

*Commissioned by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs,  
The Government of Japan*

# **Evaluation Study on The Grassroots Grant Programme**

*Case Studies in Myanmar, Cambodia, Vietnam*

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## **Abstract**

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Government of Japan conducted the evaluation study on the Grassroots Grant Programme (herein after 'the GGP') in Myanmar, Cambodia and Vietnam in July and August 2001. This is the second of its kind following the first evaluation study conducted in four countries in Latin America in 2000. The study carried out this year aimed to evaluate the effects of small grants administered through the Embassy of Japan in the three countries. It was expected to draw useful lessons from nine case studies that could be applied to the future implementation of the programme.

The biggest strength of the GGP is that the grant reaches the target population directly, by cutting out intermediaries and the bureaucracy. However impact of the grant also depends on the timing and capability of the implementing agency that receives the grant. The proposed implementation plans set out in the project proposals should generally give a good indication of the capability of the implementation agencies. However, assessment of grant applications from a given country also requires a good understanding of, *inter alia*, vulnerable groups of society, their immediate needs, and the complexity of the aid environment of the country.

Ordinary grant schemes in Japan take two to three years until a grant is formally signed between two governments, whereas in case of GGP grant assistance could be approved in three to four months on average. Although a short period for planning and designing a project may not always mean the best solution to the problem, a quick response to many problems such as natural hazards and/or lack of safe water and health services generates considerable positive impacts on the people. Despite its strengths, the study found that there is also scope for further improvements. The key recommendations arising from the study include: Introduction of cost-efficient monitoring/evaluation of the assisted projects; review of selection criteria for repeat grant applications for the same project; effective collaboration with other grant schemes to maximise project effects; find ways to ensure that GGP grant scheme does not lose its flexibility.

This paper summarises the Evaluation Report submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan. The original report is written in Japanese and contains complete results of case studies on nine projects and provides detailed descriptions of the implementation arrangements of the GGP in subject country.

## **1. Background of the study**

The Government of Japan started the Grassroots Grant Programme in 1989 to assist NGOs, local government organisations and other grassroots organisations in developing countries to implement small-scale projects that directly affect basic needs of target communities in health, education and other sectors. Since then, the GGP has gradually gained a reputation as an assistance scheme that can '*quickly respond to local needs*', despite its small per-project value (10 Million Yen or US\$9000) relative to other grant schemes in Japan. It is the main strength of the GGP that the grant can be administered in a short period of time because grant assessment can be done mainly through the Japanese Embassy overseas. This contrasts with other grant schemes that require two to three years from the identification of a project, feasibility study, grant assessment to the official signing between two countries. Being directed to the grassroots organisations that are closely working with the people in need, the GGP has also been very successful in conveying goodwill from the people of Japan.

Since its inauguration in 1989, the GGP-assisted projects have been conducted in more than 100 countries to date. The scale of the programme has expanded from 95 projects in 1989 with a total project value of 0.3 Billion Yen to 1,523 projects in the year 2000 (8.5 Billion Yen), nearly a 30-fold increase in value. The growth of GGP programme is outstanding. Its scale of implementation outnumbers any other grant scheme: Approximately 76% of the total projects assisted by official grant schemes were through the GGP in 1999. Its total budget allocated to the GGP, however, amounted to only 7 Billion Yen in the same year, less than 3% of the total official grant assistance, which exceeds over 200 Billion Yen. This reflects the fact that GGP-assisted projects cost much less than other grant projects and that the demand for small-scale grants is high. Geographically, the GGP has been most extensively administered in Asia, followed by Africa. The two regions combined have dispensed more than 60% of the total GGP budget since 1995.

The 1990s saw changes in the environment surrounding Japan's Official Development Aid (ODA) programmes. The government's annual allocation of ODA budget has grown no more than 5% since

1995, which is mainly due to the decline of Japanese economy. Consequently, taxpayers have become more concerned than ever that Japanese development projects overseas achieve reasonable results. Result-oriented project implementation is increasingly becoming a norm. During the same period, the GGP also experienced changes in its application and scope, in order to accommodate diversified needs at the grassroots level: The scheme now includes limited coverage of training programmes for local staff and to support specific needs such as removal of land mines in war-torn areas. And the maximum ceiling of a grant increased to 50 Million Yen. New operational guidelines for 1999 outlined stronger collaboration with Japanese NGOs and Japanese Municipal governments in facilitating effective delivery of grants.

