

News FROM Philippines

JANUARY to MARCH 2022



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JICA NAMES NEW CHIEF REPRESENTATIVE IN THE PHILIPPINES

It's a great honor to be given the opportunity to lead JICA Philippines Office during this time as nations keep pace with recovery from COVID-19. JICA and the Philippines have built close ties and friendship over the years. Thus, I look forward to working with our Filipino counterparts through the basis of 'mutual understanding and respect' so that we can further enhance our trusted partnership through investments, sharing of Japanese knowledge and innovations, and other areas of cooperation.

SAKAMOTO Takema
 JICA Philippines Chief Representative

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) appointed SAKAMOTO Takema as its new Chief Representative in the Philippines effective March 2022, following the leadership of AZUKIZAWA Eigo.

Prior to his appointment in the Philippines, SAKAMOTO held wide-ranging leadership positions in JICA for more than 30 years, including his post as Chief Representative in JICA Iraq and JICA India offices in 2011 and 2015 respectively. Early on in his career, SAKAMOTO also served as Representative of the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF) in Beijing, China.

His previous roles in JICA also include key positions in the Infrastructure and Peace Building Department as well as in JICA's

Middle East and Europe Department. SAKAMOTO takes over from former Chief Representative AZUKIZAWA Eigo who steered JICA's operations in the Philippines amid the COVID-19 pandemic and enabled the implementation of key cooperation projects anchored on economic prosperity through quality growth, human security, and regional peace and stability.

SAKAMOTO also served as Director General for the South Asia Department in headquarters of JICA, helming key cooperation centered on developing economic foundations and social protection with the concept of "No one left behind", ensuring peace and stability, and improving access to basic needs. Read his full message here: ([Message from CR Sakamoto](#)) ▣

JICA PROVIDES EQUIPMENT TO BOOST PHILIPPINE COVID-19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY EFFORTS

As move to help boost the Philippine economic recovery, JICA announced it is contributing JPY885 million cold chain equipment and logistics for deployment of vaccines and medicines in times of public health emergencies like COVID-19.

In addition, JICA also recently turned over laboratory equipment for the surveillance and management of COVID-19 cases in San Lazaro Hospital, as well as the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM),

to help the Philippines' response efforts

"JICA's assistance will further strengthen the laboratory capacity of the RITM, which is vital to the country's COVID-19 response: the Prevent-Detect-Isolate-Treat-Reintegrate + Vaccine or the PDITR + V strategy," said Department of Health (DOH) Secretary Francisco T. Duque III.

The recent assistance complements JICA's earlier support for the Philippines' pandemic response and recovery that includes a JPY50 billion COVID-19 Crisis Response Emergency Support Loan (CCRESL) and another JPY50 billion JICA Post-Disaster Standby Loan Phase 2. ▣



JICA, DOJ, DOH, and SLH officials.



JICA, DOJ, DOH, and RITM officials.



GRANT TO BOOST HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT IN THE PHILIPPINES

JICA and the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) signed a JPY329 million grant to further the development of human resources in the Philippines.

The Project for Human Resources Development Scholarship (JDS) is a part of the Government of Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) to the Philippines that aims to develop young leaders in government and boost efforts in socioeconomic development.

The grant will provide scholarships to Filipino government employees and give them opportunity to learn from the Japanese experience and

expertise in leading universities in Japan.

Since its inception in 2002, the program has sent 399 Filipinos to leading Japanese universities such as University of Tokyo, International University of Japan, Hokkaido University, Hiroshima University, and Hitotsubashi University to name a few.

Notable Filipino JDS scholars served as key-decision makers in their respective government agencies, while they also function as robust bridges for closer ties between two nations. ▣

JICA TO TRAIN FILIPINO ENGINEERS ON BUILDING RESILIENT COASTAL INFRA

JICA announced that it is teaming up with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) on training Filipino engineers in building better coastal structures.

