

3-2 Improvements in Living Conditions and Corrections of Development Disparities

1) Improving Basic Social Services

(1) Health Care Service

In Vietnam, the side-effects of economic growth and support by donors of different countries as well as the health and medical reforms have contributed to the improvement of various basic indicators including the infant mortality rate (24 deaths per 1,000 births in 2011), maternal mortality rate (56 deaths per 100,000 births in 2011), and the average life expectancy (75.2 years in 2011). However, improvements in the health situation have progressed unevenly; therefore providing sufficient benefits to people in the rural areas and the poor is still an urgent challenge for Vietnam's health sector.

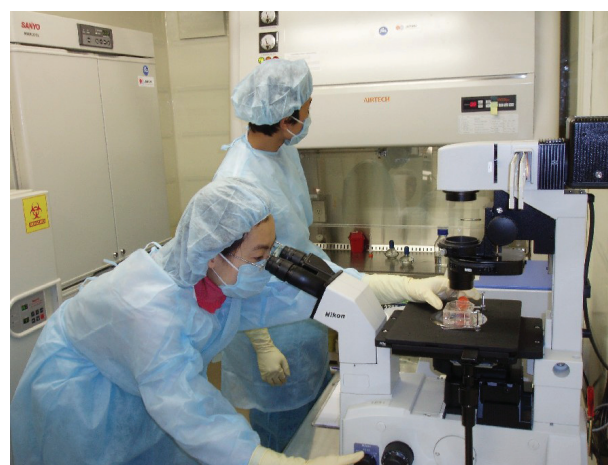
On the other hand, although the ratio of infectious diseases has decreased rapidly, there are still many problems including the recurrence of dengue outbreaks in some areas, the spread of HIV/AIDS among the youth and epidemics of emerging infectious diseases such as Avian Influenza in Human. As for the hospital system, problems such as patient concentration in hospitals at the central level, and the low satisfaction rate of patients, are points of concern.

Against this background, in accordance with the Country Assistance Program for Vietnam, JICA would emphasize the capacity development of medical workers, in strong connection with the Ministry of Health and the core medical institutions at the central level, contributing to improvements in the quality of health and medical services throughout the country. JICA would place the highest priority on support for formulation, piloting and implementation of policies through the development of medical human resources (doctors and nurses). In addition to the afore-mentioned activities, with the aim of disseminating experience and scaling up achievements in the past, JICA would assist the provision of equipment and facilities through grants and loan assistance, thereby improving the health services at the local level in an effective manner.

As for emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases, JICA would continue to stress relations with the National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology (NIHE) with the aim of enhancing their capacity and sustainability and would consider exploring new cooperation depending on the state of infectious diseases. For ensuring the effectiveness of the above-mentioned cooperation programs, JICA would strengthen policy dialogue with the Ministry of Health.



Bach Mai Hospital



National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology

(2) Basic Education

In Vietnam, the net enrollment rate for primary education reached 97.4% in 2007. The gender gap is small and the share of female students is 47.7% as the national average (2005). The adult (15 years of age or over) literacy rate is as high as 90.3% (2005), and the quality of Vietnamese teachers is rather high.

On the other hand, there remain issues in basic education to be solved, including elimination of regional disparities in access to education, transition to full-day schooling from double and triple sessions in a day in order to ensure sufficient length of class hours, which is said to be short in an international comparison, transition from lessons emphasizing rote memory to those encouraging thinking, and the improvement of educational administrative capabilities, etc. Big disparities between regions exist and several major concerns are: insufficient facilities and equipment, lack of curricula and educational material, inadequate quantity and low quality of teachers, high rate of drop-out of the poor, physically-handicapped children and ethnic minority pupils in remote mountainous areas.



In this field, Vietnam has carried out considerable reforms and received support from many international organizations. However, the scale of support has been narrowed. Thus, JICA would consider supporting to the improvement of Rural Development and Livelihood from the viewpoint of poverty reduction, depending on actual needs of Vietnam.

Lecture of fine arts in primary school in Bac Giang province (JOCV)

(3) Support to the Socially Vulnerable

In parallel with making policy support, JICA would continue emphasizing cooperation that provides direct benefits to the socially vulnerable, such as the disabled, mostly through grass-root activities. JICA would also cooperate with the Vietnam Women's Union in dealing with women trafficking. These support measures, with the aim of assisting people vulnerable to risks, are urgently required from the viewpoint of human security.



Community-based rehabilitation support program for the physically-disabled



Physical therapist (JOCV)

Improvement of the medical services

JICA is combining effectively grant aid and technical cooperation at 3 core hospitals, namely Bach Mai Hospital in Ha Noi, Hue Central Hospital in Hue, and Cho Ray Hospital in Ho Chi Minh City, in order to improve infrastructure and enhance abilities of medical staffs of those hospitals, as well as to promote the training activities toward provincial hospitals.

Moreover, with an aim to overcome the difficulties of facilities of provincial hospitals, JICA has supported to build and upgrade the facilities of Thai Nguyen Central Hospital, Lang Son Hospital and Ha Tinh Hospital. In the near future, JICA also plans to support 10 other hospitals nationwide by ODA loans.

Beside the above contributions, in order to cope with infectious disease, since 2006, JICA has been supporting the National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology (NIHE) to consolidate the management of bio-safety and enhance testing skills of highly hazardous infectious pathogens in accordance with the international standard, helping Vietnam to control dangerous diseases in the fastest and the most effective way.

