

# Toward Improving Operations Evaluation

**In order to improve the quality of future projects, operations evaluation requires the perspective of contributing to improve development outcomes by appropriately identifying the effects of projects. In this chapter, some efforts to improve JICA's operations evaluation are described.**

## ● Introduction

JICA has been making efforts to further strengthen the PDCA cycle and to enhance the quality of projects, in order to realize development outcomes and make them sustainable.

Operations evaluation is critical for appropriately examining (evaluating) the extent of the achievement of development outcomes,

and ensuring that the lessons learned and recommendations obtained through the evaluation are reflected in operations.

This chapter describes JICA's operations evaluation efforts to implement effective projects which have been undertaken since FY2013.

## FY2013 Operations Evaluation Efforts

In FY2013, JICA continued to adopt new evaluation methods, promote the use of evaluation results, and support the enhancement of the evaluation capacity of stakeholders, taking into consideration the advice received from the Advisory Committee on Evaluation (see p. 11). Furthermore, JICA continued to carry out holistic cross-sectoral analyses of detailed operations evaluations as a whole, analyze factors for assuring management and maintenance following the completion of cooperation and ensuring project continuation, and compiled lessons learned from individual evaluations (see pp. 14-15).

### ○ Adoption of New Evaluation Methods

As a new effort in evaluation, a terminal evaluation was carried out on a pilot basis of a JICA cooperation program for Colombia called the "Assistance Program to Promote Coexistence and Reconciliation of Conflict Victims" (see pp. 48-49). The evaluation affirmed that the program directly and indirectly contributed to promoting coexistence and the reconciliation of conflict victims in Colombia. At the same time, the evaluation found issues with respect to: the logic of the scenarios for getting from individual project to the achievement of cooperation program objectives; information sharing with partner country agencies and donors; and evaluation feasibility. For information on JICA's cooperation program evaluations, see p. 7. At JICA, to reinforce evidence-based project implementation, the evaluation department has been leading efforts since FY2011 to promote understanding of impact evaluations (see p. 7), as well as to hold a training program for fostering internal human resources (evaluation administrators) capable of placing orders for impact evaluations and carrying out project management. More than 200 people have taken this training program. JICA will further promote the examination of project effects through impact evaluation to fulfill its accountability, and aim to make further improvements to the aid schemes.

### ○ Promotion of Utilization of Evaluation Results

JICA considers it important that it draws on "lessons learned" – JICA's unique pool of knowledge acquired through more than 40 years of implementing diverse projects in developing countries. This is so that JICA can present solutions to complex and difficult development issues of developing countries, and strengthen mechanisms for providing more appropriate assistance. Accordingly, in FY2013, the thematic evaluation "Review of measures for strengthening the lessons learned system in a

project's PDCA cycle" (see pp. 44-45) was carried out. This evaluation proposed improvements to introduce and develop processes for the knowledge management (practical use) of lessons learned, as well as for the use of usable lessons learned in the PDCA cycle.

For concrete examples of using evaluation results, including lessons learned, see Column 1, "Examples of Utilization of Evaluation Results at the Planning Stage."

Furthermore, following on from last year's initiative with Grant Aid projects, this year, examples of standard indicators were developed and representative lessons learned were identified by development issue for Technical Cooperation projects. This has been done for six sectors so far, namely: basic education; disaster management; agricultural and rural development; SME promotion; trade and investment promotion; and water resources. It is expected that these examples of standard indicators will be used as practical reference in establishing indicators especially at the project formulation and ex-ante evaluation stages, and that representative lessons learned will be used as practical reference in referring to lessons learned of similar projects.

