

Chapter 3 JICA Program Evaluation

3-1 Strategic Enhancement of Programs

Recently, JICA has been actively promoting the implementation of projects based on country- and issue-specific approaches in order to raise aid effects. As part of such effort, when introducing Country Programs that summarize aid policies by country (1999), a group of projects that have a common objective were put together under a program*. A program concept helped clarify relationships among individual projects such as technical cooperation projects, development studies, and dispatch of experts, all of which are conducted in the same sector (refer to Figure 1-1, p. 11 for the relationship between project and program).

However, many programs that lack clarity in mid- and long-term cooperation goals or scenarios for achieving those goals have not always been formulated and implemented with sufficient strategies. While international aid trends require cooperation that aims to achieve higher-level goals based on the policy of a partner country through the sector program and coordination among donors, JICA also needs to enhance its program strategy.

Under such situations, JICA redefined program as a strategic framework to support the achievement of mid- and long-term development goals in a developing country in 2006, from which time JICA has been promoting more strategic implementation of projects. A program under the new definition includes three frameworks: (1) establishment of clear cooperation goals in line with a specific development strategy of a developing country and Japan's aid strategy, (2) formulation of a cooperation scenario appropriate for the achievement of goals, and (3) organic combination of a set of projects and collaboration with other development bodies.

3-2 Improvement of Program-level Evaluation

JICA was conducting country-specific evaluation for the purpose of evaluating aid effects on a target country as program-level evaluation, but there was a problem in terms of evaluability (goals and scenario designed for the emergence of development effects were not sufficient), thus requiring improvements in program-level evaluation methods. Various discussions were carried out

about program-level aid evaluation methods such as evaluation methods of effects among major donor countries and agencies. Along with the expansion of result-based aid methods and project management and the progress in aid coordination, a movement to review program-level evaluation methods arose. Accordingly, when conducting Synthesis Study: Country Program Evaluation in 2004, JICA analyzed and identified the issues pertaining to the past country program evaluations. At the same time, JICA reviewed the surrounding international trend and the needs for country program evaluations within the organization to discuss methods for more effective evaluation. These discussions revealed that the past country program evaluations, which confirmed consistency between JICA projects and related sectors, did not fully examine the priorities of issues in question, the combination of projects needed for solving issues, and synergic effects attained by the combinations. It also became evident that other aid agencies were shifting their evaluation focus from "attribution" to "contribution" (see 3-4 for details). As a result, the synthesis study recommended evaluation that was conducted based on the following three points.

- a. Not only consistency of the strategy of the JICA programs, but also the priority and positioning of the project in the development strategy of the partner shall be examined.
- b. Program evaluation does not simply accumulate individual projects, but also assesses coherency and relationships among components of the program with a focus on its strategic aspect.
- c. Evaluation shall be conducted using the concept of contribution based on coordination and collaboration with not only JICA projects but also aid schemes of the concerned country and Japan and projects of other donors.

Based on the above-mentioned perspectives, program evaluations were tried out from fiscal 2005 to 2006, namely, Basic Education Sector in Honduras**, Basic Education Expansion Program in Malawi and Primary Education Improvement Program in Viet Nam.

3-3 Implementation of JICA Program Evaluation

Using the evaluation method based on the concept of contribution that was developed through trial program evaluations (see

* At this time, program was defined as a set of projects (or individual projects) that are formulated and implemented under loosely connected common goals and targets.

** The summary of evaluation results of the Honduras program (Basic Education Sector) is included in Annual Evaluation Report 2005 and the whole report is available on the JICA website.

3-4 and 3-5 for details), JICA conducts program evaluation. In fiscal 2006, JICA is conducting program evaluation for Asia, Africa, Middle East and Latin America.

