

## JICA's Operations Evaluation System

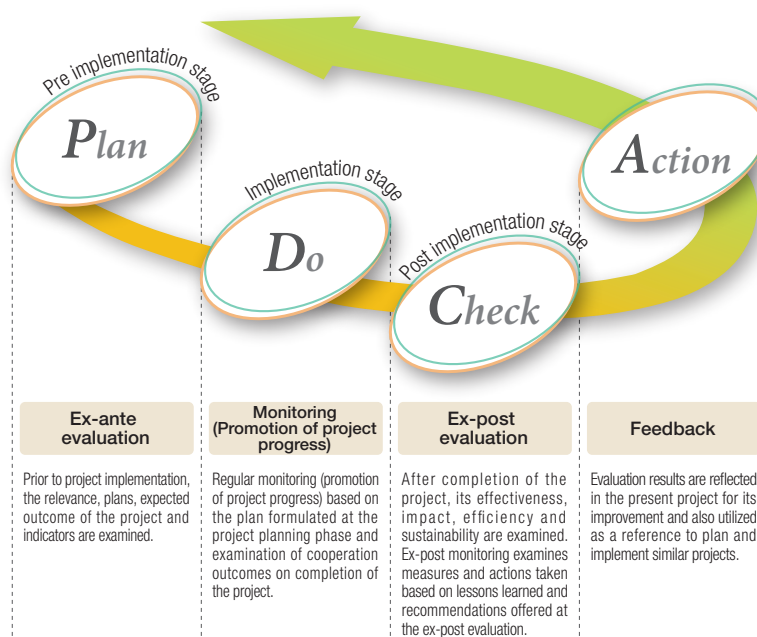
To improve its projects and ensure accountability to stakeholders, JICA implements operations evaluations and comprehensive and cross-sectoral thematic evaluations for Technical Cooperation, ODA Loans and Grant Aid projects.

### 1

#### Evaluation throughout the project's PDCA cycle

The PDCA cycle is a management tool that promotes continuous improvement of project activities and JICA's operations. It has four steps: Plan, Do, Check and Action.

For all projects, JICA's operations evaluation is conducted based on the PDCA cycle, regardless of the scheme of cooperation. Considering characteristics of the scheme of cooperation, such as the assistance period and timeframe to obtain expected results, JICA monitors and evaluates at each project stage (planning, implementation, post-implementation and feedback) within a consistent framework. By evaluating and monitoring projects at each stage of the PDCA cycle, it aims to improve the project development results. Details of the types of evaluation are introduced in p.4-5.



### 2

#### Coherent methodologies and criteria among three schemes of cooperation

JICA adopts an evaluation system using methodologies and criteria applicable to all schemes of assistance. JICA aims to conduct the evaluation and utilize the findings based on a consistent philosophy and a standard evaluation framework, while taking the differences in characteristics among each assistance scheme (Technical Cooperation, ODA Loans, and Grant Aid) into consideration.

Specifically, the evaluation framework reflects: (1) Monitoring and evaluation based on the PDCA cycle; (2) Evaluation applying Five DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance laid out by the OECD-DAC (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee) and internationally accepted as an ODA evaluation methodology; and (3) Publication of evaluation results in a uniform style by utilizing a rating system developed by JICA. The rating system and results are introduced in p.9-11.

#### Evaluation Perspectives Using the Five DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance

<b>Relevance</b>	Examines the extent to which the cooperation activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor: Does the goal of the projects meet the needs of beneficiaries? Are the activities and outputs of the program consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?
<b>Effectiveness</b>	Measures the extent to which the program or project attains its objectives.
<b>Impact</b>	Examines positive and negative changes as a result of the project. This includes direct and indirect effects and expected and unexpected effects.
<b>Efficiency</b>	Measures the outputs in relation to the inputs to determine whether the project uses the least costly resources possible to achieve the desired results.
<b>Sustainability</b>	Examines whether the benefits of the project are likely to continue after the completion of the project.

The JICA operations evaluation system has the following five features:

- 1 Evaluation throughout the project's PDCA cycle
- 2 Coherent methodologies and criteria among three schemes of cooperation
- 3 Comprehensive and cross-sectoral evaluation through a thematic evaluation
- 4 Ensuring objectivity and transparency
- 5 Emphasizing the utilization of evaluation results

## 3

### Comprehensive and cross-sectoral evaluation through thematic evaluations

JICA conducts thematic evaluations to assess a group of projects comprehensively and cross-sectorally or analyze a specific development issue or assistance scheme. The thematic evaluation is conducted by selecting projects based on a specified theme and analyzing them from perspectives that are different from individual operations evaluations, to derive common recommendations and

lessons learned from those projects.

