

Third Party Evaluation 2009

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan

**Review of Japan's ODA Evaluations
Between FY2000-2007**

- Summary -

March 2010

Preface

This report is a summary of the “Review of Japan’s ODA Evaluations Between FY2000-2007” undertaken by the External Advisory Meeting on ODA Evaluation requested by the International Cooperation Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of Japan.

Since its commencement in 1954, Japan’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) has contributed to the development of partner countries, and finding solutions to international issues which vary with the times. Recently, there have been increased domestic and international calls for more effective and efficient implementation of ODA. MOFA, as a coordinating ministry for ODA, has been conducting ODA evaluation mainly at the policy level with two main objectives: to support management of implementation of ODA and to ensure its accountability.

This evaluation study was conducted on the 48 ODA evaluations at the policy level (country assistance evaluations and priority issue evaluations) implemented between the fiscal years 2000 to 2007 by MOFA. The objectives of this evaluation are: (1) Create indicators to evaluate and improve ODA as a whole by categorizing and classifying recommendations of ODA evaluation at the policy level, (2) verify and review the follow-up status of recommendations, study the effectiveness of the recommendations, and if necessary, ascertain the issues and an in-depth study of possible recommendations that can be implemented, and (3) based on the above results, formulate recommendations for improvements regarding recommendations in policy level ODA evaluations, and state directions about how to present them.

The External Advisory Meeting on ODA Evaluation was formed as an advisory body to the Director-General of the International Cooperation Bureau of MOFA to improve objectivity in ODA evaluation. The Advisory Meeting is commissioned to design and conduct evaluations of ODA and to feed back the results of each evaluation with recommendations and lessons learned as reference to the International Cooperation Bureau of MOFA. Hiromitsu Muta (Member of the Board/Executive Vice President, Tokyo Institute of Technology) and Kiyoko Ikegami (Director, UNFPA Tokyo Office), the chairperson and a member of the meeting, respectively, were in charge of this evaluation.

Mr. Mitsuya Araki, CEO of the International Development Journal, being an advisor for the study, made an enormous contribution to this report. Likewise, MOFA, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and the ODA Taskforces as well as the government and institutions in Tanzania and Vietnam also made invaluable contribution. We would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere gratitude to all those who were involved in this study. The ODA Evaluation and Public Relations Division of the International Cooperation Bureau of MOFA was in charge of coordination of all the parties involved. All other supportive works including information collection, analysis and report preparation was provided by International Development Center of Japan (IDCJ) under the commission of MOFA

Finally, we wish to add that the opinions expressed in this report do not reflect the views or positions of the Government of Japan or any other institution.

March 2010

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1 Background and Purpose of the Study

1-1 Purpose of the review

MOFA launched ODA Evaluation in 1981 and currently, they are also working on evaluation at the policy level - mainly country assistance evaluations and priority issue evaluations. This review was implemented as a comprehensive review of the ODA evaluations at the policy level implemented by MOFA, and its three aims are listed below.

- (1) Create indicators to evaluate and improve ODA as a whole by categorizing and classifying recommendations of ODA evaluation at the policy level.
- (2) Verify and review the follow-up status of recommendations, study the effectiveness of the recommendations, and if necessary, ascertain the issues and an in-depth study of possible recommendations that can be implemented.
- (3) Based on the above results, formulate recommendations for improvements regarding recommendations in policy level ODA evaluations, and state directions about how to present them.

1-2 Subject of the review

This review covers ODA evaluations at the policy level such as country assistance evaluations and priority issue evaluations, from FY2000. It is particularly focused on the recommendations made by those evaluations. The total number of evaluations is 48, with the details as follows. Table 1-2 specifies the evaluation report titles.

Table 1-1 Evaluation report details for the review

Number of Evaluation Reports by the Type of Evaluation

Country Assistance Evaluation	Evaluation of ODA Implementation System	Thematic Evaluation	Priority Issue Evaluation
29	3	3	13
Total 48			

Number of Evaluation Reports by Region*

Asia	Africa	Middle East	Latin America	Europe
16	9	1	2	3
Total 31				

* Only for "Country Assistance Evaluation" and "Evaluation of ODA Implementation System".

Table 1-2 List of the evaluation reports for the review

Year	Name of Evaluation Report
2000	Uzbekistan: Evaluation of Aid Implementation Systems
	Kazakhstan: Evaluation on Aid Implementation Systems
	Program Evaluation of Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects (Cuba, Guatemala, Chili, Peru)
2001	Evaluation Study on Global Issues Initiative on Population and HIV/AIDS (GI) (Indonesia, Thailand, Bangladesh, Zambia)
	Report on Evaluation Study of ODA Implementation System: Case of Tanzania
	Country Evaluation Study for Nicaragua
	Country Evaluation Study for Bangladesh
	Evaluation Study of Japanese ODA for Vietnam
	Thematic Evaluation Study of Counter Global Warming-Related ODA for China
2002	Evaluation of WID/Gender-related Policy (Guatemala, Honduras)
	Country Policy Evaluation Study for Sri Lanka
	Country Policy Evaluation Study of Thailand
	Evaluation Support of South-south Cooperation (Egypt, Senegal, Tunisia)
2003	Country Assistance Evaluation of India
	Country Assistance Evaluation of Indonesia
	Country Assistance Evaluation of Pakistan
	Mid-term Evaluation on Okinawa Infectious Diseases Initiative (IDI) (Philippines, Thailand, Ethiopia, Kenya)
	Country Assistance Evaluation of Jordan
Evaluation of the Medium-Term Policy on ODA	
2004	Country Assistance Evaluation of Laos
	Country Assistance Evaluation of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan
	Country Assistance Evaluation of Ethiopia
	Evaluation of Japan's Anti-personnel Mine Action Assistance Policy (Cambodia)
	Country Assistance Evaluation of Bangladesh
	Mid-term Evaluation on Japan's Contribution to the Achievement of the MDGs in the Area of Health (Philippines)
	Mid-term Evaluation on Japan's Contribution to the Achievement of the MDGs in the Area of Education (Vietnam)
2005	Country Assistance Evaluation of Cambodia
	Country Assistance Evaluation of Kenya
	Country Assistance Evaluation of Tanzania
	Country Assistance Evaluation of Senegal
	Evaluation on Japan's ODA Contribution to Poverty Reduction - Vietnam and Ethiopia as Cases -
	Evaluation of Japan's Peacebuilding Assistance Policy - A Case Study: Afghanistan -
2006	Country Assistance Evaluation of Zambia
	Country Assistance Evaluation of Bhutan
	Country Assistance Evaluation of Vietnam
	Country Assistance Evaluation of Madagascar
	Country Assistance Evaluation of Morocco
	Evaluation of Japan's ODA for Agriculture and Rural Development (Thailand)
	Evaluation on Japan's Assistance for Forest Conservation and its Contribution to Global Issues (India, China)
	Evaluation on Japan's Support for Regional Cooperation - A Case Study of Central America - (El Salvador, Honduras)
2007	Evaluation of Japanese Assistance to Africa through the TICAD Process (Uganda, Kenya)
	Evaluation of Japanese Educational Cooperation Policy "Basic Education for Growth Initiative (BEGIN)" (Kenya, Ethiopia)
	Country Assistance Evaluation of Indonesia
	Country Assistance Evaluation of Sri Lanka
	Country Assistance Evaluation of Tunisia
	Country Assistance Evaluation of Nicaragua
	Country Assistance Evaluation of Mongolia
	Country Assistance Evaluation of China

1-3 Methodology of the study

The study was implemented with the following seven steps: (1) Analysis of the 48 evaluation reports that are subject to the review, (2) analysis of the Annual Evaluation Reports on Japan's Economic Cooperation and measures made by MOFA for recommendations in the targeted fiscal years, (3) interview of related MOFA divisions, (4) on-site study in the case study countries, (5) questionnaire to Japanese embassies abroad, (6) questionnaire to the related MOFA divisions, and (7) group discussion.

