

Looking into Triangular Cooperation Mechanisms

**Japan's Triangular
Cooperation Mechanism**
With a Focus on JICA's Activities

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April 2014

JICA Research Institute

Acknowledgements

The author sincerely thanks Hiroshi Kato, Takeshi Takano, Akio Hosono, Koji Yamada, Yoshihiro Miyamoto, Makoto Asai, Kota Sakaguchi, Masato Tokuda, Yukimi Shimoda, Yukiko Aida and Mihoko Sakai for their valuable comments and the provision of indispensable information to prepare this paper. The author also thanks Yasuhiko Sato for his excellent editorial assistance. The views expressed in this paper and any errors are those of the author and do not represent the official position of the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

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Acronyms and abbreviations

ABC	Brazilian Cooperation Agency
AGCI	Chilean International Cooperation Agency
AMEXCID	Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CAP	Country Assistance Policy
CD	Capacity Development
CLMV	Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, and Vietnam
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Society for International Cooperation)
IAI	Initiative for ASEAN Integration
JARCOM	JICA-ASEAN Regional Cooperation Meeting
JBPP	Japan-Brazil Partnership Program
JCPP	Japan-Chile Partnership Program
J-SEAM	Japan-Southeast Asian Meeting for South-South Cooperation
JHRDF	Japan Human Resources Development Fund
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan
PP	Partnership Program
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SSC	South-South cooperation
TC	Technical Cooperation
TCED	Third Country Experts Dispatch
TCP	Technical Cooperation Project
TCTP	Third Country Training Program
TICAD	Tokyo International Conference on African Development
TrC	Triangular Cooperation
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOSSC	United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation

1. Introduction

Triangular cooperation (TrC)¹ is increasingly attracting global attention as a promising approach for development cooperation. This is in part a reflection of the changing global development landscape in which new development actors, such as non-DAC² donors, have widened their activities while the aid from traditional donors has relatively declined. In spite of the growing interest in TrC, there is a dearth of information on how major bilateral donors are planning and managing TrC practices. This paper aims to address this current situation by providing a description of the systems used in Japan, most of which are operated by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), a Japanese public aid agency under the supervision of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA). This paper outlines several key characteristics of Japanese approaches to TrC, their patterns and operation mechanisms, with special attention to JICA's approach. Specifically, this paper illustrates the following points:

- TrC is firmly positioned in the key national policy and planning documents of the Japanese Government and JICA, which include the national Overseas Development Assistance (ODA) Charter and JICA's mid-term plan. TrC has also been increasingly mainstreamed into the Country Assistance Policies (CAPs), Japan's country-based assistance policy framework.
- Japan's commitment to South-South cooperation (SSC) and TrC has a long history; Japan started its TrC early in its history of international development in 1974. Since then, Japan increased its TrC steadily, and in 2012, it received over 3,500 participants from all over the world for JICA-supported triangular training programs—a main instrument of Japan's TrC.
- JICA has continuously improved instruments and management structure, including organization-wide knowledge management of TrC.
- TrC implementation patterns have widened and diversified, ranging from the simple dissemination of knowledge from a pivotal country to other—usually neighboring— country(ies), to more complex thematic networks for mutual learning among multiple stakeholders. In response to such diverse TrC implementation patterns, JICA is now applying broad types of TrC instruments,

¹ Unless otherwise stated, this paper applies the widely-used UN definition throughout: “Triangular cooperation involves southern-driven partnerships between two or more developing countries supported by a developed country (ies) / or multilateral organization(s) to implement development cooperation programs and projects (United Nations 2012, p. 5)”. This definition is broadly in line with the one that JICA currently applies. Until 2010, more descriptive phrases such as “the support or the promotion of South-South Cooperation (SSC)” were frequently used in official documents and guidelines. The official use of TrC broadly in line with the UN definition has been quite recent.

² DAC denotes the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

including training, expert dispatch, and packaged technical cooperation projects that combine multiple modalities.

- JICA's TrC management mechanism is broadly characterized by its decentralized structure, with country offices playing increasingly larger roles.
- In undertaking TrC and its capacity development support in pivotal countries to strengthen the management of South-South cooperation, JICA collaborates with other international partners, such as the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC), the World Bank, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

2. Rationales, policies and strategies for TrC

As reported by a recent OECD³ /DAC study (OECD 2013b), DAC bilateral donors, with only a few exceptions, lack clearly stipulated TrC policies in their aid policy framework. Along with Spain, Germany and the UK, Japan is one of the few existing exceptional bilateral donors.⁴ Japan's policy framework on SSC, in general, and TrC in particular, is defined at the highest level by the ODA charter and at the operational level by JICA's policy:

2.1 The rationale for engaging in TrC

The ODA White Paper 2011 featured a special article entitled New Partnerships. It concisely provided three reasons for Japan's proactive engagements in TrC (MOFA 2011):

- First, the significance of triangular cooperation includes the ability to utilize similarities in socio-economic environments and development stages, as well as compatibility of language and culture, to provide development options that are suited to the recipient of the assistance. This approach is effective in increasing the impact of the assistance on the recipient country.
- Second, by providing cooperation to a third country while receiving assistance from Japan, countries that are implementing assistance (emerging countries) can gain valuable knowledge and experience, and become aid-giving countries themselves. This is especially beneficial to emerging countries.
- Third, dissemination of results from Japan's cooperative efforts with third countries is helpful to Japan. The ability to apply the results of assistance in one country to other countries, and the ability to provide aid that has impact on a larger scale without increasing the amount of resources invested, are both deserving of merit.

In addition to the three practical reasons listed above, several documents have made clear that Japan's commitment to TrC is based on its own past experience as an emerging donor. Japan started its technical cooperation when it joined the Colombo Plan in 1954. This was the time when the country was still receiving a large volume of

³ OECD denotes the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

⁴ Through various public documents, other donors such as Germany, Spain and Korea expressed their commitment to TrC or the promotion of SSC (OECD 2013b).

external assistance to rebuild itself in the aftermath of World War II.⁵ This past experience, having been an SSC actor, has formed a basis for Japan to become an active partner in TrC (MOFA 2012; JICA 2013a; Watanabe 2013, pp. 151-157).

2.2 Policies and plans guiding TrC practices⁶

Against the backdrop of the above rationale, the Japanese Government has made clear its commitment to the support and promotion of SSC, and hence TrC, in its national policy documents.

(1) ODA policy and plans linked to TrC

National Policies and Plans

The ODA Charter of 2003, the highest official document defining the direction of Japan's ODA, takes clear note of support and promotion of SSC in one of the five basic ODA policies.⁷ It states:

Japan will actively promote South-South cooperation in partnership with more advanced developing countries in Asia and other regions. Japan will also strengthen collaboration with regional cooperation frameworks, and will support region-wide cooperation that encompasses several countries (Government of Japan 2003).⁸

Japan's Mid-term ODA plan of 2005, which translated the ODA charter into actionable policies, also underscored the above basic policy related to SSC.

Other frequently cited high-level policy documents are those adopted at the successive conferences of Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), since the first TICAD held in 1993. While TICAD itself is a joint global policy process in support of African development, the Japanese Government has played a central role in

⁵ Moreover, Japan once played the role of a pivotal country in TrC with the US acting as the "North" country at that time. In collaboration with the US International Cooperation Administration at the time, Japan provided training programs in broad areas for participants from Asian countries with financial assistance from the United States. Later, this TrC evolved into training programs wholly financed by the Japanese Government.

