Five Focal Views on People's Infrastructure

Given the reaffirmed importance of infrastructure and the lessons gleaned from the past experiences, the following five focal views can be suggested for infrastructure development in the future.

1 Toward "People's Infrastructure"

Infrastructure Redefined

Infrastructure is redefined as a foundation of basic services, guaranteeing all people the right to live in safety and good health and ultimately helping them realize their dormant potentials by self-empowerment.

2 Helping People Realize their Hopes

Field-Level Initiative in Goal Setting

The discussion addresses the question of goal-setting for infrastructure projects with emphasis on people's self-empowerment and self-realization. Suggestions are made on the importance of gleaning project goals selectively from local diverse needs, the need of seeing through the long-term prospects and the importance of flexible resetting of project goals in response to changes in external circumstances.

3 Fully Rewarding Service Delivery

Integrated Approach

To the Attainment of the set goals, the discussion focuses on how to maximize and sustain the positive contribution of pro-people infrastructure development, while minimizing the often observed negative impacts of pro-growth infrastructure development. It is concluded that the integrated approach is capable of doing this, provided that the prioritization of project proposals and related policy decisions are consistently made. It is suggested that various intellectual supports to different levels of decision makers will make crucial contribution to the integrated development planning and implementation in the developing world.

4 Concepts for Designing Empowerment

Pro-Poor Project Designs

While the integrated approach acknowledges that the design of projects in infrastructure development should be pro-poor, the actual elaboration of such designs remains largely uncharted territory. To emphasize empowerment of the poor and the primary importance of having basic infra-services reach them, four-point suggestions can be made to facilitate this pro-poor design: availability, accessibility, affordability and acceptability.

5 For People in Asia, Africa, ...

Reducing the Infra Gap

The discussion mainly addresses the question of how to deal with the absolute shortage of infrastructure stocks in the developing world and thereby to reduce the glaring infra gap that exists in varying forms. The discussion covers the roles of the private and the public sector in infrastructure development, the varying needs for infrastructure as related to the different stages of economic development, and suggests the appropriate focuses for future technical cooperation.

Irrigation facilities at Kandahar, Afghanistan

Pro-People Infrastructure

The global commitment to such development goals as Poverty Reduction, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Economic Growth has been repeatedly reaffirmed at the UN assembly and other international forums since around the turn of the present century. The reaffirmation re-heightened the awareness that infrastructure has a vital role to play toward realizing these global goals, and called for the urgent need to rethink and redefine the role of infrastructure. The conventional infrastructure development focuses on the quantitative increase of stocks and the specific effects of individual projects such as alleviation of urban traffic congestion and expanded access to water and sanitation. By critically evaluating the past performance, the emphasis is now increasingly placed on the environmental and social implications of infrastructure development and the efficiency and the effective reach of infrastructural services. In other words, individual cases of infrastructure development are now being evaluated by the outcome of their service delivery.

The redefinition of pro-people infrastructure must go further, by asking what people want for the enhancement of their life prospects. Pro-people infrastructure no doubt fulfils its indispensable role by contributing to the goals such as poverty eradication, MDGs and regional and national economic growth, but ultimately it must function as an foundation of basic services, with the benefits from which people can develop their capacities and make choices to realize their potentials. This is the redefinition of pro-people infrastructure.

Beyond Conventional Thinking

The conventional thinking of infrastructure development did not go much further than appraising its direct impact and effectiveness. Lacking is the awareness that infrastructural facilities are one of the necessary components to provide services for people and that the delivery of services ultimately expands and diversifies the available range of opportunities for people and opens up a spatial and temporal horizon of their life prospects.

