Reviewer's report

Title: Contribution of the Japan International Cooperation Agency health-related projects to health system strengthening

Version: 3 Date: 7 August 2013

Reviewer: Federica Secci

Reviewer's report:

Contribution of the Japan International Cooperation Agency health-related projects to health system strengthening.

Thanks to the editor for giving me the opportunity to review the revised manuscript and thanks to the authors for addressing the comments made during the first round of reviews.

Major Compulsory Revisions
None.

Minor Essential Revisions

Introduction. The authors state: “In particular, we assessed the contribution of the JICA projects to health system strengthening by focusing on governance.” I believe they should motivate this focus on governance and provide justification for this at this stage in the paper. Later in the Methods (Analysis of the JICA projects), the authors state: “In our study, since governance was regarded as an overarching component to manage other blocks and generate quality health service, it was considered to be an independent block.” Since this seems to be the reason for you to focus on governance, this rationale should be made explicit in the introduction and throughout the paper.

Discretionary Revisions

Abstract: Background. In order to add clarity, the authors could state: “…and assess the contribution of JICA health-related projects to strengthening health systems worldwide.”

Key words. The authors might consider adding the Project Design Matrix they used among the key words.

Minor issues not for publication.

Methods. The authors might want to specify further the following sentence: “Collection of PDMs over 5 years provided an adequate sample of more than 100 projects”, by adding “This collections of PDMs…”.

General comments.
In conclusion, I appreciate your attempt to address the reviewers' comments and
clarify the contribution of your paper. The flow of the paper improved significantly. I particularly liked the improvements made to sharpen the abstract, to explain the choice and use of methods (i.e. how you integrated the WHO framework and the PDM), and to reflect on the implications of your study in the conclusions. I have no further suggestions.

I do hope you find my comments helpful and I wish you all the best with your revisions to the manuscript.

**Level of interest:** An article of limited interest

**Quality of written English:** Acceptable

**Statistical review:** No, the manuscript does not need to be seen by a statistician.

**Declaration of competing interests:**

I declare that I have no competing interests