# JICA Guidelines for Operations Evaluation

Japan International Cooperation Agency

Evaluation Department

May, 2014

## JICA Guidelines for Operations Evaluation
## (Second Edition)

### [Purposes of operations evaluation]

1.   JICA evaluates projects mainly to fulfill two purposes: 1) improve the projects further through the PDCA [Plan (planning), Do (implementation), Check (post-completion), and Action (feedback)] cycle and 2) ensure accountability to stakeholders including Japanese nationals and people of the partner country.

2.   "Projects," which are the object of operations evaluation under these guidelines, include those of technical cooperation, ODA loan, grant aid (such as projects and cooperation programs, hereafter to be referred to as "projects") conducted by JICA according to the Act on the Japan International Cooperation Agency, Independent Administrative Agency.

3.   JICA carries out these projects, realizes the initially planned development outcomes (development goals) within a certain period, and strives to ensure sustainability after the respective projects are completed, under the ownership of their implementing agencies, etc. ["implementing agencies, etc." are implementing agencies, the governments of the partner countries (including local governments), and borrowers], in collaboration with other necessary stakeholders, in an attempt to address relevant higher-level economic and social development issues (development issues).

4.   To that end, JICA performs consistent project management in the stages of planning to implementation and then to post-completion.   Evaluation, as tools of project management, provides information for improvement to ensure that the projects are carried out or monitored more appropriately.

### [Basic principles of operations evaluation]

### (1) Ensuring quality of evaluation

5.   The greatest concern of evaluation lies in the degree of "realization of development outcomes." To verify (evaluate) it appropriately, it is important to: 1) ensure evaluability of the specific projects themselves, and 2) set and apply objective and consistent evaluation criteria.

5-1 The elements required to ensure the evaluability of the projects include the embodiment of the

project plan such as purpose, scope of the project, input, availability of objective evidence that enables to monitor the development outcomes, and identification of relevant stakeholders.

5-2 Specific events recognized in the process of evaluation must be appropriately interpreted based on objective and consistent standards to the extent possible.  Moreover, the interpretation of specific events must be comprehensively judged to ensure that it is sufficiently reasonable and logical as per the purpose of the project.

**(2) Impartiality and ethical awareness**

6.   JICA recognizes that the most important elements in appropriately achieving the two purposes of the evaluation are the unbiased impartial attitude and ethical awareness of the evaluators, and performs its evaluation to ensure them.

**(3) Ownership and communication**

7.   The ownership of the implementing agencies, etc. is indispensable to enable a particular project to realize the planned development outcomes promptly and to ensure that they remain sustainable over a long term.   From that viewpoint, JICA not only informs the implementing agencies, etc. of the evaluation findings without delay in the process of the evaluation but also, as necessary, check with these stakeholders for consistancy in system and policy-related efforts of the recipient countries.

8.   Thus, JICA's evaluation while communicating with the implementing agencies, etc. is important to improve the ownership of these stakeholders and eventually to improve the sustainability of the post-completion development outcomes as well.

**(4) Accountability**

9.   JICA promptly publishes and announces the findings of its evaluation in a plain form in order to ensure transparency of project implementation and to achieve its accountability to Japanese nationals and other stakeholders about how the development outcomes are realized.

**(5) Effective feedback to project management**

10.   JICA takes responsibility to strive to ensure the necessary organization and system and to raise

the awareness of the stakeholders engaged in all the projects in order to allow the lessons and recommendations obtained in its evaluation to be appropriately reflected on the project management of evaluated projects and other projects.

**[Specific concepts and process of evaluation]**

**(1) Specific concepts based on the above basic principles (common matters)**

11.   JICA performs its evaluation mainly to see whether the development outcomes are realizable and whether they have been realized in view of the evaluability based on objective grounds.   In its evaluation, therefore, JICA strives to find out the risk factors related to realization of the development outcomes and to allow the implementing agencies, etc. and other stakeholders engaged in the relevant projects to take the appropriate actions as necessary.

12.   In carrying out its specific tasks in evaluation, JICA refers to the evaluation system recommended by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) and, in so doing, carries out its tasks according to a certain set of standards and formalities established by itself according to the aforementioned basic principles.

13.   Moreover, in the planning and check stages of the PDCA cycle, JICA performs evaluation and intensively checks the appropriateness of the project plans and the degree of realization of the development outcomes after the completion of the project (ex-post stage).   In the evaluation, JICA takes sufficient note of a wide outlook and risk factors along with relevant actions, logical linkage, and other matters.

