

JICA Guideline for Project Evaluation

~ Practical Methods for Project Evaluation ~

September 2004

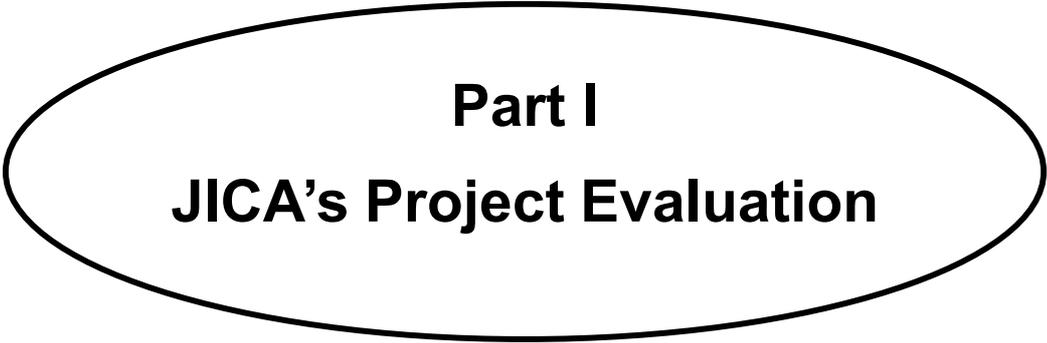
**Office of Evaluation, Planning and Coordination Department
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part I: JICA's Project Evaluation	1
Chapter 1 Outline of JICA's Project Evaluation	2
1. Objectives of JICA's Project Evaluation	3
2. Types of JICA's Project Evaluation	5
3. JICA's Evaluation System	9
4. Evaluation Feedback	11
5. Criteria for Good Evaluation	13
Chapter 2 Frameworks and Basic Steps of JICA's Project Evaluation	15
1. Evaluation as a Management Tool	16
2. Framework of Evaluation	17
3. Major Steps of JICA's Project Evaluation	23
Part II: JICA's Evaluation Methods	26
Chapter 1 Confirming Evaluation Purposes and Organizing Information on Target Project	27
1. Confirmation of Evaluation Purpose	28
2. Grasping the Whole Picture of a Target Project	30
3. Utilization of the Logical Framework	33
4. Grasping the Implementation Situation: Information on Performance and Implementation Process	46
Chapter 2 Planning Project Evaluation	48
1. Developing Evaluation Questions	51
2. Basis for Judgment	61
3. Considering Necessary Data and Information Sources	66
4. Data Collection Methods	72
5. Formulating an Evaluation Grid	82
Chapter 3 Interpretating Data and Reporting Evaluation Results	84
1. Data Interpretation	85
2. Making Recommendations and Proposing Lessons Learned	87
3. Reporting Evaluation Results	89

Part III: Management of Project Evaluations	95
Chapter 1 Issues in Managing Evaluations	96
1. The Role of JICA Project Operational Departments	97
2. Preparation of the Advertisement of a Contract	100
3. Preliminary Preparation for the Evaluation	107
4. Managing On-site Evaluations	109
5. Preparation of the Evaluation Report	113
6. Feedback of Evaluation Results	114
Chapter 2 Issues in Ex-ante and Ex-post Evaluation	115
1. Key Issues of Ex-ante Evaluation Studies	118
2. Issues of Monitoring and Mid-term Evaluation Studies	139
3. Key Issues of Terminal Evaluation Studies	152
4. Key Issues of Ex-post Evaluations	193
Frequently Asked Questions regarding JICA's Project Evaluation	198
Attached Materials	220
1. What is the Logical Framework?	221
2. What is Participatory Evaluation?	230
3. What is Performance measurement?	232
4. Bibliography	235

NOTE: This guideline is a translation of major parts of the Japanese original version; ‘*JICA Jigyo Hyoka Guideline ~ Project Hyoka no Jissenteki Shuho~*’, Office of Evaluation and Post Project Monitoring, Planning and Evaluation Department, JICA, March 2004.



Part I
JICA's Project Evaluation

Chapter 1 Outline of JICA's Project Evaluation

In order to provide an overview of JICA's Project Evaluation, this chapter explains its objectives, types, implementing system and feedback system. It also explains the "criteria for good evaluation" for improving the evaluation quality. It suggests the goal and direction of JICA's Project Evaluation.

Tips!

- There are three objectives for the use of JICA's Project Evaluation: 1) tool for the project cycle management; 2) tool for enhancing the "learning effects" for more effective project management; 3) ensuring accountability.
- Types of evaluation are mainly classified into two levels: program-level and project-level.
- Project-level evaluation is classified into four types conducted at different stages during the project cycle: ex-ante evaluation, mid-term evaluation, terminal evaluation, and ex-post evaluation. Program-level evaluation is comprehensive evaluation which mainly applies to ex-post evaluation, and has several types according to its target and evaluator.
- JICA's Evaluation system consists of 1) Evaluation Study Committee, 2) Advisory Committee on Evaluation, 3) Office of Evaluation and Post-Project Monitoring, and 4) Departments and Overseas Offices Involved in Project Implementation.
- JICA regards the function of evaluation feedback as twofold: 1) feedback for project management and operation and 2) feedback toward public. JICA makes an effort to implement strategies for effective feedback.
- Criteria for good evaluation are 1) usefulness, 2) fairness and neutrality, 3) credibility, 4) participation of partner countries and so forth. Becoming fully responsible for those criteria leads to more qualified evaluation.

1. Objectives of JICA's Project Evaluation

It is important to evaluate the outcomes that a project achieves and to feedback the evaluation results, lessons, and recommendations obtained for a more effective and efficient implementation of development assistance. The harsh economic and fiscal situations at home have generated strong calls in Japan for more effective and efficient implementation and ensuring accountability for ODA. The enhancement of evaluation has drawn attention as one of a major improvement measures. In addition, there are changes in the political landscape such as the adoption of public sector evaluation by ministries and the reorganization of agencies into Independent Administrative Institutions (IAI) that ask for improvements of the evaluation system.

JICA's evaluation is a tool for judging as objectively as possible the relevance and effectiveness of JICA's cooperation activities at four different stages during the project cycle: ex-ante, mid-term, terminal, and ex-post. The primary objective of evaluation is to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of projects by using evaluation results for better planning and implementation. JICA also intends to gain public support and understanding by using them to ensure accountability. JICA has been focusing its effort to bolster its evaluation with the following three objectives.

(1) Using Evaluation Feedback as a Means for Project Operation and Management

By using them in the decision-making process, JICA refers to evaluation results when formulating its aid strategies and JICA Country Programs. It also uses them when making decisions regarding project execution, selecting target projects, reviewing plans, and determining the continuation or termination of a project.

