

Summary of a trial quasi-assessment on the Development Master Plan to examine evaluation methods for cooperation programs

1. Study overview

➤ Purpose

In order to examine evaluation methods for cooperation programs, a trial quasi-assessment was conducted on the Master Plan (MP) previously implemented by JICA.

➤ Study method

The following three regional integrated development master plans (see Table 1) were selected as case studies. MPs and cooperation programs share common structure and relationship in terms of “objectives, strategy and proposed projects”, therefore, the study assessed MPs by focusing on the realization of the strategies as well as the four perspectives described below:

- (1) Validate and verify programs’ context and relevance
- (2) Verify appropriateness of the strategies
 - Appropriateness of the strategies in the Plans
 - Actual Performance
 - Appropriateness of the strategies in their process
- (3) Contribution analysis
 - Changes in development issues
 - Extent of accomplishment of MPs’ scenarios
- (4) Propose lessons learned and recommendations

Table 1 List of studied MPs

1. the Republic of Zambia “Basic design study report on living environmental improvement project for unplanned urban settlements in Lusaka” (2001)	
Objectives	To improve social development infrastructure in eight unplanned urban settlements in Lusaka City
Strategy	Introduce following three to achieve the Objectives: (1) formulation of an Action Area Plan; (2) formulation of guidelines for improving living conditions; and (3) formulation of a development plan for projects focusing on short-term objectives.
Proposal	Comprehensive improvement plan with the following projects proposed: (1) improving water supply facilities; (2) health/hygiene education; (3) construction of toilets; (4) construction of community schools;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (5) garbage disposal; (6) improvement of community centers; (7) improvement of roads and water drainage; and (8) increase in income.
2. the Philippines “Comprehensive development plan study of Calabarzon Region” (1991)	
Objectives	<p>Implement the following four with the aim of increasing Calabarzon's Gross Regional Product in 2010 to 6.4 times 1988 levels;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) improve incomes in agricultural areas; (2) maintain rapid growth while maintaining good balance between the agricultural and industrial sectors; (3) realize balanced geographic distribution of the population and economic activities; and (4) create a better human environment to increase social receptivity to development.
Strategy	<p>Introduce the following three strategies to achieve the objectives and purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) comprehensive development plan, (2) agricultural development; and (3) intensive industrialization.
Proposal	<p>Proposed 32 core projects in following eight sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) development of the port; (2) improvement of roads and highways; (3) support for industries; (4) urban development; (5) agricultural cooperation; (6) development of agricultural villages; (7) social development; and (8) environmental management.
3. People's Republic of China “Hainan Island Comprehensive Development Plan” (1987)	
Objectives	Increase Hainan Island's economic level (in terms of 2005 per capita agricultural production) to match China's average
Strategy	<p>Introduce following three strategies to achieve objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) upgrading industry by accelerating the shift from an agriculture-centered industrial structure to one focusing manufacturing, sightseeing, and tertiary industries; (2) creating Hainan Island's development base and broadband economic block based on a transition from closed equal and distributed development to an open market economy; and (3) improving fundamental infrastructures to match (1) and (2).

Proposal	<p>Proposed core projects in the following eight sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (1) agriculture; (2) mining; (3) human resource development; (4) sightseeing; (5) urban development; (6) transportation; (7) water resources, flood control, water utilization; and (8) energy
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➤ **Implementation arrangements**

Evaluation Division 2, Evaluation Department serves as the secretariat to supervise the study as a whole in order to conduct the study in collaboration with Planning Department, Economic Infrastructure Department, regional departments and related overseas offices involved in the case study.

➤ **Study schedule:**

The study was implemented according to the schedule described below:

(1) **Domestic survey (about 1.5 months)**

Collected information, reviewed the literature, and conducted interviews of the target MPs and projects proposed by the MPs. Further, information was sorted according to the current situation and background of the target country.

(2) **Field survey (about 0.5 to 0.7 months)**

Collected literature/documents and conducted an interview survey to the government offices of the target country, other parties involved in the project (e.g. JICA offices), and beneficiaries.

(3) **Domestic work (3 months)**

Sorted and analyzed field survey results and examined development benefits brought by projects implemented based on the MP. Provide recommendations and lesson learned.

2. Suggestions for program evaluation

(1) **Importance of monitoring**

A common fact observed among the three cases was that changes in the environment surrounding the program in the mid-to-medium term were greater than those estimated earlier. It is therefore vital to examine in the formulation phase a monitoring system that enables to take adequate countermeasures to outside conditions and to review strategies in a timely manner in the stage of program operation.

(2) **Timing of evaluation**

Generally speaking, the amount and quality of the information available program evaluation become increasingly restricted as time passes. Therefore, it is vital to carefully set the evaluation schedule which allows smooth information collection.

(3) Evaluation design

In general, information available to verify the context and relevance of the program and strategy is existing references (i.e. policy documents issued by the recipient government statistics data, Japan's Country Assistance Program, JICA's thematic policy, and JICA's country-focused cooperation plan). It is relatively hard to collect information and analyze background afterwards. Therefore, in case there are any special circumstances at the time of program formulation, it is recommended to add an explanation in a form of an additional note or remark.