It is against this background that the study was conducted in three countries, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Vietnam in July and August 2001 to assess how the implementation of the GGP-assisted projects has been responsive to the needs of people. By doing so, the study expected to draw lessons for the improvement of the scheme and its implementation practices.

**2. Objectives of the evaluation study**

1. To assess performance of the GGP-assisted projects in terms of:
  - Efficiency of resource utilisation
  - Effectiveness and impact of the project on the target community
  - Relevancy of project planning and resource allocations, and
  - Sustainability of the project after the completion of external assistance
2. To study the implementation arrangements of the Embassy of Japan, including:
  - Selection criteria for grant application
  - Priority areas for assistance, and
  - Monitoring and evaluation of assisted projects
3. To study priority issues for development in the subject country and to measure the degree of contributions of the GGP to the country where limited government resources fail to respond to the basic needs of the people in the periphery of mainstream development
4. To study similar small grant programmes that are implemented by other donor agencies and to draw lessons from those practices and their achievements, and
5. To study projects that are collaborative efforts between GGP and other assistance schemes.

**3. Methodology of the study**

Nine individual projects were chosen for case studies from areas that affect basic human needs such as health services, education, vocational training, environment and water supply. Projects were assessed on the following five aspects: Efficiency, effectiveness, impact, relevancy and sustainability.

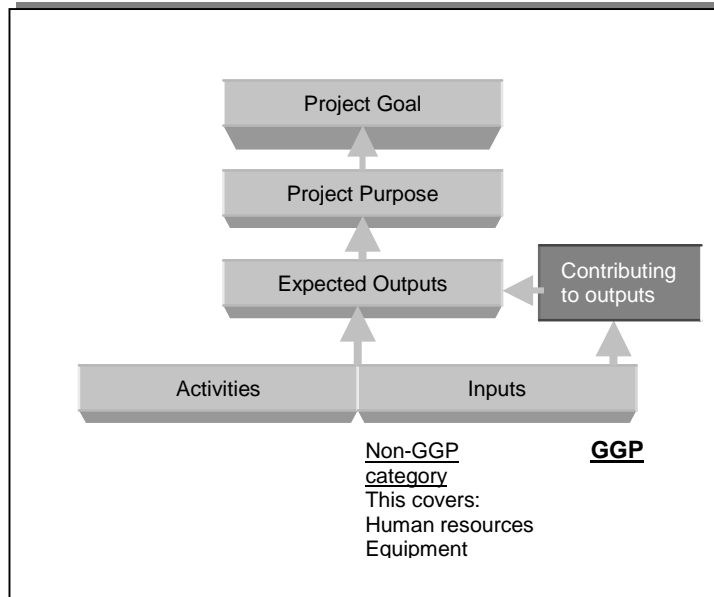
**Table 1- Five Points for Evaluation**

<i>Assessment</i>	<i>Points for Evaluation</i>
<b><i>Efficiency</i></b>	-How efficiently inputs were utilised to yield planned outputs
<b><i>Effectiveness</i></b>	-How effectively the planned outputs/project purposes were achieved
<b><i>Impact</i></b>	-Positive/negative influences on the target group as a result of project interventions
<b><i>Relevancy</i></b>	-Whether the aims of the projects are relevant to beneficiary's needs and development strategies in the area
<b><i>Sustainability</i></b>	-How the project will sustain on its own without external assistance

In this evaluation, special attention was given to analyse how the GGP intervention led to the achievement of expected outputs and project purpose. Specific questions asked by the evaluation team at the project sites included, *inter alia*, the following:

- Was the grant used as specified in the project plans?
- How were the intended outputs achieved with the help of the grant?
- What impacts were observed on the target group and how did the grant contribute?

**Figure1: Approach to Evaluation of the GGP-Assisted Projects**



In addition, the evaluation team conducted extensive interviews with the following in order to get a holistic picture of the GGP and its implementation: The officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan; the Japanese Embassies; government officials of the three countries; a consultant and volunteer (JOCV) attached to the projects, agency staff of USAID in Cambodia and of AusAID in Vietnam.

#### 4. Case Studies

The following section outlines the case studies. Each summary table includes a brief project profile, the value and year of the grant given, project effects/GGP's contributions to the project. Key recommendations for the project are provided at the end.