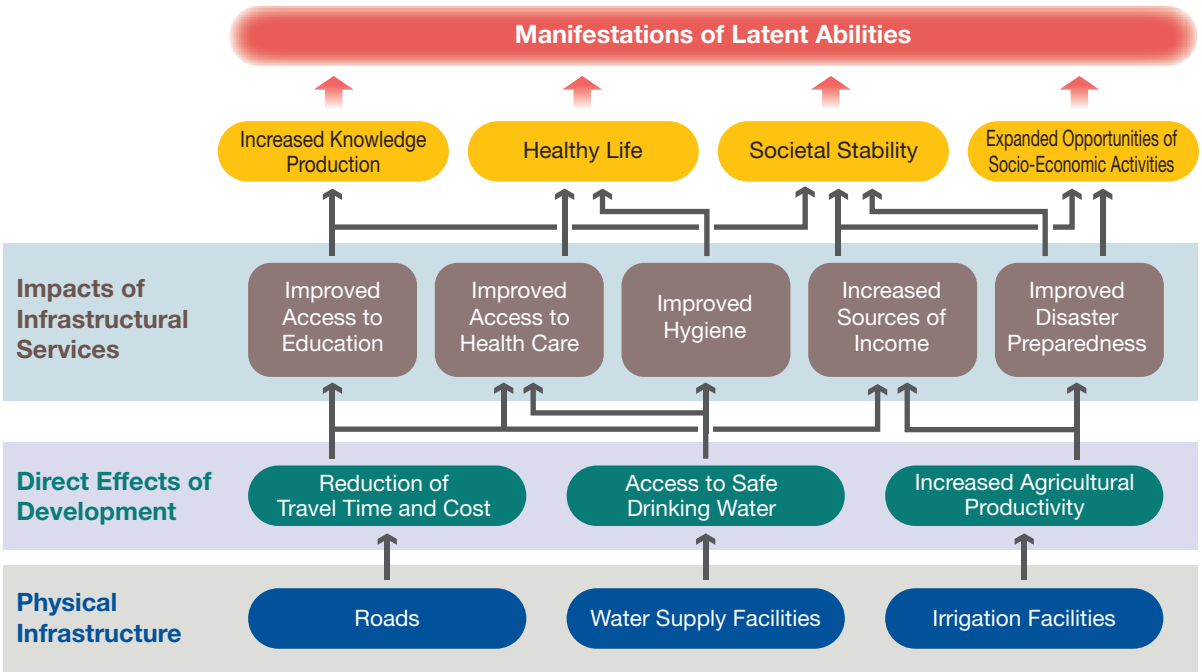
Infrastructural Services for People's Empowerment

Bilateral and multilateral donors have begun in recent years to conduct detailed field studies on the relationships between infrastructure development and poverty reduction, with increased attention to the services provided by individual projects, sometimes including the outcomes thereof. For example, Impact of Rural Roads on Poverty Reduction: A Case Study, printed by Asian Development Bank in 2002, examines the outcome of the project implementation, detailing the immediately expanded activities of local transporters and retailers, which before long encouraged local farmers to diversify into transportation and commercial businesses.

Concomitantly, the interest has been growing over the macro-level impact of infrastructure on human development. "Achieving the Millennium Development Goals: The Role of Infrastructure," a 2003 paper by the World Bank, points out the reduction of infant mortality, inter alia, following the progress of infrastructure development.

Promising emergence of new approaches notwithstanding, much more efforts are needed to find answers to basic questions: what types of latent ability should and could be made manifest through the long-term efforts on poverty reduction; how best to understand people's true wishes and aspirations; and what kinds of infrastructure are necessary to activate their potentials and how best to design and implement such projects.

Manifestations of Latent Abilities by Infrastructure Development



Mechanism for Reaching the Ultimate Goal

The ultimate goal of infrastructure development is the full and variegated manifestations of people's innate abilities, as indicated in the uppermost tier of the diagram in the previous page. Infrastructure is the common foundation for people to realize their potentials and to enable their prospects.