For the "analysis of the 48 evaluation reports that are subject to the review" step, three consultants from the study team mainly analyzed the findings and recommendations of the reports in order to classify and categorize the recommendations and to review the evaluation report quality. Analysis criteria were set by creating an analysis guideline in order to ensure a consistent review rating standard of the analysis criteria and quality among the three members of the study team. Additionally, after the shared task, three members re-examined all analysis again and secured the unified view among members.

For the "analysis of Annual Evaluation Reports on Japan's Economic Cooperation and measures made by MOFA for recommendations in the targeted fiscal years" step, the follow-up and implementation status were analyzed in order to understand the implementation status of 412 recommendations stated in the 48 reports by the related divisions in MOFA, embassies and the implementing body.

For the "interview of related MOFA divisions" step, interviews were held in a total of seven divisions at MOFA for the purpose of examining the necessary conditions for recommendations which reached implementation, understanding the feedback system for recommendations and consideration for its improvement plan, and consideration of internal and external factors which may affect the implementation of recommendations.

For the "on-site study in the case study countries" step, Tanzania and Vietnam were selected as the case study countries. There are two reasons for the selection: (1) Country assistance evaluations were implemented twice in both countries (in the fiscal years 2001 and 2005 in Tanzania, and the fiscal years 2001 and 2006 in Vietnam), and that enables the study team to understand the implementation status of the recommendations, (2) both countries have shown progress in donor coordination. In Tanzania, European countries are leading the donor coordination; on the other hand, Japan takes a major role in the donor coordination in Vietnam. In these contrasting environments, it is possible to clarify the external factors that are indispensable in implementing recommendations. Interviews were held at the local Embassy of Japan, JICA offices and in counterpart governmental organizations in order to understand the implementation status of recommendations, local feedback framework, and the internal and external factors that affect the implementation of the recommendations. Moreover, interviews with the other donors were also held in order to comprehend how they implement recommendations made by evaluations, and the progress of joint evaluations in donor coordination.

For the "questionnaire to Japanese embassies" step, 100 embassies that are implementing the ODA were involved in order to understand the utilization status of the evaluation reports. The collection rate was 60%.

For the “questionnaire to the related MOFA divisions” step, questionnaires were sent out for the purpose of acquiring additional information on the implementation status of recommendations, and the characteristics of high quality recommendations. The collection rate from related MOFA divisions was 76%.

For the “group discussion” step, members of the External Advisory Meeting of the ODA Evaluation, MOFA and JICA participated together and discussed the appropriate characteristics and quality of the evaluations and recommendations, and improvement of the feedback framework using a draft of this report as a basis. The discussions held in this meeting were reflected in this report.

2 Categorization and Classification of the Recommendations

2-1 Recommendations classification category

Firstly, the three consultant members of the study team identified a total of 412 recommendations from studying the 48 reports. Next, they assigned 6 categories (34 subcategories) and classified the 412 recommendations. Below is the list of 6 categories and 34 subcategories.

Table 2-1 Category and subcategory list

Category	Subcategory
1. Improvement of aid approach	1-1. Clarification of strategy and priority
	1-2. Introduction of program approach (including promoting cooperation among aid schemes)
	1-3. Positive response to donor coordination (including policy coordination among donors)
	1-4. Promoting consultation and partnership with the counterpart (including aid framework agreement)
	1-5. Other aid approach
2. Improvement of aid tool (aid scheme)	2-1. Input of high-level policy advisor
	2-2. Addressing the “common basket” and financial support
	2-3. Utilization and cultivation of experts, senior volunteers and Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV)
	2-4. Utilization of south-south cooperation (including Triangular Cooperation, regional cooperation in middle income countries, and Asia-Africa cooperation)
	2-5. Utilization of grass-roots grant aid and grass-roots technical cooperation
	2-6. Improvement of grant aid, loan, and technical cooperation aid schemes (including recommendations on un-tied aid)
	2-7. Improvement of other aid tools
3. Improvement of aid process and implementation framework	3-1. Recommendations on enhancement of the local ODA taskforce
	3-2. Enhancement of the organizational structure of and delegation of authority to embassies and implementing bodies
	3-3. Enhancement of MOFA organizational structure / strengthening of the cooperation with aid implementing bodies
	3-4. Recommendations related to enhancement of the ODA public relations
	3-5. Recommendations related to monitoring and evaluation
	3-6. Improvement on predictability, transparency and openness of Japan’s ODA (including improvement on a single-year basis and disclosure of aid adoption standards and amounts)
	3-7. Enhancement of policy consultations with counterpart governments (including high-level consultations, official consultations, and regularizing the consultations)
	3-8. Attention to various aspects while formulating aid plan (e.g. capacity of the counterpart government, influence to community

	residents, gender issues, etc.)
	3-9. Strengthening collaboration with other actors (both counterpart's and Japan's NGO, private sector, local government, and government agencies)
	3-10. Upgrading and improving implementation guidelines and manuals
	3-11. Improvement of other aid implementation processes and implementing framework
4. Improvement of aid policy for each sector	4-1. Economic infrastructure
	4-2. Education
	4-3. Health and infectious disease measures
	4-4. Environment conservation and global warming measures
	4-5. Industrial development
	4-6. Assistance for local NGO
	4-7. Human security
	4-8. Strengthening of counterpart's aid acceptance capacity, public administration capacity and governance
	4-9. Other sectors
5. Recommendations for individual projects	
6. Other category	

2-2 Ratio of the category and subcategory (n=412)

The 412 recommendations were classified according to the categories above and are detailed in the table below. The results are: 163 (39.6%) for "Improvement of aid approach", 29 (7.0%) for "Improvement of aid tool (aid scheme)", 131 (31.8%) for "Improvement of Aid process and implementation framework", 58 (14.1%) for "Improvement of aid policy for each sector" and 31 (7.5%) for "Recommendations for individual projects".