1. Project name	Upgrading of the Yangon Vocational Training Centre for the Physically Handicapped
2. Country	Myanmar
3. Value/Year	Granted 9.3 Million Yen in 2000
4. Implementation by	Association for Aid and Relief (AAR), Japan (Japanese NGO)
5. Project Purpose/ Assisted Areas by the GGP	AAR, Japan commenced this project in Myanmar in March 2000 to assist the victims of land mines and polio to acquire vocational skills. The project has been experiencing difficulties in the past due to insufficient floor space and facilities at the training centre to accommodate trainees with disabilities on wheelchairs. Lack of proper facilities made training programmes difficult and led to occasional accidents. The GGP assisted AAR to build a dormitory, multi-purpose hall and classroom in order to facilitate training effectiveness at the centre.
6. Project Effects/ The GGP's Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upgraded facilities are fully and effectively in use at the centre. Adequate care and maintenance are undertaken by the project for sustainable use.</li> <li>• Accidents and injuries associated with poor facilities reduced.</li> <li>• 53 out of 82 trainees who completed the training course are employed.</li> <li>• Training opportunity at the centre not only gave vocational skills to the trainees but also made them better equipped to handle society's prejudices. Most became more sociable after training.</li> <li>• Project management by AAR is reliable in terms of financial and human resources. Well-connected networks with other NGOs and the private sector created a job market for the trainees.</li> </ul>
7. Recommendations	Due to lack of proper specifications dealing with facilities for people with disabilities, the centre had to conduct additional renovation work to rectify previous mistakes. Japan Embassy should advise on procedures for selection of constructors. Specifications aimed at people with disabilities have to be set up and met.

1. Project name	Environmentally Sustainable Agro-Forestry Training Center in Inlay Lake Region
2. Country	Myanmar
3. Value/Year	Granted 8 Million Yen in 1998 and 9.5 Million Yen in 1999
4. Implementation by	Karamojia International (Japanese NGO)
5. Project Purpose/ Assisted Areas by the GGP	Karamojia International commenced agro-forestry extension services along the Lake Inlay in 1998, aimed at promoting environmentally friendly and sustainable production in agriculture and forestry. The organisation applied for the first grant in 1998 to construct a demonstration farm and training centre in Tanbogi village, a pilot project. The subsequent grant application was made in the following year to build the Pindaya training centre and to expand extension services to neighbouring villages.
6. Project Effects/ The GGP's Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The GGP effectively assisted the project. A project platform was formed for the promotion of environmentally friendly agro-productions for the next 10 years. Both demonstration farm and two training centres are fully in use and have conducted several seminars for nearby farmers and their young successors.</li> <li>• 12 students on the 2-year training programme are due to complete the required training protocol and go back to their own farms.</li> <li>• About 50 farmers were trained on sustainable agro-forestry principles and practices.</li> <li>• 30,000 nurseries were planted for reforestation in the Lake Inlay region.</li> <li>• Sustainable agro-forestry methods were highly acclaimed by the First Secretary of State, Forestry Minister and other government officials, which resulted in attracting more farmers.</li> <li>• Technical/cultural interactions among local farmers and Japanese youth took place in several occasions, resulting in better understanding of each country.</li> </ul>
7. Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of organic productions is on schedule. The adaptation of the technique by local farmers should be assessed before expanding operations.</li> <li>• The project conducts a variety of activities at present. It is recommended to focus on those that are more cost-effective.</li> </ul>

1. Project name	Upgrading of Eye Operation Theatre in Muslim Free Hospital
2. Country	Myanmar
3. Value/Year	Granted 5.2 Million Yen in 2000
4. Implementation by	Muslim Free Hospital (local NGO)
5. Project Purpose/ Assisted Areas by the GGP	Muslim Free Hospital, Yangon was established in 1937. Since then, it has provided free medical services to the poor patients regardless of their religious practices. Many patients visit this hospital to receive eye operations to regain eyesight lost from cataract. The NGO has applied for a grant to refurbish the equipment.
6. Project Effects/ The GGP's Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new surgical microscope improved accuracy of diagnosis and reduced time for examination.</li> <li>• Approximately 200 patients received eye operations after the grant helped the hospital to buy new equipment.</li> <li>• Time required for one eye operation declined by 5-10 minutes. However, prospects for increasing number of operations is still not possible because of lack of trained medical assistants</li> <li>• Renewal plan of the Eye Department was justifiable since 80% of the eye patients suffer from cataract and require prompt treatment to prevent loss of eyesight. The poor depend on free medical services offered by this hospital, as there is no other public hospital capable of providing medical services to the poor in Yangon.</li> <li>• The hospital's finances are quite stable with its own private funds set up through private and corporate contributions among Muslim network.</li> </ul>
7. Recommendations	The hospital needs to train medical staff who can use the equipment donated by the grant to maximise the usage.

