

Advisory Committee on Evaluation

JICA has set up an external advisory committee to obtain advice on project evaluation. The recommendations from the committee are fed back into the evaluation system and method for further improvement.

In order to ensure transparency and objectivity in the project evaluation system as well as to enhance the evaluation system and improve evaluation quality, JICA receives advice on 1) the guidelines and implementation of evaluation, and 2) the structure and overall system of JICA's evaluation.

The Committee, chaired by Hiromitsu Muta, Executive Vice-president of Tokyo Institute of Technology, consists of experts with in-depth knowledge of international aid as well as evaluation expertise from various fields, such as international organizations, academics, NGO, media, and private groups, etc.

Below is an outline of the advice and recommendations received from Committee members at the second and third meetings convened in 2009.

From the 2nd Meeting

- 1) **Evaluation of general financial assistance:** It is important to differentiate between countries and regions where Japan has a significant role because of the promotion of aid coordination and countries where Japan has a small presence.
- 2) **Evaluation of pseudo programs for measuring financial and technical cooperation proposed in Master Plan:** It is understood that after the merger between JICA and JBIC, it became easier to select and develop projects during the preparatory study phase, without becoming caught up in the type of cooperation scheme. For future evaluations, it may become important to evaluate projects that were included in the same scope at the preparatory study phase as a single group.
- 3) **Implementation of ex-post evaluation by external evaluators:** JICA's policy to establish the accuracy of the evaluation (detail/simplicity) according to the scale of the project is appropriate from the standpoint of making effective use of resources. For desk evaluations, it is necessary to keep in mind the burden on JICA's overseas offices.
- 4) **Support for enhancing evaluation capacity:** It is desirable if developing countries do the evaluation first and then share the findings. In some cases the wishes of aid recipient countries will be made known, and this will also lead to sustainability.
- 5) **Projects subject to evaluation:** It may be more useful for devel-

opment of future projects if evaluations are limited to major projects and more detailed lessons learned are derived and fed back.

- 6) **Basic policy of new rating system:** It is suggested that the following are incorporated: a mechanism to systematically evaluate the impact of cooperation among all three schemes; the perspective regarding the impact of establishing cooperation program and improving sustainability.
- 7) **Annual Evaluation Report 2009 (draft) and preparing policy on New JICA Project Evaluation Guideline:** JICA should consolidate the evaluation findings, come up with a mechanism to make them useful to future projects, reflect the findings in the new guideline, and make practical use of them. If JICA in its annual report describes how it will address the derived lessons learned and advice as well as how it has drawn on the previous fiscal year's lessons learned and recommendations to improve its projects, readers will be able to understand the feedback function and status.
- 8) **Concluding remarks from chairperson:** This fiscal year is the first fiscal year for actually conducting an integrated evaluation of all three schemes and is an important year in terms of this fiscal year's implementation methodology orienting future evaluations. It is hoped that JICA also makes efforts to plan projects from the viewpoint of evaluations.

From the 3rd Meeting

- 1) **Implementation of staff questionnaire aimed at promoting use of findings and formulation of new project evaluation guideline:** It is important to further enhance staff interest in evaluations, appropriately learn from the lessons of previous evaluations and make use of them in the field. Therefore, questionnaires aimed at promoting the use of evaluation findings should be continued, and processes and/or mechanisms for improving feedback should be considered.
- 2) **Consideration of ex-post evaluation system (simple evaluation system, impact evaluation, rating, general financial assistance):** Rather than simple cost comparisons, cost examinations of Grant Aid projects need to also consider specifications, lifespan, and transfer technology, as well as measure qualitative effects. It is also necessary to decide at the time the Grant Aid is provided whether to attach priority to quality or volume. While impact evaluations need to take into account cost effectiveness, their attempts to clarify the cause-effect relationship and give quantitative explanations of the impact are highly regarded.
- 3) **Introduction of Grant Aid ex-ante evaluation:** It is important to gauge outputs, but it is also necessary to take into account outcomes as directions where the project is headed.

4) **Consideration of program evaluation method:** With a view to achieving the program goal, it is necessary to consider the transition process, including the adjustment mechanism and internalization of the counterpart country's system.

5) **Status of formulation of Annual Evaluation Report:** Efforts should be made to use expressions that are plain and understandable from the readers' perspective.

