



JICA Philippines Annual Report 2025

Building Pathways to Sustainability



Building Pathways to Sustainability



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About JICA

Who We Are

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is an administrative agency of the Government of Japan that implements Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA).

JICA remains steadfast in supporting socio-economic development through its ODA activities in over 140 developing countries and regions in the world.

Vision

Leading the world with trust

Mission

JICA, in accordance, with the Development Cooperation Charter, will work on human security and quality growth.

Priority Areas in the Philippines



01

Strengthening a Foundation for Sustainable Economic Growth

- ▶ Improvement of traffic and transport network of the Greater Capital Region (GCR) and major cities outside the GCR
- ▶ Improvement of energy and water infrastructure
- ▶ Securing maritime safety
- ▶ Human resource development for industries



02

Ensuring Human Security for Inclusive Growth

- ▶ Improvement of hard and soft infrastructure related to natural disasters and environment
- ▶ Development of safety nets, including healthcare
- ▶ Enhancement of agriculture productivity and processing, and distribution of agricultural products



03

Peace and Development in Mindanao

- ▶ Reducing poverty through improvement of access to social services
- ▶ Community development through improvement of infrastructure and industry promotion
- ▶ Strengthening local governance

Types of Cooperation

Technical Cooperation

People to People Cooperation: This supports human resource development of partner countries using the knowledge, experience, and technologies of Japan through trainings and dispatch of experts.

Finance and Investment Cooperation

Lending / Investing of Funds in Concessional Terms: This refers to loans with generous lending conditions given to infrastructure and other initiatives that require large funding. It also includes Private Sector Investment Finance to support private sector activities in developing countries.

Grants

Infrastructure Development / Equipment Provision: This refers to funds without obligation of repayment for building facilities like schools, hospitals, wells, and roads, as well as provision of equipment.

Citizen Participation

Broad-based International Cooperation: This is cooperation with non-government organizations (NGOs), local governments, universities, and other organizations. It includes dispatch of Japanese professionals to support development under the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) and support to development education to deepen understanding of global issues.

Emergency Disaster Relief

Response to Natural and Other Disasters: JICA sends Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) teams as response to requests of governments. The JDR engages in rescue and treatment, provides emergency relief supplies, and assists in recovery.

Public-Private Partnerships

Private Sector Business for Socioeconomic Development: Japanese private companies introduce technologies and products with socioeconomic impact. This also includes Private Sector Investment Finance and support programs for small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

At the Helm: Message from the Chief Representative

In the past year, I had the opportunity to gain a closer look at JICA's cooperation in the Philippines for a few decades and the work being carried forward with our counterparts. What has stood out to me is the strong emphasis on supporting progress that can be sustained over time, especially as development challenges grow more complex and the country prepares for important transitions.

I am pleased to share this annual report, which stresses JICA's pursuit of quality growth in the Philippines. Guided by the theme, Building Pathways to Sustainability, it reflects our shared effort to ensure that today's initiatives contribute to lasting benefits for people, communities, and institutions.

What I value most about JICA's cooperation is our keen engagement and strong commitment throughout the full course of a project. From project planning to implementation, evaluation, and follow-up, we work closely with our local counterparts to help turn ideas into practical and workable solutions. This continuity allows experience and learning to build over time. I am also encouraged by how our cooperation consistently brings together different forms of support, linking infrastructure investments with policy work, institutional strengthening, and human resource development, so that progress is both tangible and sustainable.

As the Philippines moves toward upper middle-income status, the nature of development cooperation should evolve. While the form and scale of support may change, the trust and experience built over decades of collaboration shall endure. JICA's long-standing engagement in the Philippines has helped foster confidence in Japanese technologies and approaches, while strengthening cooperation with our partners.

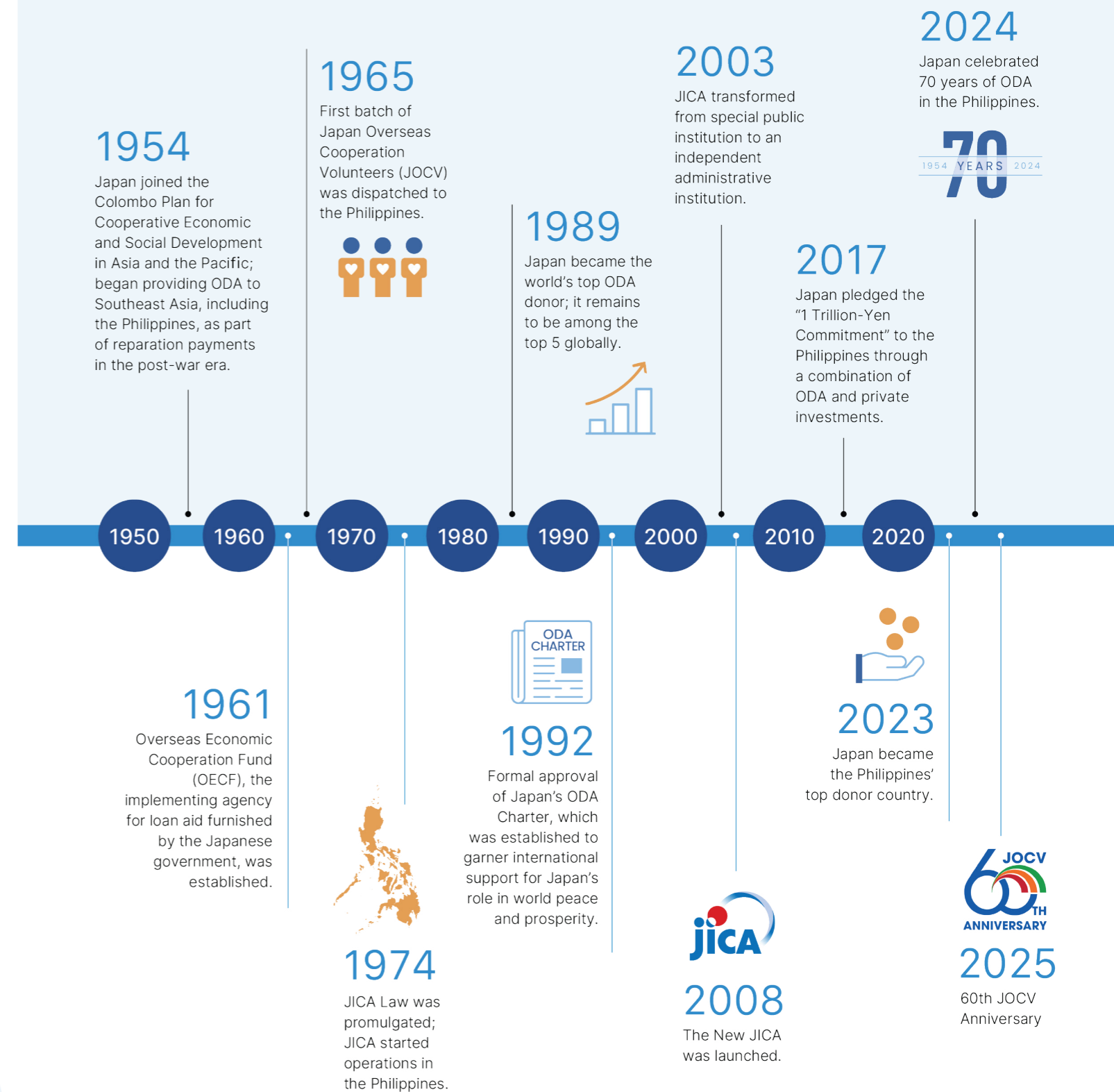
These foundations allow us to explore new ways of working together, including deeper collaboration with the private sector, where innovation, investment, and operational expertise can complement public efforts.

My sincerest appreciation to our Philippine counterparts, partner institutions, private sector collaborators, and fellow development advocates for their steadfast support. I am also most grateful to JICA staff, experts, consultants, and volunteers, whose dedication and professionalism serve as agents of change. I invite you to explore the pages that follow and see how sustainability is taking root in the Philippines through JICA.

馬場隆
BABA Takashi



70 Years of JICA's Cooperation



By the Numbers: Japan's Bilateral Assistance to the Philippines

Cumulative as of FY* 2024



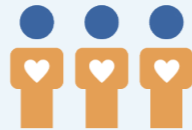
43,350

Filipinos trained
by JICA



33,698

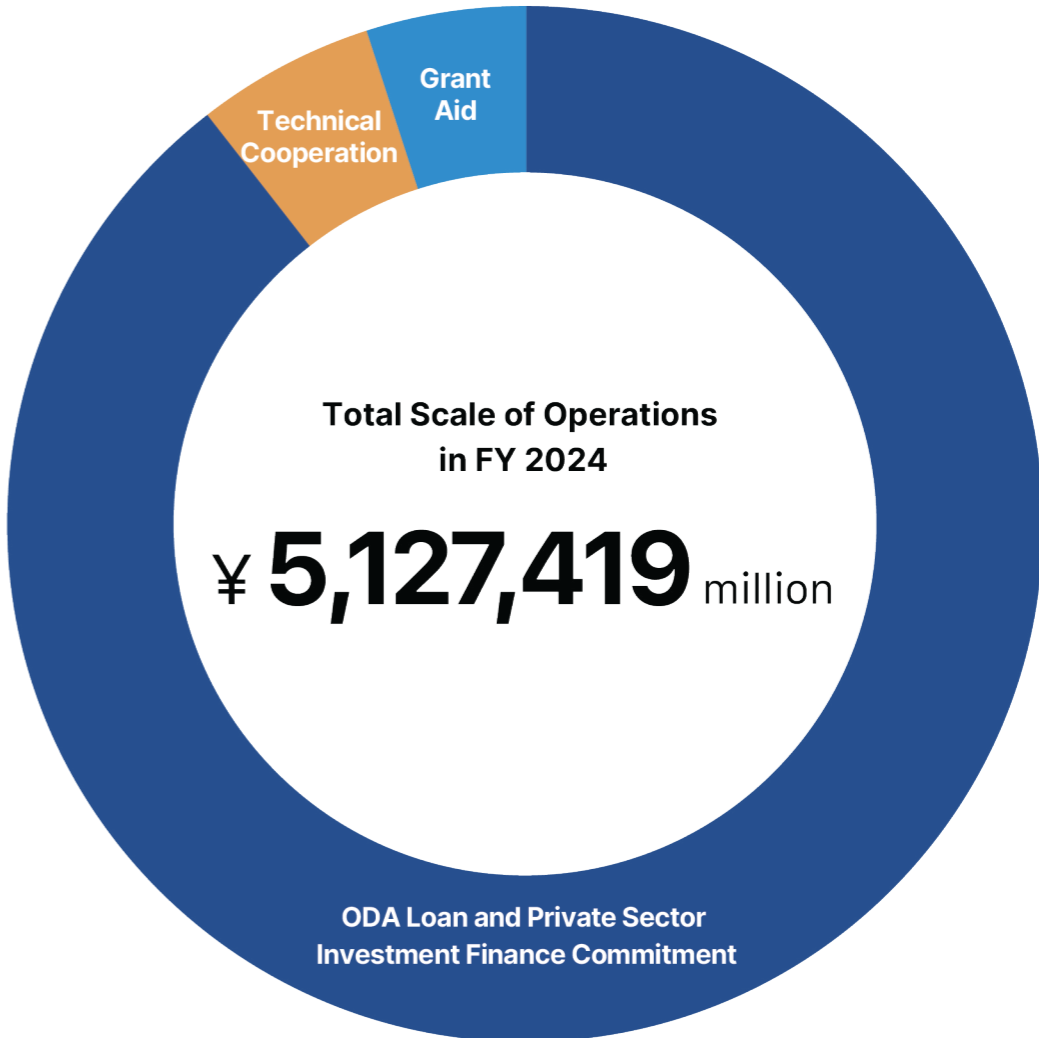
Japanese experts
and study team members
sent to the Philippines



