

# Evaluation of Japan's ODA to the Rural and Agriculture Sector in Thailand

<p><b>1. Country: Kingdom of Thailand</b></p>	 <p>Project for female farmers network development for community self-dependence, Ubon Ratchathani, Province</p>
<p><b>2. Evaluators:</b></p> <p>(1) Associate Professor Dr. Siriporn Wajjwalku          (2) Dr. Phakpoom Tippakoon          (3) Ms. Sirinthip Narinsilpa          (4) Mr. Pramote Pan Sa-art</p>	
<p><b>3. Evaluation period:</b></p> <p>November 2014- March 2015</p>	
<p><b>4. Background, objectives and scope of the Evaluation:</b></p> <p>(1) Background</p> <p>Agricultural and rural development sector is selected due to its significance in Japan's ODA policy as well as JICA's development cooperation with Thailand. Agricultural and rural development is one of the important strategies to combat global poverty and to address global issues (e.g. food security). Moreover, according to data provided by JICA Thailand Office and Embassy of Japan in Thailand, most of the development cooperation projects implemented during 2005 - 2014 fall into the agricultural and rural development sector. This signifies the importance of the sector in Japan's development cooperation in Thailand.</p> <p>(2) Evaluation Objectives</p> <p>There are three purposes of the evaluation as follows.</p> <p>a) To assess the relevance of Japan's assistance policy to Thailand's agricultural and rural development sector in terms of: (1) consistency with the policies, plans, and needs of Thailand; (2) consistency with Japan's high-level policies and priorities; and (3) balance with other donors in the sector.</p> <p>b) To assess the effectiveness of results of Japan's assistance to the sector in terms of: (1) degree of Japan's development assistance in comparison with other donors in the sector; (2) degree of achievement of the initial goals; and (3) degree of effectiveness in comparison with input; and (4) signs of image enhancement observed by the Government of Thailand and Thai citizens toward Japan's assistance to Thailand's agricultural and rural development sector.</p> <p>c) To assess the appropriateness of Japan's cooperation process in terms of: (1) whether enough consultation has been made with Thai authorities in order to understand the development issue of agricultural and rural development sector; (2) whether beneficial coordination has been made between sectors; (3) whether coordination and collaboration with other donors and international organizations have been made; (4) whether implementation systems for assistance to the sector have been sufficient; and (5) whether there has been a process to periodically grasp the conditions of the implementation of the</p>	

sector policy.

(3) Evaluation Target

The target of the evaluation is Japan's ODA in the agricultural and rural development sector in Thailand from FY 2005 to FY 2014.

(4) Evaluation Methodology

The study has been evaluated principally from the perspectives of "relevance of policies," "effectiveness of results," and "appropriateness of processes." The evaluation has been conducted based on the "Guidelines for the Partner Country-led Evaluations" of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. Data was collected through documentary research, in-depth interviews, and site visits.

**5. Brief Summary of the Evaluation Results:**

The result of the evaluation, in general, was positive. Japanese assistance policy was found relevant to both Thailand's development policy and Japan's foreign policy as being an important donor and partner of Thailand. In addition, the output of Japan's supported projects for agricultural and rural development in Thailand was also found effective, and the aid provision process was revealed as appropriate. However, with all these appreciations, there is still a possibility to increase aid effectiveness as well as appropriateness of processes.

(a) Relevance of Policies:

Japan's ODA policy to assist Thailand's agricultural and rural development in the last decade (2004-2013) had been consistent with the needs and direction of Thailand's development policy in general, Thailand's development of the agricultural sector and rural areas in particular, Japan's policy and strategy at large, and with the international agenda for poverty reduction.

Japan's ODA policy for agricultural and rural development was drawn from Japan's ODA Charter and its Medium-term Policy on ODA. It was also coherent with the MDGs focusing on poverty alleviation by promoting agricultural and rural development, as well as market access.

Compared with other donors, Japan could be considered the most active donor in the field of agricultural and rural development while other bilateral and multilateral donors operating in Thailand had focused their assistances more narrowly based on their specialization and interests.

