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1.1 Trends in ODA Evaluation in Japan

Background

Introduction of ODA Evaluation

The beginning of ODA evaluation in Japan traces back to the implementation of ex-post evaluations of individual projects conducted by the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF) in 1975. This came about partly as a result of the discussion which began to focus on the necessity of ODA evaluations at the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD-DAC) from around 1970. Subsequently, MOFA began ex-post evaluations of ODA projects in 1981, followed by the initiation of ex-post evaluations of ODA projects by JICA in 1982. The main objective of these evaluations at the time was to properly manage individual projects, in order to make Japan’s ODA more effective.

Since the 1980s, as the scale and scope of Japan’s ODA expanded and public interest regarding ODA increased, ODA evaluation began to draw attention as a means for the Government of Japan to fulfill its accountability on ODA. Therefore, in addition to the main objective of ODA evaluations to improve ODA management, MOFA set another main objective, which is to ensure accountability to the people of Japan and began active engagement in publicity of evaluation results.

Increasing Needs of ODA Evaluation

As ODA evaluation evolved to hold broader objectives and robust functions, experts and others began to request the implementation of evaluations from the ex-ante through ex-post phases. This was based on the idea that it is more effective to conduct evaluations prior to and midway through a project than to only verify its outcomes after implementation. This was deemed to allow for the consistent management of ODA from planning and formulation up to implementation and the achievement of outcomes. Based on these trends, the ODA Charter revised in August 2003 clearly indicated the need for more extensive evaluations. The Charter noted that Japan shall implement coherent evaluation from the ex-ante, mid-term, to ex-post stages, as well as the evaluation of policies, programs, and projects. It goes on to state that third-party evaluations by experts with professional expertise shall be enhanced in order to measure, analyze and objectively evaluate the outcomes of ODA. The Charter also listed evaluations conducted by administrative agencies based on the passage of the GPEA (details provided in Chapter 2, p. 32). Furthermore, it was stipulated that evaluation results should be reflected in the subsequent planning of ODA policies and its efficient and effective implementation (feedback).

ODA Review

In June 2010, MOFA conducted the “ODA Review.” As its outcome, it was decided that the following measures for ODA evaluation would be undertaken:

1. reinforcing the independence of evaluation units and recruiting external personnel to strengthen the ODA evaluation system
2. establishing mechanisms that ensure meaningful lessons from past successes and failures
3. disclosing information through promotion of “visualization” of evaluation.

Therefore, in 2011, the ODA Evaluation Division was relocated from the International Cooperation Bureau, which is in charge of ODA policies, to the Minister’s Secretariat, thereby strengthening its independence. Since then, MOFA has recruited an external evaluation expert as the director of the division. In addition, MOFA selects projects for evaluation in accordance with the priority areas of Japan’s foreign policies and development cooperation and ensures that feedback of evaluation results is incorporated into ODA policies.

Furthermore, to promote the “visualization” of evaluation, MOFA has introduced a rating system (more information in Chapter 1, p. 8) in 2011. In this way, as ODA evaluation increased its importance, it has witnessed the expansion of evaluation objectives and scope, diversification of evaluators, reinforcement of independence, and strengthening of feedback functions.

ODA Evaluation and the PDCA Cycle for Appropriate Feedback

In order to ensure ODA implementation with higher effectiveness and efficiency, it is necessary to have accurate understanding of the implementation status of development cooperation and its impacts, and to make improvements. To this end, MOFA performs ODA evaluation as part of the PDCA cycle (here PDCA cycle means feedback mechanism). Specifically, MOFA attaches clear importance to ODA evaluation in the PDCA cycle and has strengthened its system to provide feedback on evaluation results to divisions engaged in both ODA policy formulation and implementation. MOFA considers measures in response to the lessons learned and recommendations obtained from the results, and reflects them in ODA policies and implementation.
Since its revision in 2003, the ODA Charter has played an important role as a document that forms the foundation of Japan’s ODA policies. At the same time, during the 12 years following the revision, Japan and the international community have undergone significant changes, and the role required of ODA has also changed in various ways. Therefore, the Government of Japan decided to review the ODA Charter, and the Development Cooperation Charter was approved by the Cabinet in February 2015. The Development Cooperation Charter clarifies the philosophy of Japan’s development cooperation, namely, “Contributing proactively to peace, stability, and prosperity of the international community as a peace-loving nation.” Under this philosophy, the Charter sets forth the following basic policies: “contributing to peace and prosperity through cooperation for non-military purposes”; “promoting human security”; and “cooperation aimed at self-reliant development through assistance for self-help efforts as well as dialogue and collaboration based on Japan’s experience and expertise.”