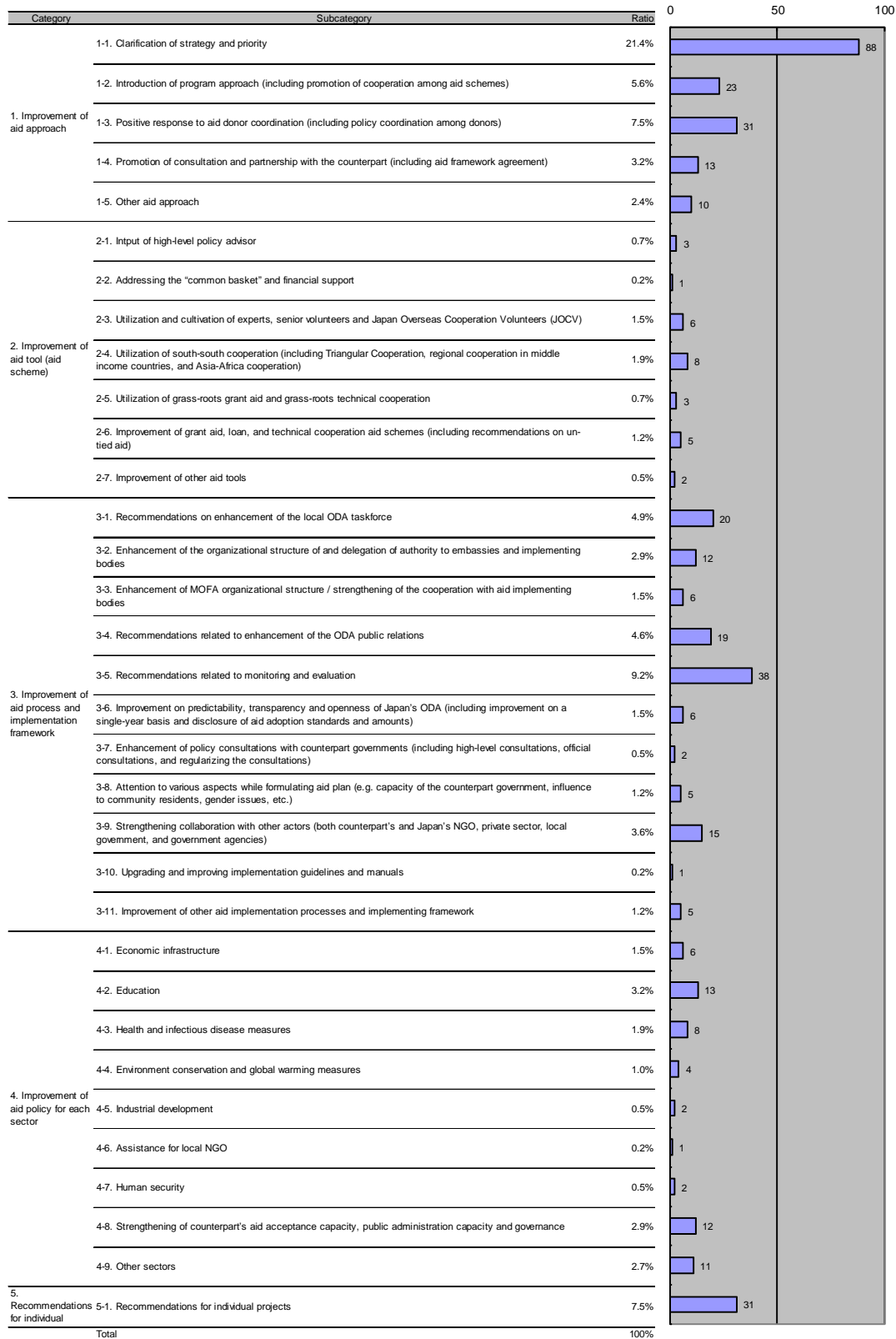
Table 2-2 Frequency and ratio of each category (n=412)

	frequency	ratio
1. Improvement of aid approach	163	39.6%
2. Improvement of aid tool (aid scheme)	29	7.0%
3. Improvement of aid process and implementation framework	131	31.8%
4. Improvement of aid policy for each sector	58	14.1%
5. Recommendations for individual projects	31	7.5%
Total	412	100.0%

Source: Based on an analysis of meta-evaluation by study team

Results of the classification by subcategory are as follows.

Table 2-3 Subcategory list (n=412)



Source: Based on an analysis of meta-evaluation by study team

For the classification in Table 2-3, although the recommendations were made in evaluations in specific sectors (e.g. priority issue evaluation), they are classified in subcategories if they are thought to be applicable to: “1. Improvement of aid approach”, “2. Improvement of aid tool (aid scheme)”, “3. Improvement of aid process and implementation framework”. As a result, the number in category “4. Improvement of aid policy for each sector” is small; however, this is due to the fact that the recommendations that are purely related to the relevant sector’s future policy were classified in category “4”.

Below is the list of subcategories ranked in order of high frequency recommendations, with the frequency of 15 or above. It is shown that the top 5 subcategories make up more than 50% (n=211) of the total recommendations.

Table 2-4 Subcategories with frequent recommendations

	Subcategory	
1	Clarification of strategy and priority (1-1)	88
2	Suggestions related to implementation status monitoring and evaluations (3-5)	38
3	Positive response to donor coordination (including policy coordination among donors) (1-3)	31
4	Recommendations for individual projects (5-1)	31
5	Introduction of program approach (including promoting cooperation among aid schemes) (1-2)	23
6	Recommendations on enhancement of the local ODA taskforce (3-1)	20
7	Recommendations related to the enhancement of ODA public relations (3-4)	19
8	Strengthening of collaboration with other actors (3-9)	15

3 Analysis of the Quality of Recommendations

3-1 Establishing analysis criteria and rating standard relating to “quality of recommendations”

Firstly, a discussion was held about the components for “quality of recommendations”. The criteria which are appropriate for the review of the policy-level evaluations implemented by MOFA were examined on the basis of similar studies in the past, such as the meta-evaluation¹ implemented by the Japan Evaluation Society on behalf of JICA. As a result, six aspects: “concreteness”, “clarity of addressee”, “clarity of period”, “degree of being supported by evidence”, “comparative advantage” and “originality” were set up and a basis of ratings was set for each aspect. The study team rated the six aspects for each of the 412 recommendations and made a list of the results.

Table 3-1 Aspects and rating basis for the quality review of recommendations

Aspect (Evaluation criteria)	Explanation of aspect	Rating basis (Evaluation basis) (points for the calculation in parenthesis)	Definition of rating basis
Concreteness	Were recommendations specific enough to instruct the action that should be taken?	- Specified (3) - Mainly specified (2) - Partially specified (1) - Not specified (No specific comment)(0)	Definition is listed in the guideline
Clarity of addressee	Was the addressee clear?	- Clear (2) - Mainly clear (1) - Not clear (No specific comment)(0)	Definition is listed in the guideline
Clarity on period	Was the implementation period clear?	- Clear (2) - Mainly clear (1) - Not clear (No specific comment)(0)	Definition is listed in the guideline
Degree of being supported by evidence	Were recommendations based on the evaluation results and persuasive?	- Fully based on the evaluation results (3) - Mainly based on the evaluation results (2) - Partially based on the evaluation results (1) - Not based on the evaluation results (0)	Definition is listed in the guideline
Comparative advantage	Was it based on the comparative advantage and disadvantage of Japan's ODA?	- Based on comparative advantage (3) - Mainly based on the comparative advantage (2) - Partially based on the comparative advantage (1) - Not based on the comparative advantage/Not needed to be based on comparative advantage (0)	Definition is listed in the guideline
Originality	Were recommendations original and innovative?	- Original and innovative (3) - Mainly original and innovative (2) - Partially original and innovative (1) - Not original and innovative (Not needed to be original and innovative) (0)	Definition is listed in the guideline

¹ “Secondary evaluation result of the Technical Cooperation Project Post Evaluation by the External Advisory Committee (Comprehensive Report)” (2009)

3-2 Rating results

The analysis results for “concreteness” consisted of, 84 (20.4%) “specified”, 166 (40.3%) “mainly specified”, 146 (35.4%) “partially specified”, and 16 (3.9%) “not specified (no specific comment)”. However, it needs to be noted that “mainly specified” may imply only a rough implementing policy. From this analysis result, most recommendations have specific implementation proposals or at least an implementation policy.

