

JEAS-Accredited Environmental Assessor Qualification Scheme

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Abstract

The Japan Association of Environment Assessment (JEAS) launched the Environmental Assessors Qualification Scheme in fiscal 2005, which, to date, includes 436 certified professionals. This qualification scheme took a big step forward with its inclusion as a civil technician qualification in the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure Transport and Tourism's register of qualifications for technicians in the last fiscal year. In the future, JEAS intends to contribute to the improvement of social credibility by supporting the further training of Environmental Assessors, as well as Continuing Professional Development by accruing achievements in qualification examinations, and the conduct of accurate and easy-to-understand environmental impact assessment.

In international developments of environmental impact assessment, institutional and technical needs for environmental and social considerations have grown together with the improvement and development of infrastructure for growth in Asian countries. However, there are a number of issues that have emerged in the implementation of these assessments. Improving the quality of environmental impact assessment in the Asian region was identified as a major issue at the Asia Environmental Impact Assessment Conference organized by the Ministry of the Environment and held in Nagoya in May last year, with efforts to increase the capacity of environmental impact assessment regarded as important.

With this in mind, JEAS is introducing its Environmental Assessor Qualification Scheme for environmental assessment practitioners and hopes that it will be utilised and play a role in improving the quality of environmental impact assessment.

Main Paper

Introduction

The Japan Association of Environment Assessment (JEAS) is a national organisation with a membership base of companies and other organizations that are involved in environmental impact assessment and environmental research. After its establishment as a private organization by 65 companies in January 1973, JEAS became an incorporated association (under the shared jurisdiction of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry; Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism; and Ministry of the Environment) in 1997 when the Environmental Impact Assessment Act was enacted. In 2012, JEAS became a general incorporated association. Currently, JEAS has 138 corporate members (as of the end of January 2017).

In order to improve technical skills for environmental impact assessment and develop human resources

as the basis for ensuring the public interest in and the credibility of environmental impact assessment, JEAS promotes projects, such as studies, research, and training on environmental impact assessment, and launched the Environmental Assessor Qualification Scheme in fiscal 2005, which has certified 436 environmental assessors to date (as of the end of January 2017).

The necessity and purpose of this qualification scheme, current state of the accreditation examination and implementation, and an overview of the scheme's continuing professional development system are described below.

1. Necessity of Qualification Scheme

With the establishment of the Environmental Impact Assessment Act, developing and securing human resources and introducing a qualification scheme for environmental impact assessments was stipulated in a supplementary resolution by the House of Councillors (June 1997). The necessity of improving technical standards and social credibility with the use of a qualification scheme for consultants was incorporated in a review of basic matters on environmental impact assessment (March 2005).

The Environmental Impact Assessment Act has been revised in recent years, and assessment areas and methods, such as documents on Primary Environmental Impact Consideration and wind power generation, have been expanded and diversified (April 2011). International trends show an increase in institutional and technical needs that reflect environmental and social considerations, along with the improvement and development of infrastructure to support growth in Asian countries, in particular. Expectations of environmental experts are high as a result of the diversification, advancements, and internationalisation of environmental impact assessment, as well as an enhanced awareness of protecting the global environment.

With this in mind, there has been increasingly strong demand to improve the technical standards of practitioners, and to improve the social credibility and appropriate practice of environmental impact assessment through the development and utilisation of a qualification scheme.

2. Objective of Qualification Scheme

The Environmental Assessor Qualification Scheme is designed to improve the technical standards of environmental assessment practitioners and expand their professional development through certifications offered by the Japan Association of Environment Assessment, as well as to contribute to the appropriate practice of environmental impact assessment and improve its credibility.

3. Overview of Qualification Scheme

(1) Name: Environmental Assessor (registered trademark)

(2) Qualification categories: Two categories

- ① Living environment category (Atmospheric environment, aquatic environment, soil environment, waste, greenhouse gases, etc.)

- ② Natural environment category (Plants, animals, ecosystems, landscapes, venues for encounters with nature, etc.)

(3) Content of qualifications: Following items related to the practice of environmental impact assessment

- Basic matters concerning legal systems and procedures related to environmental impact assessment
- Matters concerning environmental planning, surveys and analysis, forecasting and assessment, and environmental conservation measures for each sector
- Matters concerning preparation and support for the development of environmental impact assessment statements
- Matters concerning management skills for the practice of environmental impact assessment and professional ethics

(4) Eligibility requirements for examination

Five or more years of practical experience after graduation from a four-year university, three or more years of practical experience after graduation from graduate school, eight or more years of practical experience for applicants that do not fulfil these two criteria.

(5) Examination topics and contents

- Specialized subjects:
 - I-1 Work experience in qualification categories (narrative form)
 - I-2 Technical skills and knowledge in qualification categories (multiple choice)
- Common subjects:
 - II-1 Basic knowledge on legal systems, procedures, environmental protection (multiple choice)
 - II-2 Management skills in practice, professional ethics (multiple choice)
- An examination committee of academic experts is responsible for the examination .