6) **Other comments:**

- The Government Revitalization Unit's screenings and items pointed out in the DAC Peer Review of Japan are matters which have been discussed also by the Advisory Committee on Evaluation. Although JICA is being conscious of PDCA and increasingly recognizing the importance of evaluations, a sincere response is needed for issues JICA has not yet been able to achieve. In particular, it needs to give priority to evaluation-related PR and present the effects in an easy to understand manner.

- With ODA budget cuts and the limited number of personnel in JICA's Evaluation Department, JICA is required to have creativity with the evaluation system, in order to focus on issues which should be explored without narrowing the scope of evaluation.

Improving the Evaluation System

JICA, as the organization handling all three schemes of assistance (technical cooperation, ODA Loans, Grant Aid), is advancing various efforts for expanding and enhancing evaluations.

For building a post-merger evaluation system

JICA aims to develop an evaluation system that will be consistent across all of JICA's programs, while considering the unique characteristics of each assistance scheme. In this light, JICA is working on giving the system common evaluation perspectives and visual axes for

people involved in the three schemes. Additionally, JICA is working to develop evaluation methods that address new project needs and project types, as well as improve feedback to better utilize the evaluation findings for the improvement of the projects.

Approach 1 Reinforcing foundation of evaluation system for taking merits and effects of merger

► Progress of evaluation method and system integration for three schemes

- 1) The system of ex-ante and ex-post evaluations used for technical cooperation and ODA Loan projects was also introduced for Grant Aid projects. All three schemes will take an almost similar approach to ex-ante and ex-post evaluations.
- 2) Progress is being made to apply the impact evaluation method adopted by ODA Loan projects to technical cooperation projects (p.22).

Progress is also being made to integrate the evaluation method and system of the three schemes. For example, since FY2009 ex-post evaluations of all projects over a certain size under the three schemes, including Grant Aid, have been conducted by external evaluators, and transparency and objectivity of evaluations are being maintained.

► Development of consistent rating method

JICA gives ratings in its project evaluations to present the findings more clearly and disclose them. While before, different bodies were conducting the evaluations for technical cooperation, ODA Loans, and Grant Aid, respectively, and the rating method was therefore different among three schemes. However, JICA has established a new common rating system for all three schemes (see table below).

Specifically, for calculating the overall evaluation, a flow chart used for ODA Loan projects was adopted to make it visually easy to understand. For sub-ratings, a detailed set of criteria were created that match the unique characteristics of each scheme. In this way, JICA aims to develop more accurate ratings.

The rating excludes details of evaluation for clarity, and does not reflect the evaluation findings comprehensively. The rating results should not be overemphasized, therefore the new rating system

■ Integrated ex-post evaluation system of three schemes (FY2009)

| | Technical Cooperation | ODA Loans | Grant Aid |
|-------------------------|--|--|--|
| Timing | In principle, until 3rd year after project termination | | |
| Target Project | All projects with input of 200 million yen and more | All projects with size of 200 million yen and more | All projects with size of 200 million yen and more (general and fisheries) |
| Evaluator | External evaluation | | |
| Evaluation Perspectives | Based on the five DAC evaluation criteria | | |

■ Previous rating system

| | Technical Cooperation | ODA Loans | Grant Aid* |
|---------------------------|--|---|--|
| Timing | Terminal evaluation (6 months prior to project termination) | Ex-post evaluation (2 years after project completion) | Ex-post evaluation (4 years after project completion) |
| System | Multiple secondary evaluators rate based on internal evaluation findings | External evaluator rates project | Internal evaluator rates project |
| Perspectives | Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability | Relevance, effectiveness (impact), efficiency, sustainability | Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability, publicity impact |
| Approach | Each perspective rated out of 5 (max) Rating given by multiple evaluators | Each perspective sub-rated out of 3 levels (a,b,c) | Each perspective rated out of 12 levels (A*~D-) |
| Overall Evaluation Method | Overall evaluation determined based on weighted rating of each perspective | Overall evaluation determined by plugging sub-ratings of perspectives into flow chart; shown as A,B,C,D | No overall evaluation |

■ New rating system (applicable from evaluations conducted in FY2009)

| | All Three Schemes (Technical Cooperation, ODA Loans, Grant Aid*) |
|---------------------------|--|
| Timing | Ex-post evaluation (in principle, until 3rd year after termination) |
| System | External evaluator rates project |
| Perspectives | Relevance, effectiveness (impact), efficiency, continuity |
| Approach | Each perspective sub-rated out of 3 levels (a,b,c) |
| Overall Evaluation Method | Overall evaluation determined by plugging sub-ratings of perspectives into flow chart (partially revised version of chart previously used for ODA Loans); shown as A,B,C,D |

*Of the Grant Aid projects transferred to JICA, the rating system applies only to the general grant aid projects and all fisheries grant aid projects previously evaluated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

should be considered as a reference indicator, as with the old rating system.