The analysis results for “clarity of addressee” consisted of 6 (1.5%) “clear”, 34 (8.3%) “mainly clear”, and 372 (90.3%) “not clear (no specific comment)”. If the addressees were stated in some ways such as “the Ministry”, “Japan”, “Tokyo side”, it was classified as “mainly clear”, whereas if no addressee was mentioned, it was classified as “not clear (no specific comment)”. From this analysis, most recommendations are classified as “not clear (no specific comment)”.

The analysis results for “clarity of period” consisted of 21 (5.1%) “clear”, 42 (10.2%) “mainly clear”, and 349 (84.7%) “not clear (no specific comment)”. If the implementing periods were stated in some ways such as “within a few years” or “over the medium term”, it was classified as “mainly clear”, whereas if the implementing periods were not mentioned, it was classified as “not clear (no specific comment)”. From this analysis, most implementing periods for the recommendations were “not clear (no specific comment)”.

The analysis results for “degree of being supported by evidence” consisted of 175 (42.5%) “fully based on the evaluation results”, 108 (26.2%) “mainly based on the evaluation results”, 107 (26.0%) “partially based on the evaluation results”, and 22 (5.3%) “not based on the evaluation results”. If it was determined that there were no evaluation results for the evidence, it was classified as “not based on the evaluation results”. From this analysis result, most recommendations were considered to be based on the evaluation results and persuasive; however, it needs to be noted that there are some recommendations which were not based on the evaluation results.

The analysis results for “comparative advantage” consisted of 14 (3.4%) “based on comparative advantage”, 48 (11.7%) “mainly based on the comparative advantage”, 77 (18.7%) “partially based on the comparative advantage” and 273 (66.3%) “not based on the comparative advantage/not needed to be based on comparative advantage²”. From this analysis, about two-thirds of recommendations were either not based on the comparative advantage or did not need to be based on the comparative advantage.

The analysis results for “originality” consisted of 11 (2.7%) “original and innovative”, 59 (14.3%) “mainly original and innovative”, 157 (38.1%) “partially original and innovative” and 185 (44.9%) “not original and innovative”. From this analysis, only a small number were original and innovative recommendations, and conventional recommendations account for more than half of total recommendations. Recommendations do not need to

² There are two definitions classified in the same category due to difficulty in distinguishing between them; the recommendation which was not based on the comparative advantage analysis although it should had been, and the recommendations that did not need to be based on the comparative advantage.

be innovative, especially for policy-level evaluation. There are “royal road” (typical) recommendations which are not innovative but must be referred to.

Based on the results above, “concreteness” and “degree of being supported by evidence” have satisfactory results, whereas the number of recommendations that had no “clarity of addressee” and “clarity of period” was huge, implying that clear mention of addressee and implementation period will be required for the task in future.

3-3 Considerations for the quality of recommendations

From the review of the 412 recommendations and discussions carried out by the related parties including experts, the “high quality recommendations” consisted of concreteness, clarity of addressee, clarity of period, and degree of being supported by evidence. Desirable recommendations are written with (i) the summary of the evaluation results at the beginning, (ii) proposal (rough idea of direction), and (iii) specific correspondence actions. If the period and addressee are mentioned, it is a more desirable way of writing recommendations.

4 Analysis of the Implementation Status of Recommendations

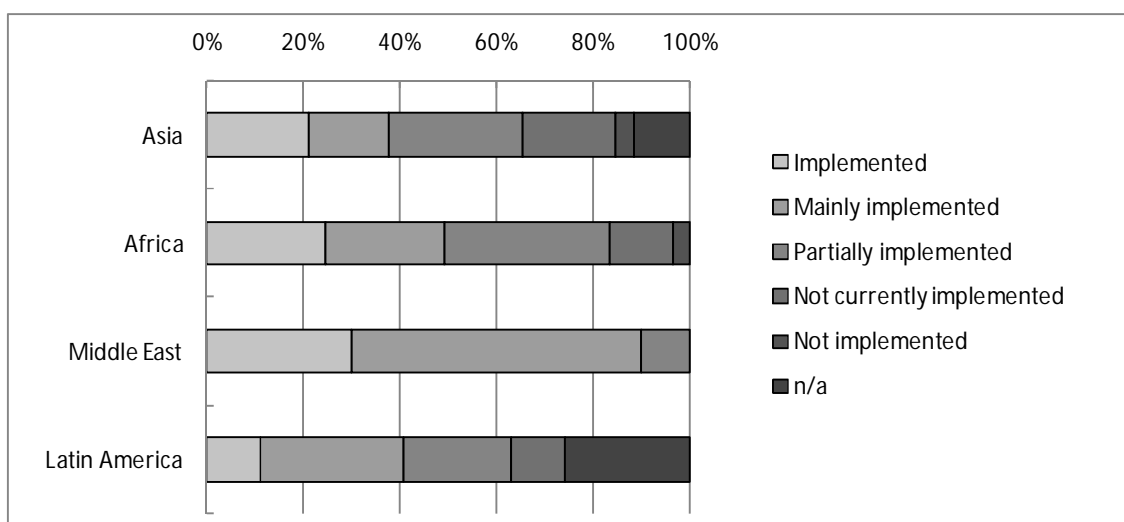
Based on the analysis of the 412 recommendations in the 48 evaluation reports, more than 70% of the results were classified as “implemented”, “mainly implemented”, or “partially implemented”, and it was found that most of the recommendations have been implemented in some way. However, it is noted that “partially implemented” includes a wide degree of actions to be taken to implement the recommendations.

From the comparison between the country assistant evaluation and the priority issue evaluation, the proportion of “implemented”, “mainly implemented”, and “partially implemented” results against the entire country assistant evaluation is 72% (181 out of 251), and of the priority issue evaluation it is 67% (108 out of 161): and there is not a large difference between them.

The list below shows the implementation status by region. Based on this analysis, the implementation ratio (“implemented”, “mainly implemented”, and “partially implemented”) by regions are, in descending order, the Middle East, Africa, Asia and South America. The implementation ratio of the Middle East is especially high compared to other regions, however, there were only 10 projects and it is not recommended to take this result as a trend.