1,700+

Japanese volunteers
dispatched to the
Philippines

*Japanese Fiscal Year: April to March the following year



Technical Cooperation

¥286,910 million

Public Works/Utilities	35%
Others	22%
Agriculture/Forestry/Fisheries	12%
Planning/Government	10%
Human Resources	6%
Health/HealthCare	6%
Mining and Manufacturing	4%
Business/Tourism	2%
Energy	2%
Social Welfare Services	1%

ODA Loan and Private Sector Investment Finance Commitment

¥4,589,117 million

Transportation	60%
Program Loans	15%
Irrigation and Flood Control	8%
Electric Power	6%
Social Services	4%
Mining and Manufacturing	3%
Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Industry	2%
Telecommunications	1%

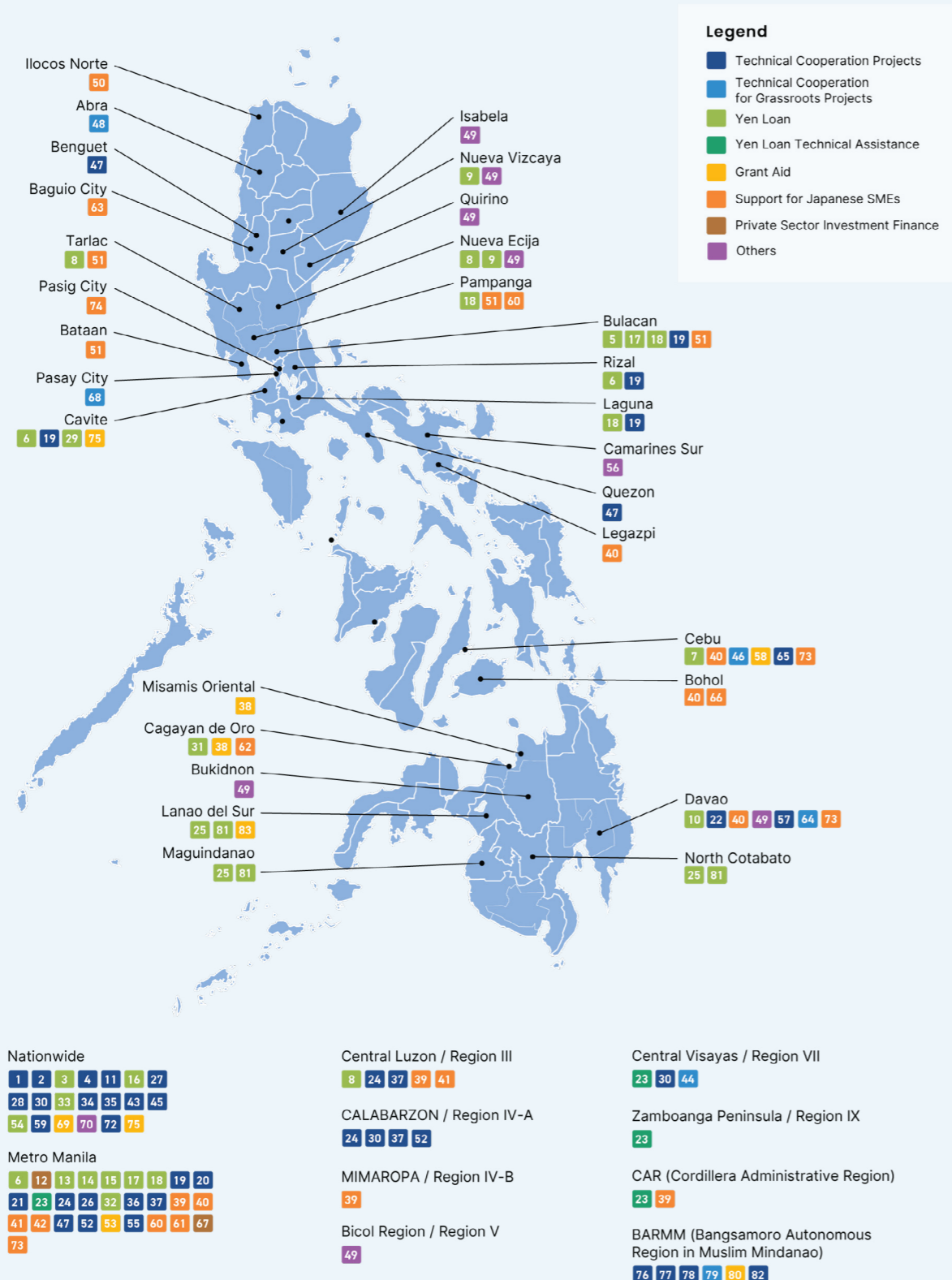
Grant Aid

¥250,737 million

Agriculture/Forestry/Fisheries	31%
Public Works/Utilities	30%
Human Resources	21%
Health/HealthCare	10%
Social Welfare Services	3%
Business/Tourism	2%
Mining and Manufacturing	1%
Planning/Government	1%
Energy	1%

Pathways Across the Philippines

Operations Map as of December 2025



Project List

Priority Area: Strengthening a Foundation for Sustainable Economic Growth

Governance

- Enhancement of Customs Operations - *Nationwide*
- Project for Enhancement of Maritime Safety and Security Capability of the Philippine Coast Guard - *Nationwide*
- Maritime Safety Capability Improvement Project (Phase III) - *Nationwide*
- The Project for Establishment of Credit Risk Database in the Philippines - *Nationwide*

Economic Infrastructure

- Arterial Road Bypass Project (Phase III) - *Bulacan*
- Capacity Enhancement of Mass Transit Systems in Metro Manila Project - *Metro Manila, Cavite, Rizal*
- Cebu-Mactan Bridge (4th Bridge) and Coastal Road Construction Project - *Cebu*
- Central Luzon Link Expressway Project - *Tarlac, Nueva Ecija*
- Dalton Pass East Alignment Road Project - *Nueva Vizcaya, Nueva Ecija*
- Davao City Bypass Construction Project - *Davao City*
- Dispatch of Advisor on Road Planning and Management - *Nationwide*
- LRT Line 1 Operation and Maintenance Improvement Project - *Metro Manila*
- Metro Manila Priority Bridges Seismic Improvement Project - *Metro Manila*
- Metro Manila Subway Project (Phase I) - *Metro Manila*
- Metro Rail Transit Line 3 Rehabilitation Project - *Metro Manila*
- New Communications, Navigation and Surveillance / Air Traffic Management (CNS/ATM) Systems Development Project - *Nationwide*

- North-South Commuter Railway Project (Malolos - Tutuban) - *Metro Manila, Bulacan*
- North-South Commuter Railway Extension Project - *Metro Manila, Laguna, Bulacan, Pampanga*
- Project for Capacity Development of Public Utility Vehicles in Metro Manila and Adjoining Areas - *Metro Manila, Rizal, Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna*
- Project for Capacity Enhancement for Transit Oriented Development - *Metro Manila*
- Project for Capacity Enhancement on Traffic Management with Improvement of Intelligent Transportation Systems in Metropolitan Manila - *Metro Manila*
- Project for Comprehensive and Sustainable Urban Development Master Plan for Metropolitan Davao - *Metropolitan Davao*
- Project for Road Disaster Preventions and Other Countermeasures on Mountainous Roads - *DPWH Central Office, CAR, Region VII, Region IX*
- Project on Formulation of a 30-Year Railway Master Plan for the Greater Manila Area - *Metro Manila, Region III, Region IV-A*
- Road Network Development Project in Conflict-Affected Areas in Mindanao - *Lanao Del Sur, Maguindanao del Norte and North Cotabato*
- Technical Assistance Project to Establish the Philippine Railway Institution - *Metro Manila*

Investment Promotion and Industrial Development

- Capacity Development for Cybersecurity - *Nationwide*
- Dispatch of Advisor on International Taxation - *Nationwide*

Priority Area: Ensuring Human Security for Inclusive Growth

Disaster Risk Reduction and Management

29. Cavite Industrial Area Flood Risk Management Project - *Cavite*
30. Disaster Risk Reduction and Management - Capacity Enhancement Project (Phase II) - *CALABARZON, Central Visayas, Nationwide*
31. Flood Risk Management Project for Cagayan de Oro River - *Cagayan de Oro*
32. Pasig Marikina River Channel Improvement Project (Phase IV) - *Metro Manila*
33. Post-Disaster Stand-by Loan (Phase III) - *Nationwide*
34. Project for Strengthening Financial Resilience of Public Asset to Natural Disasters by Improvement of Public Insurance - *Nationwide*
35. Project for Capacity Development in Coastal Engineering for Disaster Resiliency - *Nationwide*
36. Project for Enhancement of Flood Control Strategy in Prioritized River Basins - *Metro Manila, Cagayan*
37. Project for Development of a Hybrid Water-Related Disaster Risk Assessment Technology for Sustainable Local Economic Development Policy Under Climate Change in the Philippines - *Central Luzon, CALABARZON, Metro Manila*
38. Project for Improving of Flood Forecasting and Warning System for Cagayan de Oro River Basin - *Misamis Oriental*
39. SDGs Business Validation Survey for the "Environmental-Friendly Technology" Enabling Both Slope Disaster Protection and Forest Conservation in the Republic of the Philippines - *Metro Manila, CAR, Region I, Region III, Region IV-B, Region VII*
40. SDGs Business Verification Survey with Private Sector for AI Real-time Crisis Management Information System Utilizing Social Networking Services (SNS) Information - *Metro Manila, Legazpi, Cebu, Bohol, Davao*
41. SDGs Business Verification Survey with the Private Sector for Erosion Control and Vegetation Mat for Slope Protection - *Metro Manila, Central Luzon*
42. SDGs Business Verification Survey with the Private Sector for the Treatment of Disaster Waste in the Philippines - *Metro Manila*

