

## SERBIA

# COMPLETION CEREMONY - FLUE GAS DESULPHURIZATION CONSTRUCTION PROJECT FOR THERMAL POWER PLANT NIKOLA TESLA

On April 25, the flue gas desulphurization plant on four power generation units in the Nikola Tesla A, Thermal power plant in Obrenovac, officially started operating. This is the first Japanese Yen loan project in Serbia, and it was successfully completed after twelve years from loan agreement signing.

Completion ceremony, which was hosted by Elektroprivreda Srbije (EPS), gathered the Minister of Mining and Energy, and the Minister of Environmental Protection from Serbia, as well as Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs from Japan, Ambassador of Japan, representatives of JICA Balkan Office and Japanese companies.

Utilizing Japanese technology and stringent environmental standards this project will contribute to significant reduction in sulfur dioxide emissions as well as dust emissions and comply with European standards and national regulations.



Japanese side: Parliamentary Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs from Japan, Ambassador of Japan in Serbia, representatives of Japanese companies, JICA Chief Representative. Serbian side: Minister of Mining and Energy, Minister of Environmental protection, representatives of the Municipality of Obrenovac

## VOICE OF THE COUNTERPART, MS. LJILJANA VELIMIROVIC, PROJECT MANAGER



Ms. Ljiljana Velimirovic standing first from the right, showing graphic presentation of the Project

*"In this plant, Japanese technology of flue gas desulfurization by wet limestone process has been introduced. Gypsum is obtained as a by-product*

*during the technological process, which can be sold and used in the construction industry. The project was realized despite the impact of Covid 19 and the war in Ukraine, and thanks to the incredible support we constantly had from the lender JICA. Without this help, it would be very difficult to finish this important project.*

*The friendship between the two countries of Japan and Serbia can be seen by a board with an inscription on the building: "ODA loan from the people of Japan as a sign of friendship and cooperation between Japan and Serbia." The motto of friendship between the peoples of Japan and Serbia was felt during the ceremony held on April 25. After a little more than four years of construction, the operational acceptance certificate was issued on March 28. The plant is currently in normal operating mode. We will continue to take care of this facility in the best way possible in the following period."*



# FINAL JCC MEETING ON DIVJAKE-KARAVASTA NATIONAL PARK PROJECT

On March 19, the final, 4th Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC) on the Project for Capacity Building for Improving Ecosystem-Based Management on Divjake-Karavasta National Park (DKNO) was held in Tirana.

On behalf of National Agency for Protected Areas (NAPA) and the Ministry of Tourism and Environment, Ms. Daniel PIRUSHI, Project Director and Director of the National Agency for Protected Areas (NAPA), extended her gratitude and appreciation to Japanese partners on successful cooperation and underlined that the DKNP Project is a very successful model of cooperation that Albanian Government would like to expand to the other parts of Albania.

The Project completion results have been introduced by Mr. Fotjon PRENCE, Project Manager and Director of the Regional Administration of the Protected Areas Fier Region and Mr.



Mr. ASANO Koji, Chief Advisor of JICA Expert Team shares the results of the Project.

ASANO Koji, Chief Advisor of JICA Expert Team.

As one of the most important outcomes of the Project, five manuals related to the ecosystem monitoring, sustainable agriculture,

sustainable fishery, environmental educational activities, good ecosystem practices in DKNP are created. It is planned to share them widely with relevant parties in other areas of Albania.

## SERBIA

# COUNTRY FOCUS TRAINING ON CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FOR POWER GRID STABILIZATION TOWARDS MASS INTRODUCTION OF RENEWABLE ENERGY FOR THE EMPLOYEES OF EPS

Eleven employees of the Ministry of Mining and Energy, JSC Elektroprivreda Srbije and JSC Elektromreza Srbije stayed in Japan from mid-January to the beginning of February, where professional training on Capacity Development for Power Grid Stabilization towards

Mass Introduction of Renewable Energy' was organized by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

The training in Kitakyushu was designed and organized as an exchange of experiences between employees in the Japanese

and Serbian energy sectors, with the aim of adopting the best practices for the integration of renewable sources into the power system.

The participants of the training had the opportunity to learn about the development of the power sector in Japan and its specific characteristics, as well as with the entire process of integration of renewable energy sources in Japan. This included aspects from connection procedures and real-time system balancing to overcoming challenges arising during the long-term increase in the installed power of variable sources. Visits were also organized to significant energy installations on the island of Kyushu, such as the Omarugawa pumped storage hydro power plant, the Buzen and Omuta battery installations, and the main dispatch centre on the island.

"This visit to Japan represented a blend of business and cultural experience, with a far-reaching impact on the professional and personal development of all training participants, who hope to continue cooperation with Japanese colleagues and look forward to visiting this beautiful country again" commented one of the participants from EPS.