Table 4-1 The implementation status by region (n=260) ³

	Implemented	Mainly implemented	Partially implemented	Not currently implemented	Not implemented	n/a	Total
Asia	34	27	45	31	6	19	162
Africa	15	15	21	8	2	0	61
Middle East	3	6	1	0	0	0	10
Latin America	3	8	6	3	0	7	27
	55	56	73	42	8	26	260



Source: Analysis result of Meta-evaluation by study team

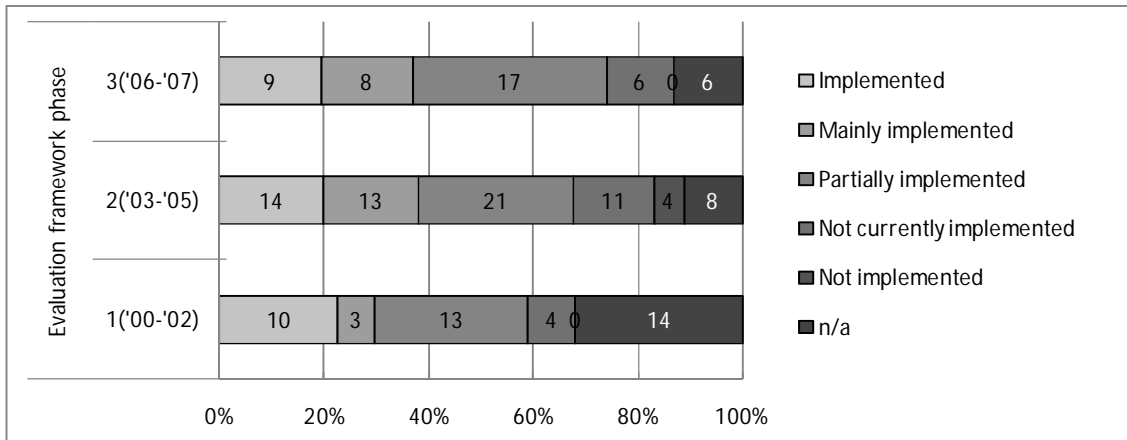
³ 260 out of the total of 412 recommendations were targeted for the evaluations of countries and regions. The remaining 152 are recommendations for priority issue evaluations and did not need to be targeted for specific countries or regions.

On the other hand, MOFA has been taking a number of approaches to the improvement of the evaluation implementation framework. The approach is roughly divided into the three phases below.

- First phase: 2000-2002 “Regeneration and enhancement period for policy-level evaluation”
- Second phase: 2003-2005 “Evaluation initiation and enhancement period by ODA experts”
- Third phase: 2006- “Enhancement period of linkage between country assistance program and evaluation”

Analysis of the relationships between the transition of the evaluation framework and the implementation status of recommendations, implementation ratio (“implemented”, “mainly implemented”, and “partially implemented”) is growing from the first phase to the third phase. From these results, it is clear that the improvement of the evaluation framework has contributed to the implementation of recommendations.

Table 4-2 Implementation status in evaluation framework history (n=412)



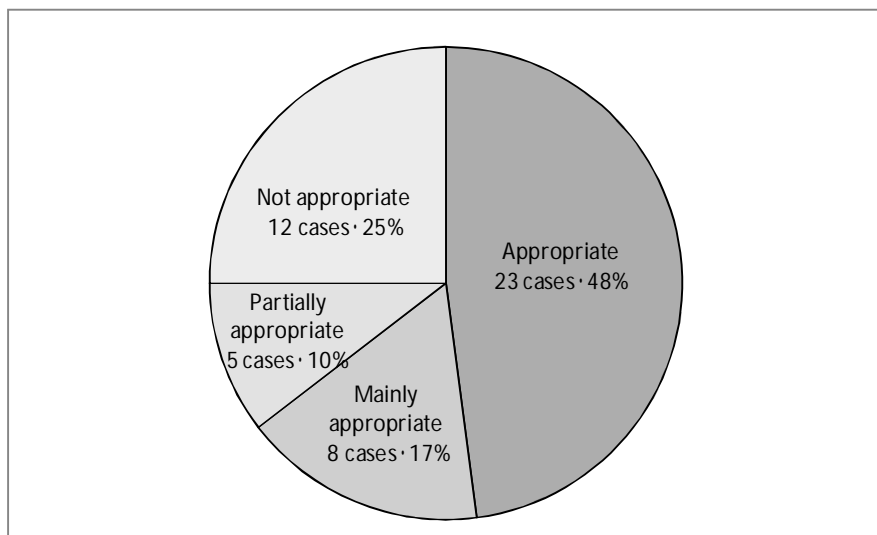
Source: Analysis result of Meta-evaluation by study team

5 Findings and Recommendations on Feedback

5-1 Analysis of feedback system

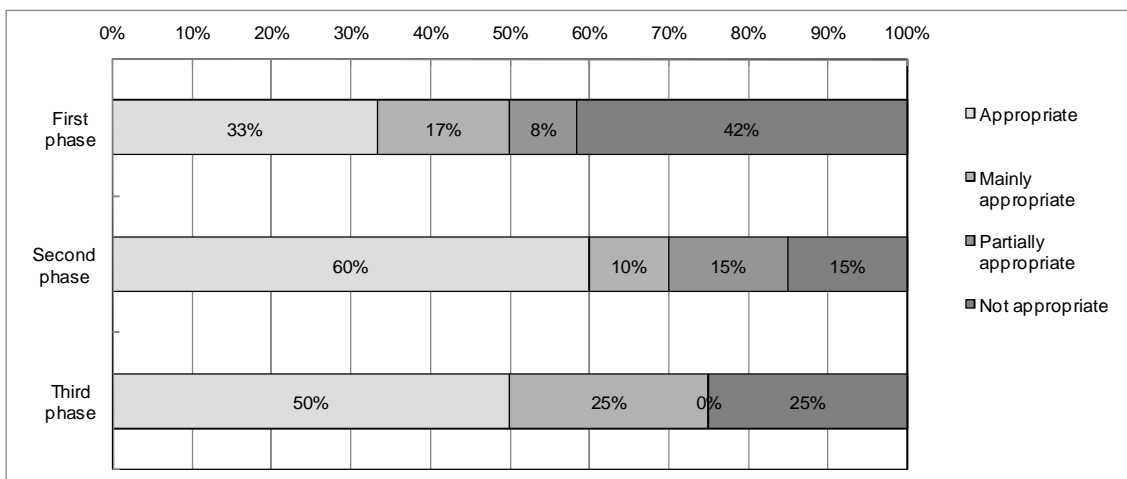
For the evaluation report feedback, it is considered that most evaluations were implemented at the appropriate time in relation to the policy formulation period, as the total of “appropriate” to “partially appropriate” exceeds 75% in table 5-1. It has also been understood that, based on the analysis relating to the time bracket of MOFA’s evaluation framework which is divided into three phases between 2000 and 2009, the evaluation implementation timing has been improved along with the improvement of the evaluation framework (ref. table 5-2).

