

South Asia

Flexible Assistance to Address Diverse Challenges

In the South Asia region, each country faces a different situation. While India has grown to become the third largest economy in Asia, most countries of the region face a pressing need to build a foundation for economic growth and overcome conflict to achieve stable peace and reconstruction. Poverty remains high in the region, and climate change and disaster prevention also present critical challenges.

JICA is utilizing various schemes to provide sustained and flexible assistance tailored to each nation. Working towards achieving sustainable economic growth for the region, JICA provides assistance for social and industrial infrastructure development in such areas as electricity, transport, and clean water and sewage. JICA also assists the development of supporting industries and the promotion of human interaction.

Key Aid Strategies

Assistance for Sustainable Growth, Environmental and Climate Change Measures, Peacebuilding and Reconstruction Assistance, Invigoration of Private Sector Economy

South Asia is comprised of the nations of India, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan and Afghanistan. One-third of the roughly 1.5 billion people who live in the region are considered to be impoverished. Eliminating poverty is a challenge facing each nation.

Many countries also need to develop their social services, including the need to expand access to primary education and medical services. There is also a pressing need to develop key agricultural industries and provide social services and living infrastructure. Furthermore, countries and regions that face political and social instability also face a critical challenge in terms of improving governance and enhancing administrative capabilities.

JICA has set four priority areas for addressing poverty reduction

in the region.

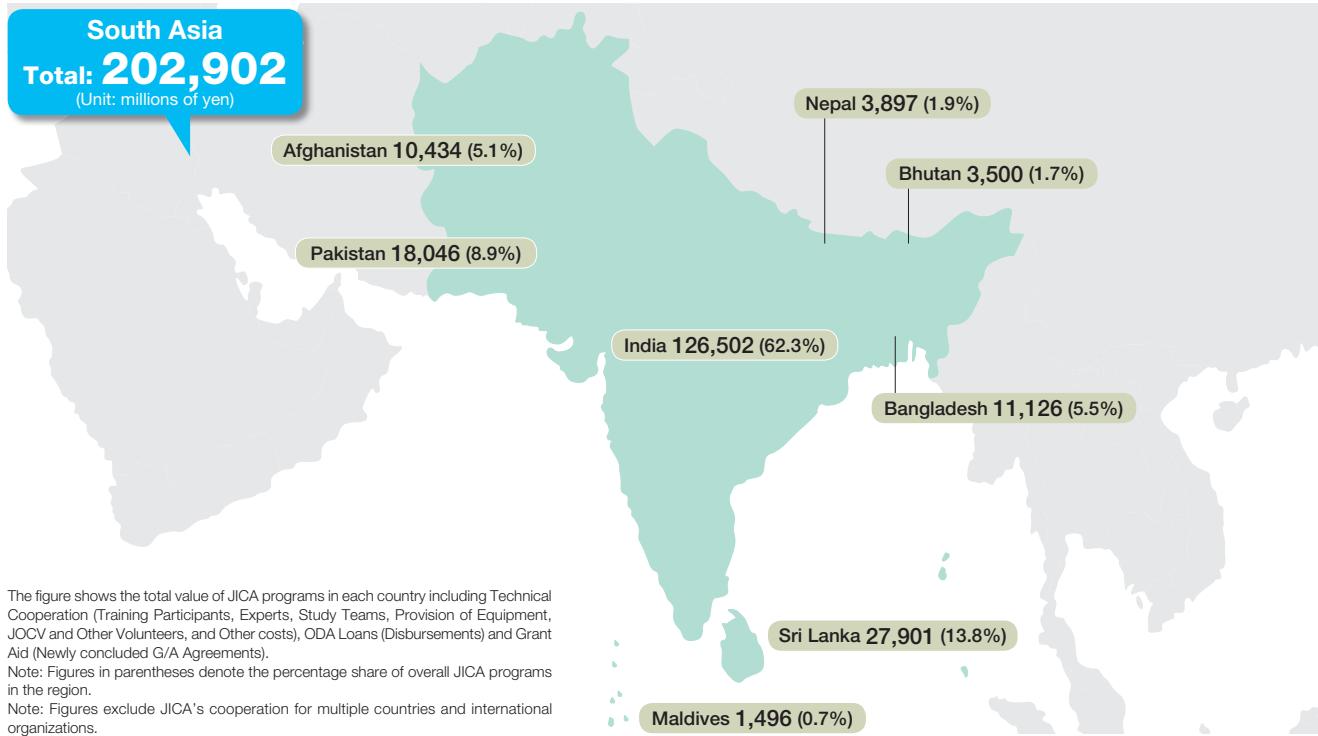
Priority Issues and Efforts

Assistance for Sustainable Growth

JICA supports the development of the infrastructure that forms the foundations of economic growth, including transport, electric power, clean water and sewage, and urban transportation. JICA also works aggressively to address poverty by developing the health and medical, educational, and agricultural and rural sectors, and by promoting assistance aimed at achieving inclusive economic development.

