

Security Measures

JICA announced the JICA Declaration on Security Measures in November 2017. This was to express to people in Japan and abroad JICA's strong resolve to do all it can to ensure that its partners engaged in JICA's cooperation (JICA partners) can travel to their assignment places safely, work there safely, and return home safely.

Threats in the international community are changing daily and hourly in terms of both level and aspect. Recent years have seen

the growing threat of indiscriminate terrorism, social upheaval, heinous crime, and traffic accidents. Since 2019, the world has been faced with a new crisis—the global COVID-19 pandemic.

While JICA is institutionally committed to day-to-day security measures, it is important that each partner also maintain a high level of crisis management awareness and take security measures one by one on a daily basis. JICA is stepping up efforts to take specific measures to this end.

Responding to COVID-19

1. Protecting our partners in the global pandemic phase

COVID-19—which was first reported in December 2019 in Wuhan, China, as an unidentified pneumonia—spread extremely rapidly across the globe. Many countries closed their borders, took strict border controls, and locked down major cities before the epidemiological characteristics or medical health hazards of the unknown virus came to light. Many international flights were suspended, seriously hampering the international flows of people.

Under these circumstances, in January 2021, JICA had its volunteers working in China to return to Japan as a temporary measure. Starting in March, it expanded the geographical scope of this temporal return-home instruction to the entire globe to cover JICA volunteers working on the frontlines of the field and other partners who had underlying conditions or were old in age. JICA also examined the emigration and immigration bottlenecks and infection status in each country. By September that year, some 6,000 partners returned to Japan from 88 countries. Furthermore, JICA supported the return of its partners in financial cooperation by consulting with partner country governments, securing departing flights, and helping the departure of engineers of third-country nationalities.

Meanwhile, Japanese staff at JICA overseas offices remained there by rotation while enhancing measures for their own safety and health. They assisted returned JICA partners in their remote work in order to ensure operational continuity. They also made preparations for early resumption of overseas travel and return to their assigned countries.

2. Efforts to resume safe travel and continue operations

The global COVID-19 pandemic not only threatened people's lives and health but also adversely affected many other aspects, including economic and social activities, employment, education, and poverty. While countries closed their borders and the momentum to put their policies first increased, the importance of standing up to this global crisis through international coordination and cooperation was emphasized more than ever.

Against this backdrop, JICA worked on and developed three frameworks of its own for forging ahead with its operations that entailed international travel, while ensuring safety and health of its partners.



Viet Nam: An intensive-care unit of the Cho Ray Hospital, the largest medical facility in southern Viet Nam. JICA worked on the return of its project partners to their countries of assignment after making necessary arrangements, including assessing the situation of health care institutions in each country to prevent COVID-19 infection.

The first framework was a set of travel rules to be observed by JICA project partners in order to prevent COVID-19 infection and spread. These rules included the Code of Conduct that set out the behavioral patterns to be followed by each partner, encouraging them to practice self-restriction and self-restraint. All partners must agree to abide by this Code of Conduct before undertaking international travel. Also included were rules on travel itineraries and guidelines on infection prevention at project sites.

The second framework consisted of country-specific response arrangements and manuals, both of which were designed to protect the safety and health of JICA project partners. JICA put in place an arrangement for closer coordination with medical institutions and prepared a manual to be followed in times of ill health. This was to ensure prompt and appropriate response in cases where project partners are suspected to have been infected with COVID-19 or suffer other serious illness or injury. JICA worked to resume the return travel of its project partners to the countries and regions where conditions permitted.

The third framework was designed to enforce strict travel control. Travels by partners under contract to JICA were put under the sole control of the Security Management Department, which checked each travel plan to see if there was any problem with

regard to their safety or health. Liaison arrangements were also in place to allow JICA partners to take appropriate action if there were changes to emigration and immigration rules in their destination countries or at transfer sites, or changes to the border controls at the time of re-entry into Japan. Furthermore, the above-mentioned Code of Conduct called for sincere compliance with the border controls by the Japanese government, including strict quarantines upon re-entry. This was done to prevent any introduction of the virus into Japan.