Table 5-1 Appropriateness of evaluation implementation timing (n=48)



Source: Created by the study team based on the results of the questionnaire survey to Japanese embassies

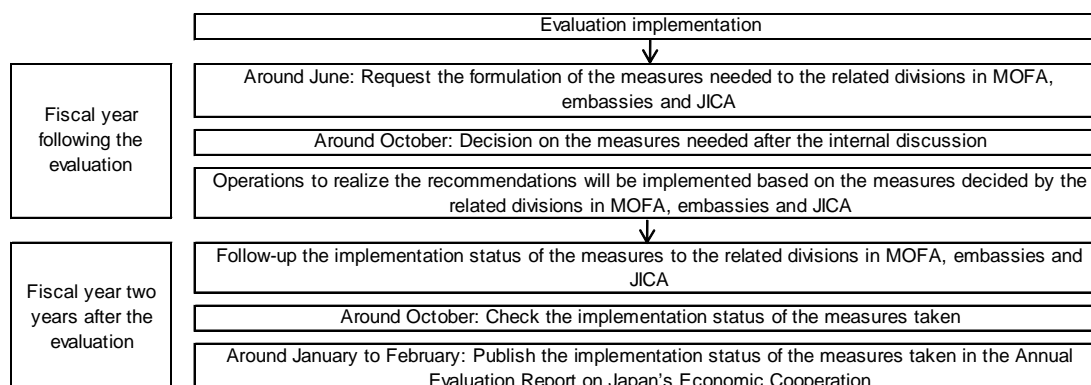
Table 5-2 Evaluation implementation timing by evaluation framework history



Source: Created by the study team based on the results of the questionnaire survey to Japanese embassies

The framework to follow-up the recommendations has been improving every year. The current framework is listed below in table 5-3.

Table 5-3 The evaluation recommendations follow-up framework



Source: Created by the study team based on the results of the interview to the ODA Evaluation and Public Relations Division in MOFA

From this framework, implementation status can subsequently be checked regarding virtually all the recommendations in the evaluation report. On the other hand, there are some issues on the quality of the report which were summarized based on the recommendations and its measures. Although the quality of the measures has improved, a further improvement is necessary.

Issues in the measures⁴

- Context of measures is not clear and it is not known whether it has been responded to.
- Not all the recommendations are mentioned. No explanation of the recommendations which were omitted from the measures.
- After the submission of the recommendations, it was followed up for the next fiscal year and the fiscal year after, however, there is no follow up after this period. Some recommendations will remain unimplemented due to the time-consuming implementation content.
- The volume of the summarizing work is vast because all the recommendations are followed. There are more than 10 recommendations in some reports.
- Results of the priority issue evaluations are mainly summarized from the responses of the implementation country; in some cases the response status of the countries are unknown.
- Additional budget will not be added after the publication of the initiative and it is not possible to divide the budget specially focused on the published field of the initiative under the current budgetary system. Even in the embassies, there is not enough budget and manpower to formulate the proposals and manage the project if the initiative is announced to be newly included in the country

⁴ Summary based on the information of the discussion and the points noticed during meta-evaluation process by the study team.

assistance program. Both embassies and related divisions have no framework for improvement and implementation after receiving the findings and recommendations of the current initiatives.

5-2 Analysis of the evaluation report utilization

From the result of the questionnaire about the utilization of the evaluation report at the embassies, more than 80% are either “constantly checked (by the embassy)”, “usually checked”, and “sometimes checked (as required)”, and although the collection rate was only 60%, it is used in the results. Specifically, it is widely utilized in the formulation of the proposals and the improvement of the management, reviewing and formulation of the country assistance program.

Tanzania, which implemented the on-site study, is a good example of the evaluation report utilization. It is confirmed that in Tanzania, the FY2005 country assistance evaluation report was used as a base and ultimately most of the recommendations were reflected in the country assistance program in 2008 by both the ODA task force led by the local embassy and MOFA. The file which has been historically looked after by the person in charge of the economic cooperation at the embassy, this report was known as the “bible”.

Likewise in Vietnam which implemented the on-site study this time, a great number of the suggestions in the country assistance evaluation report in FY2001 were reflected in the revised version of the country assistance program in FY2004. For the recommendations in the country assistance evaluation report in FY2006, although some of the recommendations were reflected in the revised version of the country assistance program for FY2009, some recommendations did not reach a clear conclusion as to whether the recommendations were implemented because a large number of the recommendation contents were “ODA implementation method” and lacked concreteness.

The result for the reason for unutilized findings in the questionnaire; “no time to extract the information which can be utilized”, suggests that an improvement of the feedback system will be important in the future.

6 Internal and External Factors which Impact the Implementation of the Recommendations

It was attempted to identify the specific factors which impact the implementation of the recommendations by comprehensively analyzing the information collected through all the analytical work. According to the results, it was roughly classified as “internal factors” and “external factors”.

For the “internal factors”, two factors; (1) appropriateness of the link to policy formulation (timing of evaluation implementation), (2) consideration of resource application potential for the recommendation implementation, were specified followed by (3) organizational approach at MOFA (a flexible attitude is a promotion factor, however, if the consolidation policy is not formulated, it will be a constraining factor), (4) personnel quality factor (leadership of MOFA and embassy high officials), are identified as a greatly-influenced factors.

For the “external factors”, (1) international pressure on participating in the government-donor aid coordination, (2) movement of policy formulation of and political instability at the aid recipient country, (3) pressure on participation for international agreement, (4) environmental changes (administrative and financial reform) in Japan, were highlighted.

7 Considerations for Desirable Recommendations

Based on the review, it is concluded that “specific and highly feasible recommendations” are the desired recommendations. Further details are as follows.

Specific and highly feasible recommendations

Specific

What must be done is clearly defined (It is regarded that (1) Clear direction of the policy and strategy, and (2) Clear aid schemes and procedures, have different features.)

To whom it is targeted is clearly defined (addressee)

By when it must be done is clearly defined (deadline or priority order)

Highly feasible

Based on the local aid needs

Based on the technical knowledge

Reflecting the available resources such as funding, human resources, aid scheme and framework.

Upfront in the creation of recommendations, it is desirable if the three points listed as the high feasibility conditions are included. However, not only in the immediately feasible recommendations, but also in the recommendations which are not feasible immediately but based on the local assistance needs and technical knowledge, as with “recommendations stay a step ahead”, a proposal must be made without hesitation because it is regarded that the recommendations with the greatest significance which lead in the long term are desirable for assistance. It is not for the evaluation whether the policy which previously formulated was implemented, however, it is possible to state the summarized knowledge separately based on the expert’s point of view (inserted as “team leader’s remarks”).

8 Conclusions and Recommendations

8-1 Conclusions

It is concluded that the current situation is mostly satisfactory since the ODA evaluations at the policy level which are implemented by MOFA have a high implementation rate (70%) regarding the recommendations mentioned in the report. However, much needs to be improved in order to improve the evaluation and recommendation quality, reflecting the findings in the policy, and to implement more effective publication and feedback.

Based on above conclusions, recommendations in order to improve the ODA evaluation by MOFA are listed below.

8-2 Recommendations

Based on the above conclusions, recommendations in order to improve the ODA evaluation by MOFA are listed below.