1. Project name	Japan-Cambodia Friendship Technical Training Centre
2. Country	Cambodia
3. Value/Year	Granted Total 7.5 Million Yen on 2 separate applications in 1998
4. Implementation by	Japan-Cambodia Friendship Technical Co-operation Centre (Local Municipal Organisation)
5. Project Purpose/ Assisted Areas by the GGP	The Japan-Cambodia Friendship Technical Co-operation Centre was established in 1986 as a technical training institution, part of the City Education Bureau. The Centre provides sewing, electronics repair, carpentry courses to junior/high school students as well as adults. The JOCV programme sent 5 Japanese volunteers and contributed to the training of Cambodian instructors. Some training equipment at the Centre was too obsolete for practical training. Grant was used to purchase sewing machines, carpentry machines, and office computers.
6. Project Effects/ The GGP's Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Centre increased training equipment with the grant. Some courses improved training efficiency but such investment was not always effective for other courses with fewer students.</li> <li>• With the help of Japanese volunteers, Cambodian instructors enjoyed opportunities to study in Japan. Most are already back in Cambodia and use knowledge and skills gained in teaching in the training courses.</li> <li>• Demand for learning practical training is high. The Centre arranged garment manufacture with hotels and furniture with NGOs. Involvement in such commercial productions provides practical experience to students.</li> </ul>
7. Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Centre needs to review part of training curriculum to meet with the employment needs of the market. Carpentry course is not full because the niche for furniture market is rather small for domestic productions in Cambodia.</li> <li>• No tracking record of students' employment is available at the Centre. The Centre should keep track records for future reference and it should attempt active job arrangements.</li> </ul>

1. Project name	Expanding of the Laboratory of the Angkor Hospital for Children in Siem Reap Province
2. Country	Cambodia
3. Value/Year	Granted 5.8 Million Yen in 1999
4. Implementation by	Friends Without Border (US NGO)
5. Project Purpose/ Assisted Areas by the GGP	Angkor Hospital for Children specialises medical treatment for children, aged under 15 years old. Over 100 patients visit the hospital every day. The hospital did not have an ICU or adequate emergency facility although it is designated as a referral hospital of Siem Reap District. Dengue fever and other infectious diseases are among the most common causes of death for small children and infants. The hospital was under urgent need to set up a medical laboratory and ICU to provide necessary treatments.
6. Project Effects/ The GGP's Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50% reduction in time required for blood testing</li> <li>• Provision of blood bank resulted in reduction of deaths from dengue haemorrhage.</li> <li>• Timely placement of a volunteer doctor to the laboratory maximised the use of laboratory functions that were updated by the grant. The volunteer doctor adequately trained three local laboratory engineers.</li> <li>• Needs assessment prior to the grant application failed to list some testing equipment.</li> <li>• Emphasis is given to train local medical staff. There are also high prospects to train medical staff at other state hospitals and private clinics.</li> <li>• At present, the hospital is run by the US NGO and volunteer doctors and nurses from all over the world. It is the NGO's mission to localise the operation by training local medical and managerial staff.</li> <li>• Increase of maintenance costs was reported after the laboratory was upgraded.</li> </ul>
7. Recommendations	The hospital currently provides free medical services to all patients. This may cause potential difficulties to future operations in maintaining high medical standards on a long-term basis.