43. Technical Cooperation on Comprehensive Meteorology - *Nationwide*
44. Strengthening and Promoting School-Based Disaster Risk Reduction in Central Visayas - *Central Visayas*
45. Technical Cooperation Program on Capacity Development for Monitoring and Information Dissemination of Earthquake, Tsunami and Volcano - *Nationwide*

Agriculture and Agribusiness Development

46. Agricultural Training Project to Improve the Livelihood of Small-Scale Farmers in the Mountain Area of Cebu City, Philippines - *Cebu*
47. Project for Market-Driven Enhancement of Vegetable Value Chain in the Philippines - *Metro Manila, Quezon, Benguet*
48. Project for Reduction of Agricultural Production Cost in Peñarrubia Municipality and Surrounding Areas in Abra - *Abra*
49. Project for the Development of Novel Disease Management Systems for Banana and Cacao - *Nueva Ecija, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, Aurora, Isabela, Bicol Region, Bukidnon, Davao*
50. SDGs Business Verification Survey with the Private Sector for Value Chain of Black Garlic - *Ilocos Norte*
51. SDGs Business Needs Confirmation Survey for Promotion of Water Saving Rice Cultivation Utilizing Joint Crediting Mechanism in the Philippines - *Bataan, Pampanga, Bulacan, Tarlac*

Environment and Energy

52. Advisory Service for Integrated Water Resources Management in the Republic of the Philippines - *Metro Manila, Region III, Region IV-A*
53. Advisory Service for Integrated Water Resources Management in the Republic of the Philippines (Phase II) - *Metro Manila, Region II, Region III*
54. Climate Change Action Program, Subprogram 2 - *Nationwide*
55. Climate Change Advisor in the Philippines - *Metro Manila*

56. Proof of Concept Project for AGRABAH-CARBON + Blue Carbon Financing for Filipino Coastal Communities & MSME - *Camarines Sur*
57. Project for Master Plan Study for Comprehensive Wastewater Management in Davao City - *Davao City, Metropolitan Davao*
58. Project for Septage Management of Metro Cebu Water District - *Metropolitan Cebu*
59. Project on Resource Inventory of Hydropower Potential Sites - *Nationwide*
60. SDGs Business Needs Confirmation Survey for Development of Circular Business through Value Maximization of Damaged Vehicles - *Metro Manila, Pampanga*
61. SDGs Business Needs Confirmation Survey for Effective Renewable Energy Supply and Disaster Prevention by Introducing Solar Power System with Battery Storage in the Philippines - *Metro Manila*
62. SDGs Business Verification Survey with the Private Sector for Advanced Dispersible Microbe System in the Philippines - *Cagayan De Oro*
63. SDGs Business Verification Survey with the Private Sector to Tackle the New Effluent Standard and Effective Development of Sewer Infrastructure with Decentralized Wastewater Treatment Technology in the Philippines - *Baguio*
64. The Project for Improvement of Municipal Solid Waste Management System in the City of Davao - *Davao City*
65. The Project for Master Plan Study on Comprehensive Sewerage System Development - *Metropolitan Cebu*
66. Verification Survey with the Private

Sector for Disseminating Japanese Technologies for Septage Management Improvement with Advanced Treatment Method in Panglao, Bohol - *Bohol*

67. Water Supply Improvement Project (PSIF-LEAP2) - *Metro Manila*

Health and Social Development

68. Comprehensive Empowerment Support for the Parent with Challenging Backgrounds - Social Adaptation Improvement Project for Impoverished Families in the Vicinity of Pasay City - *Pasay City, Manila*
69. Japanese Grant Aid for Human Resource Development Scholarship (JDS) - *Nationwide*
70. JICA Program for Japanese Studies (JICA Chair) - *Nationwide*
71. Project Aiming to Establish the Community-based Juvenile Intervention Facilitator System for Children in Conflict with the Law and Children at Risk in NCR and Region III - *Malabon City, Navotas City, Olongapo City*
72. Project for Strengthening the Philippine National Health Laboratory Network for Infectious Diseases - *Nationwide*
73. SDGs Business Needs Confirmation Survey for the PACS System with Medical Collaboration Service Function Aimed at Correcting Inequality in Medical Access in the Philippines - *Metro Manila, Davao City, Cebu City*
74. SDGs Business Verification Survey with the Private Sector for Introducing Japanese Style Nursing-Care System - *Pasig City*
75. The Program for Consolidated Rehabilitation of Illegal Drug Users (CARE) - *Cavite, Nationwide*

Priority Area: Peace and Development in Mindanao

Mindanao

76. BARMM Advisor on Institutional Development - *BARMM*
77. Capacity Development Project for the Bangsamoro - *BARMM*
78. Project for Strengthening Services in Maternal and Child Health and Nutrition Improvement in BARMM - *BARMM*
79. Project to Develop Cacao and Chocolate Industries for Peace in Bangsamoro Region in the Republic of the Philippines - *BARMM*

80. Program for the Urgent Improvement of Socioeconomic Infrastructures in Bangsamoro Region - *BARMM*
81. Road Network Development Project in Conflict-Affected Areas in Mindanao - *Lanao Del Sur, Maguindanao del Norte and North Cotabato*
82. Socio-economic Assistance for Bangsamoro Normalization Process - *BARMM*
83. The Program for the Support for Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Marawi City and Its Surrounding Areas - *Lanao del Sur*



Toward Good Governance

Good governance provides the structure that allows development efforts to take root. When institutions operate transparently and efficiently, and when public personnel have the skills and systems they need, government can deliver services that strengthen trust, enable economic activity, and support long-term progress.

One strand of JICA's work in this area focuses on improving how institutions manage data, evaluate risks, and make informed decisions. By encouraging greater use of standardized information and analytical tools, JICA promotes more data-driven processes, particularly in decisions that will stimulate economic activity.

Another area of cooperation centers on enhancing operational capacities in sectors that require specialized expertise. JICA's long-standing partnership in the maritime sector has helped the Philippines safeguard lives and resources, ensure accountability, and uphold maritime order.

A third cornerstone of JICA's strategic approach is human resource development. Through scholarships, training programs, and exchanges anchored in mutual learning, JICA helps build a pipeline of leaders and technical specialists prepared to guide reforms and respond to emerging governance challenges.

As JICA and its partners continue strengthening these systems and capacities, their combined efforts are laying more dependable foundations for effective public service.

Data-driven Financial Governance

The second phase of the **Credit Risk Database (CRD)** project with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) is enabling banks to do risk-based lending, especially for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) – a sector that makes up more than 99 percent of Philippine businesses but continues to face difficulty accessing financing.

A key development this year is the launch of the web-based CRD scoring service, allowing easier access for participating financial institutions. This shift encourages wider data contribution and strengthens the accuracy of the statistical model, which is essential in promoting risk-based lending and reducing reliance on collateral and traditional documentation.

The project also supports ongoing digitalization efforts across the financial sector. By standardizing the processing and storage of financial statements and bank records, the CRD creates a more reliable pool of information for credit evaluation and improves internal risk management practices in the Philippines.

As Phase II expands participation and further refines the model, the initiative is expected to help build a more inclusive and sustainable financial environment that supports business growth and economic resilience.

Maritime Safety

JICA's continued cooperation with the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) supports the agency's efforts to manage an expanding fleet and respond more effectively to maritime risks. With additional multi-role response vessels delivered in earlier collaborations, the **Project for the Enhancement of Maritime Safety and Security Capability of the PCG** focuses on strengthening the systems and skills needed to operate and maintain these assets properly.



PCG Commandant (L) and JICA Philippines Chief Representative (R) ink new project to enhance PCG's capability in maritime safety and security.

Launched in 2025, the technical cooperation will develop standardized procedures for vessel operation and maintenance, along with improved guidelines for maritime criminal investigation. These measures help ensure more consistent enforcement, clearer workflows, and better preparedness during maritime incidents.

With these initiatives, the project reinforces operational standards and strengthens the technical capacity needed for the PCG to safeguard coastal communities, protect marine resources, and maintain safe and orderly seas. These enhancements advance good governance and contribute to the country's long-term security.



Multi Role Response Vessel (MRRV) acquired through JICA's support.

Leadership and Skills Development

JICA's human resource development programs, such as the Knowledge Co-Creation Program (KCCP) and Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship (JDS), support governance by equipping Filipino public servants with sharper analytical skills, updated knowledge, and international perspectives. Through specialized training and graduate studies, participants gain exposure to development experiences they can adapt to local contexts. They return with a stronger sense of purpose and concrete ideas for improving policies, processes, and services.

Safeguarding Electoral Integrity

For Director Abigail Claire Llacuna of the Commission on Elections (COMELEC), the KCCP course on Electoral Management in Democratic Countries provided both technical grounding and a clearer view of how election systems uphold democratic values. Over three weeks in Japan, she studied legal frameworks, voting and counting procedures, voter education, and gender equality in elections. "Each session has widened my perspective and strengthened my commitment to safeguarding the integrity of the elections," she shared.

The program also gave her the chance to learn alongside peers from Asia and Africa who were facing their own electoral challenges. Comparing experiences broadened her understanding of what credible, inclusive elections can look like in different contexts and created a network of colleagues she continues to engage with.

Back at COMELEC, Abigail has drawn on these lessons to refine voter education and information efforts, from public campaigns to student-focused "Lakbay Aral" activities. Her strengthened expertise and international exposure have likewise contributed to COMELEC's growing role in regional exchanges, including her participation as a resource person in a knowledge-sharing mission with the Electoral Commission of Maldives.