### ○ Improved Networking with Other Development Aid Agencies

Against the global backdrop of emphasizing outcomes, many operations evaluations are implemented by international organizations, such as the World Bank, and bilateral aid agencies. JICA exchanges information with the evaluation departments of such aid agencies. JICA believes that information obtained from these agencies can be utilized effectively, including information on the evaluation methods for private sector assistance, evaluation methods for cooperation programs, and qualitative analyses, such as of relevance – evaluation methods that are difficult for JICA to develop singlehandedly. This year, JICA exchanged views with organizations, including the World Bank's Independent Evaluation Group (IEG), the Evaluation Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Office of Evaluation and Oversight of the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB), Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), the Economic Development Cooperation Fund (EDCF) of the Export-Import Bank of Korea, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) Network on Development Evaluation, and the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

## Column 1: Examples of Utilization of Evaluation Results at the Planning Stage

### ● Sri Lanka, The Project for Construction of a Dredger (Grant Aid)

An evaluation of a past dredger development project, "The Project for Reinforcement of Dredging Capabilities for Beira Port" in Mozambique (evaluation year: 2010), noted that the specifications of the dredger were not necessarily sufficient for the initially anticipated deposited sand, and that shipping lanes and berths were not properly maintained and managed due to the insufficient maintenance and management system of the counterpart government. The lessons learned were that the specifications of a dredger should be decided based upon adequate studies of the sedimentation situation, and that counterpart government agencies should be urged to take budgetary measures necessary for the operation, maintenance, and management for ensuring the sufficient use of the dredger constructed by the project.

Based on these lessons learned, the MOU of the Sri Lanka project made note of budgetary allocations for the operation, maintenance, and management of the dredger and of appropriate personnel assignments, and ensured that the counterpart government steadily implemented these measures. The field survey identified the necessary amount of dredge for each dredger model. On this basis, the specifications of the grabs and hoppers were determined according to the dredging capabilities of the dredger constructed by this project. Furthermore, the size of the dredger's hull was decided, fully accounting for the promotion of the use of the fishing port and navigable width.

### ● Republic of Moldova, Project for Improvement of Medical Care Service (ODA Loans)

From the ex-post evaluation of a similar project for improving health care institutions, the "Rural Health Infrastructure Strengthening Project" in the Kingdom of Thailand (evaluation year: 2005), the following lessons learned were obtained: (1) In selecting medical equipment, its necessity and relevance and the hospital's capacity of application and management must be sufficiently examined; and (2) In a project where equipment is provided to many beneficiaries, it should be kept in mind that the managing capacity (e.g., to keep equipment organized and in order, maintain equipment, keep a record of its use, maintain system of selecting equipment) of the beneficiaries varies. It is preferable that hospitals are further involved in the

equipment selection process when they are deemed to have high managing capacity.

The project compiled a list of equipment considering each hospital's disease trends, skills and distribution of medical personnel, human resource development plan, maintenance system, and contracted maintenance services. As the managing capacity of target medical institutions including equipment maintenance was confirmed to be at a high level, it was decided that the detailed specifications for the equipment to be procured through the project will be decided based on sufficient interview surveys of hospital or institution personnel to ensure their involvement.

### ● Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, Project on the Reinforcement of Communities for Promoting Social Cohesion in Greater Abidjan (Technical Cooperation Project)

Rebuilding a society in a conflict-affected region requires the promotion of the reconciliation of people and the strengthening of relationships. Accordingly, in the Project for Confidence-Building in Srebrenica on Agricultural and Rural Enterprise Development (SACRED) in Bosnia and Herzegovina (evaluation year: 2011), the main implementers of the activities were principally organizations comprised of both ethnic groups. This project, by having opposing people engage in a single task, promoted their reconciliation and contributed to forging trust among the people.

The project in Cote d'Ivoire implements pilot projects in conflict-affected communes using labor-based technology (a method of constructing small-scale infrastructures by giving priority to human labor, supplementing it with relatively simple technologies and easy-to-use equipment, such as sandbags, masonry, and gabions). Based on the lesson learned that reconciliation of the people and the strengthening of relationships are indispensable for the reconstruction of society, the project adopted this method of construction to allow for the greater participation and engagement of the people. It is expected that communication among opposing people will be facilitated through working together to build social infrastructures they themselves use, and thereby, improving the living environment. Moreover, sharing the experience of building social infrastructures is expected to foster a sense of collaboration and overall trust, and promote the reconciliation of people and the strengthening of relationships.