Training participants in front of JICA Kyushu training center



## MONTENEGRO

# TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROJECT ON CAPACITY BUILDING FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (DRR) THROUGH NATIONAL FOREST FIRE INFORMATION SYSTEM (NFFIS) AND ECO-DRR



Field visit to the project site

JICA in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior in Montenegro, has been implementing the Project on Capacity Building for Disaster

Risk Reduction through National Forest Fire Information System (NFFIS) and Eco-DRR since 2021.

One of the Eco-DRR activities is to support coast forest area which is deforested and degraded. To protect residence and agricultural area from sea wind and sand, and to prevent soil erosion, approximately 4000 seedlings have been planned on the coastal side in Ulcinj municipality.

JICA Balkan Office representatives together with the Japanese consultants and municipal representatives visited Ulcinj area in May this year.

The project acknowledges the importance of environmental education activities in schools; hence, the activities are planned to continue during its implementation in 2024. In order to obtain a legal framework for Eco-DRR activities and Coastal Forest management plan, the activities and the plan will be incorporated into spatial plan of Ulcinj municipality.

## SERBIA

# COMPLETION OF PROJECT FOR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OF SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

Since its beginning, the project has aimed to promote a regional waste management system throughout Serbia by establishing Efficient and sustainable Municipal Solid Waste Management (MSWM) in Sid municipality as a model for small and medium-sized municipalities and sharing its experience as a model for improving waste management in these municipalities.

Furthermore, by contributing to the achievement of environmental standards set by the European Union (EU) and improving the recycling rate, the project will help Serbia achieve its national goal of EU membership.

Specifically, the project aims to: (1) Enhance capacity for analyzing current issues and challenges of MSWM in Sid municipality in line with guidance and standards of regional waste management system; (2) Improve capacity for waste collection and transportation with source separation; (3) Establish methodologies for minimizing waste generation and promotion of 3Rs; (4) Enhance capacity for waste minimization and source separation with 3R principles among various stakeholders such as residents and business entities; (5) Enhance financial, organizational and institutional capacities

regarding MSWM; (6) Summarize experience of establishing sustainable MSWM in Sid municipality as “Sid Model” and shared with small and medium-sized municipalities.

Throughout the project period, the Japanese Expert team and counterpart organizations (Ministry of Environmental Protection, Sid

Municipality, PUC Standard Sid) faced a series of challenges that were overcome with sincere collaboration and cooperation. Finally, the project team archived all project outputs and the project purpose. In the future, the Sid model is expected to be disseminated throughout the country and improve MSWM in Serbia.



Weigh bridge and discussion



# REGIONAL SEMINAR ON PROJECT FOR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT FOR AIR POLLUTION CONTROL PHASE 2

The seminar was held on February 28 and 29, and attended by representatives of central and local institutions, representatives from academia, economic operators, representatives from counterpart institutions, guests from North Macedonia and Albania, Japanese experts implementing the project, JICA HQ (Tokyo), and JICA Balkan Office.

The aim of the workshop was to present the activities carried out by the Project for Capacity Development for Air Pollution Control Phase 2. In the seminar, the activities and achievements of the project related to the study of emission reduction measures for large combustion plants, air quality monitoring activities related to air quality data management, emission inventory activities and modeling to estimate the contribution from emission sources, the study of emission control measures for these emission sources as well as the support of policy proposals were presented.

The purpose of the Project is to develop capacities for air quality management based on the technical evidence and will be implemented until June 2026.



Panel discussion "Lessons learned from the JICA Project in Kosovo"

# NAŠA KUĆA: COOPERATION WITH JTI COMPANY FROM JAPAN



Process of paper making at Naša Kuća

The Japan Tobacco International (JTI) company's support for the NAŠA KUĆA association began in 2017 through financing the development of the hydroponic production of herbs and micro herbs. Through this project the number of beneficiaries increased from 10 persons, who were working on the production of paper bags and packaging, to 40 in 2024. The company JTI, together with JICA, is the main ally of NAŠA KUĆA in the creation of a program for job training and employment of people with developmental disabilities.

From 2020, a new cycle of JICA support began with the sponsorship of JTI, on the program of manual paper production using Japanese technology.

This JTI support has enabled NAŠA KUĆA to develop into a successful social enterprise that has the capacity to transfer knowledge and experience to other organizations that provide support to people with disabilities. From 2023, we jointly started a new phase of forming a network of Social Enterprises throughout Serbia.

In the first phase of the formation of the network, 7 organizations across Serbia have been equipped, trained and empowered. In the second phase, that number will increase to 10, and the total number of people employed in the network will be around 200.

# ALUMNI SERBIA WORKSHOP: RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY AS A PROSUMER OF ELECTRICITY



Goran Vučković, Ph.D., Ass. Prof., JICA Alumni

On February 1, a workshop under the title “Residential community as a prosumer of electricity” was held at the Science and Technology Park in city of Niš (Motorola Hall).