In addition to the support in upgrading the hard components such as infrastructure and medical equipments, assistance to the soft components in term of giving advices on health policies, sustaining the medical system based on cooperation with 3 core hospitals and human resources development, JICA is making important contributions to improving the quality of medical services in Vietnam.

In the North:

- 1998 ~ 2000 Improvement of Bach Mai Hospital (Grant Aid)
- 2000 ~ 2005 Functional Enhancement of Bach Mai Hospital
- 2004 ~ 2009 Strengthening Health Services Provision in Hoa Binh Province
- 2005 ~ 2007 Improvement of Hoa Binh Hospital (Grant Aid)
- 2006 ~ 2009 Bach Mai Hospital Project for Strengthening Training Capacity for Provincial hospitals
- 2006 ~ 2010 Capacity Development for NIHE to control emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases
- 2011 ~ 2016 Capacity Development for Laboratory Network in Vietnam of Biosafety and Examination of Highly Hazardous Infectious Pathogen
- 2010 ~ 2015 Improvement of the Quality of Human Resource in the Medical Service System
- 2006 ~ 2011 Regional and Provincial Hospitals Development (Phase 1) (ODA loans)

In the Central:

- 2005 ~ 2006 Improvement of Medical Equipment of Da Nang Hospital (Grant Aid)
- 2004 ~ 2006 Improvement of Hue Central Hospital (Grant Aid)
- 2005 ~ 2010 Improvement of Medical Services in the Central Region

In the South:

- 1992 ~ 1995 Improvement of Cho Ray Hospital (Grant Aid)
- 1995 ~ 1999 The technical cooperation project for Cho Ray Hospital
- 1999 ~ 2004 In country training program on enhancement of clinical techniques
- 2004 ~ 2008 In country training program for strengthening medical human resources in the Southern Area
- 2010 ~ 2013 Strengthening Medical Rehabilitation Services in the Southern Area of Vietnam



Training for nurses at Emergency Department (Bach Mai Hospital)



Improvement of Hue Central Hospital (Grant Aid)

2) Rural Development and Improvements in Livelihood

In Vietnam, because of the rapid industrialization process, the share of the agriculture, forestry and fishery sector accounts for only 20.3% of GDP (in 2007), and tends to be decreasing. However, three quarters of the total population live in rural areas and agriculture, forestry and fishery sector employs 53.9% of the population, so these sectors still have a major impact on the Vietnamese economy and society. Especially the rural areas play a major role as suppliers of food and raw materials and a market for industrial products, and also contribute to sustainable socio-economic development of the country in terms of natural environment conservation and ensuring a stable society.

With respect to agriculture, since the Doi-Moi policy was introduced, economic liberalization measures such as permission to possess agriculture-related properties, the removal of crop price controls and application of advanced agricultural technology have encouraged the diversification of products and the improvement of agricultural productivity. As a result farmers' incomes have increased. The Vietnamese government, encouraging such direction, aims at diverse, productive, high-quality and sustainable crop production to satisfy domestic consumption and export demands.

In terms of rice production, Vietnam is far below that of Japan and China (4,869kg/ha in Vietnam in comparison with 6,537kg/ha in Japan (FAO, 2007)). Therefore, it is essential to increase Vietnam's agricultural productivity. Major issues as weakness of extension system, insufficient access to financing, weak farmer's organizations, low quality of crops including safety issues, small land plots per farming household (the average is 0.3ha in the north and 1.2ha in the south), aging irrigation facilities, and the absence of agriculture insurance have become hindrance to the development of agriculture in Vietnam.

In addition, it is essential to address bottlenecks in livelihood improvements of the rural population that include vulnerability to natural disasters, insufficient development of potential industries other than agriculture (a limited number of farming households can earn their living by farming alone, and diversification of livelihoods is a key issue), deterioration of infrastructures and pressures on the natural environment (decreasing forest resources), etc.

In this context, JICA, in accordance with the Country Assistance Program for Vietnam, would aim to improve livelihoods of the rural population, particularly the poor, and give priority to the Northern Mountainous Regions (specifically the Northwestern region), Central Highlands Region, and Mekong Delta Region through selective and targeted support and cooperation with the Development Triangle which was agreed at the Japan-CLV Summit Meeting. Furthermore, Japan's ODA would provide the following four pillars of assistance:



Capacity Building of HCMC University of Technology to Strengthen University-Community Linkage



Capacity Building for AR-CDM Promotion

(1) Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery

Taking into consideration the situation of considerable change of environment of local people after the accession to the WTO, JICA would provide support for the poor to improve policy/systems and upgrade technology, especially in the three aforementioned priority areas. Attention should be paid to improving the extension system so that technology improvements can better benefit farmers and fishermen.

(2) Development of Rural Industries

To support diversification of livelihoods in the rural area, JICA would support development of traditional handicraft, tourism, and utilization of natural resources, aiming at comprehensive livelihood improvements in collaboration with activities for access and quality improvement of basic social services.

(3) Natural disaster prevention

Vietnam is one of the most disaster-prone countries. Natural disaster causes hunger and poverty to the citizens. Today, JICA is implementing various activities to strengthen the community natural disaster prevention in the local, improve disaster risk management (DRM) capacities of functional bodies and upgrade infrastructure for natural disaster prevention. JICA also implements Japanese government's emergency relief assistance.

(4) Infrastructure Development (Power Distribution, Roads, Water Supply, Irrigation etc.)

JICA supports the establishment of an adequate institution for proper operation and maintenance for improvement and sustainable use of local infrastructure, aiming at poverty reduction and livelihoods improvement.