The Record of Discussion for the new Technical Cooperation Project, Capacity Development in Coastal Engineering for Disaster Resiliency, was signed recently between JICA and the Philippine government in a move to improve disaster risk reduction countermeasures through coastal engineering. The project will come up with a human resource development plan to strengthen the DPWH's capacity and know-how in building disaster-proof structures along coasts.

Under the project, case studies will be conducted to understand the phenomena of actual situations in coastal areas. For instance, coastal erosion is a natural process that is made worse when people build structures in coastal zones. The project will consider these types of concerns in developing different guidelines in designing coastal structures. ▣



A BOOST TO JOB CREATION IN BANGSAMORO, OTHER CONFLICT-AFFECTED AREAS IN MINDANAO

JICA, through its Technical Assistance (TA) team, trained agri-business owners in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) and Conflict-Affected Areas in Mindanao (CAAM) to boost job creation and productivity in the agriculture sector.

A group of Japanese and Filipino experts from the JICA TA team trained the agri-business owners on high-value production and marketing. It is a part of the technical assistance provided to the Land Bank of the Philippines in the implementation of the Project for Harnessing Agribusiness Opportunities through Robust and Vibrant Entrepreneurship Supportive of Peaceful Transformation (HARVEST). HARVEST is an ODA of JICA that seeks to provide concessional loans to micro, small, medium and large enterprises, cooperatives, agribusiness enterprises, and financial institutions in BARMM and CAAM.

"The training is an opportunity for the agribusiness sector and farmers to step up and improve productivity and marketability of their products in the face of uncertainties and rising food prices. Hopefully, these enterprises will be able to explore innovative ways to supply and market agricultural products more sustainably," said JICA Senior Representative EBISAWA Yo. As of March 2021, 22 agriculture enterprises engaged in different production sectors in BARMM have joined the HARVEST program. ▣



FILIPINO START-UPS WIN TOP AWARDS IN JICA ACCELERATOR PROGRAM

A program of JICA designed to groom aspiring entrepreneurs conferred awards to three Filipino start-up companies during a pitch event with Japanese and Southeast Asian investors held recently.

The JICA NINJA (Next Innovation with Japan) Accelerator Program has shortlisted 15 start-up firms from the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Bangladesh who pitched their business ideas to over 60 Japanese venture capitalists and investors in the project's business matching event. Filipino company Packworks won first place in the Best Performing Startups category followed by Plentina and Mayani.

The Filipino start-up winners offer services that cater to underserved sectors of the economy such as microentrepreneurs, consumers without credit cards, and farmers. Packworks offers micro-entrepreneurs like sari-sari store (small neighborhood store) owners access to business capital, tools, and insights. Plentina, on the other hand, offers store credits to ordinary consumers, and Mayani is an e-commerce platform that connects farmers to markets and investors.

The JICA NINJA Accelerator Program is an initiative of JICA to increase private sector participation in development and at the same time, groom entrepreneurs and give them opportunities to build and scale their innovation while contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Participants of the program receive mentoring and business matching support. ▣





JICA and Department of Finance (DOF) signed last February 10, 2022, the JPY253.30 billion Loan Agreement for the second tranche of Metro Manila Subway Project (MMSP), Phase I.

JICA REASSURES COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT THE “PROJECT OF THE CENTURY” IN THE PHILIPPINES

Accelerating the transport infrastructure of the country, JICA has committed to support the Philippine Government in implementing the PHP357 billion MMSP, Phase I. The envisioned 27-km MMSP will run underground from East Valenzuela City to the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Terminal 3) in Pasay City. Once completed, the MMSP can accommodate about 370,000 passengers per day while reducing

the travel time from 1 hour and 10 minutes to just 45 minutes.

Finance Secretary Carlos G. Dominguez expressed his appreciation to JICA for continuing financial support for the construction of the Project which is one of the flagship projects under the "Build, Build, Build Program" of the Administration. ▣

MANUAL TO PROMOTE WASTE ANALYSIS AND MANAGEMENT

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic threats to public health and environment, the National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) and Japanese Government are working together to establish guidelines for the accurate characterization of wastes for the use of local government units.

