

Chapter 3 Data Interpretation and Reporting Evaluation

Results

This chapter explains how to interpret data and how to bring together evaluation results.

Tips!

- Evaluation does not end with data collection and analysis. It is also very important to follow through with data interpretation and the reporting of results by coming to a consensus about them with the stakeholders.
- Data interpretation is done in order to evaluate the project from comprehensive viewpoint of the five criteria and draw a conclusion. This is the value judgment process.
- In data interpretation, hindering or contributing factors are also analyzed. Influential factors should be identified by utilizing the concepts of implementation failure or theory failure.
- Recommendations and lessons learned have to be specific as well as practical, backed up by evidence. When making recommendations and drawing lessons learned from the results, it is also important to have an opportunity to reach a consensus with potential users.
- The evaluator needs to write a report that is logical enough to communicate with the third party, who was not directly involved in the evaluation process.

1. Data Interpretation

Evaluation does not end with just data collection and analysis to find out mean value or degree of satisfaction. Based on those results of analysis, some value judgments should be made according to the evaluation criteria. At the same time, in order to make useful recommendations and lessons learned, influential factors that have affected the results should be fully analyzed. This task is called “interpretation.” As seen so far, the evaluation study follows the process from “data collection” through “data analysis” to “interpretation of results.”

There are two steps in the interpretation process: 1) making value judgments about a project according to the Five Evaluation Criteria; and 2) drawing a conclusion based on those judgments.

(1) Evaluation Using the Five Criteria

The first task is to evaluate a project using the five criteria and specify the factors that brought the evaluation results. For instance, suppose when evaluating the effectiveness of a water supply project, effectiveness is examined based on the data analysis that “60 percent of all villagers could access safe water” as an answer to the evaluation question of “what percentage of villagers could access safe water by conducting the project?” In the case that the evaluator judges that the effectiveness is not high enough because the target value (80 percent of the villagers) was not attained, factors that inhibited the achievement of the objective should be analyzed. There might have been a problem with the location of the waterworks installed, or the water supply management committee might not be functioning properly.

When explaining hindering or contributing factors, specific evidence drawn from survey results should be presented to all stakeholders. If not, the credibility of the evaluation may decrease. As a result, fewer people will be persuaded to utilize the evaluation results.

If the conclusion only indicates that “the effectiveness is high” without analyzing hindering or contributing factors, or if it reports the rating score of each criterion, the results may not be utilized for project improvement. Only when influential factors are identified can useful recommendations and lessons learned be proposed.

(2) Conclusion

Drawing a conclusion based on the interpretation results for each of the five criteria is the next step. In an evaluation using the five criteria, the evaluator perceives a project from the viewpoint of each criterion individually. To draw a conclusion, however, the evaluator has to make a value judgment for each evaluation purpose from a comprehensive viewpoint, considering all the criteria. For instance, in

ex-ante evaluation, an evaluation mission team decides whether it is valid to conduct a project and whether the contents of plans are appropriate. In the case of terminal evaluation, a team judges whether a project is successful and whether the assistance should be terminated. The team also has to provide evidence for the judgment from the results.

In drawing the conclusion, the following approach can be applied to re-examine a project: 1) whether assumed causal relationships between project implementation and effects were appropriate; and 2) whether the project implementation process was appropriate. For instance, if the effectiveness is low despite the fact that the efficiency (the relationship between inputs and outputs) is high in a project, there might have been problems in the planning process which specified the causal relationships that would produce the expected effects (or the original plans). Or, in the case that effects are not produced although the project structure (the logic of causal relationships) is considered appropriate, there might have been problems in the implementation process (or the way of implementing a project, including inputs and the management system). Re-examining a project on these issues clarifies who is responsible for what, and makes it possible to formulate recommendations and propose the lessons that have been learned more specifically. This analysis is essential for internal evaluation whose main purpose is to feedback the evaluation results to those responsible or to those concerned in order to improve project management and operation.

2. Making Recommendations and Proposing Lessons Learned

Based on the conclusion, recommendations are made and lessons learned are drawn. “Recommendations” include specific measures, suggestions and advice on a target project for JICA or those concerned in the implementing agencies. “Lessons” can be learned through the experience of a target project and fed back to on-going similar projects or to project finding and planning process in the future.

It is important to reach some consensus among the stakeholders (including the government officers of a partner country) about the recommendations and lessons learned. By involving potential users of evaluation results, it is expected that the recommendations and lessons learned will be practiced, and accordingly, some improvements will be made in project management and operations.