Participatory Approach for Contribution to Improvement of Safe water, Nutritional and Health Environment in three Rural Communes (Photograph: ILSI Japan CHP)

Development of Northwestern Mountainous Region

Although economic growth has been progressed rapidly in Vietnam, the development disparity between the rural and urban areas, and between regions remains considerable. The Northwestern Region is the poorest area in Vietnam facing many difficulties in the process of socio-economic development. Therefore, JICA has implemented comprehensive cooperation with the Northwestern Mountainous Region with the purpose of narrowing the social gaps. Under such direction, JICA has conducted a development study “Master Plan Study on Improvement of Rural Living Conditions in North Western Mountainous Region” in order to gain a thorough grasp of local challenges and potentials, then contributing to supporting the Government of Vietnam to make the long-term development policy for the region. Based on the study, JICA recognizes the agriculture and forestry sector are the main production force of the region, and thus has been implementing the technical cooperation project with the purpose to promote artisan crafts, increasing added-value of potential crops, and bringing regional resources into play for regional sustainable improvement and development. Moreover, JICA also carried out a preferential loan-funded project for development of basic infrastructure (roads, power distribution, water supply, irrigation) in rural areas - an indispensable factor contributing to regional development. Through the collaboration of the development study, technical cooperation and yen loan, the development program in the Northwestern mountainous region will be implemented in an effective manner.

ODA Loans

- 1995 ~ 2002 Rural Infrastructure Development and Living Standard Improvement (I, II, III)
- 2002 ~ Small-scale Pro-poor Infrastructure Development Project (I, II)

Technical cooperation

- 2007 ~ 2008 Master Plan Study on Improvement of Rural Living Conditions in North Western Mountainous Region
- 2008 ~ 2011 Project on Capacity Development on Artisan Craft Promotion for Socio-economic Development in Rural Area
- 2010 ~ 2015 Project for Northwest Region Rural Development
- 2010 ~ 2015 Project for Sustainable Forest Management in the Northwest Watershed Area



Small-scale Pro-poor Infrastructure Development in Lai Chau Province



Artisan Craft Promotion for Socio-Economic Development in rural area

3-3 Environment Conservation

1) Urban Environmental Management

Economic growth and rapid urbanization in Vietnam have caused serious environmental problems.

Urban water pollution increases because of direct flow of untreated daily and industrial waste water and floods occurs more frequently due to poor management of drainage systems. Untreated hazardous waste including hospital waste and lack of environment-related treatment works also pose a serious problem. Air pollution is a concern not only in central cities but also in residential quarters and it exceeds the environmental standards. In such a situation, the Vietnamese Government has been intensifying measures to alleviate environmental problems by setting up “an environmental protection strategy” and defining targets aimed at restricting rapid pollution growth. Furthermore, the Vietnamese Government has built a basic legal system on environmental management, of which laws on environmental protection were amended, and sanctions were introduced with the detail circulars. In addition, since 2006 the government decided to allocate one per cent of the national budget to environmental protection expenses. With a mind to strengthen natural resource protection, the Ministry of Public Security established a department of environmental protection police in 2007 that has strictly punished any violation of environmental protection law. Human resources and finance remain insufficient in the administrative structure of environmental protection in the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment - also in the line body of urban environment management, in local departments of natural resources and environment.

Consequently, JICA has been supporting all aspects of infrastructure, human training, operation mode improvement, planning, institution improvement through the programs/projects on technical cooperation and financial assistance focusing on the fields of the water environment management, waste management in the medium and big cities and industrial zones which are in need of urban infrastructure improvement and are severely polluted.

Regarding water environment management, with a target of reducing pollution to meet the demand on diversified water sources and improving water quality from Vietnam rivers, JICA has supported human resources training for management bodies, waste water treatment plants, investigation and research agencies for the water environment management, administrative offices relating to the water environment management in the key cities at risk of high pollution level such as the four big cities of Hanoi, Hai Phong, Da Nang and HCMC, and other cities as well such as Hue, Ha Long and Can Tho, where dense population has caused serious pollution problems.

Regarding waste management, 3R Initiative has been applied: Reduce, Recycle, Re-use, JICA focuses on technical assistance in waste classification and construction of waste treatment plants.



Hanoi Drainage Project for Environmental Improvement



Wasted - material toys for Hue pupils



Lecture on environment education in a Hanoi primary school

2) Natural Environment Conservation

Vietnam forests are important for not only providing us with wood materials and charcoal but also water conservation, ecological environment protection. However, due to the conversion of forest land to farm land because of population growth, hunger, poverty and illegal deforestation, forest cover decreased from 43% in 1945 to 28% in 1995. Thanks to afforestation efforts, forest cover had reached 37% by 2005. The Vietnamese government made efforts on making “a forest development strategy 2006-2010,” considering the forest redistribution and rehabilitating forests in both quality and quantity. Despite these efforts, there remain difficulties in forest management, such as lack of forest wardens and staff, sluggish implementation of the program on local people’s participation in forest management, and lack of forestry improvement measures.

Ten percent of the world animal species are found in Vietnam, and it is one of rich biodiversity nations in the world. Parallel with the establishment of nature conservation zones with 30 national parks accounting for 7.6% of the country area, the development of “a management strategy of nature conservation zones by 2010” (in 2003), the government has implemented programs for environmental protection through the participation of the local people and opened human resources training for ecosystem conservation and natural resources management in the national parks. In addition, a law on biodiversity was ratified in 2008. However, illegal hunting of wild animals, deforestation destroying the living environment of fauna and flora has resulted in 700 species in danger of extinction; the world’s valuable biodiversity is being lost at ever faster rate.

