

Central America and the Caribbean

Promoting Effective Development Cooperation

While the Central America and the Caribbean*¹ countries share many aspects such as language and culture, they also have diverse needs according to each country's size and different socio-economic situations.

Taking into consideration the unique context of each country as well as the trend of regional and intra-regional cooperation initiatives to overcome region-wide development issues, JICA supports the sustainable development of the region, based on three priority areas: 1) Infrastructure development for sustainable economic growth; 2) Addressing global issues; and 3) Disparity reduction from the perspective of human security.

Special Feature

Program Goals and Overview

Concrete Initiatives

Cooperation Modality

Operation, Management and Evaluation

Data and Information

Key Aid Strategies

Improvement of the Economic Infrastructure, Response to Global Issues and Mitigation of Socio-Economic Disparities

The Central America region was seriously affected by the armed conflicts that continued for over 10 years since the late 1970s. With the end of the conflicts and the progress of peace negotiations in the 1990s, democracy began to take roots in the region. Today, most Central American countries are achieving stable economic growth. The Caribbean region is also maintaining a certain degree of economic growth supported mainly by the tourism industry and remittances from migrants residing in the United States.

On the other hand, Central America and the Caribbean face many problems such as frequent hurricanes and other natural disasters, and the vulnerable economic structure which is highly dependent on primary products exportation and overseas remittances. In order to overcome these common issues and achieve regional development, regional integration and intra-regional cooperation initiatives are intensifying via organizations like the Central American Integration System (SICA) and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Along with these trends of region-wide and intra-regional cooperation, JICA is continuing to work in partnership with

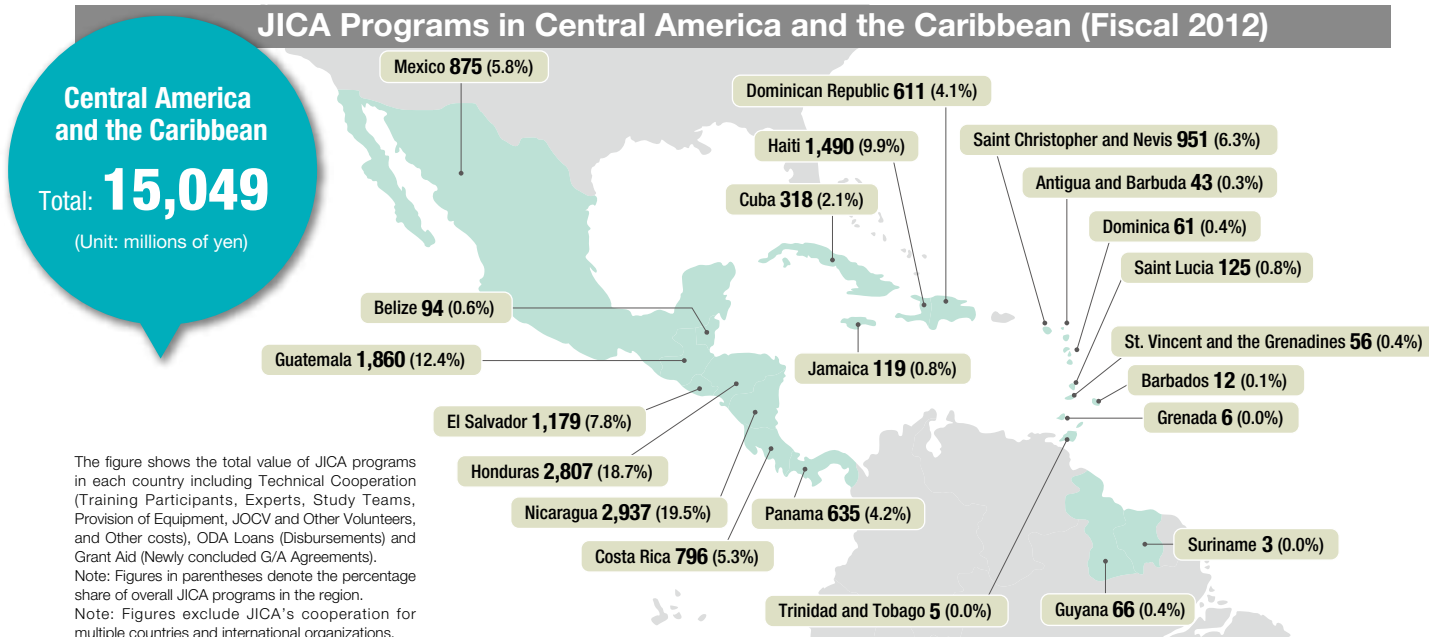
international organizations such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and other bilateral donors, in order to respond effectively to common development issues in the region.

In March 2012, JICA has signed a co-financing framework agreement with the IDB called as CORE - Co-financing for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency scheme for Central America and the Caribbean. Based on this agreement, JICA is preparing ODA Loan projects for countries in the region, such as Costa Rica and Nicaragua.