There are two major channels in the mechanism to realize the manifestations of people's latent abilities. One channel is to deliver basic infra-services directly to people and thereby expand and diversify the spatial and temporal horizon of opportunities for people to choose. This will culminate in the reduction of poverty and the attainment of other Millennium Development Goals. The other channel is to provide physical assets that support regional and national economic growth. Growth will raise the level of per capita income and improve the standards of living, contributing thus to the attainment of poverty reduction and other development goals. The former channel consists of those infrastructure projects with clear pro-poor impacts, but it has been often pointed out that the long-term sustainability of such projects is hard to guarantee. Continued investment in physical facilities and recurrent expenditure on basic services are possible only when economic growth generates additional revenues to spend. The investment in economic infrastructure is crucial therefore to support continued growth. It must be remembered, however, that rapid growth may bring with it widening income disparities among social classes and between regions and a negative impact on the natural environment. It is essential to adopt supportive policy instruments that offer an affordable service delivery arrangement for the poor and ensure adequate environmental conservation.

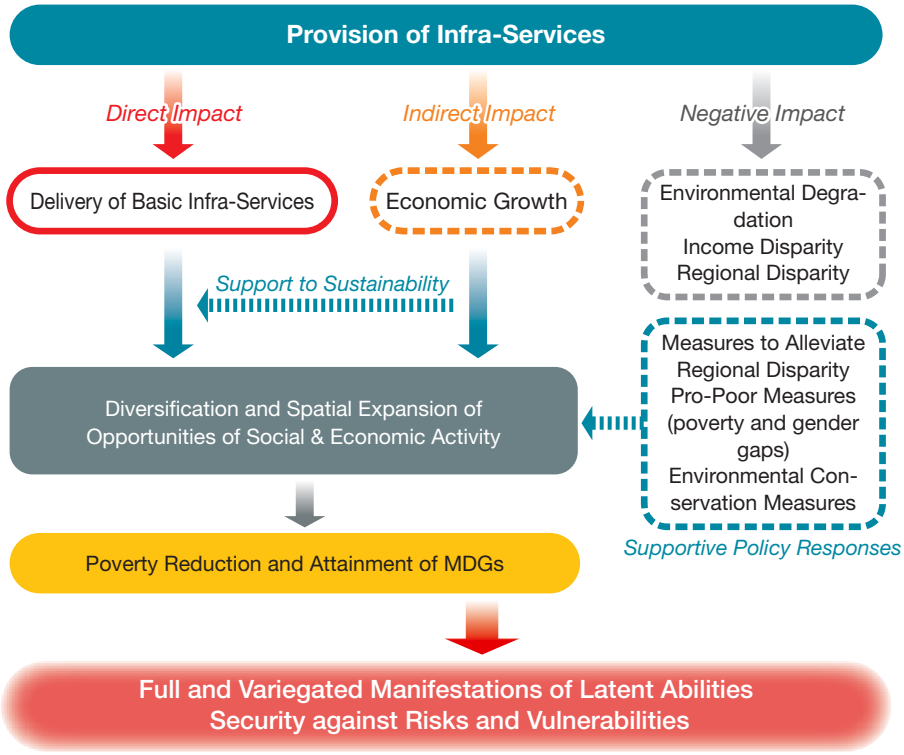
Actions by JICA

JICA is making preparations to initiate a number of case studies to clarify how dormant abilities found paths to self-empowerment in a new milieu provided by project implementation. Study findings will be analyzed and pooled as common stock of knowledge for subsequent project planning and implementation.

Note: In the discussion of pro-poor growth, the mechanism to generate growth is conceptualized as direct channel, market channel and policy channel.