⁶ The operational structure of Japan's ODA is largely divided into two functions, policy and implementation, with the former under the responsibility of the MOFA as the central coordinating government body for ODA and the latter, in large part under JICA's responsibility.

⁷ The National Security Strategy (NSS) of the Japanese Government published in December 2013 by the Cabinet Secretariat also mentioned cooperation with emerging countries (Page 27 in the tentative English translation of NSS: "Emerging countries such as Brazil, Mexico, Turkey, Argentina, and South Africa have been increasing their presence not only in international economy, but also in international politics. Japan will therefore endeavor to further develop relations with such countries, not merely on a bilateral basis, but in cooperative efforts to tackle global challenges (Government of Japan 2013)").

⁸ Basic Principles (5), Partnership and collaboration with the international community in ODA Charter 2003

organizing the conferences in partnership with other co-organizers, including UNDP representing the UN Development Group, the World Bank, and the African Union.⁹ The official declarations and action plans adopted at the conferences, which have repeatedly emphasized SSC and Asia-Africa cooperation, have long guided JICA's TrC for Africa. The following statement is included in the Tokyo Declaration for African Development (1993):

We, the participants of TICAD, recognize that development achievements in East and South-East Asia have[sic] enhanced opportunities for South-South cooperation with Africa. We welcome the interest shown by some Asian and African countries in promoting this cooperation. (TICAD 1993, Paragraph 26).

In line with ODA policies and strategies, JICA has accordingly identified TrC, in its current mid-term plan,¹⁰ as one of its key prioritized approaches for development cooperation (2012-2016).¹¹ As one of four actions toward the enhancement of strategic orientation and management of JICA's programs and projects, the document states that:

JICA strives to strategically engage in TrC in recognition of its relevance and effectiveness for development cooperation. JICA will also make an effort to take stock of JICA's experience and lessons learned in TrC, and share them with other interested international partners (JICA, 2013b, p 3, the author's translation).

Regional directions of ODA related to TrC

While the Japanese Government has not officially spelled out regional strategies for TrC engagement, the annual ODA White Paper does touch upon some broad regional directions relevant to TrC engagement. Below is the authors' summary from Japan's Official Development Assistance White Paper 2012:¹²

- ASEAN¹³ region: Emphasis is placed on intra-regional cooperation to address disparities in development progress among ASEAN members;
- Pacific region: Taking small island states that share many common issues such as climate change and natural disasters into consideration, Japan's ODA

⁹ The African Union (AU) joined as one of the co-organizers of TICAD, from TICAD V.

¹⁰ JICA's mid-term plan is a statutory document which outlines the five year commitment of JICA as the independent administrative institution. The document requires the formal approval of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

¹¹ In line with the Japanese financial year, the duration of the mid-term plan is from April 1, 2012 to March 31, 2017. JICA also needs to prepare an annual plan within the framework of the current mid-term plan, and then submit the annual performance report to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for scrutiny at the end of each Japanese fiscal year.

¹² This is the authors' summary on points related to TrC in Section 3: Assistance for Each Region, Chapter 2: Specific Initiatives of Japan's Official Development Assistance, Part 3: Official Development Assistance in FY 2011, Japan's Official Development Assistance White Paper 2012 (MOFA 2013).

¹³ ASEAN denotes Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

emphasizes regional exchanges of knowledge and experience such as the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), a framework for regional cooperation;

- Latin America and the Caribbean: Priority actions include the effective application and combination of different TrC instruments, and capacity development (CD) support of SSC-implementing agencies in pivotal countries;
- Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA): In keeping with the TICAD process, TrC in the region promotes both intra-regional and inter-regional cooperation,¹⁴ and
- Middle-East and North Africa: Two priority areas for TrC are the support of efforts that restore peace in conflict-affected areas, and fostering of partnerships among Arab countries.

Country Assistance Policy (CAP)

Under the above-mentioned ODA policies at both global and regional levels, the locus of assistance policies and planning of Japan's ODA, including TrC activities, is at the country level. At this level, a document called the Country Assistance Policy (CAP) serves as the central policy framework of Japan's ODA for each beneficiary country, according to which JICA plans and administers its country-wise aid activities, including TrC.

MOFA officially introduced the current CAP framework in 2011 as part of the then active ODA reform that emphasized country-based programming.¹⁵ Each CAP consists of a main policy document, and an attached five-year rolling-plan of aid activities.¹⁶ The rolling-plan lists outcome-oriented programs with constituent projects and other interventions, including TrC activities.

As of January 2014, CAP has been formulated in over eighty countries, and is expected to cover all the beneficiary countries of Japan's ODA. With the progress of CAP formulation, TrC activities have thus been increasingly integrated into this country-based planning framework regarding both key pivotal countries such as Indonesia, Brazil, and Egypt, and beneficiary countries of TrC.

¹⁴ In recent years, Japan has also played the catalytic role of promoting collaboration between Brazil and Lusophone African countries such as Mozambique and Angola.

¹⁵ The current CAP framework was introduced with the objective of revamping the preceding Country Assistance Programs introduced in 1998 into "a concise and more strategic form to better highlight priority areas, and the direction of assistance by country". The latest CAPs for these countries can be accessed at the web page of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/assistance/country2.html>

¹⁶ The initial draft of CAP is prepared by the country-based ODA taskforce comprising mainly members of the Japanese Embassy (Chair) and JICA, in close consultation with the partner government. The draft is then appraised and modified taking account of comments from other related ministries and agencies, and from the public.

(2) JICA's Thematic Guideline on South-South Cooperation

The abovementioned JICA's mid-term plan only sets out the very broad direction of JICA's engagement in TrC. More detailed strategies and guidelines can be found in the "Thematic Guideline on South-South cooperation (Support of SSC)" prepared in 2006 by JICA's working group on SSC (JICA 2006). To help JICA's practitioners in planning and implementing TrC, this document classified JICA's TrC practices according to their main objectives and functions, to which this paper makes reference in the following section on JICA's TrC patterns. The two major categories, by objective, are:

- a) Support of developing countries (pivotal countries) in implementing SSC; and
- b) Mobilization of Southern knowledge to enrich the body of knowledge provided by JICA's bilateral assistance for better effectiveness and efficiency

The document also makes reference to the remaining challenges facing JICA. These challenges are: 1) specifically identifying development themes and issues in which the mobilization of Southern knowledge resources would be most effective; 2) balancing the ownership of pivotal countries in their SSC activities (TrC) with the development needs of beneficiary countries; 3) identifying strategies to select the main Southern partners for JICA's CD support for their SSC; and 4) outlining exit strategies for the CD support of SSC, and deciding how long such CD support should continue.

Following the publication of the guideline, JICA prepared and issued operation manuals for key TrC instruments (JICA 2008, 2012c). These guidelines and manuals prepared since the second half of the 2000s are key documents describing JICA's TrC practices until now.