(Top) Abigail Llacuna (2nd from the right) with fellow trainees in Electoral Management; (Bottom) JICA scholar, Patricia Blanco Reyes, graduates from the Meiji University.

Finding Purpose in Public Service

Patricia Blanco Reyes describes her JICA scholarship experience as a turning point that deepened her sense of leadership and public responsibility. Enrolled in a Master of Public Policy program at Meiji University, she examined how systems, institutions, and citizen engagement influence resilience – insights that enriched her research on community-based flood preparedness. Living in Japan, where public services are reliable and oriented toward collective well-being, allowed her to see how effective governance can shape daily life and long-term security.

Returning to the Philippines brought her back to difficult realities: repeated flooding, infrastructure gaps, and governance issues closely tied to her field. Rebuilding her own household while resettling professionally tested her resolve, but it also clarified why her work matters. As she reflected, "I choose to stay, to work, and to hope with the strong determination and grit I have built and learned along the way."

Now with the UP Resilience Institute, Patricia channels her training into disaster education, science communication, and community-focused policy work. In designing programs and sharing evidence with local stakeholders, she aims to translate lessons from Japan into practical steps toward more responsive, people-centered systems.



Toward Improved Connectivity



Improved connectivity enables people, goods, and services to move more efficiently across the country, helping reduce regional disparities and supporting inclusive economic growth.

For ordinary Filipinos, these improvements translate into shorter and safer commutes, and easier access to jobs, schools, and essential services. Business owners, farmers, and the informal sector will benefit from smoother logistics and lower transport costs, while motorists and commuters will experience less congestion.

To advance this sector, JICA supports the Philippines in developing transport systems that are well planned, effectively managed, and responsive to long-term needs. Much of this cooperation focuses on the roads and bridges, as well as railway networks, which serve as the backbone of national mobility. A cohesive transport network is complemented with effective route planning, modernized public utility vehicles, and intelligent transport systems.

JICA supports Metro Manila agencies in adopting data-driven tools and modern traffic and transport management systems that ease congestion and improve daily travel. In Davao, cooperation helps guide orderly urban development through long-term spatial and transport planning. In Mindanao and underserved regions, JICA strengthens connectivity that supports local economies, expands access to essential services, and contributes to regional stability.



Enhancing Transport Systems in Metro Manila

In 2025, JICA continued its efforts to improve connectivity in Metro Manila through two flagship projects: the Metro Manila Subway Project (MMSP), the country's first underground railway linking Valenzuela to Paranaque, as well as the 147-km North-South Commuter Railway (NSCR) connecting Metro Manila to the regional growth centers of Pampanga and Laguna.

These flagship railway projects reflect the shared commitment of the Philippines and Japan to advancing high-quality, safe, and sustainable transport systems. As the country's first subway, the MMSP introduces a new standard of urban mobility, backed by Japan's expertise in engineering, disaster risk reduction, and railway systems. Beyond construction, JICA's support emphasizes capacity development, technology transfer, and the strengthening of systems for long-term operation and maintenance, so that these investments continue to serve future generations. Once operational, the MMSP and NSCR are expected to usher Transit-Oriented Development, and shape more livable and resilient urban development across Metro Manila and nearby growth areas.

To complement infrastructure delivery, JICA also provides technical cooperations for the formulation of the 30-year Railway Masterplan and support for the Philippines Railway Institute (PRI). Site visits for university engineering



Metro Manila Subway Project, Camp Aguinaldo Station.

students to MMSP station sites allow future professionals to observe advanced methods and technologies for railway construction. More than technical exposure, these visits provide opportunities for knowledge exchange, allowing them to engage directly with seasoned engineers from Japanese companies and gain insights into how large-scale railway projects are implemented. These activities support the formation of future railway professionals, contributing to long-term human resource development in the transport sector.

Under the **Project for Capacity Development of Public Utility Vehicles (PUV)**, JICA has started the collaboration with the Department of Transportation (DOTr) and the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) to lay the groundwork for a more rational and data-driven public transport network. Consultations have begun with LGUs and PUV operators to gain context on local public transport operations and passenger demand, essential in the drafting of the PUV Route Planning Manual. This will guide agencies in updating and evaluating routes more systematically. These interventions are expected to reduce overlapping routes, shorten travel times, and make daily commutes more predictable and comfortable for passengers, thereby encouraging modal shift from private to public transportation in Metro Manila and adjoining areas.



FEATI University students go on an educational site tour of the Metro Manila Subway Project.

The first Joint Coordination Committee (JCC) meeting finalized revised indicators, clarified the scope of pilot projects, and strengthened coordination with local governments to ensure institutional readiness. These steps help position the pilot sites to serve as scalable examples of integrated route design, improved facilities, and strengthened operations, which are key foundations for a commuter-friendly PUV system.

Complementing these improvements, the **Project for Capacity Enhancement on Traffic Management with Improvement of Intelligent Transportation Systems (MMITS)** supports the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) in upgrading its traffic planning and operations. Building on the Comprehensive Traffic Management Plan, the project focuses on enhancing MMDA's ITS planning and implementation capacity through improvement of traffic monitoring and information systems,

and promotion of better data integration across Metro Manila's 17 local government units (LGUs).

In this year's JCC, JICA, MMDA, and transportation-related government agencies reaffirmed the commitment to expand the use of technology and data in traffic management. Stakeholders underscored the urgency of modernizing traffic systems amid the region's growing population and vehicle volume. Progress this year included comprehensive stakeholder consultations, analysis of MMDA's traffic data systems, reviewing technical requirements for future ITS components, and strengthening coordination mechanisms among national government agencies and the 17 LGUs of Metro Manila. Enhanced ITS is seen to yield improvements such as smarter traffic control, more reliable enforcement, and more effective congestion management.

Shaping Urban Growth and Connectivity in Davao

JICA continued to support Davao's evolution into a more connected, resilient, and well-managed metropolitan area through two complementary initiatives that provide a long-term direction.

The **Metropolitan Davao Urban Development Master Plan** was completed in 2025, establishing a unified framework to shape development across all 15 LGUs through 2045. Building on an earlier initiative, the master plan adopted a multisectoral approach that integrates land use, transport, water supply, wastewater and solid waste management, disaster risk reduction, environmental sustainability, and economic development. Its preparation involved detailed sector analyses, GIS-based mapping, traffic and socioeconomic surveys, and extensive consultations with local governments and regional agencies. These inputs informed spatial strategies and investment priorities intended to bolster balanced urban growth, strengthen service delivery, and improve the capacity of LGUs to respond to changing needs.



JICA expert team members, representatives from JICA Headquarters and DEPDev XI, along with panelists from LGUs, Davao City Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Davao Oriental State University during the Metro Davao Master Plan Dissemination Seminar

The process also helped strengthen metropolitan coordination. Through technical workshops, working group sessions, and capacity-building

activities, counterpart agencies enriched their understanding of metropolitan governance, project evaluation, and long-term urban management. The completion of the master plan has established a common reference for aligning local priorities and guiding the region's continued development.

In parallel, progress on the **Davao City Bypass Construction Project** also marked an important step forward, highlighted by the tunnel breakthrough, which is now the longest mountain tunnel in the Philippines at 2.3 kilometers. The bypass road is designed to divert through-traffic away from central Davao and ease severe congestion identified in major traffic studies. Once operational, it will reduce travel time between the Davao-Digos and Davao-Tagum corridors from about 104 minutes to 49 minutes, enabling more efficient movement of commuters, freight, and businesses across Mindanao.

The project likewise demonstrates Japan's technical contribution through the application of the New Austrian Tunneling Method (NATM) and structured knowledge transfer to Filipino engineers. These capacity-building efforts will



The twin tunnels of the Davao Bypass Road were successfully broken through.

help ensure effective operation and maintenance of the tunnels and related structures as the region's infrastructure network expands.

With the master plan establishing a clear long-term direction for urban development and the bypass advancing toward mobility improvements, Davao is better equipped to manage growth and expand opportunities across the region.

Developing Road Access in Conflict-Affected Areas

Work continued under the **Road Network Development Project (RNDP)**, which seeks to expand road access and logistics capacity in conflict-affected areas of Mindanao. By opening connections to remote communities and strengthening links between local markets and regional growth centers, the project supports efforts to improve mobility, economic participation, and service delivery in areas where limited infrastructure has constrained development.

A key accomplishment in 2025 was the start of civil works for two subprojects in Maguindanao del Norte. Said construction is crucial in expanding reliable road access in Maguindanao areas, where many communities still depend

on poorly connected routes for daily travel. Improved access through these subprojects is expected to cut travel time and transport costs, support local livelihoods, and make it easier for residents to reach markets, schools, health facilities, and other basic services.

Enhanced road access also reinforces peacebuilding gains by increasing government presence and allowing frontline agencies to deliver assistance and public services to areas that previously experienced logistical and security barriers. As these works progress, RNDP lays the groundwork for more inclusive and sustainable development in underserved areas in Mindanao.



Toward Disaster Resilience

As natural hazards in the Philippines grow more frequent and intense, they continue to pose threats to lives, essential services, infrastructure, and economic growth.

Reducing these risks is therefore central to building pathways to sustainability, ensuring that communities and institutions remain stable during extreme events, while continuing to progress toward long-term development goals.

JICA's cooperation in disaster risk reduction (DRR) draws from Japan's extensive experience as a disaster-prone country. It underscores the principle that early action, grounded in science, sound planning, and capable institutions, is the most effective way to lessen the impacts of disasters.

In the Philippines, JICA focuses on three priorities. First, it strengthens pre-disaster investment through improved flood management, risk assessment, and early warning systems, helping communities avoid large-scale damage and maintain social and economic functions. Second, it enhances disaster risk governance so agencies at all levels can plan, coordinate, and respond more effectively using clear policies and reliable data. Third, it promotes "build back better" to ensure that recovery efforts lead to safer, more resilient infrastructure and reduced vulnerability over time.

Taken together, these priorities reflect JICA's commitment to helping the Philippines build a more secure and sustainable future.



Institutional Strengthening

The **Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Capacity Enhancement Project Phase II (DRRMCEP2)** concluded in 2025 after six years of partnership with the Office of Civil Defense (OCD). The initiative strengthened the country's disaster governance framework by improving how regional and local DRR plans are formulated, implemented, and monitored. The OCD noted that the project contributed to a more coherent and sustainable approach to managing disaster risks across the Philippines.