Family Outing on a Flooded Road (Argentina)

Pro-People Infrastructure Redefined: Foundation for Realizing People's Potentials

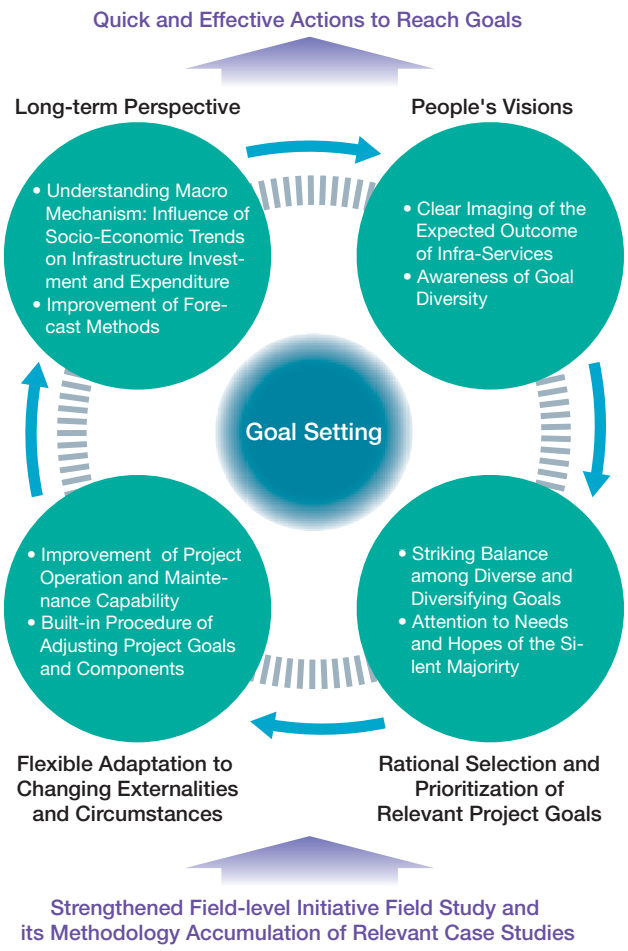


2 Helping People Realize Their Hopes : Field-Level Initiative in Goal Setting

There is this professed global commitment to poverty reduction, MDGs and security against risks and vulnerabilities. However, these goals must be translated into more specific goals and targets in application, because the developing world contains an enormous diversity of cultures and social structures as well as stages of economic and social development. In order to design and implement infrastructure projects and thereby deliver basic services efficiently, it is essential to seek accurate understanding of diverse needs among people, integrate them by prioritization and select the actionable goals and targets. It is also essential to adjust the goals and targets flexibly in response to changing externalities and circumstances.

Goal Setting for Pro-People Development

Goal setting for infrastructure development can be done with reference to the aforementioned pro-people redefinition. The goals may be equated with the direct output of a physical asset, the service delivery thereof, or the impact of service delivery. In order to design and implement an effective project, it is important to plan the efficient service delivery arrangement in such a way that the outcome thereof will contribute to the manifestations of beneficiaries' latent abilities.



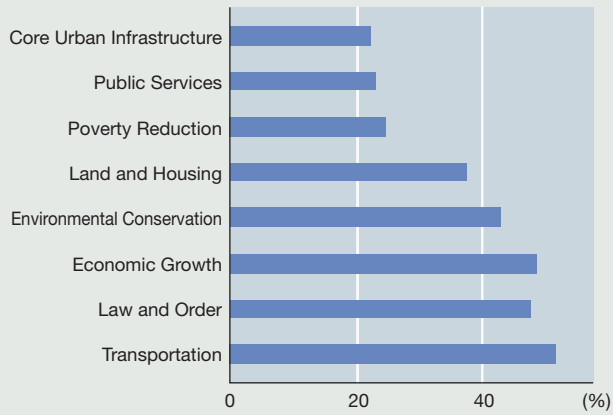
Accurate Understanding of Needs

- *Matching project goals with people's own*

  The expressions like poverty reduction and Millennium Development Goals are not easily translatable on the field level of project planning. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and similar publications nonetheless fall short of giving practicable clues for project planners working on a particular project for a particular area. It is necessary to define project-specific goals and targets from the accurate understanding of what local people need and desire, keeping the goals and strategies of higher order in proper perspective.