JICA's activities in the Caribbean are guided by the "Partnership for Peace, Development and Prosperity between Japan and the Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)" agreed at the Second Japan-CARICOM Ministerial-Level Conference in September 2010. Based on this partnership, JICA provides assistance for sustainable social development focusing on disaster prevention and environmental issues.

*1 Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Saint Christopher and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent, Surinam, and Trinidad and Tobago.

JICA Programs in Central America and the Caribbean (Fiscal 2012)



Moreover, JICA is also promoting trilateral cooperation in collaboration with emerging countries such as Mexico, under the Japan Mexico Partnership Program (JMPP).

Priority Issues and Activities

Infrastructure Development for Sustainable Economic Growth

The Central American region has fallen behind in building and restoring its basic economic infrastructure as a result of many years of civil war and frequent natural disasters, such as hurricanes. Weak infrastructure is one of the obstacles to the economic growth in the region. In order to facilitate the efficient movement of goods throughout the entire region, JICA provides assistance for the construction of highways and bridges.

In Guatemala, JICA is working on the improvement of roads located in the peace zone (Zonapaz), a region particularly affected by the civil war that ended in 1996. By building national roads that run across Zonapaz or that connect the main transportation routes to neighboring departments, JICA aims to strengthen the transportation system and to improve the access to socio-economic services. These efforts are being made in hopes of improving the standard of living, stimulating the regional economy and firmly establishing the peace.

Although the Central America has made some progress in its recovery from the global financial crisis that started in the fall of 2008, its pace has been slow. Consequently, a growing need for initiatives to achieve continuous economic growth and to mitigate socio-economic disparities has emerged.

In Mexico, the economic ties with Japan have further strengthened after the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) came into effect in 2005. JICA has been implementing projects to support local companies, with the objective of facilitating the entering of Japanese companies in the Mexican market. Emphasis has been placed on the north and central regions of Mexico, where many Japanese automobile-related companies are already starting their business. In 2010, JICA initiated the "Project for Human Resource Development in the Technology of Plastic Transformation" and in 2012, JICA has been implementing the "Project for Automotive Supply Chain Development in Mexico" which aims to promote the

development of supply chains between Japanese and Mexican automotive parts suppliers. The project is being carried out in collaboration with several Mexican province governments and ProMéxico, the federal government's trade investment promotion agency.

Addressing Global Issues Climate Change Countermeasures (Renewable Energy, Environmental Protection and Improvement, and Disaster Prevention)

Through the previously mentioned JICA-IDB co-financing scheme, JICA is actively taking measures to address climate change. JICA provides assistance for the development of renewable energy and introduction of energy conservation methods. JICA also assists in climate change adaptation measures, such as the strengthening of disaster prevention capabilities.

Hydroelectricity is the main source of electric power in Costa Rica, but in recent years, fluctuation in the amount of rainfall has created power shortages. On the other hand, the country is rich in geothermal resources. Therefore, as an environmental mitigation measure, JICA is formulating a project that will make ODA Loans for the construction of multiple geothermal electric power generation plants in Costa Rica. In Nicaragua, where the dependency to fossil fuel electric power generation is high, the priority issue is the diversification of electric power sources and the improvement in the overall balance of supply and demand. JICA is elaborating an ODA Loan project to build multiple small hydroelectric power generation stations throughout the country. In addition, the project will include the replacement of the lighting equipment for streets, public facilities, and houses to energy saving appliances of a quality seen in only a few other places in the world. In the future, JICA also plans to promote activities to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases in the region.

As measure for climate change adaptation, enhancing disaster risk management is also important. In October 2011, Tropical Storm 12-E inflicted enormous damage on the socio-economic infrastructure in El Salvador. In response, JICA conducted the damage evaluation of 18 bridges, prepared the Bridge Rehabilitation Plan and installed temporary bridges

Case Study Assistance for Improving Living Environment and Sanitation Conditions

Panama's First Sewage Treatment Plant Completed

JICA aims to provide better living and sanitation conditions for residents of Panama by building its first sewage treatment plant. The project is intended to improve the notable water pollution in Panama City and the Gulf of Panama.

Of the 3.4 million people living in Panama, approximately 1.2 million are concentrated in the capital, Panama City. Rapid development has produced row of high-rise buildings in the capital, but the country had no sewage treatment plant. Sewage passed untreated into the rivers flowing through the city into the Gulf of Panama. Affected by the bad odor, the nearby beaches were deserted. In 2001, the pollution forced Panama's Ministry of Health to prohibit

the consumption of marine products from the Gulf of Panama.

Against this backdrop, since 2007, JICA has been providing ODA Loans (approved amount: ¥19.4 billion) for the construction of a sewage treatment plant and the connection of pipelines to collect sewage from the city and carry it to the plant. Through the co-financing program with IDB, the project is also building a sewage network in the city.