1. Project name	Renovating the Kien Khleang Vocational Training Centre for the Disabled in Phnom Penh
2. Country	Cambodia
3. Value/Year	Granted 10 Million Yen in 1999
4. Implementation by	Association for Aid and Relief (AAR), Japan (Japanese NGO)
5. Project Purpose/ Assisted Areas by the GGP	AAR, Japan established the Vocational Training Centre in Phnom Penh City to help victims of landmines and polio to become economically and socially independent by learning vocational skills. The obsolete facilities, constructed in 1984, posed hazards to trainees on wheelchairs and with disabilities. AAR requested a grant to improve training and dormitory facilities.
6. Project Effects/ The GGP's Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nearly 100% of the trainees got employed and 70% still retained jobs after 1 year from completion of training. Some were forced to leave job due to health problems and fierce market competition.</li> <li>• 350 people were successfully trained since the opening of the Training Centre.</li> <li>• Vocational trainees also improve literacy during training period. Nearly 100% are able to read and write by the end of training course.</li> <li>• The Centre is successful in networking with garment industry and came to an agreement to employ trainees.</li> <li>• The grant was effectively used to improve the centre's facilities and noticeable changes in training efficiency were reported: Hygiene improvement and lower accidents among the wheelchair users were also reported.</li> <li>• Employment support activities are effectively provided and successful in following up job-related and other social problems that the trainees are bound to face. They keep good track records of trainees.</li> </ul>
7. Recommendations	Periodical flaws of construction work were found and the Centre had to procure additional renovation works. Embassy of Japan could advise on the selection of builders familiar with specifications for people with disabilities.

1. Project name	Supporting for Water Supply Construction in Nam Hong
2. Country	Vietnam
3. Value/Year	Granted 7.4 Million Yen in 1999
4. Implementation by	Okinawa-Vietnam Friendship Association (Japanese NGO)
5. Project Purpose/ Assisted Areas by the GGP	The target community lacked proper water supply systems. The residents were under constant threat of contacting infectious diseases because of lack of safe drinking water. In particular, small children were most vulnerable to diarrhoea. The Japanese NGO, whose business base is located in the same area, applied for a grant to install a water supply system for the community.
6. Project Effects/ The GGP's Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The water supply system installed in the community provides safe water to the nearby village of 1500 population.</li> <li>• Children at the community nursery school picked up hygienic practices after the installation of water system: Many wash hands and wear clean clothes.</li> <li>• Teachers at the nursery school were relieved from fetching water and spend more time with children.</li> <li>• Provision of water system formed a platform for inviting Japanese industry to the area.</li> </ul>
7. Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involvement of village people in the maintenance of water system should be considered.</li> <li>• Provision of health education on preventive diseases would be desirable.</li> </ul>

1. Project name	Improvement of School Buildings at Vu Van Primary School
2. Country	Vietnam
3. Value/Year	Granted 6.3 Million Yen in 1999
4. Implementation by	People's Committee, Vu Van Commune
5. Project Purpose/ Assisted Areas by the GGP	The branch school of Vu Van Primary School suffered from periodical floods in the past. Although the main campus building escaped floods, its school facility was poor and could not accommodate 78% of the student body into proper classroom facilities. The grant was used to build a new school building with 10 classrooms where students from both main campus and branch school could attend.
6. Project Effects/ The GGP's Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students' academic achievements increased, due to provision of a scholarship programme and possibly due to improved learning environment.</li> <li>• Fewer students drop out today and 100% students took examinations for higher education.</li> <li>• School received accreditation and government subsidies as a higher grade school due to improved facilities.</li> <li>• Teachers were relieved from extra work of home visits to the affected students during flooding.</li> <li>• People's Committee and commune volunteers share responsibility of maintenance of school facilities.</li> <li>• The commune shared 26% of total construction costs - some contributions from the students' parents.</li> </ul>
7. Recommendations	Care should be given to the students and their parents who have to commute to school from a long distance as a result of closure of branch school.

1. Project name	Improvement of Medical Equipments for the Melinh Hospital
2. Country	Vietnam
3. Value/Year	Granted 9.5 Million Yen in 1999
4. Implementation by	Melin Hospital (provincial hospital)
5. Project Purpose/ Assisted Areas by the GGP	The hospital has over 45 years history in operation, serving currently 250,000 residents of the region and workers of multinational companies in the vicinity. Accidents soared due to increased volume of traffic on the nearby highway systems connecting to capital Hanoi. Thus, the hospital was placed under greater demand for improving medical facilities.
6. Project Effects/ The GGP's Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Modern facilities for laboratory testing and ICU reduced manual work of the hospital staff. Accurate testing results and diagnosis are available as a result.</li> <li>• The hospital increased capacity at the In-patient Ward and quality of care increased.</li> <li>• Rationale for an improved medical facility is strong, as over 2500 operations related to traffic accidents.</li> <li>• Establishment of ICU made it possible to treat patients without referring to a larger hospital far away.</li> <li>• Medical staffs are well trained and capable of using the equipment newly installed.</li> </ul>
7. Recommendations	Due to weak electric power supply in the location, due consideration should have been given to the provision of the equipment with automatic conversion to battery-operations in the case of power failure.



