

# Advisory Committee on Evaluation

JICA has set up the Advisory Committee on Evaluation to obtain advice on project evaluation. The recommendations from the Committee are fed back into the evaluation system and method for further improvement.

In July 2010, JICA reorganized the Committee in order to better ensure evaluation accountability, enhance the quality of evaluations, and strengthen feedback of the evaluation results.

The Committee, chaired by Shinji Asanuma, Visiting Professor at the

School of International and Public Policy, Hitotsubashi University, includes experts in international aid and evaluation from international organizations, academia, NGO, media, and private sector groups.

Below is an outline of the expert advice provided from the Committee members during the first and second meetings convened in 2010. The wide range of advice will help JICA to further improve project evaluations.

## From the 1st Meeting

### 1) Enhancing quality of evaluations

- ODA projects should not be evaluated against today's criteria if project environment or objective has changed from the time of implementation.
- It is not appropriate to apply same evaluation methods to different types of aid modalities, such as technical cooperation, micro credit, and loans.
- Given the large number of projects that JICA operates, an "evaluation strategy" is needed for JICA to review the breadth and depth of its evaluation activities.
- Selection and concentration is the key to enhance quality of evaluations. Possibilities include evaluating overall plans or programs of developing countries, evaluating executing agencies, or evaluating projects grouped by sector/project type.
- As there are a wide range of studies and papers available to public, JICA can apply these research findings to its project evaluation with the cooperation of the JICA Research Institute as well as external researchers.
- JICA should facilitate the use of human resources of overseas research

institutes, think tanks, etc.

### 2) Strengthening feedback

- If a project is off-track at the time of monitoring or mid-term evaluation, necessary adjustments should continue to be made wherever feasible.
- A mechanism is needed for a project to reflect findings of rigorous evaluation during transition from phase 1 to phase 2.

### 3) Ensuring accountability

- Ensuring accountability and strengthening the feedback mechanism are different and therefore need to be examined separately.
- Feedback should be directed at different actors, depending on who takes responsibility for project success/failure.
- The contents of evaluation reports need to be divided into those that are easy to understand for the general audience and those aimed at experts.
- Beneficiary evaluations that are conducted by beneficiaries should be implemented, and the findings should be disclosed to the public. External evaluations should be conducted as secondary evaluations afterwards.

## From the 2nd Meeting

### 1) Enhancing quality of evaluations

- If the number of ex-post evaluations is not decreased, measures to lessen the work burden, including a detailed manual, should be developed.
- The framework of detailed evaluation leaves more space for selection and concentration. Some of the projects over one billion yen may be assessed based on existent evidences and therefore may not require extra survey or analysis.
- The evaluation system of the three schemes should be consistent, while the analysis method should correspond with the characteristics of each project.
- It is highly welcome that field offices with in-depth knowledge about the local situation are in charge of the evaluations. Budget should allow for use of local human resources, including local consultants, for the implementation of evaluations.

### 2) Strengthening feedback

- New progress was made: Launch of project evaluation database on website and disclosure of external evaluation reports.

### 3) On the Analysis of FY2009 ex-post evaluation findings and the overview of the draft Annual Evaluation

### Report 2010

- There are gaps in interpretation of evaluation findings between the general public and ODA experts. Providing a sufficient explanation of Japan's vital role in international community for achievement of MDGs as well as implementation status of projects under difficult constraints, will contribute to deepen public understanding.
- The benchmark for the overall ratings, flowchart, and explanation of evaluation results can be made a little clearer.
- Analysis of relevance is insufficient. Evaluations should confirm not only consistency with policies, but also consistency with strategies in line with the country's current situation.
- As private consultants, it is desirable that JICA will further strengthen the mechanism of sharing evaluation findings.

### 4) Way forward (from JICA Evaluation Department)

- As a member of DAC, we will continue to use the internationally required methods of evaluation. We would like to improve the way the ratings are illustrated.
- Regarding the representation of evaluation findings, we would like to explore ways of presenting them more visually, including other media than the Annual Evaluation Report.