3. Major cooperation patterns and aid instruments for TrC

3.1 JICA's cooperation patterns in TrC

JICA undertakes TrC activities in a variety of forms. In the early years, it was mostly limited to the support of stand-alone training programs offered by Southern countries and the dispatch of a limited number of southern experts. During that time, JICA's TrC mostly aimed at the dissemination of knowledge initially developed through JICA's prior bilateral technical cooperation. Since the 1990s, however, JICA has diversified TrC practices. In order to respond to the variety of development needs in developing countries, JICA has introduced more complex patterns of TrC practices, such as regional multi-stakeholders' networks on specific themes. It also began to provide assistance to CD efforts of Southern partners in their SSC planning and management. The following section depicts some discernible patterns of JICA's current TrC. The first four are patterns of TrC, while the last two are related to JICA's support of CD efforts by pivotal countries for their SSC.¹⁷

Key patterns of triangular cooperation¹⁸

a) Dissemination of excellent practices (Figure 1)

This has been the most standard form of JICA's TrC. This framework allows the dissemination of knowledge co-created through prior technical cooperation between Southern partner(s) and JICA to other beneficiary countries in the South. Training and the dispatch of experts are the usual instruments used for this pattern. This pattern often develops into a regional network as in d) below.

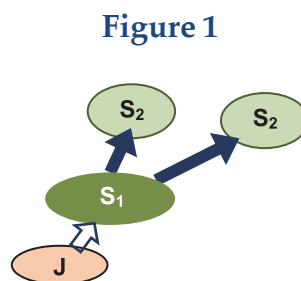


Figure 1

Examples of this type of cooperation abound in JICA's TrC practices. The Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI), in collaboration with JICA, has organized a triangular training program on social forestry, which was previously developed through bilateral technical cooperation between Kenya and Japan. Senegal's Vocational

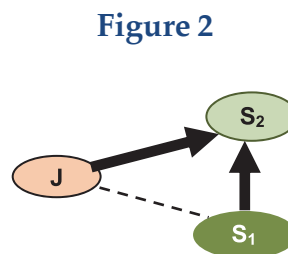
¹⁷ In the diagrams included in this section, J stands for Japan and S stands for southern partners. Arrows represent the flow of personnel, equipment, materials, and other kinds of input. Areas enclosed by dotted red lines indicate the scope of JICA's direct engagement.

¹⁸ The patterns illustrated in this section are based on the patterns set out by JICA's thematic guideline on South-South Cooperation (JICA 2006), with some additions and changes by the author.

Training Center actively hosts vocational training programs for instructors and trainers from French-speaking African countries in the field of industrial development, building on its capacity strengthened through bilateral cooperation with Japan (Honda, Kato, and Shimoda 2013).

b) Collaborative support among Japan and Southern development partners (Figure 2)

This is another pattern in which JICA and Southern partner(s) jointly support a beneficiary country through strategic collaboration as equal partners. As many developing countries have developed into middle-income countries with unique technological and managerial strengths, it has become more beneficial to partner with these emerging countries in seeking the synergy of knowledge from both Japan and partner country(ies).



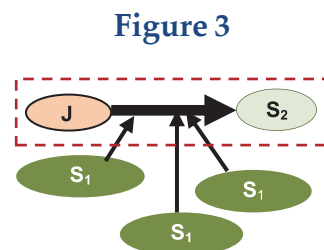
One notable example of this pattern is the joint support by Brazil and Japan for capacity building of Angola’s Josina Machel Hospital, the national reference hospital in the country’s capital Luanda that was rehabilitated with Japanese capital grant aid (Task Team on South-South Cooperation, 2011). The project was the first full partnership launched in 2007 between Brazil and Japan under the Japan-Brazil Partnership Program (JBPP).¹⁹ In organizing twelve training programs for over 700 medical and health staff of the hospital during the three-year period, the government of Brazil, together with the Brazilian Cooperation Agency (ABC) and its Embassy in Angola, has shared Brazilian expertise, fully taking advantage of the language and cultural similarities between the two countries.

Another example of this pattern is Project *Taishin* (a Japanese word meaning “quake resistant”) or “Enhancement of Technology for the Construction of Popular Earthquake-resistant Housing”, which was implemented from 2003 to 2008 with the aim of alleviating the disaster risk for residents in popular low-cost housing in El Salvador. The project was a collaborative response by Mexico and Japan to help El Salvador recover from two successive tragic earthquakes in 2001, and rebuild the country. In the initiative, the National Center for Disaster Prevention in Mexico provided CD assistance to El Salvadorian counterpart organizations, while the Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID) oversaw support from Mexico to El Salvador at a policy level. JICA helped facilitate the triangular initiative while also providing technical advice, financial assistance, and equipment (Saito 2012a).

¹⁹The success of this partnership led to a subsequent large-scale joint cooperation to help strengthen human resources in the Angolan health sector. This cooperation was called Project for Health Sector Human Resource Development in Angola (ProFORSA), which is currently ongoing today.

c) Bilateral technical cooperation (TC) project integrating Southern knowledge (Figure 3)

With the objective of enhancing the impact of JICA's bilateral TC project, JICA mobilizes knowledge resources from Southern partners, either through Third Country Training Program (TCTP) or Third Country Expert Dispatch (TCED), in a field where Japan may not have a comparative advantage or readily available good practices relevant to the beneficiary country concerned.

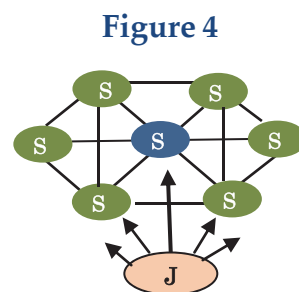


For example, the technical cooperation project “Capacity Development for Public Administration” in Ghana, sought expertise not only from Japan but also from a number of other countries including Singapore, Malaysia, and South Africa to enhance the training programs in ethical leadership and quality improvement at Ghana’s Civil Service Training Centre. The project design was based on the belief that the expertise of other commonwealth countries, which share many common features with Ghana, would add to Japanese experience in civil service management (Honda, Kato, and Shimoda 2013).

d) Network / platform among Southern partners (Figure 4)

JICA has applied more complex forms of networks or platforms in recent years. In many of these patterns, no single Southern partner assumes the role of central knowledge dispenser;²⁰ rather, the alliance comprises a number of interested parties interacting among themselves, each bringing their own strengths and unique experience. In other cases, the network mechanism may be introduced with the aim of connecting already ongoing and established practices in similar fields within the country.

This has increasingly become one of the standard patterns of JICA's larger scale TrC projects, being implemented in various sectors and regions. In the field of solid waste management, the case of promotion of improved solid waste control among the Pacific states, J-PRISM, is a notable example.²¹ Likewise, the Coalition for African Rice Development with its secretariat in Kenya is an example within the agricultural sector (Kubota 2013). This project strives to broadly connect stakeholders ranging from government organizations, academic institutions, NGOs, and private sector and international donors, in the form



²⁰ A central secretariat may be established to coordinate and facilitate knowledge exchange among network members.

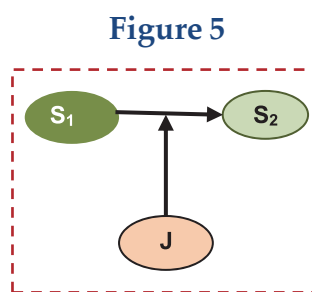
²¹ J-PRISM is the abbreviated project title of Japanese Technical Cooperation Project for Promotion of Regional Initiatives on Solid Waste Management in the Pacific Island Countries. See Kano and Honda (2013) for details.

of a multilateral knowledge platform for the development of the rice crop sector in Africa. In the education sector, Kenya played a key role as the knowledge hub for the Strengthening of Mathematics and Science Education project in Western, Eastern, Central, and Southern Africa (SMASE-WECSA). The project has developed into an even more horizontal network in which various countries are starting to share their own student-centered teaching methods in mathematics and science education (Ishihara 2012).