## 5. Main Findings

### Country Profile

The evaluation study 2001 found that the GGP is playing a significant role in the three countries. In Myanmar where most donor countries have suspended bilateral assistance as a gesture of protest to the current military regime, the basic needs of the people have been severely constrained without external assistance. The GGP, being free from the grip of the central government on aid, has direct access to the most needy areas and thus is able to provide vital resources to the most marginal and periphery of the country through NGOs and other private entities. In other countries, the GGP has also demonstrated its effectiveness by filling the gap left by large-scale international projects, which are normally, executed through bilateral aid programmes. Although the GGP specifies the use of grant for non-operational items only, demands for the GGP have been ever increasing during the past years in all three countries.

	Myanmar	Cambodia	Vietnam
Development Issue	Promote agriculture, mining, transportation, and energy sectors. Primary education, health and related technical and vocational training are also primary concerns. Disparities among districts and regions need to be narrowed.	Priority sectors include: 1. Infrastructure for social and economic development 2. Agriculture and rural development 3. Education, health services 4. Conservation of natural resources and efficient resource management. In addition, emphasis is given to tackle cross-sectional issues such as poverty, lack of trained workers, and social welfare to land mine victims	1. Stabilise macro-economy 2. Expand production/ market and create jobs by transferring industrial structures from primary to manufacturing and service sectors 3. Continue to assist basic human needs areas (education, health services) 4. Narrow regional disparities of wealth
ODA guideline	Consider assistance to the basic human needs sectors on a case-by-case basis.	-Continue to support social and economic rehabilitation efforts; -Assist to narrow regional disparities of wealth -Assist to eradicate poverty -Strike balance in assistance to infrastructure development and human capital development	-Assist to form a platform for sustainable economic growth -Assist to tackle poverty -Assist in rural development and agriculture development -Improve education and health services in rural areas
Priority Area for GGP	Basic infrastructure development to promote primary education, health services, environment conservation, poverty eradication and income generation.	-Human capital development -Reduction of infectious diseases; HIV/AIDS, Malaria, TB -Removal of land mines -Rural/agriculture development	-Prioritise humanitarian assistance in health services and education. -Widen geographical coverage of assistance
GGP Partnership	Out of 71 projects assisted in 2000, 69% were implemented by NGOs (local 25%, Japanese 17%), and 31% by government agency.	Over 60% of the GGP-assisted projects were conducted by NGOs, of which 33% were Japanese, 16% International NGOs, 13% local NGOs. 40% were done by local educational institutions and local authorities.	34% of the projects were conducted by provincial/district People's Committee, 27% by hospitals and other health service providers, and 12% by Japanese NGO.
GGP Achievement	A total of 205 projects were implemented to date since the GGP was introduced in 1993. Total value of the grant administered is 12.1 Billion Yen.	Total of 183 projects (10.8 Billion Yen) were implemented by the end of 2000 since its introduction in 1991. A steady yearly increase has been observed except in 97 when military clashes occurred.	A total of 136 projects were conducted in Northern half of Vietnam by the end of 2000 since its introduction in 1992.
Geographical Coverage	42% of total assisted projects took place in Yangon Division, capital region.	69% of total projects were in 5 provinces including 23% in Phnom Pen area	Out of 38 Districts, covered by the Embassy in Hanoi, 10% of the GGP-assisted projects were conducted in Capital Hanoi and 25% in 5 Districts.

## Implementation Arrangements

The biggest strength of the GGP is that the grant reaches the target population directly, by cutting out intermediaries and the bureaucracy. However impact of the grant also depends on the timing and capability of the implementing agency that receives the grant. The proposed implementation plans set out in the project proposals should generally give a good indication of the capability of the implementation agencies. However, assessment of grant applications from a given country also requires a good understanding of, *inter alia*, vulnerable groups of society, their immediate needs, and the complexity of the aid environment of the country.

Ordinary grant schemes in Japan take two to three years until a grant is formally signed between two governments, whereas in case of GGP grant assistance could be approved in three to four months on average. Although a short period for planning and designing a project may not always mean the best solution to the problem, a quick response to many problems such as natural hazards and/or lack of safe water and health services generates considerable positive impacts on the people.

The following table summarises implementation arrangements by the Japan Embassy in the three countries.