Thematic evaluations in FY 2016 systematized practical and universal lessons learned from the projects implemented in the energy sector by analyzing a number of project evaluation results horizontally and adding inputs from JICA staff and external experts through meetings.

## 4

### Ensuring objectivity and transparency

JICA has incorporated external evaluations according to its project size of the ex-post evaluations to ensure objectivity and transparency of project implementation results. Moreover, JICA tries to make efforts to increase transparency in its operations evaluations by providing the findings of the ex-post evaluation results on JICA's official website.

To improve the quality of evaluations, JICA has established

mechanisms allowing the viewpoints of external parties to be reflected in the operations evaluation system. In this context, JICA receives advice on evaluation policy, as well as the evaluation system and methodology from the Advisory Committee on Evaluation consisting of third-party experts. Please refer to p.6 regarding the committee.

## 5

### Emphasizing the utilization of evaluation results

JICA's operations evaluations focus on utilizing the results for improving the quality of "Action" of the PDCA cycle, which is also utilized to feed back recommendations to improve the project and lessons learned for ongoing and future similar projects. JICA intends to strengthen the feedback function further to reflect the evaluation results in JICA's cooperation strategies.

At the same time, JICA makes efforts to reflect the evaluation results in its development policies, sector programs and the respective projects of recipient governments by feeding back the evaluation findings and by other means.

#### ① Reflection in JICA's basic strategies

Improving JICA Thematic Guidelines, cooperation programs, etc.

#### ② Reflection in projects

Improving target projects, similar projects in progress or in preparation

#### ③ Reflection in partner governments' policies

Feeding back to partner governments' project, program, development policy, etc.

**Action**

#### Evaluation Results

- Recommendations
- Lessons learned

– Results of the operations evaluation are available on JICA's website –

**Related link:** ► [https://www.jica.go.jp/english/our\\_work/evaluation/index.html](https://www.jica.go.jp/english/our_work/evaluation/index.html)

# Pre Implementation Stage (Ex-ante Evaluation)

To determine needs for projects as well as to set targets for project outcomes, JICA conducts ex-ante evaluations.

## ◇ What is ex-ante evaluation?

JICA conducts ex-ante evaluations prior to project implementation to confirm needs and priorities of projects, examine project outlines and anticipated outcomes, and establish indicators to measure the outcomes from the perspective of Five DAC Criteria. During the ex-ante evaluation, JICA also confirms the implementations of appropriate safeguards after reviewing environmental and social considerations, as

well as the reflection of lessons learned from past projects.

## ◇ Utilization of results of ex-ante evaluations

The results of the ex-ante evaluation are reflected in subsequent decision-making on project designs and approaches. Once projects commence, monitoring and evaluations are conducted based on the evaluation plans and indicators set at the time of the ex-ante evaluation.

### Number of Ex-ante Evaluation Performed in FY2015\*1

Technical Cooperation	122 projects
ODA Loans	67 projects
Grant Aid	70 projects

\*1: Published as the ex-ante evaluations performed in FY2015 (as of February 2017).

### Evaluation at Pre Implementation Stage by Scheme

Scheme	Technical Cooperation	ODA Loans	Grant Aid
Timing	Prior to project implementation		
Preparation of Ex-Ante Evaluation report*2	All projects with contributions of 200 million yen or more		Projects with contributions of 200 million yen or more implemented by JICA*3
Principals of evaluation	Operational Departments of JICA, etc. (Internal Evaluation)		
Items evaluated and evaluation method	Confirming needs and expected outcomes and verifying the plan of projects, in light of Five DAC Criteria		

\*2: In principle, ex-ante evaluation report is prepared for all projects with contributions of 200 million yen or more and not prepared for those with less than 200 million yen.

\*3: Evaluation of projects collaborated with international organizations is conducted by such international organizations.

# Post Implementation Stage (Ex-post Evaluation)

JICA conducts ex-post evaluations to evaluate completed projects comprehensively and examine whether the project's effectiveness, impact and sustainability will continue to manifest after project completion.

## ◇ What is ex-post stage evaluation?

JICA performs ex-post evaluation after completion of projects with contributions of 200 million yen or more, the results of which are immediately presented to the public in an understandable form.

