

News FROM Philippines

J A N U A R Y – J U N E 2 0 2 0

JICA appoints new chief representative in the Philippines



The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) announced the appointment of AZUKIZAWA Eigo as new chief representative of the JICA Philippine Office.

AZUKIZAWA, a development finance expert, served at the former Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) Paris Office from 2004 - 2006 and held key finance management positions in JICA from 2008 to 2020. He was also involved in development finance for more than 12 years at the former Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF), Japan's loan aid implementing agency. AZUKIZAWA succeeded WADA Yoshio who led JICA's operations in the Philippines for the past two years. A balikbayan (returnee) to the Philippines, AZUKIZAWA has served in the JICA Philippine Office from 2013 to 2015 overseeing JICA's infrastructure development initiatives among others to encourage sustainable economic activities.

"I call on our partners to work closely with JICA and harness innovative solutions and agile ways to accomplish our projects," added AZUKIZAWA, while also saying that JICA will continue to encourage Japanese private sector participation in development, using their insights and investment experiences, to sustain gains in development and ensure a better future for all.

A graduate of political science and economics at Waseda University, AZUKIZAWA supported policies and operations in JICA Tokyo Headquarters under the Office of the President in 2015 - 2018 and as Deputy Director General of the Southeast Asia and Pacific Department from 2018 - 2020. •

"While these are challenging times globally, particularly with disruptions in human security, JICA assures the Philippines that we will continue to strengthen our trusted partnership – sharing Japan's experience and knowhow, building capacity, and creating win-win solutions."
-AZUKIZAWA Eigo
JICA Philippines
Chief Representative

JICA, Philippines sign JPY 50 billion COVID-19 crisis response emergency support

JICA and the Philippine government signed a JPY 50 billion Official Development Assistance (ODA) loan to curtail the spread of COVID-19 in the Philippines and support government efforts in addressing the health crisis.

The COVID-19 Crisis Response Emergency Support Loan, as a general budgetary support co-financed with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), is designed to strengthen the country's capacity to respond to COVID-19 and revitalize economic activities largely hit by the pandemic. It is the first budgetary support extended by the bilateral donor to address the COVID-19 situation in the Philippines.

As of April 2020, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported that the unemployment rate in the country climbed to a record-high of 17.7 percent or 7.3 million people as an effect of COVID-19 to the economy.



"We believe that this emergency support loan would complement our other projects in the Philippines to help boost the economy by providing jobs to many Filipinos, including the recent agreements for the Cebu Mactan 4th Bridge and Davao City Bypass Road infrastructure projects in support of the Build Build Build program and which we signed just about two weeks ago."
-AZUKIZAWA Eigo, JICA Philippines Chief Representative

The Philippines is the first recipient country of the new facility designed by the Government of Japan to help developing countries globally in augmenting COVID-19 response program and stimulating economic activity. •



NEWS FROM THE FIELD

JICA continues support to PH infra to help boost economy amid pandemic

JICA and the Philippine Government through the Department of Finance (DOF) signed a combined total of 154 billion yen Official Development Assistance (ODA) for infrastructure projects in Cebu and Davao emphasizing the Japanese bilateral aid agency's support to the Philippine economy affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The infrastructure projects include the 4th Cebu-Mactan Bridge and Coastal Road and Davao City Bypass projects expected to be completed on 2029 and 2023, respectively. Said projects are among the eight (8) ongoing cooperation of JICA and the Philippines in the roads and bridges sector under the Build Build Build agenda of the Philippine government.

"We assure the Philippines of our continuing support through quality infrastructure to help boost investments and restart the country's economy. As trusted development partner of the Philippines, JICA will continue to share our expertise on infrastructure as the Philippine economy seeks to rebound from the impact of COVID-19," said JICA Philippines Chief Representative AZUKIZAWA Eigo.

The projects, during construction, can also create jobs in the road sector at this time when many Filipinos workers have been displaced. Once completed, this projects will ease traffic in these areas and spread economic growth in the long-term.

The Cebu-Mactan Bridge and Coastal Road project is composed of a 3.3 kilometer bridge and 4.9 kilometer road. Meanwhile, the Davao City Bypass project stretching 45.5 kilometers (4-lanes) is set to have the first long-distance mountain tunnel in the country using tunneling technology commonly used in Japan. It will also include a component on capacity development of DPWH staff for tunnel operation and maintenance in recognition of the significance of the pioneering tunnel facility which would extend for about 2.2 kilometers.●



Loan Signing Ceremony



Philippine Coast Guard vessel

JICA lauds PCG efforts in COVID-19 response using vessels from Japan

JICA cited the services of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) in helping handle the coronavirus outbreak, utilizing the JICA-assisted multi-role response vessels (MRRV).