The participants of the workshop were professional managers of residential buildings, students of the Faculty of Electronics in Niš, students of the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Architecture in Niš, as well as students and teachers at the High school of electrical engineering “Nikola Tesla” in Niš. The total number of participants in the workshop was 65.

The goal of the workshop was to promote the use of renewable energy sources, especially solar energy, for transformation into electricity on the roofs of residential buildings, considering that the roofs of residential buildings represent a great potential for the use of solar energy, and an opportunity to achieve the goals of sustainable development in the period of energy transition.

The lecturers at the workshop were a professor of Faculty of Mechanical Engineering in Niš, a professor of the faculty of Law, Nis and a mechanical engineer who spoke about his experiences in the construction of a photovoltaic solar power plant in the Magdon residential community in Niš.

All participants received a brochure with brief instruction how to the residential community could become a “Prosumer” of electricity.

## KOSOVO

# ALUMNI KOSOVO CULTURAL EVENT: JAPAN DAY IN PODUJEVO

On February 10, Japan Day was held in Podujeva Municipality organized by JICA Alumni Association of Kosovo (JAAK) in collaboration with Municipality of Podujeva with the support of Embassy of Japan in Kosovo and JICA Balkan Office.

The event was attended by representatives from various institutions of the Podujeva Municipality, representatives of Embassy of Japan in Kosovo, Japanese experts working in Kosovo in JICA projects, University, members of different foreign institution, civil society, students and pupils, members of JAAK, JICA Balkan Office, etc.

After the opening speech, children of Primary School “Xheladin Rekaliu” performed a folk dance. In addition to the cultural program, martial arts sports, originating from Japan, were demonstrated from the “Llapi” karate club, the “Llapi” Judo club and “Kroni” club, after which a documentary “Japan’s Experience in Promoting 3R” was shown.



Martial arts sports originating from Japan demonstrated by “Llapi” karate club

After serving the traditional food and drinks, the participants were invited to the exhibition with motifs from Japan, where photos, flowers, traditional Japanese foods, demonstration of calligraphy and origami were displayed.



# ALUMNI BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA CULTURAL EVENT: EXHIBITION OF ART WORKS – WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT JAPAN

On February 27, JICA Alumni Association in BiH, with the support of JICA Balkan office and in cooperation with Embassy of Japan, organized the cultural event in a primary school in Biogradi, Siroki Brijeg, to foster and promote cultural exchange between BiH and Japan. As part of the event, the exhibition was installed based on pupils' artworks which submitted to the public call for art competition for primary schools in BiH. The aim of exhibition "What do we know about Japan?" was to explore Japanese culture and to learn about richness of diversities.

The event was attended by Mr. Miro Kraljevic, Mayor of Siroki Brijeg, Mr. Stanko Milicevic, Principal of Primary school Biogradi, representatives of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture and Sports of West Herzegovina County, JICA Alumni Association in BiH and Mr. Masahiro Ueki, Chief Representative of JICA Balkan Office.

The key mission of the JICA Alumni BiH



*Japan-themed artwork of the children from primary school Biogradi, Siroki Brijeg  
Awarded pupils of the Primary School Biogradi*

Association is capacity building through dissemination of knowledge gained from courses they attended in Japan. The Alumni achieves this by holding seminars and workshops from various fields, following the long-term needs of the society, as a whole. Also, they hold various

social gatherings among the members and participants from Japan - they organize cultural events every year, as a rule, every time in a different city in BiH, where they promote the culture of BiH and Japan along with an appropriate program and socializing.

## ALBANIA

# ALUMNI ALBANIA: CELEBRATION OF THE NATIONAL DAY OF JAPAN IN TIRANA



*New board members of Alumni Albania*

On February 23, JICA Alumni Albania organized a cultural event in Tirana on the National Day of Japan, the Birthday of His Majesty the Emperor of Japan, in the presence of the Ambassador of Japan in Albania, Her Excellency Mrs. KATO, representatives of counterpart organizations of bilateral cooperation with Japan, officials from JICA Balkan Office as well as friends of Japan attended this activity.

During the activity, Ex-participants for JICA training courses in Japan, demonstrated various forms of Japanese Tradition and Culture, such as the Tea Ceremony, origami performance, etc.

At the same time, the Alumni General Assembly has been held and new Alumni President and Board members were elected. On this occasion, Dr. Sajmir HOXHA has been elected as the new President of the Alumni Association.