With regard to evaluation, the Charter states that the Government will strengthen ODA’s PDCA cycle based on a strategic approach, noting that, “A more strategic approach should be taken to maximize the impact of Japan’s development cooperation…It is also important to engage in the development cooperation cycle of policymaking, implementation, and evaluation in an integrated manner.” While the ODA Charter revised in 2003 clearly mentioned the enhancement of evaluation, the new Charter takes a step further by stating that evaluation is essential for implementing effective and efficient ODA: “In the light of the importance of evaluation not only for improving effectiveness and efficiency but for accountability to the public, Japan will conduct evaluations at the policy and program/project levels and give an appropriate feedback of the results during the decision-making and program/project implementation process.”

Moreover, the Charter expresses that “Development cooperation provides one of the most important tools for Japan in its agile diplomacy implementation,” and that such development cooperation will “lead to ensuring Japan’s national interests.” On this basis, the Charter sets forth that “Efforts will be made to undertake evaluation from a diplomatic point of view, as well,” noting that evaluations will incorporate not only the “development point of view” of whether the development cooperation contributes to the development of the partner country, but also the “diplomatic point of view” of what favorable impacts the development cooperation will bring to Japan’s national interests.

**Development Cooperation Charter (Excerpts Pertaining to ODA Evaluation)**

- A more strategic approach should be taken to maximize the impact of Japan’s development cooperation. In other words, it is important for the government and implementing agencies to work as one – in cooperation with diverse stakeholders – and to mobilize various resources available to Japan. It is also important to engage in the development cooperation cycle of policymaking, implementation and evaluation in an integrated manner.
  (Development Cooperation Charter, III. Implementation, (1) Implementation principles, A. Principles for effective and efficient development cooperation, (a) A more strategic approach)

- In the light of the importance of evaluation not only for improving effectiveness and efficiency but for accountability to the public, Japan will conduct evaluations at the policy and program/project levels and feed the results back to the decision-making and program/project implementation processes. Such evaluations, while focusing on outcomes, will take into account the peculiarities and conditions of the recipients. Efforts will also be made to undertake evaluation from a diplomatic point of view.
  (Development Cooperation Charter, III. Implementation, (1) Implementation principles, A. Principles for effective and efficient development cooperation, (a) A more strategic approach)

- The government will strive for effective public relations on development cooperation in Japan, timely and adequate disclosure of information on implementation, evaluation and other aspects of development cooperation to the wider public in a transparent manner. The government will also provide easy-to-understand explanations on the policies, significance, outcomes and evaluation of Japan’s development cooperation by the international community among other aspects.
  (Development Cooperation Charter, III. Implementation, (2) Implementation arrangements, C. Strengthening the foundations for implementation, (a) Information disclosure and promoting understanding of the public and the international community)
1.2 International Trends in ODA Evaluation and the Contribution of Japan

Background

The Importance of ODA Evaluation

Originally, countries carried out ODA evaluations individually as part of their administrative activities. In the 1970s, growing awareness of the importance of ODA evaluations led to the full-fledged start of international discussions on evaluation at the OECD-DAC and a range of other international fora. In particular, evaluation activities began to be built into the international community’s development assistance systems as a means for enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of ODA, and furthermore, as a means for fulfilling accountability to the people. In 1991, the DAC proposed five evaluation criteria as benchmarks to conduct comprehensive examinations of the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of development assistance projects, the sustainability of impacts after the project is completed, among other aspects (see Chapter 1, p. 7). Development aid agencies and other stakeholders worldwide still utilize these criteria as the basis for establishing benchmarks according to their respective objectives.

