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I . Introduction

1. The role of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and JICA

Around 80% of the world's population lives in developing countries. These countries are facing many problems- spiraling population increases, poverty, inadequate social infrastructure for medical care and education, environmental destruction and so on. In order to help these countries and to solve cross border problems typified by environmental pollution, the international community has been uniting its efforts for international cooperation.

Not only governments but various groups and organizations including international organizations, NGOs, and private companies are engaged in international cooperation in support of the social and economic development of developing countries. The funds and technical assistance which governments provide to developing countries are called Official Development Assistance (ODA). According to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), ODA is defined as having to meet the following three conditions. ODA must be provided:

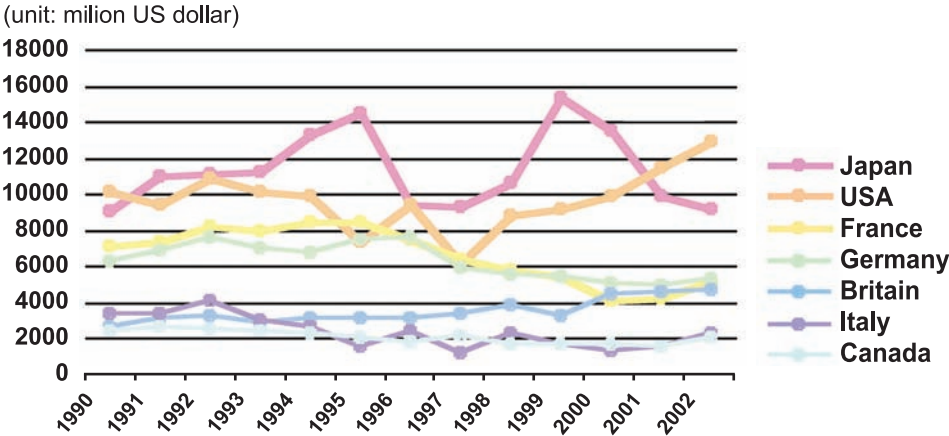
1. to a developing country or an international organization by the government or implementing agency of the donor country;
2. with the main objective of promoting the economic development and welfare of the recipient country;
3. in the case of a loan, with a grant element of at least 25% (the grant element is a figure showing the concessionality level of a loan; for grant aid, it is 100%).

Japan, which is now a major donor country, itself received a great deal and variety of goods and materials as well as funds during its reconstruction period after World War II. Japan is now proud that it has the world's second strongest economy, but it is not standing alone. Resource-poor Japan imports many materials from developing countries, therefore the stability of those countries is linked to the stability of Japan and consequently the stability of the rest of the world. Japan's commitment to international cooperation is one of our duties as a member of the international community.



Although there have been declines in quantity, Japan has been one of the major donor countries for years. Japan's ODA amounted to \$10.64 billion in 1998, 20.64% of the total amount provided by all DAC member countries, making Japan the top donor that year. This means that, on a per capita basis, each Japanese citizen contributed about \$84 that year for ODA.

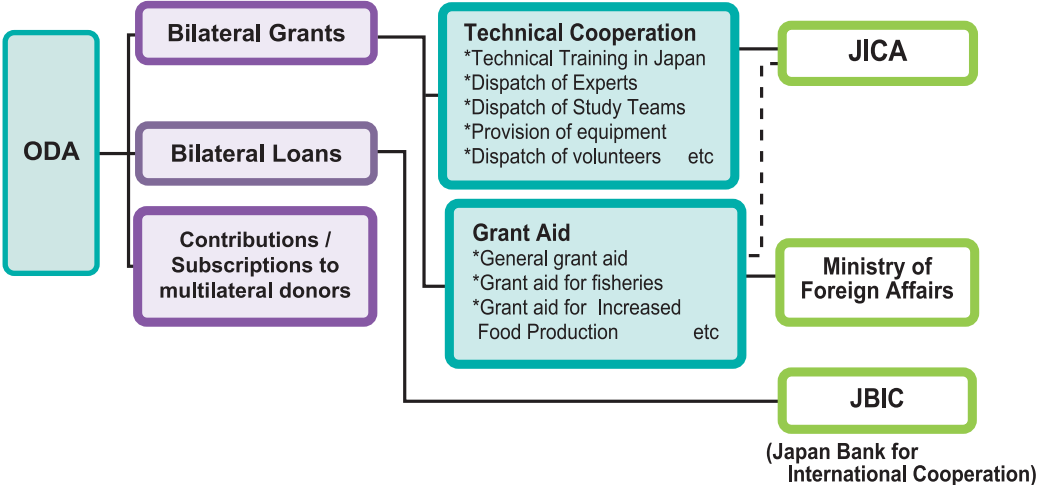
ODA budget of major donor countries



Japan's ODA takes the form of (1) bilateral assistance (grants and loans) that is directly provided to developing countries, and (2) contributions and subscriptions to multilateral donors. Bilateral ODA can be divided into grants, which carry no obligation for the recipient country to pay back, and loans, through which funds are lent on concessional terms, for example, at low interest rates and with long repayment periods. Bilateral grants can be divided into "technical cooperation", the main objectives of which are human resources development and capacity building, and "grant aid", which includes general grant aid and grant aid for increased food production, cultural grants, disaster relief, and so on.