JICA's CD support for South-South Cooperation

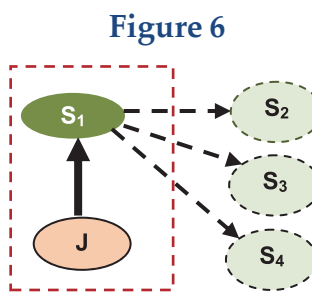
e) Support for South-South Cooperation (Figure 5)

Apart from the TrC types described above, JICA has also extended complementary support to technical cooperation among developing countries. The objectives of this pattern are twofold. Firstly, it allows JICA to collaborate with Southern partners even in fields where Japan may not have a pronounced comparative advantage. Second, it provides Japan with opportunities to support the Southern partners' CD through complementary support of their SSC practices.



f) Support for SSC organizational capacity development (Figure 6)

JICA has also assisted the CD efforts of Southern partners more directly, dispatching a number of technical cooperation experts to share Japan's ODA experience and practical approaches to planning and managing cooperation activities. It has also accepted key personnel at CD workshops for SSC in Japan and elsewhere.



One ongoing practice is JICA's support of the Indonesian efforts in strengthening capacity to deliver more effective SSC. JICA has been assisting Indonesia to this end, in close collaboration with other international organizations like UNDP and the World Bank (Shimoda and Nakazawa 2012).

3.2 Major aid instruments for TrC engagements²²

JICA is combining various aid instruments to support the diverse patterns of TrC as we have seen in the previous section. Among these instruments, training and expert dispatch have been the main types of JICA's TrC activities. In recent years, however,

²² TCTP and TCED are frequently complemented by other auxiliary instruments, including the supply of equipment and the dispatch of Japanese experts to provide additional expertise to enrich TCTP training courses.

JICA is increasingly applying more complex types of TrC projects and programs combining multiple instruments.

(1) Training programs

JICA has implemented the major part of its triangular training programs through what it calls the Third Country Training Program (TCTP) scheme, forming the core of JICA's TrC. TCTP has been the main instrument for TrC pattern a) described in section 3-1 above, and has also been widely deployed in other patterns. TCTP is undertaken through cost-sharing between JICA and the host country, the details of which will be explained in a later section on planning implementation. It includes open or semi-open training programs ("group training" in JICA's operation terminology), and tailor-made training, specifically designed for a specific country or organization ("individual training" in JICA's terminology).²³ Usually, one training program lasts for one to two months per year over for a period of three years.²⁴

Table 1 below illustrates the current trends of TCTP by region. In terms of magnitude, JICA assisted its Southern partners to accept a total of about 3,600 training participants during the Japanese fiscal year of 2011.

Table1. Number of TCTP participants (by region in 2011)

		Number of TCTP participants sent (by regional origin)					
		Asia-Pacific	LAC	Middle-East*	Europe	SSA	Total
Number of TCTP participants received	Asia-Pacific	885	15	50	0	279	1,229
	LAC	16	598	0	0	96	710
	Middle-East ²⁵	78	0	647	0	472	1,197
	Europe	30	0	28	6	0	64
	SSA	0	0	0	0	381	381
	Total	1,009	613	725	6	1,228	3,581

Source: JICA 2011

The table illustrates several general features. First and not surprisingly, roughly two thirds of TCTP participants receive training within their respective regions, with a country in the region working as a provider in support of other countries in the region (Asia-Pacific 885, LAC 598, Middle-East 647, SSA 381).

²³ The beneficiaries of the latter are usually the counterpart organizations of JICA's ongoing bilateral technical cooperation.

²⁴ An extension for another three years (2nd phase) may be granted if the expected impact of the first phase is evaluated as positive, and the needs and relevance of the program are proven.

²⁵ Middle-East here also includes North Africa, according to JICA's regional classification for operations.

Second, JICA's main TrC engagements occur in the Asia-Pacific region.²⁶ The countries in this region have accepted the largest number of trainees (1,229).²⁷

The Middle-East region has provided the second largest number of trainees (1,197), of which over half come from the same region. Here the SSA region is the second largest beneficiary (472) of the training programs offered in the Middle-East. This is due to the presence of Egypt and the Maghreb countries, which have been active in providing knowledge opportunities to SSA participants (Honda, Kato and Shimoda 2013).

Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) is another region active in JICA-supported TrC. Though the total number of TCTP activities (710) is smaller than in other regions such as Asia-Pacific, LAC countries with JICA support have undertaken a number of good regional knowledge exchange practices in broad areas including health, disaster prevention, sustainable agriculture, and the environment. Such a high commitment to regional exchanges in part reflects the similarities in languages, geographical features, and cultural and historical heritage.

Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) sent the largest number of trainees (1,228). The fact that nearly 300 of these SSA participants (279) were trained in the Asia-Pacific Region underscores the importance placed on the promotion of Asia-Africa cooperation through the TICAD process. It is also interesting to note that quite a large number of SSA participants (381) were trained in other SSA countries, demonstrating an active inter-regional exchange. Another notable trend is the increasingly active exchanges between SSA and Latin America (96), a sizable portion of which seems to be the exchange between Brazil and Lusophone African countries, according to other sources (Honda, Kato and Shimoda 2013).

(2) Experts dispatch

JICA has assisted the dispatch of Southern experts by partner countries through the scheme called Third Country Experts Dispatch (TCED).²⁸ In comparison to TCTP, the total number of dispatched TCED personnel has been relatively limited, lingering at a little over one hundred in 2011 (JICA 2011).

The detailed breakdown of TCED in terms of region and country of origin as well as

²⁶ An analysis of past trends shows that the proportion of SSA trainees has consistently increased over the years, whereas that in the Asia-Pacific region has been decreasing (JICA 2011). LAC has consistently engaged in large numbers of TrC practices.

²⁷ Though not shown in the table, the general trend within the South-East Asia sub-region is that more advanced ASEAN countries including Thailand, Indonesia, and Malaysia support CLMV (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam) in lower income brackets (JICA 2012b).

²⁸ In the scheme, there are generally two sub-types: 1) TCED integrated into JICA's bilateral project, and 2) stand-alone TCED with the main objective of disseminating knowledge and skills of southern country experts previously acquired through JICA's bilateral technical cooperation.

beneficiary countries in 2011 is shown in Table 2 below.²⁹ Under the TCED scheme most experts come from middle-income countries. The LAC countries, such as Mexico and Brazil, dispatched relatively high numbers of experts. While the duration of most expert dispatch is generally short and is around a few weeks, there were some cases like those of Brazil where long-term TCED experts have been dispatched to beneficiary countries.

Table2. Breakdown of TCED by country in 2011

Regional origins	Country of origin (# of experts in total)	Beneficiary countries	Number of TCED
Asia	Indonesia (2)	Madagascar	2
	Philippines (4)	Cambodia	2
		Tanzania	2
	Vietnam (10)	Mozambique	10
Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)	Argentina (22)	Costa Rica	1
		Paraguay	21
	Chile (8)	Paraguay	8
	Brazil (31)	Angola	1
		Cambodia	3
		Nicaragua	2
		Paraguay	16
		Bolivia	1
	Mexico (22)	Mozambique	8
		El Salvador	3
		Guatemala	1
		Haiti	2
		Paraguay	3
	Honduras	13	
Total			99

Source: JICA 2011

JICA uses the TCED scheme in multiple patterns with varied objectives. For example, in the project addressing regional solid waste management in the Pacific, local experts in the Pacific actively engage in the regional initiative as advisors to share local experience with other countries within the region. Other than this specific mobilization of TCED within the particular region, it also applies the scheme to support inter-regional dispatch from one region to another. For instance, Ghana's Civil Service Training Centre accepted experts from the Civil Service College of Singapore on various themes including quality and productivity improvement as part of a JICA-supported bilateral technical cooperation project.³⁰

²⁹ This figure mostly represents those of stand-alone TCED, and excludes TCED dispatched as part of larger technical cooperation projects. JICA has not yet consolidated all data for TCED in its various forms.