From Project Level to Program Level

Since the 1990s, development assistance activities of the international community have transitioned from the level of individual projects to programs (in which multiple projects sharing common objectives are grouped together, etc.). In turn, evaluations have expanded from those of individual projects to sector-based development assistance activities. Additionally, partly due to the establishment of macro-level indicators for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that were adopted at the United Nations in 2000, development assistance and its evaluation viewpoints have evolved from the individual project level, to those tailored to the specific issues and needs of recipient countries. They have furthermore evolved to take into account coordination with other donors as well as consistency with the developing countries’ procedures for receiving aid.

The OECD-DAC Network on Development Evaluation (EvalNet)

The DAC Network on Development Evaluation (EvalNet), one of the subsidiary bodies of the OECD-DAC, was established in 1981. Currently, approximately 45 donor countries and agencies including Japan have joined EvalNet.

EvalNet holds regular meetings about twice every year. It aims to facilitate the evaluation efforts of countries and to promote development aid effectiveness, through exchanging information among member countries and agencies on their evaluation systems and evaluation results and discussing ways to improve evaluation methodologies. In recent years, such issues as evaluation of the effectiveness of assistance by international organizations, evaluation capacity development (ECD) of partner countries, and ways to mainstream human rights and gender in evaluation have been discussed. Japan has been participating in EvalNet meetings to share information on evaluation measures. Japan is furthermore a member of the ECD task force established under EvalNet with a view to contributing to the ECD of partner countries.

Recent Trends

Efforts to Increase Development Effectiveness

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (Paris Declaration) was adopted at the Second High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness that was held in Paris in 2005, which presented five principles for increasing aid effectiveness. Specifically, they are the following: donors and agencies will implement assistance in line with the development strategies of partner countries (alignment); the assistance procedures and other arrangements implemented by donors will be harmonized (harmonization); partner countries will exercise leadership in formulating and implementing their development strategies (ownership); donors and partner countries will increase the transparency of their aid flows and development outcomes to fulfill mutual accountability (accountability); and development results will be further increased by strengthening the systems associated with aid implementation and management, including the development plans and evaluations of partner countries, and reinforcing mutual linkages (managing for results).

Twelve evaluation indicators were established to implement these principles. By 2010, evaluations were carried out in two phases on what the Paris Declaration has achieved and the progress on the implementation of the Agenda for Action that was subsequently created. The evaluation results were reported at the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness (Busan Forum) held in the Republic of Korea in 2011. The Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC) was established as a monitoring mechanism to increase aid effectiveness following the Busan Forum, and a decision was made to establish monitoring indicators. During the First High Level Meeting of the GPEDC held in Mexico City in April 2014, the implementation status of the Busan commitments was reviewed using these monitoring indicators.
Establishing the International Year of Evaluation (EvalYear)

The International Conference on National Evaluation Capacities held in September 2013 declared to designate 2015 as the International Year of Evaluation (EvalYear). This was later referred in a United Nations General Assembly resolution in December 2014. 2015 is the final year of the MDGs and is the year when a new development agenda, the “Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” is to be adopted to replace the MDGs. Given this transition in international society, the aim of EvalYear is to advocate and promote evaluation and evidence-based policy-making at a variety of levels, including the regional and national levels. Against this backdrop, there lies the recognition that while the MDGs drove and implemented an overall vision for the achievement of the goals, a comprehensive evaluation of past achievements has not been carried out. Furthermore, it is acknowledged that the formulation of development policies should be based on evidence confirmed from country-led monitoring and evaluation systems, rather than donor-led ones, and that to this end, it is important to increase the evaluation capacities of partner countries.

