

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.

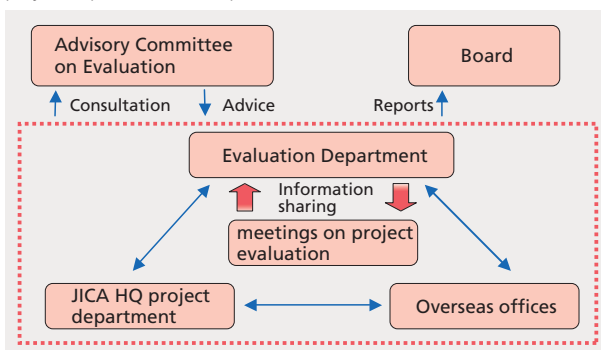
Improving the Evaluation System

In order to improve project management and increase development impact, JICA is taking steps to improve its evaluation system. In particular, priority is placed on strengthening feedback by making use of lessons learned and recommendations from evaluation findings and improving accountability through evaluations.

Approach 1 Strengthening feedback

Strengthening information sharing between evaluation and project implementation departments

To improve projects, the feedback of lessons learned and recommendations from evaluation findings into follow-on and similar projects is important. In order to further strengthen information sharing between the evaluation and project implementation departments, meeting on project evaluation was newly introduced at JICA. The meeting in principle is held twice a year to share information and exchange opinions on project evaluation between the evaluation and project implementation departments.



Improving evaluation quality and promoting use of evaluation findings

To conduct evaluations in line with project needs and increase the evaluation-related knowledge and capacity of staff and stakeholders, JICA does the following:

1. Address new evaluation needs

JICA is developing new evaluation methods to improve project management and impact (e.g., cooperation program evaluation method and impact evaluation method [see p.11]) and is applying them in practice.

2. Reinforce the evaluation capacity of staff

To promote the use of the New JICA Project Evaluation Guideline, which outlines the project evaluation system and method of JICA since its merger, JICA has created multimedia materials for the guideline (Japanese, English, and Spanish). It also held distance learning seminars on project evaluation (Japanese, English, Spanish, and French) for Japanese and national staffs of JICA's field offices.

In addition, in August 2010, special training was held for JICA staff engaged in evaluation work. The lecture given by an outside instructor on "social survey methods for gauging project impact" covered a range of topics from social survey design to data collection and analysis methods. Furthermore, as part of the "social survey for JICA projects", a workshop was held on the purpose, methods, and implementation

challenges of impact evaluations in particular, which are being employed more frequently in recent years. JICA thereby strived to raise awareness about the importance of social surveys in project evaluations as a tool for improving projects.



Project evaluation multimedia material (<http://jica-net.jica.go.jp/dspace/handle/10410/668>)

Mechanism for promoting the use of evaluation findings

To improve information disclosure and strengthen its accountability to the people, while also bearing in mind the needs that were confirmed from a questionnaire administered to stakeholders in 2009 to promote feedback, JICA set up the "Project Evaluation Search Database" on its website at the end of September 2010. The database includes the evaluation findings for Technical Cooperation, ODA Loans, and Grant Aid. The evaluations are searchable by project title, region/country, sector, scheme, evaluation type, and start year.

The creation of the database has made evaluation information more accessible to people interested in JICA's projects and evaluations. In addition, it has enabled the smooth feedback of evaluation information to those engaged in project design and planning, project implementation and management, and project evaluation and monitoring.

検索条件

対象地域・国名

検索

件数

評価種別

目的別

実施年度 (西暦4桁)

検索

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Evaluation findings now searchable on the JICA website. (<http://www2.jica.go.jp/ja/evaluation/index.php>) Japanese only.

Examples of Uses of Evaluation Findings

(1) Cambodia “Technical Service Center for Irrigation System Project” (Technical Cooperation)

Lesson learned: Partnership with government agency

This project aims to contribute to the achievement of efficient water resources management and stable agricultural production through improving the management techniques of irrigation projects in the project area.

In a similar project carried out in Pakistan, the “Irrigation Management Transfer/Water Management Expert Project in Punjab Province”, while the importance of the partnership between the agriculture and irrigation authorities was acknowledged, a variety of problems came to light, including lack of partnership due to the government’s vertical administrative structure and lack of transparency in the partnership arrangements.

