



# JICA IN TUNISIA

*a half-century  
of cooperation  
& friendship*





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>2</b>	JICA in Tunisia	<b>5</b>	Message from the Ambassador of Japan to Tunisia
<b>3</b>	Message from the President of JICA	<b>6</b>	Major events in the history of JICA in Tunisia
<b>4</b>	Message from the Minister of Foreign Affairs		
<b>8</b>	<b>JOCV throughout history</b>		
	THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM (JOCV) .....10		DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES .....21
	MARTIAL ARTS .....12		DISTRIBUTION OF VOLUNTEERS BY SPECIALITY .....24
	YOUTH SUPPORT .....15		DISTRIBUTION OF VOLUNTEERS BY GOVERNORATE .....25
	SUPPORT TO DISABLED PEOPLE .....18		
<b>26</b>	<b>Tunisia-Japan: a strategic partnership</b>		
	THE HISTORY OF JICA'S OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE (ODA) IN TUNISIA .....28		HEALTHCARE .....41
	WATER .....30		INDUSTRY .....42
	TRANSPORTATION .....32		TRAINING PROGRAMS IN JAPAN .....44
	ENERGY .....35		JICA PROJECTS IN TUNISIA IN FIGURES .....46
	RURAL DEVELOPMENT .....36		MAP OF MAJOR JICA PROJECTS IN TUNISIA .....47
	SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY .....38		
<b>48</b>	List of JICA projects in Tunisia	<b>54</b>	Editor Note



# JICA in Tunisia

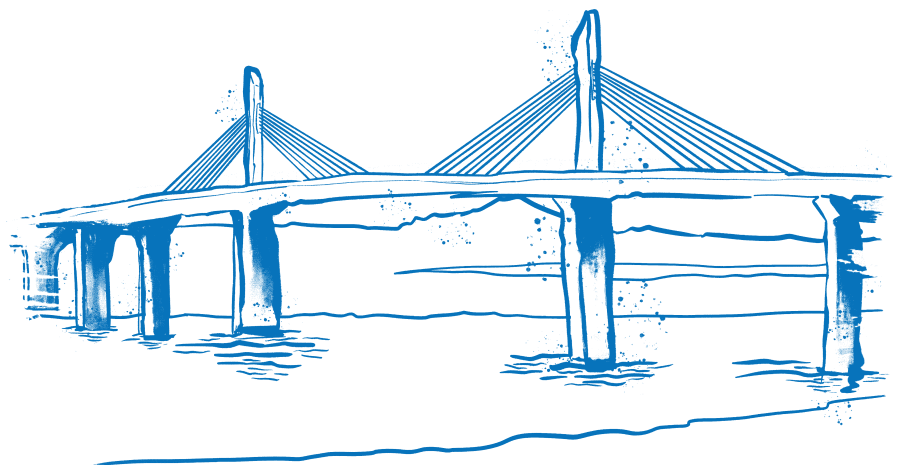
The year 2025 marks the 50th anniversary of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in Tunisia. JICA, one of the world's largest bilateral aid agencies (ODA), is responsible for implementing ODA programmes — technical cooperation, financing and investment cooperation, grants — including the volunteer programme, in an integrated manner. It is active in more than 150 countries and regions and has approximately 90 offices overseas. In Tunisia, two areas have been the main focus of its activities in recent years:

- **Development of economic infrastructure and human resources, and strengthening of security capabilities.**
- **Improvement of living conditions to reduce regional disparities.**



On 9 February 2025, at the Cité de la Culture, we celebrated our 50th anniversary with a special event organized for Japan Festival, attended by our partners and the general public. We presented a rich programme thanks to the involvement of our volunteers from different regions of Tunisia, with dance, theatre and music performances and a Japanese language competition.

This publication also serves as a witness to our shared history. We hope it will give you a comprehensive overview of our 50 years of presence in Tunisia, i.e., a history where the professionalism and the humanism are blended for a better future and for the next generation.



## Message from the President of JICA



As I commemorate the 50th anniversary of JICA's presence and the dispatch of JICA volunteers to Tunisia, I am filled with profound gratitude and pride. The year 2025 also marks the 60th anniversary of JICA's Volunteer Program, which began in 1965. This milestone is not just a testament to the passage of time but a reflection of our enduring commitment to fostering cooperation and development of Tunisia.