Many events are scheduled to be held throughout the EvalYear. Among them, Japan will hold the ODA Evaluation Workshop (refer to “Japan’s Contributions” on the right). It is expected that through these events, evaluation will be seen as a useful tool for discussions on the SDGs by partner countries and for the formulation and implementation of national development policies.

Membership in the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN)

Since late 2014, Japan has been a member of the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN), which was established to carry out joint approach in assessing the effectiveness of multilateral organizations (as of 2015, 19 countries are members including Japan).

MOPAN assesses the operation, management, and achievements of the multilateral organizations and then releases the assessment reports. It is expected that MOPAN members and multilateral organizations will effectively make use of the assessment results.

OECD-DAC Development Cooperation Peer Review of Japan

From 2013 to 2014, Japan underwent a development cooperation peer review by the OECD-DAC, which examines the development cooperation policies of DAC members and their implementation status once every four to five years. During the next peer review, following the mid-term review to be conducted in around 2016, the OECD-DAC is expected to check the progress made in the matters raised in the review.

Japan’s Contributions

The ODA Evaluation Workshop

MOFA has hosted the ODA Evaluation Workshop since 2001, inviting government officials and experts from Asian and Pacific countries.

The objectives of the workshop are: (1) to promote understanding of ODA evaluation issues and evaluation methodologies in the Asia-Pacific region and thereby enhance evaluation capacities, especially of partner countries; and (2) to improve ODA evaluation capacities of stakeholders in partner countries not only to further enhance the aid effectiveness of donor countries but also to enhance the ownership and transparency of partner countries and their development effectiveness.

In the previous 12 workshops, participants exchanged information and shared views on various topics, including countries’ specific efforts for enhancing evaluation capacities and joint evaluations of ODA by partner and donor countries.

The ODA Evaluation Workshops

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 7-8 November 2001</td>
<td>Tokyo, Japan</td>
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<td>2 13-14 November 2002</td>
<td>Tokyo, Japan</td>
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<td>3 12-13 November 2003</td>
<td>Tokyo, Japan</td>
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<td>4 17-21 January 2005</td>
<td>Bangkok, Thailand</td>
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<td>5 26-27 January 2006</td>
<td>Tokyo, Japan</td>
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<td>6 18-20 October 2006</td>
<td>Manila, Philippines</td>
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<td>7 28-29 November 2007</td>
<td>Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia</td>
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<td>8 3-4 March 2009</td>
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<td>10 24-25 February 2011</td>
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<td>11 26-27 November 2012</td>
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<td>12 2-3 December 2014</td>
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Objectives of ODA Evaluation

MOFA carries out ODA evaluation under two objectives:

1. To Improve ODA Management: to contribute to the improvement of ODA quality through feeding back lessons obtained from the examination of ODA activities to the process of ODA policy formulation and implementation.
2. To Maintain Accountability: to fulfill accountability and promote public understanding and support by increasing transparency of ODA through publication of evaluation results.

Structure of the Implementation Process

MOFA is mainly responsible for planning and formulating ODA policies, while JICA is responsible for implementing individual projects. MOFA and JICA collaborate on ODA evaluation by sharing roles.

MOFA conducts policy-level and program-level evaluations in the form of third-party evaluations based on the Order for Organization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. With the entry into force of the Government Policy Evaluations Act (GPEA) in 2002, each ministry and agency is required to conduct self-evaluations of policies under its jurisdiction. On this basis, since 2002, MOFA has implemented policy evaluations that include overall ODA policy, as well as ex-ante and ex-post evaluations of specific projects as required by the GPEA in the form of self-evaluations.

JICA, on the other hand, implements project-level evaluations of individual projects, as well as thematic evaluations on specific themes and development goals from cross-sectoral and comprehensive perspectives, in the form of third-party evaluations and self-evaluations.

Other ministries and agencies of the Government of Japan also plan and formulate policies as well as implement programs and projects that involve ODA in the respective fields under their jurisdiction. These evaluations are conducted mainly based on the GPEA.