## VOICE FROM SDG GLOBAL LEADER PROGRAM PARTICIPANT MR. DANIEL GJORGJIEVSKI, CRISIS MANAGEMENT CENTER, NORTH MACEDONIA



*Mr. Daniel Gjorgjievski in front of the Kyoto University*

dreams, and took me to Japan and Kyoto University, the second oldest university, established in 1897. Kyoto University boasts with 19 Nobel Prize laureates, which placed it alongside other esteemed universities from around the globe. It's a privilege to study in this eminent educational institution, which provides all preconditions so that students can entirely focus on their studies and research.

I value each day spent listening to the lectures and gaining new knowledge.

Kyoto University is an environment which encourages discussions with professors and fellow students and helps to develop critical thinking and self-expression.

However, this educational journey wouldn't be possible without the support of the Japanese international Cooperation Agency (JICA) and my organization the Crisis Management Center of North Macedonia, for the nomination, support and selection for the SDGs Global Leader program.

In the next two years of my studies, I will be a part of the Graduate School for Global Environmental Studies, Environmental Education department. As master student my focus of studies will be the Disaster education programs conducted in Japan. My objective is to enhance my knowledge in this area through diligent research, with the aim of contributing to the advancement of this kind of educational programs in my country, jointly with my colleagues.

Furthermore, having in mind the scope of the SDG GL program, which is creating bridges of friendship among the two countries, acknowledging the Japanese expertise in Disaster Management, I see this as possibility for fruitful future cooperation.

Representing my country and being the first Macedonian in this program presents an honor and huge responsibility.

"And remember, roads were made for journeys not destinations" by Confucius.

## SERBIA

## FAREWELL OF MS. MATSUSE JOCV

**M**y name is Saki Matsuse and I was working at a special needs school in Jagodina, a city located in the southern part of Serbia, since August 2022. I have mainly worked with my colleagues to create teaching materials for children with intellectual disabilities, autism, and other developmental disabilities. Creating and sharing knowledge with each other has taught me a lot. I hope that the children will continue to enjoy their days learning with the teaching materials we have created. Although the days I spent with my children and colleagues were challenging at times, they were always filled with smiles and fun. I will never forget the children's bright smiles. And all my colleagues were kind and always helped me. I am so grateful. Хвала вам свима!



*Ms. Matsuse with her colleagues*



SERBIA

# WELCOMING OF TWO NEW VOLUNTEERS FOR KENDO AND TOURISM IN LOZNICA

**Z**dravo! It's been a week since I came to Belgrade. This beautiful city abundant in nature and history surrounded by Danube River and Sava River will not take long to make you fall in love with it. The beautiful old town is so much bigger than I expected, and people

seem to be very caring and hospitable. From June, I'll be working at a tourism organization of Loznica. Since when I was working in Tokyo, I've believed that "A person is your mirror". If you behave unkind to others it would come back to you, however, if you worked hard,

people would appreciate it and do the same. I try to keep it in mind and do my best here to be helpful for the organization and people around. I am so grateful for this opportunity. Can't wait to learn new things and meet new people. Hajdemo!



Mr. Miyoshi in Kendo practice

**I**'m Toshinari Miyoshi. I'm glad to see you. I'm going to work at the Serbian Kendo Federation as a Kendo instructor. I feel a little bit nervous but also excited because I have never lived in a foreign country. I started practicing kendo when I was 5 years old, and I have been doing kendo more than two decades now. Having experienced to be both a player and an instructor, I think I can share my skills and knowledge here in Serbia. I am looking forward to learning new things during my stay, such as kendo practice in Serbia, Serbian language and culture.



Ms. Hoshino (on the left) and Mr. Miyoshi at Training Center in Japan

FROM JICA BALKAN OFFICE:

## TRAINING IN KENYA FOR MS. SONJA SKAREP, PROGRAM OFFICER

**A**s a part of capacity building for JICA national staff I had opportunity to attend a training on loan management and administration in Kenya, from January 29 to February 2, 2024.

The goal of the training was to provide an opportunity to gain knowledge and skills through intensive lectures, discussion and case studies about Yen loan management and administration. In addition to experienced and professional lecturers from JICA Headquarters, exchanging experience with other colleagues from JICA offices from African countries, Turkey and Iraq, was very important and valuable to me. It was interesting to see that regardless of the specifics of each country, we all face very similar challenges in loan operations. The interactive sessions, case studies and discussion with experienced colleagues, provided practical insights that will help me in my daily work.

In addition, we had a chance to go on a site visit out of Nairobi, to Oikaria where we visited largest Geothermal Power Project in the country, partially financed by the JICA loan.

Colleagues from JICA Kenya Office that

hosted this training did their best to make our stay comfortable and bringing us closer to African culture and tradition, they made our time there memorable.

Very busy schedule did not allow us to have a lot of free time for exploring Nairobi, but we captured some nice moments by visiting Safari and Giraffe Centre.



Ms. Sonja Skarep (4th from the left in the 2nd row) with all the training participants from JICA overseas offices and lecturers from JICA Headquarters



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