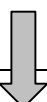
Not many people would utilize the recommendations and lessons learned if they were not specific and practical enough. To convey clear messages by providing supporting evidence obtained from evaluation results is most important. The following issues should be examined in making recommendations and drawing lessons learned.

Issues of examination

- Recommendations/lessons learned have to be made based on the information obtained through the process of data analysis and interpretation. The contents have to meet the evaluation purpose.
- Recommendations/lessons learned have to be targeted at the potential users of the evaluation results.
- Avoid vague and impractical recommendations/lessons learned.
- Recommendations have to be specific and prioritized with a time frame (e.g., in a short term or a longer term) to the extent possible so that the next measures can easily be taken.
- Lessons have to be generalized and conceptualized so that they will widely be applicable.

Table 2-3-1

The Flow of Data Interpretation and Recommendations/Lessons Learned

<p>Data Analysis</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Numerical value data by quantitative analysis ● Issues and incidents grasped through qualitative analysis
<p>Evaluation Results Using the Five Evaluation Criteria</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Judgments based on each of the Five Evaluation Criteria: – relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability ● Provide evidence for the judgment and analyze hindering or contributing factors
<p>Conclusion</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Responses to evaluation questions ● Judgment for the evaluation purpose from the comprehensive viewpoint based on the results of the five criteria <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ <u>Ex-ante Evaluation</u>: whether implementing a specific project is valid and whether the contents of its plans are appropriate ✓ <u>Mid-term Evaluation</u>: whether a project is producing effects as expected and whether there is a necessity of modifying its plans ✓ <u>Terminal Evaluation</u>: whether a project is considered as a good practice or a failure ✓ <u>Ex-post Evaluation</u>: whether the effects produced are being sustained and whether a project was worth conducting ✓ Judgments for other evaluation purposes ● Providing the grounds Examining whether the problem can be attributed to the way causal relationships are specified (a matter resulting from project planning) or the problem of the implementation process (a matter resulting from implementing a project)
<p>Recommendations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Specific measures, suggestions, and advice regarding a target project to be taken into consideration by those concerned
<p>Lessons Learned</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lessons learned through the experience of a target project (useful information for project finding and formulation in the future or the management of other on-going projects)

3. Reporting Evaluation Results

Evaluation results should be reported in a simple and clear way to potential users. If the report is difficult to understand, evaluation results are not easily fed back and utilized. As a result, resources (namely time and money) invested in the evaluation might end up being wasted. Reports should explain key issues in a comprehensive manner to those who are not directly involved in the evaluation study, so that they can easily follow and understand the results.

At JICA, such summaries as “Ex-ante Evaluation Table” and “Summary Table of Evaluation Results” are attached to an evaluation report (or to a project document in the case of ex-ante evaluation). Also, summaries have to be prepared in English to be fed back to the partner countries. These summaries of the evaluation results are publicized on the JICA homepage for the purpose of accountability. (Refer to table 2-3-2, 2-3-3, and 2-3-4 for examples of document formats.)

Shown below are the tips to properly report evaluation results.

Tips in preparing a report

- Avoid a redundant report. Keep the length of the main part around 30 to 40 pages. Be sure to make a summary of the evaluation results.
- Write a report using specific expressions in a simple manner, emphasizing issues to be conveyed. Avoid using technical terms too often.
- Use tables and figures in an appropriate and simple manner when explaining data, so that the readers can receive messages to be conveyed through the data.
- State the limitation of the evaluation study.
- Provide the grounds for judgments in the evaluation of survey results.
- Stipulate the sources of quoted data.
- Place the evaluation grid, contents of the questionnaire, and collected data in an appendix.

Table 2-3-2 An Example of Evaluation Report Contents (the Case of Terminal Evaluation)

Table of Contents
Preface
Project Site Map
Pictures
Abbreviations
Summary of Evaluation Results
Chapter 1 Scope of Evaluation Study
- Background and Goal of Evaluation Mission Dispatch
- Mission Team and Time Frame
- Project Overview, etc.
(e.g., Background of Project, Logical Framework, etc.)
Chapter 2 Evaluation Methods
- Evaluation Questions, Necessary Data, and Indicators
- Data Collection Methods
- Data Analysis Methods
- Restrictions and Limitations in Evaluation Study
Chapter 3 Project Performance
- Inputs and Outputs
- Project Purpose
- Implementation Process
Chapter 4 Evaluation Results
4-1 Evaluation for Each of the Five Criteria
- Describe data analysis results, evaluation results and grounds, and the hindering or contributing factors related to each of the Five Evaluation Criteria
4-2 Conclusion
- Examine hindering or contributing factors and make judgments on evaluation results from the comprehensive viewpoint
- Summarize noticeable issues when necessary

