

Terms of Reference of the Virtual National Staff Network

(April 2005)

Background:

JARCOM (JICA-ASEAN Regional Cooperation Meeting) is a regional meeting where JICA Offices in ASEAN countries and the representatives of their government counterpart agencies meet annually in order to discuss and formulate regional cooperation programs. The Mission of JARCOM is to rectify socio-economic gaps among ASEAN countries through JICA's cooperation activities.

Over the years, the Meeting has helped improve the areas of regional cooperation mechanisms and the expansion of cooperation modalities, among others. Numerous training courses and programmes have been formulated through the JARCOM network...

As a result of the matching exercises, regional cooperation activities have increased. Thus, it is crucial for JICA staff members dealing with day to day operations of the programs to be kept abreast of the situation in order to ensure smooth and effective implementation of regional cooperation programs, especially the Third Country Training Programs (TCTP).

Looking at a recent trend in JICA Offices, where the main portion of the operational tasks are now the responsibility of the national staff (NS), it is important to create a network among the NS in charge of South-South Cooperation, and connecting of JICA-JARCOM offices, to encourage and promote information sharing, monitoring, and improvement of the TCTP operation. Through effective communication, the NS can contribute towards the improvement of the current work situation and achievement of JARCOM's Mission.

Objectives of the network:

1. To contribute to the achievement of JARCOM's Mission by enhancing JARCOM program operations;
2. To strengthen the NS network among JICA- JARCOM Offices;
3. To provide a venue for the NS to share their experiences regarding the day to day operation of regional cooperation projects;
4. To encourage national staff initiatives for identification of areas of improvement and proposals for countermeasures in carrying out their responsibilities; and
5. To support national staff capacity building.

Procedures (How does the virtual network work?)

1. JARCOM Secretariat in consultation with several offices nominated 2 facilitators.
2. Initially, each participating JICA Office nominated two NS as members.
3. After a six-month trial period, the network facilitators and JARCOM Secretariat will consider expansion of membership to any NS (and Japanese staff) in related JICA offices on a voluntary basis.
4. The facilitators shall maintain and update the member list. Any updated information should be officially reported by *kyouden* to all related JICA Offices.
5. A network discussion summary note will be submitted to JARCOM Secretariat every 6 months.
6. One member from JARCOM Secretariat will be registered in the network as an observer.

The roles of facilitators

The Facilitators will:

1. Prepare an email list of the virtual network and update any change; .
2. Facilitate email exchanges among members;
3. During the 1st year of implementation, take notes of important points from the email discussions and prepare a summary note of discussions and activities to be submitted to the JARCOM Secretariat.
4. In consultation with the members, prepare the agenda and proposed outputs of the NS meeting for the 4th JARCOM;
5. Co-chair the NS meeting at the 4th JARCOM and prepare the minutes of the meeting (a rapporteur can be appointed to assist them);

The roles of the network members

1. Initial members nominated by each JICA Office will participate in the discussion on behalf of their offices in view of sharing information with other NS interested in joining the discussion group in the future.
2. Members can forward any request or assistance on regional cooperation projects with regard to the day to day operation.
3. Members are required to take action on the above requests or assistance required from other network members within the time frame required.
4. After the 1st year of trial period, in order to encourage members' initiatives and participation, the preparation of network discussion summary note will be rotated among the network members.

Focus areas

The discussions through the virtual network focus on following areas:

1. Presentation of the TCTP operational procedures in each JICA Office
2. Assist in solving problems faced by each country on TCTP/TCE in consultation with related parties.
3. Discuss improvement of the procedures and mechanism of TCTP/TCE at operational level.
4. Improve coordination between JICA offices and implementing agencies.
5. Improve coordination between JICA offices and government focal points.
6. Distribute and update TCTP/TCE information to all members.
7. Coordinate & Link to JARCOM activities
 - a) Follow up on action plan for JARCOM meeting
 - b) Submission of results of TCTP, TCE, etc. to JARCOM Secretariat as required
 - c) Assist in the formulation of TCTP for JARCOM
 - d) Cooperate in all JARCOM activities.
 - e) Other operational tasks requested by the JARCOM Secretariat
8. Make any proposal/ suggestion for improvement of JARCOM.
9. Prepare the agenda of the annual or ad-hoc NS meetings.