Thus, JICA has promoted cooperation on programs/projects on sustainable management of natural environment and forest for the improvement of biodiversity, forest area and its quality. In addition to decentralization, JICA has supported the overall management of natural resources, and the mobilization of peoples’ participation and their livelihood improvement.



Afforestation based on CDM (in cooperation with Honda Vietnam Corp)



Capacity Building for Preparing Feasibilities Studies and Implementation Plans for Afforestation

3) Climate Change

Vietnam which has more than 3,200 km coastal line, is one of the countries which are affected significantly by climate change. According to the Ministry of Natural Resources & Environment's scenarios, it is forecasted that til 2100, the sea level will rise up to between 75 cm and 100 cm, thus flooding 40 percent of Mekong River Delta and more than 20 percent of Ho Chi Minh City area. In response to that, the Government of Vietnam has timely adopted the International Convention on Climate Change and has been actively developing institutional instruments for climate change response. One of these actions was the endorsement of National Target Program on Response to Climate Change in December, 2008.

JICA, in connection with other donors and international organizations, has committed to support Vietnam in formulating overarching policy on climate change by conducting policy dialogues to the Government of Vietnam as well as by financing for execution of the above-mentioned Program.

With respect to mitigation measures, right after the 13th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the Climate Change Convention (COP13) within the United Nations' Frame Convention on Climate Change, the developing countries gave more prominence to "Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD)", and JICA has been actively consulting on Vietnam's REDD policies including a thorough grasp of the status of forest resources as a contribution to REDD. JICA has been also considering support in efficient use of renewable energy, and using ODA loans for promotion of energy saving in Vietnam enterprises.

For adaptation measures, JICA conducts analysis on impacts of climate change to Mekong River Delta, supports to mitigate natural disasters' impacts in the Central area, plants protection forests in coastal areas as well as advocate sustainable development planning.



Flood prone area due to the affect of climate change



Coastal protection forest in Quang Nam Province

Improvement of Urban Water Environment

In the past, Hanoi was seen as the Venice of Indochina whereas the ancient capital of Hue was known as a water palace. In a country that is such rich in water resources like Vietnam, “Town” and “Water” exist in an inseparable relationship. Time after time, the authorities have had to work hard to master the flooded rivers and they have made every effort to build the city where an amicable symbiosis of man and water was possible.

However, urban infrastructures had been ruined and made obsolete due to long lasting wars. In addition, since the 1990s, because of rapid economic growth and urbanization, the inner city infrastructure hasn't been able to meet the needs of the population increase. Due to the poor management of drainage system and waste water treatment, damage caused by flooding is frequent.

In order to improve this situation, to meet the request from the Government of Vietnam, JICA conducted a survey on the development of drainage system and waste water treatment of Hanoi. Based on the survey result, since 1995 “Hanoi Drainage Project for Environment Improvement” (including drainage system and waste water treatment) has been carried out with ODA loans. Likewise, JICA has supported some main cities in Vietnam such as HCMC, Hai Phong, Hue, etc.

In addition, JICA has been conducting technical cooperation with Vietnamese Academy of Science and Technology for enhancing the capacity on analysis technology of water quality and treatment in research institutes, acting as advisors for state management agencies. Through these measures, the condition of Vietnam's water resources is expected to improve.

(In Hanoi)

- 1993 ~ 1994 The Study on Urban Drainage and Wastewater Disposal System in Hanoi
- 1995 ~ 2005 Hanoi Drainage Project for Environment Improvement (ODA loans)
- 2006 ~ Second Hanoi Drainage Project for Environment Protection (ODA loans)

(In Ho Chi Minh City)

- 1998 ~ 1999 The Study on Urban Drainage and Sewerage system for HCMC
- 2001 ~ 2009 HCMC Water Environment Improvement Project (ODA loans)
- 2006 ~ Second HCMC Water Environment Improvement Project (I) (ODA loans)
- 2009 ~ 2010 Project for Capacity Development on Sewerage Management (I)

(Others)

- 2003 ~ 2006 Project for Enhancing Capacity of Vietnamese Academy of Science and Technology in Water Environment Protection.
- 2008 ~ 2012 Project for Enhancing Capacity of Vietnamese Academy of Science and Technology in Water Environment Protection (Phase 2).
- 2005 ~ Hai Phong City Environmental Improvement Project (ODA loans)
- 2008 ~ Hue City Water Environment Improvement Project (ODA loans)
- 2008 ~ 2010 Study on river basin's water environment management
- 2010 ~ Project for strengthening capacity of water environmental management

3-4 Strengthening of Governance

1) Development of Legal Systems and Judicial Reforms

Japan has provided technical cooperation mainly in the enactment and revision of the Civil Code, the Code of Civil Procedures and other basic laws for economic activities under the market economy system in Vietnam. Although Vietnam has developed such basic laws to a considerable extent with the support of Japanese law-makers through JICA, the systems and human resources for properly executing the laws are inadequate. In addition, some ordinances and decrees enacted under various laws are unclear or inconsistent, which has made the legal system complicated and opaque.

Japan will positively promote cooperation on Vietnam's basic policy on legal and judicial reforms based on the results of the cooperation provided so far. Concretely, Japan will mainly support the enactment of laws and ordinances, establishment and improvement of systems necessary for their execution, the development of human resources to improve the capacity to execute laws at the local level and improvement in dissemination of information concerning laws and access to justice, among others, coordinating such activities with each other effectively to establish and maintain the "rule of law".