In recent years, Bangladesh has continued to achieve annual economic growth of around 6% and has begun to attract attention

JICA Programs in South Asia (Fiscal 2010)





as a potential industrial center and marketplace. At the same time, one in three Bangladeshi citizens suffer from poverty. The country is held back by a tremendous lack of social and economic infrastructure. Accordingly, JICA is providing a diverse range of support measures with a view to promoting economic growth and reducing poverty [→ See the Case Study on page 51]. At the beginning of fiscal 2011, JICA decided to provide ODA Loans to Bangladesh for the Padma Multipurpose Bridge Project, which is intended to construct one of the longest bridges in the world. The construction of the Padma Bridge will significantly reduce the travel time between southwest Bangladesh, where the poverty rate is high, the capital Dhaka, and the eastern part of the country. This will greatly contribute to vitalizing the country's overall economy. In addition, JICA has also decided to provide ODA Loans for the development of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). These enterprises form the core of the country's manufacturing industry. ODA Loans will also be put toward the development of water supply system in Khulna, Bangladesh's third largest city.

In Sri Lanka, 25 years of internal conflict between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) finally came to an end in May 2009. Since the end of the conflict, public order has rapidly improved and an environment conducive to peaceful development is being steadily established. Sri Lanka's real GDP over the first three quarters of 2010 grew by 7.8% from the previous fiscal year. For 2011, the country has set itself a real GDP growth rate target of 8.5%. In this way, Sri Lanka's economy is steadily undergoing a full-fledged recovery. Nevertheless, numerous issues remain to be faced, including the lack of infrastructure, disparities between regions, and a deteriorating financial situation. In order to address these problems, since 2009 JICA has provided ODA Loans for the Greater Colombo Urban Transport Development Project, a project to construct highways that connect major national roads and southern highways in the suburbs outside of Colombo. The project aims to alleviate traffic congestion in the capital and improve connectivity with rural areas, as well as to provide support for the promotion of logistics development.

In Pakistan, with the aim of promoting recovery and reconstruction from damage caused by major flooding in July 2010, JICA signed two ODA Loan agreements at the beginning of 2011 for a rural road rehabilitation project in an area where damage was particularly great, and for Emergency Import Support Loan to be appropriated for the purchase of imported supplies needed for recovery and reconstruction [→ See the Case Study on page 50].

Environmental and Climate Change Countermeasures

Many countries in South Asia are deeply influenced by the effects of climate change and are in need of mitigating measures

to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in conjunction with measures to address the effects of climate change. The region also faces many natural disasters, with the critical challenges of requiring disaster relief and assistance for recovery and restoration in addition to assistance for disaster prevention and awareness-raising.

Having launched economic reforms in 1991, India has achieved an annual economic growth rate between 4% and 9%. At the same time, there is a big challenge for India to achieve growth targets while ameliorating the environmental burden. JICA is therefore providing assistance through three ODA Loans to support a model of development which is environmentally harmonious and preserves the nation's biodiversity: the Himachal Pradesh Crop Diversification Promotion Project, the Tamil Nadu Biodiversity Conservation and Greening Project, and the Yamuna Action Plan Project (III).

In Bangladesh, JICA is implementing Technical Cooperation in order to improve meteorological analysis and forecasting capacity to support the effective use of equipment associated with the meteorological radar previously installed by Grant Aid. Furthermore, as a preparatory countermeasure against expected large-scale earthquakes, JICA is cooperating with Bangladesh to improve construction administration in order to promote construction and improvement for earthquake resistant buildings.

In Sri Lanka, in addition to providing Technical Cooperation for enhancing disaster preparedness capabilities in response to climate change, JICA is implementing Technical Cooperation for the renewal of the Sri Lankan clean development mechanism (CDM) policy, strategy, and action plans.

Besides the aforementioned flood damage of 2010, Pakistan also suffered from extensive damage from a massive earthquake in 2005 in the northern part of the country that left approximately 75,000 people dead. Through these tragedies, disaster preparedness has become a priority agenda alongside recovery and reconstruction in Pakistan. In March 2010, the project to formulate the National Disaster Management Plan was started with the support of JICA. This project aims to reinforce the national disaster preparedness structure based on the Government of Pakistan's prevention and mitigation efforts as well as on a cross-sectoral disaster response.

