

JICA Secondee Issei Aoki introduces JICA-IDB collaborations under the CORE program



On March 24, 2021, JICA and the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) Group signed a Memorandum of Collaboration (MOC) to expand the reach of its Cooperation for Economic Recovery and Social Inclusion (CORE) program for the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region. The MOC expands co-financing opportunities for JICA and the IDB in the disaster risk management and global health sectors, as well as financing for projects in energy, transportation, and water and sanitation. The new MOC also extends the period of cooperation between JICA and the IDB by five years and makes available new funds to co-finance private sector projects through IDB Invest and the IDB Lab.

Shortly after expanding the CORE program, on August 18, JICA signed a loan agreement with the IDB and the operator of Paraguay’s national electricity grid, la Administración Nacional de Electricidad (ANDE), to improve the reliability and efficiency of the high-voltage transmission system in Paraguay through a project called the “Expansion of the High-Voltage Transmission System and Energy Efficiency Actions.” Additionally, in July 2021, JICA signed a loan agreement with the Government of the Dominican Republic for a project called the “Program to Strengthen Public Policy and Fiscal Management in Response to the Health and Economic Crisis Caused by COVID-19” – which marks the first health project financed under the CORE program.



Issei Aoki (second from the right) visits a hydropower plant in El Salvador with IDB colleagues and engineers

While Latin American and Caribbean countries have relatively high incomes compared to other JICA partner countries, these nations continue to face many challenges, including transitioning to low-carbon economies. In order to comply with the Paris Agreement, JICA and the IDB seek to support LAC countries as they institute innovative approaches to accelerate decarbonization within its energy systems.

As JICA’s secondee to the IDB, Mr. Issei Aoki works in the Energy Division of the IDB’s Infrastructure and Energy Department to improve energy efficiency, while promoting low-carbon solutions. Mr. Aoki is currently working on technical cooperation projects that focus on promoting the green hydrogen market in Chile and developing Costa Rica’s national green hydrogen strategy.

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Various countries across the LAC region have been blessed with abundant renewable energy resources, including solar, wind, hydroelectric, and geothermal power. In the case of Chile, Mr. Aoki is working on a project to support the country to make use of its abundant



A solar thermal power plant in the Atacama Desert

solar energy provided by the Atacama Desert to produce green hydrogen and reduce Chile's greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, with its bountiful wind, Mr. Aoki is also supporting the country utilize its renewable advantage to produce clean wind energy in the Patagonia region. As part of this work, the IDB is implementing feasibility studies to construct a port to export green hydrogen from Chile. From the regulatory side, the IDB is also working

to help develop necessary safety regulations and protocols to deliver hydrogen through the existing natural gas pipeline network.

In addition to promoting green hydrogen, the IDB is preparing feasibility studies to support the modernization of the region's existing hydropower plants. While the LAC region derives nearly half of its renewable energy resources from hydropower, many of these power plants have been constructed more than 20 years ago. Given the age of these structures, it is necessary to update and revitalize these hydropower plants. As part of this effort, Mr. Aoki is working with JICA and the IDB to realize this cooperation with the hope that such activities will support the decarbonization of LAC countries.