JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY

News FROM Cambodia

JUNE - OCTOBER 2020 • NUMBER 1 • PHNOM PENH

Improvement of Public Bus Operation in Phnom Penh

The impacts of COVID-19 on the City Bus Operation in Phnom Penh

JICA and Phnom Penh Capital Administration (PPCA) have embarked on a four-year technical cooperation to enhance the operation and management of the city bus system, which was fully opened to the public in late 2014. Called "The Project for Improvement of Public Bus Operation in Phnom Penh" (PiBO), the initiative has been in place since January 2017.

In line with PiBO, Japan provided 80 buses in 2018 to the City Bus Authority (CBA) under Japanese Grant Aid. With the new fleet, CBA expanded its service network from three lines in 2016 to 13 lines in 2018, covering the majority of Phnom Penh. This also helped to increase ridership from 7,000 passengers per day in 2017 to around 30,000 in 2019.

However, since the beginning of this year, the city bus operation and PiBO project have been significantly impacted by the Covid-19 outbreak. PPCA and CBA announced the temporary suspension of bus services on March 26 as part of the measures to prevent the spread of the virus. As a consequence, several ongoing PiBO activities, including pilot projects, have been suspended.

Despite the suspension of services and further challenges caused by the Covid-19 crisis, JICA's PiBO team and the CBA are working together to develop an operation and recovery plan that includes mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery. These measures are to ensure the safety of passengers during the outbreak and in the post-pandemic period. Some of the initiatives include the regular cleaning and disinfection of vehicles and equipment, social distancing on buses and training in hygiene and prevention measures, as well as the provision of preventative equipment. Some of the action taken has been disseminated through the media and via CBA's Facebook page to help maintain passenger trust in public transport both during and after the Covid-19 pandemic.

In line with the operation and recovery plan, and the installation of preventive equipment, the city's bus operations are expected to resume by the end of this year.

PiBO Team, JICA Infra-Team

Trainees performing their task transmission line maintenance

H.E Lou Kin Chhun Delegate of the Royal Government of Cambodia in Charge as Chairman & CEO of PAS

Quality Declared Seed (QDS) field inspection

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JICA COOPERATION IN ENHANCEMENT OF OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT OF TRANSMISSION SYSTEM

Technical Transfer for Improving Human Resource in Power Sector

Power outages used to be a common occurrence in the Kingdom due to an insufficient supply of electricity and a lack of high-voltage transmission lines. To address this, the Cambodian government began purchasing additional electricity from neighbouring countries and constructing more substations. This eventually increased the need for the high-voltage transmission lines needed to transmit electricity over long distances. To meet these growing demands, development partners including Japan have significantly contributed to the construction of high-voltage transmission lines and substations enabling Cambodia to maintain a stable power supply.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has provided development assistance through various projects such as the Greater Mekong Power Network Development Project signed in 2007 and the Project for Phnom Penh Distribution System Expansion Phase I and Phase II inked in 2014 and 2015, respectively.

To enhance the operating and maintenance capacity of these newly built facilities, JICA has also been implementing various technical cooperation projects with Electricite du Cambodge (EDC), such as the Project for Improvement of Transmission Systems Operations and Maintenance. Began in 2013, it was completed in 2015.

However, EDC staff still faced other challenges such as quickly restoring power after outages caused by accidents or natural disasters affecting substations or transmission lines. The EDC also needed to further develop human resources in the planning, operating and maintaining of power systems. To this end, another technical cooperation project was launched in 2017 to transfer technology and provide Cambodian engineers with training from Japanese experts on operating the network and the effective maintenance and management of transmission and substation facilities. To be completed in November next year, this will also see the updating of training courses at EDC's Institution of Electrical Science.

Such projects have their challenges, but are ultimately worthwhile and rewarding, said Masatoshi Akimoto, the project's chief advisor.

JICA is confident that with this further technical cooperation project, EDC's engineers will gain considerably increased capacity to meet the needs of a rapidly expanding Cambodian electricity network. ●

Industrial Development Team, JICA Cambodia

H.E Lou Kim Chhun's Impression, Achievement and Experiences Working with JICA

Spring Conferment of Decorations Obtained

H.E Lou Kim Chhun, Delegate of the Royal Government of Cambodia in Charge as Chairman & CEO of Sihanoukville Port, received the 2020 Spring Conferment of Decorations from the Government of Japan for his contribution to promoting relationship between Japan and Cambodia in the field of port development. The following is an interview on his impression, achievements and experiences with JICA through the development of Sihanoukville Port known as the only international deep-sea port in supporting the national economic and industrial activities in Cambodia.

