

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 7th and 8th meetings convened in August 2013 and January 2014 are as below.*¹ The wide range of advice promotes the further improvement of JICA's operations evaluations.

List of Committee Members

(as of January 2014)

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
Masaichi Nosaka	Vice Chairman of Editorial Board, The Yomiuri Shimbun
Toyokazu Nakata	Chairperson, Somneed / Director, Institute of Participatory Development
Yasuyuki Sawada	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 7th Meeting

(1) Strengthening the lessons learned system in the PDCA cycle

- Much work is involved in extracting practical lessons learned. The lessons learned obtained through daily activities should be fed back, the process should be reviewed, and the lessons learned should be carried over to future activities.
- Lessons learned should not be what JICA expects of partner countries or other parties, but what JICA can act within the scope of its discretion.
- It would be effective if the PDCA cycle management process specifies who makes use of the extracted lessons learned.
- It should be kept on record if past lessons learned were taken stock of in formulating a new project.

(2) Revision of the New JICA Guidelines for Project Evaluation

- The draft Guidelines are written on the premise that operations evaluations are carried out at different stages, e.g., planning, implementation, and after completion stages. The Guidelines should state the underlying concept of evaluations at each stage.
- Evaluations are expected to lead to larger development effects. The Guidelines should mention fundamental aspects, such as what development effect is and what the goals are.
- The Guidelines give "accountability" and "project improvement" as the objectives of operations evaluation. However, the most important objective is sharing recommendations and lessons learned, so-called case. The objectives of operations evaluations are "accountability," "project improvement," "recommendations and lessons learned," and "reporting to external parties." The Guidelines would be clearer if they are presented as pillars of operations evaluations.

● From the 8th Meeting

During the 8th meeting, explanations were provided on the progress and other developments related to the topics that were discussed at the previous meeting. Based on this, the committee members held renewed discussions.

(1) Proposed revisions of the New JICA Guidelines for Project Evaluation

- The objectives and basic principles are written more simply and are easier to understand than the draft discussed during the 7th meeting. The message will get across to domestic and international readers more clearly if the language is kept simple.
- It should be understood that the principles and basic policy which are given simple descriptions in the Guidelines entail an array of circumstances that must be dealt with in reality.
- It is important not to place a disproportionate emphasis on quantitative evaluations, and this should be emphasized. Is JICA not becoming inefficient by carrying out quantitative evaluations? Qualitative judgment should be utilized if useful.
- The linkages from output to outcome to impact are not as simple as implied in the Guidelines. In reality, when a project is implemented in a single sub-sector, a strategy is first established, followed by a policy and system, and then activities are ranked in priority before starting a project. This process should be conceived as a whole.

(2) Progress on strengthening the lessons learned system in the PDCA cycle

- Evaluations are necessary for JICA's human resource development. Case studies of successes and failures should be recorded and utilized for future projects.
- Staff should seize this initiative to enhance their expertise. However, this is no more than an "opportunity," and cost should be kept down as much as possible. It would be inefficient to apply this process to all sectors. Strategies should be conceived, such as narrowing down the process to sub-sectors that face challenges.
- As implied by "PDCA," the process must lead to actions. It is important to identify what JICA can do. The private sector also implements PDCA and analyzes cause-and-effect relationships. However, if the problem were attributed to external and not internal causes, the lessons learned system would not lead to actions. JICA must be conscious of how JICA itself should change.

*1 The minutes of the Committee's meetings are posted on the JICA website.