³⁰ See Honda, Kato and Shimoda (2012) for details.

(3) Technical cooperation project

In order to provide more systematic and flexible assistance to address development challenges, it is increasingly common for JICA to engage in TrC through a JICA's technical cooperation project (TCP) scheme. TCP is a multi-year scheme which can package a range of technical cooperation instruments including the dispatch of experts, training, equipment, and complementary financial assistance.

Some variations exist in the way TCP is applied to TrC practices. One clear-cut approach is the projects specifically designed to promote TrC engagement, an example of which is the project for livestock hygiene improvement in South America. This project aimed to develop and enhance the regional network of university-based veterinary professionals (Inamura 2012). Another noticeable variation is the case in which a bilateral project incorporates TrC sub-components to take advantage of knowledge available in Southern countries, a type of TCP described in pattern c) of section 3-1 above. The Project for Improvement of the Maternal, Newborn and Child Health Service in Madagascar is a notable example of such a pattern; it incorporated opportunities for the Malagasy professional to learn, in Brazil, the advanced practice of humanized care in maternity (JICA 2010).

(4) TrC activities consisting of multiple programs and projects

Often, a single project or program cannot effectively manage and coordinate continuous activities of knowledge sharing and dialogue among multiple stakeholders from several countries. Therefore, JICA gradually began to design more extensive initiatives, consisting of multiple projects and programs. The Better Hospital Services Program (BHSP) in Africa is such a case. It is an inter-regional multi-country triangular cooperation connecting Sri Lanka, Japan, and 17 African countries to promote management change in African hospital services, applying the knowledge package for management called 5S-KAIZEN-TQM.³¹ BHSP provides a broad cooperation framework which flexibly binds projects and programs using diverse modalities such as TCTP, TCED, and bilateral technical cooperation projects in the beneficiary countries for effective knowledge exchange. This BHSP approach has already resulted in the localization and institutional scale-up of the management change approach in Tanzania, which has come to play a role as a regional knowledge provider in Africa in recent years (Honda 2012).

³¹ 5S-KAIZEN-TQM is the acronym of three inter-connected but distinct management change approaches, i.e., 1) 5S ("Sort", "Set", "Shine", "Standardize", and "Sustain"), 2) KAIZEN and 3) Total Quality Management (TQM).

(5) TrC and CD support of SSC through international partnership

JICA has also collaborated with other bilateral and multilateral organizations. One example is a collaborative learning and dialogue program hosted by JICA which aims to help develop capacity in pivotal countries to organize international training. The program consisted of one training session per year for the duration of 2009 and 2011. Participants in the program came from Indonesia, Brazil, Mexico, Egypt, and Kenya, among other countries, and included resource personnel from German GIZ, International Labor Organization, and UNDP,³² along with JICA specialists. Another example is a joint Capacity Development program addressing the management of SSC/TrC planning and operations among ABC, UNOSSC, and JICA. It aims to create spaces for sharing knowledge and experience among government staff in SSC/TrC technical cooperation. In March 2013, its first “International Training Course on Management of South-South and Triangular Technical Cooperation” was held in Brasília³³ as part of the three-year initiative. The specific topics discussed during the course included legal and institutional framework, human resources and project management, information sharing, and partnership building among others, all in connection with SSC/TrC.³⁴ Through such partnership, JICA will also learn about the excellent practices of other international partners.

³² A resource person was invited from the then Special Unit for South-South Cooperation, the predecessor of the current UNOSSC.

³³ The target countries of the course include both middle-income countries, such as Brazil, acting mainly as SSC/TrC providers, and low-income countries, which are mainly beneficiaries. A total of 39 practitioners from 36 countries participated in the inaugural course.

³⁴ Most of the lectures and presentations can be viewed from the dedicated space for the Global South-South Development Academy on the UNOSSC web page at: <http://academy.ssc.undp.org/GSSDAcademy/video/default.aspx>. Also, UNOSSC, ABC, and JICA are currently compiling a study report on the management of SSC/TrC based on the information shared and discussion results during the course, which is expected to be available at the GSSDEXPO 2013 in Nairobi.

4. The mechanism of TrC planning and management

Managing TrC is no easy task as it inevitably involves multiple stakeholders from several countries (OECD 2013a). As a long-standing bilateral donor in TrC, JICA has made continuous efforts to improve its institutional and organizational mechanism over the years.³⁵ This section provides a snapshot of the management mechanisms, and organizational structure of JICA's TrC in its current form.

In what follows, we will have a look at JICA's TrC operation mechanisms, whose major characteristics can be summarized as follows:

- Japan's TrC is largely managed through Japan's regular ODA mechanism. Within the framework of the single year budget system of the Japanese Government, planning of TrC activities broadly follows the annual cycle along with other bilateral aid.
- In line with Japan's ongoing ODA reform which increasingly emphasizes country-based planning and management of its ODA, the management of Japan's TrC activities is broadly characterized by its decentralized approach, largely driven at the country level, even though final authority over new projects and programs officially still rests with these headquarters offices.
- The Japanese Government with JICA has made several notable initiatives of systematizing the process of matching Southern knowledge, as well as planning and management of TrC at country level, including the Partnership Program (PP) framework launched in twelve key pivotal countries.

4.1 TrC planning framework at the country level

As explained in section 2.2 (1) above, JICA's current TrC activities have been integrated into CAP, which forms the common framework for key government actors in Japan's ODA, including the Japanese Embassy and JICA. A CAP usually comes with a five-year rolling plan.

Five-year rolling plans for the provider countries record all TrC activities as a rule. Also, most rolling plans for beneficiary countries register the support received, such as training and acceptance of experts from the pivotal country. The country-level planning of JICA's

³⁵ These moves have been influenced and accelerated by Japan's ODA reform during the 2000s, during which JICA was re-established as an autonomous public aid agency handling three aid modalities of concessional loans, capital grant aid, and technical cooperation.

TrC activities has been included in these programs as an integral part of Japan’s ODA.

4.2 Supplementary mechanisms for systematizing TrC planning and management

JICA and the Japanese government have introduced and experimented with several institutional approaches for systematizing its TrC practices. Two such notable exercises are the Partnership Programs (PP) and the JICA-ASEAN Regional Cooperation Meeting (JARCOM), of which the latter has now been reorganized and aligned with the Initiative of ASEAN Integration (IAI).

(1) Partnership Program (PP): A bilateral framework for triangular cooperation

In response to rapidly expanding and more complex TrC practices, the Japanese Government introduced the “Partnership Program (PP)” in the mid-1990s. PPs are a bilateral framework for TrC between Japan and the key TrC partners.³⁶ Since the launch of the first PP with Singapore in 1994, twelve programs have been concluded throughout the Asian, African, and Latin American regions as shown in Table 3 below.