In Cambodia, too, it is essential that the Ministry of Water Resources and Meteorology in charge of irrigation development and management and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in charge of agriculture management work together, and thus, JICA has consistently urged both ministries to do so from the time of the implementation of a preceding project. However, as with the project in Pakistan, the partnership between the ministries did not fully function. Bearing this in mind, this project confirmed that there are few obstacles to partnership at the field level and promotes partnership at the field level. The provincial agricultural authority in the project site was identified as one of the counterparts, and this project serves as a model irrigation project to generate impacts, including improved agricultural management.

(2) Viet Nam “Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Promoting Project” (ODA Loan)

Lesson learned: Establishment of interest rate, ensure relevance with environment policy

This project, through a two-step loan via the Vietnam Development Bank, aims to provide the necessary mid- to long-term funds for the promotion of energy efficiency and renewable energy use by companies in the country, and to raise the awareness of these companies.

In the “Environmental Protection Promotion Program” in Thailand and the “Small and Micro Industries Leader and Entrepreneur Promotion Project” in Sri Lanka, the market interest rate declined, and thus, the projects’ merit of having a low interest rate decreased. From both projects, the lesson learned was that in accordance with the changes in the economic situation, the projects should have allowed for the flexible application of the lending rate for the two-step loan. Drawing on this lesson, this project establishes a sub-loan interest rate that is linked to the national interest rate which fluctuates with market changes, so that it is a preferential interest rate that is suitable for the Vietnamese market.

In addition, in the “Mexico City Sulfur Dioxide Emission Reduction Project” in Mexico, it was recommended that when providing a two-step loan type assistance in the environmental conservation field, it is necessary to analyze the project’s relationship with related projects and subsidies provided by other government agencies and coordinate with them. Bearing this in mind, this project established an advisory committee consisting of relevant organizations and government agencies to discuss the project’s relevance with the policy trends in energy efficiency and renewable energy.

(3) Montenegro “The Project for Urgent Rehabilitation of Water Supply System in the Capital City of Podgorica” (Grant Aid)

Lesson learned: Monitoring system

This project aims to rehabilitate the water distribution system in Podgorica, and through monitoring the system’s operations and water distribution situation, provide a stable water supply service to the people of the city.

Regarding monitoring systems of water supplies, a lesson from the “Project for the Improvement of Water Supply System in Belgrade City” in then Serbia and Montenegro was that the after-sales service contract with a local company contributed to the appropriate utilization of the monitoring system. For the said project, JICA proposed to the executing agency during the assessment phase to do the same, and the same measure is scheduled to be implemented.

Approach 2 Improving accountability

1. Expanding the rating system

To make the evaluation findings easy to understand for the people, the rating method was applied to illustrate the evaluation findings for the three aid schemes of ODA Loans, Technical Cooperation (experimented in FY2008), and Grant Aid (since FY2009 ex-post evaluations).

2. Improving the disclosure of evaluation findings

In addition to the Project Evaluation Search Database on the JICA website (see p.9), JICA will continue to make efforts to employ simpler, easy to understand language in its evaluation reports, including this report. Similarly, JICA will appropriately disclose expert analyses useful from an evaluation standpoint.

3. Promoting results-based management

To ensure that the project goal and outcome indicators (the basis for project management) are appropriately established, JICA’s evaluation department conducts cross-cutting quality management for its ex-ante evaluations across the various aid schemes and sectors. It also provides

support to improve logicity until the project achieves its goal and increase evaluation feasibility. In the ex-ante evaluations of Grant Aid which began in FY2009 (projects transferred to JICA, FY2009: 85 projects), the evaluation department decided to develop quantitative effect indicators for all projects, and has been working with the department in charge of the project to quantify the outcomes.

In order to ensure project transparency and accountability, JICA intends to swiftly disclose the evaluation findings on its website after the agreement of the project with the partner country.

4. Drawing on external experts

In July 2010, JICA launched a new committee to further develop the Advisory Committee on Evaluation (see p.8). The committee, consisting of external experts, will offer recommendations on improving the project evaluations and evaluation system, as well as useful advice for strengthening JICA’s accountability to the people.