"It is my great honor and pleasure with profound emotion that my masterpieces, especially the achievement of friendship and cooperation between Japan and Cambodia in terms

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JICA IN THE MEDIA

"ជប៉ុនផ្តល់ជំនួយឥតសំណង ៣២លានដុល្លារ សម្រាប់គម្រោងពង្រីកប្រព័ន្ធផ្គត់ផ្គង់ទឹកស្អាត នៅក្រុងតាខ្មៅ"

Fresh News
2 June 2020

"Japan's friendship knows no bounds"

Khmer Times
13 October 2020

CALENDAR

JUNE

25 Final report session of JICA Volunteers (Online Meeting)

AUGUST

11 Four Countries JCC for Cassava-SATREPS

12 Launching Ceremony of Japan Partnership Program (SVA)

27 5th JCC for IINeoC Project

SEPTEMBER

3 Cambodia-Japan Government-Private Joint Conference

OCTOBER

13 JICA Volunteers-Activity Final Presentation (6 Volunteers Online from Japan)

19 4th JCC for TVET Project

22 4th Technical Dialogue for Cooperation Partnership in Power Sector between Cambodia-Japan

of the Sihanoukville Port development, which have been evaluated preciously and recognized outstanding achievements. It also shows remarkable accomplishments and significant contribution to the progress of Japanese civil engineering and promotion of exchange and cooperation between Japan and Cambodia. I also expect that a good cooperation and close relationship between Japan and Cambodia will contribute more to poverty reduction and Cambodia's development," said H.E.

Please allow me to briefly describe experience and the remarkable achievements with JICA Projects and Japanese Experts in terms of Sihanoukville Port Development in both hardware and software over the last 20 years are as follows:

With JICA projects:

JICA has provided technical cooperation project called "The Study on Master Plan and Feasibility Study of the Sihanoukville Port" (1996-1997). This study provided significant importance and established long-term concept plans for Sihanoukville Port Development. **Sihanoukville Port Urgent Rehabilitation Project** was launched in 2002 and continued until 2005 with the total cost of JPY4,142,000,000 for the development and construction of the 240m Container Berth, Container Yard with 8.5 ha and dredging the port channel and port basin up to -11.50m depth. It was an initial step of the integration of Sihanoukville Port into the marine transportation sector; particularly it was an era of transportation reform from general cargo into containerized cargo according to the modern transportation trend.

Later, **Sihanoukville Port Urgent Expansion Project (2005-2009)** was implemented with the total cost of JPY4, 313,000,000 in which the 160m Container Berth and One-Stop-Service administration building were constructed, and the port channel and port basin were also dredged up to -11.5m. In addition, 2 units of Quay Gantry Cranes, 05 Units of Rubber Tires Gantry Cranes, 08 Units of Tractor & Trailer, and one set of Management Systems (CTMS) were provided. It is the first time that the container deep-sea port started to operate in Cambodia. **In 2007**, JICA provided loan for **Sihanoukville Port SEZ Development Project-E/S** with the total cost of JPY318,000,000 for the feasibility study and details design, and the loan for **Sihanoukville Port SEZ Development Project** was provided in 2009 with the total cost of JPY3,651,000,000 for the construction of important SEZ's facilities. Together with this, **Sihanoukville Port Multipurpose Terminal Development Project** (2015-2018) by Japanese ODA Loan with the total cost of JPY7, 176,000,000 also provided.

The construction of a Multipurpose Terminal Berth with 330m long, by -13.5 depth for bulk and general cargoes with 200m length of Terminal Berth for Logistic Base of Oil Exploration was constructed in order to facilitate and stimulate the export of Cambodian agricultural products, such as acacia, woodchip, dry tapioca chip, milled rice including logistic service for the offshore oil exploration in the territory of Cambodian sea as well as for the economic growth in Cambodia. This project has contributed to reducing the ocean freight of bulk cargoes for import and export of Cambodia, and strengthened more competitiveness contributing to poverty reduction for Cambodian people and the economic growth of Cambodia. Lastly, JICA provided 7 years loan **project for Sihanoukville Port New Container Terminal Development-Phase 1** with the total cost of JPY 23,502,000,000, period of which is from **2017 to 2024**. The New Container Terminal-Phase 1 with 350m long by -14.5m depth, which is expected to be constructed in the middle of 2021 and operational in the middle of 2024, can accommodate the Over-Panama Size Container Ships with capacity of 60,000 DWT (5,000TEUs) and can allow/berth alongside 93% of the Intra-Asia Container Ships to Sihanoukville Port, thereby enabling the Ocean Freight comparable to that of our neighboring ports. It is a new step for the improvement of marine transportation in the Asia Pacific to be more efficient and effective, and the barrier of the water depth is eliminated. It contributes to strengthen more competitiveness with the regional countries.