Our journey in Tunisia has started with the arrival of two Japanese volunteers (nurses) in Tunis on 24th april, 1975. Since then, Tunisia has received over 500 volunteers—young and senior professionals alike—who have selflessly shared their expertise across various fields, with a profound spirit of integration. Professional domain varies from medical doctors and engineers to music and Japanese language teachers, sports trainers, and more. Their personal testimonies, captured in this booklet, offer a glimpse into the transformative power of volunteerism and the lasting bonds forged between our nations.

In parallel, our economic cooperation has evolved over the past half century. In line with the government's priorities, JICA's technical cooperation started with medical and fishery areas, followed by financial

assistances for industries and economic infrastructure which served as the engine for growth in Tunisia. JICA has been privileged to support the construction of extensive highways spanning 143 kilometers, contribute to more than 10% of the nation's electricity production (as of 2025), and enhance access to water supply and sanitation services nationwide. Alongside, our technical cooperation strengthened the capacity of institutions and human resource development in technical fields such as health, fishery, Kaizen (continuous quality and productivity improvement) for industries, scientific research, and more. These initiatives, highlighted in the subsequent pages, underscore our commitment to the concept of human security which places Tunisian people at the centre of development.

I would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to all who have been part of this remarkable journey. May this booklet serve as a testament to our shared history and as an inspiration for the many chapters yet to be written in our ongoing partnership.

**Akihiko Tanaka**

President

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

## Message from the Minister of Foreign Affairs



For half a century, Tunisia and Japan have maintained exemplary multisectoral cooperation relations, based on common values of respect, solidarity and sustainable development. The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has illustrated this mindset with concrete and progressive initiatives in many strategic sectors, including health, education, agriculture, infrastructure, the environment and many other areas. Initiatives which have clearly strengthened our national capacities and the development of innovative solutions adapted to our realities.

Not only has JICA left its mark on the Tunisian development landscape, through its continuous presence in structuring projects, but also through a human approach embodied by the valuable action of its volunteers. These women and men, who came from Japan with a spirit of solidarity and a high sense of commitment, have worked in several regions of the country, often in difficult conditions, to share their

know-how, support local communities, and forge deep and lasting human ties.

It is in this context that this book retraces with accuracy and emotion the journey of this exceptional cooperation and highlights the joint efforts that have made it possible to improve the quality of life of Tunisians and to accompany our country on the path of development.

On behalf of the Government of Tunisia, I would like to express my deep gratitude to JICA, its professional staff and volunteers, as well as to all Tunisian and Japanese actors who have contributed to the success of this cooperation. May this book be a living testimony of our strong and innovative partnership, a source of inspiration for generations to come, in order to preserve the Tunisian-Japanese friendship.

**Mohamed Ali NAFTI**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs



## Message from the Ambassador of Japan to Tunisia



It is with great pleasure that we commemorate the 50th anniversary of the presence of the JICA in Tunisia and the beginning of dispatch of its volunteers. In fact, the start of JICA cooperation in Tunisia in 1975 was a major step forward in strengthening the friendly relationship between Japan and Tunisia since its independence.

Our very constructive exchanges have continuously developed since then thanks to the many financial and technical cooperation projects implemented by JICA and its Tunisian partners. Major infrastructure projects, such as the Radès-La Goulette bridge and the very recent seawater desalination plant in Sfax, have become symbols of our friendship. The Tunisian experts who attended JICA's training programs in Japan have become our privileged interlocutors and support the deepening of our bilateral relations. In addition, JICA volunteers have always been our frontline diplomats in communities in every corner of Tunisia.