(6) Results of qualification examination (as of end of January 2017)

Categories	No. of Applicants	No. of Candidates for Examination	No. of Successful Candidates	Passing Rate	No. of Assessors Registered
Living environment	791	586	274	46.8%	203
Natural environment	799	632	295	46.7%	233
Total	1,590	1,218	569	46.7%	436

(7) Registration and renewal of qualifications

- Applicants that have passed the examination can apply to register their qualifications with the JEAS. Persons that have been registered are permitted to use the name “Environmental Assessor.”
- The period of validity of qualifications is five years. In order to renew qualifications, Environmental Assessors must have earned 250 CPD credits in five years based on the Continuing Professional

Development (CPD) scheme or 100 CPD credits in five years with a specified lecture or paper, separately determined by the JEAS.

4. Overview of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) System

Environmental Assessors must be able to continuously understand changes in the social environment and acquire new skills and knowledge, all the while making strides in self-development through continuing education, such as maintaining and improving their own skills and technological levels. The CPD system plays an important role together with the Qualification Scheme as a mechanism to support Environmental Assessors. The system offers CPD programs for trainings, seminars, and research and is used for registration, management, and certification. JEAS is a member of the CPD Consortium in Construction Engineering Societies and Associations, and can make use of the CPD programs of members of the Consortium.

JEAS-CPD is subject to additional evaluations in proposals and general evaluation projects of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, for example.

5. Efforts for the Use of Qualifications

(1) Inclusion in the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism's register of qualifications for technical professionals

JEAS-accredited Environmental Assessor qualifications are registered as qualifications under provisions by the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Tourism to include the professional qualifications of technicians that will contribute to quality assurance in public work surveys and designs. Environmental Assessors are expected to be solicited as supervising engineers to comply with bid participation qualifications and to be subject to additional evaluations in comprehensive evaluation systems when public work is ordered by the national and local governments.

- Registration: February 24, 2016, Registration number 110
- Qualification name: Environmental Assessor qualification (Japan Association of Environment Assessment)
- Registration category: Supervising engineers for studies in the planning, surveys, and designs for the building environment field

(2) As a professional technician qualification for voluntary environmental impact assessments in projects of the Ministry of the Environment

Voluntary assessments are required in projects where interest subsidies are issued to promote loans for environmental risk studies that were systematically implemented by the Ministry of the Environment in fiscal 2013. The names of Environmental Assessors and other professionals are required at the time a project is implemented as experts that can provide guidance and advice. JEAS was entrusted to work on providing guidance on voluntary assessments in this project and has been in charge of this practice since fiscal 2015.

Conclusion

This qualification scheme, which was introduced in fiscal 2005, took a big step forward with its inclusion as a civil technician qualification in the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure Transport and Tourism's register of qualifications for technicians in the last fiscal year.

In the future, JEAS intends to contribute to the improvement of social credibility by supporting the further training of Environmental Assessors, as well as Continuing Professional Development by accruing achievements in qualification examinations, and the conduct of accurate and easy-to-understand environmental impact assessment.

In international developments of environmental impact assessment, institutional and technical needs for environmental and social considerations have grown together with the improvement and development of infrastructure for growth in Asian countries. However, there are a number of issues that have emerged in the implementation of these assessments. Improving the quality of environmental impact assessment in the Asian region was identified as a major issue at the Asia Environmental Impact Assessment Conference organized by the Ministry of the Environment and held in Nagoya in May last year, with efforts to increase the capacity of environmental impact assessment regarded as important. With this in mind, JEAS hopes that its Environmental Assessor Qualification Scheme for environmental assessment practitioners will be utilised and play a role in improving the quality of environmental impact assessment.



Figure 1: Overview of Japan Association of Environment Assessment

Structure of Qualification Scheme

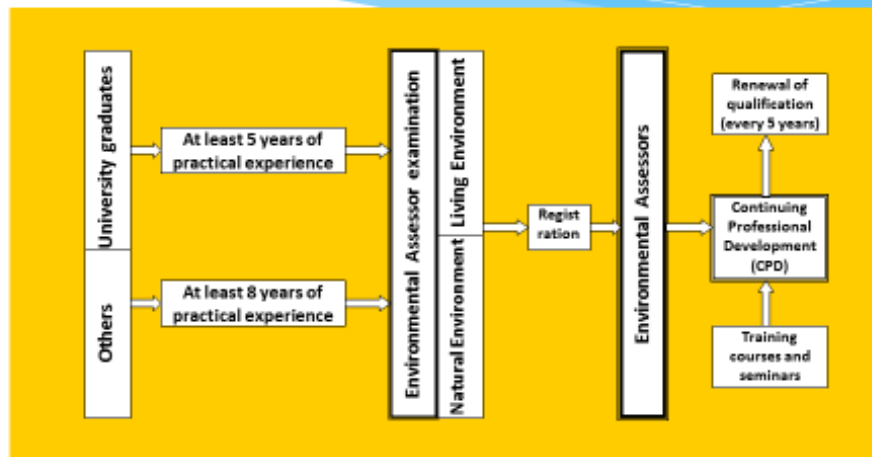


Figure 2: Structure of Qualification Scheme