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is responsible for the technical cooperation and supplementary role in grant aid aspects of Japan's ODA programs. Through such cooperation JICA carries out a variety of projects to support the nation building of developing countries. JICA has about 1,300 staff members working both in Japan and at its more than fifty overseas offices.

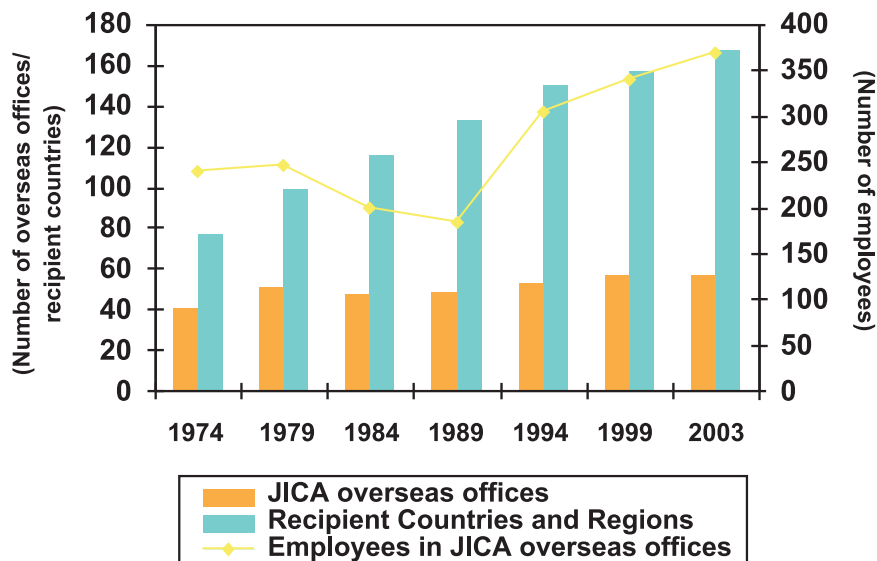
Categories of Official Development Assistance



2. JICA's approach

Japan's ODA began in 1954, when it joined the Colombo Plan, an organization set up in 1950 to assist Asian countries in their socio-economic development. While receiving aid itself in the 1950's from the World Bank for the reconstruction of its own economy, Japan began the process of delivering aid to developing countries. Since that time, Japan's ODA commitment has increased and expanded yearly. With this expansion, there has also been a gradual move to include countries outside Asian-countries with Eastern and Central Europe being the most recent additions.

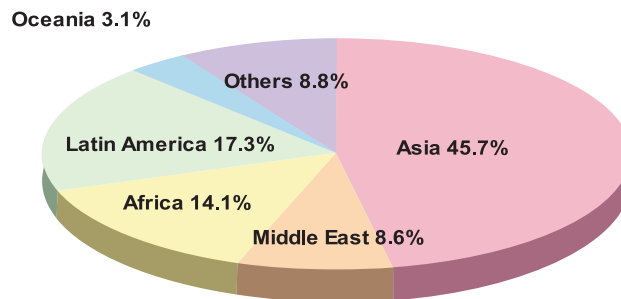
Since its establishment in 1974, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) as Japan's main ODA implementing body has supported human-resource and socioeconomic development in order to facilitate the self-reliant, sustainable development of developing countries,. JICA carries out a variety of international cooperation projects that focus predominantly on technical cooperation in developing countries and regions



By region, 45.7% of JICA's Technical Cooperation goes to Asia, to which Japan naturally has deep historical and economic ties, with Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East next. By sector, aid for the development of economic infrastructure- transportation, electric power, telecommunications, etc. –has the largest share, followed by aid for social infrastructure and services, and productivity improvement in that order.



JICA's Technical Cooperation by region



JICA offers various fields and forms of cooperation in order to adjust to the ever changing international situation as well as the needs of developing countries. From the beginning JICA has covered the area of agriculture and social infrastructure building, but its assistance has now been expanded to infectious disease control including HIV/AIDS and SARS, support for establishing a market economy and a legal system, peace building and post-conflict reconstruction in countries like Afghanistan and East Timor.

JICA invites engineers (and skilled workers) and government officials from developing countries to Japan for training in a variety of fields. To developing countries, JICA dispatches experts with the skill and knowledge suited to the country's needs. It provides the equipment needed to transfer technology appropriately and effectively. It also sends various study teams to draw up development plans for developing countries and regions.

Moreover, JICA has recently put emphasis on the Third Country Training Program (TCTP), which is a form of Technical Cooperation utilizing the development experience of leading developing countries to help other neighboring developing countries. This form of cooperation is considered to be effective as countries inside the same region often have similar or common social, cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

For the Least-Less developed countries in particular, JICA conducts basic design study and promotes the implementation of grant aid projects such as constructing schools, hospitals, and other facilities. In addition, JICA dispatches volunteers such as Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) and Senior Volunteers (SV). In the case of major disasters, JICA provides Emergency Disaster Relief to affected countries. It also organizes training programs for international cooperation specialists in Japan.