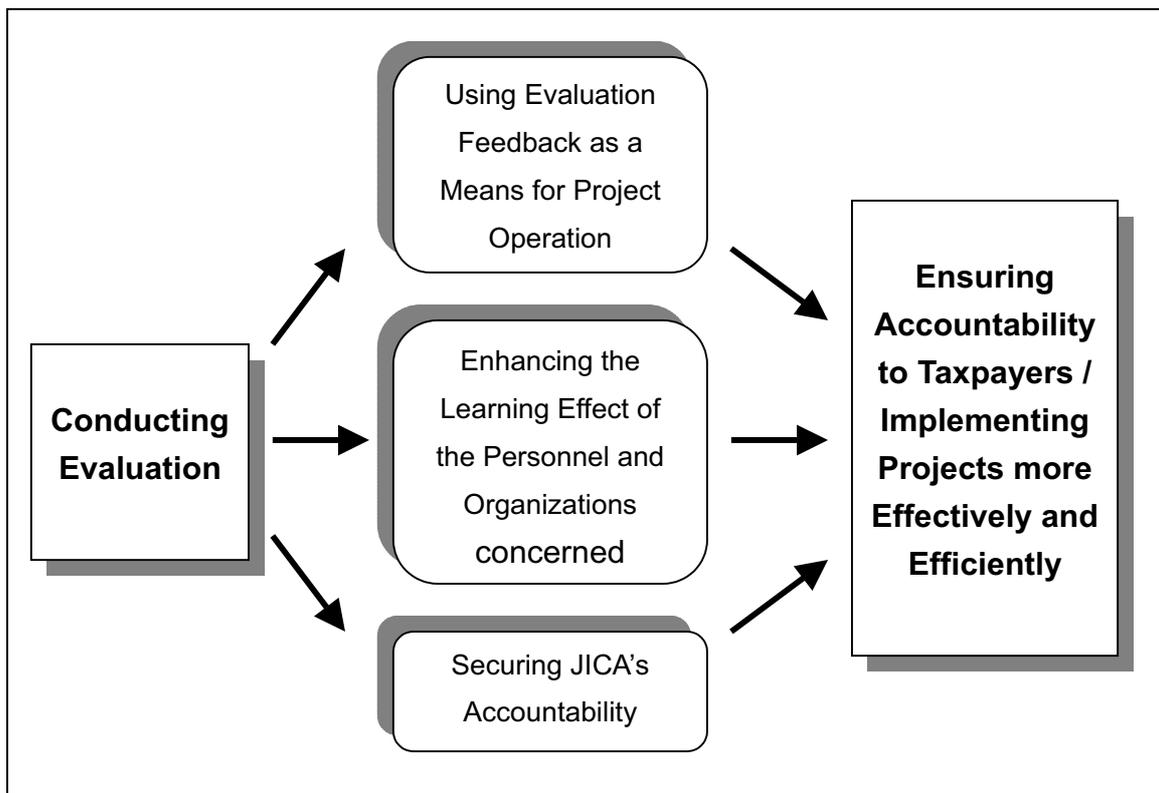
(2) Enhancing the “Learning Effects” of the Personnel and Organizations Concerned for More Effective Project Implementation

Evaluation feedback enhances how effectively the various people involved can learn and develop their skills. The term “Learning Effects” refers to how successfully the process of learning from evaluations enables JICA staff and stakeholders to better implement their projects and programs. For instance, the lessons from past projects serve as useful references for jica staff and officials of partner countries when they plan and implement similar projects. Also, the evaluation process itself contributes to expanding the knowledge and developing the capacities of the people involved, and thus serves as a “learning process”.

(3) Disclosing Information Widely to Secure JICA's Accountability

Disclosing evaluation results to the public and explaining that JICA is fulfilling its responsibility for its undertakings is indispensable for winning public support and understanding. In order to ensure accountability to taxpayers, JICA needs to ensure adequate information disclosure.

Figure 1-1-1 Utilization of JICA's Evaluation Results



2. Types of JICA's Project Evaluation

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' "Report on Improvement of ODA Evaluation System," released in March 2000, classified ODA evaluation into three levels: policy-level, program-level, and project-level as shown in Figure 1-1-2. The report called for enhancement of policy- and program-level evaluation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs conducts policy level evaluation such as Country Assistance Program and Sector-specific Initiatives, as well as program-level evaluation by sectors and schemes. JICA conducts program- and project-level evaluation. How to evaluate JICA's management cycle is illustrated in Figure 1-1-3. There are two cycles: the "small cycle" (project cycle) and the "large cycle" (program cycle).