With Japanese Experts:

Since 2005 up to present, the Ports and Harbors Bureau of MLIT have dispatched 07 port engineers to be JICA's Advisors to PAS to support the port operation and administration. Furthermore, a numerous Japanese engineers/personnel have been dispatched to be Japanese Experts for several Projects granted by Technical Cooperation Programme.

Working with the Japanese experts and advisors, we have acquired technical skilled and expertized knowledge, Know-How, lesson learnt, and experiences as follows:

- If we are facing difficulties related to port operation and management in the region as well as the world, we are able to inquire and share experiences with Japanese experts and advisors on timely basis and with friendship and honesty,
- PAS, in close elaboration with Japanese Consultants and Contractors, has obtained successful and fruitful achievements related to port facilities and infrastructures,
- We have acquired more knowledge on both technical aspects and work commitment of Japanese experts including the Project Consultants and Contractors, and
- The training in Japan has enhanced and improved the knowledge, Know-How, lesson learnt and experiences of PAS's staff and personnel to endeavor for better and reliable services and high productivities for Sihanoukville Port today as well as for future developments.

The Japanese ODA Loans, Grant Aids and Technical Cooperation at present and future have significantly diversified the Sihanoukville Port of Cambodia as the international port of better service quality and good environment as well as improved its productivities with customers' satisfaction in providing the benefits and cost competitiveness to all port's users in accordance with the international standard.

We expect that the container ships can transport directly from Cambodia to Asia Pacific, the US and EU or via without transshipment in the other ports in next 10 years.

With the precious and long vision of necessity and efficiency, as well as a solid support and constant assistance in both hardware and software for the Sihanoukville Port development by the Government of Japan through JICA, I strongly expect that JICA has precisely identified that the Sihanoukville Port development is quite efficient and significantly for poverty reduction and economic growth of Cambodia and to achieve that purpose the Sihanoukville Port will play an essential role as one of the main container gateways in the region. From that point of view, I am convinced that Japan (JICA) is still playing a phenomenal role as a development partner. ●

Infra-Team, JICA Cambodia

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RICE SEED PRODUCTION AND PROMOTION PROJECT

Enriching high-quality rice seed with the Quality Declared Seed system

Quality Declared Seed (QDS) field inspection

With high-quality rice seed indispensable for enhancing the quality of each variety, JICA's Rice Seed Production and Promotion Project (RSPP) strives to improve such standards in Cambodia.

The project started in October 2017 is being run in cooperation with the General Directorate of Agriculture (GDA) under the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (MAFF).

The overall objective of the RSPP is to produce more quality rice seeds and promote them to farmers so they can produce higher yields. The RSPP highlights the following three main activities upgrading the capacity of the farmers involved, introducing a rice seed inspection and certification system, and growing the rice seed business.

In its third year, the project focuses on establishing the Quality Declared Seed (QDS) system as one significant pillar. The QDS system, unlike an ordinary comprehensive system of seed quality control, inspects only 10 per cent of the seed production areas and the harvested seeds to maximize the use of limited human and financial resources. The QDS system consists of documentation screening, field inspections and quality checks. Provincial Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (PDAFF) staff are in charge of all inspections at the provincial level, while GDA staff supervise them nationally. The Department of Crop Seeds at the GDA was officially established to supervise and promote the QDS system.

Responding to the organizational setup, the project invited PDAFF staff from all provinces for a "train the trainers" course to provide QDS inspectors with the necessary skills. The field training provided effective methods for removing weeds, identifying off-types and inspection judgement. The laboratory training demonstrated the quality inspection technique, including using light to detect inert matter on each seed.

To effectively promote the QDS system, the RSPP also employs the Seed Business Model, which nominates an agricultural cooperative (AC) as lead to act as a bridge between seed producers and the market.