In view of the fact that the projects are monitored as part of project management, JICA refers to these results in its ex-post evaluation and strives to obtain information useful in its evaluation.

**(2) Ex-ante evaluation**

14.   JICA, in its implementation of a project, performs an appropriate ex-ante evaluation on its relevance in accordance of the contents of the project. Ex-ante evaluations verify relevance and set project outcomes.

15.   The most important thing in ex-ante evaluation performed before the project, that is, JICA and the implementing agencies, etc. to determine and share 1) whether a project plan is appropriately designed, 2) what development issues of the recipient country the project aims to address, and 3)

"who (or what) is to be changed in what way" by implementation of the project, considering the logic of realization of the development outcomes and prospects for the impact on the target society.

16.    JICA, together with the implementing agencies, etc., therefore analyzes from a broad outlook based on objective grounds the framework from the development issues to realization of the effects as well as the external risk factors that may affect the relevant projects.   Moreover, JICA appropriately grasps the status of the implementing agencies, etc. and other stakeholders in an attempt to form projects that ensure even higher effects of cooperation (intervention).

17.    JICA needs to consider measures to reduce the risks recognized in the aforementioned process of analysis with the implementing agencies, etc. as early as the planning stage to the extent possible. Moreover, JICA deliberates these measures sufficiently with the implementing agencies, etc. and, under their ownership, encourages the stakeholders to take these measures.

18.    JICA also strives to clearly identify a logic from project implementation to realization of the development outcomes (logics leading output to outcome and then to impact) in the process of ex-ante evaluation with the implementing agencies, etc. and to set an appropriate time frame required for that purpose.
At that time, it is desirable to organize, beforehand in the planning stage, the added value of the relevant projects intended to address the even higher-level objectives and JICA's exit strategy as well.

19.    Promptly after establishing an agreement on a specific project plan with the implementing agencies, etc., JICA announces the ex-ante evaluation report.

## (3) Ex-post evaluation

20.    JICA performs its ex-post evaluation within a certain period after a specific project is completed, based on the ex-ante evaluation report in the planning stage, records of monitoring during and at the end of the project implementation, and other information.

21.    Ex-post evaluation focuses its check, on the basis of comparison of the plan with the results, 1) not just the inputs loaded in the implementation stage but whether activities have been carried out appropriately to realize the development outcomes and 2) on how well the development outcomes were realized as a result.   Moreover, the ex-post evaluation at a certain interval after the project completion enables comprehensive evaluation including how the development outcomes were

realized and also enables appropriate recommendations and lessons which will lead to improve projects.

22.   In performing its ex-post evaluation, similarly to ex-ante evaluation and monitoring at the time of project implementation, JICA considers logical linkage with realization of the development outcomes and considers how they are realized and sustained, along with other issues, from a broad outlook based on grounds that are as objective as possible.   JICA also gives comprehensive consideration to the circumstances surrounding the specific projects and other elements and strives to perform fair and appropriate evaluation without depending only on quantitative indicators.

23.   JICA checks the facts specified in the findings of the ex-post evaluation report with the implementing agencies, etc. and then promptly announces the findings of its ex-post evaluation.

**(4) Feedback**

24.   JICA is responsible for improving the projects by using effective recommendations, lessons, and good practices extracted from the series of procedures of the aforementioned ex-ante evaluation and ex-post evaluation, thereby proceeding with its organizational efforts for improving project management to further realize the development outcomes.

25.   Out of the recommendations, lessons, and good practices obtained in its ex-post evaluation, JICA actively shares with the implementing agencies, etc. and takes measures to ensure that they are used in considering and implementing development projects in the future.

26.   These, in particular, include those which not only contribute directly to developing plans for JICA's projects but also are useful in improving systems related to Japan's ODA.   JICA continues to announce these actively and strives to share them with its stakeholders in various fields.

27.   It is to be noted that JICA's ex-post evaluations are just analyses conducted at certain timings after project completion and they themselves do not ensure the development outcomes that the projects aimed at.   If, therefore, ex-post evaluation finds that the development outcomes, which are the goals of the project, is inadequate, JICA mentions the necessity of continuous monitoring and additional actions by JICA or the implementing agencies, etc. in the ex-post evaluation reports as the recommendations and lessons.