The PCG has deployed five (5) of the 10 (ten) 44-meter MRRVs in transporting medicines and medical supplies in the Visayas, ferrying stranded international tourists to their sweeper flights, and securing the cruise ships quarantined in Manila Bay recently while assisting the virus testing of its passengers.

The MRRVs were part of the JICA-PCG project Maritime Safety Capability Improvement I (2013-2022) that aims to help the Philippines build up its maritime safety and security operations.

"JICA shares the PCG's goal to help reduce the spread of the coronavirus. The actions they took, including effective use of MRRVs from Japan, are valuable in these times when we are feeling the impact of the pandemic in the workforce and economy," said JICA Philippines Senior Representative KAWABUCHI Kiyo.

Aside from MRRVs, JICA has also shared Japan's experience in maritime safety and security through trainings of more than 300 coast guard personnel in Japan and in the Philippines.

Since the outbreak, the PCG was designated to hold patrol missions to secure cruise ships in various parts of the country using the MRRVs. Most recently, they also assisted medical personnel in collecting swabs for testing of Filipino crews in the quarantined ships following the protocols of the Philippine Red Cross (PRC) and Bureau of Quarantine.

Earlier in the year, the Department of Transportation (DOTR) and Mitsubishi Shipbuilding Corporation Limited signed a contract for the construction of two 94-meter MRRVs amounting to 14.45 billion yen under the ongoing JICA-PCG Maritime Safety Capability Improvement Project Phase II. The vessels will also be used for PCG operations including maritime patrol in exclusive economic zones, search and rescue, marine environment protection, and safety.●

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Filipino trainees of Philippine Railway Institute graduate via online ceremony

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) welcomed the first five batches of Filipino trainees of the Philippine Railway Institute (PRI) during their first ever virtual graduation as they embark on improved railway management services in the Philippines amid the coronavirus crisis.

In remarks recorded for the virtual graduation, JICA Chief Representative AZUKIZAWA Eigo congratulated the 116 trainees, urging them to continue helping improve the Philippines' railway services "to help reduce the difficulties of Filipinos in accessing transportation options and everyday hardships of dealing with traffic congestion and pollution."

Azukizawa also emphasized that with the unexpected challenges from the pandemic, improved railway services will inevitably "contribute to improving the quality of life in the Philippines."

The graduates completed a refresher course on railway operations including passenger management, fare ticketing management, train driving, among others. With the onset of the coronavirus challenges, training will be shifted online. The trainings are conducted by PRI officers, with the support of Japanese experts, including some from Tokyo Metro Co., Ltd., which runs one of the busiest metro systems in the world.



Virtual awarding of certificates to the PRI graduates



Ms. Graziela Santos, one of the top graduates giving her graduation message



Congratulatory message from JICA Philippines Chief Representative AZUKIZAWA Eigo

JICA is also supporting the construction of the PRI building patterned after the Tokyo Metro Railway Institute at the depot of the Metro Manila Subway. The PRI courses are currently offered to existing employees of Philippine railway operators and will also offer courses for future railway personnel. •

NEWS IN PHOTOS



Turnover ceremony at the DSWD Central Office

JICA helps affected communities by Taal Volcano disaster

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) supported relief efforts through in-kind donations to communities affected by the Taal Volcano disaster. JICA turned over five (5) units of generators; five (5) units of extension cord reel; 5,000 portable jerry cans; 5,500 water containers; and 10,000 N95 masks for displaced families and individuals from the volcano disaster. •

New mangrove vegetation index eyed to map mangroves under BlueCARES project

Researchers from the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman and Tokyo Institute of Technology proposed a new mangrove vegetation index to facilitate easy and rapid mapping of mangroves from satellite images. A scientific paper on the Mangrove Vegetation Index (MVI) was released this June and is published in the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS) Journal via ScienceDirect, a global database of scientific and medical journals. Said development is part of ongoing five-year research project of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST).