Textbooks used for legislature, judiciary and executive bodies

2) Improvement of Administrative Capacities

The Government of Vietnam has formulated Public Administrative Reform Master Plan and tried its best to improve the system of civil services, etc; however, it is insufficient. Moreover, with the progress of decentralization, improvement of the local governments' administrative capacities has become a challenge. In addition, although the establishment of a series of laws concerning the management of ODA is in progress, there are many issues that need to improve such as the improvement of mechanisms to execute the above legal system in an effective manner between Ministry of Planning and Investment and other Ministries, agencies, etc.

With the aim to support the improvement of administrative capacities, JICA has carried out technical support to improve the capacity of government officers and the capacity of local government employees in drawing up development plans, and management of budget planning. Moreover, since November 2009, within the framework of Program to support human resources training of Communist Party cadres (Program 165), JICA has started the dialogue relating to macro-economic policies, local administration and business management with experts and related Ministries and agencies in Japan. These activities are expected to continue in the future.



Support the human resource development program to Communist Party

3) Public Financial Management

To ensure effective and efficient budget management and improve debt management, Vietnam has been proceeding with various reforms, such as the enforcement of the revised Law on the State Budget (2004); the strengthening of the independence of the State Audit of Vietnam, the introduction of internal and external auditing, etc. However, the reinforcement of public financial management continues to be important for the establishment of a sound governance system. Among others, the following have become challenges: tax reform and the streamlining of tax administration to cope with a decline in trade-related tax revenues due to the accession to the WTO in 2007; strengthening of the integrated management of investment and current expenditures, and the strengthening of debt management, etc.



Seminar on improvement of administration

In this context, through policy dialogue, JICA has provided support for various institutional reforms such as tax reforms, debt management, promotion of the integration of current and investment budgets, etc. Also JICA will provide technical cooperation for the improvement of practical abilities and the development of human resources in the revenue field, such as tax administration, etc.

4) Anti-corruption

In the context that the problem of corruption has long been recognized as an obstruction to Vietnam's development and economic modernization, with the increasing interest of citizens, the Vietnamese Government has been promoting reforms in the eradication of corruption including the establishment of a National Anti-Corruption Committee whose chairperson is the Prime Minister, formulation of National Strategy on Anti-corruption up to 2020. Furthermore, in 2008, upon the detection of a bribery incidence related to a yen loan project (PCI case), anti-corruption measures have been introduced by Japan-Vietnam Joint Committee for Preventing Japanese ODA-related Corruption to prevent the recurrence of corruption cases such as strengthening the supervision and transparency in bidding.

Also together with strictly following the measures approved by the above-mentioned Committee, JICA will, through policy dialogues and technical cooperation, contribute to expand support in reforms of policies and mechanisms for prevention and eradication of corruption. In addition, JICA will support the enhancement of transparency of administrative services through technical cooperation for the improvement of administrative services in tax, customs and other fields in order to make further contributions towards the eradication of corruption.

IV. Typical Examples of JICA's cooperation in Vietnam

Typical Example No. 1: Hai Van Tunnel Construction Project (ODA Loans)

Vietnam's biggest tunnel with total length of 6,280m

Located at the altitude of about 500m by the sea level, the Hai Van Pass is situated at the most complicated section of the National Highway No.1, connecting Thua Thien Hue Province and Da Nang City as the thoroughfare between the North and the South. The old national road over the Pass was very dangerous and bendy with high mountains, deep gulf, sheer rocks, and became a black spot highly susceptible to traffic accidents.

The construction of Hai Van Tunnel began in August 2000 after many years of wait. It could be considered as a huge construction work with a total cost of about 150 million US dollars and total length of 6,280m including bridge and access roads with the participation of Vietnamese, Japanese and Korean construction companies (2,000 staffs and workers).

Contribution to the development of the whole Central region

Before opening the Hai Van Tunnel, it took about one and a half hours to cross the pass. Now, it takes only 10 minutes. The number of people passing the Hai Van Tunnel in the period 2001-2003 is about 9 ~ 12 million, and this number increased to 19 million in the period 2007-2008. The effect of Hai Van Tunnel can be seen in the increasing number of tourists visiting Hue City - an internationally recognized world heritage site. Before the opening of Hai Van Tunnel, the number of tourists to Hue City in the year 2004 was 750,000 people in comparison with the 1.1 million tourists in 2006, and 1.5 million in 2007.



The fruits of international cooperation

Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Canh, leader of PMU85, one of the leaders contributing to the success of this construction work, affirmed: "The construction work completed successfully thanks to the effort of Japanese side in technology transfer as well as the great support and cooperation of JICA. With the precious experience accumulated during the construction period of Hai Van Tunnel, at present, the capacity of Vietnamese side in technical knowledge and ODA management has been dramatically improved."

Vietnam looks at the aim to construct the tunnel works by itself

Mr. Canh added: "Vietnam is now aiming at reaching the capacity to design tunnels by itself although it is difficult for us to design large-scale construction work like the Hai Van Tunnel. However, thanks to the application of Japanese advanced technology, Vietnam is surely capable of reaching this target in the near future."