Peacebuilding and Reconstruction Support

Effectively promoting peacebuilding support remains a vital issue for countries such as Afghanistan, which is still politically and socially unstable, and Sri Lanka, where peace has yet to be fully established.

In Afghanistan, JICA carries out projects that contribute to economic growth, including the creation of employment opportunities and stabilizing the lives of citizens. At the same time, JICA implements the maximum level of safety measures

possible in consideration of the instable security situation. Specifically, while establishing the priority areas of infrastructure improvement focusing on developing the capital of Kabul and on the development of agriculture and of rural areas, JICA is working to improve administrative services and support the establishment of systems. Furthermore, JICA is promoting a plan to dispatch 500 long-term trainees to Japan over a five-year period.

In Sri Lanka, the internal conflict destroyed major economic infrastructure in the country's north, an area that was continuously affected by the conflict until its end. Moreover, internally displaced persons (IDPs) generated as a result of the conflict still need to be returned to their homes and the livelihoods of these people must be restored. In order to improve the living conditions of IDPs and vitalize economic activity by safeguarding the stable supply of electric power to the northern region, JICA is providing an ODA Loan for the repair of power lines running between Vavuniya and Kilinochchi and for the reconstruction of transformer stations.

Furthermore, JICA also supports reconstruction through such efforts as the Project for Development Planning for the Rapid Promotion of Reconstruction and Development in Jaffna District in northern Sri Lanka and the Project for Development Planning for the Urgent Rehabilitation of the Resettlement Community in Mannar District in eastern Sri Lanka.

Vitalizing the Private-Sector Economy

South Asia, comprising countries such as India and Bangladesh, which continue to see remarkable economic growth, is rapidly becoming an attractive region for Japanese companies.

In keeping with the New Growth Strategy of the Government of Japan, JICA works in collaboration with the private sector to form PPP infrastructure projects and BOP business-related projects. At the same time, JICA is actively engaged in promoting human exchanges and technical partnerships, and improving the investment environment [→ See the Case Study on page 22].

Case Study

Pakistan The Emergency Import Support Loan / The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Emergency Rural Road Rehabilitation Project

Contributing to Early Reconstruction Following the Worst Flood Damage in Pakistan's History

Pakistan experienced extraordinary rainfall in mid-July 2010, which continued until September 2010, causing the worst flood damage since the birth of Pakistan and leaving 20% of the country covered with water.

In the wake of the disaster, JICA, as a leading bilateral aid donor, participated in a Damage and Needs Assessment (DNA) led by the World Bank and Asian Development Bank. This assessment had the aim of forming a reconstruction assistance plan in response to the massive damage. JICA promptly began formulating particular projects based on the DNA, and by February 2011 committed to support early reconstruction by two ODA Loan projects totaling ¥19.7 billion.

Coordination with Other Donors

The flooding caused extensive damage throughout the country, affecting more than 20 million people (12% of Pakistan's population) and destroying 1.9 million houses. In response, Japan provided emergency assistance by extending emergency aid supplies, dispatching

Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) teams, and supporting early recovery by providing Emergency Grant Aid.

Thanks to the efforts made by JICA, in parallel to providing emergency assistance, in preparing medium and long-term reconstruction assistance plans based on the DNA, as well as to its efforts to coordinate its activities with those of other donors, JICA was able to: 1) provide emergency import financing for immediate relief, recovery, and reconstruction needs; and 2) support the rehabilitation works of the roads sector, which JICA has continuously supported in the past.

Concerning Emergency Import Support Loan, an ODA Loan agreement was signed in January 2011 for up to ¥5 billion. This loan will contribute to the stabilization of the balance of payments under the framework of international cooperation spearheaded by the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Contributing to the Stabilization of the Border Areas

In February 2011, a ¥14.7 billion ODA Loan project was launched in order to support road rehabilitation in the rural areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, which was severely damaged by the flooding.

This province is host to many mountainous areas and suffers from a high level of poverty. The western side of the province shares a border with Afghanistan, neighboring the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA).



A severed road in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province

Accordingly, development in the province has been far behind due to the severe security situation. Furthermore, since April 2009, a large number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been generated as a result of the Pakistani government's military operations against the Taliban.

The people faced life-threatening conditions when a large number of their communities were isolated as the transportation access collapsed or became severely damaged by the floods. The unrestored roads and bridges in the flooded areas significantly interfere with the lives of local people and strongly impede efforts for the return of IDPs to their homes, which was being addressed before the flooding.

JICA is working to restore severed logistics and infrastructure, promote an early recovery of the region's socioeconomic activities, and mitigate poverty by rehabilitating damaged roads and bridges. These efforts are expediting the return home of IDPs and the reconstruction of livelihoods, while contributing to reconstruction from conflict.