Table3. List of Partnership Programs

Region	Countries	Launch year
Asia	Singapore	1994
	Thailand	1994
	Philippine	2002
	Indonesia	2003
Latin America and the Caribbean	Chile	1999
	Brazil	2000
	Argentina	2001
	Mexico	2003
Middle-East and North Africa	Egypt	1998
	Tunisia	1999
	Morocco	2003
	Jordan	2004

Source: JICA 2012a

The two main objectives of PP are, firstly, to provide a platform for systematic joint programming and implementing of TrC, and secondly, to share Japanese experience in aid management with some of the counterpart organizations. An example of the latter

³⁶ The conclusion of PP generally takes the form of a formal memorandum of discussions signed by high level representatives of both countries, many of which were signed by Foreign Ministers.

is the dispatch of experts to the Chilean International Cooperation Agency (AGCI) in the mid-2000s.

PP generally start with the signing of documents or statements of commitment to the partnership. Such documents could typically include the cost-sharing principle among the two parties,³⁷ the forms of triangular technical cooperation, and the annual joint planning cycle. Some PP spell out priority areas for joint activities. Among the PP, the Japan-Chile Partnership Program (JCPP), launched in 1999 and operating under strong Chilean leadership with Japan's catalytic support, has been the most active (Yamada 2007; JICA 2009).

In spite of such notable good practices, PP are not without problems. For example, several past evaluations pointed out that the intensity of activities differs quite widely among PP (Nomura Research Institute 2013). Given the rapidly changing global development landscape as well as the changing country-based ODA planning and implementation mechanism of Japan's ODA centered on CAP, some revisions of the design of PP may be in order to make full use of the model as a unifying framework for increasingly voluminous and complex TrC practices, especially in key pivotal countries.

(2) Mechanism for regional knowledge matching: JARCOM and its successor initiatives

An attempt to establish a systematic regional knowledge matching mechanism was JARCOM launched in 2002. JARCOM is a multi-country, multi-sector process and mechanism to effectively meet the knowledge and capacity-buildings needs of ASEAN countries.³⁸ It also represents JICA's conscious efforts at promoting more demand-driven, effective TrC. In JARCOM, CLMV countries³⁹ first submit a list of areas in need of support. This list is then carefully matched with potential knowledge provider(s) in more advanced ASEAN countries such as Thailand and Indonesia, using various channels such as bilateral and multilateral meetings, fact-finding missions, and seminars organized under the auspices of JARCOM (JICA Thailand Office and UNDP Regional Centre in Bangkok 2009).

Building on the achievement of JARCOM, the needs matching system further evolved into what is called Japan-Southeast Asian Meeting for South-South Cooperation (J-SEAM), which puts more emphasis on the quality of knowledge exchange as well as network building. To further enhance the alignment of JICA-assisted regional TrC coordination efforts, JICA then dissolved J-SEAM, incorporating some of its

³⁷ Some PP specify the exact cost-sharing ratio in the document.

³⁸ The several related actions began in the late 1990s, culminating in the launch of the JARCOM process in 2002.

³⁹ CLMV denotes the lower-income group of ASEAN countries including Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, and Vietnam.

constituent activities into IAI under the auspices of ASEAN. To extend necessary support to IAI, JICA, the ASEAN Secretariat, and Laos, for example, are currently implementing the Laos Pilot Program for Narrowing the Development Gap toward ASEAN Integration with the focus on the green economy and a clean environment (JICA 2012b).

4.3 The process and procedures of formulation, budgeting and execution

(1) Overview of process and procedures

TrC project-planning and implementation facilitated by JICA is largely decentralized to country offices, which help their partner countries to formulate and execute their own TrC programs. The opinions and recommendations of the country offices count a great deal in the formal approval process, with headquarter offices taking on more supportive roles. The final decision on new projects and programs, however, still rests with the headquarter offices.⁴⁰

Broadly, the Japanese Government and JICA follow the annual formulation process for new projects and programs.⁴¹ The deadline for partner governments to submit official requests to the respective Japanese embassy (with a copy to the JICA country office) usually comes around the end of August. The JICA office and the Japanese Embassy in the country closely communicate with partner governments to identify their assistance needs, and lend support towards preparing proposals for projects/programs.

(2) Identifying new TrC activities

Under JICA's approach to TrC, a project can be initiated by pivotal countries, by the beneficiary countries, or by both.

In most training programs, a pivotal country usually starts the planning of TrC activities. In such a pattern, the counterpart organization and JICA collaboratively shape the design of new TrC activities through close discussions.⁴² Alternatively, the planning of TrC activities can be initiated by the beneficiary country, as when a developing country is desirous of receiving assistance from other developing countries

⁴⁰ The power of final authorization lies with the International Cooperation Bureau of MOFA, which receives an official request through its diplomatic channel in parallel with an internal transaction within JICA. This is to ensure effective diplomatic communication among TrC stakeholders whenever needed.

⁴¹ This excludes loan aid and other requests for urgent assistance such as in the case of natural disasters, for which MOFA accepts request for assistance throughout the year on an as-needed basis. Furthermore, MOFA and JICA have gradually increased the flexibility of the annual application process in which the Japanese government does accept requests for other modalities such as capital grant aid and technical cooperation with justifiable reasons.

⁴² The JICA side usually includes the technical cooperation experts and staff of the JICA country office.

that it believes have relevant experience and knowledge. For more complex types of TrC, such as technical cooperation projects in support of regional networks, the preparation process often engages, from the onset, multiple beneficiary countries as equal partners.

The proposed TrC activities identified through the initial planning process are then fed into the annual official needs survey (hearing) of Japan's ODA, which takes place around July and August. This is the process through which the nominated TrC activities are put into the official request process for formal appraisal along with other bilateral ODA projects. During the survey, a Japanese country-based ODA taskforce, mainly comprised of the staff of the embassy and the JICA country office, intensively consult with partner governments about the frameworks of CAP and PP.

The Japanese Government and their key partner countries with PP hold a joint planning committee occasionally to review progress, and discuss annual implementation plans and future activities in TrC. This information will be entered into the annual needs survey exercise, which is explained in the next sub-section.

(3) Formal process of appraisal and approval

To kick-start the official appraisal process for new ODA activities including TrC, the partner government (either pivotal or beneficiary country) has to submit a set of compiled proposals with an official cover letter to the Japanese Government, with a copy to JICA. This step needs to happen at the end of the official needs survey period which is around the end of August. Each proposal is required to describe a set of required information including objectives, goals and envisaged outcomes, and proposed activities.

The submitted proposals are sent to the International Cooperation Bureau of MOFA, headquartered in Tokyo. The JICA country office also simultaneously sends another copy to the relevant regional department of JICA headquarters, which further shares it with the JICA sector and other relevant departments. MOFA, in close consultation with JICA, appraises the proposed projects, and returns the final appraisal outcome to the partner government by March or April. Some additional preparatory work for the approved activities will then follow.

(4) Budgeting and financing of planned TrC activities

JICA and its pivotal countries share the costs of organizing training programs and dispatching Southern experts. In the case of the standard triangular training program, for instance, pivotal countries provide appropriate venues and facilities, develop and prepare the curriculum, select participants, and organize the actual training in most cases. The proportion of required contributions from the Southern partners is

determined on a case-by-case basis through dialogue, taking into account their financial capacity, among other factors. JICA then provides its partners with various resources, including advisory support to develop the curriculum and select participants, and complementary financial contributions such as travel and accommodation expenses for participants, and honoraria for guest instructors from abroad.