3. Conclusions

➤ MP-related speculation based on study results

(1) Strategy features

As a rule, the government of the recipient country must take responsibility for realizing the strategy of MPs. Since the strategy involves funding or resources of which not only JICA but also the recipient country's own or those from other donors, it is possible to draw a bigger picture in comparison with cooperation programs. On the other hand, a cooperation program provides sub-programs and projects as a packaged tools for implementation when it formulates strategies, Considering the size of a cooperation program, it is impossible to cover an entire view of MP, and therefore, the scope of the strategy is limited in comparison with MP.

(2) Gradual decrease in applicability of strategy implementation

Even a top-performing MP can not survive forever. Ten years since a MP has been proposed, then the information would be outdated which was used for study and analysis of each framework; for example information on social, economic, space, environment, infrastructure, and facility conditions. The people involved in strategy formulation are no exception. It is impossible to avoid a gradual decrease in applicability of the strategy due to changes in circumstances and external factors, no matter how good the strategy proposed by the MP.

(3) Correlation among target-strategy-proposed projects

The motivation of the recipient government to take ownership in implementing the proposed projects by the MP may decrease if the relationships among the target-strategy-proposed projects are missing or weak. To avoid this and to maintain logical relationships. Especially for MPs, therefore JICA provides more resources for formulating strategy, collecting and analyzing information related to sectors in a comprehensive manner. For strategies that can only be achieved by accomplishing a significant number of proposed projects, the correlation between

each proposed project and the strategy is weaker. Because of this, the government of the recipient country may not always be capable of implementing every one of the many projects proposed in the MP, even if the government is motivated to take ownership. Further, during the strategy implementation phase, it is essential to coordinate among the organizations involved and laws and regulations related to the projects. The government of the recipient country is therefore requested to establish a secretariat that serves to manage (monitor) the progress of projects if they are implemented according to the scenario, in order to accomplish the project goals, and to adjust things if necessary. It is nearly impossible to function as an effective secretariat without having a consensus-building system within the existing agency. This is done by establishing a section to coordinate efforts at the time of MP formulation.

➤ Recommendations for cooperation programs obtained from survey results

(4) External factors

The applicability of MP strategy may be drastically reduced due to changes in external factors; for example, changes of government, shifts in policy, and economic crises that were unpredictable at the time of formulation. The repercussions of these external factors are enhanced depending on the length (of time) and range (scope) of the strategy. For example, if the expected effects of an intervention are not likely to be accomplished, it is vital to consider making drastic changes to the scenario, including termination of the intervention. For the preparation of unexpected changes in external factors, it is necessary to establish some systems in place beforehand, to change interventions, to monitor regularly the ongoing situation, and to deliberate issues among decision-makers involved in the realization of strategy. For the programs as well, it is vital to know that there is a possibility that some programs may need to be reconsidered before the end of the planned implementation period.

(5) Realizing strategy and visualizing the effects of intervention

The preparatory survey, which plays a central role in the formulation of cooperation programs, cannot afford to provide as much resources as MP. Therefore, it may be important to boost motivation of counterparts in the recipient governments in order to realize the strategies with a different mechanism from the MP. Further, it is vital to mutually check the legitimacy of the strategy by indicating (visualizing) the benefits that intervention would bring about through implementation of the cooperation program. If there are parties other than JICA that are to intervene in the program to achieve clear cooperation goals, the legitimacy of the strategy must be checked with other development partners as well.

(6) Service delivery (SD) and capacity development (CD)

The trial assessment of the MP was effective in getting an overview of the benefits both in terms of CD and SD. Because of the effects stemming from external factors, it is difficult to discuss the CD

and SD benefits in a clear cause-and-effect manner. However, it is at least possible to make the following two points: (1) the benefits of intervention are not able to verify unless service provision is improved from a long-term perspective; and (2) notwithstanding (1) above, improvements stemming from intervention largely depend on capacity improvement. At the stage of formulating scenarios of a program (strategy) with a focus on scaling-up, it is vital to clarify how to visualize the benefits of intervention by combining the two types of projects (those that support SD and CD) after thoroughly analyzing different aspects of target issues.

(7) Summative evaluation and formative evaluation

Since this study was designed to examine evaluation methods for cooperation programs, the main focus was on “how to evaluate”. However, it is quite important **to enhance benefit verifiability by identifying issues that require extra consideration at the time of strategy formulation.**

Further, for cases where the maturity of program is still in progress, it is critical to emphasize evaluations focusing project improvement (formulation evaluation) over evaluations summarizing the results of the project (summary evaluation). A formulation evaluation is a management process that reflects changes in external factors even before completion of the project, while thoroughly monitoring it.

Regarding the method of “evaluation of contribution”, the Theory of Change was used as a trial on three MP assessments recently conducted. The “evaluation of contribution” was used to summarize the results of assessment (summary evaluation) when a series of projects conducted in line with cooperation program strategy were duly completed. This allowed progress towards resolving development issues to be quantitatively assessed. Therefore, as a methodology for “evaluation of contribution”, the theory can be deemed effective under certain conditions where series of information can be collected regarding assumed conditions and external factors. In the coming years, it may become vital to specify quantitative and qualitative indexes or targets that provide enough information to a third party for evaluation whether progress towards resolving development issues moves forward as designed by the cooperation program..