

Efforts to Ensure Appropriate Development Cooperation

Japan's development cooperation centered on ODA has contributed greatly not only to the development and growth of developing countries but also to the establishment of firm bonds of friendship and trust between Japan and developing countries. At the same time, it has helped enhance Japan's standing in the international community and ensure the country's peace and prosperity. On the other hand, there have been cases of fraud committed in ODA projects, as well as failures in delivering expected outcomes and delays due to unforeseen circumstances.

The Government of Japan has made various efforts to learn lessons from these experiences for the future, such as improving evaluation systems, enhancing transparency, strengthening project management processes, and holding dialogues with a wide range of stakeholders, including recipient countries and civil society. The Government will continue to strive to engage in more effective and appropriate development cooperation.

Furthermore, in order to implement projects with due consideration for environmental and social aspects, JICA has established the JICA Guidelines for Environmental and Social Considerations as a part of its efforts to ensure the appropriateness of its development cooperation.

(1) Prevention of Fraudulent Practices

Fraudulent practices related to ODA projects not only hinder their appropriate and effective implementation, but also undermine trust in ODA that is funded by the taxes paid by the people of Japan. Therefore, fraudulent practices are absolutely unacceptable.

Based on lessons learned from past fraudulent practices, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and JICA have strengthened efforts to prevent those practices. These include enhancing monitoring systems (such as strengthening the function of the consultation desk for information related to fraud and corruption and expanding third-party checks), increasing penalties (such as extending the maximum period of suspension of eligibility for participation, increasing penalty charges for breaching contracts, and introducing a point-deduction system applicable to corporations that repeatedly

commit serious fraudulent practices), and expanding the scope of suspension of eligibility for participation (such as subjecting the groups of the suspended corporations and entities who have received business transfers from the suspended corporations to penalties).

Japan will remain firmly committed to the prevention of fraudulent practices in ODA under the strong conviction that fraudulent practices related to ODA projects can never be tolerated.

(2) Safety Measures for People Involved in International Cooperation Projects

Ensuring the safety of not only JICA-associated workers but also all actors involved in international cooperation projects, such as employees of companies and members of NGOs, is a prerequisite for the implementation of development cooperation centered on ODA projects, and MOFA and JICA work on taking sufficient security measures and establishing safety measures on a regular basis.

Following the terrorist attack in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in July 2016, the Council on Safety Measures for International Cooperation Projects, in which the relevant ministries, agencies, government-related organizations, and experts participated, carried out its review and released the "Final Report."²⁹ MOFA and JICA strive to implement the safety measures³⁰ recommended in the report as well as to continue and enhance actions to ensure the effectiveness of safety measures for people involved in international cooperation projects. At the 2024 Council, which was made permanent after publication of the report, MOFA shared information on recent terrorist attacks and kidnapping cases that require special attention, while JICA provided information on incidents affecting the safety of people involved in ODA projects that occurred during the year, and on related safety measures. The participants discussed various circumstances, measures, efforts, and other matters related to the safety of those involved in international cooperation projects.

Furthermore, in the wake of the terrorist attack in Dhaka, the Small and Medium Enterprise Overseas

²⁹ Safety Measures for International Cooperation Projects https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/page22_000141.html

³⁰ The following five points are proposed as new safety measures: (i) Strengthening the collection, analysis, and sharing of threat information, (ii) A code of conduct of project partners and NGOs, (iii) Physical and non-physical protective measures, and strengthening training and drills, (iv) Post-crisis response, and (v) Raising crisis management awareness and improving organizational structures of MOFA and JICA.



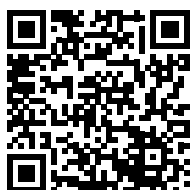
Then State Minister for Foreign Affairs Miyaji attending the 9th plenary meeting of the “Small and Medium Enterprise Overseas Safety Measures Network”

Safety Measures Network ³¹ was established in 2016 to strengthen overseas safety measures for personnel associated with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), including those involved in international cooperation projects. With participants from ministries and agencies involved in the overseas expansion of Japanese companies, the Network holds a director-general-level plenary meeting about once a year. In January 2024, the 8th plenary meeting was held, and in January 2025, the 9th plenary meeting was held, attended respectively by then State Minister for Foreign Affairs Tsuge and then State Minister for Foreign Affairs Miyaji. At these meetings, organizations participating in the Network confirmed that they would continue to actively engage in awareness-raising activities, as well as further strengthen cooperation with organizations and relevant ministries and agencies to advance safety measures for SMEs.

In 2024, when the security situation deteriorated in



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Iran, Israel, Palestine and other countries, MOFA and JICA, building on the aforementioned regular security measures and initiatives, while accurately assessing the situation and cooperating with international organizations, swiftly evacuated those involved in international cooperation projects from those countries, placing the highest priority on human lives to ensure their safety.

Additionally, following multiple evacuation cases in 2023, in March 2024, MOFA created an expanded second edition of “Golgo 13's Security Guidelines for Japanese SMEs Abroad,” which has been used to strengthen overseas safety measures for Japanese nationals including those involved in international cooperation projects. This edition includes a new episode emphasizing the importance of “preparing for evacuation.”

(3) Efforts to Address Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment in Development Cooperation

In the recent years, there has been a growing international concern about sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) in humanitarian and development assistance. In July 2019, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) adopted the “DAC Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment in Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Assistance.” In 2023, at the G7 Hiroshima Summit under Japan's Presidency, the G7 leaders confirmed their commitment to the elimination of SEAH in the G7 Hiroshima Leaders' Communiqué.

In light of these developments, MOFA conducts awareness-raising activities such as staff training. It also makes available the summaries of Japan's basic position and the DAC Recommendation on the MOFA website ³² to promote public understanding.

JICA raises awareness of the importance of SEAH prevention among a wide range of relevant parties involved in JICA projects through its website, which posts the president's call for eliminating SEAH, ³³ and through its employment regulations and ethics guidelines for JICA personnel that take into account SEAH prevention measures. In addition, it works to develop a consultation service as well as a response and monitoring system in case of an incident.

In addition, MOFA is taking measures such as incorporating SEAH prevention into the implementation guidelines for the Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects from FY2022 onward.

³¹ Small and Medium Enterprise Overseas Safety Measures Network https://www.anzen.mofa.go.jp/anzen_info/network.html (in Japanese only)

³² International Efforts to Address Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH) in Development Cooperation https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/about/doukou/page24_000019.html (in Japanese only)

³³ Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment https://www.jica.go.jp/english/our_work/compliance/seah_eradication.html