

Achievements of the New JICA

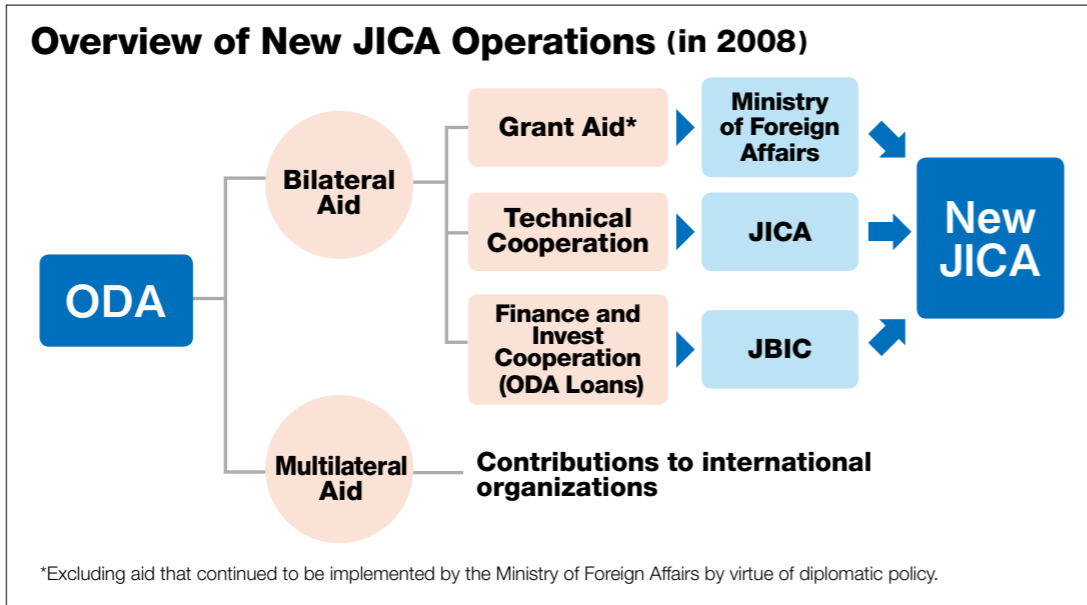
In recent years, JICA has been faced with dramatic changes in the needs of developing countries, as well as social conditions in Japan. Here we look back on the work JICA has initiated over the past 10 years, and the path it has taken under its new structure.

An integrated approach to technical and financial cooperation

Making progress on development with a one-stop support window



Keiichiro Nakazawa
Director General
Operations Strategy Department



Pakistan struggles against polio. The photo shows an educational class on preventive vaccination in a school. A Japanese expert helps to communicate the importance of vaccines to children.



The one-stop service center in the Thilawa Industrial Park. It has been praised by the client companies for its prompt execution of the various procedures necessary to start business activities.



Companies set up operations in the Thilawa Industrial Park one after another.

Effects of integration realized in Myanmar's special economic zone

Ten years have passed since JICA became an organization that implements an integrated approach to the three primary ODA schemes of technical cooperation, finance and investment cooperation, and grant assistance. The results are evident in a lot of areas. Keiichiro Nakazawa, Director General of Operations Strategy Department, gives the achievements of the Thilawa Special Economic Zone, which opened in Myanmar in September 2015, as an example. Working on industrial park development in that special economic zone is Myanmar Japan Thilawa Development Limited (MJTD), a joint venture of Japanese trading companies and banks, the Myanmar government, and local companies.

JICA has invested in MJTD whilst providing ODA loans for the expansion and maintenance of a major road extending dozens of miles to Yangon, Myanmar's largest city, and for the construction of terminals at Thilawa Port. JICA also provided technical cooperation for developing capacity to build a one-stop service center in the special economic zone as a centralized location to apply for the government services necessary for business activities, from corpo-

rate registration to approval of investment applications. The establishment of this service center made it possible to obtain investment approval more quickly. Nakazawa says, "If two different organizations, one providing loan assistance for industrial park and infrastructure development, and the other technical cooperation for establishing a one-stop service center operate independently, as they did before, decisions have to be made by each organization. This would have resulted in more time and hassle related to coordination, and coordinating the timing of assistance would have been more challenging. By having a single organization administer all of these services, we were able to proceed more efficiently." He also touched on his own experiences with the integrated operations approach at JICA's Myanmar Office. "At the Myanmar Office, each officer is in charge of technical cooperation, ODA loans, and grants so that he/she acquires extensive know-how and is able to move everything forward smoothly."

Contributing to the eradication of polio by coordinating innovative finance and technical assistance

Before the organizational integration, Nakazawa was in charge

of ODA loan operations at the Japan Bank of International Cooperation (JBIC) for many years. "In this role I contributed to infrastructure development and facility construction, but I had almost no opportunities to be directly involved in aspects such as human resource development. That's because the partner countries are reluctant to borrow money to hire foreign experts for human resource development. Today, however, JICA dispatches advisors or experts under technical cooperation, engaging in human resource development in parallel with infrastructure development. This gives Japan more room to address the needs of developing countries, and I really feel that this has led to more significant development impact."

JICA's efforts to eradicate polio in Pakistan through technical cooperation is another good example of integrated operations using partnerships to create an innovative scheme. In order to further accelerate the eradication efforts, funding was required on a larger scale. Toward that end, an ODA loan with a low interest rate was provided to the Pakistani government, and later a cooperation agreement was signed with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, which is also working to eradicate polio. The agreement states

that if the Pakistani government achieves a certain level of success with the steady implementation of its National Emergency Action Plan for Polio Eradication, the foundation will take over the government's debt for the loan. Together with the ODA loan, JICA provided technical cooperation for administration of the polio vaccine under a routine vaccination scheme, as well providing a grant for additional priority vaccinations. Target levels, including that of improving vaccination rates, were met due to these efforts, leading to improved health among Pakistani citizens.

This would not have been possible with JICA only providing technical cooperation, or JBIC only providing ODA loans. Indeed, this tie-up was a result only made possible by the new JICA structure.

Looking ahead to the future, Nakazawa says, "It will be JICA's task not only to further enhance the effects of integrated administration of multiple schemes, but also to create a mechanism of development funds flow, including those from the private sector, which will properly meet the needs of developing countries."