Pursuant to the Basic Act on Central Government Reform in 1988, MOFA assumes a central role in coordinating all government entities for the overall planning and other tasks associated with ODA. Accordingly, Inter-Ministerial Liaison Meetings are held, which are comprised of the relevant ministries and agencies as well as JICA. Discussions on further improvements for the ODA evaluation activities are undertaken by the entire government at the meetings, and MOFA compiles the results of the ODA evaluations of other ministries and agencies.

Chapter 2 of this report presents an overview of the evaluations conducted by MOFA, other ministries and agencies, and JICA, mainly in FY2014.

Classification by Evaluation Targets

ODA evaluations are classified into policy-level evaluation, program-level evaluation, and project-level evaluation according to what is being evaluated (Table 1, p. 7).

Diversity amongst Evaluators

ODA evaluations are classified by type of evaluator, and include self-evaluation, internal evaluation, third-party evaluation (external evaluation), evaluation conducted by recipient governments and agencies, as well as joint evaluation by MOFA and other countries and organizations.

1. Self-Evaluation

Self-evaluation is an evaluation conducted by the divisions that provide, implement, or manage assistance of their assistance policies and programs. Evaluations conducted by MOFA and other ministries and agencies based on the GPEA are classified as self-evaluation, as are JICA’s ex-ante evaluations of projects and partially ex-post evaluations of projects.

2. Internal Evaluation

Evaluation conducted by the divisions responsible for reporting to the divisions of aid agencies is called internal evaluation.

Other ministries and agencies

Other ministries and agencies

MOFA

JICA

Figure 2. Japan’s ODA Evaluation Mechanism

Formulation/Implementation of ODA-related policies, programs and projects

Implementation of ODA project operations

Formulation of ODA policies
(e.g., Country Assistance Policy, Sectoral Development Policy, Priority Policy for International Cooperation)

ODA evaluation
Based on the Order for Organization of MOFA, ODA Charter, etc.

Target: Policies/Programs including ODA and ODA projects

Evaluator: Self-evaluation

Target: Policy-level evaluation
Program-level evaluation

Evaluator: Third-party evaluation

Target: Operations evaluation
Based on JICA Law and JICA’s internal regulations

Target: Project-level evaluation
Thematic evaluation

Evaluator: External evaluation, self-evaluation
(3) Third-Party Evaluation (External Evaluation)

This evaluation is conducted by a third party who is independent from both donors and recipients of assistance. In MOFA’s policy-level and program-level evaluations, third parties (experts and private sector consultants, etc.) selected by open competitive bidding are the principal evaluators. JICA also conducts third-party evaluation in the form of ex-post evaluation of projects that cost over a certain amount of funding or projects which are deemed to provide valuable insight.

(4) Evaluation Conducted by Recipient Governments and Agencies

MOFA implements around one evaluation every year, primarily program-level evaluations, by requesting recipient governments and agencies, private sector consultants, and evaluation experts to conduct the evaluation. The objective is to secure the fairness and transparency of Japan’s ODA evaluation, promote recipient countries’ understanding of Japan’s ODA, and enhance the evaluation capacities of recipient countries by having recipient governments and agencies conduct the evaluation.

(5) Joint Evaluation

This evaluation is conducted jointly by donors and recipients of assistance or by different aid organizations. MOFA conducts joint evaluations with external entities, including other donor countries, international organizations, and NGOs, in addition to joint evaluations with recipient countries.

The joint evaluations with recipient countries have significance in so far as they respect the ownership of recipient countries and strengthen partnerships between Japan and recipient countries, in addition to achieving the objectives of enhanced ODA management and fulfillment of accountability. MOFA carried out a joint program-level evaluation with Viet Nam and the Philippines, respectively, in 2005.

At the same time, as multiple donors provide assistance to recipient countries in various fields, it has become important to conduct evaluations jointly with other donors and international organizations in order to have a broader understanding of the assistance extended to a particular country. In this respect, MOFA has been conducting joint evaluations with other organizations since FY2002.