Under these frameworks, JICA arranged the travels of its partners to 99 countries by March 2021. JICA constantly checked to see whether the response arrangement and manual were effective in each of these countries. When necessity arose, JICA suspended such travels as part of its meticulous response architecture.

3. Support for JICA project partners

In addition to the above, JICA provides information regarding security measures to its project partners and otherwise supports

them. The JICA website includes a page dedicated to security measures. This web page provides registered project partners with access to country-specific security measures and security manuals, among other information. The web page regularly updates and scales up information on COVID-19, including a list of countries that JICA has begun to dispatch its partners, as well as guides to prevent infection and spread.

During fiscal 2020, JICA organized briefing sessions and seminars on how better to respond to and cope with COVID-19 for a total of 4,500 project partners. Upon inquiry from individual project partners, JICA provided information on country-specific emigration and immigration arrangements, quarantine measures, and medical institutions in each country. JICA also assisted its project partners in obtaining a visa and securing a flight when additional procedures were required for the entry formalities and when they needed to visit countries for which commercial flights were not yet available.

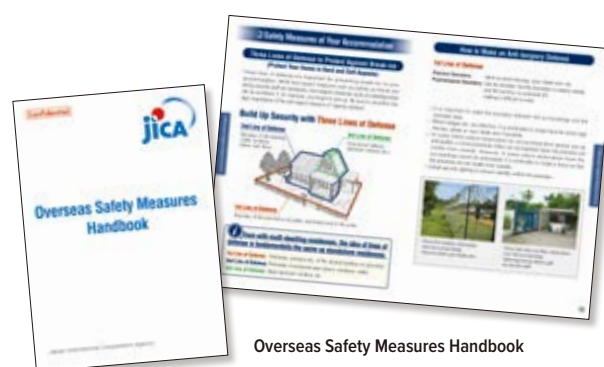
Enhancing Security Measures

Amid drastic changes in the international situation, threats to international travelers are changing in level and aspect. International travelers are always at risk; they might experience indiscriminate terrorism, including bomb explosion, aimed at causing many casualties, focused terrorism designed to kidnap a few targeted people and take them hostage, robbery by armed groups and individuals, or violence against women. Recent years have seen growing numbers of other incidents such as armed conflicts and hostilities stemming from international disputes, cases of public security deterioration associated with political instability and elections, and clashes between mass demonstrators and security forces.

Strengthening protective capabilities in both physical and nonphysical aspects

JICA helps to improve the self-defense capabilities of its project partners based on the motto: "You are the one who protects yourself." To this end, JICA takes advantage of the Overseas Safety Measures Handbook, a booklet JICA has prepared to explain the basics for acquiring such capabilities. It encourages each project partner to raise their safety awareness, change their behavior, and practice self-defense skills.

Project partners who will be dispatched overseas under direct contract to JICA must receive self-defense training prior to their departure. JICA offers open training 12 times a year for project partners who will be dispatched overseas under contract to a JICA partner company or organization as well as for partners in financial cooperation. They are encouraged to receive such training before their departure. In the first half of fiscal 2020, JICA suspended part of the training due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Then JICA began



Overseas Safety Measures Handbook

to offer it online. A total of nine online sessions were attended by 425 people.

JICA also offers manager-level training to officers at security management units and other security managers of partner companies and organizations. During fiscal 2020, it provided a total of five sessions, attended by 101 people.

On the frontline of international development cooperation, security measures for project sites, project offices, and the homes of JICA experts and volunteers are also important. From fiscal 2019, JICA applies the General Guidance for Security Measures to the sites of large cooperation projects in high security-risk areas. Projects subject to this guidance are required to define necessary physical and nonphysical security measures in the planning phase, incorporate them into their operational plans, and earmark a budget for that purpose. In short, security measures are incorporated into the project cycle for systematic response. Additionally, JICA makes a checklist for the project offices and the residences of its partners and encourage them to take necessary security measures.