

Simplified Ex-Post Evaluation for Grant Aid Project

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Project Name	Project for the Improvement of the Program Production Equipment of the National TV and Radio Broadcasting Corporation	October 2011 - April 2012

I Project Outline

Country Name	Kyrgyz Republic	
Project Period	January 2005 – January 2006	
Executing Agency	National TV and Radio Broadcasting Company (NTRC) (currently Public Broadcasting Company of the Kyrgyz Republic (PBC))	
Project Cost	Grant Limit: 681 million yen	Actual Grant Amount: 468 million yen
Main Contractors	(Procurement) Mitsubishi Corporation	
Main Consultants	Yachiyo Engineering Co., Ltd.	
Basic Design	June 2004 – January 2005	
Related Projects (if any)	<p>< Technical Cooperation ></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master plan study on the development of radio and TV broadcasting in the Kyrgyz Republic (1995) <p>< Grant Aid ></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supply of Studio Equipment (Cultural Grant Assistance, 1997) <p>< Other international cooperation and aid agencies, etc.></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One set of radio editing equipment (UNDP, 1995 - 1997) • Computers, consumer television cameras, one set of consumer video editing equipment (UNESCO, 1996 - 1997) • One set of video camera equipment for reporting use, satellite receiver equipment, videotape recorders (Germany, 1996 - 1998) • One set of small-scale studio program production equipment, one set of video editing equipment, videotape recorders (Denmark, 1998) • Osh studio equipment (China, 2004) 	
Project Background	<p>NTRC, which had provided broadcasting services as a branch station of Radio Moscow before the independence of Kyrgyz from the Soviet Union in 1991, was reorganized into the sole company broadcasting in the Kyrgyz language covering the whole country. However, its old and insufficient equipment did not meet the demands of program production, such as accurate and timely news shows. This was also affecting program production operations, such as the editing of programs.</p> <p>Due to these conditions, the Kyrgyz government developed the Project for the Improvement of the Program Production Equipment of NTRC to enable the efficient production of programs and to recover its functions as a national broadcasting company. For the purpose of raising the funds to purchase the program production and other equipment to implement the project, the Kyrgyz government requested grant aid from the Japanese government.</p>	
Project Objective	<p>To recover the functions as a national broadcasting company and make it possible to increase the number of original programs in the Kyrgyz language by upgrading the program production equipment of the NTRC to cover the whole of Kyrgyz with a view to the production of programs on subjects such as local social issues and culture, the prompt distribution of information on natural disasters, social events, etc., to community residents, and the promotion of democratization, mutual understanding and information sharing among ethnic groups through the production of fair and impartial news programs.</p>	
Output (Japanese Side)	<p>(1) Supply of studio equipment C-600-1 TV Studio System, C-120 TV Studio System, Master Control System, Format Conversion System, ENG System, Video Non Linear Editing System, A/B Roll Editing System, 1:1 Editing System, Maintenance Equipment and Tools</p> <p>(2) On-the-job training in the operation and maintenance of the equipment</p>	

II Result of the Evaluation

Summary of the evaluation
<p>This project provided the latest program production equipment to PBC (formerly NTRC), the sole television broadcasting company with a network covering Kyrgyz. The project was relevant to the development policies of Kyrgyz to provide information services evenly among its citizens throughout its vast territory, with the development need to improve the capability to produce programs in the Kyrgyz language through the renovation of program production equipment at the most reliable television broadcasting company in Kyrgyz, and with Japan's ODA policy to support the improvement of the social infrastructure for the purpose of promoting regional reconciliation, democratization, and the transition to a market</p>

economy.

The project outputs were delivered as planned. In terms of inputs, the project was completed within the planned period, and the costs were much lower than the planned amount. Thus the efficiency of project implementation was high.

From the standpoint of effectiveness and impact, while there were some effects from the social disorder in Kyrgyz, the implementation of this project contributed to the accomplishment of the project objectives to increase the number of hours of broadcasting of original programs in the Kyrgyz language, and to improve the reliability of broadcasting and the timeliness of news and information programs. In addition, this project can be considered to have raised awareness among the viewers regarding healthcare through programs in the Kyrgyz language and to have increased the total number of broadcasting hours through improvements in the efficiency of program production.