Figure 1-1-2 ODA System and JICA Evaluation

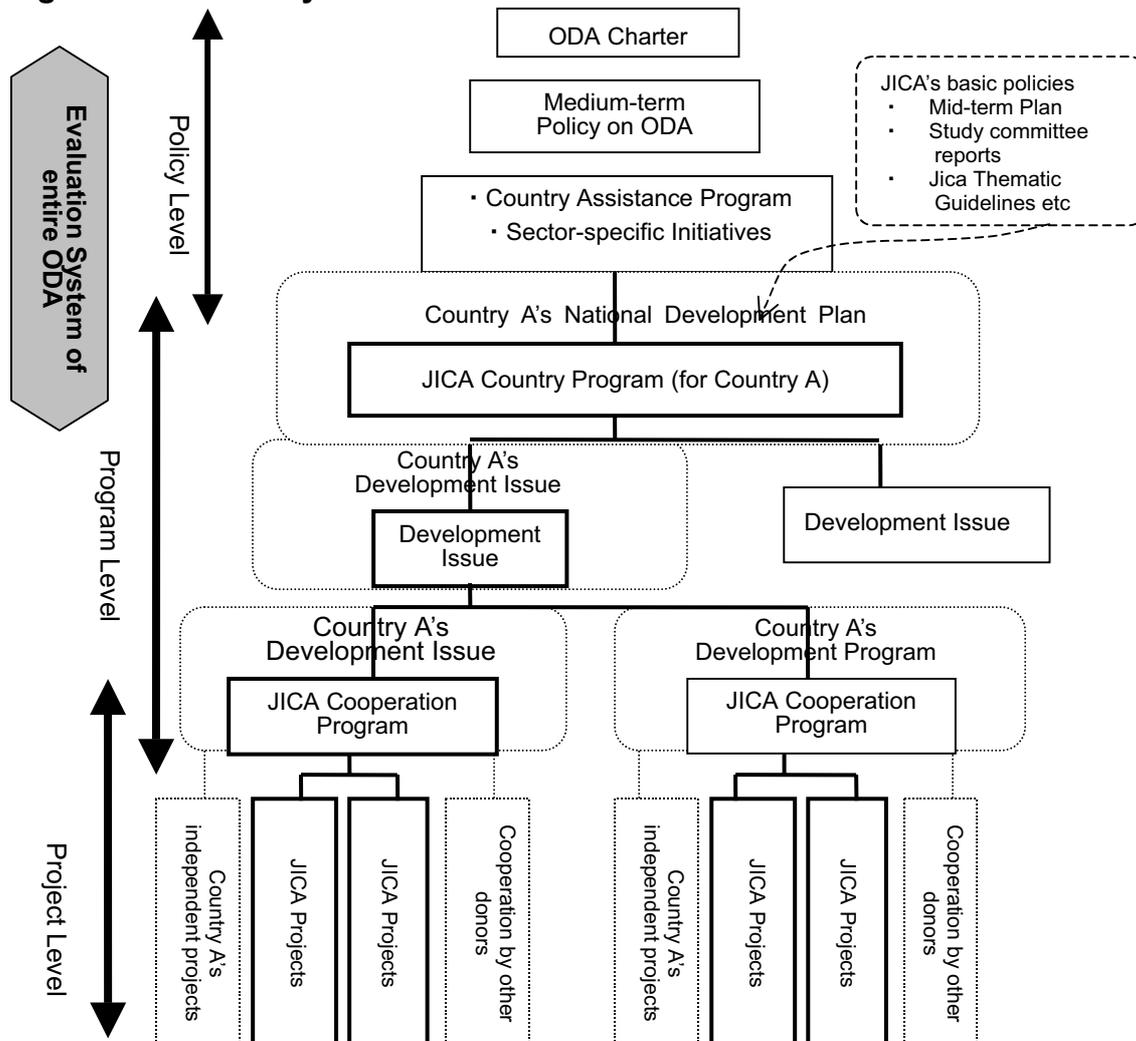
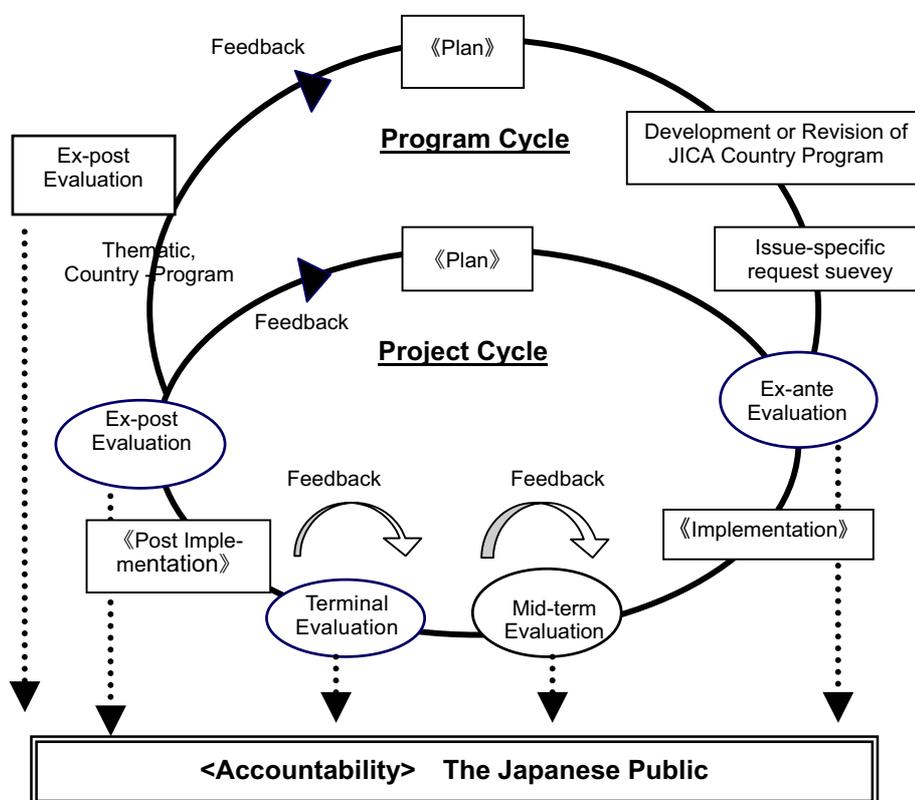


Figure 1-1-3 Evaluation Types by Stages during the Project Cycle



(1) Evaluation Types by Project/Program level

Project-level evaluation covers individual projects. This type of evaluation, conducted both by JICA’s departments responsible for project implementation and by overseas offices, is intended to be reflected in planning and reviewing individual projects, in making decisions as to the continuation of projects and the revision of project plans, in planning and executing other similar projects, and in ensuring the accountability of operations.

Program-level evaluation includes comprehensive evaluation applied to such groups of projects as those that share the same overall goal and development issues. It is also directed at a set of projects under a specific cooperation scheme. These evaluations are principally conducted by the Office of Evaluation in JICA at the ex-post stages as country-program evaluation or thematic evaluation. The evaluation results are used mainly for improving JICA’s Country Program and for finding and formulating new projects. Program-level evaluation is classified into two types as follows:

i) Country-program Evaluation

This comprehensive evaluation examines the overall effects of JICA’s cooperation on the

development of a targeted country across projects. After clarifying and analyzing the overall effects of JICA's cooperation and the difficulties it faced, this evaluation derives lessons and recommendations for the improvement of future JICA Country Program of the country in question.

ii) Thematic Evaluation

This evaluation looks at a number of projects by focusing on specific sectors, issues (environment, poverty, gender, peace-building, etc.) or cooperation schemes (Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer Program, etc.). After clarifying and analyzing the overall effects and common impeding factors of JICA's projects with regard to the issue in question, this evaluation derives lessons and recommendations for the implementation of future projects focusing on those themes. It also considers effective approaches and methods to implement projects focusing on the specific theme.

(2) Evaluation Types by Stages During the Project Cycle

Project-level evaluation is classified into four types conducted at different stages during the project cycle: ex-ante evaluation, mid-term evaluation, terminal evaluation, and ex-post evaluation.

i) Ex-ante Evaluation

Ex-ante evaluation is conducted on a project requested by a recipient country. It first involves a study of the project to determine its necessity as well as its conformity with JICA Country Program. Details of the project and its expected outputs are clarified. Then, the relevance of the project is comprehensively examined and evaluated. In ex-ante evaluation, evaluation indicators are set and they are used to measure the effect of the project in subsequent evaluation, from the mid-term evaluation to the ex-post evaluation.

ii) Mid-term Evaluation

Mid-term evaluation is conducted at the mid-point of projects. This evaluation aims at examining the achievements and process of the project, focusing on the efficiency and relevance among the Five Evaluation Criteria. Based upon its results, the original project plan may be revised or the operation structure strengthened if necessary.

iii) Terminal Evaluation

Terminal evaluation is performed upon completion of a project, focusing on its efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability. Based upon the results of the evaluation, JICA determines

whether it is appropriate to complete the project or necessary to extend follow-up cooperation.

iv) Ex-post Evaluation

Ex-post evaluation is conducted after a certain period has passed since the completion of a target project, and it is conducted with emphasis on the impact and sustainability of the project. This evaluation aims at deriving lessons and recommendations for the improvement of JICA Country Programs and for the planning and implementation of more effective and efficient projects.