Organizationally, the planning and management of TrC is through a regular ODA mechanism. JICA thus internally budgets the cost of its TrC activities along with other bilateral cooperation activities without any separately managed fund for TrC. For instance, TCTP, the training program in the form of TrC, is in the same budget line as the bilateral training program. This budgeting approach also applies to other instruments, including TCED and technical cooperation projects, in a triangular form.⁴³

With respect to the budget allocation of TrC activities, the large part of TCTP is accounted for at the country offices in the pivotal country where the host organizations are located. In other cases, such as when a beneficiary country invites experts from other developing countries, a JICA office in the beneficiary country may account for the respective budget.

4.4 Monitoring and evaluation

(1) Monitoring and evaluation in operations

In line with the result-based management of Japan's ODA and JICA's operations, JICA conducts monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of all TrC programs and projects through a continuous cycle of learning and feedback in the form of PDCA (Plan, Do, Check, and Action). This approach is in line with the general rules for bilateral cooperation based on DAC evaluation criteria.

JICA applies differentiated M&E methods and approaches depending on the TrC instruments used and the size of the operation. In the case of a full-scale evaluation, JICA conducts a series of M&E including continuous monitoring of progress with feedback during implementation, as well as ex-ante and ex-post evaluations. For most TrC practices, which are largely small operations, simplified M&E methods are applied.⁴⁴

⁴³ TCTP and TCED are managed as sub-categories of respective budget lines without earmarking.

⁴⁴ According to JICA's evaluation guideline published in 2010, the projects with the total planned input of 200 million yen or less for the entire duration can be evaluated by simplified methods (JICA 2010). In such cases, the main focus of the evaluation is usually placed on the three criteria: relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, out of five DAC evaluation criteria. However, two other items, sustainability and impact, may also be included depending on the nature of the program.

In conducting the evaluation, JICA's thematic guideline on SSC advises that its offices should appropriately consult with counterpart organizations and governments through all the steps in the evaluation exercise.⁴⁵ For instance, in the case of small-scale triangular training programs, JICA has a general rule that the host organization, JICA, and the participants hold an interactive evaluation session on the training's relevance and usefulness at the end of each training course. At this point, the course participants submit their evaluation sheets. The findings and recommendations from these evaluations are used as key referential information for improving the next round of training. For example, the JICA-supported triangular training project organized by the Dominican Republic illustrates a case where the project made continuous improvement in response to opinions gathered at each course evaluation workshop (Saito 2012b).

In its M&E for TrC activities, JICA gives weight to the process aspect of how effectively partner organizations in pivotal countries have implemented TrC programs, such as in the case of TCTP. In recent years, however, the emphasis of JICA's M&E is shifting towards assessing the development impact of TrC activities in beneficiary countries. With the objective of learning lessons for further program improvement, JICA has also conducted ex-post evaluations of past triangular training programs at the pivotal country level in collaboration with partner governments.⁴⁶ These studies usually consist of questionnaire surveys and field interviews aimed at ex-participants, as well as other stakeholders such as government agencies in the beneficiary countries.

(2) In-depth evaluation studies

Beyond these operational evaluation exercises, JICA has also undertaken a series of in-depth evaluation studies on triangular cooperation. They include thematic evaluations of the broader impact of JICA's support of South-South cooperation, as well as a series of country-level evaluations of the triangular training programs. MOFA has also undertaken evaluation studies on the effectiveness of Japan's SSC Support/TrC in 2003, and a third-party evaluation in 2012. The scope and some of the key findings from major in-depth evaluation studies are summarized in Table 4 below:

⁴⁵ In the case of stand-alone dispatch of short-term third country experts, the evaluation is usually substituted by the submission of a completion report by the experts to the partner organization that received the experts, and the JICA offices both in the beneficiary country and pivotal country.

⁴⁶ Such an exercise includes Egypt (2007), Morocco (2010), and the Philippines (2010).

Table 4. Scope and key findings of major in-depth evaluation studies on TrC

Year	Comm. by	Type of evaluation	Scope and findings
2001	JICA	Thematic Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study focused on the two TrC instruments of TCTP and TCED conducted between 1994 and 1999 by Singapore and Thailand. • The report identified several challenges including goals and objectives not clearly defined, and practices and procedures which tended to be tedious and supply-driven. It also found several promising results, such as the contribution to capacity building of the beneficiary countries' professionals in fields such as health. • Based on the findings, the study recommended a move towards a more equal partnership between JICA and pivotal countries, an increased focus on demand, and a more systematic, streamlined and flexible operation.
2003	MOFA	Thematic Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study analyzed the broad spectrum of Japanese TrC covering not only TCTP and TCED, but also other assistance including the Japan Human Resources Development Fund (JHRDF), a UNDP-administered trust fund, part of which is earmarked for SSC. • The evaluation positively assessed Japanese long-term commitment and achievements in SSC, both in terms of Japan's global diplomacy and its developmental impact. It also made several recommendations, including strengthening partnership programs, engaging in closer communication with beneficiary countries, and providing extra support to the CD efforts of pivotal countries for SSC implementation. • While favorably assessing the impacts of SSC Support and TrC by Japan, it made recommendations for enhancing the strategic orientation of Japan's support including expansion of the Partnership Program to other pivotal countries, and CD support to pivotal countries.
2006	JICA	Third Party Thematic Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study covered selected case studies, questionnaire surveys, and cross-regional analysis of JICA's TrC covering Asia, Latin America, and Sub-Saharan Africa. • This evaluation found several key success factors in TrC. These included the presence of leading organizations, the engagement of stakeholders, and the clear roles assigned to each partner engaged in the TrC. It also pointed out some impeding factors like the lack of communication between the pivotal and beneficiary countries, and the misalignment of program contents with the exact needs of recipients. One challenge was that often, TrC was not fully aligned with the development strategies of the beneficiary countries. • It made reference to the wide-range of patterns and instruments at JICA's disposal as its advantage in TrC. • The evaluation made comparisons that demonstrated variances among regions. • Based on these findings, it recommended stronger alignment of TrC into country policies and systems, deeper partnerships among TrC partners including more information sharing, and further enhancement of TrC implementation mechanisms including the strengthening of follow-up mechanisms.
2012	MOFA	Third Party Thematic Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study revisited historical pathways, policies and plans, and the instruments and mechanism of TrC mainly conducted by JICA. In the analysis, special emphasis was placed on the aspect of Asia and Africa Cooperation, with a specific case study on TrC knowledge exchange in export promotion between Malaysia and Zambia. • The evaluation found Japan's past TrC to be effective and relevant to policy, specifically in terms of coherence with Japanese government policy, the high global recognition of Japan's past contribution to TrC, and its refined procedures. • It also suggests a few potential areas for further improvements, including strengthening Japan's TrC strategy with a view to the context of the changing global development landscape, and a more strategic selection of key partners with which Japan should further deepen its partnership. • It made five key recommendations: 1) align the use and definition of TrC in Japan's ODA mechanism, 2) create a stronger strategic orientation of its planning and implementation, 3) further rationalize the use of TrC instruments, 4) revisit the partnership strategy including the partnership program, and 5) strengthen TrC policies and systems to more effectively utilize TrC as a key diplomatic instrument.