While projects of which contributions are from 200 million to one billion yen are subject to internal ex-post evaluation by JICA overseas offices, those with one billion yen\*4 or more are evaluated by third-party

evaluators (external ex-post evaluation) to ensure more objective evaluation. For external evaluation, a rating system\*5 has been adopted to present the results in an easily understandable manner.

## ◇ Utilization of results of ex-post evaluations

The recommendations and lessons learned gathered from these ex-post evaluations will be applied to improving the project, as well as planning and implementing similar projects in future.

### Number of Ex-post Evaluation Performed in FY2015\*6

Technical Cooperation	(External Evaluation) 25 projects (Internal Evaluation) 24 projects
ODA Loans	(External Evaluation) 35 projects (Internal Evaluation) None
Grant Aid	(External Evaluation) 30 projects (Internal Evaluation) 17 projects

\*4: For projects with contributions of less than 1 billion yen but those that are likely to gain valuable lessons, ex-post evaluations are conducted.

\*5: Please refer to p.10 for the rating system.

\*6: Evaluations of which results were confirmed in FY 2016 (as of February 2017). Such results were published as "Evaluation Results in FY 2015" on JICA's website.

### Evaluation at Post Implementation Stage by Scheme\*7

Scheme	Technical Cooperation	ODA Loans	Grant Aid
Timing	In principle, until 3 years after project implementation		
Targets	All projects with contributions of 200 million yen or more		Projects with contributions of 200 million yen or more implemented by JICA
Principals of evaluation*8	Third party (External Evaluation), JICA Overseas Office, etc. (Internal evaluation)		
Items evaluated and evaluation method	Based on the Five DAC Criteria		

\*7: Matters to be noted

•For projects which are continuously implemented and related to ODA Loans, relevant projects are integrally evaluated in principle.

•For projects of which outcome-based evaluations are not rational in terms of their implication and cost effectiveness, such projects are evaluated through output-based monitoring. This applies to Grant Aid for Human Resource Development Scholarship, for example.

•For projects which provide financial assistance or collaborate with international organizations under the scheme of ODA Loans and Grant Aid, JICA's ex-post evaluation is not conducted, in principle, from the perspective of development partnerships.

\*8: For projects with contributions of 1 billion yen or more and those that are considered to be likely to gain valuable lessons, external evaluations are conducted. Internal evaluations are conducted by JICA's overseas offices for projects of which contributions are from 200 million yen to 1 billion yen.

## Thematic Evaluation

JICA conducts comprehensive evaluations and analysis of JICA's cooperation with specific themes or development goals, the results of which are utilized for future cooperation planning and implementation to make them more effective.

JICA conducts thematic evaluations which set specific themes, such as region, sector and assistance methodology, and evaluate projects that are relevant to the themes by using evaluation criteria established for each theme. These include comprehensive analysis, which extracts tendencies and problems which are common to particular issues or compares and categorizes projects to extract common features and

good practices. Furthermore, JICA also endeavors to develop a new evaluation methodology.

Thematic evaluation in FY 2016 systematized practical and universal lessons learned from projects within the energy sector by analyzing its project evaluation results. For its details, please refer to p.50.

## Impact Evaluation

To further enhance project effectiveness and quality, JICA has been promoting evidence-based practice and emphasizing the application of impact evaluation<sup>\*9</sup> as its major tool.

To further enhance project effectiveness and quality, JICA and many other donor agencies have recently been promoting evidence-based practice and emphasizing the application of impact evaluation as its major tool.

By using statistical method, impact evaluation assesses the changes caused in target societies by specific measures, projects, or development models to improve and solve development issues. To grasp project effects precisely, it requires comparison between situations which are actually observed (Factual) and counterfactual situations which would have appeared in the absence of the project. By analyzing these two situations with statistical method, precise comparison is possible.

