

JBIC Signs MOU on Evaluation with MPI in Vietnam

On July 9, 2007, JBIC signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) in Vietnam to improve evaluation of the country's development projects. This MOU aims to enhance the Vietnamese government's evaluation capacity throughout the project cycle (i.e., from project planning to after project completion) by transferring consistent evaluation know-how used in Japanese ODA loan-financed projects to MPI, which oversees the coordination and evaluation of Vietnam's foreign aid. In addition, it seeks to enable the Government of Vietnam to establish a project cycle in which lessons learned and recommendations derived from evaluations will be utilized for the implementation of new projects.

The signing of this MOU is expected to further boost the

economic growth of Vietnam by increasing the effectiveness of development projects, including Japanese ODA loan-financed projects, and by prioritizing budget allocations for projects proving more effective. Specifically, JBIC and MPI will jointly conduct ex-post evaluations for Japanese ODA loan-financed projects, follow up on lessons learned, and study ways to improve the evaluation systems of the respective institutions.

Last November, the Government of Vietnam issued a decree for management and utilization of ODA, stipulating evaluation at each of four stages: initial evaluation, mid-term evaluation, terminal evaluation and impact evaluation, drawing on the strengths of the Japanese evaluation system. To ensure efficient planning and implementation of ODA loan-financed projects, JBIC to date has made recommendations to the Vietnamese government on measures for effective and efficient project planning and implementation through project monitoring and evaluation of Japanese ODA loan-financed projects. However, the Vietnamese government sees a need for further capacity building and institutional development for evaluation. Under these circumstances, giving high credit to JBIC's efforts toward evaluation, the Government of Vietnam requested JBIC to transfer evaluation know-how, thus opening the way for the signing of this MOU.

JBIC has conducted joint evaluations in such countries as Thailand, Indonesia, and India in an effort to transfer evaluation techniques. In May 2006, JBIC signed similar MOUs on evaluation with the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) in the Philippines and the National Development Planning Agency (Bappenas) in Indonesia to provide cooperation that will meet the needs of those governments.



Signing ceremony between JBIC and MPI on July 9, 2007

Experiencing International Cooperation through the JBIC Internship Program

Since FY2004, JBIC has been providing an internship program for partnership universities' graduate students with strong interest in international cooperation and development assistance to deepen their understanding of ODA through practical on the job training.

From September 3 to September 28, 2007, the JBIC Development Assistance Operations Evaluation Office welcomed Mr. Shigematsu, a graduate student from Kyushu University, as an intern. During the internship program, he learned about the evaluation of development projects through on the job training such as assisting in daily operations in the evaluation office and through first-hand experiences at project sites, which included field visits to Vietnam. The column on the right includes Mr. Shigematsu's comments on his experiences as an intern. During his field visit to Vietnam, he also had the opportunity to participate in joint evaluation activities (see above section).

Experiences through the Internship Program

My experience as an intern at JBIC provided me with valuable opportunities to deepen my understanding of international cooperation and development assistance, which had been previously somewhat vague, and to gain insight into Japan's involvement in international cooperation. Previously, my general impression had been that ODA loans were used mainly to finance large-scale infrastructure projects such as the construction of roads, railways, or electric power and gas facilities. In recent years, however, these loans have also financed development in soft areas, such as the promotion of traffic safety and other activities. Joint evaluations conducted by JBIC and the executing agencies in developing countries are another aspect of new initiatives which go beyond the previous framework of ODA projects. During my internship, I was deeply impressed by the dedicated JBIC staff and specialists who worked so hard on a daily basis to provide better assistance. Meeting with a wide range of people, including JBIC staff and consultants with a variety of skills and backgrounds, as well as officers of executing agencies and internship participants from other universities, made me realize that diverse qualities and areas of involvement are required in international cooperation and that there are so many ways to be involved in development assistance. I have yet to determine "how" and "where", but my experience as an intern has strengthened my desire to contribute to international cooperation in the future.



Mr. Shigematsu (at the JBIC office)