A key achievement was the development of unified planning references and operational tools that guide local governments in preparing risk-informed Local Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Plans (LDRRMPs). These materials – including the Disaster Risk Assessment Guidebook, the LDRRMP and RDRRMP Formulation Guidebooks, and updated monitoring frameworks – provide consistent standards and clearer processes for planning and review. Several documents have been formally approved by the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), validating their role as official national guidance.

To support adoption at scale, the project established a training and replication mechanism through OCD regional offices, enabling them to assist cities and municipalities in applying the enhanced processes. Pilot areas showed that these improvements result in DRR plans



Members of the Camarines Sur LGU gain insights to help them update their local DRRM Plan Formulation Guidebook.

that are more realistic, better aligned with budget priorities, and more responsive to local risk conditions. Project assessments also confirm that OCD now has the capability, tools, and institutional support needed to continue expanding the system throughout the country.

In strengthening planning systems and supporting institutions that lead DRR efforts, the project helps advance a more proactive, risk-informed governance environment. Local governments gain clearer direction and practical means to manage hazards effectively, while communities benefit from plans that result in safer environments, reduced losses, and more reliable access to essential services during emergencies.

Integrated Flood Management

Efforts to strengthen disaster resilience also require long-term investments in managing the country's major river systems, where flooding continues to pose significant risks. The **Project for the Enhancement of Flood Control Strategy in Prioritized River Basins** supports the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) in updating the Flood Control Master Plans for the Pasig-Marikina and Cagayan River Basins – two of the largest and most flood-prone basins in the Philippines.

For the Pasig-Marikina River Basin, the project is updating decades-old planning assumptions by incorporating recent hydrological data, climate change projections, and evolving land use patterns. Past studies, such as JICA's 1990 survey, the World Bank's 2012 master plan, and subsequent JICA assessments, highlight increasing rainfall intensity, rapid urban development, and the need to achieve a 100-year flood safety level. The updated Master Plan therefore evaluates a mix of structural measures like upstream dams, retarding basins, river improvement works, dredging, and an underground diversion tunnel. These countermeasures are being assessed for effectiveness and feasibility based on recent

flood events that underscored persistent vulnerabilities in Metro Manila.

In the Cagayan River Basin, the study addresses long-standing implementation delays in the 1987 Master Plan and later revisions. The updated plan integrates new flood risk assessments that consider climate change impacts and identifies priority structural measures, including multi-purpose dams, river improvement, erosion and sedimentation control, and adjustments to the operational rules of existing dams. It also prepares pre-feasibility studies for select high-impact projects. Surveys covering cross-sections, geotechnical investigations, and sedimentation analyses, provide updated technical inputs for designing appropriate countermeasures across various tributaries and river sections.

Consultations with agencies and river basin stakeholders form a core part of the ongoing work. Through steering committee meetings and basin-wide discussions, DPWH and JICA study teams are refining draft master plans and sequencing investments to support gradual but steady implementation.



Cagayan De Oro Flood Warning System.

Community-Level Preparedness

While national systems and large-scale flood management projects reinforce the country's overall resilience, community-level preparedness ensures that these gains translate into disaster-ready families at the local level. Supporting this goal is the project for **Strengthening and Promoting School-Based Disaster Risk Reduction in Central Visayas (Phase III)**, completed in October 2025. It reflects nearly 10 years of collaboration among the Department of Education (DepEd) Region VII, SEEDS Asia, and the Hyogo Prefectural Board of Education. Delivered through JICA's Grassroots Technical Cooperation framework, the initiative strengthened school-level preparedness by enhancing DRR education and building practical systems to improve safety in learning environments.

A key feature of the final phase was the selection of Inabanga North Central Integrated School (INCIS) in Bohol as the region's model school. Here, teachers and administrators piloted the School-Based DRR Training Program, which integrates disaster education, climate adaptation, and lessons from past disasters into one cohesive framework.

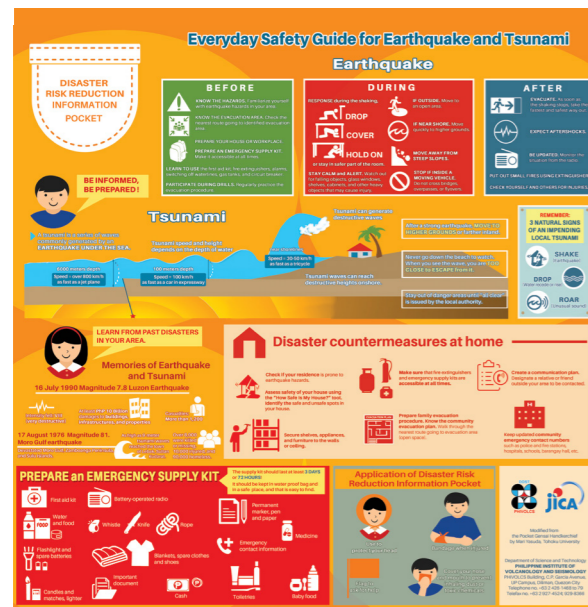


A DRR-trained teacher from INCIS demonstrates how disaster risk reduction is embedded in the school's facilities and learning tools.

To support wider adoption, the project introduced a suite of tools, such as a Training of Trainers (ToT) Program, a region-wide School DRR Training Program, and a Comprehensive School Safety Assessment Tool. These resources offer education personnel a structured way to promote preparedness and carry out safety assessments.

Teachers and learners in INCIS shared that the project deepened their understanding of local hazards and helped foster a sustained culture of preparedness within the school. They also noted that this awareness now extends to their families and nearby barangays.

Building on this momentum, DepEd Region VII is preparing to continue the rollout across its schools, while DepEd Central Office is exploring how to integrate the project's outputs, such as enhanced weather education and new training materials, into broader disaster preparedness efforts nationwide.



Toward an Equitable Society

Building an equitable society means ensuring that every Filipino – regardless of income, geography, or circumstance – can live with dignity and access vital services needed to thrive. Yet for many communities across the country, this is not the reality.

Disparities in livelihood opportunities, learning environments, and access to quality healthcare, among others, continue to hinder their ability to fully participate in national progress. Therefore, addressing these gaps is essential not only to improve individual well-being, but also to foster a more resilient and inclusive society.

JICA's cooperation in this area is grounded in the principle that equitable development is achieved through strong, inclusive, and people-centered systems. Rather than relying on isolated interventions, JICA supports efforts that strengthen institutions and human capacity, while promoting practical, community-based innovations that enhance the quality, accessibility, and sustainability of essential services.

Ultimately, JICA aims to create conditions where people have greater control over their own development. By reducing barriers and expanding opportunities, the agency seeks to help build more resilient and self-sustaining communities.

Sustainable Agriculture

JICA's work in agriculture continues to support improvements in crop productivity, value chain efficiency, and farmer resilience. Through the **Project for the Development of Novel Disease Management Systems for Banana and Cacao (BaCaDM)** under the Science and Technology Research Partnership for Sustainable Development (SATREPS), Philippine and Japanese research institutions made further progress in developing science-based approaches to manage the major diseases affecting two of the country's most important high-value crops. Various field trials showed encouraging results in improving soil health that helps cultivation of banana and cacao, offering growers a potential pathway to restore production more quickly than current practices allow. A new agreement between the Department of Agriculture – Bureau of Plant Industry (DA-BPI) and Tamagawa University also formalized

the preservation and exchange of microbial resources essential for continued research. This helps ensure that technical advancements can be sustained and applied more widely.

In parallel, the **Project for Market-Driven Enhancement of Vegetable Value Chain in the Philippines (MV2C)** further strengthened critical links across the vegetable value chain. Technical solutions verified under the project – including protected cultivation, grafted seedlings, pre-cooling, and the use of plastic crates – were confirmed to improve yields, extend shipment periods, and reduce postharvest losses. These solutions help farmers deliver better-quality produce and access more stable markets. At the same time, activities related to product development and vegetable promotion broadened market opportunities and encouraged higher local consumption. These developments demonstrate how integrated value chain improvements can enhance farmers' income prospects while responding to consumer needs.

Complementing these research and value chain efforts, the **Technical Cooperation for Grassroots Projects (TCGP)** in Abra assisted smallholder farmers in lowering production costs and strengthening sustainable cultivation practices. Implemented with the Abra Diocesan Teachers and Employees Multi-Purpose Cooperative (ADTEMPCO) and NPO HACHI, a Japan-based nonprofit, the project conducted training sessions on soil health, low-input farming methods, and efficient seedling and fertilizer management. These capacity-building efforts provided farmers with practical techniques to maintain productivity amid rising input prices and climate-related pressures.

Taken together, these projects empower farmers and strengthen their ability to build stable, dignified livelihoods. By expanding access to practical technologies, markets, and skills, JICA supports rural communities in participating more fully in national development and moves the Philippines closer to a more equitable society.



(Top) Provision of cold storages in support of the Development of Novel Disease Management Systems for Banana and Cacao (BaCaDM) project.
(Bottom) Training session on soil health by NPO HACHI in Abra.

Inclusive Learning



DepEd officials visit Yamaha Toyooka in Shizuoka, Japan to explore learner engagement through music education.

In line with efforts to make learning more accessible and inclusive, JICA advanced initiatives that strengthen elementary instruction and expand opportunities for engagement in higher education.

In basic education, JICA partnered with Yamaha Corporation to introduce **instrumental music education in public schools**. Formalized through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed in July 2025, the collaboration brings together JICA's experience in foundational learning and Yamaha's expertise in music instruction to help create more stimulating and holistic classroom environments. As part of the initiative, officials from the Department of Education (DepEd) participated in study visits to observe effective approaches in Japan and Indonesia. Meanwhile, trial classes in Davao City serve as testing grounds for integrating instrumental activities, such as recorder lessons, to enhance student participation and support the development of non-cognitive skills. These efforts complement ongoing measures to address persistent learning

challenges by providing young students with more engaging classroom experiences.

At the tertiary level, the **JICA Chair (JICA Program for Japanese Studies)** broadened academic exposure to Japan's modernization, governance, and development experience. Previously, the program hosted a hybrid lecture on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) at the Ateneo de Manila University, delivered by a Japan-based expert and attended by representatives from national government agencies, academe, and other DRRM-related agencies. The session formed part of a continuing series of short intensive lectures under the program and was accompanied by reference materials for classroom use.

By enabling students, faculty, and government practitioners to engage with global perspectives and policy lessons, the initiative helps develop leaders equipped to navigate governance and development challenges at both local and national levels.