(3) Evaluation Types by Evaluators

JICA's evaluation can be classified by evaluators as follows:

i) Evaluation by third parties (External Evaluation)

In order to improve the quality and objectivity of its evaluation, JICA entrusts a certain portion of its evaluation studies to external third parties that were not involved in the planning and implementation of the projects to be evaluated. For the same reason, JICA also includes those that have high expertise in the targeted fields for evaluation, such as universities, research institutions, academics, consultants, etc.

ii) Evaluation by JICA (Internal Evaluation)

In order to derive lessons and recommendations that meet the actual condition or needs of recipient countries, this evaluation is conducted mainly by JICA with the knowledge of those systems and other things that surround a project or an issue. JICA also promotes the review of such internal evaluation results by third parties (academics, journalists, NGOs, etc.) with expertise in development assistance and familiarity with JICA's undertakings to assure transparency and objectivity.

iii) Joint Evaluation

This evaluation is conducted in collaboration with organizations in the target countries or with the aid agencies of other donor countries. Joint evaluation with partner countries is effective for sharing recognition with JICA about the effects of and the issues regarding those projects. It also contributes to learning evaluation methods and improving the capacity of those countries in carrying out evaluation. This evaluation is effective in promoting the mutual learning of evaluation methods and aid coordination.

3. JICA's Evaluation System

(1) Development of JICA's Evaluation System

JICA has long been committed to improving its evaluation system. In July 1981, JICA set up the Evaluation Study Committee to deal with issues and challenges with its evaluation. The Committee has been leading JICA's effort to develop new approaches and techniques for better evaluation. In April 1988, the Office of Evaluation was set up within the Planning Department, as a unit specializing in evaluation. In April 1990, the Office was reorganized as the Evaluation and Post Project Monitoring Division, and then put under direct supervision of the President in October 1996 for greater independence of evaluations.

In January 2000, the Office of Evaluation and Post Project Monitoring was merged again with the Planning and Evaluation Department as a step to enhance the feedback of evaluation results for better project planning. In an effort to ensure objectivity and transparency in evaluation, an Advisory Committee on Evaluation composed of external experts was established in June 2002 as an advisory body for the Evaluation Study Committee. A further step to upgrade the evaluation system was taken in May 2003, when an evaluation chief was assigned to each of the departments and overseas offices directly involved in project management. The step is aimed at controlling and improving the quality of evaluation so that evaluation can meet the needs and conditions at the forefront of aid operations. The evaluation chiefs' main responsibilities include quality control for project evaluations by their departments and offices and the promotion of evaluation feedback to those concerned.

In April 2004, the Planning and Evaluation Department was reorganized into Planning and Coordination Department as a part of a reform that the Headquarters carried out after reorganizing JICA into an Independent Administrative Initiative (IAI).

(2) Current Evaluation System and Roles

JICA's current evaluation system involves four main parties: the Evaluation Study Committee, the Advisory Committee on Evaluation, the Office of Evaluation and Post Project Monitoring and the project implementation departments (departments and overseas offices responsible for project operation). The principal roles of these respective parties are as follows:

i) Evaluation Study Committee

The committee is headed by the JICA Vice President in charge of planning and evaluation and is composed of managing directors of related departments. The committee examines and discusses JICA's basic evaluation policies as well as the methods for giving evaluation

feedback. Under this committee, an “Evaluation Study Working Group” has been set up to study, deliberate and report on related issues and problems.

ii) Advisory Committee on Evaluation

This committee is made up of external experts (academics, NGO members, journalists, etc.) well informed about issues concerning development aid and evaluation. The committee advises the Evaluation Study Committee on evaluation systems and methods. It also reviews the results of internal evaluations to improve their objectivity.

iii) Office of Evaluation, Planning and Coordination Department

The Office is responsible for planning and coordinating the overall evaluation activities within JICA, including efforts to improve the evaluation methods and promote evaluation feedback. It also carries out ex-post evaluations such as country program evaluation and thematic evaluation. The Office supports and supervises evaluation activities by departments and overseas offices.

iv) Departments and Overseas Offices Involved in Project Implementation

Departments and overseas offices involved in project implementation conduct ex-ante, mid-term, terminal, and ex-post evaluations of individual projects under their responsibility. These evaluation results are used in managing the projects and identifying their effects. As mentioned above, the evaluation chiefs assigned to these departments and offices lead their efforts to improve the quality control for evaluations and evaluation feedback.

(3) Efforts of Fostering Human Resources for Evaluation

In addition to the establishment of a good evaluation system, building human resources with evaluation capacity is also essential for improving the quality of JICA's evaluations. JICA has provided training programs for its staff both at its headquarters and overseas offices, using a distance training program developed in collaboration with the World Bank Institute.

4. Evaluation Feedback

JICA regards the function of evaluation feedback as twofold: 1) feedback for project management and operation and 2) feedback for the public.

(1) Feedback for Project Management and Operation

Feedback for project management and operation involves a process of using evaluation results as well as the lessons and recommendations obtained to improve the planning and implementation of projects. This type of feedback can be further classified into feedback to improve the decision-making process and feedback for the learning process of the concerned parties.

i) Feedback to improve the decision-making process

Feedback to improve the decision-making process involves direct use of evaluation results in making decisions concerning the target project. In most cases, this process forms a part of the project management procedures by the department responsible for the project. For example, the results of the ex-ante evaluation serve as an important reference for deciding whether the project in question should be executed, while those of the mid-term evaluation are considered to decide whether to make a revision of the original project plan. Similarly, the results of the terminal evaluation are used to determine whether the project should be completed, extended or followed up with additional cooperation.

ii) Feedback for the organization's learning process

On the other hand, feedback for the organization's learning process involves the accumulation of evaluation information and lessons by the people involved in development aid operations with the aim of using them in formulating and planning similar projects and in reviewing organizational strategies.

Specifically, feedback for their learning process is provided through a variety of measures as follows: debriefing meetings with the participation of stakeholders whenever an evaluation team returns to Japan, information sharing through the evaluation network mentioned above, the creation of a database on lessons concerning the education and telecommunications areas by thematic task teams, and synthetic studies on evaluations to identify common tendencies. Starting 2004, a new column has been added to the "ex-ante evaluation document" for writing down remarks about the lessons applied from similar projects in the past. This is another step for better evaluation feedback.

