

JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY



News FROM Philippines

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WHY A 30-YEAR RAILWAY MASTER PLAN MAKES SENSE FOR PH NOW

As the Philippine government commits to ease traffic woes, improve quality of life, and attract more investments into the country, JICA and Department of Transportation (DOTr) agreed to prepare a “30-year Railway Master Plan for the Greater Capital Region (GCR)”, a comprehensive joint effort to progress significant railway project impacts, with the signing of the Project’s Record of Discussions recently.

The master plan aims to develop a network of railway lines, increase Philippine railways’ modal share of passenger trips, and increase the country’s rail routes. It will support and expand the Philippines’ ongoing efforts to address transport infrastructure gaps and perennial commuter difficulties.

The Philippines is currently implementing major railway infrastructure projects in cooperation with JICA that include the Metro Manila Subway, North-South Commuter Railway system, MRT-3 Rehabilitation, and capacity enhancement of Light Rail Transit Lines 1 and 2. However, further expansion of railway systems to form a transport network is considered a prerequisite for the country’s development.

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. likewise reiterated in his latest State of the Nation Address (SONA) that the government will strengthen infrastructure spending between 5 to 6 percent of the country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and this project also aligns with the President’s initiative by supporting the Philippine Government to further formulate and implement new railway infrastructure projects.

As work is underway for the country’s ongoing major railway projects, the cooperation for a 30-year railway master plan broadens this quest for long-lasting, reliable, affordable, safe, and environment-friendly infrastructure. ▣



FULL STORY HERE:

JICA, ATENEO LECTURE HIGHLIGHTS BANGSAMORO PEACE BUILDING PROCESS



JICA, in partnership with Ateneo de Manila University (ADMU), held a special joint lecture on Japan and Bangsamoro's peace building process.

The topic "Japan's Experience on Peace Building: Bangsamoro's Journey to Peace" is the fourth in a series of lecture events under the JICA Chair program in the Philippines. This JICA Chair program, launched in 2020, aims to share Japan's modernization experience with partner countries, like the Philippines, and initiate discourse on common issues and solutions to challenges.

Tokyo University of Foreign Studies Professor SHINODA Hideaki is the speaker for the lecture. His research focus includes peace building, international order, and national sovereignty. The panelists are Minister Mohammad S. Yacob from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Agrarian Reform of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA), Director Farrah Grace Naparan from the Office of Presidential Adviser on Peace, Reconciliation and Unity (OPAPRU), Dr. Jennifer Oreta from the Department of Political Science in ADMU, Senior Director MUROTANI Ryutaro from the Governance and Peacebuilding Department of JICA, and Mr. OCHIAI Naoyuki from the Southeast Asia Department of JICA.

Through this lecture series, it was emphasized that peacebuilding is a long-term process that requires effort and commitment from various stakeholders in order to be successful and sustainable. JICA fully supports the Bangsamoro people as it continues to do best efforts through the transition process for the peace and prosperity in the Bangsamoro region and in the entire country.

JICA supports various peace and development initiatives in Mindanao, especially in terms of capacity development, including a study visit to Hiroshima, Japan, where 17 Bangsamoro Parliament members attended lectures on Japan's Parliamentary system and met with Japanese government officials and agriculture businesspersons. Additionally, JICA supported Bangsamoro Senior Minister Abunawas Maslamama to join a 15-day JICA training course in Tokyo for National Government Administration, under JICA's Knowledge Co-Creation Program (KCCP) for Group and Region Focus, to help improve policy formulation skills for effective national policies. ▣

Scan this QR code to read the full story



UP-AND-COMING JAPANESE STARTUP LAUNCHED AI-POWERED DISASTER MANAGEMENT TECH



A disaster management tool using Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology invented by a Japanese company is recently being piloted in the Philippines in a move to protect and save more lives in times of disasters and other emergencies.

The technology is launched by a unique Japanese startup, Spectee, Inc., through the Public-Private Partnership

(PPP) promotion program of JICA, as part of their efforts to provide real-time information in disaster-prone countries like Japan and the Philippines.

Spectee Inc. has partnered with the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) and the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) to use the AI tool as trial in disaster prevention operations. The OCD and some local government units (LGUs) are piloting the technology to mitigate disaster risks and save more lives.

The AI makes judgments based on huge social media information data, while a human team on duty re-checks and verifies the information. The information is then channeled through a dashboard, smartphone notifications, and e-mail alerts. It is already being used by more than 100 government organizations, including police

and fire stations, as well as 90% of news organizations in Japan.

The technology visualizes the crisis using data from social media, climate information, river/road camera, and people traffic, among others. It has its own primary check features based on sentence and image analysis as well as credibility scores. This helps discard fake news and eliminate them from the data. ■

SCAN TO READ MORE:



PHILIPPINES REAFFIRMED JICA AS KEY PARTNER AT TOKYO HIGH-LEVEL MEETING

Philippine Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno cited Japan as a key partner in development.