Robust Healthcare Systems

Efforts in the health sector this year continued to reinforce the systems that ensure Filipinos can access timely, reliable, and affordable care. One of the major initiatives was the **Build Universal Health Care (BUHC) Program, Subprogram 2**, which advanced key reforms to help operationalize the Universal Health Care Act. Co-financed with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the subprogram supported policy actions that expand primary care benefits, increase sustainable financing, and enhance coordination across health care providers. It also contributed to initiatives that modernize health information systems and establish standards for climate-responsive and gender-sensitive health facilities. These reforms strengthen the structures that will allow health services to reach more Filipinos and be delivered with greater consistency and quality.

Significant progress also emerged through the **GABAY: Community-Based Juvenile Intervention Facilitator (CBJIF) System**, which works with local governments to improve support for children at risk (CAR) and children in conflict with the law (CICL). From August to October 2025, technical working groups from Malabon, Navotas, Valenzuela, and Olongapo took part in five targeted trainings covering child protection laws, responsible parenting, behavioral management,



DOH officials trained in Japan to strengthen their skills in laboratory management and disease surveillance.

life skills interventions, adolescent reproductive health, and the use of the Gabay System Guidelines. The project also completed interim guidelines to help local governments strengthen case management processes. With 45 local personnel trained, communities are gaining the capability to deliver after-care and support, thereby ensuring that vulnerable children receive timely guidance and are not overlooked due to resource gaps.

Further gains were noted in laboratory systems through the **Project for Strengthening the Philippine National Health Laboratory Networks for Infectious Diseases (PHeLNIDs)**. Two groups of Department of Health (DOH) and regional hospital personnel completed specialized trainings in Japan on laboratory management, biosafety and biosecurity, whole genome sequencing, and data analytics. Across the Philippines, 12 pilot hospitals advanced in developing their biosafety and biosecurity manuals, with several already completed. The project also rolled out data management tools that now support the DOH-Epidemiology Bureau in generating weekly epidemiology surveillance reports. These enhancements strengthen the country's readiness to detect and respond to infectious diseases and help ensure more reliable laboratory networks nationwide.

By expanding access to essential services, strengthening protection for vulnerable groups, and supporting more resilient public health infrastructure, JICA contributes to creating conditions where all Filipinos can benefit from better and more responsive health care.



Gabay Volunteers are trained to provide support to LGUs in the care and management of children at risk and children in conflict with the law.



Toward Environmental Protection

The Philippines' pathway to sustainability depends on how effectively it balances environmental protection and natural resource management with economic development.

As the country faces the combined pressures of climate change, rapid urbanization, and limited resource capacity, the need for comprehensive and long-term solutions has become more urgent. JICA's work in the environment and energy sectors focuses on building the systems, capacities, and partnerships that enable the Philippines to sustain these solutions well into the future.

For decades, JICA has worked alongside the Philippine government to address these interconnected challenges as a shared national endeavor. JICA supports the creation of greener, more resilient communities through initiatives in climate action, clean energy, waste management, and water resource management. These efforts help the country develop practical and science-based solutions that empower institutions to act decisively, anchored on strong policy frameworks, reliable data, and community participation.

This strategic direction mirrors the priorities of the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028, which underscores the need for cleaner growth and resource efficiency, and aligns with JICA's Global Agendas on energy, climate change, environmental management, and sustainable water resources. Through its cooperation in environment and energy, JICA envisions a future where clean energy powers inclusive development, resources are used responsibly, a clean and healthy environment is maintained, and communities thrive in balance with nature.



Climate Change and Energy

The **Climate Change Action Program (Subprogram 2)** is advancing the Philippines' policy and institutional reforms for climate action and low-carbon growth. It is co-financed by JICA, the Asian Development Bank, and the Agence Française de Développement, and implemented through the DOF with key agencies such as the Climate Change Commission (CCC), Department of Energy (DOE), and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP).

The program has helped the Philippine government establish critical policy instruments, including the first implementation plan for its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) under the Paris Agreement and gender-responsive climate measures that make adaptation and mitigation efforts more inclusive. It also promotes sustainable finance through the BSP's Sustainable Central Banking Strategy and the rollout of green lending guidelines aligned with the Sustainable Finance Taxonomy, ensuring that climate priorities are embedded in financial systems.

By linking fiscal policy, energy reform, and climate governance, the program strengthens the country's ability to pursue a coordinated, well-resourced response to climate change. These policy actions are paving the way for the energy transition and moving the Philippines closer to its goal of achieving a 50 percent renewable energy share by 2040.

In parallel, JICA is providing technical assistance through the **Climate Change Advisor in the Philippines**, assigned to the CCC to strengthen its leadership in coordinating the country's climate agenda. The initiative focuses on enhancing institutional capacity, improving inter-agency collaboration, and building systems that support transparent and evidence-based policymaking. By helping the CCC serve as an effective hub for climate governance, the project reinforces the implementation of national strategies and ensures that climate actions are coherent, accountable, and sustained over the long term.

Complementing these efforts to strengthen climate governance, JICA is also supporting the DOE in advancing renewable energy development through the **Project on Resource Inventory of Hydropower Potential Sites in the Philippines**. This three-year technical cooperation aims to update and expand the national inventory of large-scale hydropower and pumped-storage sites with capacities above 100 megawatts. The project combines policy advice, technical training, and data management support, thereby enhancing the DOE's ability to plan and manage hydropower resources and identify priority areas for development. It also fosters dialogue on regulatory and investment strategies, promoting transparent and competitive hydropower development through evidence-based planning and stronger institutional capability.

Alongside these efforts, JICA places strong emphasis on developing capable, forward-thinking professionals who will sustain and expand these reforms.

Through the **Knowledge Co-Creation Program (KCCP)**, officials from the DOE, National Transmission Corporation (TRANSCO), and CCC are pursuing advanced studies in Japan under the **Green Transformation (GX) Human Resources Development for Energy Sector and Climate Change Policy Programs**. These long-term scholarships build leadership and technical expertise in energy transition, energy systems, and climate governance. By learning from Japan's experience in linking innovation with policy and planning, scholars are gaining practical insights they can apply to improve systems back home.

In investing in human resources, JICA ensures that the progress achieved through policy and technical cooperation will continue to evolve and be carried forward by the next generation of Filipino leaders in climate and energy.



CCC Legal Services Chief, Atty. Carlos M. Borja Jr., is the first Filipino Climate Change Policy Program scholar.

Waste Management

JICA continues to work with Philippine partners to promote sustainable and inclusive waste management systems that strengthen local capacity, community engagement, and institutional coordination. In Davao City, JICA has been collaborating with the City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) and the City of Kitakyushu through the **Grassroots Project on Improvement of Municipal Solid Waste Management System**. The project has improved waste segregation and collection in a model community, and clarified the roles of local stakeholders in implementing the city's waste management plan. Building on lessons from an earlier JICA initiative, it demonstrates how locally adapted, community-driven approaches can lead to more efficient and accountable urban waste systems.



JICA team surveys waste management facilities in Davao.

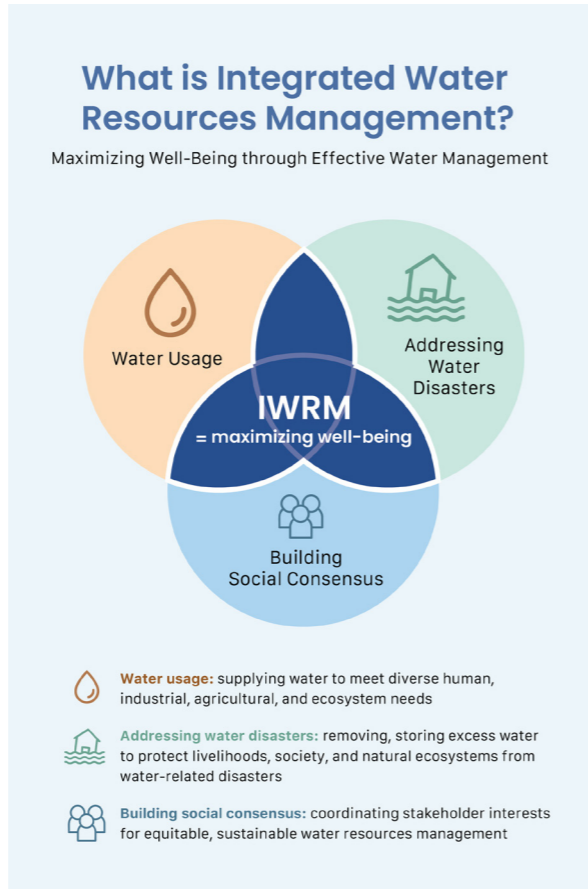


CCC and JICA officials with Climate Change experts during the technical cooperation kickoff. Photo courtesy of the CCC.

Water and Sanitation

Aligned with JICA's integrated approach to environmental protection and resource sustainability, cooperation in water and sanitation strengthens the Philippines' management and safeguarding of its water resources. Through the **Advisory Services for Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM)**, JICA works with the Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DEPDev), the National Water Resources Board (NWRB), and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Water Resources Management Office (DENR-WRMO) to improve policy coordination and harmonize planning among water-related agencies. The project promotes data integration, multi-stakeholder dialogue, and practical measures such as enhanced river basin governance and multi-purpose infrastructure planning. Support was extended through a second phase to sustain progress on these initiatives.

At the local level, JICA supports Metro Cebu and Davao City through **Master Plan Studies on Comprehensive Sewerage and Wastewater Management**. These studies identify investment priorities, feasible treatment methods, and implementation strategies to guide future infrastructure projects. This ongoing cooperation also underscores the importance of partnerships



between Japanese and Philippine local governments and private-sector companies. These are complemented by the **Grant Aid Project for Septage Management of the Metro Cebu Water District**, which will establish a treatment facility and strengthen septage collection systems, thereby reducing pollution in local waterways. To help translate these plans into action, engineers and planners involved in the Cebu master plan also participated in training programs in Japan, where they developed technical expertise in sewerage system planning, operation, and maintenance.

As these plans move toward implementation, JICA extends technical assistance to the Department of Public Works and Highways-Environmental and Social Safeguards Division (DPWH-ESSD) in revising the **National Sewerage and Septage Management Program – Program Operations Manual (NSSMP-POM)**. The updated manual is expected to ease local governments' and water districts' access to financing and adopt national standards for wastewater projects.



Metro Cebu counterparts visit a decentralized wastewater treatment facility built by Hinode Snagyo for industrial effluent management in Yokohama, Japan.