[Recommendations to improve the quality of recommendations]

Formulating the recommendations with four domains

In this review study, the recommendations included a range from the high level recommendations such as the policy and strategy direction and contents, to the practical level recommendations such as the assistance method and assistance procedure. It is also understood that there are recommendations which MOFA has to deal with as an organization and some recommendations to be dealt with by the individual embassies and the divisions in charge. It is pointed out that listing these recommendations in the report without classifying is one of the causes for the difficulty in tackling the recommendations. It is hoped that the recommendations will be consciously formulated with four domains in future⁵.

Level 1 \ Level 2	Japan HQ level (Assumption of the entire organizational response) (MOFA, Implementing body HQ etc.)	County Specific level (Assumption of the response to the individual case) (Embassy, Implementing body's local office etc.)
Policy, strategy direction level		
Aid scheme/procedure level		

*If the recommendations have anything other than the above 4 domains such as to the counterpart government and international organizations, create spaces and state separately.

State the “priority” and “addressee” as clearly as possible

It was pointed out in this review that if the priorities are stated clearly, the recommendations will be easily tackled. Specifically, it is considered to set up two

⁵ Connections with the category and subcategory in Table 2-1, “1. Improvement of aid approach” and “4. Improvement of aid policy for each sector” are classified as the direction of the policy and strategy level, and “2. Improvement of aid tool (aid scheme)” and “3. Improvement of aid process and implementation framework” are for the assistance method and assistance procedure level. However, some recommendations were not applied for this correspondence and it is necessary to assess individually.

classifications: (1) recommendations which should be implemented immediately, and (2) recommendations which should be implemented over the medium term. The recommendation's addressee might have been clear in the evaluation process, however, it was examined that it would become unclear in the course of time. Thus, clarification of the addressee in recommendations is desirable. In specific terms, (1) MOFA divisions, (2) embassies, (3) Implementing bodies (JICA headquarters, JICA local offices), (4) counterpart governments, are thought to be included in the divisions. It is also thought appropriate to list up the "priority" and "addressee" at the end of the recommendations.

Recommendations should be stated with three points included; foundation of the findings, direction of the correspondence and specific correspondence action, wherever possible.

Some recommendations described as good practices are constructed by first, briefly describing the findings as the basis and stating the rough correspondence policy to improve the situation, and then, stating the specific correspondence action. Recommendations should be stated if possible with three points included; the foundation of the findings (chapter number and reference number should be noted), direction of the response, and specific response action. In addition, if the recommendations include "promote the policy selection and concentration", "tackle in a strategic way", or "clarify the correspondence policy measure", the specific field and criteria which should be focused upon must be stated.

Procedure for formulating recommendations is: first, the evaluator makes a draft, and then evaluates the feasibility with the person in charge at MOFA and the embassy, and subsequently the evaluator makes the final decision.

This study review proves that good recommendations require to be based on the available resources. To satisfy these requirements, first, the evaluator makes the draft, but the feasibility should be assessed by the person in charge at MOFA and the embassy. Based on their inputs, the evaluator then makes a final decision.

[Recommendations to enhance the quality of the findings]

Create an "objective tree" during the policy formulating process in order to guide the objective findings.

From this on-site study, it was found that the outcomes are to be monitored objectively by formulating the systematic objective tree (including an indicator measuring its outcome) at the policy formulation stage. On the other hand, it was found that a number of evaluations are based on the tree, which was summarized the first time based on the policy documents when evaluation was implemented. Under such circumstances, in the future, it is desirable to configure the settings for the best possible indicator and formulation of the "objective tree" when the policy is formulated.

Introduce a “comprehensive evaluation system” in order to deliver findings which are easy to understand.

There are few reports which state with clear wording whether a satisfactory outcome was gained with Japan’s assistance. Easy-to-understand evaluation findings should be provided to the related parties including Japanese citizens and the citizens of the aid recipient country. Considering that some assistance organizations (e.g. World Bank⁶, Asian Development Bank) have adopted the “comprehensive evaluation system” with a five level rating to fulfil the demand, the introduction of a “comprehensive evaluation system” at MOFA is desired⁷. However, if there is difficulty in adopting a comprehensive evaluation system, stating the findings for each criterion as a list (known as profile) should be considered.

Maintain the evaluation procedure corresponding to the new issue (Reviewing the ODA evaluation guidelines).

According to the review study, there are some reports with an unsatisfactory level of evaluation findings. This is thought to be caused by an unmaintained evaluation method. It is required to revise the ODA evaluation guidelines to incorporate the evaluation methods which are not currently entirely covered by the ODA evaluation guidelines such as evaluation methods of the country level impact study (improvement due to the assistance); evaluation methods of the country level cost effect; and utilization method of joint evaluation in a country that adopted general financial support.

[Recommendations to reflect the recommendations further to the government]

Strengthen the cooperation with the formulation process of the country assistance program.

Recommendations made in the country assistance evaluations which were implemented two years prior to the formulation of country assistance programs were highly reflected in the programs. In such cases, findings of evaluations have been effectively utilized. It is desirable to link the country assistance plan formulation schedule and country assistance evaluation implementation schedule in future⁸. It is essential to disseminate the usage of the country assistance evaluation report as base data to formulate the country assistance program.

For the sectoral initiative, position clearly as MOFA’s policy and strengthen the linkage with the evaluation.

The sectoral initiative is not being formulated regularly like the country assistance program. It is formulated based on the change in international trends and the necessity of the policy to appeal to the international community. Therefore, the

⁶ The five grades of the criteria adopted at the World Bank (“Highly satisfied, Satisfied, Generally satisfied, Generally unsatisfied, and Highly unsatisfied”).

⁷ “Comprehensive Evaluation System” with four grades of criteria is adopted for the loan assistance cooperation project implemented by JICA.

⁸ However, the country assistance program is being reviewed at MOFA and connections between country assistance evaluation and country assistance program is expected to be changed depends on the result of the review.

number of criteria for evaluating the approach related to the initiative which elapsed few years after the publication are greater than evaluations implemented for the formulation of the new initiative. However, the place of the sectoral initiative as a policy within MOFA is unclear and although the ex-post evaluation can be implemented for accountability reasons, it is confirmed that the framework, which can result in the implementation improvement as an organization or reflecting to the formulation of the next phase initiative, is not maintained. It should clearly be a position of the policy with the implementation framework, period, budget and evaluation plan. It is desirable to implement the ex-post evaluation after the estimated implementing period, and evaluate the degree of implementation in the future⁹.

For identical recommendations stated in a number of evaluation reports, decide on a single corresponding policy from MOFA after discussions, and confirm the implementation status that must be carried out for the future evaluations.

From this review study, it was found that the same contents for the recommendations such as the promotion of selection and concentration for the policy, and strengthening the progress monitoring and evaluation framework, were made in a number of evaluations. It is proposed that these recommendations should be discussed within MOFA and a decision made on a unified MOFA policy and the corresponding action promoted to the all embassies. A draft of the unified policy is listed below. In the future, these recommendations should be mentioned in the study criteria of policy-level evaluations, and it should be followed until the task has been implemented.