In the business model, the lead AC acts as QDS candidate, seed processor and marketer, while neighboring ACs supply it with rice seeds. The RSPP began supporting lead ACs in Prey Veng and Takeo provinces not only on the production methods, but also on business management.

In addition to such support, the project has hosted business forums in Prey Veng, Takeo, and Battambang provinces to boost the rice seed business nationwide. At the forums, seed producers and distributors can create a direct linkage for seed transactions, with both parties able to share frontline business information.

The focused supporting area in the business model is gradually shifting from production – which the lead ACs and their counterparts became familiar with – towards the business management side they still need to improve on. The lead ACs also need to enhance their skills in analysis and keeping financial records, as well as in stock management.

With manuals and videos on the system being completed in collaboration with the other development partners, the project urges the digitalization of the QDS system procedures. This is to enhance the operational sustainability of the system even under the unexpected circumstances, such as the current Covid-19 pandemic.

The RSPP will continue its endeavours to promote high quality rice seeds to more rice producers using the QDS system. ●

Agriculture and Rural Development Section, JICA Cambodia

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International News

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Maintaining Learning Opportunities for Children:

Japan and its private companies play a crucial role in the global expansion of online learning

Due to the impact of the novel coronavirus, schools around the world have been forced to call off classes. Supporting children's home-based learning and the continuation of education have been common challenges in the world. In such a situation, online learning systems and tools developed by Japanese companies in cooperation with JICA are being utilized globally. Here are some examples of online learning in Cambodia, Uzbekistan, and Japan introduced for children (for the details, please refer to the link at the end of the article).

The scene of an online video lesson using Think! Think! with the theme of teaching materials to improve thinking skills

Cambodia: Think! Think! an educational app offered free of charge to pupils by June, 2020

In Cambodia, classes at schools have been canceled since mid-March, and online courses are being broadcast on the website of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS). One of the courses uses "Think! Think!" an educational app created by WonderLab Inc. of Tokyo.

Think! Think! is a teaching platform for children from kindergarten to elementary school. It provides education program on spatial recognition, planar graphics, and other elements that form the foundation of thinking, while having fun. In Cambodia, the maintenance of the educational environment and the advancement of academic ability are national agenda. In order to enhance early childhood education, WonderLab has been promoting the utilization of Think! Think! as a commissioned project of JICA since 2018.

"In the wake of the closure of all schools due to the novel coronavirus, the Cambodian government consulted us on whether the interactive learning app Think!Think! could be utilized for home learning, especially since it is difficult for elementary school students to study using watch-only videos. We decided to offer it free of charge," says WATANABE Daiki of WonderLab.

"Cambodia's Minister of Education, Youth and Sport, Dr. Hang Chuon Naron (photo: right), has high expectations saying, "This is an excellent learning tool that fosters the ability to think, and I am hoping that it will be used for at-home study."

As there are few opportunities to learn via apps in Cambodia, they devised a method for students to learn while watching lesson videos on the MoEYS website and state-run television. Currently, more than 20,000 children watch online lessons each time they are broadcasting. ●

https://www.jica.go.jp/english/news/field/2020/20200617_01.html

Providing "safe water" as a vital measure against COVID-19

Safe water is essential for handwashing with soap, which is one of the effective measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. JICA is continuing its efforts to provide safe water in developing countries. Access to water is a fundamental human right. A stable supply of safe water leads to the resolving of challenges in various fields, including public health, medical and health care, as well as gender, education, and economic issues.

Phnom Penh's successful case spreads throughout the world

JICA has been working with Kitakyushu City, Japan to develop water supply system in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, since 1999. In a comparison of 1993 to 2006, Phnom Penh's water coverage increased from 25% to 90%, expanding the hours of water supply from 10 to 24 hours per day. In addition, the non-revenue water ratio decreased from 72% to 8%. These achievements were dubbed, the "Miracle of Phnom Penh," and surprised the entire world.

A significant distinction of Japan's international cooperation in water supply projects is the collaboration with water utilities in Japan, such as Water and Sewer Bureau of Kitakyushu City, with advanced technical and management capabilities. ●

https://www.jica.go.jp/english/news/field/2020/20200812_02.htmll

Contact Us

News from Cambodia is a newsletter that focuses on JICA's international perspectives and its involvement in local economic development. This newsletter details the work of JICA in Cambodia.

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