Toward Peace and Development in Mindanao

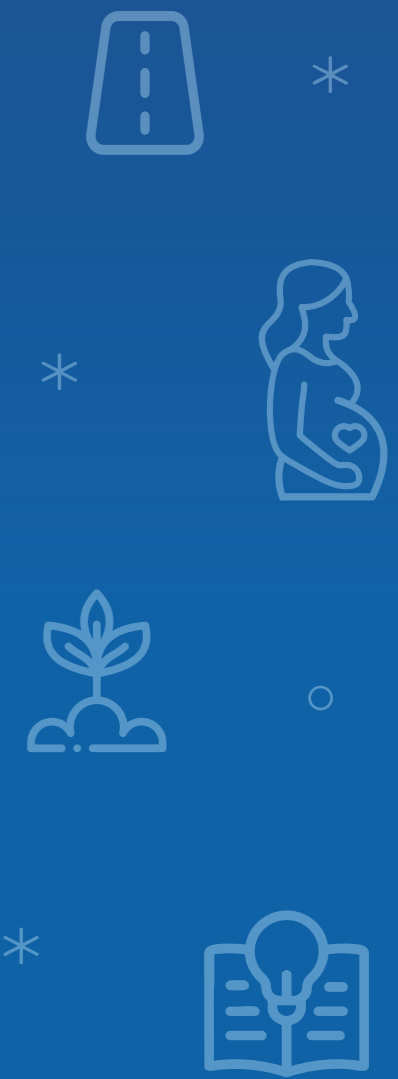
Advancing peace and development in Mindanao remains a central priority of the Philippine government and a core pillar of JICA's long-standing cooperation in the country.

For many years, JICA has supported both the political and normalization tracks of the peace process, working with national and Bangsamoro partners to help strengthen institutions, improve community welfare, and build conditions for stability.

As the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) prepares for its first regular parliamentary election, the region enters a critical phase. This electoral milestone is regarded as a turning point, marking the shift from a transition authority to a fully mandated autonomous regional government. In this context, JICA's continued support for governance, capacity development, and normalization is particularly important, helping ensure that emerging institutions are prepared to deliver services and uphold the commitments of the peace process.

JICA's cooperation in Mindanao is anchored on the Philippine government's peace and normalization priorities under the Comprehensive Agreement on the Bangsamoro (CAB). Drawing on years of engagement in the region, JICA continues to apply a long-term, systems-focused approach that emphasizes institution-building, community resilience, and responsive service delivery. With these principles guiding its operation, JICA remains committed to supporting the region's transition toward stable self-governance and broader socio-economic development.

The following sections illustrate how this approach is reflected across initiatives – from normalization support and governance strengthening to connectivity improvements and upcoming programs that will further reinforce peace and development in Mindanao.



Normalization and Livelihood Reintegration

The **Skills Development and Economic Empowerment for Bangsamoro (SEE Bangsamoro!) Project** plays a critical role in strengthening the socio-economic aspect of the normalization process by improving how livelihood skills training is planned, delivered, and sustained for decommissioned combatants and their communities (DCCs). By addressing systemic issues such as gaps in profiling, limited alignment between training offerings and actual livelihood needs, and insufficient post-training support, the project helps ensure that skills development becomes a more reliable and sustainable pathway for reintegration.

In 2025, a major focus of the project was enhancing the capacity of the Ministry of Basic, Higher and Technical Education – Technical Education and Skills Development (MBHTE-TESD) to design and implement training that responds to community livelihood conditions.

Through targeted training and mentoring, including practical placements in private companies, MBHTE-TESD curriculum officers gained stronger competencies to develop fit-for-purpose courses. These improvements contributed to a more relevant regional training ecosystem that can continue supporting DCCs even beyond the project period.

The SEE Bangsamoro! also advanced its series of model pilot trainings, which serve as platforms for testing and refining approaches that can later be scaled. The third pilot cycle delivered courses in shielded metal arc welding and agriculture crop production, integrating technical instruction with value transformation sessions, enterprise-oriented activities, and exposure to real work environments. Graduates received toolkits and training support funds, which allowed them to apply new skills immediately and begin strengthening their household livelihoods. Tracer studies showed early signs of income gains, employment opportunities, and stronger confidence among trainees.

One of the project’s key achievements this year is the development of the Training Manual for Decommissioned Combatants, co-authored with the MBHTE-TESD and informed by consultations with partners such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Community and Family Services International (CFSI). The manual consolidates lessons from the project’s three pilot training runs and establishes a standardized process for skills training. It also recommends post-training pathways, emphasizing coordination with BARMM ministries and local support programs to help graduates link their skills to available livelihood opportunities.

To sustain the gains of the project, JICA initiated discussions with BARMM officials, national agencies, and development partners to outline priorities for a potential next phase.

Governance and Institutional Strengthening

As the BARMM moves through a critical stage in its political transition, the **Capacity Development Project for the Bangsamoro (CDPB)** provides targeted support to build the capacities of key institutions. The Governance component of the CDPB focuses on helping the Ministry of the Interior and Local Government – Bangsamoro Local Government Academy (MILG-BLGA), and the Development Academy of the Bangsamoro (DAB) establish administrative systems, leadership skills, and institutional processes needed for effective autonomous governance.

In 2025, the **Bangsamoro Newly Elected Local Officials’ Guidelines: Navigating the First 100 Days**, developed with JICA’s technical assistance, was formally handed over to the MILG-BLGA in October. The manual adapts national onboarding materials to the Bangsamoro context and provides practical guidance on early leadership decisions, administrative procedures, and promoting transparent and accountable practices. It will be distributed to incoming local chief executives across the BARMM before they assume office.

Alongside this, the CDPB continues its capacity development activities for BARMM officials, including training, workshops, and technical support on public administration, organizational management, and local governance.



A manual developed with JICA’s technical assistance to help the BTA navigate its first 100 days was turned over to MILG-BLGA.

These ongoing efforts help strengthen day-to-day functions within ministries and local government units and contribute to more consistent and coordinated governance practices.

Agricultural Livelihoods and Farmer Empowerment

JICA will also uplift the livelihood of farmers through **Smallholder Horticulture Empowerment and Promotion (SHEP) Project**, a three-year technical cooperation initiative that

will support the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Agrarian Reform (MAFAR) in strengthening agricultural livelihoods across the region.



(Top) During post-training interviews. (Bottom) Decommissioned combatants engage in hands-on skills training by JICA.



SHEP partnered with G'dam Women's Vegetable Producers Association in Barira, Maguindanao del Norte to expand their agricultural skills and output.

The project will enable MAFAR to adopt and operationalize the Bangsamoro-SHEP approach by building the ministry's technical and institutional capacity, establishing structured support systems for agricultural service providers, and equipping local governments and civil society organizations to implement the approach in target provinces.

With expanded access to relevant skills, market information, and technical support, farmers will be better positioned to improve their livelihoods and take advantage of emerging economic opportunities in their communities.

Rural Connectivity and Community Access



Completed 4.3km farm-to-market road in South Upi to improve connectivity of upland communities.

The completion and turnover of the 4.3-kilometer farm-to-market road connecting Barangays Romongaob, South Upi, Maguindanao Del Sur, and Ranao Pilayan, Upi, Maguindanao Del Norte significantly improved connectivity for upland communities. Implemented in close coordination with the Ministry of Public Works (MPW), the project forms part of JICA's Grant Aid **Program for the Urgent Improvement of Socioeconomic Infrastructures in the Bangsamoro Region.**

Farm-to-market roads are especially important in upland areas, where farmers and Indigenous Peoples often face long travel times and challenging terrain when bringing produce to markets or accessing basic services.

By providing a more dependable route between the two barangays, the new road makes it easier for households to transport goods, reach nearby town centers, and engage in local economic activities, thereby supporting the day-to-day livelihoods of farming families.

During the turnover ceremony in October 2025, partners aptly described the new road as a "pathway to opportunity" and a tangible improvement that communities can use and benefit from.

Maternal, Neonatal, and Child Health and Nutrition

Aligned with its commitment to improve maternal, neonatal, and child health and nutrition outcomes in the BARMM, JICA launched the **Resilient and Equitable Access to Care and Health in Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi (REACH-BASULTA)** project in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM). This three-year grant targets vulnerable and mobile populations in geographically isolated island provinces, where access to timely and quality healthcare remains constrained by distance, limited facilities, and displacement. The project supports the improvement of equipment in health centers, strengthens frontline health worker capacity, and promotes culturally sensitive outreach to encourage safe deliveries, early intervention, and enrollment in PhilHealth.

Complementing this initiative, JICA also commenced the technical cooperation **The Project for Strengthening Services in Maternal and Child Nutrition Improvement in the BARMM (Ina-Wata Nu BARMM Project)**, which focuses on enhancing the administrative and service delivery of primary healthcare facilities in mainland BARMM.



At the Cotabato City Health Office, one of the beneficiaries of the MNCHN cooperation project.

Implemented in close coordination with the Department of Health, the Ministry of Health (MOH), and local stakeholders, these initiatives aim to deliver tangible dividends of peace by improving survival, nutrition, and well-being among mothers and children in underserved communities.

Opening New Pathways with the Private Sector

Addressing today's development challenges increasingly calls for collaboration that brings together public purpose and private innovation.

Investing in Everyday Mobility

For many commuters in Metro Manila, reliable public transport is a daily essential. Keeping urban mobility systems running safely and efficiently is therefore more than an operational concern; it is a public service that supports daily routines, livelihoods, and economic activity across the metropolitan area.

Private Sector Investment Finance (PSIF) is one of the ways JICA works with companies to advance development-oriented private investments. Through this scheme, JICA partnered with Sumitomo Corporation and Hankyu Corporation to support the operation and maintenance of LRT Line 1, Metro Manila's oldest rail line, under Light Rail Manila Corporation (LRMC).

Sumitomo Corporation is a global trading and investment company with extensive experience in infrastructure and transport projects worldwide, while Hankyu Corporation brings deep expertise in railway operations built through decades of managing urban rail systems in Japan. For both JICA and Hankyu, the LRT Line 1 collaboration also marks a first, representing



LRT Line 1. Photo courtesy of the DOTr.

their initial overseas investment in railway operation and maintenance, and demonstrating how Japanese rail expertise can be applied beyond domestic networks.

In addition to day-to-day operations, the partnership places strong emphasis on sustainability. It focuses on improving energy efficiency, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and strengthening operational practices that support long-term system performance.

