The Ninth ODA Evaluation Workshop: From the Participants (1)
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The Ninth ODA Evaluation Workshop was held on 18 February 2010, in Tokyo. Like previous ODA evaluation workshops, a number of the partner countries, including Vietnam, were invited to this event to share their experiences and achievements in establishing ODA evaluation systems and developing evaluation culture.

Together with the JICA Evaluation Team, Vietnam had an opportunity to introduce its national M&E system as well as the good practices in the Vietnam-Japan Joint Evaluation Programme, which was demonstrated by specific and remarkable examples. For the partner countries like Vietnam, leadership, ownership, and capacity development were very essential in this regard.

Over the past ten years, Vietnam has made tremendous efforts within these three pillars: (1) Legal and institutional framework; (2) Methods and technological capability; and (3) Human resource development. Additionally, it has enjoyed a favorable environment, especially with strong commitment from the government and development partners during the implementation of the Paris Declaration, Hanoi Core Statement, and Accra Action Agenda (AAA). The following issues still remain however:

- The level of institutionalization of M&E at concerned stakeholders and Project Management Units (PMUs) are still below expectation
- Lack of Cost Norm for Evaluation Regulations
- Lack of human resources for evaluation in both the government and non-government sector
- Constraint in utilization of evaluation results, especially at policy level

At this ODA Evaluation Workshop, partner countries expressed great interests in the joint evaluation model, and the Vietnamese delegation had a chance to exchange its views and practical experiences with those countries who were expecting to follow this model in the future.

Furthermore, Vietnam also actively participated in the initiative to set up the Asia-Pacific Evaluation Association Network by providing comments on its proposal and draft charter.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Vietnamese delegation, I would like to express my deep appreciation to MOFA of Japan for organizing this workshop. It was truly beneficial for partner countries like Vietnam.
To begin with, the Pakistan delegation would like to thank the Government of Japan for providing the opportunity to participate in the Ninth ODA Evaluation Workshop in Tokyo. This brief but well-organized event provided an excellent opportunity to learn about the role played by Japan’s ODA in the development strategies of various recipient countries, including Pakistan.

Pakistan ranks 7th among all the recipients of Japan’s ODA in terms of volume. Since its inception in 1961, ODA has taken the form of loan aid, grant aid, and technical cooperation. So far, more than 60 projects have been completed. The annual Japanese assistance to Pakistan has reached 300 million to 400 million US dollars, in addition to exceptional relief assistance like debt rescheduling, food aid, earthquake relief assistance, etc. Three priority areas have been provided in Japan’s Country Assistance Program for Pakistan:

- Ensuring human security and human development
- Development of a sound market economy
- Achievement of balanced regional socioeconomic development

The projects initiated in the health and education sectors have contributed to human resource development by assisting implementing organizations to improve operational capabilities and establish linkages between various schemes. Japan’s ODA contributed in the construction of the Indus highway and Kohat tunnel, helped Pakistan with village electrification, contributed to increasing agricultural productivity, and enhanced the capacity of the Environmental Protection Agency.

While Japan’s ODA has greatly contributed to the economic development of Pakistan, many of Pakistan’s socio-economic indicators remain below those of other countries with similar per-capita national income. Rising prices of oil and food have scarred the economy. Additional aid of enhanced quality and quantity in tandem is necessary, therefore, to achieve sustainable development results.

The workshop has enhanced our understanding of international evaluation standards and provided us with an opportunity to learn about other country’s experiences on various ways to improve development policies and implementation. For instance, the “Case Studies on Project-Level Evaluation of Japan’s ODA Projects” presentation made it clear that results measured by quantitative indicators are most important in loan projects, whereas assessment of the process was most important in technical cooperation within human capacity development. That result is equally applicable in case of Pakistan. Similarly, the various presentations given during the workshop developed a consensus among the participants that both internal and external evaluators were needed: internal for improvement of project management, and external for accountability to the taxpayer.

Participants from Pakistan expressed their opinion that the Paris Declaration should not only promote improvement of aid delivery, but also prompt appropriate evaluation. Participants from other countries took keen interest in various initiatives taken by Pakistan toward enhancing aid effectiveness, which indicated that more and more countries are now working on agendas of aid effectiveness.

Lastly, the Pakistan delegation would like to suggest that, in future, the participants be provided with the background of all ODA seminars held previously. At least one page on each of the previous ODA seminars should be shared in advance, so that continuity of the event can be maintained, and the participants can reap the benefits of previous feedback to make the next results.