In terms of sustainability, the reorganization of NTRC into PBC is likely to facilitate the use of the program production equipment by encouraging creative efforts in program production. At the same time, the number of maintenance staff is not sufficient due to the shortage of funds. Technically, there are no concerns about the level of operation and maintenance since PBC has been trying to enhance the skills of the maintenance staff. On the other hand, insufficient funding has made it difficult for PBC to obtain enough spare parts and other supplies for maintenance. On the subject of securing future funding, due to the transition to a public service company it is not clear whether the same level of financial support from the government will be provided. In addition, PBC does not seem to be securing its operating revenues efficiently due to the lack of coordination between each program production section and the advertising section. With regard to the operation and maintenance condition of the equipment, while some equipment was damaged or stolen during the political changes in April 2010, negative impacts on broadcasting activities have been avoided. The equipment is maintained to the extent possible despite the shortfall in the budget. PBC plans to utilize the equipment provided through this project even after the transition to digital broadcasting planned in 2015. Furthermore, technical transfer carried out by JICA Senior Volunteers dispatched after this project has promoted the effective utilization of the equipment provided.

In light of the above, this project is evaluated to be highly satisfactory.

<Recommendations to the executing agency>

In addition to the shortage of funds for operation and maintenance, it is not certain whether financial support from the government will be continued at the same level as in the pre-democratization period. Therefore, it seems desirable that PBC carry out reforms to produce programs that meet the needs of its viewers so as to generate sufficient revenues for the maintenance and renewal of equipment in the future.

<Recommendations to JICA>

Continuous provision of information and technical assistance on the production of programs and business management could increase operating revenues and lead to the sustainable utilization of the equipment provided in this project. As PBC plans to use the equipment even after the transition to digital broadcasting, it is assumed that the necessary provision of technical information would help to achieve a smoother transition to digital broadcasting and more effective utilization of the equipment.

<Lessons Learned>

The dispatch of a JICA Senior Volunteer conducted after this project can be considered to have been effective in promoting the utilization of the equipment provided under this project. In similar projects in future, it would be desirable to provide knowledge and technical assistance not just on the technical use of the equipment, but also on how to produce programs with the equipment more effectively by applying examples of Japanese program production.

1 Relevance

(1) Relevance with the Development Policy of the Kyrgyz Republic

The Comprehensive Development Framework (CDF) 2003 - 2004, the national development plan at the time of project planning, recognized information services, especially via television, for the residents of small settlements across the vast territory of Kyrgyz as essential to the nation's development. The current Country Development Strategy (CDS) 2009 - 2011, has indicated concerns about information disparities among its citizens and the elimination of domestic broadcasting companies due to the superior technological capacities and financial power of foreign broadcasting companies from Russia and Uzbekistan. The CDS also identifies a need to improve the reliability of the nationwide broadcasting system as one of the policy issues for the development of the domestic information industries.

(2) Relevance with the Development Needs of the Kyrgyz Republic

While the Kyrgyz Republic is a multilingual nation, its national language is the Kyrgyz language. When this project was planned, the Kyrgyz language was the prime language in rural areas, and NTRC was the only nationwide company broadcasting in the Kyrgyz language. However, it was difficult for NTRC to produce original programs because of the obsolescence and differences in the formats of its equipment. Therefore, prompt renewal of the equipment was required. At the time of the ex-post evaluation, PBC (former NTRC) was supposed to be the most reliable television broadcasting company in Kyrgyz in terms of its nationwide broadcasting coverage and the quality of its original programs, etc. Thus, producing original programs in the Kyrgyz language by PBC is essential.

(3) Relevance with Japan's ODA Policy

During the project planning stage, Japan's ODA policy for Central Asia and the Caucasus region focused on support for the social infrastructure to promote regional reconciliation, democratization, and the adoption of a market economy (Japan's ODA White Paper 2004). At the same time, the priority areas of Japan's aid to Kyrgyz were identified as (1) support for the transition to a market economy, (2) basic living standards (basic medical care, education, etc.), (3) economic infrastructure, and (4) agriculture (Japan's Country Assistance Program for Kyrgyz 2005). The transition to a market economy, public education, and real-time distribution of economic information triggered by mass media such as television, had positive effects on promoting development in priority areas in many fields. The implementation of this project was relevant to the policy.