JICA's project evaluation is conducted for the primary purpose of either evaluating the outcomes of the implemented projects and drawing out lessons learned for the future implementation of similar projects, or extracting recommendations regarding the improvement of operational management for ongoing projects. Similarly, JICA's program evaluation is divided into two types: one aims at examining the degree of contribution to development outcomes after the completion of cooperation and feeding back the evaluation results to other JICA programs, and the other aims at evaluating the programs at the middle stage to extract future improvement measures. Many of JICA's ongoing programs are at the stages where cooperation goals, outcome indicators, and cooperation scenarios should be further clarified for strategic enhancement. Accordingly, program evaluations in fiscal 2006 mainly aim at improving ongoing programs.

The following sections, 3-4 and 3-5, will explain the framework and methods of JICA program evaluation.

3-4 Framework of Evaluation

Conventionally, JICA has conducted project evaluation based on the concept of attribution, which seeks to examine precise causal relationships between a specific project provided by an aid agency and changes in development status in the partner country. For example, JICA's project evaluation plans and evaluates the relations from activities and project purpose (activities-outputs-project purpose) based on precise causal relationships.

In contrast, a program sets a relatively high-level goal conducive to the achievement of developmental strategy goal of the partner country and achieving such a goal involves various factors other than the activities of one agency, such as activities of the

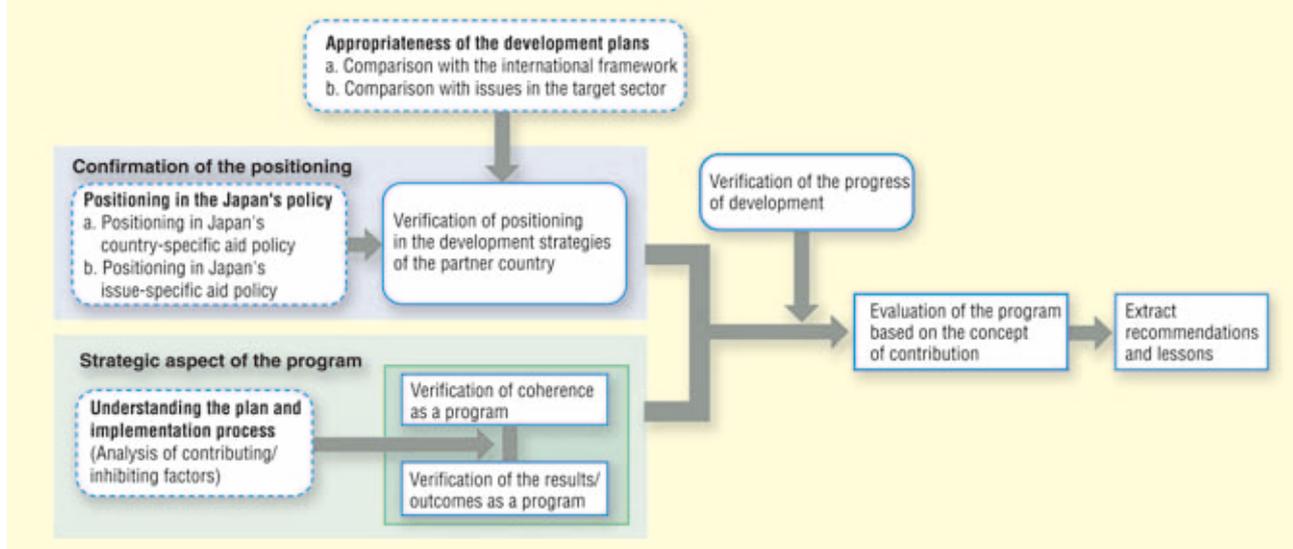
partner government and other donors and other external factors, thus making the verification of attribution difficult. Instead of evaluating the relationship between one agency's activities and development issues in the upper level based on the concept of attribution, a technique to conduct evaluation based on the concept of contribution, which focuses on what roles one agency played in achieving outcomes in the whole picture of activities of the partner country and other aid agencies, is becoming the norm for bilateral aid agencies and international organizations. The concept of contribution involves verification of the plausibility of the causal relationships between the progress of development issue in the partner country and the outcome aimed by an aid agency, which should be recognized separately and explicitly in advance (see Figure 1-5).

