact" examines 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 whether the effects achieved in the project are sustained even after the completion of cooperation.

to evaluation and provided training to people involved in projects to improve their evaluation capacity.

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 the community participatory approach jointly with NGOs amidst a focus on assistance that directly reaches people. 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. In fiscal 2007, four JICA programs were evaluated.

3. Securing Transparency and Objectivity in Evaluations

Project evaluation is usually conducted by JICA as an internal evaluation. Internal evaluations have merits: for example, evaluation based on an 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 evaluations.

In response, the Advisory Committee on Evaluation has conducted secondary evaluation paying attention to ensuring transparency and objectivity in the 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.

Inauguration of New JICA

New JICA, which is scheduled to be inaugurated in October 2008, will strive to establish a consistent monitoring and evaluation system for the three schemes of grant aid, technical cooperation, and ODA loan. For project-level evaluations, the most appropriate monitoring and evaluation methods at each stage of the project cycle will be introduced in accordance with each scheme's characteristics. JICA also intends to conduct program-level evaluations which directly provide feedback for improving projects/programs, further clarifying the division of roles in policy evaluations conducted by MOFA. As one of the efforts for building such an evaluation system, new JICA will establish an independent Evaluation Department, which was conventionally set up in the Planning and Coordination Department, in order to enhance such areas as accountability, objectivity in evaluations, and the feedback of evaluation results for project management.

Figure 3-13 JICA's Evaluation System

This committee is made up of external experts (academics, UN agencies, NGO members, private sector, etc.) knowledgeable about issues concerning development assistance and evaluation. The committee provides advice on evaluation systems and methods to the Evaluation Study Committee. It also reviews the results of internal evaluations to improve the objectivity of the evaluations.

The committee is headed by the JICA Vice-President in charge of the Office of Evaluation and is composed of directors general of related departments. The committee examines and discusses JICA's basic evaluation policies as well as the methods for promoting evaluation feedback.

Advisory Committee on Evaluation

Consultation
Recommendation

Evaluation Study Committee
Working Group

Board of Vice-Presidents

Study on evaluation policies and methods
Study on methods to feed back evaluation results for future projects

Office of Evaluation

Advice/Information
Advice/Information

- Improving methods of JICA evaluation
- Promoting feedback of evaluation results
- Implementing program-level evaluation
- Quality control for evaluation

Project Implementation Departments
Evaluation Chiefs

Overseas Offices
Evaluation Chiefs

Conducting evaluation, using evaluation results

Sharing/Exchanging information

Conducting evaluation, using evaluation results