This project has been highly relevant with Kyrgyz's development plan, development needs, as well as Japan's ODA policy; therefore its relevance is high.

2 Efficiency

(1) Project Outputs

The outputs from the Japanese side were delivered as planned.

(2) Project Period

The project was designed to be completed in 12.5 months in the basic design study and it was actually completed in 12.5 months.

(3) Project Cost

The cost of this project was reduced as a result of competitive bidding of the equipment procurement. The actual project cost was 468 million yen, lower than the planned cost of 681 million yen (68.7% of the plan).

Both the project period and project costs were as planned, therefore the efficiency of the project is high.

3 Effectiveness / Impact

(1) Quantitative Effects

One of the objectives of this project was that the number of broadcasting hours of original programs in the Kyrgyz language was to be increased from 46 hours/week at the time of project planning to at least 51 hours/week in 2011, five years after completion of the project. While the actual number of broadcasting hours of 53 hours/week in 2010 exceeded the target, in 2011 the figure fell to 48 hours/week. As a result, the number of broadcasting hours of original programs in the Kyrgyz language in the target year (2011) had increased from the base year to 104.3%, but did not reach the target (94.1% of the target). The decrease in the number of broadcasting hours in 2011 seemed to be due to the unusual programming after the political changes in April 2010, as a result of the reorganization of the executing agency in June 2010 and the presidential election in October 2011. In addition, some equipment procured under this project, including microphones and video monitors, was stolen or damaged during the political upheavals. According to PBC, any effect of the resulting aftermath on program production was avoided by bringing substitute equipment from other studios. It was difficult to judge whether and how much this damage affected the number of broadcasting hours.

At the same time, according to JICA short-term Senior Volunteers, a legal amendment in spring 2011 required all television broadcasting companies to increase the proportion of Kyrgyz-language programs to 50% (Currently the percentage of Kyrgyz-language programs on PBC is roughly 40%). To meet this requirement, PBC is currently preparing a plan to increase its Kyrgyz-language broadcasting by, for example, re-training in the Kyrgyz language among its employees in order to improve their visual presentation such as with subtitles and charts using computer graphic techniques, since the Kyrgyz grammar is difficult and many journalists are not familiar with Kyrgyz expressions. For this reason, it is highly likely that the number of original programs in the Kyrgyz language will increase.

(2) Qualitative Effects

During the project planning stage, (i) improvements in the reliability of broadcasting and (ii) ensuring the timeliness of news and information programs were expected as qualitative effects. According to PBC, on the subject of effect (i) – improvements in the reliability of broadcasting, the replacement of old broadcasting equipment with the latest equipment has improved the quality of programs and been effective in increasing the stability of broadcasting by reducing equipment failures. It can therefore be said that the project has contributed to this increase in reliability. With regard to the effect (ii) – ensuring timeliness in news and information programs, local information with video footage filmed in the capital area and the provinces has been broadcast more frequently by utilizing the outside newsgathering system and the editing system provided through this project.

(3) Impacts (Impacts on the natural environment, Land Acquisition and Resettlement, Unintended Positive/Negative Impact)

According to PBC, an increase in Kyrgyz-language programs has promoted the sharing of accurate information regarding healthcare among the public, in particular, through talk shows and news programs. In addition, Kyrgyz-language television programs have been utilized for publicity on the prevention of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis, pneumonia, and HIV and in media campaigns to promote a healthy life without taking drugs, smoking, or drinking.

The total number of broadcasting hours of PBC has also increased from 5,636 hours/year at the time of project planning (2004) to 6,205 hours/year at the time of the ex-post evaluation (2011). The equipment procured in this project can be considered to have had a positive effect on increasing the total number of broadcasting hours through improvements in the efficiency of program production at PBC.

For the above reasons, with the exception of the negative effects due to the external factor of the political upheavals in April 2010, this project has largely achieved its objectives; therefore its effectiveness is high.