- *Local diversity of goals*

  Beneficiaries of infrastructure development, or clients of infrastructural services, vary widely from individuals to various organizations, local governments, and the state. The attributes of clients vary by the different levels of economic and social development among developing countries, by different regions within a country, by different ethnic and cultural backgrounds of people, and so on. Potential clients see different visions of their future and have different goals of their own. Therefore, what they want from infrastructure projects might vary just as widely as their personal visions and goals. Moreover, the diversity tends to increase because the process of social and economic development usually gives rise to new values and life styles. The trend of administrative decentralization in the developing world also underscores the diversification of needs and goals. Project planning will require the accurate gleaning of service needs by profiling local people's livelihood activities and capability potentials.



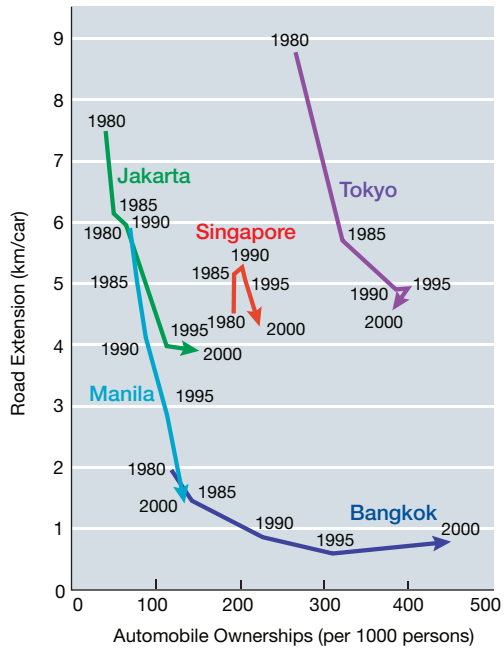
People living in Ho Chi Minh City pointed out a number of urban problems that they considered serious.
(They were asked to choose three from the list of problems.)

Source: JICA, Urban Transportation Study in Ho Chi Minh City, 2003

Goal Setting from Long-Term Perspective

Most physical structures have very long life, and provide services over generations. As shown by Champs Elysees in Paris and the Roman aqueduct network in Rome, once constructed, infrastructure facilities continue to occupy space semi-permanently, underpinning the rigid structural framework of urban space. Therefore, it is necessary to set the goals of infrastructure development by forecasting the long-term prospects of demography, social and economic development and environmental deterioration.

