



## PRESS RELEASE

*For Immediate Release*

### **JAPAN AND VIETNAM TO BOOST COOPERATION FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH IN BEN TRE PROVINCE**

**March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020** - Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Office in Vietnam signed a tripartite Memorandum of Cooperation with the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) Office in Ho Chi Minh City and Ben Tre province, under which JICA will actively implement results of ODA projects as well as surveys under the Japanese Enterprises Proposing Program while JETRO will provide support and information to Japanese enterprises to invest in Ben Tre province.

The tripartite Memorandum of Cooperation focuses on three specific areas of cooperation: establishment of climate resilient agricultural value chain; improvement of investment environment and promotion of high quality investment in Ben Tre province, especially the investment from Japanese enterprises; and development of human resources for agricultural development and investment promotion, particularly through Japanese cultural exchanges and language training within the framework of JICA and JETRO' programs.

Under this Memorandum of Cooperation, Ben Tre Supporting Group will be established with members from public sector, enterprises and civil society organizations who are actively supporting the socio-economic development of Ben Tre province.

JICA provided Ben Tre province with both "structural" (infrastructure development under loan projects) and "non-structural" (policy and technical assistance) support, for example the loan project of "Ben Tre Water Management" which will help the province to tackle climate change issues such as saltwater intrusion, shortage of freshwater, etc. by constructing water sluice gates and related facilities. Besides, under a framework of cooperation with the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences - VASS, JICA has also been providing consultancy activities to Ben Tre province in formulating agriculture development policies.

On July 24, 2018, JICA and JETRO already signed a Memorandum of Cooperation to strengthen their support to Japanese enterprises in overseas markets. Based on this memorandum, JICA and JETRO have actively provided cooperation and support to localities and Ben Tre is the second province who has signed the Memorandum of Cooperation after Nghe An (Memorandum of Cooperation was signed on September 5, 2019), and moreover, it is the first cooperation model of its kind in the Mekong Delta.

In the near future, JICA and JETRO will work as a bridge for information sharing between the parties and jointly promote investment and economic development in different provinces in Vietnam.

Ben Tre Province is only 2-hour drive away from Ho Chi Minh City and its location is very advantageous for agro-fishery production such as coconut or shrimp farming etc. The province identifies agriculture as a key economic sector and also focuses on promotion of both domestic and foreign investment. Compared to other provinces in the vicinity of Ho Chi Minh City, Ben Tre province also has great potential with abundant and low-cost human resources and is one of the provinces providing a large pool of apprentices for Japan.

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