### Criteria for ODA Evaluation and Recommendations

MOFA has established the following three criteria for ODA evaluation from a development viewpoint based on the so-called five “DAC Evaluation Criteria” (Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact, and Sustainability), which were announced by the OECD-DAC in 1991.

1. **Relevance of Policies**: whether policies and programs are consistent with Japan’s high-level policies on ODA and the needs of recipient countries.
2. **Effectiveness of Results**: whether expected objectives are achieved.
3. **Appropriateness of Processes**: whether processes have been taken that would ensure the relevance and effectiveness of policies and programs.

Since FY2011, MOFA has introduced a rating system (a straightforward approach to representing scores using a multi-point scale) to promote the “visualization” of evaluation (see Chapter 1, p. 8). While ratings facilitate “visualization,” they do not take into account the individual situation and background of what is being evaluated and pose the danger of oversimplifying the evaluation result. For this reason, MOFA always provides supplementary explanations to its ratings, including the basis of its judgments. MOFA does not give numerical or letter ratings.

Moreover, since FY2011, MOFA has introduced the new evaluation criterion of “diplomatic viewpoints” to
examine the impacts of assistance on Japan’s national interests, in addition to the above “development viewpoints” that examine to what extent assistance contributes to the development of recipient countries.

With respect to these criteria for ODA evaluation and specific methodologies, MOFA formulated the “ODA Evaluation Guidelines” since 2003, publishing the 9th edition in May 2015.

When evaluation is conducted based on the GPEA, viewpoints such as necessity, effectiveness, and efficiency are evaluated in line with the “Basic Plan on Policy Evaluation” established by MOFA. JICA conducts evaluations basically in line with five DAC Evaluation Criteria. For some ex-post evaluations (third-party evaluations), the overall evaluation is shown using a four-point rating scale (A to D) to make the evaluation results easier to understand.

### Application of Results

To establish a PDCA cycle, it is important that the evaluation results and recommendations from ODA evaluations provide feedback and that the results are reflected in future processes of policy making and project implementation for policymakers and those engaged in project implementation.

Therefore, MOFA feeds back the evaluation results to its relevant divisions, JICA, and Japan’s overseas establishments. It also develops measures for addressing the recommendations extracted from the evaluation results, taking account of their concreteness, feasibility, and other criteria. Furthermore, to ensure that the recommendations are reflected in subsequent policy-making and other processes, MOFA follows up on and discloses the status of such measures. Since FY2010, as part of the efforts for the “visualization” of ODA, these measures and their implementation status (follow-up status) are published in the Annual Report on ODA Evaluation (please refer to Chapter 2 for the measures in response to the results of the FY2014 ODA evaluation, and Chapter 3 for the follow-up efforts to the results of the FY2013 ODA evaluation).

The evaluation results are distributed to stakeholders in recipient countries through translated summaries of evaluation reports. Through such efforts, MOFA strives to provide feedback to recipient countries.

In addition, JICA conducts monitoring and evaluation in line with a project’s PDCA cycle in order to expand the development outcomes of the project.

### Publicizing Evaluation Results

To facilitate understanding of Japan’s ODA evaluation, MOFA proactively publicizes evaluation results. In conducting third-party evaluations, MOFA recommends that evaluators (the third parties) prepare reader-friendly evaluation reports. Also, MOFA posts a summary and a full text of each report as well as its summary in English and other languages (depending on the report) on MOFA’s ODA website.

Furthermore, every year MOFA publishes the Annual Report on Japan’s ODA Evaluation. The report is a compilation of the overview of the results of evaluations conducted by MOFA, JICA, and other ministries and agencies in the previous fiscal year, as well as the response measures to each recommendation and the implementation status of the response measures to the recommendations of evaluations conducted two fiscal years before. This report is distributed to a wide range of entities, including Diet members, experts, NGOs, universities, and libraries, and is also available on MOFA’s ODA website.

JICA publishes the JICA Annual Evaluation Report that compiles operations evaluation activities of the previous year (see Chapter 2, p. 34-35 for more information on JICA’s activities).