### ○ Support to Increase Evaluation Capacity

The term “evaluation capacity” encapsulates a range of capacities – not only the capacity required of evaluation implementers who do the evaluations, but also the capacity to understand and make use of the evaluation results. Improving evaluation capacity is necessary for JICA’s project implementers to implement higher quality projects. JICA holds trainings on the “overview of operations evaluations,” “clear objectives and appropriate indicators,” and “overview of impact evaluation” in order to enhance the capacities

of JICA’s internal human resources.

Furthermore, for impact evaluations, JICA held trainings for building up the capacities of non-JICA personnel, and trained consultants and other non-JICA human resources.

In addition to support for the enhancement of the evaluation capacity of its personnel, JICA endeavors to improve the evaluation capacity of developing countries through trainings. For more information, see Column 2, “Enhancement of Evaluation Capacity of Developing Countries.”

## Column 2: Enhancement of Evaluation Capacity of Developing Countries

### ● Seminar on Evaluation of Japanese ODA Projects

JICA has been holding “Seminars on the evaluation of Japanese ODA projects” for staff working in the aid coordination offices and project executing agencies of developing countries. This seminar is intended to enhance the evaluation and monitoring capacities of developing countries through lectures and workshops on JICA’s operations evaluations, especially ex-post evaluation, and visits to the sites of infrastructure projects in Japan.

Improving the evaluation capacity of project executing and supervising agencies in developing countries further increases their ownership of development projects, and leads to more effective and efficient implementation of JICA’s projects. Furthermore, it could be expected that enhancing the evaluation capacity of developing countries will have spillover effects on the projects of other aid agencies.

Since 2001, former JICA and former JBIC jointly held “Seminars on the evaluation of Japanese ODA Loan projects.” Since FY2011, JICA has been holding trainings through “Seminars on the evaluation of Japanese ODA” regarding not only ODA Loan projects but also Technical Cooperation projects.

The 11th “Seminar on the evaluation of Japanese ODA” in FY2013 was held from November 25 to December 6 with 18 participants from 17 countries. All trainees were participants engaged in ODA from ministries and agencies and organizations. Discussions on specific and technical matters took place for carrying out more accurate operations evaluations and monitoring in view of the situation in each country. In addition to lectures, the training held workshops where trainees took the lead in tackling issues, as well as visits to the sites of infrastructure projects in Japan. In regard to this training approach of combining

classroom lecture, workshop, and visits, trainees expressed that the linkages between the lectures and visits allowed them to deepen their understanding of the training content, and that they were able to confirm whether the knowledge they gained through the workshop was the entrenched in themselves.

After returning to their countries, the trainees are expected not only to utilize the knowledge they obtained through the seminar in their own countries, but also to disseminate the knowledge within their organizations. Six months after the completion of the training, the trainees report to JICA their activities following the return to their countries.

The trainees have reported a variety of activities. In the Indonesian case, knowledge obtained in the training was used to introduce monitoring to an ongoing project. In the Mexican and Solomon Island cases, trainees held workshops and shared information with their organizations. In the Egyptian case, a trainee implemented project evaluation at the trainee’s own initiative.

In many cases, JICA executes projects at the trainees’ organizations, and it is expected that the training would have synergistic effects on such projects. One of the participants in this year’s training noted that the trainee would like to contribute to JICA’s project by using the knowledge the trainee obtained in the training and deepen cooperation with JICA.

Such efforts to enhance the evaluation capacity of developing countries are described in a booklet commemorating 30 years of the OECD-DAC Network on Development Evaluation. Although FY2013 is the final year of this training, JICA will continue to examine ways of supporting the enhancement of the evaluation capacity of developing countries via former training participants, including development of a training participants’ network.

# Advisory Committee on Evaluation

JICA established the Advisory Committee on Evaluation in July 2010 in order to enhance the quality of evaluations, strengthen feedback of the evaluation results, and better ensure evaluation accountability.

The Committee, chaired by Shinji Asanuma, Visiting Professor at the School of International and Public Policy, Hitotsubashi University, includes experts in international cooperation and evaluation from international organizations, academia, NGOs, media, and private sector groups.