Table 2-3-2 (continued)

Chapter 5 Recommendations and Lessons Learned

5-1 Recommendations

- Describe specific measures, suggestions, and advice regarding a target project or a related cooperation program.
- Describe recommendations for each potential user, in priority order, and in a time frame, if possible.

5-2 Lessons Learned

- Describe useful information, obtained from the target project, for project finding and formulation of similar projects or the implementation and the management of other on-going projects.
- Describe useful information for formulating a cooperation program in the related area.

Appendix:

1. Study Schedule
2. Main Interviewees
3. Minutes
4. Evaluation Grid
5. Questionnaire, Question Items, etc.
6. Data Collection and Analysis Results
7. List of Collected Literature and Documents
8. Other Related Materials

Table 2-3-3 An Example of the Summary of Mid-term and Terminal Evaluation

I. Outline of the Project	
Country :	Project title :
Issue/Sector :	Cooperation scheme :
Division in charge : Dept. Division	Total cost : _____yen Cost per participant: _____yen Share of Japan's Contribution: ___%
Period of Cooperation	(R/D): (Extension): (F/U) :
	Partner Country's Implementing Organization : Supporting Organization in Japan :
Related Cooperation :	
1 Background of the Project	
2 Project Overview	
<u>(write an outline of the project/training program, briefly in one or two sentences)</u>	
(1) Overall Goal <u>(Copy your overall goal, project purpose, outputs from your PDMe)</u>	
(2) Project Purpose	
(3) Outputs	
(4) Inputs	
Japanese side :	
Long-term Expert	_____ Equipment Yen
Short-term Expert	_____ Local cost Yen
Trainees received	_____ Others Yen
-----'s Side :	
Counterpart	_____ Equipment _____local currency (____Yen)
Land and Facilities	_____local currency (____Yen) Local Cost_____local currency (____Yen)
Others	_____local currency (____Yen)
II. Evaluation Team	
Members of Evaluation Team	

Period of Evaluation	Day/ month/ Year~ Day/ month/ Year	Type of Evaluation : Terminal or Ex-post
III. Results of Evaluation		
<p>1 Summary of Evaluation Results</p> <p>(1) Relevance</p> <p>(2) Effectiveness</p> <p>(3) Efficiency</p> <p>(4) Impact</p> <p>(5) Sustainability</p>		
<p>2 Factors promoting sustainability and impact</p> <p>(1) Factors concerning to Planning</p> <p>(2) Factors concerning to the Implementation Process</p> <p>3 Factors inhibiting sustainability and impact</p> <p>(1) Factors concerning to Planning</p> <p>(2) Factors concerning to the Implementation Process</p> <p>4 Conclusion</p> <p>5 Recommendations</p> <p>6 Lessons Learned</p> <p>7 Follow-up Situation</p>		

Table 2-3-4 Ex-ante Evaluation Sheet (Technical Cooperation Projects)

1. Project Title:
2. Outline of the Cooperation (1) Outline of the project objective and output (2) Period of Cooperation (3) Total amount of cooperation (Japan) (4) Implementing Agency of Partner Country (5) Cooperation Agency in Japan (6) Target Group and Beneficiaries
3. Necessity and positioning of the cooperation (1) Current situation and Problems (2) Positioning within the national policies of country A's government (3) Positioning within the Japanese foreign aid policy and JICA's plan for country-specific program implementation
4. Framework of the Cooperation (1) Objective of the Cooperation (Outcomes) i) Objective to be achieved at the end of the cooperation (Project Purpose) ii) Objective expected to be achieved after the end of the cooperation (Overall Goal) (2) Outputs and Activities (3) Inputs i) Japanese side ii) Partner Country's side (4) External factors (important assumptions that should come true)
5. Evaluation Results based on five evaluation criteria (1) Relevance (2) Effectiveness (3) Efficiency (4) Impact (5) Sustainability
6. Consideration for Poverty, Gender and Environmental Issues
7. Lessons Learned from Past Experience
8. Future Evaluation Plan