(b) Effectiveness of Results:

In general, Japanese assistance had contributed to the agricultural and rural development in Thailand in many aspects.

Regarding degree of contribution of Japan's development assistance in comparison with other donors, it was found out that Japan had played an active and significant role in agricultural and rural development in Thailand.

For the degree of achievement of the initial goals, it was also found out that the level of achievement of the initial goals of each project was impressive.

Regarding the degree of effectiveness in comparison with input, in general, the degree of

effectiveness of Japanese assistance was impressive. Almost all of projects reached a high degree of achievement while some projects' achievement was at moderate level basically because of their unsustainability of the activities after completion of the projects.

From in-depth interviews, signs of image enhancement toward Japanese assistance were observed in many aspects. Firstly, it was perceived by some projects' managers and coordinators that Japan's ODA projects were relatively more effective than other donors' projects. Secondly, there was a sign of strong confidence in Japanese knowledge, technologies, and expertise in the field of agricultural and rural development. Thirdly, most of Thai counterparts believed that development assistance and cooperation from Japan was still in need for Thailand's agricultural and rural development due to a number of existing problems in Thailand and Japan's potential as an active donor and technological and advanced country.

(c) Appropriateness of Processes:

Regarding the appropriateness of the policy making process, in general, it was found out that the policy process of Japanese ODA for Thailand's agricultural and rural development was appropriate. It was mentioned by Thai counterparts that the clarity of terms and conditions concerning project selection and requirements for project formulation and implementation was a strong point of Japanese ODA. However, in practice, some differences between JICA and the Japanese Embassy regarding the process of project design and formulation were found.

Regarding the appropriateness of policy implementation process, one important characteristic of Japanese ODA to Thailand's agricultural and rural development was the recipient's significant role in the policy implementation process. In general, implementers perceived that their ownership over the projects was well respected by Japanese aid agencies.

**6. Recommendations**

(a) Continuation of Japan's ODA for Thailand's agricultural and rural development.

It is believed that Japanese assistance, particularly capacity building for Thai agencies, officials, and communities, as well as the technology transfer, will help Thailand to overcome several problems in the agricultural sector and support rural development, which in the long term will lead to poverty reduction and sustainable development of the country.

(b) Maintaining the merits and improving the weak points of Japan's ODA.

For both JICA's assistance and GGP projects, the clear criteria and required conditions, as well as implementation instructions, were the key merit of Japanese ODA policy and practice. Regarding JICA, the wide scope, scale, and period of assistance, respect of recipient's initiatives and role, flexible management, and frequent communication which were identified as advantages should be maintained and promoted. In addition, the comprehensive package which paved the way for positive outputs due to budget predictability and facility availability should also be encouraged.

For GGP projects, the direct resources allocation to grassroots level, ownership enhancement, as well as flexibility of project management were mentioned as significant

advantages which should be maintained. However, to increase efficiency and effectiveness, it is important to make sure that the assistance has reached the beneficiaries, particularly in the case that the recipients and the beneficiaries are not the same group. In addition, while the ownership enhancement is promoted with respect to the recipient's initiatives and role, some mechanisms should be introduced from the donor side to support the recipient on the condition of the recipient's limited capacity and request.

(3) Sustaining the Positive Outputs of the Project after Completion

Some project managers and coordinators of both JICA and GGP raised that the positive outputs were not continued after the project completion for many projects and activities, which led to the question of sustainability. Therefore, the long term conditions for project sustainability should be considered and designed carefully during project formulation.

(4) Frequent communication and consultation between Japan and the beneficiaries

Although frequent communication and consultation has existed between partners of the project, it seems to be a bilateral practice between the Japanese side and Thai counterparts (organizations or communities involved) only. Therefore, it is suggested that more inclusive process of project formulation and implementation should be encouraged between the beneficiaries and Japan. Namely it is preferable that more stakeholders should be invited to share ideas and concerns regarding the project.

Note: The opinions expressed in this summary are based on the research by the Evaluators and do not reflect the views or positions of the Government of Japan.