

Advisory Committee on Evaluation

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

The Committee, chaired by Motoki Takahashi, Professor at the Graduate School of International Cooperation Studies, Kobe University, includes experts in international cooperation and evaluation from international organizations, academia, NGOs, media and private sector groups.

Outlines of expert advice provided by committee members during the meetings convened in August 2014 and January 2015 are as below.*1

List of Committee Members

(as of January 2015)

Chairperson	
Motoki Takahashi	Professor, Graduate School of International Cooperation Studies, Kobe 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	Manager, Yomiuri Research Institute, The Yomiuri Shimbun
Toyokazu Nakata	Chairperson, Muranomirai
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 Meeting in August 2014

Increased efficiency and effectiveness of ex-post evaluation to use evaluation results strategically

- Although the concept of evaluating a group of projects as a program to enhance evaluation efficiency is the right direction for JICA, key to this approach will be the process and strategy on how to select projects for evaluation.
- The mid-term review and terminal evaluation reports of Technical Cooperation projects were replaced by regular monitoring sheets and project completion reports, respectively, both of which are to be prepared by project team members (e.g. consultants and experts) themselves. Attention should be paid to ensure this change does not undermine accountability.
- Recently, many Technical Cooperation projects are terminated within three years and sustainability is often problematic. They may have been evaluated mainly on outputs rather than outcomes. The results of the evaluation should be shared with project team members (e.g. consultants) to learn lessons for future projects.

Progress of the project evaluation plan in FY2014

- It is important to train JICA staff, particularly those assigned to overseas offices, on project evaluation. JICA should create a roadmap and further making efforts to accelerate human resource development.
- It is essential to link the two evaluation objectives: learning lessons from projects and ensuring accountability. In other words, JICA should consider how to share lessons learned from its activities with people outside the organization.
- JICA's efforts to promote the use of evaluation results are commendable. It is significant to make opportunities for each individual; not only to gain experience but also to share it with others. In particular, overseas office staff should be involved in this process.
- Although JICA's efforts to analyze and improve detailed technical aspects of the impact evaluation are worthy, it is more important to explore the most effective approach from a broader perspective.

From the Meeting in January 2015

Progress made in terms of improvement based on past recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Evaluation

- European and American donor agencies closely exchange views on aid effectiveness. JICA should strengthen its ability to convey opinions to play a leading role in the Asian donor community in future. Conversely, attention should be paid to ensure that the information dispatched does not take on a life of its own.
- Projects should be evaluated from the following three perspectives: (1) whether appropriate measures have been taken for partner countries; (2) whether the process was appropriate; and (3) whether there were any other options. In particular, the third perspective should be strengthened by promoting joint evaluation with other donors as well as third-party evaluation.

Comments on the draft of the Annual Evaluation Report 2014

- The Annual Evaluation Report has been made easy to read. It is essential to make it logically consistent from start to finish.
- JICA's efforts to convert lessons learned into knowledge are admirable. More emphasis should be placed on how to use and scale up knowledge.
- The public should feel it is inappropriate to evaluate efficiency by

comparing estimated and actual costs and assessing the timeliness of disbursement. Typically, things do not go as planned.

- In general, Japanese people care whether assistance reaches those in need, rather than whether inputs are transformed into outputs. By evaluating efficiency from a Japanese rather than international perspective and presenting the results to the world, JICA can convey Japan's message. Moreover, the existing flowchart of the rating system must be reviewed.
- There is a comment that "There is a gap between the technology JICA intends to transfer to developing countries and the latest technology used by the private sector; therefore, JICA should remain aware of the latest technological development in the private sector." This perspective should be taken into account evaluation.
- With regard to effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability in particular, JICA should consider whether to design projects assuming developing countries lack the capacity to absorb support; whether to assist them in building that capacity and whether to implement projects in cooperation with other donors to optimize finite resources.

JICA's efforts

To improve its evaluation methods and systems, JICA will adopt as many of the above recommendations as possible after carefully considering them, particularly on the strategic selection of projects for evaluation, the development of human resources,

the use of lessons learned for improvement, the publication of results and the improvement of the rating system, while taking into account resource limitations and the data available in project evaluation.

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