Through the Ministry of Environment of Japan, a Waste Analysis and Characterization Study (WACS) Manual was developed as Japan's cooperation with the NSWMC. The manual sets technical standards in analyzing waste characteristics to guide LGUs in making and implementing waste reduction and management programs.

JICA facilitated the design & layout and printing of 7,700 copies of the manuals that were delivered to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) Regional Offices and Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao - Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Energy (BARMM-MENRE) for their distribution to LGUs. Some have already used the manual as reference in conducting solid waste management trainings. ▣



Scan the QR code to download the WACS manual!

JICA, PHILIPPINES STEP UP MARITIME COOPERATION

JICA and the Philippines are stepping up their cooperation in maritime safety and security with the inspection of the first of the two 97-meter Multi-Role Response Vessels (MRRV) from Japan, one of which arrived in Manila in February.

The new MRRV, the largest-ever vessel for the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), is a part of an ongoing cooperation between JICA and the Philippines, "Maritime Safety Capability Improvement Project Phase II" that aims to beef up the coast guard's capability in responding to maritime incidents in the Philippine waters as well as in search and rescue, maritime environment protection, and other maritime security operations.

"These are trying times in maritime

safety and security, with the pandemic affecting the flow of goods and increasing maritime safety and security challenges. It's important that we come together and ensure that our cooperation results in modernizing and upgrading maritime security and border protection in the Philippines, and even in the region," said then JICA Philippines Chief Representative AZUKIZAWA Eigo.

Said PCG ship is the first of the two (2) MRRVs under the Phase II of the project while the second vessel is expected to be delivered around May this year. The new MRRV is a part of JICA's continuing assistance to Philippine maritime safety and security in addition to training more than 300 Filipino coast guard personnel since the 1970s. ▣



FEATURE

FILIPINO SCHOLARS IN JAPAN RETURN TO THE PHILIPPINES, VOWS TO 'GIVE BACK' TO SOCIETY

Twenty Filipino scholars sent to Japanese major universities under the Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship by Japanese Grant Aid (JDS) returned to the Philippines recently, having completed their postgraduate in Japan despite COVID-19, and committing to 'give back' to Philippine society.

Three of the 20 scholars - Lev Nikko Macalintal (Department of Agriculture), Sheila Marie Alfonso (Department of Public Works and Highways), and Patrick Cristobal (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) - graduated with honors in their respective postgraduate courses. The program has been sending highly capable Filipino government scholars since 2002 to support capacity building and institutional development in the Philippines. Since its inception, 399 Filipino JDS fellows have studied in Japan under the program.



Lev Nikko Macalintal

"The JDS program is one of the most competitive programs for career development in the government service. I think my experience and knowledge gained from this program will allow me to make quality outputs for the development of my sector."

-Lev Nikko Macalintal
JDS Batch 20

JDS fellows are given opportunities to study priority issues in the Philippines relevant to their respective government agencies. Under the scholarship, Filipino JDS fellows receive mentoring and professional development support from Japan's leading universities such as University of Tokyo,

International Christian University, Hokkaido University, Hiroshima University, and Hitotsubashi University to name a few.

The recent batch of fellows focused their research on public administration and finance with topics on role of policy in processing business registrations, institution building to address constraints in the Philippines' anti-money laundering obligations, monitoring and evaluation systems for civil society organizations (CSOs), mainstreaming climate change adaptation in the agriculture sector, Philippine response in the West Philippine Sea, and underemployment in the country. Other Filipino fellows focused on industrial promotion topics (such as SME finance and exports), transportation infrastructure, disaster management, and environment management. ▣

GOT FEEDBACK?

We would like to hear from you! Drop a question, message, comment, or suggestion in our email: pp_oso_rep@jica.go.jp

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 scale of operations amounting to about USD 16.69 billion for JFY 2020 and a worldwide network of about 100 overseas offices including the Philippines.

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