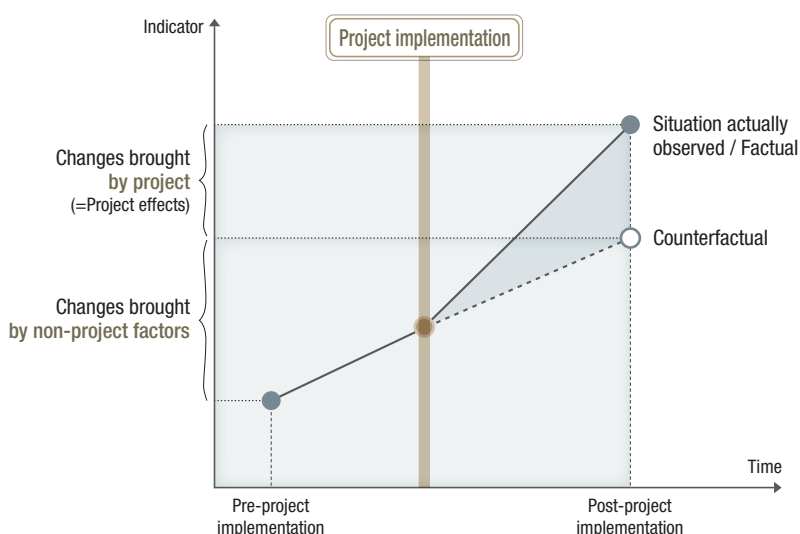
On the other hand, impact evaluation requires additional costs and high expertise for its analysis. Thus, JICA examines the priority based on evaluation purposes and needs and conducts impact evaluation on selected projects. In addition to evaluation results obtained by using methods which are traditionally used to measure effects including one which compares before and after projects, reliable evidence obtained from impact evaluation is expected to be utilized for project management and policy-making in partner countries.

In FY 2016, impact evaluations were conducted, including the Technical Cooperation projects "the Skills Training and Job Obtainment Support for Social Participation of Ex-Combatants and Other People with Disabilities in Rwanda" and "Project for Enhancing Access and Capacity of EQUITV program in Papua

New Guinea". Moreover, JICA conducted a capacity enhancement training course, "Impact Evaluation: Toward Evidence-Based Practice (EBP)", for those who involved in international cooperation projects to develop human resources who promote the implementation of impact evaluation, as described in p.8.

<sup>\*9</sup> The definition of the term "impact" in impact evaluations differs from "impact" used in the Five OECD-DAC Evaluation Criteria. The latter is defined as "positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended" (overall concept of "outcomes") while the former refers to effects produced by a project more directly including the "outcomes" described in the Criteria.

**Conceptual Diagram of the Impact Evaluation: Comparison of situation actually observed and counterfactual situation**



# Advisory Committee on Evaluation

JICA established the Advisory Committee on Evaluation to enhance evaluation quality, strengthen feedback of evaluation results and ensure accountability.

The Committee, chaired by Motoki Takahashi, Professor at the Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto University, includes experts in international cooperation and evaluation from international organizations, academia, NGOs, media and private sector groups.

In two meetings held in FY2016, various activities related to JICA's operations evaluation, JICA's responses to advice and recommendations provided in the past meetings were discussed. Major activities which JICA had in response to the main points discussed in the meetings in FY 2016 were outlined as below.

Chairperson	
Motoki Takahashi	Professor, Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto University
Acting Chairperson	
Akifumi Kuchiki	Professor, College of Bioresource Sciences, Nihon University
Members	
Tetsuo Kondo	Director, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Representation Office in Tokyo
Yasuyuki Sawada	Professor, Faculty of Economics, Graduate School of Economics, The University of Tokyo
Hisashi Takanashi	Executive Managing Director, Engineering and Consulting Firms Association, Japan (ECFA)
Toyokazu Nakata	Chairperson, Muranomirai (NPO)
Masaishi Nosaka	Senior Deputy Chief Officer, Yomiuri Research Institute, The Yomiuri Shimbun
Yoshiko Homma	Lawyer (Yoshiko Homma Law Office) / Professor, The Graduate School of Law, Soka University
Kiyotaka Morita	Senior Manager, International Cooperation Bureau, Keidanren (Japanese Business Federation)
Kiyoshi Yamaya	Professor, Doshisha University Graduate School of Policy and Management

(as of January 2017)