Outlines of the expert advice provided by the Committee members during the 7th and 8th meetings convened in August 2013 and January 2014 are as below.\*<sup>1</sup> The wide range of advice promotes the further improvement of JICA's operations evaluations.

## List of Committee Members

(as of January 2014)

Chairperson	
<b>Shinji Asanuma</b>	Visiting Professor, School of International and Public Policy, Hitotsubashi University
Acting Chairperson	
<b>Akifumi Kuchiki</b>	Professor, College of Bioresource Sciences, Nihon University
Members (in alphabetical order)	
<b>Hisashi Takanashi</b>	Managing Director, Engineering and Consulting Firms Association, Japan (ECFA)
<b>Kenichiro Yokoo</b>	Director, International Cooperation Bureau, Keidanren (Japan Business Federation)
<b>Kiyoshi Yamaya</b>	Professor, Doshisha University Graduate School of Policy and Management
<b>Kunihiko Hirabayashi</b>	Director, UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) Tokyo Office
<b>Masaichi Nosaka</b>	Vice Chairman of Editorial Board, The Yomiuri Shimbun
<b>Toyokazu Nakata</b>	Chairperson, Somneed / Director, Institute of Participatory Development
<b>Yasuyuki Sawada</b>	Professor, Faculty of Economics, Graduate School of Economics, The University of Tokyo
<b>Yoshiko Homma</b>	Lawyer (Yoshiko Homma Law Office) / Professor, The Graduate School of Law, Soka University

## ● From the 7th Meeting

### (1) Strengthening the lessons learned system in the PDCA cycle

- Much work is involved in extracting practical lessons learned. The lessons learned obtained through daily activities should be fed back, the process should be reviewed, and the lessons learned should be carried over to future activities.
- Lessons learned should not be what JICA expects of partner countries or other parties, but what JICA can act within the scope of its discretion.
- It would be effective if the PDCA cycle management process specifies who makes use of the extracted lessons learned.
- It should be kept on record if past lessons learned were taken stock of in formulating a new project.

### (2) Revision of the New JICA Guidelines for Project Evaluation

- The draft Guidelines are written on the premise that operations evaluations are carried out at different stages, e.g., planning, implementation, and after completion stages. The Guidelines should state the underlying concept of evaluations at each stage.
- Evaluations are expected to lead to larger development effects. The Guidelines should mention fundamental aspects, such as what development effect is and what the goals are.
- The Guidelines give "accountability" and "project improvement" as the objectives of operations evaluation. However, the most important objective is sharing recommendations and lessons learned, so-called case. The objectives of operations evaluations are "accountability," "project improvement," "recommendations and lessons learned," and "reporting to external parties." The Guidelines would be clearer if they are presented as pillars of operations evaluations.

## ● From the 8th Meeting

During the 8th meeting, explanations were provided on the progress and other developments related to the topics that were discussed at the previous meeting. Based on this, the committee members held renewed discussions.

### (1) Proposed revisions of the New JICA Guidelines for Project Evaluation

- The objectives and basic principles are written more simply and are easier to understand than the draft discussed during the 7th meeting. The message will get across to domestic and international readers more clearly if the language is kept simple.
- It should be understood that the principles and basic policy which are given simple descriptions in the Guidelines entail an array of circumstances that must be dealt with in reality.
- It is important not to place a disproportionate emphasis on quantitative evaluations, and this should be emphasized. Is JICA not becoming inefficient by carrying out quantitative evaluations? Qualitative judgment should be utilized if useful.
- The linkages from output to outcome to impact are not as simple as implied in the Guidelines. In reality, when a project is implemented in a single sub-sector, a strategy is first established, followed by a policy and system, and then activities are ranked in priority before starting a project. This process should be conceived as a whole.