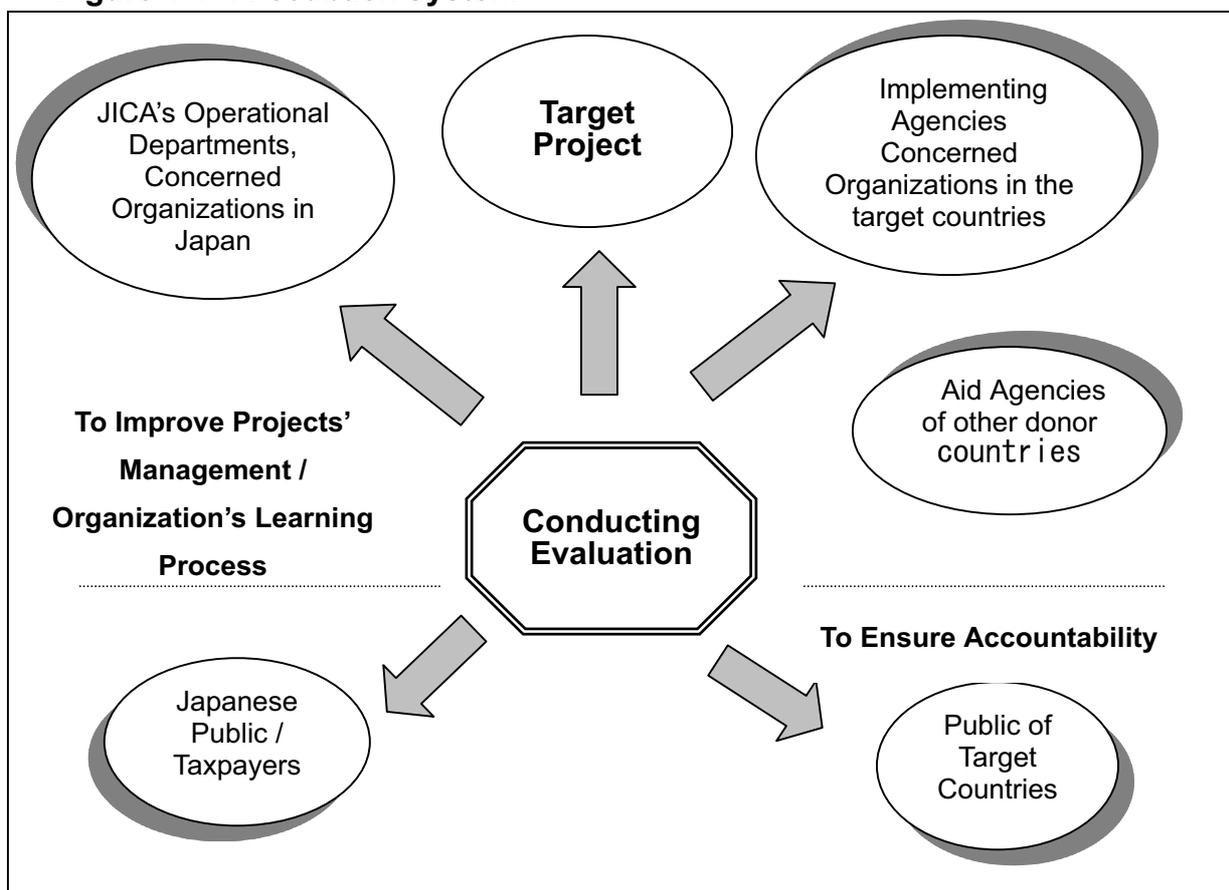
(2) Feedback to the Public

Feedback to the public is a process for JICA to fulfill its accountability which is one of the purposes of JICA's evaluation. Accountability means more than a commitment to publishing evaluation results. It requires a system in which the 'trustee' of such undertakings (JICA) gives a full account to the 'entruster' (taxpayers) on how it has implemented those undertakings in a responsible manner whereby the entruster can judge the trustee's performance. Also, since cooperation projects need to be carried out jointly with the countries receiving the aid, feedback for those concerned and the wider public of these countries is also important.

The accountability requirements include clear cooperation objectives, transparency in the organization's decision making process and efficient use of inputs, and accurate measurement of the achievements resulting from the project. Ensuring accountability demands the disclosure of evaluation information with quality that meets all of these requirements.

In more concrete terms, JICA's efforts to give feedback to the public include the publication of evaluation reports, the holding of evaluation seminars to present to Japanese citizens and the people concerned in partner countries the results of major ex-post evaluations such as country-program and thematic evaluations, and the use of its website for quick disclosure of evaluation results.

Figure 1-1-4 Feedback System



5. Criteria for Good Evaluation

Criteria such as 1) usefulness, 2) impartiality and independence, 3) credibility, and 4) participation of partner countries should be satisfied in order to provide appropriate information worth being utilized; all of these are important for conducting a 'Good Evaluation.'

(1) Usefulness

Evaluation results should be clear and useful in order to be utilized in the decision-making of the organization. The objectives of the evaluation should be made clear, and for feedback to be effective, it is desirable that the evaluation should reflect the needs of envisioned users. Information regarding evaluation results is utilized in various stages during the project cycle and it is also utilized in the formulation of effective strategy, so it is essential that information is readily accessible, and implementation of the evaluation is just in time.

(2) Impartiality and Independence

Evaluation should be impartially conducted in a neutral setting. For assuring the credibility of the evaluation information, it is indispensable to assure impartiality in providing standardized analysis of evaluation results. It is also important to gather a broad range of information from various stakeholders as well as from the particular persons and organizations concerned. In addition, the guarantee of impartiality is expected to prevent conflicts among stakeholders.

The impartiality and independence of the evaluators is not counter to the sharing of information or feedback among stakeholders. The evaluation study group and departments involved in project implementation each have an independent role, yet share the same objective to improve project management.

(3) Credibility

For credible evaluation information, it is essential for evaluators to have specialized knowledge of the target fields and schemes (types of projects) and also to be well informed in the scientific research method. Such an evaluator is capable of producing credible information that is the result of an objective analysis of those factors indicating success or failure. Besides, it is important to share the evaluation process itself among stakeholders of the project, because it assures transparency. In the process, it is important to include different opinions proposed regarding lessons learned and recommendations in the report, and leave it to a public verdict. Transparency is indispensable for increasing credibility with

the public, and it also has no small effect on how much the evaluation information is utilized.

(4) Participation of Partner Countries

JICA's cooperation projects are conducted in collaboration with partner countries, and jointly with them JICA conducts evaluation consistently from the ex-ante to terminal stage. Thus, evaluation information should be utilized by both donor and partner sides. Lessons learned and recommendations obtained by the experience of project management are used as feedback for the development strategy of partner countries, and lead to a reexamination of the project. It is necessary for evaluators to communicate with the stakeholders of both donor and recipient sides during each stage of the evaluation.

Chapter 2 Frameworks and Basic Steps of JICA's Project

Evaluation

This chapter consists of two parts: 1) the framework of evaluation, and 2) the major steps of evaluation study. Detailed explanations of evaluation methodologies are included in Part II.

Tips!

- Evaluation is a practical tool for effectively managing a project.

- There are three phases in evaluation: 1) assessment of the project performance; 2) value judgment based on the Five Evaluation Criteria; and 3) making recommendations, drawing lessons learned, and providing feedback.

- Evaluation study basically consists of the following six steps.
 - 1) Confirmation of the evaluation's purpose
 - 2) Organization of information on a target project
 - 3) Making plans for the implementation of the evaluation
 - 4) Collection and analysis of data
 - 5) Interpretation of data and putting the results together
 - 6) Reporting evaluation results

1. Evaluation as a Management Tool

Evaluation is a practical tool for effectively managing a project. Evaluation provides all stakeholders throughout all levels and stages of project management with information about the process. Such information includes what the needs of a target society are, whether a project is being carried out as planned, how a project is affecting a target society, or what the factors that affect project management are. JICA conducts ex-ante, monitoring, mid-term, terminal and ex-post evaluation throughout the operating cycle of a project, aiming at effective and efficient project implementation.