(1) Structural Aspects of Operation Maintenance

An ordinance promulgated by the provisional government and a presidential decree were established after the political changes in Kyrgyz in April 2010, after the implementation of this project, and the state-run NTRC was reorganized into a public service company, PBC. In this reorganization, the rules regarding the appointment of the chairperson and members of the Supervisory Board were changed (Before the reorganization, NTRC's chairperson and Supervisory Board members had been appointed by the President of Kyrgyz. Currently, PBC's chairperson is appointed by the Supervisory Board. PBC's Supervisory Board members are appointed by the President, the Parliament, and the public among candidates recommended by related parties, such as NPOs). According to PBC, the reorganization into a public service company has enabled the production of programs meeting the viewers' needs. In addition, core personnel of the company have been replaced, and internal organizational reforms have been actively carried out in order to produce democratic and viewer-oriented programs. These organizational changes following the political changes are intended to improve the functions of PBC as a television broadcasting company and to make it into a media organization for the benefit of the viewers, in contrast with its status under the previous government. As a result, the reorganization can be considered to have had a positive effect on the sustainability of this project.

According to PBC, while the number of staff using the equipment for the production of television programs is adequate at 231 persons, the number of technicians in the maintenance sections, 41, is slightly insufficient. PBC states in their answers to the questionnaire that it believes that it needs to hire two more specialized technicians to facilitate smooth maintenance activities.

(2) Technical Aspects of Operation Maintenance

PBC conducts weekly equipment operation and maintenance training and provides information to specialist personnel in a systematic manner, in accordance with the on-the-job training activities provided during this project, and it is striving to upgrade skills and knowledge. Up to now PBC has not received any repair services from the equipment manufacturers and has handled all the repairs internally. Thus, the technical level of operation and maintenance is considered to be sufficient. However, knowledge and experience in producing viewer-friendly programs by utilizing techniques such as subtitles and computer graphics need to be enhanced. In addition, there is room for further improvement in its business management from the current situation, as seen in the procedures for hiring announcers and conducting sales activities to attract sponsors by each of the respective program production units.

(3) Financial Aspects of Operation Maintenance

Sufficient funds for purchasing spare parts and other supplies for maintenance are lacking. While operating revenues have increased massively from an average of 22,218,000 Som estimated in 2000 - 2002 at the time of the basic design study to 98,537,000 Som at the time of the ex-post evaluation (2010), revenues from government subsidies account for about 80% of the total revenues and there are insufficient independent sources of funds. Though the government subsidies are allocated to PBC at present, it is necessary to monitor whether PBC will be able to continue to secure these government subsidies in the future since the status of PBC has changed from being a pro-government media organization under the previous administration as a result of democratization. In addition, while at the time of project planning, 5% of the advertising revenues and 2% of the program production costs and general expenses were taken out and accumulated each year as a reserve for the replacement of major equipment in 2015 (approximately 300 million yen), PBC says it is unclear whether such funding will be secured since the Kyrgyz government is cutting overall expenditures in order to reduce its foreign debt.

Since the producers of the programs make and broadcast them only after finding sponsors for each program, it seems probable that their activities overlap with the duties of the advertising section and the activities of the production sections of other programs. At the same time, it is uncertain whether sales activities are conducted in a way that would ensure that the prospective sponsoring firms will become constant and stable sponsors instead of sponsors of a single program. PBC says that it will make organizational efforts to secure new funding sources.

(4) Current Status of Operation Maintenance

According to the responses to the questionnaire, PBC was attacked in the civil unrest that broke out in Bishkek at the time of the political upheavals in April 2010. There were 17 pieces of equipment damaged or stolen (5 pieces damaged and 12 pieces stolen), including microphones, loudspeakers, video monitors, camera adapters, and multi-scan displays. While the equipment has not been replaced or repaired due to the lack of funds, any negative effects on broadcasting activities, including program production, have been avoided and PBC continued broadcasting 17 hours/day in 2010 and 2011. Though broadcasting is suspended for one hour every Tuesday afternoon for equipment maintenance, there seem to be no particular problems with the broadcasting conditions.

PBC makes every effort to keep the equipment in good condition through in-house repairs, despite the shortage of funds for spare parts and technical specifications for the repairs. The equipment will be utilized even after the transition to digital broadcasting planned for June 2015.

In addition, technical assistance was provided by a JICA Senior Volunteer on television program production at PBC over a six-month period from March 2010. This technical transfer has facilitated the effective utilization of the equipment in program production, for example by increasing the number of field interviews in live news and information programs.

Some problems have been observed in terms of the financial and organizational aspects; therefore the sustainability of the project effects is fair.