### (2) Progress on strengthening the lessons learned system in the PDCA cycle

- Evaluations are necessary for JICA's human resource development. Case studies of successes and failures should be recorded and utilized for future projects.
- Staff should seize this initiative to enhance their expertise. However, this is no more than an "opportunity," and cost should be kept down as much as possible. It would be inefficient to apply this process to all sectors. Strategies should be conceived, such as narrowing down the process to sub-sectors that face challenges.
- As implied by "PDCA," the process must lead to actions. It is important to identify what JICA can do. The private sector also implements PDCA and analyzes cause-and-effect relationships. However, if the problem were attributed to external and not internal causes, the lessons learned system would not lead to actions. JICA must be conscious of how JICA itself should change.

\*1 The minutes of the Committee's meetings are posted on the JICA website.

JICA's operations evaluations for Technical Cooperation, ODA Loans, and Grant Aid projects at respective stages are discussed below.\*1

## Pre Implementation Stage Evaluation (Ex-ante Evaluation)

All three assistance schemes are subject to Ex-ante evaluation.

Ex-ante evaluation confirms the needs and priorities of the project and verifies its contents and expected outcomes prior to project implementation.

### Evaluation at Pre Implementation Stage by Scheme

Scheme	Technical Cooperation	ODA Loans	Grant Aid
Evaluation scheme	Ex-ante evaluation		
Timing	Prior to project implementation		
Targets	In principle, all projects*2	All projects	In principle, all projects*3
Principals of evaluation	Internal evaluation		
Items evaluated and evaluation method	Confirming the needs and expected outcomes and verifying the plan of the project, in light of the Five DAC Criteria		

## Implementation Stage Evaluation (Mid-term Review and Terminal Evaluation)

Mid-term review verifies the relevance of a Technical Cooperation project, in which the implementation period will be more than four years, in the middle of the cooperation period. It also aims to study the attainability of the project purpose, contributing or impeding factors to the project's implementation, as well as their respective trends in terms of effectiveness and efficiency.

Terminal evaluation is conducted about six months prior to the completion of a Technical Cooperation project. The purpose is to verify primarily the attainability of project purpose, efficiency, and sustainability.

### Evaluation at Implementation Stage by Scheme

Scheme	Technical Cooperation	
Evaluation scheme	Mid-term review	Terminal evaluation
Timing	At mid-point of project	6 months prior to project completion
Targets	Projects with cooperation period of four years or more*2	All projects*2
Principals of evaluation	Internal evaluation (joint evaluation with recipient government)	
Items evaluated and evaluation method	Evaluating project outcomes based on the Five DAC Criteria. The findings are utilized in fine-tuning plans and improving operational structures as necessary.	Evaluating attainability of project outcomes comprehensively based on the Five DAC Criteria. Judging propriety of project completion and necessity of follow-ups, based on the results.

Mid-term review of ODA loans is an evaluation to implement project targets, conducted 5 years after the loan contract, if it is judged to be necessary by the community/overseas office that a mid-term review should be implemented, due to factors which have influenced the project outcome, or if unsatisfactory progress has been made.

## Post Implementation Stage Evaluation (Ex-post Evaluation)

All three assistance schemes are subject to Ex-post evaluation. Aiming for comprehensive evaluation after the completion of each project, Ex-post evaluation is conducted using the Five DAC Criteria.

### Evaluation at Post Implementation Stage by Scheme

Scheme	Technical Cooperation	ODA Loans	Grant Aid
Evaluation scheme	Ex-post evaluation		
Timing	In principle, by 3 years after project completion		
Targets	All projects with contributions of 200 million yen or more	All projects with contributions of 200 million yen or more	General and Fisheries Grant Aid projects with contributions of 200 million yen or more implemented by JICA and some other sub-schemes
Principals of evaluation	External evaluation / Internal evaluation*4		
Items evaluated and evaluation method	Based on the Five DAC Criteria		

\*1 Evaluation report is available on JICA's website.

\*2 In projects concerning less than 200 million yen, it is possible to apply a simple evaluation.

\*3 JICA targets projects estimated at over 200 million yen for the implementation of a preliminary survey.

\*4 For projects over 1 billion yen and those where there is considered to be a high likelihood of gaining valuable lessons, detailed evaluations (external evaluations) are conducted. Internal evaluations are conducted by JICA's overseas offices for projects over 200 million yen and under 1 billion yen.