[Recommendations to implement effective publication and feedback based on the findings]

Publicize a summary list of the findings implemented within the last year to all Japanese embassies implementing the ODA, and send the actual report to the closely related embassies.

Based on this review, it is found that the utilization of the evaluation report is low. To improve this situation, it is suggested to make a summary list based on the evaluation report and recommendations which have been implemented within the last year, and publicize it to the embassies implementing the ODA.

Implement the various ideas in order to publicize the findings to related parties (composition of the report, on-site report seminar).

For more effective publication, the three measures related to the composition of the report, are proposed below¹⁰.

⁹ However, initiatives in the report are based on the basic approach of the development assistance for the targeted sectors and are an international approach. There are some opinions for which the initiatives are not necessarily being mentioned specific commitment.

¹⁰ Framework of the output based on the recommendations should include the followings. (1) Summary (Maximum of 2 pages in an easily understood manner), (2) Main body (Recommendation should be simple,

- (1) The summary should be written clearly without the use of technical language because it is widely read and used. It should be around two pages long and the findings should be stated concisely.
- (2) On the other hand, for the English summary created for the involved parties in the counterpart country, a certain degree of details should be included because the content created by the simple translation from the Japanese summary may be insufficient. For the criteria the purpose, target, method, analysis result, findings and recommendations should be included.
- (3) Implementation of an on-site report seminar is recommended for the purpose of reporting findings to the involved parties in the counterpart country and for stating the recommendations which should be implemented by the involved parties in the counterpart country. On-site report seminars were previously implemented. However, due to budget constraints, it has not been implemented in recent years. On-site report seminars are recommended if the evaluation was implemented for major ODA recipient countries.

the analysis part should be detailed and state the technical analysis result), (3) English report (Partially detailed) (4) Summary for the website (Public use. Around one page. State clearly in simple language, limiting to the main points.).

Table 8-1 Improvement recommendations, priority, addressees

Improvement recommendations	Priority	Addressees
[Recommendations to improve the quality of recommendations]		
Formulating the recommendations into four domains.	Implementing immediately	ODA Evaluation and Public Relations Division
State the "priority" and "addressee" clearly as far as possible.	Implementing immediately	ODA Evaluation and Public Relations Division
Foundation of the findings, direction of the correspondence, specific correspondence action should be included in the recommendations wherever possible.	Implementing immediately	ODA Evaluation and Public Relations Division
[Recommendations to improve the quality of the findings]		
Create "objective tree" during the policy formulating process for the purpose in order to guide the objective findings.	Implementing immediately	Each Country Assistance Planning Divisions and Global Issues Cooperation Division
Introduce "comprehensive evaluation system" in order to deliver the findings which are easy to understand.	Implementing over the medium term	ODA Evaluation and Public Relations Division
Maintain the evaluation procedures corresponding to the new issue (Reviewing the ODA evaluation guidelines).	Implementing immediately (next fiscal year)	ODA Evaluation and Public Relations Division
[Recommendations to reflect the recommendations further to the government]		
Strengthen cooperation with the formulation process of the country assistance program.	Implementing immediately	ODA Evaluation and Public Relations Division, Each Country Assistance Planning Divisions
For the sectoral initiative, position clearly as MOFA's policy and strengthen the linkage with the evaluation.	Implementing over the medium term	ODA Evaluation and Public Relations Division, Global Issues Cooperation Division
For identical recommendations stated in a number of evaluation reports, decide on a single corresponding policy from MOFA after discussion, and confirmation of the implementation status must be carried out for future evaluations.	Implementing immediately	International Cooperation Bureau, ODA Evaluation and Public Relations Division, Aid Policy and Management Division
[Recommendations to implement effective publication and feedback based on the findings]		
Publicize the list of the summary of the findings implemented within the last year to all Japanese embassies implementing the ODA, as well as sending the actual report to the closely related embassies.	Implementing immediately	ODA Evaluation and Public Relations Division
Implement the various ideas in order to publicize the findings to the related parties (composition of the report, on-site report seminar).	Implementing over the medium term	ODA Evaluation and Public Relations Division

Consolidation policy for the reoccurring recommendations for MOFA (draft)

There was a recommendation in section 8-2, "For identical recommendations stated in a number of evaluation reports, decide on a single corresponding policy from MOFA after the discussion, and confirmation of the implementation status must be carried out for future evaluations". Below is the draft consolidation policy for MOFA as a whole created by the study team. Use the draft as a base, as it is anticipated to hold active discussions within MOFA.

Clarifying the strategy and priority

As a preliminary step, set the number of the strategy criteria (priority criteria) in the country assistance program depending on the scale of the assistance and political importance.

For example, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of Germany adopted a method which is divided into three levels; most prioritized assistant country, prioritized assistant country, and regular assistant country and they limit the maximum number of the strategy criteria (priority criteria) to either 5, 3, or 1.

Flexibility in the response while using these methods as an example should be applied for approving the additional criteria which have no application to the strategic criteria. (Tanzania's country assistance program "other assistant sectors (continuation of good practice)" has adopted this method.)

Strengthen implementation status monitoring

When the country assistance program is being formulated, there is a need to create an objective tree and set the indicator to identify the progress against the target. Setting the numerical target value is not essential (set a value if possible) because the indicator may not be improved apart from the factor created from the assistance from Japan¹¹. By adopting the indicator which was selected from the counterpart country's national development plan, work load for collecting the indicator can be reduced (refer to Tanzania's country assistance program implemented in 2008).

Strengthen the program and approach

Set the strategies (priorities) or its individual targets as a program target, and strengthen the system which makes an organic linkage between several schemes in order to achieve the program target.

Based on the fact that making a linkage of the aid schemes such as grant assistance, loan assistance, and technical assistance becomes very easy due to the inauguration of new JICA, constructing the program implementing framework

¹¹ If the numerical indicator value was selected from the beginning of the assistance period, at least the pre and post comparison or evaluation from before-after analysis can be undertaken. However, currently there is no numerical value for the indicator, so if it is necessary to search the data, the indicator will have to be calculated (normally, not enough data will be found in the post assistance period). The purpose of the recommendation is to improve this condition.

by MOFA setting the strategy targets (priorities) and sharing the strategy target with JICA is thought to be an option. The “Project” which is used when it is implemented as a single aid scheme will be abolished due to the criticism made by other assistant countries. Instead, use “program component” to clarify that it is a part of a program (adopted by DANIDA in Denmark).

Strengthen ODA publications

Considering the usage purpose of the evaluation report, expand the contents of the website for ODA evaluation. For example, for the ODA related parties such as MOFA, embassies, and JICA, the system should be able to search the database of lessons learned and recommendations in the evaluation reports by sector, region and theme, and it should be accessible to the public. To publish the summary of the findings rewritten from a journalistic standpoint is one idea. Moreover, for the related parties in the aid recipient country, the assistance program and country assistance evaluation report must be created in English (or local languages) and should be accessible from the embassy’s homepage.

(Note) There was a high frequency of recommendations related to the correspondence to aid donor coordination, and strengthening the framework of the ODA taskforce. However, this was not included in the list of the consolidation policy because it was understood that no unified measure will be recommended by MOFA at the present.