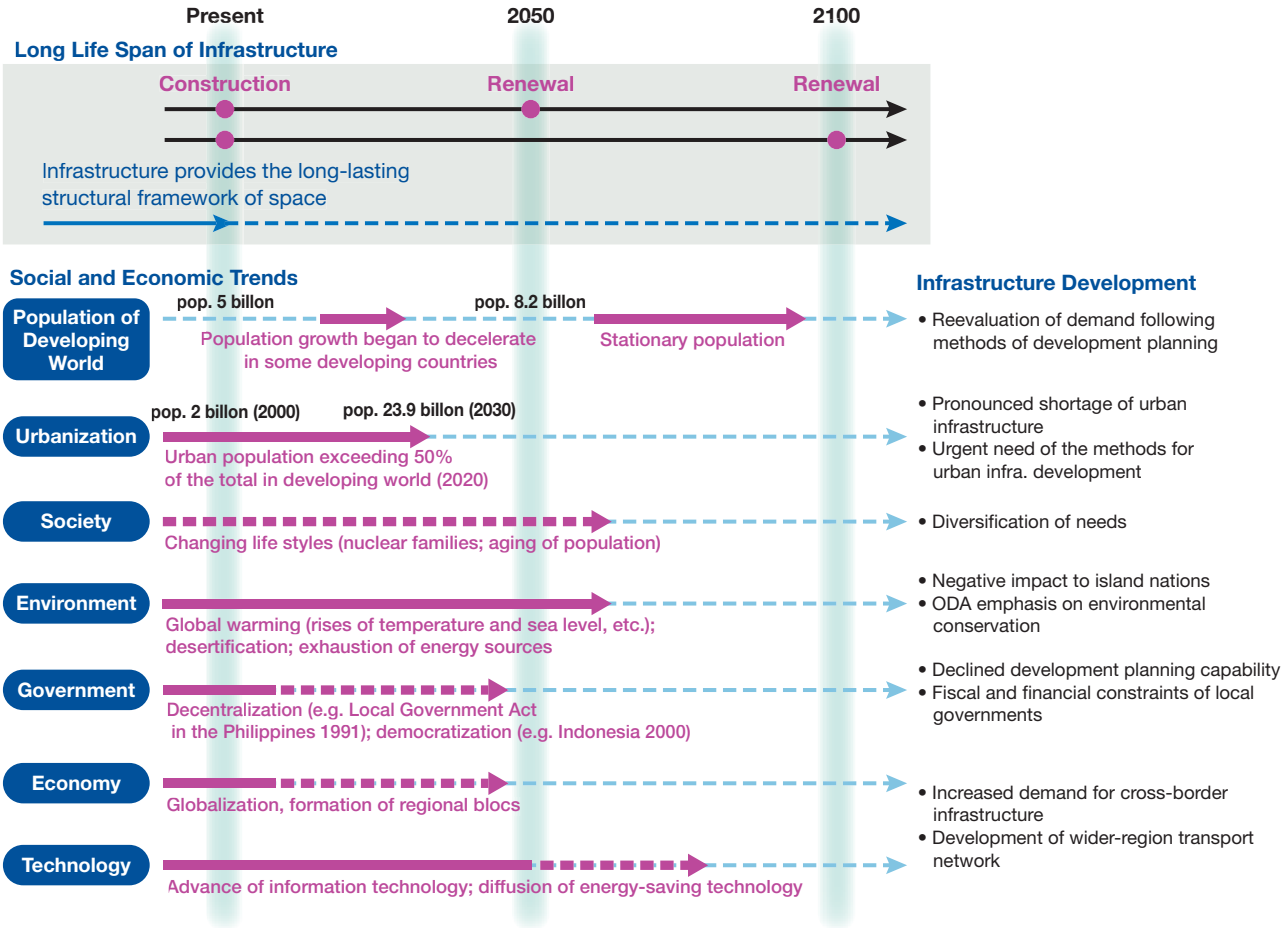
Some long-term prospects are worth mentioning. Regarding environment, the impact of global warming will be increasingly felt world-wide in the future. For example, the vulnerability of atolls has been already increasing along with the rising sea level. Tuvalu Island was washed over by sea water during the globally felt abnormal weather in 2001. The current rapid growth of energy demand in China is expected to tighten the world energy supply and demand situation in the future. According to the IEA forecast, China's demand for petroleum is estimated to become the second highest in the world (5.49 million barrels a day) in 2003 and grow to command the world share of 9% by 2020.



Automobile Ownerships and Total Road Extension

- *Jakarta and Manila are following the trend of Bangkok.*
- *Growing motorization and urbanization visibly aggravate the shortage of urban infrastructure*

Infrastructure under Social and Economic Changes



Relevant Goal Setting

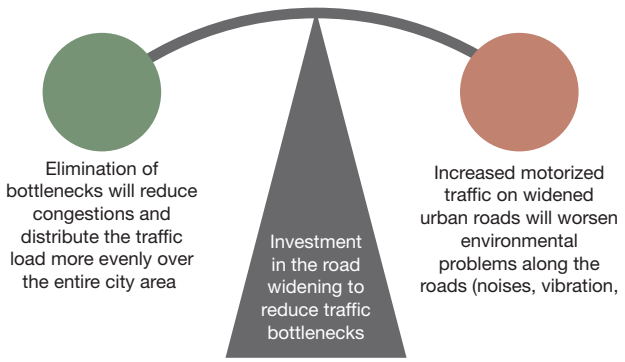
- *Selective Focus on Diverse Needs*

The impact of infrastructure development is spatially and temporally far-reaching. The actors in its service delivery arrangement are often many and heterogeneous. In order to define the exact role for a given project, it is important to seek the accurate understanding of what future prospects these actors envision for themselves and what specific goals they want the project to achieve. At the same time, it is just as important to define priority among the actors' divergent needs and selectively focus on relevant goals. The selective focus is essential to determine the exact role for a given project and to design the project components accordingly.