Based on the fact that JICA programs aim at setting up comparatively high-level goals to support the mid- and long-term development goals of a target country, and considering the trend regarding the evaluation methods of other aid agencies, this evaluation adopts the framework in which the plausibility of causal relationships is evaluated under the concept of contribution based on the positioning of JICA programs in the development strategy and the strategic aspect of JICA programs (plan, outcome and process).

3-5 Evaluation Method (Evaluation Perspectives by Step)

The evaluation conducted under the concept of contribution takes three steps (see Table 1-4): (1) confirmation of the positioning in the development strategy of the partner country; (2) confirmation of strategic aspect (plan, outcome and process) of JICA programs; and (3) contribution to the development strategy. In the evaluation based on the concept of contribution, the plausibility of causal relationships is evaluated after the outcome of

Figure 1-5 Framework of Evaluation



cooperation implemented by one agency (JICA) is separated from the overall outcome collectively attained from projects implemented by the government of a target country and other aid agencies. The plausibility of causal relationships is confirmed by the positioning in the development strategy, which questions how JICA programs were positioned in the development strategy of a target country and whether JICA selected and addressed high priority issues. It is also confirmed by assessing the strategic aspect (plan, outcome and process) of JICA programs that evaluate whether an effective plan was formulated for the achievement of goals (whether program was conducted with consistency), whether the outcomes were achieved, and whether plans and implementation procedures were changed appropriately depending on the situation. Using the evaluations of positioning and the strategic aspect (plan, outcome and process) as analysis steps, this evaluation is carried out based on the concept of contribution while considering the progress of development strategy of a target country (the whole outcome attained collectively from projects conducted by other aid agencies and government of a target country). Therefore, it can be concluded that the plausibility of causal

relationships is high if JICA selects the priority issues in the development strategy of a target country and attains significant outcomes with improvement in development issues. The following explains the evaluation perspectives by step.

(1) Confirmation of Positioning in Japan's Policy and Development Strategy of Partner Country

1) Confirmation of Positioning in Japan's Policy

Conformity with the policies of country assistance programs and country programs, and conformity with aid policy in a relevant sector (for example, BEGIN** in the education sector) are confirmed. Other important factors for effective implementation of programs such as the comparative superiority of Japan (strength) and utilization of past project experiences are also confirmed.

2) Confirmation of Positioning in Development Strategy of Partner Country

After examining the conformity with the development strategy of a partner country, it is confirmed whether a program inter-

Table 1-4 Evaluation Items and Examples of Evaluation Questions*

Evaluation Item		Evaluation Question	
1. Positioning	Positioning in Japan's policy	1-1-1 How is the JICA program positioned in Japan's country-specific aid policy? 1-1-2 How is the JICA program positioned in Japan's sector- and issue-specific aid policies?	
	Positioning in the development strategy of the partner country	1-2-1 How is the JICA program positioned in the development strategy of the partner country?	
2. Strategic aspect of program	Plan	2-1-1 Is the scenario for the achievement of JICA program goals (including the structure of a set of projects) appropriately established (program coherence)?	
		Outcome	2-2-1 To what extent were the goals of individual projects comprising JICA program achieved? What outcomes were attained by the implementation of individual projects? 2-2-2 What outcomes were attained by the coordination of JICA projects comprising JICA program from the perspective of achieving JICA program goals? 2-2-3 What outcomes were attained by the coordination of JICA projects and cooperation of other aid agencies from the perspective of achieving JICA program goals? 2-2-4 To what extent were the JICA program goals achieved? 2-2-5 Was the selection of comprising projects appropriate for the achievement of JICA program goals?
	Process	(Analysis is made as necessary at the time of evaluations of plans and outcomes in order to extract contributing and impeding factors.)	
		2-3-1 Were the appropriate cooperation and coordination of projects comprising the JICA program attempted at the planning and implementation stages?	
		2-3-2 Were appropriate cooperation and coordination with other aid agencies attempted in the planning and implementation of individual projects comprising the JICA program?	
	3. Contribution to development strategy		3-1-1 How did the indicators for development goals of the partner country in which the JICA program is positioned progress? 3-1-2 How did the JICA program contribute to the effect described in the abovementioned 3-1-1? 3-1-3 What outcomes did the JICA program bring to the achievement of development goals by cooperating with other aid agencies? 3-1-4 Was the JICA program effective and self-sustaining from the perspective of achieving the development goal of the partner country? (What kind of cooperation should be implemented in the future for the achievement of goals?)