Typical Example No. 2: Tan Son Nhat International Airport Terminal Construction Project (ODA Loans)

New International Airport Terminal helps to reduce the density

The new Tan Son Nhat International Airport Terminal completed in July 2007 has the capacity to serve 10 million passengers per annum with the mission: “For more convenient transport for passengers.” The design of this construction work was made with reference to the design of Kansai International Airport, Japan. The system of flights has been improved; and state-of-the-art luggage conveyers have been installed. This construction work could be considered as the milestone for the development of Ho Chi Minh City - the country’s economic locomotive.

The project brings the pride to both Vietnam and Japan

ODA Loan for the construction work has been used in reasonable manner with the technology transferred from Japanese side. Plans for Japan’s technology transfer were tied condition that Japanese companies must be the main contractors. Vietnamese companies were only sub-contractors. The ODA Loan for this construction enjoys preferential conditions with interest rate of 0.2% and repayment period of 40 years.

In order to receive technology transfer from Japanese side and to reach objective of early completion of the new Tan Son Nhat International Airport Terminal, both Vietnamese and Japanese sides tried their best to overcome all difficulties and divergences in views. Mr. Vu Phan Nguyen An, Southern Airport Authorities, said: “We sometimes faced the divergences in point of views which were so severe that we felt impossible to sit together for further discussion. However, we realized that we shared the unique objective of early completion of new Tan Son Nhat Airport which will bring the convenience to the passengers.”

“After a range of difficulties, we wish to do something so that the women and the elderly can feel comfortable while waiting for flights,” said Mr. Yamada Ryohei, Advisor of Japan Airport Consultants Company.

The wish to do something for the children’s pride

Despite time with severe divergence in ideas, and views relating to the construction work, both sides shared the common dream to “do something for the children’s pride”. When Mr. An confided how proud he felt when hearing his children saying to their friends that it was their father who constructed this airport, Mr. Yamada was also full of pride in his mind. Technologies and techniques developed by both Japanese and Vietnamese hold new inspiration for Tan Son Nhat International Airport and will help it become the construction work for the next generation.



Typical Example No. 3: Project for Traffic Safety Human Resource Development in Hanoi (Technical Cooperation)

Transport Infrastructure Development Project in Hanoi (ODA Loans)

Convey Japan's experience – Aiming to build traffic safety culture

Mr. Michimasa Takagi, Chief Advisor of the Project on Traffic Safety Human Resources Development Project, said: “The current traffic situation in Hanoi is similar to what Japan had experienced in the 1960s, 1970s. We do hope to join efforts with Hanoi to solve this situation by sharing our own experience.”

The key element of transport is human. Therefore, it is extremely important to convey the message of traffic safety to all individuals who join traffic activities such as car drivers, motorbike drivers and walkers.

Within the framework of the above-mentioned Project, one aim is to improve traffic control and traffic technology capacity of transport technicians and officials of Traffic Police Department who are in charge of operating the traffic management center with system of transport roads and traffic signals. Also building a traffic accident database and government regulations can enable the forecast and policy-making in the future. The database can also be utilized for promoting traffic safety practice to each individual in Hanoi.

Special features of intersections make Hanoi become more modern

- Nga Tu So Flyover, Nga Tu Vong Flyover and Kim Lien Underpass -

Nga Tu So and Nga Tu Vong intersections in Hanoi City. “Traffic used to be so serious at Nga Tu So and Nga Tu Vong intersections during rush hour in the morning and late afternoon. Especially, in the rainy days, traffic jam could be nearly half-day to be over. Solving the gridlock was the difficult issue due to financial shortage so Japan's ODA (yen loans) was something we really waited for,” said Mr. Nguyen Sy Bao – Project Management Unit.

After the Project kick-off, Vietnamese and Japanese companies saw success despite difficulties in the initial stage resulting from the different customs and thoughts. But Mr. Bao confirmed: “It is the cultural difference to create advantages. The hard - working style and work efficiency of the Japanese were great lessons for us.”

Kim Lien Underpass was completed and operational in October 2009. This construction work was to welcome 1000-year Thang Long - Hanoi celebration in 2010.

“In the near future, Hanoi will become a modern city. These three flyovers and underpass can be considered as the new turning - point which creates the great change and become symbol of Hanoi City,” hopes Mr. Bao.



Nga Tu So Flyover



Rush hour

Typical Example No. 4: Project for Strengthening Healthcare Services Provision in Hoa Binh Province” (Technical Cooperation)

Improvement of medical equipment and establishment of the patient information system in an effective and efficient manner

As for basic health indicators, low average life expectancy and high infant mortality rate in comparison with other regions in the country remain urgent challenges for Hoa Binh authorities. To assist improvements to the provincial healthcare services quality, JICA has been cooperating with the Hoa Binh Department of Health (DOH), with focus on improving the management and guidance capabilities, then contributing to developing training capacity of medical workers in hospitals at district level, establishing the referral system ※¹ and strengthening the operation of the Direction Office for Healthcare Activities (DOHA) ※².

All for patient’s satisfaction

The high-tech building in Hoa Binh General Hospital was built with grant aid from the Government of Japan. A slogan “All for the patient’s satisfaction” hanged in front of the main entrance of the building is the initiative taken by the hospital’s director – Doctor Truong Quy Duong and is a message to all of its staff and medical workers. “Thanks to JICA’s technical cooperation project, through training on improvement of communication skills with patients, the hospital’s medical workers have started to provide more patient-oriented healthcare services, which will contribute to improve the quality of medical and health care,” said Doctor Duong.