In ex-ante evaluation, the appropriateness and relevance of project strategy as well as its efficiency and effectiveness are examined. In addition, adequate indicators, target values and means of measurement (means of verification) are developed. Once a project starts, monitoring is conducted with those indicators and measurements, and some modification of activities and strategy are made if necessary. Thus, ex-ante evaluation provides indispensable information for establishing a monitoring system during project implementation. When considering those indicators and measurements, the cost of data gathering and its accessibility should be carefully examined through a baseline survey.

Mid-term evaluation provides the necessary information for adjusting the original plans by evaluating a project from a comprehensive viewpoint. The results of mid-term evaluation should fully be utilized to re-design an on-going project at its mid-point. Some projects may face unexpected situations or become influenced by unexpected factors only after activities have already started. Modification of the original plans or strategies is essential as early as possible to avoid a situation whereby no effects are produced at the end of the project.

Terminal and ex-post evaluation is carried out to provide useful information on the management of the target project as well as on the planning of another similar type of project or program. Such evaluations examine the effects, impacts and sustainability of the project.

As mentioned above, JICA's evaluation is one of the tools used to present information on whether a project is producing effects or being properly conducted from the viewpoint of accountability, and also to provide related departments of JICA and its management with useful information for more effective implementation of projects and programs. Project operation departments should seek crucial information for decision-making through evaluation, and they should feed back the results to project management.

2. Framework of Evaluation

Evaluation is the act of making a value judgment backed up by evidence. Also, as explained in the previous section, the proper feedback of recommendations and lessons learned to the future operation is essential. It is not satisfactory only to conclude that “objectives are achieved” or rate a project according to some scale at the end of evaluation studies.

There are three phases in JICA’s evaluation: 1) assessing the performance of a project; 2) making a value judgment on the project using Five Evaluation Criteria; and 3) making recommendations, drawing from the lessons learned, and feeding them back to the next stage. This section explains the basic concepts of each framework.

(1) Assessing the Performance of a Project: Results, Implementation Process, and Causal Relationships

Three kinds of assessment are indispensable for analyzing the actual situation and the performance of the project. *Measurement of results* is to see what is achieved in a project and to what extent (or to see the validity of plans and target values in the case of ex-ante evaluation). *Examination of implementation process* is to analyze what is happening in the process towards its achievement and how it affects the performance (or to see whether the process is well planned in the case of ex-ante evaluation). Lastly, *examination of causal relationships* is to examine whether the project performance resulted from project intervention by looking at causal relationships between the project and whatever effects (or to see the validity of project designs in the case of ex-ante evaluation).

i) Measurement of Results (or Assessment of Indicators and Target Values in Ex-ante Evaluation)

The measurement of results is for the purpose of understanding what the project has achieved and for the purpose of verifying whether it has been achieved as expected in mid-term, terminal and ex-post evaluation. The achievement level of objectives (e.g., project purpose and overall goal), outputs, and inputs are measured at the time of evaluation, and those results are compared with what has been planned.

In ex-ante evaluation, the evaluator examines the appropriateness of the contents of plans. It is also necessary to see the validity of the target values in comparison with the baseline data.

ii) Examination of Implementation Process

The examination of implementation process is for the purpose of investigating the whole process of activities and what is happening during project implementation. In evaluation after mid-term, the evaluator examines the dynamism within a project by focusing on such

aspects as whether its activities are carried out as planned, whether a project is properly managed, whether those concerned with a project get along with each other, or how the beneficiaries perceive the situation. Also, any factors in the implementation process that may have influenced the achievement of its objectives need to be examined.

In ex-ante evaluation, the contents of project plans are examined with attention to the implementation process. This process includes the relevance of activities to produce intended outputs and objectives, the appropriateness of the management system, and the relationships with the beneficiary and relevant organizations.

Information about the implementation process often becomes supporting evidence for efficiency and effectiveness, and thus may be useful for analysis of the hindering or contributing factors of project's success. In the case of ex-ante evaluation, the information can be utilized to avoid obstacles in advance, and to re-design the original plans or the planning of a similar project in the case of mid-term, terminal and ex-post evaluation.

iii) Examination of Causal Relationships

The examination of causal relationships is for the purpose of investigating whether project purpose and overall goal are or will be achieved as a result of project implementation. A project is merely one intervention for a whole society and thus, there always are influences caused by other factors. Even though some effects are observed as expected, there might be other influential factors that are not related to the project's implementation. The evaluator should rule out other possible explanations in order to determine whether the project, and not other factors, caused the effects.

In order to examine causal relationships between effects and a project, different approaches from the ones used for performance assessment will be adopted. Those approaches include the method of comparing a target group (with a project) with a control group (without a project), and seeing changes before and after a project.

It is indispensable to examine the project performance in those three ways. In order to improve project operation, some hindering factors should be identified especially through an examination of the implementation process and causal relationships. In the case that some problem is identified in the implementation process, a management issue might be at the problem's root. Or, when the causal linkage has not properly been constructed, the responsibility might be attributed to the planning itself.

Also, "monitoring" plays an important role with respect to evaluation. Monitoring is routine work and provides information for re-designing a project's plan if necessary. The monitoring information contains quite a few data on "results" and "implementation process" and thus, it is an important data source for evaluation study. If monitoring is not carried out appropriately, necessary data and information for evaluation might be lacking.