* Not all the evaluation questions were addressed. Evaluation questions are selected and applied as necessary for each program.

** Basic Education for Growth Initiative (BEGIN): In recognition that the investment in education based on self-help efforts is the most effective means to eradicate poverty and promote economic growth in developing countries, the Japanese government announced this initiative in 2002 at the Kananaskik Summit (Canada). The initiative indicates future direction of Japan's aid policy in the basic education sector, showing the policies on the basis of support for self-help efforts, recognition of cultural diversity, and support based on collaboration and coordination within the international community, as principles.

venes in the important issues of development strategy. In doing so, in addition to analysis on current issues in a relevant sector, analysis is made from perspectives such as priority sectors (priority issues) identified by government and administrative organizations of a relevant country and other aid agencies in their development strategies, and budget allocations. Based on these analyses in a comprehensive manner, positioning of the program is confirmed. In the case of Honduras, as a result of the study on priority sectors and the project implementation status of the government and donors, it became evident that donors cooperate in lowering the dropout rate, centered on the EFA-ETI Plan*, the development strategy of Honduras in the basic education sector, and that the JICA program also addresses priority issues while being positioned in the picture.

Efficient analysis and more accurate evaluations that correspond to JICA program goals can be expected by considering the differences in levels of issues in the development strategy and JICA program goals, and understanding the scope of issues subject to the analysis. The program evaluations that are currently being conducted divide issues into three types: upper-level issues crossing over sectors and levels (issues in relation to goals in the national development strategy and the general development strategy of a specific area), sector-level issues, and sub-sector-level issues. In the Malawi program, program goals were set up at the education sector level and the analysis targets a wide area throughout the sector. Accordingly, in order to conduct effective analysis, after the positioning and priority of the sub-sectors (such as primary education and secondary education) that JICA focuses on in a sector were confirmed, detailed issue analysis by sub-sector was taken as necessary.

(2) Confirmation of Strategic Aspect (Plan, Outcome and Process) of JICA Programs

1) Confirmation of JICA Program Plan (Coherence)

Whether a program is consistent with JICA program goals is confirmed. In particular, confirmation is made on whether goals are clear and whether an appropriate scenario to achieve the goals (such as how each project is related to one another and if sufficient efforts are made for the achievement of goals) is formulated (implemented).

When analyzing the scenario, in addition to JICA programs themselves, their coordination with Japan's other aid schemes (yen loans and grant aid cooperation) and projects of other actors (such as the partner government, aid agencies, and NGOs) should be taken into consideration. In the case of Viet Nam, JICA supported the formulation of a development strategy through a development study in the primary education sector. Based on this development strategy, the JICA program aims at contributing to the improvement in quality of nationwide primary education through technical cooperation projects while coordinating with projects of other aid agencies. Evaluation concludes that the pro-

gram was designed with consistency based on the relationships of individual projects leading to the achievement of goals.

For the relationship between program goals and scenarios, it is generally assumed that the higher the level of program goal, the more aid inputs and actor activities are involved. So it is important to be aware of the levels of program goals when analyzing scenarios.

2) Confirmation of Outcomes

Outcomes at the three levels are confirmed.