To be moved by the diligence of Japanese experts

Improvement of healthcare services quality not only means the upgrade of medical equipment and facilities but also includes the strengthening of training capacity of medical workers and development of the regional medical system. Taking this into consideration, the project has been implemented with the aim of enhancing the patient referral system and strengthening the management and guidance capacities of local hospitals, and improving healthcare services provision at a grassroots level.

Mr. Nguyen Van Qua – Head of Personnel and Organization Division of the Hoa Binh DOH said “During the process of project implementation, JICA experts always try their utmost and work with a sense of responsibility, even when facing difficulties, all of which made me really be moved.” Mr. Quach Dinh Thong, Director of the Hoa Binh DOH also shared the same opinion that method of regular information exchange introduced by Japan has contributed to improvement of healthcare services quality of the hospital. “Thanks to the development of the management and guidance capabilities and establishment of the patient referral system with the focal point of DOHA, the provincial healthcare services have progressed notably. The experience gained from the project should be disseminated to other hospitals in the North, and scaled up throughout the country,” added Mr. Thong.



※¹ Patient referral system: Based on the health condition of the patient, hospitals at the level of province or district will operate a mechanism of introducing and referring the patient to medical institutions at upper level for the appropriate medical treatment.

※² The Direction Office for Healthcare Activities: With the aim of narrowing the disparity between regions in respect of healthcare services, hospitals at upper level will direct and transfer technology to hospitals at lower level.

Typical Example No. 5: Project for Implementation Support for 3R Initiative in Hanoi City to Contribute to the Development of a Sound Material-Cycle Society

Kick-off 3R Initiative: Reduce – Reuse – Recycle

Nguyen Van Hoa, Deputy Director of URENCO Hanoi worried that if Hanoi's rubbish keeps on increasing at the current rate, Nam Son dumping site will become overloaded in near future. "We cannot ignore the fact that our environment becomes worse due to polluted water resource, waste random disposal, and untreated waste. It is necessary to make a policy and an action plan which will be implemented by administrative offices and the residents," he said.

JICA and URENCO Hanoi officially kicked off 3R Project (3R-HN) in Hanoi in November 2006. 3R-HN is an integrated environmental improvement project through source separation, organic fertilizer manufacture and environmental education in four wards of 4 inner districts of Hanoi.

Resident's participation is indispensable in the success of 3R Project

Since the source separation activities were kicked off, random disposal has reduced at project sites. Nguyen Thi Hien, a member of women union of Lang Ha ward shows her expectation to 3R Project "Having heard of 3R Project, I was so happy and felt more secure when Japanese experts would participate in the Project." Furthermore, many concerned organizations have been established such as 3R Volunteer Club (3R-VC) with participation of students and higher secondary schools' pupils, who care about the environment.



Dang Lang Ngoc, chairwoman 3R-VC said "young generation should learn and practise environmental education and to conduct environment PR activities towards all walks of life. We expect more achievements will be gained through the related events."

With the support by JICA, 3R-VC has organized Mottainai Fair for 5 times in Hanoi and 1 time in Hoi An. Mottainai Fair includes activities such as used clothes exchange, environmental education for children, making ecological bags from recycled canvas, paper to help people understand more about the importance of environment.

Continuous PR activities - a Key to success

Stating on the future of 3R Initiative, Luong Thi Mai Huong, the leader of environmental education and PR unit of URENCO said "It took dozen of years for source separation in Japan to become habit of Japanese residents. Hence, in Vietnam, it is necessary to have continuous PR activities to change the peoples' habits." 3R-HN has completed its 3 - year project in November 2009 and now source separation has been done self-consciously in a number of areas in Hanoi.

Ministry of Construction, the central agency in charge of solid waste management and Hanoi City expect that the 3R Initiative will spread to all areas of Hanoi and go further to other cities in Vietnam.



Typical Example No. 6: Hanoi Drainage Project for Environment Improvement (ODA Loans)

Let's protect Hanoi from flooding

Three days of heavy rain starting in the afternoon October 30, 2008 made a new record for rainfall at 700 milliliter. Images of the flooded city were spread by mass media, the residents had to push their motorbikes in flood waters or evacuate from the flood-stricken areas on small boats. Acts of God are always beyond human imagination. However, with modern technology and human efforts, man is able to minimize the damage. "Hanoi Drainage Project for Environment Improvement" commenced in 1995 with a slogan "Let's protect Hanoi from flooding"



Trial demonstration of our achievement

Mr. Sasaki Masaya, Nippon Koei Company recalled of the historic rain in 2008: "Our achievement has been put into trial demonstration. We were worried whether the drainage pumping station could work as well as expected. With 11 pumps of big capacity of 45 ton of water/second, Yen So pump station sucked water out of the four inland embanked rivers such as To Lich river, then pouring into Red river by a drainage pipe system. Nevertheless, the amount of rainfall surpassed expectations and flooded Yen So pumping station center.

With a strong effort to protect the pumping station, early in the morning on 31 October, lots of sandbags were piled up to protect the station from flood. "It is important that if we can pump out the water as expected. The one thing I can do is to pray for it," said Sakai.

He added, "While in the past, with the same rainfall, it had taken 2 months to dry out, in this case, it just took one week with the operation of our current pump station. The station has worked as well as expected. I am happy to see the flood dry out quickly, which helps the residents be in tune with their daily life and minimizes economic loss."

Important to combine the effects of rivers system

"Like meaning of its name, Hanoi is enclosed by the rivers" added Mr. Pham Van Cuong, Project Management Unit "Water is considered as an essential resource for human life as well as for production, but too much water also causes many difficulties to man's life."