At the 14th Philippines-Japan High-Level Joint Committee Meeting on Infrastructure Development and Economic Cooperation in Tokyo in August, the finance chief led the Philippine high-level delegation to meet with their Japanese counterparts and review accomplishments and promotion plan of the Philippines' bilateral relationship with Japan.

Diokno also acknowledged Japan's support to the Philippines' pursuit of upper middle-income status through "impactful ODA (Official Development Assistance) and private sector investments."



Photo courtesy of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.

The Japanese government, through JICA, is financing many key infrastructure projects, such as railways, in the Philippines to help improve the quality of life of Filipinos through better connectivity and less traffic congestion. In 2023, the Loan Agreements for the North-South Commuter Railway Project (NSCR), NSCR Extension Project, and Metro Rail Transit (MRT) Line 3 Rehabilitation Project amounting to about JPY395-B were signed. In addition to infrastructure development, other subjects that were covered were maritime safety, agriculture, and regional growth, among others.

The Philippine delegation also spoke before the Japanese private sector at the JICA Office in Tokyo. JICA Chief Representative to the Philippines SAKAMOTO Takema pointed out the huge potential and opportunities of the Philippines as an investment hub and development partner. He added several key points for the success of investment projects, such as well-organized planning, proper operation and maintenance measures, and appropriate burden and responsibility sharing.

The Philippine delegation to Tokyo includes other agencies who are all actively working with JICA on various cooperation projects, namely National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), Department of Budget and Management (DBM), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Transportation (DOTr), Department of Energy (DOE), Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT), and Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA). The Philippine Ambassador to Japan Her Excellency Mylene J. Garcia-Albano was also in the Meeting. ■

Check out Chief Rep SAKAMOTO's full presentation here:



Talk of the Town

JICA LAUNCHES WASTEWATER TREATMENT TECHNOLOGY BY JAPANESE COMPANY IN BAGUIO TO PROMOTE HEALTHY LIVING CONDITIONS AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

JICA and Japanese company FujiClean Co., Ltd. spearheads a workshop to launch FujiClean's wastewater technology that is both easy-to-maintain and can address wastewater problems in unfavorable geographical areas. FujiClean is one of Japan's leading companies in onsite wastewater treatment system and technology, and it demonstrates No.1 market share in this field in Japan. The company adds that the onsite wastewater treatment can address water pollution in highly urbanized environments, and transform them into smart, sustainable cities.

This initiative is being made under the JICA Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Business Model Formulation Survey for Effective and Sustainable Development of Sewer Infrastructure. The program explores overseas markets and

public-private partnerships, aiming to use Japanese companies' technologies and business models to address various development challenges in partner countries like the Philippines.

FujiClean is looking into working with the local government of Baguio as well as national agencies such as Department of Tourism (DOT), National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA), and Local Water Utilities Administration (LUWA).

JICA is also supporting a similar wastewater management and regional development cooperation with the local government of Davao. The recently launched Masterplan Study on Comprehensive Wastewater Management in Davao City aims to address water sanitation concerns and implement priority projects in wastewater management, supplementing the sewerage development priority of the JICA-assisted Davao City Infrastructure Development Plan and Capacity Building Project (IM4Davao). ▣



Photo shows (from left): FujiClean Co. Ltd General Manager TABATA Yosuke, Baguio City Mayor Benjamin Magalong, JICA Chief Representative SAKAMOTO Takema, DENR CAR-EMB Director Jean Borromeo.

Read the full story here:



OVER 60 LGUS JOIN JICA, DOH, AND DA-BAI COOPERATION TO END RABIES IN PH BY 2030

The rapid rabies test kit developed under JAPOHR was made available to participating LGUs and has remarkably detected over 200 rabies cases from October 2021 to June 2023.

A partnership between JICA, Department of Health (DOH), and Department of Agriculture – Bureau of Animal Industry (DA-BAI) encouraged more than 60 LGUs in 11 regions to push for zero rabies in the Philippines by 2030.

A wrap-up seminar for the Japan and Philippines One Health Rabies (JAPOHR) project was held on July 6 at the Crimson Hotel in Alabang, Muntinlupa City attended by several stakeholders that explored ways to move the project forward more sustainably.

JAPOHR project collaborated with Japanese universities, Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM), San Lazaro Hospital (SLH), and Bulacan LGU as pilot site. The project, which began in 2018 and ends this year, launched innovations in animal rabies surveillance and rapid response, including rapid rabies testing and internet-based data sharing system.

In 2018 and 2019, JAPOHR likewise trained doctors and health personnel from the Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office III (DA-RFO3) and RITM in Japan. Two RITM and DA-BAI doctors also received their Master of Public Health (MPH) in Nagasaki University and Doctorate Program (PhD) in Oita University.