The first level to be confirmed is what kind of outcomes project-level activities comprising the program produce (produced), utilizing the evaluation results of individual projects. Second level to be confirmed is what kind of effects the project-level outcomes extracted to achieve higher-level goals through coordination with other JICA and Japanese projects and projects of other aid agencies. The third level is the confirmation of achievement status of JICA program outcomes. In this way, outcomes of JICA programs (outcomes of a specific agency) are evaluated and confirmed while considering these three levels.

For example, in the case of Honduras, as well as the project-level outcomes such as improvements in teachers' skills, outcomes achieved through coordination were observed; for example, textbooks and training methods developed in a JICA project were expanded and implemented nationwide by other aid agencies. Higher-level outcomes such as quality improvement of lessons were also observed. The program goals were in conformity with the goals of the Honduras development strategy, and so the progress was confirmed by taking into consideration the various indicators set up in the development strategy and the program implementation status.

3) Confirmation of Process

Analysis is made when necessary regarding the contributing and impeding factors affecting the planning, implementation, and outcomes of JICA programs. For example, the process of how to formulate projects that are not in coherence with the program is analyzed from the perspective of the aid policy changes. And the process of aid cooperation leading to the outcomes at the program level in coordination with other donors is analyzed.

(3) Evaluation of Contribution to Development Strategy

1) Confirmation of Progress of Development Strategy

How the development strategy progressed in the timeframe, in other words, what outcome as a whole was attained by combining the program outcomes of the partner government, JICA, and other aid agencies including the Japanese government, is confirmed. Generally speaking, achievement indicators are set for the development strategy, so progress according to the indicators is confirmed. In the case where the implementation of a

* Education for All-Fast Track Initiative (EFA-FTI): Initiative to give aid priority to countries where achievement of full completion of primary education by 2015 is deemed difficult, on condition that they meet the specific criteria.

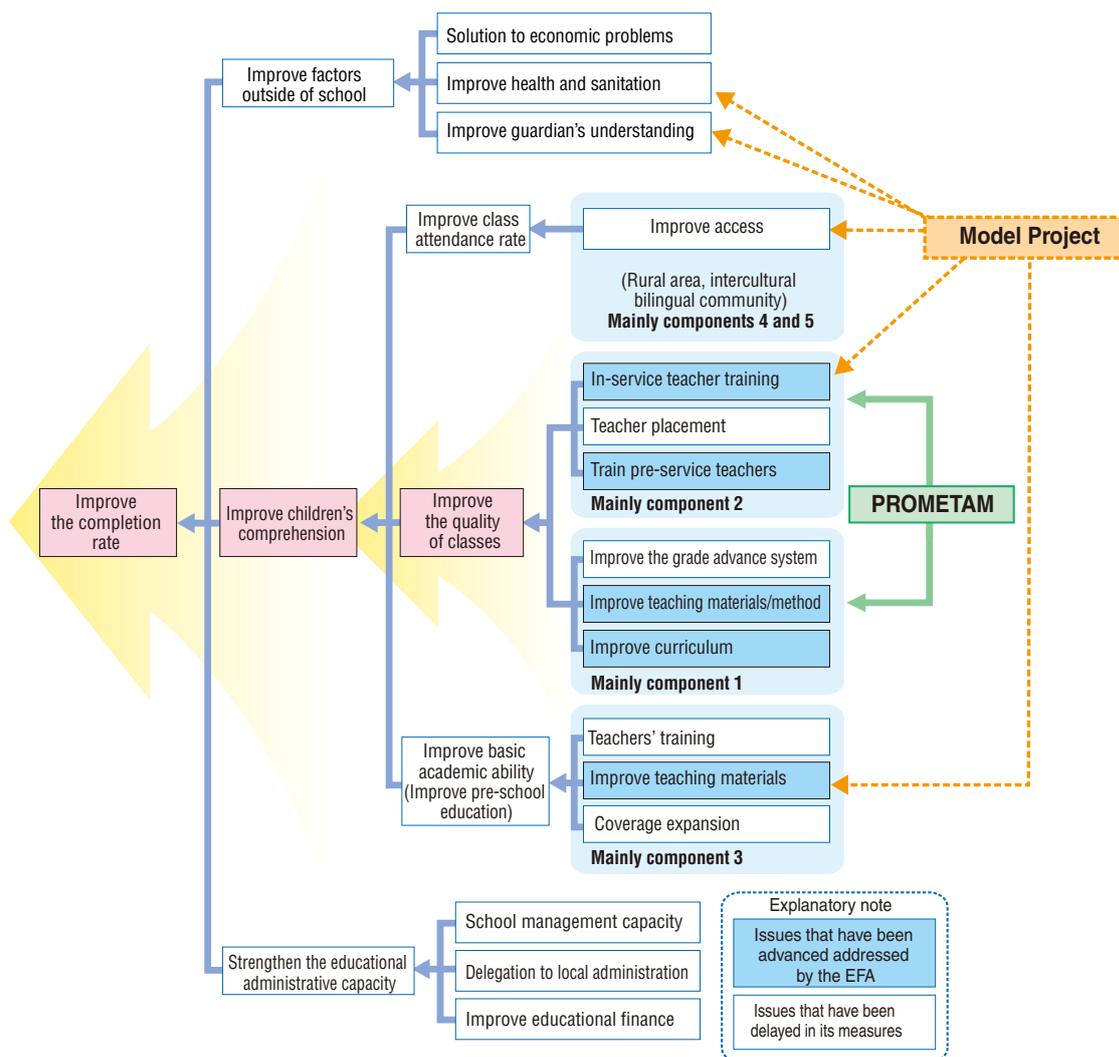
development strategy was fairly recent and has not reached the stage of index changes, the status of efforts in relation to the development strategy is confirmed, and by verifying the progressing sectors (sectors where progress is expected) and the non-progressing sectors (sectors where progress seems difficult), the plausibility of outcome as a whole can be confirmed.

