

Coordination between Technical Cooperation and Training Activities

Part 3 – Coordination with technical cooperation project

In this article, we would like to examine a case in Afghanistan, as a tentative suggestion for ensuring coordination between technical cooperation and training activities in Japan. Afghanistan used to be an agricultural nation with approximately 80% of the country's labor engaged in the agricultural sector. However, due to drought and the destruction of irrigation facilities during the civil war, agricultural production declined sharply, and the country is currently dependent on foreign food aid. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) began its assistance in Afghanistan with urgent support for the emergency recovery of agriculture in Kandahar. JICA then implemented programs focusing on the reconstruction of irrigation systems, farming and livestock husbandry, as well as on environmental improvement in farming areas. As part of the JICA supported program to strengthen agricultural research in Afghanistan, work is on-going to consolidate the basic programs of the Central Agricultural Experiment Station in Kabul. As there were no technicians for many years due to the closure of research organizations and the termination of their activities, there is a total lack of technicians in the country. Therefore, it is essential to improve capacity of researchers and technical instructors who will lead the experiment center in future.

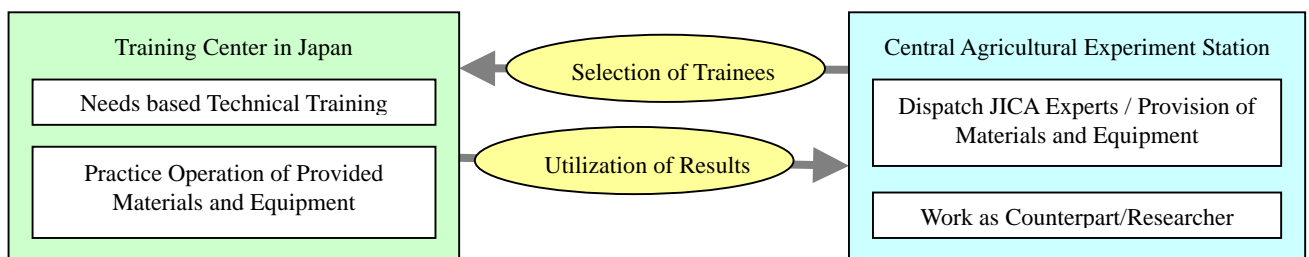


Central Agricultural Experiment Station

With this background, we examined the possibility of linking this technical cooperation project and the JICA training programs in Japan. At present, JICA is dispatching specialists as part of the technical cooperation program and providing equipment to the center. In addition, if this assistance can be combined with capacity development of specialist technicians as part of the training program in Japan (e.g. country-focused special training), the objective of the rehabilitation of the Experiment Station will be achieved more quickly and effectively.

Staff of the Central Agricultural Experiment Station in Kabul have already participated in training courses in Japan. By linking technical cooperation projects abroad and training programs, it makes JICA's cooperation activities more consistent. This coordination also has the following concrete benefits, and it will definitely lead to a speedy increase in, and stabilization of, agricultural production in Afghanistan.

- Under the technical cooperation project for the Central Agricultural Experiment Station in Kabul, it is possible for Japanese experts and the counterpart team to formulate a basic program to strengthen comprehensive agricultural experiment and research, as well as to strengthen extension programs.
- Based on the formulated programs, it is possible to examine the details of necessary training contents, and to select appropriate training subjects and target trainees for the needs.
- In the country-focused special training sessions in Japan, it is possible to provide focused training on different experiment methods for cultivation and water saving irrigation, as well as extension methods, which the participants are expected to use after returning to their country.
- It is possible to provide training in Japan on the operation of equipment that is procured under the technical cooperation project, promoting responsible and professional utilization, and maintenance of provided extension materials and equipment.
- When the participants go back to work under technical cooperation projects, they can fully utilize what they acquired during the training. In other words, follow up activities of training programs are automatically implemented under technical cooperation projects.



As mentioned in AAI News Vol. 48 in which we summed up our training series, we consider that it is extremely important, in JICA's training programs, to select the right participants and to determine the needs-based training contents. This coordination with technical cooperation projects also assists training program organizers in securing appropriate participants and in slim-lining training contents. In addition, the coordination benefits technical cooperation projects, as it is possible to suggest appropriate training subjects that are needed for counterparts in projects. This in turn leads to the enhancement of necessary techniques and skills by counterparts, and many other ripple effects are expected through participants returning to their countries after gaining an understanding and affection for Japan through their stay there. The technical cooperation project in Afghanistan introduced here is only one of many projects. The coordination between technical cooperation projects and training activities would increase the effectiveness of many other projects and training programs. I hope that this example in Afghanistan will make a good case for the complementary functions of technical cooperation projects and training programs in Japan.