

Evaluation of Japan's ODA in Bangladesh's Transport Sector

(Partner Country-Led Evaluation)

1. Theme: Evaluation of Japan's ODA in Bangladesh's Transport Sector
2. Country: Bangladesh
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4. Period of Evaluation Survey: February 2011– March 2011
5. Description of Evaluation: (1) Evaluation Objective The main purpose of the evaluation is to assess the degree of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of Japan's ODA in Bangladesh's transport sector (2000-2010). This also examined the appropriateness of the ODA process in the development of the sector program. (2) Evaluation Scope The evaluation study covered Japan's ODA projects in transport sector during 2000-2010. These are large chunk projects comprising the access road to Jamuna Bridge and two bridge projects totalling 2.4km. (3) Evaluation Methodology The evaluation follows the "Guidelines for Partner Country-led Evaluations" issued by Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, which describes three dimensions: objectives, results and processes. Precisely, following the Guidelines the report undertook two approaches for this evaluation: (a) Top-down approach and (b) Bottomup approach. Evaluation method includes: (i) Desk review, (ii) Focus group discussion, (iii) Survey and (iv) Interview of relevant officials.
6. Results of Evaluation: (1) Relevance The program is highly relevant with the objectives of the Country Assistance Program for Bangladesh (CAP), and is compatible with the priorities and goals of Japan's ODA. The program is also consistent with Bangladesh's country goals, priorities and objectives as laid down in the plan and the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). Infrastructural development is an important plank in the strategy for poverty alleviation, growth and development in the CAP, the Fifth Five Year Plan (FFYP) and the PRSP positioning the program at the very heart of the development agenda.

(2) Effectiveness

The program has been quite effective in developing the output, generating outcome and bringing desirable changes in the western and south western region of the country. Bridges developed are of very high quality. Access road is also good but deteriorating for a lack of periodic maintenance and overloading which R&H is addressing recently. Traffic growth in all the infrastructures points to the benefits accruing from these facilities.

(3) Appropriateness

The process was appropriate in the development of the program elements. There is a good coordination among the Embassy of Japan, JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency), JBIC (Japan Bank for International Cooperation), OECF (Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund), Government of Bangladesh and other development partners. These were in the nature of information sharing, joint approach in program development and integration of viewpoints for program improvement. The process was also appropriate in addressing program sustainability.

7. Recommendations

(1) Upgrade national highways East of Jamuna

Elements of the transport sector program are experiencing tremendous traffic growth. Jamuna Access road is running in excess of its capacity already causing suffocating delays. Bangabandhu Bridge has resulted in traffic volume far in excess of the capacity of the National Highways in the Eastern Zone. This is and will be harming exports and industry now and in near future. Now it is essential to give a priority to investment for expansion of the National Highways and for development of alternate highways connecting Dhaka and Chittagong.

(2) Develop a balanced multimodal transport

The country is experiencing a lopsided development in traffic demand in its multimodal composition: road, rail and inland waterways, etc. It is imperative that the country develops the other two modes of transport in order to relieve pressure on the road network and to develop a balanced and efficient transportation system in the country.

(3) Address road safety

Bangladesh is experiencing a very severe road safety problem and the situation has been deteriorating with increasing number of accidental deaths. Bangladesh is one of the countries which have the highest fatality rates in road accidents, over 100 deaths per 10,000 motor vehicles. Road accidents in Bangladesh are costing the community in the order of Tk 5,000 crore (US \$ 850 million) which is nearly 2% of the GDP. These figures indicate that road safety is a serious national issue.

(4) Develop Mongla Port

Considering the outcome of development of the Mongla Port, program implementation has been effective. Long-standing need of having uninterrupted and efficient traffic flow

across Padma at Paksey and across Rupsa in Khulna was achieved. These two bridges created an uninterrupted road link between the North west and the South west region connecting the Mongla Port. Development of the Port to facilitate export and import of the region is essential for effective utilization of the road network.

(5) Stringent pre-qualification and thorough studies required

Implementation of the program experienced major delays firstly, for the failure of the first lowest bidder in signing the construction contract (Paksey Bridge). Second important reason is the inadequate and faulty soil investigation (Access Road and Rupsa Bridge respectively). This calls for thorough preliminary studies before construction contract. On the other hand, there should be more stringent prequalification criteria for bidders to discourage “back out”.

(6) Advance planning for contract implementation

Completion of a bridge was delayed by 6.5 months (Paksey) due to the failure of the local agency to hand over the land for working yard (contract-1). The executing agency lacked detailed advanced planning for implementation of the contract, and it caused losses of valuable time and money for the nation.

(Note: The opinions expressed in this summary do not necessarily reflect the views and positions of the Government of Japan or any other institutions.)