

Toward Improving Project Evaluation Advisory Committee on Evaluation

JICA established the Advisory Committee on Evaluation in July 2010 in order to enhance the quality of evaluations, strengthen feedback of the evaluation results, and better ensure evaluation accountability.

The Committee, chaired by Shinji Asanuma, Visiting Professor at the School of International and Public Policy, Hitotsubashi University, includes experts in international cooperation and evaluation from international organizations, academia, NGOs, media, and private sector groups.

Outlines of the expert advice provided by the Committee members during the 5th and 6th meetings convened in FY2012 are as below. The wide range of advice promotes the further improvement of JICA's operations evaluations.

List of Committee Members

(as of January 2013)

Chairperson	
Shinji Asanuma	Visiting Professor, School of International and Public Policy, Hitotsubashi University
Acting Chairperson	
Akifumi Kuchiki	Professor, College of Bioresource Sciences, Nihon University
Members (in alphabetical order)	
Hisashi Takanashi	Managing Director, Engineering and Consulting Firms Association, Japan (ECFA)
Kenichiro Yokoo	Director, International Cooperation Bureau, Keidanren (Japan Business Federation)
Kiyoshi Yamaya	Professor, Doshisha University Graduate School of Policy and Management
Kunihiko Hirabayashi	Director, UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) Tokyo Office
Masachi Nosaka	Vice Chairman of Editorial Board, The Yomiuri Shimbun
Toyokazu Nakata	Chairperson, ShaplaNeer=Citizens' Committee in Japan for Overseas Support / Director, Institute of Participatory Development
Yasuyuki Sawada	Associate Professor, Faculty of Economics, Graduate School of Economics, The University of Tokyo
Yoshiko Homma	Lawyer (Yoshiko Homma Law Office) / Professor, The Graduate School of Law, Soka University

● From the 5th Meeting

(1) Status of JICA's previous efforts concerning operations evaluation

- Following the development of the New JICA Guidelines for Project Evaluation and the completion of methodological establishment and manual preparation on evaluation, JICA should implement the guidelines and improve the quality of actual evaluations.
- It is very important for JICA overseas offices to get proactively involved in internal evaluations. As they actually implement projects, have a variety of information and develop close relationships with their counterparts, their involvement is deemed to enable them to implement effective operations evaluations.
- JICA should further strengthen cooperation with project executing departments to create a virtuous cycle of feeding back advantages and disadvantages of projects and points to be considered.

(2) Utilization of evaluation results by project executing departments

- The Committee regards the JICA Evaluation Handbook for Basic Education Cooperation^{*2} to have a high degree of academic completeness. The Committee expects JICA to find common denominators in order to enhance the versatility of the Handbook for other sectors.
- The utilization of the Handbook enables JICA staff and experts to be aware of the perspectives gained through feedback in launching new projects.
- To connect Technical Cooperation Projects and the concept of a results-based approach, Results-Based Management is deemed effective in sharing the outcome of projects among all parties involved, and in moving toward their common goals.

● From the 6th Meeting

(1) Efforts to improve the project planning stage^{*3}

- Examples of standard indicators in Grant Aid projects indicate the flow from the identification of goals among development issues and selection of optimal means, to achieve goals to the preparation of programs and the formulation and implementation of projects. Within the basic policy framework of goals and means, it is very useful to reconsider how to logically respond to development issues.
- It is necessary to improve the guidance for the establishment of indicators and methods to obtain quantitative data. When JICA considers conducting a bottleneck analysis, counterparts of the project should be involved in the analysis process to strengthen their organizations' capacity to ensure the sustainability of projects.

(2) Overview of the results of thematic evaluation and ex-post evaluation

- It may be difficult for some developing countries to prepare necessary measures for post-project review at the planning stage. However, it is important that recipient countries make sustaining project outcomes part of their own policies. JICA should study the development policies of respective countries and strategically select targeted countries.
- A more detailed analysis of relevance is necessary. Efficiency should also be considered in terms of economy. The Five DAC Criteria used in ex-post evaluations should be regarded as structurally linked, not as individual and independent.
- Conducting baseline studies is important in the project formation stage. JICA should be flexible in the reviewing and revision of project plans with counterparts within one month of the launch of projects.

*1 The minutes of the Committee's meetings are posted on the JICA website (URL: http://www.jica.go.jp/english/our_work/evaluation/advisory/index.html).

*2 The JICA Evaluation Handbook for Basic Education Cooperation is described on p. 11.

*3 These efforts are described on p. 11.