Operations Evaluation

JICA uses the plan-do-check-action (PDCA) cycle to conduct evaluations of all projects and programs, including Technical Cooperation, ODA Loans and Grant Aid. JICA's evaluation utilizes a common framework that encompasses the pre-implementation, implementation, post-implementation and feedback stages, while reflecting the features of each aid scheme such as the assistance period and timeframe for expected results. By conducting evaluations at each stage of the PDCA cycle, JICA aims to improve the development results of the operations.

Table 1: The PDCA Cycle

Ex-ante evaluation	Mid-term review	Terminal evaluation	Ex-post evaluation	Ex-post monitoring	Feedback
Prior to project implementation, the relevance, details and expected outcome of the project along with evaluation indicators are examined.	Examines the relevance of the plan, progress of the project, attainability of the goal, and internal and external factors influencing the project.		After the completion of the project, the relevance, effectiveness, impact, efficiency and sustainability of the project are examined. Ex-post monitoring examines measures and actions taken based on lessons learned and recommendations offered at Ex-post evaluation.		Evaluation results are reflected in the present project for improvement and also utilized as reference for planning and implementation of similar projects.

Characteristics of JICA's Evaluations

1. Consistency throughout the Project by Reflecting the PDCA Cycle (See Table 1)

2. Coherent Methodologies and Criteria for All Three Schemes of Assistance

JICA aims to conduct evaluations and utilizes the findings based on a consistent philosophy and a standardized evaluation framework, while taking into consideration the characteristics of each assistance scheme. For example, JICA conducts evaluations based on the PDCA cycle, using the Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance (See Table 2) laid out by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) as an international ODA evaluation perspective. Also, evaluation results are published based on a rating system developed by JICA.

3. Cross-sectoral and Comprehensive Evaluation through a Thematic Evaluation

JICA conducts thematic evaluations to analyze a group of projects comprehensively and cross-sectorally. The aim of this evaluation is to derive recommendations and lessons learned which can be utilized in many projects. A thematic evaluation is conducted by selecting projects based on a specified theme and analyzing them from a different angle than in an individual project evaluation.

In the future, evaluations will also be conducted for JICA's cooperation programs (a strategic framework designed to support the achievement of developing countries' mid- to long-term development goals) in line with the progress being made in this endeavor.

4. Ensuring Objectivity and Transparency

JICA conducts external evaluations in the ex-post evaluations, which require an objective verification of project implementation results. An external third-party makes evaluation judgments for projects over a certain size. In addition, results of ex-post evaluations are published on the JICA website to ensure the transparency of these evaluations. Furthermore, as a framework to reflect the perspectives of outside parties in evaluations, advice on the evaluation framework, structure, and methods is provided by the Advisory Committee on Evaluation comprising third-party experts.

5. Emphasizing Use of Evaluation Results

For JICA's project evaluations, the results of evaluations at each stage of the project are used as feedback that can improve the quality of the "Action" phase of the PDCA cycle. This feedback includes recommendations for improving the project and lessons learned that can be used at other ongoing or future projects. Furthermore, JICA will utilize feedback for establishing JICA's fundamental strategies for cooperation and the JICA Thematic Guideline. Also, JICA will provide feedback of evaluation findings to recipient governments and use other measures so that the findings can be incorporated in the projects, programs and upper level policies, such as development policies of these recipient governments.

Table 2: Evaluation Perspectives Using the DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance

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