<Box 1: Theory Failure and Implementation Failure>

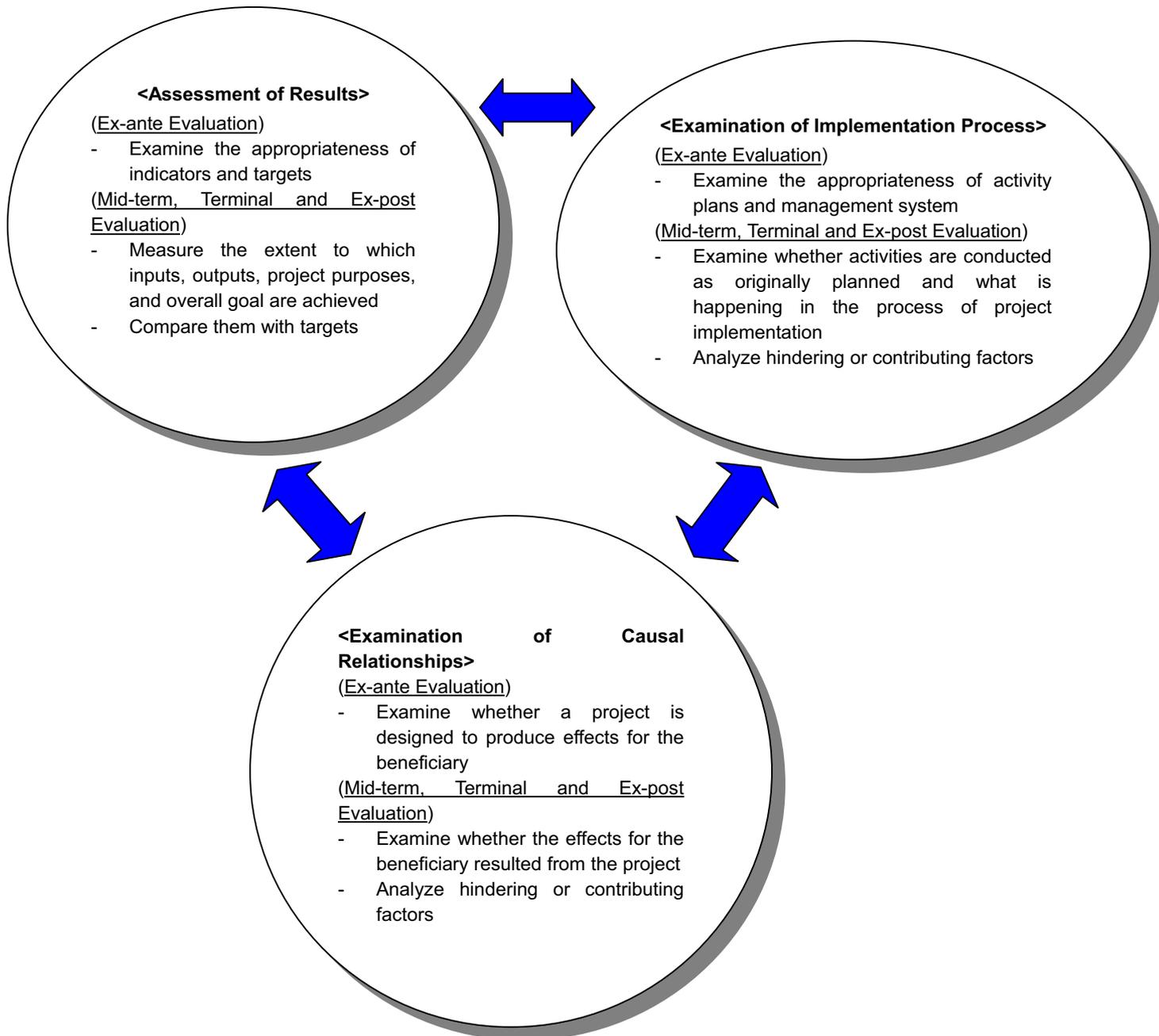
“Theory failure” refers to finding out a problem in causal relationships at the planning phase, while “implementation failure” refers to a problem in the implementation process of a project.

Theory failure implies that it is theoretically impossible to cause effects and achieve project objectives as expected even after project implementation. In that case, no effects might be observed even though outputs are delivered as planned. Theory failure may indicate that there was a problem in the original project plans.

On the other hand, implementation failure implies that there is a cause of failure in the project implementation (inputs, activities, outputs, and internal conditions, etc.) or management systems.

It is important to distinguish the two types of failure and analyze them respectively. This distinction is based on a definition of project in which inputs, activities and outputs are controllable by administrators (managerial interests) and thus, should totally be managed, while changes in a target group at the levels of project objectives are not controllable because they may be inevitably influenced by external factors.

Figure 1-2-1 Assessment of Performance – Three Aspects



(2) Value Judgment Based on Five Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation is undertaken for the purpose of making a value judgment based on the achievement of results. JICA adopted Five Evaluation Criteria for conducting an evaluation (mainly project evaluation), which was proposed by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) at the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1991. These five criteria, as shown below, are meant to be used for evaluating development assistance activities from a comprehensive range of criteria. (Refer to 2-2-1 for detailed explanation)

i) Relevance

A criterion for considering the validity and necessity of a project regarding whether the expected effects of a project (or project purpose and overall goal) meet with the needs of target beneficiaries; whether a project intervention is appropriate as a solution for problems concerned; whether the contents of a project is consistent with policies; whether project strategies and approaches are relevant, and whether a project is justified to be implemented with public funds of ODA.

ii) Effectiveness

A criterion for considering whether the implementation of project has benefited (or will benefit) the intended beneficiaries or the target society.

iii) Efficiency

A criterion for considering how economic resource/inputs are converted to results. The main focus is on the relationship between project cost and effects.

iv) Impact

A criterion for considering the effects of the project with an eye on the longer term effects including direct or indirect, positive or negative, intended or unintended.

v) Sustainability

A criterion for considering whether produced effects continue after the termination of the assistance.

Five Evaluation Criteria are used to evaluate the value of conducting a project from a comprehensive point of view. The evaluator examines the effects of a project as well as the appropriateness of the volume of resources for producing the effects (i.e. efficiency). The value of conducting a project would possibly decrease if it costs more than necessary even though it produced enormous effects, or if effects were limited despite the fact that a large scale of inputs were used. Also, in order to judge the validity of an aid intervention, the *relevance* of strategies is examined as well as the *sustainability* of the effects after the termination of the assistance. Thus, evaluating a project using the five criteria makes it

possible to see the value of a project from different viewpoints, and as a result, various factors that influence the success or the failure of the project can be specified. When evaluating projects, whether to assess performance or to foresee the future, perspectives will differ depending on the timing of evaluation study in operating cycle. Focus of each criterion also will vary among projects. However, JICA decided to basically cover all five criteria in any type of evaluation study.

(3) Make Recommendations, Learn Lessons and Feedback

Results of an evaluation are meaningful only when they are utilized. JICA recognizes the evaluation as a practical management tool, and therefore specific recommendations should be made and lessons should be drawn from the evaluation results. The recommendations and lessons learned have to be fed back to relevant departments of JICA and related organizations so that they will be utilized for the improvement of the target project or future operations.

It is indispensable to specify the hindering or contributing factors influencing a project when making such recommendations and understanding what has been learned. For instance, when the project is found to be not effective, the hindering factors should be identified by examining both the implementation process and the causal relationships, and based on those factors, recommendations or lessons learned should be proposed. As another example, if it turned out that there was a problem in the arrangement of staff in the implementing agency, some recommendations to change the situation would be needed. In the case that evaluation results tell us the need for another set of outputs to achieve intended effects, recommendations to re-design the outputs should be proposed.

In summary, there are three phases in evaluation: 1) assessing performance; 2) making a value judgment about the project; and 3) making recommendations and drawing lessons learned by analyzing the hindering or contributing factors, and feeding them back. It is not possible to conduct useful evaluation without any of these phases.

3. Major Steps of JICA's Project Evaluation

As is explained in the previous section, JICA's Project Evaluation includes such activities as assessment of performance, value judgment based on Five Evaluation Criteria, and feedback of recommendation and lessons learned to potential decision makers. In order to implement these activities effectively, the following steps are taken as shown below. An evaluation study consists of 3 major steps: planning, doing and reporting the results.