►Revision of evaluation guideline

To improve the quality of evaluations and promote their use, it is necessary to present and explain the evaluation system, method, and outcome priorities to a broad audience, both within and outside of JICA. To this end, JICA is reviewing the existing guideline and evaluation system, gathering and sorting out information about the current situation and challenges surrounding evaluations, and is compiling a clear and practical project evaluation guideline on the evaluation method of the three schemes. To increase domestic and overseas JICA project staffs' understanding about the evaluation system and method, JICA will create a summary of the new project evaluation guideline, and based on this, plans to create multimedia learning materials in multiple languages (Japanese, English, Spanish).



Project evaluation multimedia learning material

Approach 2

Development of new evaluation method

JICA is working to develop and enhance the monitoring and evaluation method for cooperation programs that are strategic frameworks for approaching integrated programs including all three schemes (technical cooperation, ODA Loans, Grant Aid), as well as to develop and consider the evaluation method for financial assistance projects that do not yet have an established evaluation method.

As an output of launching the new JICA, it is expected that aid efficiency and effectiveness will increase, through forming effective partnerships between the three assistance schemes (technical cooperation, ODA Loans, Grant Aid) and integrating them wherever necessary. From an evaluation standpoint, it will be necessary to have an accurate grasp of the effects of the integration of assistance schemes. It remains that JICA must continue to tackle priority issues, including evaluation of JICA programs that effectively integrate multiple assistance schemes and development of a more accurate comprehension of the result on the outcome level.

►Improvement of setting indicators to better measure outcomes

It has become increasingly important to measure the extent of achievement of objectives and verify the outcomes through monitoring and evaluation, based on the appropriate establishment of objectives and indicators at the project planning phase. To appropriately establish such objectives and indicators, JICA is working to improve its ex-ante evaluation process that will enable JICA to establish appropriate objectives and indicators and enhance the evaluation guideline.

Specifically, JICA is working to establish clear and appropriate indicators in consultation with relevant personnel during the ex-ante evaluation form creation phase, as well as to incorporate good practices for the development of quantitative indicators into the evaluation guideline being revised. In parallel with these efforts, JICA is also conducting training for the development of logframes, objectives, and indicators for JICA staff directly engaged in the planning, evaluation, and operation of JICA projects.

Furthermore, JICA plans to implement baseline studies for 22 projects prior to and immediately after the projects' start, and is working to collect and maintain indicator data that are necessary for more detailed evaluations.

►Development of JICA cooperation program evaluation method

JICA conducted studies to consider the evaluation method for JICA cooperation programs, using the master plans for China, Philippines, and Zambia (overview of Zambia example on p.17, p.70-71). The development objectives presented in the master plan (strategic framework)—usually assumed to be achieved in 10-20 years—were considered to be the program objectives. The studies evaluated, for example, how the plan was aligned with the development plan of the counterpart government, how the proposed projects were achieved, and what sort of roles were fulfilled by the projects implemented by Japan/JICA. The recommendations and lessons learned from the studies will be used to improve the program formulation and program evaluation method.

►Promotion of impact evaluation research

JICA has been gradually implementing "impact evaluation" method that measures the impact of its projects using a micro-econometrics method. To increase the performance of impact evaluations, JICA, for example, conducts trial evaluations of ongoing projects that meet the conditions for impact evaluations, and for projects being prepared/planned, collects and analyzes data necessary for impact evaluations from the project start-up phase. JICA is also making efforts to develop staffs' analysis and research skills related to impact evaluations through the development of manuals and workshops (p.22).

►Review of suspended projects

Although it is possible to derive recommendations and lessons learned from projects that were suspended without being completed, there was no evaluation method for doing this. Therefore, from FY2007 JICA has been developing an evaluation method for suspended ODA Loan projects. These project reviews abstract the factors and processes that contributed to the project not being finished, as well as lessons learned, and JICA is working for utilizing them to improve future project management (p.34).

Approach-3 Promoting enhancement of feedback

Feedback of evaluation findings into projects

JICA is working to improve the projects, taking into account the evaluation findings fed back to the field.