Sources: JICA 2001; MOFA 2003; Kaihatsu Management Consulting Inc.2006; Nomura Research Institute 2013.

The Japanese Government and JICA have incorporated many of the findings and recommendations from these studies into TrC instruments and mechanisms. Some of the actions that have already been taken to address issues, which were recommended by previous evaluations, include the following:

- Introduce indicative TrC patterns with clearer objectives to promote systematization of TrC planning, implementation, and evaluation following the launch of the thematic guideline on SSC in 2005;
- Incorporate regional orientation into TrC, which can result in more projects in the form of region-wide networks including solid waste management in the Pacific through the J-PRISM project in the Pacific (Kano and Honda 2013), the region-wide rice development initiative of the Coalition for African Rice Development (Kubota 2013; Honda, Kato and Shimoda 2013), and professional network building among specialists in livestock hygiene in South America (Inamura 2012);
- Streamline and simplify procedures for TrC practices, such as the promotion of multi-year planning in TCTP to reduce the transaction cost of annual official requests and approval procedures; and
- Strengthen communication between JICA offices engaged in TrC practices by, among other things, holding regional staff workshops in South-South/triangular cooperation in the LAC region for the objective of sharing experience, and establishing consensus towards the further enhancement of TrC effectiveness.⁴⁷

4.5 Organizational arrangement of TrC activities

As noted above, the global coverage of JICA's TrC partnerships is extensive, covering the Asia-Pacific region, the traditional focus of Japan's ODA, to other regions of SSA, Middle-East and LAC. This implies that a quite large number of JICA's divisions, offices, and personnel engage in TrCs in one way or another, forming a backdrop of JICA's TrC mechanism. To strengthen the capacity of its country offices to manage TrC, JICA has instituted several support mechanisms.

(1) Staffing

In general, the staff of bilateral ODA programs/projects, consisting of diplomatic officials in charge of ODA policy and programming and JICA staff for ODA implementation, also handle TrC activities. However, the extra work required for coordinating multiple actors in TrC often overburdens these ODA officials, who are already required to manage a large volume of bilateral aid projects/programs. In

⁴⁷ The team responsible for third-party thematic evaluation of TrC under the auspices of MOFA discovered that staffs working at the headquarters and overseas offices in LAC countries, for instance, consciously engage in systematic communication among themselves so as to ensure the needs-driven aspect of TrC with more of a focus on results. It also reported that JICA offices in ASEAN countries are closely communicating with each other and with the IAI secretariat of ASEAN, especially during the formulation process of TrC programs (Nomura Research Institute 2013).

rectifying the above situation, JICA has taken action at the implementation level.

First, it has strengthened its country offices, especially those in key pivotal countries, by reinforcing the staff in charge. For instance, it has assigned dedicated staff to its Malaysia and Indonesia offices to help their counterpart organizations coordinate JICA-supported TrC activities.⁴⁸ Another action that was taken is the nomination of a TrC focal point in the country offices of key TrC partner countries. Nationally-recruited staff has also played a critical role in supporting the planning and execution of TrC in all country offices.⁴⁹

Second, JICA has been trying to strengthen intra-organizational networking among country offices in response to the recommendations made by JICA's successive thematic evaluations of TrC (SSC support). To that end, JICA has organized regional meetings of staff in charge of TrC and national staff to provide face-to-face opportunities to reinforce the human network within the organization.

(2) Knowledge management

In the early 2000s, JICA established an internal cross-functional working group on SSC/TrC involving staff experienced in TrC, both in its headquarters and in the country offices.⁵⁰ The main activities included taking stock of JICA's global and increasingly diverse TrC practices, and thinking of ways to systematize and improve approaches and instruments. Following its launch, the working group has produced a Thematic Guideline on South-South Cooperation, which, along with manuals for SSC support, has been the key document for JICA's TrC operation. The group compiled cases of good practices as support materials for JICA staff and experts. It also uploaded key TrC data and reports from country offices and other HQs departments onto a dedicated website for SSC (mostly in Japanese). In the last few years, JICA has moreover started to reinvigorate its knowledge management activities in SSC/TrC.

⁴⁸ In Indonesia, JICA recently started to dispatch a Japanese expert to BAPPENAS, the Indonesian Development Planning Agency, to help build further capacity in SSC planning and management.

⁴⁹ For example, in the JICA Indonesia office, a senior Indonesian staff member in the position of Deputy Chief Representative oversees the entire triangular cooperation programs in Indonesia.

⁵⁰ The working group was launched as an integral part of an organization-wide move to form sector and thematic networks cutting across the formal divisions of JICA's knowledge management.

5. Concluding remarks

This paper has attempted to provide an overview of JICA's policies and plans, mechanisms, and instruments in the management of its TrC activities. As shown, mechanisms and instruments have evolved into a fairly complex array of patterns with a broad range of instruments under the supervision of both the Japanese Government and JICA. This is the result, in large part, of JICA's response to the increasingly diverse development needs of its partner countries.

The current mechanism can also be understood as a product of JICA's continuous endeavor to balance the two aspects of ownership of Southern partners, especially of pivotal countries, and development impact in the beneficiary countries. Fulfilling both aspects in TrC can be challenging, especially if the Southern knowledge provider is very new to the act of international cooperation, and has not fully established a systematic management mechanism for international cooperation.

This paper demonstrated that JICA has already taken a number of steps to address TrC challenges, including many innovative practices and mechanisms, with reasonable results as demonstrated by a series of thematic evaluations. The progressive decentralization of planning and implementation of TrC practices to country offices in both pivotal and beneficiary countries has enabled JICA to get closer to both the source of knowledge and its beneficiary, leading to facilitation of better knowledge exchange. Closer communication between country offices is expected to provide complementary actions to help match the needs and supply of Southern knowledge. JICA's support to an increasing number of regional networks is also a manifestation of JICA's efforts to enhance the virtuous cycle of continuous mutual learning among member stakeholders. JICA's past and current assistance and capacity development in pivotal countries, undertaken within the framework of Partnership Programs in most cases, can also be viewed as an attempt to improve the quality of TrC practices under Southern ownership.

The generally positive assessments of JICA's current TrC mechanism, however, do not imply that the mechanism is in perfect shape. There seems to be several areas worthy of consideration by JICA to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its TrC activities. For instance, JICA can more proactively apply ICT in its TrC practices, such as the systematic application of video conferencing and the strategic use of web-based discussion. However, any hasty and premature decisions to bring in considerable changes to JICA's TrC practices would adversely weaken its competitive edge, realized

through long and continuous improvement efforts.

As the author sees it, there is an opportune moment for JICA to undertake another serious review of its TrC in light of the changing operational environment. Several actions could be recommended in this regard. The first is to reinforce the data collection of JICA's TrC, which has not still been able to fully capture the entirety of TrC actions. The second is to undertake more systematic and comparative case analyses of JICA's TrC with reference to both global discussions on SSC/TrC, and the latest practices by other major international donors. The case documentation exercises recently started at the JICA Research Institute might form the basis for such an action.⁵¹ Third, activation of JICA's organizational learning of TrC practices is lacking. Improved data and results from systematic case analyses will inform the learning process. Last but not least, the author would like to emphasize the importance of JICA's continuous and enhanced engagement in global and regional learning of TrC practices.

⁵¹ Some of the outputs include Honda, Kato and Shimoda 2013, Hosono 2012, and Kato and Honda 2013.

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