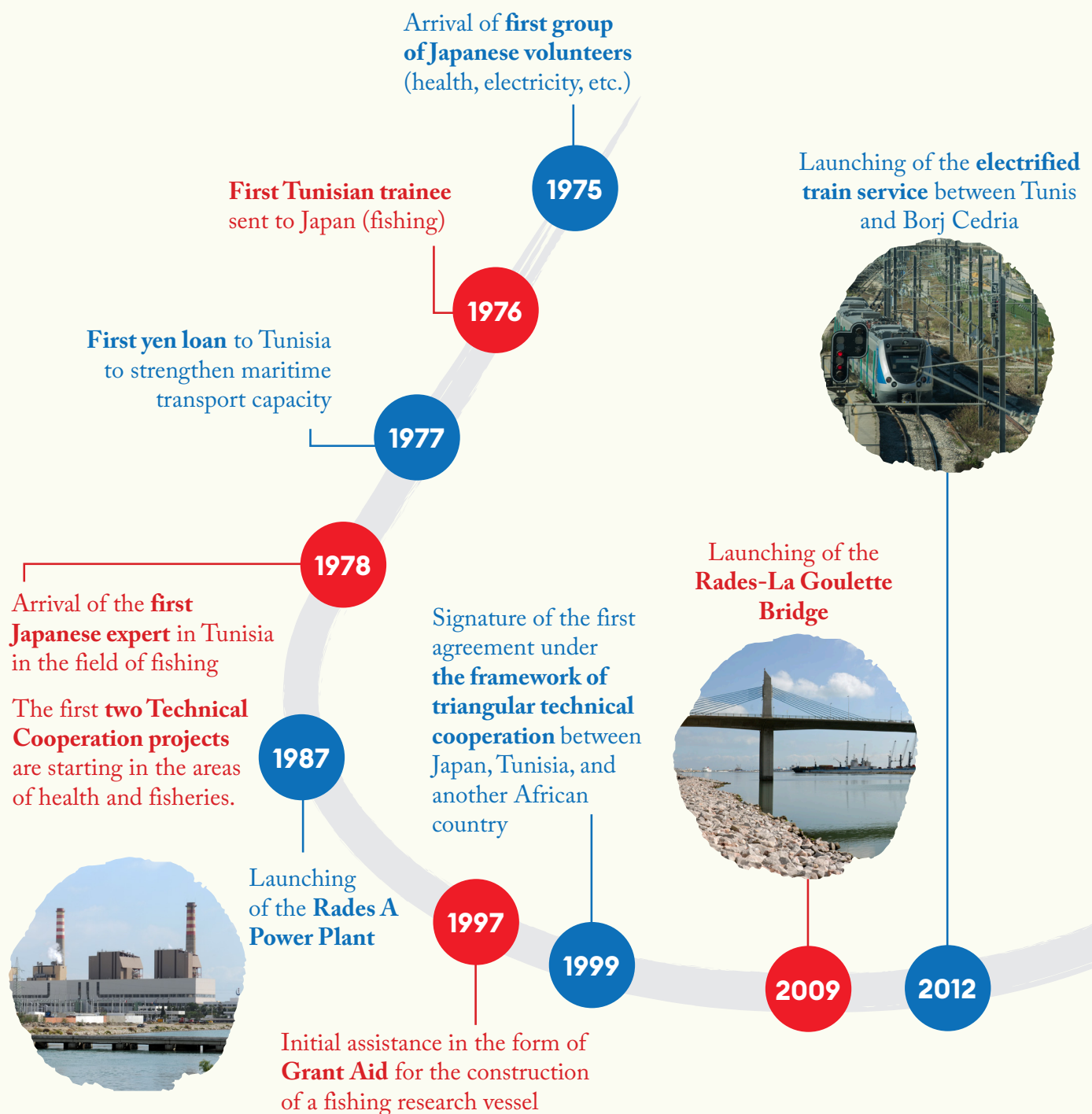
In addition, since the Eighth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD8) held in Tunis in 2022 and the entry into force in 2023 of the TICAD8 agreement on technical cooperation, our collaboration through JICA has become an exemplary partnership, contributing together to the development of other African countries.