The project exemplifies co-creation in practice: combining public objectives with private investment and operation expertise to sustain everyday mobility, preparing urban transport systems for future growth. It illustrates how co-created solutions can address immediate service needs while moving toward a lower-carbon future.

As risks become more complex and needs evolve more quickly, JICA has broadened how it works with the private sector, recognizing that investment, technology, and operational know-how can help turn ideas into effective solutions that last.

At the core of this approach is "co-creation" - a shared process in which public and private actors jointly shape solutions from the ground up. JICA places co-creation with private companies at the center of its engagement, aiming to build flexible, practical partnerships that respond to real needs on the ground. Rather than being confined to existing project frameworks, JICA actively explores a wide range of co-creation

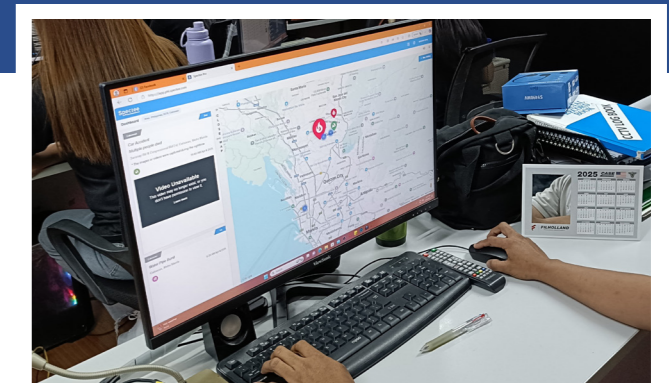
Turning Information into Action

When disasters strike, timely and reliable updates can shape how effectively authorities respond. In the Philippines, where social media plays a central role in how communities share developments during emergencies, vast amounts of real-time content can surface within minutes. Making sense of that information, confirming what is reliable, and using it to guide action remains a critical task for authorities on the ground.

Instead of letting data overload slow response efforts, JICA has been exploring ways to help decision-makers turn real-time inputs into usable insights. Through JICABiz, JICA's program that works with Japanese companies to create solutions to development issues, Spectee Pro is introduced to Philippine partners as a solution. The system analyzes social media posts using artificial intelligence, complemented by human verification. It was adapted to the Philippine context, particularly to reflect the widespread use of Facebook during disasters.

opportunities tailored to the diverse needs, strengths, and challenges of the private sector.

In the Philippines, this approach is taking shape through concrete partnerships that connect specialized expertise with real-world needs. JICA's engagement goes beyond private investment through multiple channels - including technology demonstration, policy dialogue, institutional support, and capacity building - to jointly address development challenges. Through these collaborative efforts, JICA is helping create solutions that deliver immediate benefits while strengthening systems for scalable and sustainable impact.



Spectee Pro, a Japanese-developed crisis management tool, was rolled out for Philippine users.

Rather than replacing existing systems, Spectee was tested as a complementary tool. Working with national agencies and local governments, the platform explored how real-time, verified reports could improve situational awareness as events unfolded.

What emerged from this collaboration is a practical example of how private sector technology can support disaster preparedness and response. By translating large volumes of raw content into clearer insights, Spectee can help decision makers act with greater confidence under pressure. The experience also points to broader possibilities for adapting similar tools in other disaster-prone settings, where timely information and effective coordination are equally important.

Walking the Pathways Together

For six decades, Japanese volunteers have been an essential part of JICA's partnership with the Philippines, bringing its development cooperation to life through people-to-people collaboration in communities across the country.



The Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) Program, launched in 1965, is a clear expression of JICA's mission to work hand in hand with partners by co-creating knowledge, experience, and a deep commitment to inclusive and sustainable development.



21

Active volunteers as of December 2025



600+

Organizations/agencies in the Philippines assisted by JOCVs

The volunteers come from diverse professions – teachers, engineers, health workers, community organizers, and technical specialists – all wanting to contribute their skills and, at the same time, learn from the communities they serve.

While JICA's projects focus on strengthening institutions, infrastructure, and systems, its volunteers translate these efforts into action at the grassroots. They teach in schools, assist local governments, work with farmers and entrepreneurs, and help communities address specific needs. In doing so, they embody JICA's gamba principle: working together on the ground. Each assignment becomes an extension of larger development initiatives, turning policy into practice and collaboration into lived experience.

The celebration of the JOCV Program's 60th anniversary in Manila brought together Filipino counterparts, government officials, current volunteers, as well as Japanese Parliament representatives to honor this enduring partnership. More than 1,700 volunteers have served across the country, helping advance national priorities in education, agriculture, health, disaster risk reduction, and community development. Beyond the numbers, their legacy lies in the trust and friendships they have built over time. Filipino partners have welcomed them as members of their own communities – people who live, work, and strive toward the same hopes for growth and progress.



Creating Livelihoods, Reviving Hope



MAEKAWA Miho showcases the products of her work with community mothers.

When MAEKAWA Miho arrived in the Philippines in early 2024, she brought with her a belief that marketing is about connecting people and creating possibilities. At ACTION Inc., a child-focused non-government organization (NGO) that helps parents earn income through livelihood projects, she applied that belief to strengthen its programs.

Working with community mothers to revive CHIKARA, the NGO's brand of upcycled fabric bags and crafts, MAEKAWA helped refine product designs, improve quality, and develop a consistent catalog. She even created sample pieces herself to demonstrate new ideas and inspire creativity. Through bazaars, customer surveys, and promotional efforts, she helped rebuild CHIKARA's presence in the market and renewed the confidence of the mothers behind it.

On top of her main assignment, MAEKAWA also supported the organization's communication activities by documenting events such as ACTION's 30th anniversary celebration and community sales events. Her photos were later featured across ACTION's online channels and publications, helping showcase their work to a wider audience and raise the group's visibility.

Within a year, CHIKARA exceeded its sales target and doubled its income, which revitalized the group's motivation and sense of pride in their craft.



Making Science Come Alive



KANAZAWA Mikako supports science education of high school students and teachers.

At Rosario Integrated School in La Union, JICA volunteer KANAZAWA Mikako has been helping teachers and students discover new ways to learn science, one experiment at a time. With a background in biology and a strong commitment to making science education engaging and accessible, she introduced creative approaches using simple, locally available materials. By doing this, she demonstrated that meaningful discovery could happen even without expensive laboratories.

KANAZAWA guided teachers in designing inquiry-based lessons and integrating experiments and research projects into daily instruction. Believing that curiosity is the starting point of learning, she encouraged students to test ideas, observe results, and take pride in their own discoveries. To sustain these efforts, she produced short instructional videos and added QR codes to lesson modules so students could revisit topics anytime.

According to school staff, her presence strengthened teacher collaboration and renewed students' enthusiasm for scientific investigation. Building on this momentum, she also supported the school's Project AGOS on water conservation and helped organize exhibits to showcase students' research.

The school has since seen greater student participation in investigatory projects and a stronger sense of purpose among teachers.

A Coordinated Pathway to Sustainable Development

Tackling today's complex development issues requires institutions, sectors, and funding partners to move in step. JICA remains committed to working hand-in-hand with the Philippine government and other stakeholders to promote coordinated and impactful development strategies.

The Philippine Development Forum (PDF) is a high-level platform where this collaboration becomes tangible. Led by the Philippine Department of Economy, Planning, and Development (DEPDev) in October, the PDF 2025 gathered government agencies and development partners at a pivotal moment of the midterm review of the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023–2028. It offered an opportunity for key development actors to monitor progress and discuss strategic realignments needed to sustain momentum and deliver inclusive and lasting outcomes, felt by every Filipino.

As a leading development partner of the Philippines, JICA took an active role by co-leading the sectoral dialogue on infrastructure expansion and upgrading, covering transport, digital connectivity, water resources, energy, and social infrastructure. In preparation for the forum, JICA collaborated with partners to help frame the group's shared insights, and during the event, it presented the sectoral progress, common challenges, and collective commitments for stakeholders across the development landscape.

Drawing on insights from its ongoing cooperation with national and local counterparts, JICA



JICA Chief Representative co-leads sectoral dialogue on infrastructure in Philippine Development Forum 2025

highlighted several cross cutting issues affecting infrastructure development. These challenges continue to affect implementation across infrastructure, social services, and economic development programs, influencing how projects translate into measurable results on the ground.

The discussions also reaffirmed the need for sustained coordination among development partners, particularly in aligning support with national priorities, and ensuring that resources are deployed where they are most needed. Through its engagement in other sectoral working groups, JICA also reflected on the interconnected nature of development challenges.

Building on these discussions, JICA emphasized the importance of charting coordinated pathways by emphasizing that development cooperation is not only a financing mechanism but also a driver of knowledge exchange, practical solutions, and system-wide improvements.

JICA remains steadfast in advancing a coordinated pathway to development, fostering strong multi stakeholder partnerships so that individual efforts align to deliver sustainable, inclusive, impactful progress that matter.

Pathways Forward

The period ahead will bring new demands and adjustments as the Philippines continues to navigate through economic, social, and environmental changes. For JICA and its partners, the priority is to sustain approaches that are proven effective and to remain flexible, balancing experience with creativity and responding to complex development needs.

At the heart of JICA's work moving forward are two guiding principles: trust and commitment. Trust has been built through long-term engagement, steady presence, and the willingness to stand alongside Philippine partners through both progress and difficulty. It is this trust that allows JICA to play a meaningful role in supporting initiatives and offering sound advice when decisions become complex, or circumstances are uncertain. JICA's commitment reflects its responsibility to stay engaged and to share perspectives shaped by experience, while respecting local leadership and ownership.

As cooperation evolves, JICA will pursue deeper collaboration with the private sector. These arrangements can bring additional capacity and practical approaches that complement public initiatives and help move plans into delivery.

As this next phase unfolds, JICA's role remains rooted in trust and sustained commitment. JICA continues to serve as a trusted partner, guided by a clear strategic outlook and a responsibility to support the Philippines' national agenda.



JICA Philippines Office

Resources and Other Links

Links

For more information about JICA Philippines, visit:



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Editorial Team: Maita Alcampado, Laurice Enriquez

Stories by: Carla May Kim

Layout and Design by: Leslie Lim

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Japan International Cooperation Agency
40th Floor Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza
6819 Ayala Avenue, Makati City, Philippines 1200
Tel: +63 2 8889-7119
Email: pp_oso_rep@jica.go.jp

