

Evaluation of Japan's ODA to the Health Sector in Viet Nam

Consultation of Investment in Health Promotion (CIHP)

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Evaluation Period: October 2013 – March 2014

Case Study Country: Socialist Republic of Viet Nam



Original Report: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/evaluation/FY2013/pdfs/health.pdf>

Descriptions of Evaluation

(1) Evaluation Objective

The purpose of this evaluation is to obtain useful lessons and recommendations for Japan's future assistance policies in the health sector, which will be used when planning and implementing policies.

(2) Evaluation Target

The target of the evaluation was Japan's ODA policies towards the health sector in Viet Nam. The following five projects conducted from 2000 to 2010 were selected as key focus areas for evaluation in two main components of the health sector, namely improvement of health and medical services and prevention of infectious diseases.

- Improvement of health and medical services
 - a) The Bach Mai Hospital Project for Functional Enhancement (Technical Cooperation)
 - b) The Bach Mai Hospital Project for Strengthening Training Capacity for Provincial Hospitals (Technical Cooperation)
 - c) Regional and Provincial Hospital Development Project (ODA Loan)
- Prevention of infectious diseases
 - d) The Project for Construction of the Facilities for Measles Vaccine Production in Viet Nam (Grant Aid)
 - e) The Project for Strengthening Capacity for Measles Vaccine Production in Viet Nam (Technical Cooperation)

(3) Evaluation Methodology

This evaluation was conducted in three perspectives: "relevance of policies," "effectiveness of results," and "appropriateness of processes." This evaluation employed methods as follows:

- 1) Desk study to review all related documents, plans, and reports from involved organizations.
- 2) Semi-structured interviews with key informants at different levels to obtain opinions and experiences of stakeholders involved.
- 3) Observations at project sites to have better understandings of the infrastructure, equipment, and routine functions of supported facilities.

- 4) Collection of secondary data. Data collected at field visits varied, depending on output indicators of each project as well as the availability of data.

Evaluation Results

Overall evaluation to Japan's ODA to Viet Nam's health sector is high. From the viewpoint of relevance of policies, Japan's ODA policies for providing assistance to Viet Nam's health sector have been highly consistent with the needs of Viet Nam's health sector as well as the internationally agreed development goals. From the viewpoint of effectiveness of results, evaluated projects successfully achieved planned outputs and contributed to the improvement of health care services in Viet Nam. The sustainability of all evaluated projects is also considered high. From the viewpoint of appropriateness of processes, Japan's assistance places emphasis on the dialogue, consultation and collaboration among counterparts and is well-received by Vietnamese partners in general. Meanwhile, there is a need to improve monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

(1) Relevance of Policies

Japan's ODA policies for providing assistance to Viet Nam's health sector, in the last decade, have been highly consistent with the priorities and objectives of the Viet Nam National Strategy on People's Health Care and Protection as well as the needs of recipient agencies, in term of the improvement of accessibilities to good quality health care services. Japan's ODA to Viet Nam's health



The Center for Research and Production of Vaccines and Biologicals (POLYVAC)



The Bach Mai Hospital

care sector has also been consistent with Japan's policies and strategies such as the Health and Development Initiative (HDI) of Japan at large. In addition, the assistance of Japan's ODA for Viet Nam's health sector is in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the international agenda for health care provision.

(2) Effectiveness of Results

Overall, evaluated projects successfully achieved planned outputs. Specifically, in terms of two technical cooperation projects in Bach Mai Hospital, significant improvement was seen in output and outcome indicators, including the improvement in using computer systems for patient database and financial data management, the decrease of mortality rate, and nosocomial infection rate, the enhancement of technical and training capacity, and the introduction of the Total Care. Grant aid and technical cooperation for measles vaccine production achieved their objectives to provide a stable supply of measles vaccine for Viet Nam through establishment of the physical and technical production capacity. In the ODA loan projects for three regional and provincial hospitals, capacities of these hospitals significantly improved. These improvements were reflected in the initiation of new services, the increase in the number of patients, and the reduction of mortality rates. The sustainability of all evaluated projects is also considered high. This includes the sustainability of human resources, the effective utilization and maintenance of facilities and equipment, as well as the high functioning of these health facilities.

(3) Appropriateness of Processes

The process of implementing Japan's assistance is acknowledged as comprehensive and clear. Japan's assistance places emphasis on the dialogue, consultation, and collaboration among counterparts. Representatives from the Vietnamese side expressed their respect and satisfaction with the consultation of the Japanese experts. The mechanism for monitoring and evaluation has been started at the beginning of the project and been functioning during project implementation. However, there is no clear mechanism for monitoring and reporting established when the project ends.

Recommendations

1 Continue Japan's ODA Assistance

Continue Japan's ODA assistance to the health sector of Viet Nam. Because of the macroeconomic difficulties and a dramatic decrease in the state budget of Viet Nam spending on health, ODA projects from Japan are very important for Viet Nam to maintain achievements of the health sector in Viet Nam in the last decade and to address priority issues. ODA projects should continue with priorities in the health sector of Viet Nam in the future.

2 Promote Participation and Communication

Projects should be managed in a more participatory manner, and communication between partners should be strengthened. More participation from local partners is recommended to increase the ownership, accountability, contribution of partners, and the effectiveness and sustainability of projects. This will also enhance the capacity of partners in project management. In addition, communication between agencies should be enhanced in order to avoid misunderstandings and achieve a high consensus in decision-making and satisfaction among partners.

3 Strengthen the Process of Preparation

Strengthen the process of preparation and approval for ODA projects. The process of preparation for proposed projects has been very carefully undertaken at various stages. It has resulted in a well-designed project. However, sometimes it resulted in some delays. There is a need for good collaboration in order to speed up the process.

4 Improve Monitoring and Evaluation Systems

Monitoring and evaluation systems should be improved. A project design matrix (PDM) should be carefully prepared with concrete but feasible indicators. Indicators also should reflect the outputs of projects and be able to be collected from the recipient's information management system. Furthermore, it should be beneficial for JICA and the health sector of Viet Nam to keep monitoring and reporting after a project ends in order to ensure the sustainability of the project. A system to keep track and manage the usage, efficiency, and maintenance status of medical equipment is recommended.

5 Introduce Research on the Cost of Effectiveness

Research on the cost of effectiveness is important to help JICA and the Ministry of Health to measure the effectiveness of projects and design evidence-based investment.