	<b>Myanmar</b>	<b>Cambodia</b>	<b>Vietnam</b>
<b>Selection Criteria</b>	1.Expected impacts (direct/indirect) 2.Sustainability of the project 3.Rationale of the planning 4.Project budget and cost efficiency 5.Political influence/effects	1. Reputation and reliability of the organisation 2. Past achievements 3. Geographical area for project 4. Scale of target beneficiaries 5. Expected impacts of the project 6. Emergency for assistance	1. Priority sectors 2. Emergency and humanitarian needs for assistance 3. Expected impacts of the project
<b>Assessment</b>	-The project should be given permission by local authority. -Receive about 150 applications per year and select 50% -Visit the project site for 30% of approved projects	-Employ two step assessment process -Receive about 200 applications per year and select 15% -Visit the project site for 90% of approved projects	-Visit the project-sites and prioritise the assistance based on the degree of emergency and humanitarian considerations. -Prioritise the geographical areas where no GGP grant is given yet. -Receive about 200 applications per year and select 24 cases nation-wide.
<b>Grant size</b>	5.8 Million Yen per project	8 Million Yen per project	7.7 Million Yen per project
<b>Staff</b>	4 staff- 1 Embassy attaché, 2 Japanese co-ordinators and 1 local staff	5 staff- 1 Embassy attaché, 3 Japanese co-ordinators and 1 local staff	1 Embassy attaché
<b>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</b>	Implementing agency is requested to submit Interim and End-of-Project Reports.	-Interim and End-of-Project Reports are requested - implementing agency to submit -If the project budget exceeds 10 million JPY, or includes overhead costs, progress reports are asked every 3 months.	Visit the project-sites and monitor /evaluate the use of grant according to the proposal submitted.

## Collaboration with Other Assistance Scheme

In Cambodia where the Japan Overseas Co-operation Volunteer (JOCV) Programme has been active at the grassroots level across the country, the GGP often works closely with JOCV members. In one case, a JOCV member who teaches at an electronics repair course at the Vocational Training Centre in Phnom Pen helped the Training Centre to apply for a grant to the Japan Embassy. The Japanese volunteer who is familiar with both grassroots work and local organisations provided the Japan Embassy with project information and convinced the Embassy of the rationale for grant application. Technical consultants of JICA often play a similar role. In Vietnam, the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA) works on the development of model agricultural co-operatives and its

project consultant reached out to the Japan Embassy in Hanoi for collaboration with the GGP to develop farm roads and irrigation systems in the target community. Collaboration between the GGP and the JICA project brought much bigger benefits to the community than envisaged in the original project.

Data provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs show that approximately 7-8% of the GGP-assisted projects in 2000 collaborated with other assistance schemes, which are not only of Japanese origin.

### **Improving Cost-Effectiveness of GGP-assisted Project**

It is likely that collaboration between GGP-assisted projects and General grant scheme projects will result in greater cost effectiveness of GGP projects.

In comparison to projects coming under the general grant schemes, GGP-assisted projects have both advantages and disadvantages. They tend to be lower in cost, faster in completion time, and utilise volunteer labour, thus ensuring a more participatory approach. At the same time these projects tend to have lower specifications, and lack specialised features. For example, primary schools constructed under the GGP scheme in Vietnam lacked such facilities as drainage and sanitary installations. These projects also undertake little or no feasibility studies and prior research. Whereas, projects coming under the general grant schemes tend to have the opposite characteristics. The two types of projects meet different needs. However, there are also areas for possible collaboration. GGP-assisted projects can make use of some of the research and feasibility results of general grant scheme projects. This type of information sharing will create greater synergies, thus improving the cost effectiveness of the GGP-projects.

### **Goodwill from the GGP- Projects**

Unlike general scheme grants that go through the governments of the recipient nations, GGP grants go directly to local organisations. Further, since some of these latter funds go through Japanese NGO's working at the grass-root levels, these projects often lead to a better understanding between the donor and the recipients. Since the effects of these projects are also seen in the short-term, it is likely that Japanese taxpayers will perceive the utilisation of foreign aid to be more transparent.