A rabies awareness campaign was also launched in social media, while a hands-on training on rabies rapid diagnosis and data sharing system was held at the LGU level. ▣

FULL STORY HERE



NEWS IN PHOTOS

JAPANESE NPO PUSHES FOR DISASTER EDUC IN PH SCHOOLS AMID CLIMATE CHANGE

Extreme weather patterns brought by climate change prompted a Japanese non-profit organization (NPO) to champion weather education in Philippine schools.

In Central Visayas, where the activity is being piloted and to be rolled out in all schools, a workshop on climate change adaptation was held this 24 August 2023 in Talisay City, Province of Cebu. The activity is in partnership with Department of Education (DepEd) - Region VII and the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA). This workshop is also supported by City of Talisay Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office.



The activity in Cebu is part of the third phase of “Strengthening and Promoting School-Based Disaster Risk Reduction in Central Visayas.” JICA supports this cooperation under its Technical Cooperation for Grassroots Projects in efforts to address global issues like climate change together with Japanese citizens and organizations.

Japanese NPO “SEEDS Asia” and DepEd in Cebu, in collaboration with Hyogo Prefecture in Japan, will develop training programs for teachers and personnel that foster leadership, knowledge exchange, and collaboration in disaster preparedness and management. Meteorological experts from PAGASA, Japan’s Tokoha University, and SEEDS Asia will share their knowledge on understanding climate hazards, importance of weather education, and weather observation devices used in Myanmar and India. ▣

Read the full story in this QR code:



DENR AND JICA BUILD COFFEE PROCESSING FACILITY IN NUEVA VIZCAYA TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNITY-BASED ENTERPRISES AND SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT

The Kalanguyan tribe in Kayapa, Nueva Vizcaya is venturing into coffee production with the inauguration of a PHP 5.8 million coffee processing facility to boost local economy in watershed areas and further promote forest conservation.



In addition to creating livelihood opportunities for upland farmers engaged in the protection and maintenance of the Upper Matuno Sub-watershed in Nueva Vizcaya, the agroforestry value chain sub-project envisions to harness the produce from established agroforestry plantations by partner People’s Organizations (POs). Such initiative is part of the Forestland Management Project (FMP), an ongoing cooperation between the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and JICA, to strengthen forestland management through the implementation of community-based forest management approach. The facility will directly benefit nearly 1,000 farmers under five (5) POs of Nueva Vizcaya.



Aside from enterprise development, FMP has been active in implementing other community-based management strategies including capacity development of POs, conduct of information and education drives to promote sustainable use of forestland resources, and rehabilitation/construction of Agroforestry Support Facilities subprojects to improve production network and access to market. ▣

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JICA awards prestigious Japanese scholarship to 20 Filipino policymakers

The Government of Japan, through JICA, is sending twenty Filipinos to pursue graduate studies at Japan's foremost universities. This scheme is part of JICA's ODA, the Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship by Japanese Grant Aid, also known as JDS Project.

The new batch of JDS Fellows is represented by policymakers coming from multi-sectoral government institutions such as the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB), Department of Finance (DoF), DPWH, Department of Science and Technology – Industrial Technology Development Institute (DOST-ITD), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Ministry of Public Works of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), NEDA, Office of the President – Presidential Management Staff (OP-PMS), Philippine Board of Investments (BOI),



Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), and University of the Philippines – Resilience Institute (UP-RI).

These young participants are recognized as “Ambassadors of Goodwill” who will lead the country towards its socioeconomic success, while acting as catalysts of change and fostering a stronger Philippines-Japan relations.

“Remember that you’re all part of something bigger than yourselves. So be patriotic. Be MAKABAYAN. Study hard!” said JICA Philippines Chief Representative SAKAMOTO Takema during the send-off ceremony.

On its 21st year of implementation in the country, the JDS Project has served to be a robust platform for people-to-people exchange and human resource development. To date, there have been 439 Filipino recipients of the project who are responsible for spearheading the Philippines’ sustainable development in different fields. ▣

FULL STORY HERE



FEATURE

JICA – PHILIPPINE COOPERATION TAKES THE SPOTLIGHT ON GMA TV, FACEBOOK SHORT VIDEO SERIES



Screenshot from Agripreneur's YouTube Channel.

JICA Chief Representative SAKAMOTO Takema and popular Filipino broadcast journalist Jiggy Manicad recently put the spotlight on JICA and the Philippine cooperation and how it is improving the livelihoods of many Filipinos.

The interview also zeroed in on the agriculture sector and how JICA is supporting it holistically. The JICA Chief noted that as part of the three pillars of JICA's assistance to the Philippines, JICA's decades of assistance to the sector is bearing fruit. Initially, the Japanese government has focused on increasing productivity and building infrastructure for agriculture. To date, more than 500 irrigation systems had been built, over 200, 000 ha of agricultural lands were developed, and 320, 000

agrarian reform beneficiaries were part of JICA's cooperation in the sector.