2) Evaluation of Contribution

Based on the evaluation results in terms of positioning and strategic aspects, the JICA program's contribution to the progress of the development strategy is evaluated. Using the analysis result of each of the above-mentioned steps, the relations between JICA program outcomes and the development strategy progress, in other words, the plausibility of causal relationships between the JICA program outcomes and the achievement of goals is analyzed and the final evaluation results, recommendations, and lessons learned are extracted by taking into consideration the analysis results of the process.

In the case of Honduras, the implementation of the development strategy (EFA-FTI Plan) was fairly recent and it was difficult to understand clear progress using the indicators. In order to verify how each activity leads to the final goal, improved completion rate, the conceptual flow chart of the process to contribution (Figure 1-6), was compiled for evaluation based on the development strategy structure. Based on this flow chart the following analyses were made: (1) JICA plays a central role in relatively advanced activities that correspond to Components 1 and 2* as primary issues, raising the plausibility of contribution; (2) By enhancing the activities that are not sufficiently advanced and which correspond to Components 3 and 5, the Model Project that carries out activities related to some factors outside school, the improvement of plausibility of contribution can be expected; and (3) It is necessary to take into consideration the administrative capacity enhancement that is not included in the EFA-FTI Plan and other factors outside school in order to achieve the goals. Evaluations are conducted based on these analyses, and recom-

Figure 1-6 Conceptual Flow Chart of the Process to Contribution



* EFA-FTI Plan, the development strategy of Honduras, is comprised of five components. The components in the figure correspond to the five components in the EFA-FTI Plan.

mendations are extracted.

Among the evaluations conducted in fiscal 2006, evaluation reports for Malawi and Viet Nam are completed (refer to the BOX article) and disclosed on the JICA website. Other program

evaluations are at the stage of report compilation. Utilizing these case studies, JICA will continuously improve the evaluation methods and enhance the strategic aspect of JICA programs.