This bridge was washed away in the flooding. (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province)

Linking People and Government; Reaching Beyond Sectors; Changing the Society

Across the country, the Government of Bangladesh promotes two “frameworks,” linking peoples’ needs and public services, which were developed with JICA’s technical cooperation. The JICA Bangladesh Office reports.



Matching of community needs and public services facilitated by Mr. Rahman (far left)

Link Model, Reversing Stereotype

When (then) Prof. Yoshihiro Kaida of Kyoto University first visited Bangladesh in 1986, he witnessed the huge dissociation between the people and government. For sustainable development, the people and government must collaborate with each other with a sense of unity. With this strong belief, Prof. Kaida proposed a “framework”, named the Link Model, through JICA’s Joint Studies on Rural Development. The model focuses on “vertical linkages” between communities and local government institutions and “horizontal linkages” among various public services.

Mr. Moshiur Rahman is the only government official working at the Dehunda Union. Union is the lowest tier of local government institutions, covering a population of 30,000. He used to feel helpless with no budget and no manpower. However, Mr. Rahman changed his home Union after initiating the Link Model. Budget and manpower are available at the Upazila level. Upazila is the upper tier of local government institutions above Union. The people know what they really need. All that was needed was a “platform” where these two sides can meet with each other. Today, the Meeting of Union Development Coordination Committee (UDCC)* deals with a variety of proposals, including “Let’s conduct a cow vaccination program at once and at one place”, and “Let’s make a recipient checklist for pension payment.” This meeting is just like a market where the peoples’ needs and public service deliveries are actively matched together.

Ever since being assigned to Bangladesh as a Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer (JOCV) in 2002, Mr. Hiroki Watanabe, a JICA Expert, has devoted himself to the dissemination and establishment of the Link Model. He

notes, “Once a ‘platform’ is set, peoples’ consciousness will change, peoples’ behaviors will change, and ultimately the society will change. When the people began to show their willingness to pay more Union Tax based on their expectations of public services, I became very emotional thinking about how far things have come.”

Narsingdi Model, Protecting the Lives of Children and Pregnant Women

In Rishipara, Narsingdi District, the pilot district of JICA’s Safe Motherhood Promotion Project, a farmer and leader of the villagers’ group, Mr. Chandra Das, sat in a circle with his colleagues and health workers, and gazed seriously at a handmade map of the village. The map is color-coded to indicate the houses of pregnant women. Based on the information of the map, women volunteers visit the pregnant women and see what supports are necessary for them. Mr. Das boasts, “Since the project’s commencement, we have not lost any women and babies during labor and delivery for three and a half years.”

The Narsingdi Model establishes a “framework” of linking the villagers’ will to protect the lives of pregnant women, health services, and local government. Under this model, the community people are part of the health system and assist health service delivery by the government while ensuring accountability and government responsiveness.

Ms. Yukie Yoshimura, Chief Advisor of the project, explained with deep emotion. “The community support groups demonstrated the power of the people to change the

situation. They have the know-how to solve problems. I was able to get this far by extracting this know-how, learning from it and feeling empowered by it.”

Mr. Das’s group strives to promote not only maternal and child health, but also seeks to resolve a variety of issues facing the village, including domestic violence, premature marriage, and the need to establish more elementary schools.

Scaling-Up Nationwide

In 2010, the stakeholders of both models visited each others’ sites and shared information about their activities. Then the Link Model was adopted and expanded in the Narsingdi District. Furthermore, it was introduced as one of the good case studies of people-government linkages at the Horizontal Learning Program organized by the World Bank. Since then, the model has begun to be implemented over a wide region.

In the same year, the Narsingdi Model was presented at international conferences and the G8 Summit as a successful case study of mother and child health improvement projects.

In 2011, both models were integrated into the institutions and policies of their respective local government institutions, as part of the Government’s efforts to scale up the models nationwide. Today, a new Mr. Rahman and Mr. Das are emerging one after another across the country. These people no longer believe that poverty is the problem and that they are powerless. They are filled with pride and confidence of having the power to link the community and government and transform society by themselves.

JICA will continue to stand with the people, and feeling inspired by them, continue to extend assistance with the aim of realizing human security.

(JICA Bangladesh Office)

* One of the components of the Link Model. The Committee is comprised of stakeholders engaged in the Union development programs: elected Union council members, village representatives, public service providers, NGOs, etc. Meetings are held every month to mainly coordinate the public service delivery based on peoples’ needs.



Mr. Das (far right) is confirming the due dates of pregnant women. Rishipara holds the ongoing record for accident-free labor and deliveries. (The record is now at three and a half years.)