## **6. Recommendations and conclusions**

Small-scale grant assistance schemes are effective in directly delivering benefits to the target community, as they assist the projects at the grassroots level. Support by donor agencies for grassroots development has been promising across the world. Various types of grant schemes similar to the GGP scheme have been in practice in many developing countries. The evaluation study in Vietnam learned that the Australian Small Activities Scheme (ASAS) annually extends approximately 20 grants to grassroots projects in community health, education, agriculture, community development, and environment sectors through provincial/district People's Committee and international NGOs. In Japan, the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA) followed the trend set by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and recently launched two grant schemes that assist private entities such as Japanese NGOs for their grassroots activities in developing countries. Therefore, the GGP scheme is conceptually very strong. It has also been generally successful at the operational level. However, there is also scope for further improvements. The key recommendations arising from the study are set out below:

### **Role of the Ministry in maintaining decision making flexibility**

A key strength of the GGP scheme is its flexibility due to low levels of bureaucracy resulting from quick decision making at the implementation level. However, now, the cap on the value of GGP scheme projects has been increased to 50 Million Yen due to the increased scope of projects, to cover parts of indirect costs (such as training expenses) in addition to initial costs (such as equipment purchases). When new scope of the GGP is applied, the approval process is bound to be more

complex and lengthy. This scenario could lead to the possibility that higher valued GGP projects will lose their degree of flexibility as a result of the increased bureaucracy in decision making. Although maintaining the 10 Million Yen cap on GGP scheme projects is a simple way to ensure flexibility, such a course of action will limit the scope of future projects.

Therefore, it is recommended that the decision-making procedures be reviewed in order to ensure that justifiable requests for grants exceeding the 10 Million-Yen value can be entertained while maintaining decision-making flexibility at the local level. This will ensure that one of the key strengths of the GGP scheme - flexibility - is not lost.

### **Involvement of Japanese NGO's in GGP Scheme**

Five out of the nine<sup>1</sup> case studies reported here are related to projects undertaken by Japanese NGO's. They were found to be following good implementation methodologies, having solid project management skills as well as strong commitment. Provision of vocational training was found to be a key strength of the Japanese NGO's.

Especially where local NGO's are not mature, Japanese NGO's should be in a position to contribute significantly in both training local NGO's and in project implementation. However, one of the limitations faced by Japanese NGO's is that they have to depend to a large extent on government grants to finance their activities. Unlike some international NGO's they have less income generation capabilities of their own. This limits their ability to get involved in long term activities such as poverty alleviation projects because government funding is generally for limited durations. A solution may lie in having a more participatory approach to project implementation. AusAID programme - Australian Small Activities Scheme (ASAS) - is a good example of such a scheme, where local recipients are supposed to contribute 20% of the expenses. Such an approach can ensure not only project sustainability, but also long-term involvement of Japanese NGO's.

### **Cost efficiency of Monitoring & Evaluation (M & E)**

Unlike large projects funded by the general-grants schemes, small scale GGP projects can not afford sophisticated M&E systems. Although such systems are desirable, they may not be practical for small scale, short-term projects. Therefore, ways must be found to establish cost efficient M&E systems suited to these conditions.

One possible way is for the Japanese embassy to prepare simple, concise, and easy to follow guidelines in local language where appropriate and hand over the responsibility for M&E to the local implementing agencies for self-management. Transfer of responsibility from embassy to implementing agencies will also increase ownership of the project. The implementing agencies will become more responsible for the results and they will also learn to become more accountable.

Ideally the local implementing agency could invite a representative of the recipient government at the local level to these periodic evaluation exercises. This will ensure that the projects undertaken under the GGP scheme are co-ordinated with similar projects undertaken by the local government, reducing the likelihood of duplication of effort, and possibly, increasing the likelihood of collaboration where possible.

### **Selection criteria for repeat applications**

In the case of repeat grant applications by implementing agencies for existing projects, the assessment should not only be based on the credibility of the agency, but also on the performance of the previous phase of the project. Serious consideration should be given before extending grant facilities to under-performing projects, even though they may be implemented by credible agencies.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: This is not necessarily an indication of the true level of involvement of Japanese NGO's in project implementation in these countries.

### **Methodologies for Future Evaluation Studies**

As an overall scheme, GGP funding per se is difficult to evaluate since these funds often form only a part of the project inputs. As such the effect of the GGP funds alone is difficult to isolate. Indeed it is possible to evaluate the entire project and judge the effectiveness of GGP funds in terms of overall project success. However, there are some alternatives too. It should be possible to assess the impact of no GGP funds on the project outcome. What is suggested is a *sensitivity analysis* approach whereby, 'what if' type questions are raised with the aim of finding out what would happen to the project purpose if GGP funds were not forthcoming.