Suggestions and Recommendations from the Committee.	Actions Taken by JICA
<b>Further consideration on public relations</b>	
The Annual Evaluation Reports are too technical and complicated for the general public to understand. Further consideration should be given to simplifying them, for example, by using compelling illustrations.	Apart from the Annual Evaluation Reports, JICA published an online brochure so that people who are unfamiliar with operations evaluation and development cooperation can understand how and what JICA does in its operations evaluations. ▶ <a href="https://www.jica.go.jp/english/our_work/evaluation/index.html">https://www.jica.go.jp/english/our_work/evaluation/index.html</a>
<b>Strengthening the strategic focus of ex-post evaluation</b>	
JICA should develop an evaluation strategy and select projects to be evaluated. Some projects need to be evaluated in detail, while others need not. It is important to explain logically and rationally how to select subjects for evaluation.	JICA has been trying to reduce workload to deal with the increasing number of ex-post evaluations (internal evaluations). At the same time, JICA has been selectively conducting deeper analyses which focus on learning. In FY2016, the reports of internal ex-post evaluations were simplified and the relevant procedures were changed to be more efficient.
It is essential to further strengthen the learning from evaluations.	In FY2016, JICA established an Advisory Panel on Enhancement of Ex-post Evaluation comprising external experts, to further strengthen the learning from evaluations. The Panel has been examining the way to deepen the analysis of the process of generating project outcomes (Refer to p. 48).
It is critical to promote collaboration with various parties in ex-post external evaluations.	JICA involved experts from domestic and overseas universities and NGOs in three of the ex-post evaluations started in FY2015 to take more specialized and diverse perspectives into account. These projects were evaluated not only from the perspective of the conventional Five DAC Criteria but also from the viewpoints of the approaches and effects of the projects and environmental and social considerations (Refer to p. 18 for the evaluation results). Some of the external evaluations launched in FY2016 also include additional analyses by academics and experienced practitioners.

In addition, the suggestions and recommendations of the Advisory Committee were reflected in various efforts to improve the JICA's operations evaluation. Please refer to "Efforts to Improve Operations Evaluation" (p. 7) for more details.

## Related links:

The past suggestions and recommendations from the Committee are available on the JICA website.  
▶ [https://www.jica.go.jp/english/our\\_work/evaluation/advisory/index.html](https://www.jica.go.jp/english/our_work/evaluation/advisory/index.html)



# Efforts to Improve Operations Evaluation

Operations evaluation focuses on assessing project effects to improve future projects and make development assistance more effective.

This chapter describes the efforts made by JICA in FY2016 to improve its operations evaluation for these purposes.

## Effort ① Enhancing the quality of evaluation

### 1. Establishing an Advisory Panel on Enhancement of Ex-post Evaluation for JICA

JICA established an Advisory Panel on Enhancement of Ex-post Evaluation (refer to p. 48) comprising external experts for the following two purposes: (1) to help identify and analyze project effects in greater depth as well as the process leading up to them; and (2) to develop new methodologies and improve systems to maintain and enhance the quality of internal ex-post evaluations.

### 2. Involving experts in External Evaluation

In FY2016, JICA tried ex-post evaluations in cooperation with experts (academics and experienced practitioners from domestic and overseas universities and NGOs), in addition to the project evaluations conducted by external evaluators based on the Five OECD DAC Criteria, to take more specialized and diverse perspectives into account. These experts provided comments on the projects based on their past experiences and knowledge, details of which are described in p. 18. In the next fiscal year, JICA plans to increase the number of such evaluation.

### 3. Enhancing communication in English in External Evaluation

For external evaluation, reference documents and guidelines on external evaluations are used to design the evaluation framework and conduct analysis. In FY2016, JICA translated some of these reference documents

and selectively conducted evaluations with the entire procedure in English. These efforts are expected to facilitate the participation of local staff from JICA overseas offices who are responsible for project management in the evaluation process, and ultimately lead to deepening their understanding on the ex-post evaluation system, strengthen lessons learned through ex-post evaluations and enhance collaboration between the Japanese and local staff in the evaluation process.

### 4. Efforts to improve operations evaluation

JICA has been examining how to improve the operations evaluation while ensuring that all projects are, in principle, evaluated based on Five DAC Criteria. For example, in FY2016, JICA launched evaluations of projects implemented under the Science and Technology Research Partnership for Sustainable Development (SATREPS) scheme<sup>\*1</sup>, integrated evaluations of Grant Aid and Technical Cooperation projects to assess their synergistic effect and integrated evaluations of ODA Loans and related technical assistance projects.

<sup>\*1</sup>: Science and Technology Research Partnership for Sustainable Development (SATREPS) is a type of technical cooperation, involving international collaborative research between Japanese research institutions and partner countries. Its aims are to obtain new knowledge and to utilize research outcomes for the benefit of the society with a view to resolving global issues such as environment and energy, disaster prevention, and infectious diseases. In conjunction with this, it also aspires to improve the development of human resources and research capabilities in partner countries by conducting joint research.

## Effort ② Sharing and utilizing evaluation results

### 1. Sectoral analysis in the energy sector

In FY2016, JICA conducted a sectoral analysis of past projects in the energy sector and derived practical and generalized lessons from the lessons learned of individual projects. Details are given in p. 50.

