

1 Relevance

(1) Relevance with the Development Plan of Afghanistan

National Development Framework (2002) at the time of Project's preliminary evaluation indicated that the capacity reinforcement of TV station was important to deliver people necessary information. The succeeding national strategy, "Afghanistan National Development Strategy 2008-2013" also prioritized increasing the diffusion rate for TV and radio, extending broadcasting duration and improving the quality of TV programs.

(2) Relevance with the Development Needs of Afghanistan

Although TV broadcasting only got started in 1978, facilities and equipment soon began to deteriorate as the Soviet Union invaded in 1979 and the Afghan civil war brought chaos to the country. TV broadcasting was then utterly prohibited when the Taliban took power in 1996 and it remained so until the Taliban's demise in 2001. During the Taliban's 18-year regime, the Afghan people did not have access to political, economic, and cultural news. Currently, information diffused by the RTA regarding politics, economics and culture is believed to be contributing to the Afghan government's and the Afghan nation's attempt to form their identity. RTA run TV programs are an effective source of information for the peace-building efforts of the Afghan nation.

(3) Relevance with Japan's ODA Policy

JICA's Country Assistance Programme for Afghanistan was not yet finalized at the time of the preliminary evaluation. However, at the Afghanistan Reconstruction Conference in 2002, in which Japan served as a co-chair, the government of Japan raised 6 important areas, including "media infrastructure" and disbursed 500 million dollars. Aligned with this policy, the development study of "Urgent Rehabilitation Support Programme in Afghanistan" (2004), which includes the field of broadcasting, resulted in the formulation and implementation of this project, with the complementary project of "The Project for Improvement of Equipment of the Broadcasting at RTA", sharing the same overall goal.

In light of the above, this project has been highly relevant with Afghanistan's development plan and development needs and is also highly relevant with Japan's ODA policy. Therefore its relevance is high.

2 Efficiency

(1) Project Outputs

The outputs by Japan were achieved as planned, except in regards to the following five modifications; 1) reinforcement of capacity of fan and related facilities at the emergency power supply room, 2) air-conditioning at the transmitting room, 3) layout of bed at night duty room, 4) increase water supply tank capacity and 5) lead-in point of transmission line of power. A consultant carefully examined the technical and financial aspects of these modifications and concluded that they had no negative impact to achieve the project purpose.

(2) Project Period (Project Inputs)

The actual project period took 23 month as opposed to the planned 17 months (135% of planned period). The major reasons for the extended planned period were the mandatory evacuation from Afghanistan of the consultants and construction personnel due to security issues related to the Presidential election (for 3 months) and suspension of construction due to the heaviest snowfall in the 20 years (for 2 months), as well as related issues such as difficulties re-hiring construction workers. These impediments can be regarded as force majeure and the delay, therefore, cannot be attributed to either the consultants or the construction company.

(3) Project Cost (Project Inputs)

The actual project cost was 794 million yen, compared to planned costs of 794 million yen (100 %).

In light of the above, the project cost was as planned, and the project period was longer than planned. However, the reasons for the delay were unavoidable (the mandatory evacuation of workers and unexpectedly bad weather). Judging the situation comprehensively, efficiency is rated as high.

3 Effectiveness / Impact

(1) Quantitative Effects

Data for the broadcasting area and duration for the target year (2006) could not be obtained. However, according to JICA's internal 2008 reports, the broadcasting area reached 283 km² (the same as planned), and the broadcasting duration had also reached 24 hours, (more than the planned 7 hours).

(2) Impacts

The number of families able to enjoy RTA programs in Kabul city increased to 5 million in 2009: up from 50 thousand in 2003. The coverage rate for TV sets in Kabul city also increased from 20% in 2003 to 80% in 2009. The broadcasting area of RTA is not limited to Kabul city, but has expanded to the capitals of other provinces as well as to neighboring countries (broadcasting to neighboring countries was made possible through satellite transmission apparatus provided by a different donor)*. The number of TV programs available has expanded to more than 100 (at the time of the preliminary evaluation there were only 20). Additional RTA programs were produced with the support by a complementary grant aid project, "The Project for Improvement of Equipment of the Broadcasting at RTA (2002)". The contents of the TV program, which cover politics, economics, culture and daily life, help stimulate the consciousness of the people and contribute to Afghan's nation building.

In light with above, this project has largely achieved its objectives; therefore, its effectiveness is high.

4 Sustainability

(1) Structural Aspects of Operation Maintenance

The turnover rate of technical staff at RTA is low. Even though the number of technical staff at the Transmitter Section of the Technical Department has decreased from 132 to 100, more experienced veteran staff with good command of necessary tasks are working in the section. The number of staff with 10 to 20 years working experience has increased from 18 in 2003 to 52 in 2009. Although the broadcasting duration has expanded to 24 hours, the number of staff working at Asmayi Transmission Station remains almost the same: 9 persons in 2009, compared to 8 persons in 2003. Although RTA has reported that the current number of staff is not enough, the Japanese consultant has concluded that the current number of staff can manage 24 hour broadcasting.

(2) Technical Aspects of Operation Maintenance

At RTA, specific technical criteria for recruiting staff has been established, and opportunities to participate in training programs are offered to the staff. They are attending the training program offered by AIBD (Asia Pacific Institute of Broadcasting Development) and UNESCO. In addition, in 2010 JICA started in-country training, "RTA TV and Radio broadcasting training (including the technical training for transmission)". The staff, who participated in these programs, have shared what they learned with other staff. With these programs, they are maintaining their technical skills. RTA has reported some problems they currently face including; the lack of knowledge for new technology (such as digital broadcasting technology) and many RTA staff cannot understand the technical documents written in English. JICA's in-country technical training program mentioned above is being conducted to respond to these problems as well. The Japanese consultant, who is involved in this training, reported that the transmission equipment is, in general, properly operated by RTA staff.

(3) Financial Aspects of Operation Maintenance

The commercial income in 2009 was 120 million Afs. But this income has to be merged with the budget of Ministry of Information and Culture (hereinafter referred to as MOIC), and RTA is allocated the budget from MOIC accordingly, which does not allocate RTA sufficient budget. Without the exact budget figures, RTA and Japanese consultant reported that either the budget of Afghan government or that of RTA is constrained, and the minimum budget for the daily operation and maintenance of the equipment is secured. But RTA cannot afford to repair the equipment and to purchase spare parts and other necessary things.

(4) Current Status of Operation Maintenance

The current status of major equipments' operation and maintenance is in a good condition. The TV transmitter, TV changeover switch equipment, program input and monitoring equipment, field strength meter with tripod and antenna element, and automatic voltage regulator are regularly inspected, and have been in use without malfunction. The operation guideline in English and in Dari is used well and the procedure for repair has been established, setting the specific format to report the result of daily inspections. Regarding the facility maintenance at Asmayi Transmitting Station, the temperature is adjusted appropriately and the equipment is well taken care of so that the equipment condition meets the technical requirement, and also well cleaned-up. The Kabul TV Studio Center is also regularly cleaned up and well maintained as well as Asmayi Transmitting Station.

In light with the above, some financial problems have been observed; therefore, the sustainability of the project effect is fair.