In 1990s, water quality, hygiene and sanitation, which were serious concerns in Hanoi, caused epidemic diseases: dengue fever, eye diseases, etc. Thanks to the project, diseases had been controlled and peoples' lives had been stabilized.

In parallel with rapid economic growth, city expansion, population increase and business development as well, Hanoi is facing a strong demand for an effective drainage system. The remaining defects of the Hanoi drainage system are expected to be resolved soon. "Along with minimization of flood damages and treatment of waste water, in the very near future, green lakes will be seen in our city as when I was a child," Mr. Cuong hoped.



Yen So Pump Station

Typical Example No. 7: Management and Preservation of Duong Lam Ancient Village (Dispatching Volunteers)

Volunteers involve in historical scenery preservation work

Some 60 kilometers outside of Hanoi is the village of Duong Lam, surrounded by immense rice paddies. It offers a glimpse of an ancient scene of Vietnam with houses of faded brown wall, laterite country lanes and the fragrant scent of burnt straw in the air.

To preserve the traditional features of Duong Lam Ancient Village, from the beginning of 2007, JICA and Duong Lam Ancient Village Management and Preservation Board kicked-off restoration and preservation work. Two Japanese Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs) cooperated with the Board to develop a plan on regional development and restoration management of ancient houses recognized as cultural relics.

Preservation of historical-cultural relics to descendant

JOCV in charge of the restoration management of Hung's house said, "In the historical structures, there remain the memories of the former residents which cannot be bought with money. It is much simpler to rebuild or repair the house with modern material than to preserve it as it was. Thus, Hung, the local carpenters and Management Board have been trying to work out the method of management and restoration without changing its own features and identities.

Through the time, the ancient houses have been deteriorated. "At first, I have thought of rebuilding parts of it with modern material, but I hope that with JOCV support, this ancient 400-year old house can live 100 years more," said Hung. The most complicated problem in preservation and repair work is that people are still living in those ancient houses. "We are trying our best to let the residents be aware of our work through the time without pressing them," JOCV.



Photographer: Quynh Ngan

Forwarding to world heritage status

A stable economic foundation is a prerequisite for preservation, restoration and human habitation. Thus, the Board and JOCV in charge of rural development worked out the measures on tourism development, took into account the living environment of the villagers. Regarding this issue, Pham Hung Son, Director of the Board said "Duong Lam Ancient Village is still alive, while its people are living. We need measures on both ensuring an economic income and the preservation of the living environment for the villagers." It is the lives of the villagers which is the first priority.

Efforts should be made to preserve both the designated ancient houses and other tangible and intangible cultural heritages as well: harvest festival, folk songs (Cheo), etc. Son added, "Seeking World Heritage Status is not only the national goal but also my personal wish."

Typical Example No. 8: Enhancing knowledge and techniques of preceding generations (Dispatching volunteers)

“We expect that the accumulated techniques and experiences in Japan will be useful for developing country”

Such is sharing from Japanese senior volunteers (SVs). In Dec. 2011, there were 23 SVs working in provinces and cities throughout Vietnam. Having rich social experiences, these SVs involve in many areas such as education, health, agriculture, tourism, transportation and industry, support for on-the-spot response to Vietnam’s socio-economic issues arisen from high economic growth.

One of the above issues is support for development of supporting industries

With annual import surplus of around USD12.6 billion, Vietnam has to frequently import components for supporting industry products for its growing economy. Because of this, coupled with economic development, import surplus has become a more worrisome issue. Setting the goal of becoming an industrialized country in 2020, prior to the removal of tariffs among ASEAN member countries in the region, Vietnam should elevate localization rate of component and part supply, in other words, it has to quickly develop the supporting industry.

Therefore, Vietnam really needs techniques and experiences from an industrial power like Japan. Being veteran experts having high specialized experiences and technical skills, most of Japanese SVs have come to Vietnam with dreams and expectations to apply experiences of Japan’s past high economic growing era to further elevate Vietnam’s current dynamism. Supported audiences of these volunteers include medium and small-sized enterprises. The volunteers give guidance and enhance their specialized experiences in areas such as support for improved production, quality control in plastic processing, metal plating and metal processing...

A SV who is currently assisting enterprises in Hanoi says: “Many Vietnamese enterprises have expressed their gratitude and joy to my assistance. Sometimes I do not feel pleased because results are not up to what I expected, however, I’ve further understood differences in working method of the people here.”

Together with high economic growth rate, worsening traffic has become a social problem

A SV, who has long-standing experience in road improving area and once proposed improvement of traffic accident situation to authorities in Japan, is now making efforts to improve traffic situation in Hanoi. After being dispatched, this SV has made considerable contribution to deploy specific measures aimed at easing traffic overload by flyovers and underpasses at traffic spots.

There are traffic management issues may be solved in a short time, issues may be temporarily solved and issues could not be solved within a short time. In order to solve the road problems, it is necessary to simultaneously carry out legal preparations, road management as well as joint efforts from the people. This is an issue that needs lasting efforts and high determination.

At present, Japanese SVs operating in transportation and industry are mainly concentrated in two major cities. In other localities, Japanese SVs involve in areas such as teaching the Japanese language, management and maintenance of health equipments, poultry hygiene.

Japanese SVs, in spite of differences in their specialization, job specifications or working places, all have one common wish of rendering their contributions to Vietnam society. In their daily performance, in spite of countless difficulties, they still find moments of joy when seeing outcomes of their activities. We could see future image of Vietnam after a decade reflected in the eyes of these volunteers.