### 2. A new brochure on JICA's operations evaluation

In FY2016, JICA published a new online brochure for the general public. This brochure was designed to make it easy to understand JICA's operations evaluation.

The brochure is available on the following website:

▶ <https://www.jica.go.jp/activities/evaluation/index.html> (Japanese only)

### 3. Strengthening networks with other development partners and disseminating information

Following the global trend of pursuing outcome-driven development, both multilateral and bilateral donors have been conducting a growing number of operations evaluations. JICA exchanges information with the evaluation units of these development partners. In FY2016, JICA

attended international evaluation forums, such as the DAC Network on Development Evaluation (EVALNET). JICA also organized a seminar, inviting evaluation experts from the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie)<sup>\*2</sup> and the World Bank.

To share evaluation results widely, JICA delivered presentations on its evaluation results at the national conference of the Japan Evaluation Society and the spring conference of the Japan Society for International Development in FY2016. JICA also actively disseminated information at international meetings, such as the Asia-Pacific Evaluation Association (APEA) forum held in Vietnam in November 2016. Details are provided in the column in p. 8.

<sup>\*2</sup>: The International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) is an international NGO established in 2008 to promote evidence-based development policies and programs. It has funded more than 200 projects in more than 50 countries (as of December 2016) to facilitate impact evaluations, systematic reviews and evidence-based studies.

## Effort ③ Human resource development

### ▶ 1. Training programs and seminars for JICA staff

JICA continues to organize training programs to strengthen the evaluation capacity of its staff, such as “How to Set Clear Objectives and Appropriate Indicators,” “Learning from Ex-post Evaluations,” and “A Guide to Impact Evaluation.” JICA also dispatched Evaluation Department staff to overseas offices, as required, to train and guide the staff there on internal evaluations. Moreover, five new staff were engaged in internal ex-post evaluations during their overseas offices training program in FY2016 for the second consecutive year. They worked with overseas office staff to collect and analyze data for internal evaluations.

JICA also held a series of feedback seminars to encourage its staff to use the evaluation results and lessons learned through the ex-post evaluations completed in FY2015.

### ▶ 2. Training programs and seminars for external evaluators

JICA organized the impact evaluation training in FY2016, for development consultants and other practitioners engaged in JICA projects. JICA also held seminars for consultants and experts to share information on the recent activities of the Evaluation Department and the annual evaluation plan. In addition, it held seminars to explain the reference for external evaluation and beneficiary surveys to external evaluators engaging in external evaluations.

## Column

### JICA Shared Information on Its Evaluation Activities at the ODA Evaluation Workshop Held by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The 14th ODA Evaluation Workshop was organized in Hanoi, Vietnam, on November 23, 2016, by the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs in cooperation with JICA. The workshop was held as part of the First Asia-Pacific Evaluation Association (APEA)\* Evaluation Conference 2016 and attended by 33 people from ministries and agencies in 18 countries in the Asia-Pacific region.

During the first session on Evaluation for Joint Learning and Mutual Accountability, participants discussed the importance of Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD) in support for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the increasing need for ECD to improve government-led evaluations.

At the second session on Evaluation System and Evaluation Capacity Development, participants debated the necessity of ECD to ensure that the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system would function adequately to achieve the SDGs. The Vietnamese Ministry of Planning and Investment made a presentation to outline



Presentation at the Workshop

Vietnam's M&E system and its problems, while the JICA Vietnam Office delivered a presentation to illustrate JICA's ex-post evaluation system; emphasizing the importance of learning lessons from the

evaluations. Moreover, the JICA Evaluation Department also described the contribution JICA had made to ECD through technical cooperation and training programs in Japan.

During the third session on Impact Evaluation for Evidence-based Policy Making, “the Project for Enhancing Regional Integrated SME Mechanism” implemented by JICA in Thailand was used as a case study to discuss Impact Evaluation for policy making. First, the JICA Thailand Office presented the outline of the Project. Next, Dr. Aya Suzuki, Associate Professor of the University of Tokyo, who was engaged in evaluating the impact of the project, presented details of the evaluation results. Finally, the Thai Ministry of Industry presented details of how the evaluation results could be used for policy making. Participants commented that although the impact evaluation was conducted utilizing existing data, it effectively showed how the evaluation results could be used for policy making.

During the workshop, participants acknowledged the increasing awareness of evaluation and the need for ECD in their respective countries and showed great interest in JICA's activities.

\* APEA was established in 2012, comprising 17 evaluation societies (as of December 2016) in the Asia-Pacific Region, including the Japan Evaluation Society.