Table1-2-1 summarizes major activities of each step as well as some issues to be considered. A detailed explanation follows in the pages referred to in the table.

Steps of Evaluation Study:

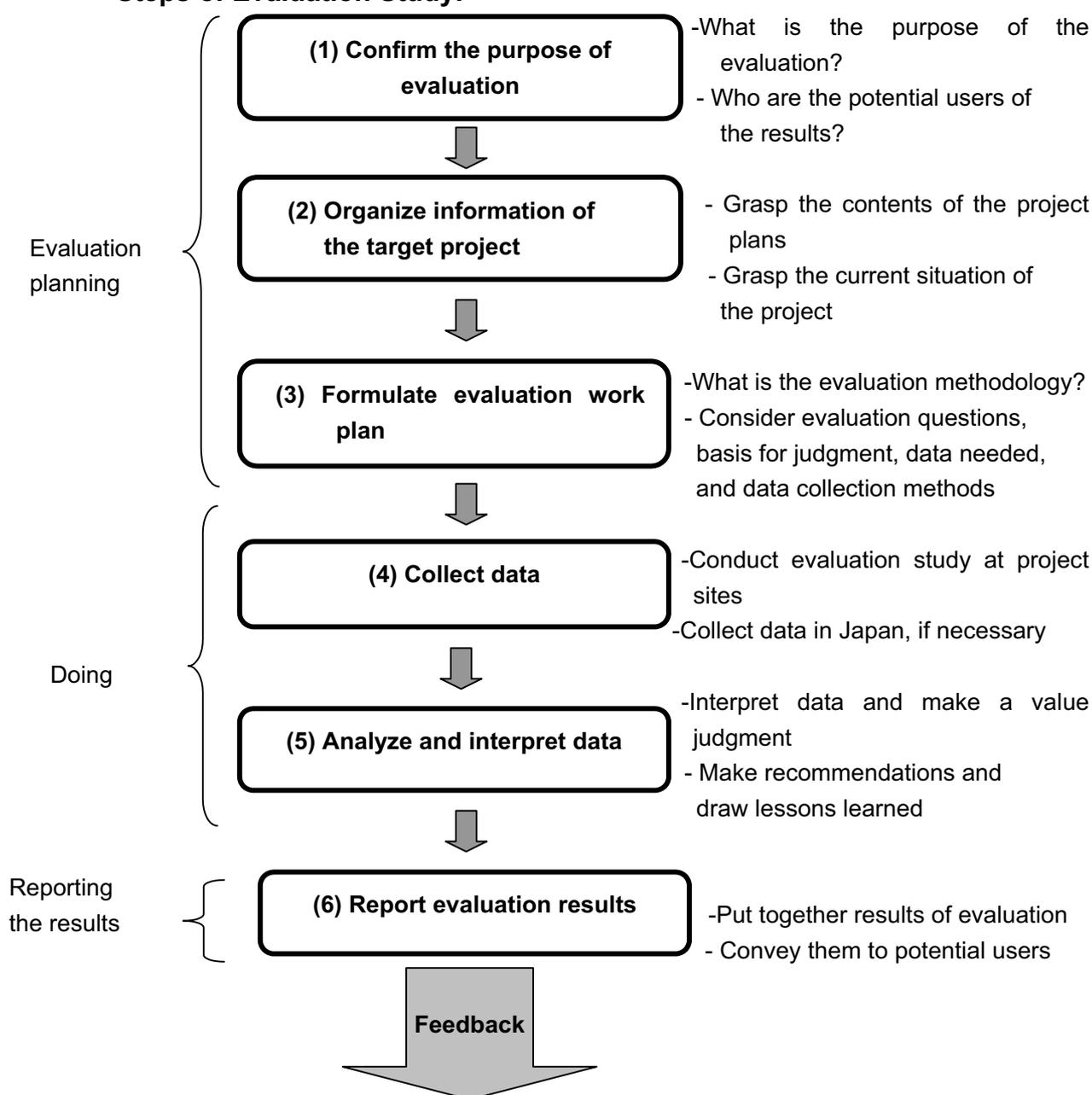


Table 1-2-1 Major activities for each step in evaluation

Steps in Evaluation		What to do	Issues to be Considered
Evaluation Plan	1. Confirming evaluation purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Confirm the purpose of evaluation. ● Confirm who are the potential users. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Note that the focus of evaluation differs depending on the type of evaluation.
	2. Organizing information on a target project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Confirm contents of plans and current situation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Make sure that the actual situation is reflected upon in the logframe/PDM. ■ Organize monitoring information including the performance and the implementation process. ■ In addition, organize project information by reviewing related materials and interviewing those concerned. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do not create a new logframe/PDM just to make evaluation easy. - In the case that monitoring information is not available, carry out related surveys in evaluation.
	3. Make Evaluation Work Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop evaluation questions by considering what should be investigated through evaluation study. ● Evaluation questions should be formulated according to each of the five criteria. ● Decide basis for judgment: comparison criteria or target values/evaluation design ● Decide necessary data and data sources. ● Select data collection methods: questionnaire survey, interview, literature review, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formulate evaluation questions that relate to the concerns of stakeholders, and that provide useful information to improve a target project . - Evaluation perspectives and focus are different depending on evaluation purposes and the kinds and issues of the target project. - In the case that target values or means of verification described in logframe/PDM are not appropriate, consider new criteria or means. - When examining effectiveness or impact, adopt the evaluation design of ‘before and after’ or the quasi-experimental design method. - Both quantitative and qualitative data should be taken into account in considering necessary data. - When identifying data sources, fully pay attention to the differences of gender, ethnicity, and social classes. - Make an attempt to increase the credibility of data by combining several data collection methods.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create the Evaluation Grid. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Flexibly use the Evaluation Grid by adding necessary items/issues, since it is a practical tool for discussing the evaluation work plan among stakeholders.
Implementation	4. Data Collection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collect necessary data for evaluation by conducting studies in a partner country. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The evaluator has to be skillful in survey methods – e.g. interviewing, creating and collecting the questionnaire, etc.
	5. Data Analysis and Interpretation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Analyze collected data by applying quantitative and qualitative analysis methods. ● Evaluate a project (or make value judgments) using the Five Evaluation Criteria based on data analysis, and identify hindering or contributing factors. ● Draw a conclusion based on evaluation results of the Five Evaluation Criteria. ● Make recommendations and draw lessons learned. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyze factors that have influenced a project, as well as hindering or contributing factors. - Describe reasons and specific grounds for evaluation results. - Recommendations and lessons learned have to be specific and practical with supporting evidence.
Reporting	6. Evaluation Results Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Put evaluation results together in “Ex-ante Evaluation Table” or “Summary Table of Evaluation Results.” ● Write “Evaluation Report” in and after mid-term evaluation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make an attempt to convey evaluation results to potential users as simply and clearly as possible. - Make sure to prepare a summary in English as well.