

6th Seminar on International Cooperation for Local Initiatives
(Unofficial translation)

Mr Hiroshi Matsugu
Director, Facilities Section, Facilities Department
Environment Bureau, City of Fukuoka

Title

Experiences in international technical cooperation in the Fukuoka Method: Solid waste landfill technology

Summary

Local governments in Japan contribute to the development of developing countries through technology and know-how in various urban fields, such as waste management, environmental protection, water supply and wastewater treatment, and health/medicine. However, in my experiences to now, I do not think that the know-how of local governments in Japan has been sufficiently applied.

Waste management is a problem being faced by local governments in many countries. The scale is small however in international cooperation between countries, it has not been picked up.

In order to make use of the know-how of Japanese cities, it is necessary to think of a framework (system) to respond to the small-scale projects being carried out between local governments.

Concretely, if an organization like the Japan Environmental Corporation (JEC) was established in developing countries, international support organizations could evaluate the management and debt repayment situation, while also providing funds, financing individual projects of solid waste management companies of target countries, and promoting support through technological guidance. In this way, targeted support countries and supporting countries, as well as experts from support organizations could cooperate and local governments could support such projects as consultants.

In other words, in the creation of a new system for two-step loans, there is potential for international support organizations and local governments in Japan to link together.

Presentation

My name is Hiroshi Matsugu of the Facilities Section, Facilities Department, Environment Bureau, City of Fukuoka. I will make a short statement on international cooperation related to the Fukuoka Method, waste landfill technology.

First, I would like to give you an explanation of the outcomes of international cooperation through the Fukuoka Method.

In November 1997, the 2nd Asia-Pacific Cities Summit, comprised of Fukuoka City and cities in the Asia-Pacific region, was held and the Fukuoka Method was introduced. Since then, Fukuoka City has received a steady stream of requests for cooperation from overseas and international organizations.

To date, Fukuoka has cooperated with eight countries, including China, Malaysia, Mexico. This also includes lectures at various seminars and meetings. Additionally, in one city in China, guidance has been provided for the construction of a final disposal site and monitoring is being carried out. In November 2003, a technical cooperation agreement was signed with Tsinghua University in Beijing and presently, collaborative technical guidance is being carried out in one province in China on the construction a disposal site.

The costs for technical cooperation are borne by the side requesting cooperation (with the exception of personnel costs). Fukuoka cannot cooperation with requests for cooperation in which these costs cannot be met.

In addition, Fukuoka receives many trainees. From 1999, we have received trainees every year for a course on landfill technology for Malaysia, as well as receiving 20 groups of 152 trainees for FY2003 under JICA.

This type of cooperation is basically conducted in collaboration with Fukuoka University however we are also linking with international organizations such as UNHABITAT Fukuoka Office, UNEP, JICA, and Inter-American Development Bank, among others.

Based on these experiences, I would like to give you my opinion. Local governments in Japan

contribute to the development of developing countries through technology and know-how in various urban fields, such as waste management, environmental protection, water supply and wastewater treatment, and health/medicine. In particular, the improvement of environmental problems in developing countries can be considered as a contribution of the experiences of local governments. However, when looking at the current situation, it can be considered that the know-how of local governments in Japan has not been sufficiently applied. Could it be a possibility that this know-how has not been sufficiently adopted within the ODA framework, the foundation of international cooperation in Japan? Against this background, the experiences of Kitakyushu City in using the ODA framework for promotion of cooperation should receive special mention and evaluation.

In recent years, the financial situation of local governments has worsened, and cities are minimizing their internationalization policies. In Fukuoka, mere “international exchange” has been discarded and international cooperation is undergoing a revision. Important aspects only are being continued for projects which require substantial cooperation, including personnel costs in implementation, however, for cities in Asia which request cooperation but are unable to bear the costs of cooperation, local governments are finding it more difficult to do this on a volunteer basis. In this situation, in order for the know-how of local governments to be used, the labor costs of people who participate in such projects that have no financial benefit, a new business system could be called for.

In addition, regional promotion policies, such as the Fukuoka Method for waste disposal technology and the “one village, one product” action being taken in Oita Prefecture, are at a stage where it is difficult to develop as international cooperation activities. This is an issue for local governments in other countries as well; if the scale is too small, the outcomes are difficult to be picked up by international cooperation frameworks between countries.

In order to make use of the know-how of local governments in Japan, it is necessary to develop or think of a new business framework (system) which can respond to the needs of small-scale projects being carried out by local governments.

In the field of solid waste management, in Japan and other developing countries, because there are numerous cases of the promotion of privatization, national and local governments are anticipating regular earnings such as solid waste treatment user fees. With this type of system, in developing countries, loans can be an effective method for social development.

For cooperation for Fukuoka City and also our partners, such as Fukuoka University professors, if use of small-scale funding could be easy to obtain, it has been proposed that this would be able to make use of the experiences of our cities and improve solid waste management.

As I am not an expert, this is only one idea. However, I think that a framework for two-step loans related to environmental and regional promotion departments may work well. If there are new funds available, the international cooperation activities of local governments could develop.

Concretely, if an organization like the Japan Environmental Corporation (JEC) was established in developing countries, international support organizations could evaluate the management and debt repayment situation, while also providing funds, financing individual projects of solid waste management companies of target countries, and promoting support through technological guidance. In this way, targeted support countries and supporting countries, as well as experts from support organizations could cooperate and local governments could support such projects as consultants. In other words, with the creation of a new system for two-step loans, linkages with international support organizations and local governments in Japan could be possible.

With regard to regional development, small and medium sized business financial treasuries in Japan could also be established in developing countries.

As a concrete proposal under the Kitakyushu Initiative, I would like to propose this as one idea in the creation of a “Kitakyushu Method.”