6 Case Studies of Program Evaluations in Malawi and Viet Nam

This article outlines the results of JICA program evaluations in Malawi and Viet Nam conducted in fiscal 2006. Both programs were at the stage of program strategic enhancement, so the evaluations were conducted for the purpose of improving on-going programs.

<Malawi: Basic Education Expansion Program>

In the education sector in Malawi, the completion rate of primary education is still low due to a shortage of classrooms as well as an insufficient number of teachers who lack the required level of skills. The enrollment rate in secondary education is also low. To address these issues, the Malawi government and various aid agencies are implementing cooperation based on the policy investment framework and the education sector plan that are the development strategy of the Malawi education sector. JICA also is implementing a program aimed at expanding access and improving quality in the primary and secondary education sector.

Positioning: Priority issues in the Malawi education sector are supported. A development study is conducted for the purpose of management enhancement in the local educational administration, which is recognized as an issue in the development strategy but which few donors have addressed. Also being implemented is a technical cooperation project for the purpose of improving teacher quality in the secondary education sector where the existence of non-qualified teachers has become an issue.

Strategic Aspect (Plan, Outcome, and Process): As for the scenario, the component aimed at enhancing the skills of educational administration at the local level (such as development study) and the component aimed at enhancing secondary science and mathematic education (technical cooperation project) were implemented as separate programs initially. When the programs were reviewed, the goal level was raised and the two components were consolidated

into one program. Therefore, the relations between the two components in the program goal were not clear and it was observed that the strategic aspect weakened. At the project level, outcomes such as formulation and revision of the prefectural education plan in the development study, resulting capacity development of prefectural teachers, and development of core trainers in the technical cooperation project in secondary education, are achieved. As for the component aimed at enhancing secondary science and mathematic education, JICA's technical cooperation project and cooperation by other aid agencies complement one another, thus producing outcomes.

Conclusion: The program goals are set at a high level covering a wide range of issues including those of primary and secondary education. The achievement of goals is anticipated to be difficult in the short and middle terms considering the amount of aid implemented by the Malawi government and aid agencies including JICA. Therefore, the plausibility of contribution is not high in the short and middle terms.

Recommendations: Program goals should be set up at the sub-sector level where future input by JICA and other donors and the Malawi government are expected to result in improvements in the short and middle terms so that the program has a scenario to raise the plausibility of contribution.

<Viet Nam: Primary Education Improvement Program>

Viet Nam has reached 97.5% of its net enrollment rate in primary education and is at the last stage of achieving universal primary education. Now the country is working to improve the completion rate and access in poverty areas and mountainous areas. Under such a situation, JICA is implementing a program aimed at improving the quality of primary education.

Positioning: In the primary education sector, which has problems with education quality, support is provided for the

formulation of a Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) and training is provided for teachers to run classes in line with the new curriculum promoted by the Vietnamese government. These cooperation efforts for improving education quality address the primary issues.

Strategic Aspect (Plan, Outcome, and Process): As for the scenario, support for the formulation of PEDP is given to solve the issues of the primary education sector and, based on the PEDP, priority sectors are selected and technical cooperation is extended, thus showing that consistency in the program is aimed at improving the quality of primary education. As for the outcomes, in addition to project-level outcomes such as the completion of PEDP and key trainer development training for model lessons based on the new curriculum, outcomes for the achievement of program goals are emerging as observed based on the fact that coordination between JOCV and technical cooperation projects promoted the implementation of model lessons, and that the formulation of PEDP accelerated the process of formulation of an EFA Plan.

Conclusion: The program is being implemented with the positioning and strategic aspects secured. The Vietnamese government and other donors are also actively providing projects that focus on the primary education sector, a sub-sector level. Given that achievement of the program goals in the future is probable, it can be concluded that the plausibility of the contribution of the JICA program is improving.

Recommendation: Issues such as how the model projects under development in the technical cooperation project can be spread nationwide remain. In order to raise the plausibility of contribution in the future, it is therefore necessary to enhance coordination with other agencies for expansion and promotion in addition to the establishment of an effective model in the project.