Part of the completed concrete pavement of Marawi Trans-central Road I leading to Ground Zero or the most affected area by the Marawi Siege

JICA, DPWH ongoing road projects seen to boost Marawi rehab

Amid lull in economic activities from the pandemic, JICA assures its continuing support to rehabilitation and recovery in Marawi via the ongoing 61.77 kilometers of road network projects in the area. The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) is implementing the grant road projects to rehabilitate Marawi Trans-central Road Phase I and II. Meanwhile, another JICA-DPWH ODA loan project is also being implemented to rehabilitate Marawi Trans-central Road Phase III and construct Marawi City Ring Road. •



Mangroves in Palawan

Called the Comprehensive Assessment and Conservation of Blue Carbon Ecosystems and their Services in the Coral Triangle or BlueCARES project, the research aims to help policy makers develop scientific-based conservation measures or Blue Carbon Strategy to preserve and improve coastal ecosystems. •

NEWS IN PHOTOS

Screenshot from the winning video blog



Two students from Mindanao's conflict-affected area win first JICA video blog contest

Students from Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology – Shannefamel Almazan, 20, and Prince Loyd Besorio, 20 won the first Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) video blog contest with their entry on their experience from the Marawi conflict, and the Japanese government's support in the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Marawi City and surrounding areas. The contest is supported by All Nippon Airways Co. Ltd. (ANA), Business Mirror, BusinessWorld SparkUp, Japan Foundation, and Japan National Tourism Organization. •



47 subprojects turned over to farmers in Mindanao under JICA, DAR cooperation

A total of 47 subprojects on rural infrastructure and agriculture, agroforestry, and agribusiness development amounting to 492 million pesos were turned over to farmers in Mindanao under the ongoing cooperation of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR) called Mindanao Sustainable Agrarian and Agriculture Development (MINSAAD) Project.

Said infrastructure includes farm-to-market roads and bridges in Lanao del Norte and Cotabato; irrigation facilities in Bukidnon and Sultan Kudarat; and post-harvest facilities in Lanao del Norte and Cotabato. Among the crops covered by the turned over subprojects are coconut, rice, rubber, corn, coffee, and cacao. •



JICA underscores role of coastal management in PH disaster resiliency

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) shared its expertise in coastal management with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) in a move to help boost the Philippines' disaster resiliency. JICA expert NAKUI Takafumi and Dr. UDA Takaaki, Head of Shore Protection Research of Japan's Public Works Research Center shared Japan's organizational system and laws on coastal disaster management and coastal engineering, as well as lessons on their coastal development. •

FEATURES

Knowledge Co-Creation Program: Filipino teacher from Iloilo learns from Japan's education system

A Filipino teacher from Jibolo Elementary School in Iloilo Province joined other nationalities in learning from Japan's education system to improve teaching in the country's remote areas under a Japanese government training program.

Mark John Belleza, 28, a math teacher, joined the Knowledge Co-Creation Program (KCCP) on Improvement of Education in Remote and Isolated Areas for the Achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The KCCP is a program of the Japanese government through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) that trains young professionals in various development areas as part of Official Development Assistance (ODA).

"In Japan, I saw that schools teach not only book learning but also morals and customs, laying the essential groundwork for life as a member of society," said Belleza. "For schools in remote areas, they have a School Support Station Program where volunteers from the local community help plan school activities. They also emphasize independent learning while creating activities for slow performing students."



Belleza with representatives from Liberia and Myanmar

The training gave me the opportunity to learn from other countries particularly in injecting real-life learning and including the support of the local community to improve the quality of education in remote schools.

MARK JOHN BELLEZA
JICA KCCP Trainee

As part of the training, Belleza is implementing a Mentoring the Mathematics Mentors in Iloilo in partnership with Kochi University as well as integration of Filipino core values in the curriculum through songs and stories. •

Way Forward, Working Together: JICA helps fight COVID-19 with partner countries

As nations all over the world cope with the COVID-19 pandemic, JICA draws lessons from the ongoing response specific to each country, and the crisis' impact to economy and international cooperation efforts. As clamor to get back to normal lives increases, JICA vows to (1) respond to urgent needs; (2) build resilient, flexible health systems; and (3) establish a sustainable 'New World' and realize human security.

Check out JICA's Quick Analysis on COVID-19 in this link: https://www.jica.go.jp/COVID-19/en/responses/research/quick_analysis.html

About JICA

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is the executing agency of Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA), which handles technical cooperation, ODA loans and investment, and grant aid, as well as cooperation volunteers and disaster relief programs. JICA is the world's largest bilateral aid agency with its volume of cooperation amounting to about USD 14.08 billion for JFY 2018 and a worldwide network of about 100 overseas offices including the Philippines.

JICA Philippines Office

40F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza
6819 Ayala Avenue, Makati City
Telephone: +632 889-7119
Facsimile: +632 889-6850
Website: <https://www.jica.go.jp/philippine/english/>
Editorial Team: Jennifer Erice, Maffy Carandang-Patio,
Amanda Bacani, Roxanne De los Santos



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