[Example of application of evaluation findings 1] (application of recommendation at implementation phase)

The mid-term evaluation of "Japan-China Cooperation Center for Meteorological Disasters" in China recommended the establishment of a larger network of communities and specialized fields to facilitate the development of a forecast model, as well as strengthening the partnership with the international weather observation network for international appeal and awareness.

Based on the recommendations, the Center held workshops and seminars on the thematic research topics, and exchanged information on technologies. The Center also launched its exclusive website, and spread information and conducted PR proactively. There was active exchange of information on latest research trends and outcomes, and the network of relevant persons was strengthened creatively.

As a result of these efforts, the terminal evaluation confirmed that the initial objectives (development of a forecast model, enhanced understanding of mechanism, etc.) were achieved. Additionally, it was evaluated that the proactive transmission of information, e.g., research presentations at international conferences, helped to bring attention to the outcomes of the project on the international stage.

[Example of application of evaluation findings 2] (application of lessons learned from similar projects)

The ex-ante evaluation of "Broadening Regional Initiative for Developing Girls' Education (BRIDGE) Program" in Yemen recognized that girls' non-enrollment and dropout were remarkably high compared to boys', and that the challenge is to close the education gender

gap.

With regards to improving the enrollment rate and lowering the dropout rate, lessons learned from projects already completed, such as the Study on Regional Educational Development and Improvement Project (REDIP) in Indonesia and the Basic Education Improvement Program for Rural Area in Morocco, revealed that education promotion activities are effective when schools and communities jointly engage in enrollment campaigns or improve the learning environment.

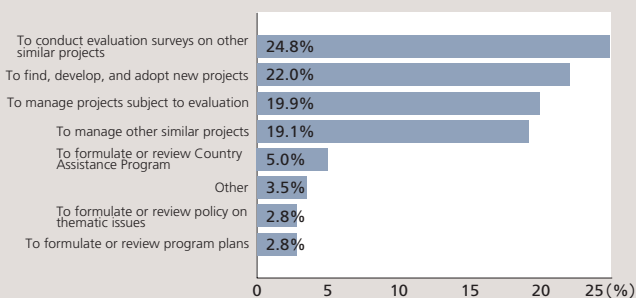
Building on these lessons learned, the BRIDGE project newly established a school committee and parents' association (fathers' association, mothers' association), and promoted their active engagement. The project also called for the clear mention of promoting girls' education in school plans. Training was provided to local education administrators to support the monitoring of these interventions. As a result, the number of principals who recognized that boys and girls have an equal right to education increased significantly from 9.4% when the project started to 96.6% three years after the project's start.

Staff questionnaire for promoting feedback

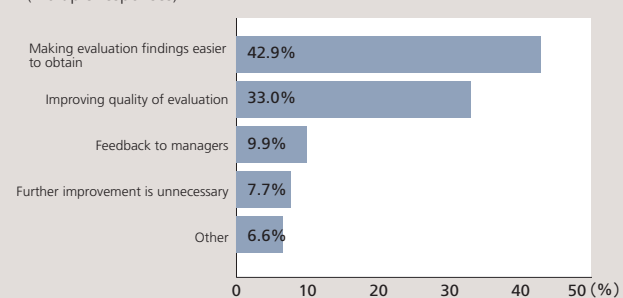
To promote the feedback of evaluation findings, a questionnaire was administered to JICA personnel regarding their consciousness about applying the evaluation findings, and suggestions on improving the evaluations. The results from the latest questionnaire indicated that for promoting the application of evaluation findings, it would be effective to simplify the method of obtaining the findings. Additionally, for improving the quality of the evaluations, it would be effective to enhance the sections on lessons learned and indicators. JICA will take these suggestions into account and work to further improve the feedback mechanism.

From the results of staff questionnaire for promoting feedback

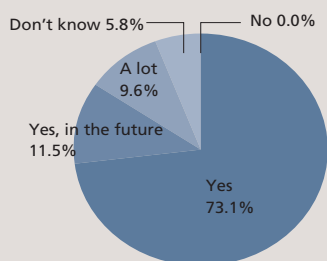
How do you apply evaluation findings? (multiple responses)



What is effective for improving the use and application of evaluation findings? (multiple responses)



Did the application of evaluation findings have any impact (project improvement or organizational learning)?



What improvements need to be made? (multiple responses)