- *Participation of Project Beneficiaries in Goal Setting*

It will be very important to have the actors participate in the decision making process, because wider ownership by the government and communities is the key to ensure the success of a proposed project in terms of sustainable cost sharing and adequate execution of project operation and maintenance. The participatory approach to project-related decisions has been proving its worth in many parts of the developing world. The approach appears to work more effectively for projects of relatively small scale. The larger the project scale, the more time consuming the coordination of conflicting claims from diverse actors, and the harder the selective but consensual focusing on relevant project goals. It is becoming increasingly important that some forms of opinion survey be undertaken among the potential beneficiaries to ensure the project relevancy and thereby influence their decision Especially important for the participatory approach is the transparent presentation of all relevant information to encourage rational and relevant decisions by those participating in the project. For example, it is useful to explain the expenditure and the labor requirement for project operation and maintenance in relation to the service charge the beneficiaries have to pay. It is also useful to explain the tradeoff between daily advantages and amenities gained by the project and the expected deterioration of local environment. The presentation of information is necessary not only when decisions are being made but also when the already made decisions are in need of reconfirmation.

Example of Tradeoffs in Transport Development



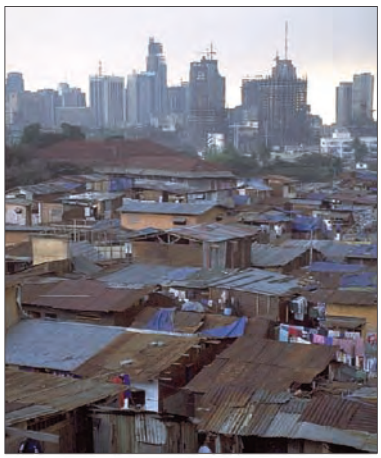
Flexible Adjustment of Project Goals

Infrastructure projects not infrequently face changes of externalities and circumstances, such as revisions of government industrial policy and setbacks in macroeconomic growth which have been unaccounted for at the time of project planning. Unexpected changes sometimes occur in the demand structure for infrastructure services. The range of uncertainties is quite large in the developing world. To cope with such eventualities, it is necessary to have a built-in procedure in the project implementation process, wherein the goals are reassessed regularly vis-à-vis monitored changes in external circumstances and modified or revised accordingly. Especially regarding the demand creating types of transport projects, the closely associated investments that are assumed to create the demand (e.g., a new industrial estate or new housing development) must be regularly monitored, and if deemed necessary, appropriate actions must be taken to adapt the transport project implementation itself. Unplanned additional investments nearby are sometimes found to absorb the demand assumed for a given road project. Such cases call for a flexible procedure to reduce the latter's scale or change its alignment.

- *We need technical cooperation for updating by ourselves used in JICA-assisted project feasibility study and detailed design. (Answer to the questionnaire in the Philippines)*

Actions by JICA

JICA has been strengthening the field-level initiative throughout the process of project preparation: namely, culling relevant goals from accurately collected local needs; presenting tradeoffs between goals to stakeholders in the proposed project; fine tuning forecast methods regarding long-term social and economic prospects and technological changes; thereby making decisions on project goals and components by envisioning the long-term pro-people outcome thereof; and presenting an image as vividly as possible of the expected "outcome" of project implementation so that potential clients would be able to judge wisely and rationally. In addition, technical cooperation efforts are being improved toward the capacity development among the counterpart personnel so that they will be able to update and adapt the project goals and components.



Slums and Skyscrapers (Manila, Philippines)