ABSTRACT: This article analyzes the strategy of Korea’s official development assistance (ODA) for Cambodia’s agriculture and rural development sector, as performed by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) to Cambodia’s agriculture and rural development sector. Defining KOICA’s strategy proved difficult because of the small scale of grant aid and fewer numbers of agricultural and rural development projects. Thus, this article intends to evaluate KOICA’s strategy by comparing it with the strategy of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), an agency similar to KOICA in its makeup and professed goals. With comparison of JICA’s strategy, it has a useful meaning with starting point, which evaluates KOICA’s strategy in Cambodia. Based on the findings, the article recommends that KOICA consider increasing the amount of grant aid, the size and period of related projects; adapting the two-track approach; extending specific activities in the fisheries industry; and applying a participatory rural development and multidisciplinary approach.

Key words: Official Development Assistance (ODA), Rural Development, Agricultural Cooperation, KOICA, JICA
a donor country. As Korea’s experiences overcoming poverty and achieving enormous economic development have been noticed by developing countries and international organizations, the demand for Korea to share its experiences has increased. Thus, the country has become an international role model for developing an economy and reducing poverty (Chun, 2007). In particular, Korea’s nationwide movement in its agriculture and rural development sector, the *Saemaul Undong* [New Community Movement], has been introduced to developing countries as a successful rural development project. It has been also standing in the spotlight of the research subject in order to develop similar strategies in developing countries (Lim, 2011; Lim, 2011; Sohn & Chang, 2011).

Korea’s government selected the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as the priority countries for economic investment and cooperation. The economic, political, and diplomatic relations with Cambodia have quickly improved since Korea’s ODA started flowing into Cambodia in 2001 (Sotharith, 2010). After both countries agreed to boost their economic ties in 2009, Korea’s ODA programs increased and extended. Most of these ODA programs have been implemented by The Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). KOICA, established in 1991, is the government agency formed to promote relations between Korea and developing countries by supporting those countries’ economic and social development. In Cambodia, KOICA has focused on rural and agricultural development, human resources development, health and medical services, infrastructure and green energy. These efforts are designed to coincide with Cambodia’s development strategy, to help that country achieve Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as defined by the United Nations, and to share Korea’s development experience.

The Korea’s ODA for Cambodia has been provided through grant aid and concessional loans. This article addresses only ODA grant aid. Opened in 2003, KOICA Cambodia Office overseas the disbursement of ODA grant aid for bilateral projects, partnerships with Cambodia civil societies, multilateral cooperation with international organizations, invitation training programs, volunteer programs, and expert dispatch programs. It has been providing its assistance for social sectors such as health and education; economic sectors such as urban planning and management, agriculture and rural development; infrastructure areas such as energy, power, transportation, water, and sanitation; and services for community and social welfare, the arts, environmental conservation, and tourism.

Cambodia is generally known as an agrarian country. More than 80% of the populations living in rural areas make their livings in agriculture. As a whole, the country’s economic foundation still mainly relies on agriculture (MAFF, 2012). Accordingly, agriculture is regarded as the most important economic sector and has played a major role in contributing to Cambodia’s economic growth and social development. Above all, agriculture and rural development are necessary for reducing poverty and supporting farmers and rural societies in Cambodia. Although the inflow of donor countries’ ODA grant aid has increased year by year, and Cambodia has plentiful water resources, its agricultural productivity is still lower than its neighbors’ and its rural growth is slower than its speed of urbanization. Essentially, Cambodia has difficulties obtaining practical and satisfactory results. In the middle of increasing Korea’s technical and financial cooperation, we also need to find a method to provide substantial help in agriculture and rural development in Cambodia through reviewing the past and present ODA grant aid. In order to describe the past and current state of Korea-Cambodia agricultural cooperation, the researcher analyzed ODA projects registered in the Cambodia ODA Database maintained by the Council for The Development of Cambodia. Kang et al (2009) quantitatively examined substantial similarities in aid allocation between Korean and Japan using bilateral data of foreign direct investment (FDI). They found that Korea’s foreign aid practices are very similar to Japan’s aid practices of the 1980’s and suggested that Korea learn a lesson from the weaknesses and mistakes of Japan’s previous aid policy. Additionally, this article intends to analyze the state of Japan-Cambodia agricultural cooperation as overseen by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Comparison of the two policies will help us easily understand the current situation of KOICA strategy. Finally, we explore how to establish strategies to strengthen and expand the agricultural cooperation between Korea and Cambodia in the future.

**KOICA Agriculture and Rural Development Sector Strategy**

Korea has been supporting the sustainable development of rural areas in developing countries since 1991, when the first rural development-related project was implemented to aid the sericulture laboratory in Nepal. KOICA performed or subsidized approximately 90 projects by 2010 for about 30 developing countries (KOICA, 2011a). Complying with the needs of an international community, KOICA considered rural development as one of seven core sectors, which consist of public health, education, governance, ICT (information and communication technology), rural development, industry and energy, environment and gender (KOICA, 2011b; KOICA, 2012).

By establishing a new strategy in 2011, KOICA...