Manicad also noted JICA's recent support in improving the Philippine vegetable value chain through JICA's Market-Driven Enhancement of Vegetable Value Chains in the Philippines, noting its impact on curbing post-harvest losses and improving market development.

“Agriculture is a foundation in an economy. *Sa masaganang agrikultura, maunlad ang ekonomiya.* (A progressive agriculture sector means a successful economy),” SAKAMOTO said.

Scan this QR code for the full interview:





Kwentong JICA #1
DRRM Projects in the Philippines

SCAN HERE →



MAKE WAY FOR 'KWENTONG JICA'

Meanwhile, JICA also launched this year its "Kwentong JICA" ("JICA stories") short video series via Facebook to share the impact and vision behind JICA's cooperation to various sectors or topics in the Philippines. The series features the JICA Chief to the Philippines SAKAMOTO Takema and interesting facts and trivia on JICA-Philippine cooperation.



Kwentong JICA #2
Agriculture Projects in the Philippines

SCAN HERE →



The recent video series highlighted JICA cooperation in disaster risk reduction and management, agriculture, and infrastructure development in Davao. Download the QR codes to watch or you may also visit our Facebook Page here: www.facebook.com/jicaphilippines



Kwentong JICA #3
Davao Projects

SCAN HERE →



If you have other suggestions on what we can feature next, please feel free to send your suggestions to Trish Mendros (MendrosTrisha-PP@jica.go.jp) and Laurice Enriquez (EnriquezLaurice-PP@jica.go.jp). ▣

Batangas LGU collaborates with Japanese volunteers to upgrade agriculture and DRRM efforts

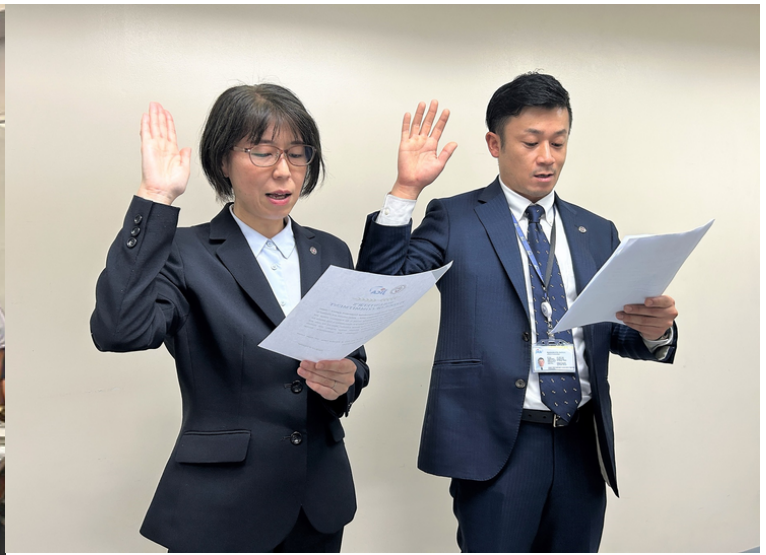
The Municipality of Cuenca in Batangas is hosting Japanese volunteers in efforts to upgrade agriculture technology and disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM) in the communities.

Japanese volunteers – MIMURA Mari and KAWAMURA Akihiro – were both assigned to work with Cuenca local government under the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) Program of JICA.

The municipality is revitalizing their demo farms and would like to learn modern agricultural practices and experiences from Japan. These demo farms will be used to show the Cuenca community how to carry out new practices, research, and agricultural techniques of vegetable growing. This will also be a good opportunity for the local farmers to collaborate with a JICA volunteer toward sustainable farming that can contribute to environmental conservation, food security and quality of life of people in the municipality.



Their Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (DRRMO) is also in need of technical expertise in strengthening capacities of communities on disaster response. In 2020, the Taal Volcano eruption forced evacuations in Cuenca's lakeshore barangays. Through the volunteer's endeavor, technical support and training to enhance the capabilities of the Cuenca DRRMO in handling such emergencies effectively will be provided, among others.



MIMURA is an agriculture technology graduate of Tokyo University of Agriculture. She worked in the field of environment conservation and bio-breeding at the Kumamoto Prefectural Agricultural Research Center, Japan. Meanwhile, KAWAMURA is a firefighter in Japan who also trained schools and communities in evacuation and other disaster response.

Cuenca Mayor Alexander Magpantay assured that the LGU will provide support and guidance to the JICA volunteers throughout their projects. ▣

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read more:



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 JPY 2,745 billion for JFY 2022 and a worldwide network of about 100 overseas offices including the Philippines.

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