The completed sewage treatment plant

The sewage treatment plant was completed in February 2013, and trial operations began in June 2013. Through the construction of the sewage treatment plant and the expansion of the scope of the sewage system, people are hoping for the earliest recovery of the natural beauty of the Gulf of Panama.

under the Economic Infrastructure Rehabilitation Assistance Project. With the installation of temporary bridges in two highly urgent sites, it is expected that the local material flow will increase and the economy will be activated. Moreover, JICA has contributed to El Salvador's disaster response capability by providing seismographs, GPS seismic monitoring systems, and other risk management systems under "the Project for Improvement of Equipment for Disaster Risk Management (Grant Aid) launched in 2012.

Assistance for Mitigation of Socio-Economic Disparities from the Perspective of Human Security

Although countries in Central America and the Caribbean have attained a certain degree of economic development, there are still a large number of people living in poverty with no access to basic education, health and medical services and safe drinking water. From the perspective of human security, JICA aims to achieve inclusive development in this region through the capacity development of the government, the communities and its residents.

In the governance sector, JICA has been promoting regional development through "the Project for Strengthening of the Capacity Development of the Local Governments for Regional Development (FOCAL II)" since October 2011. Prior to this

project, JICA had carried out "the Project for Capacity Development in the Western Region" in Honduras from September 2006 to October 2010, in which JICA introduced a participatory development process named as FOCAL. This process consists of participatory situation analysis, elaboration and implementation of a development plan. The FOCAL project was highly regarded by the Government of Honduras as an effective way to promote decentralization. Under FOCAL II, the FOCAL process is being applied nation-wide, contributing to the capacity development of regional authorities in this country.

Haiti -the poorest country in Central America and the Caribbean - is still recovering from the devastation caused by a major earthquake in 2010. JICA is providing Grant Aid for the construction and repair of streets in Léogâne, where more than 90% of the buildings were destroyed by the disaster. The Grant Aid covers paving of streets, construction and dredging of the drainage canals. One of the goals of the project is to stimulate the socio-economic activity in the area by improving the city's transportation network. The project also aims to improve the standard of living of the local residents by providing the opportunity to earn cash through the employment of labor-intensive construction method.

Case Study Nicaragua Chagas Disease Control Project

Sharing Results in Four Central and South American Countries with the World

Known as a disease of the poor, Chagas disease is an infectious disease peculiar to Latin America. After an asymptomatic period of several decades, the disease can cause cardiac hypertrophy and cardiac hypofunction in some patients and can be life threatening. JICA is vigorously working to control the disease.

The transmission route for Chagas disease is almost exclusively through the blood-sucking insect of the subfamily Triatominae cruzi, also known as the kissing bug, which lives in thatched roofs, cracks in walls, and other spots in houses. In Nicaragua, it is estimated that at least 50,000 people are infected with the disease. It is difficult to correctly determine the state of disease because the signs and symptoms are difficult to be seen and the asymptomatic period is long. As a result, there is no established treatment method for patients in the chronic stage of the disease.

JICA was one of the first to focus on this infectious disease, commencing research in Guatemala in the 1990s. For more than ten years since then, JICA has implemented

Technical Cooperation projects in four countries in Central America (Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua). Through these projects, JICA has determined high-risk regions for Chagas disease and proceeded to exterminate the kissing bug in those regions by spraying insecticides. In addition, with the collaboration of the Health Department staff of these countries and the local communities, JICA has set up a monitoring system. Under the auspices of the World Health Organization (WHO), the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and other international organizations, the efforts have been used to halt new infections from the highly infectious non-native kissingbug vector in Nicaragua, Guatemala and Honduras. In El Salvador, the extermination of the insect

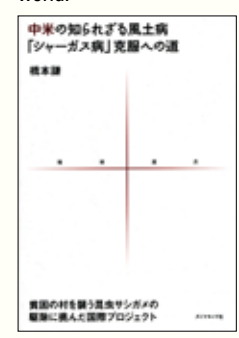
has been declared. To firmly establish the knowledge and experience cultivated in each of the Central American countries, JICA has dispatched Regional Experts (Chagas disease control advisors) to compile the results of the implemented projects as the culmination of cooperation done so far. Furthermore, JICA has disseminated its experience and results with Chagas disease control at international meetings held in Thailand, Peru and other countries. Besides the publication of a book in 2013 regarding the JICA's experience in Chagas disease and other activities, JICA is continuously working to spread and disseminating the results of its efforts to control Chagas disease to the world.



Health Department staff member explains the assassin bug monitoring system (Matagalpa Department).



Health Department staff member receives assassin bugs captured by citizens (Nueva Segovia Department).



"Overcoming Chagas Disease: The Unknown Disease Endemic to Central America," a book written by Ken Hashimoto and published by DIAMOND, Inc.