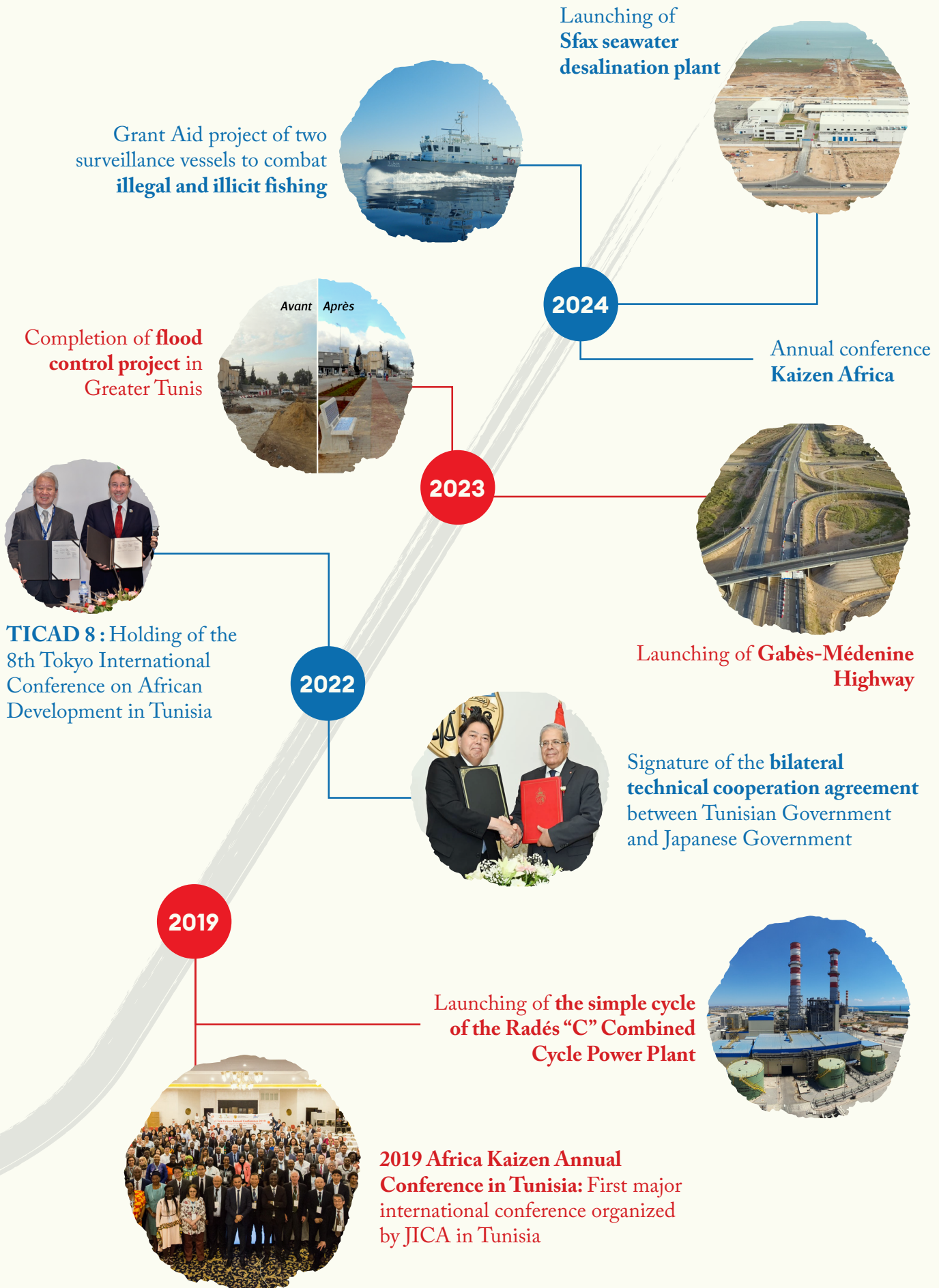
JICA has always contributed to promoting the friendship between our two peoples through its hard work for sustainable development and the strengthening of human security in Tunisia. Japan and Tunisia will celebrate the 70th anniversary of their diplomatic relationship in 2026 and JICA will remain at the heart of our relationship of trust and friendship in this pivotal year and beyond.

**Takeshi OSUGA**

Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
Ambassador of Japan to Tunisia

# Major events in the history of JICA in Tunisia

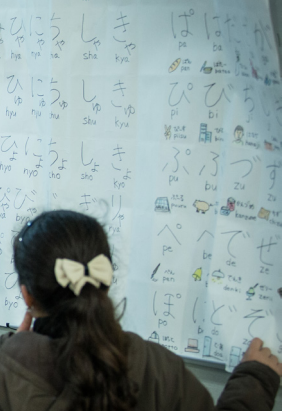












# JOCV

*throughout history*







## THE VOLUNTEER PROGRAM (JOCV)

### Japan-Tunisia: Fifty years of cooperation since the first volunteer was dispatched to Tunisia .....

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) is one of the largest bilateral aid agencies supporting the socio-economic development of developing countries. Created in 1965, JICA's "Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs)" sends Japanese volunteers to transfer their skills and experience to the people of the host country. Tunisia was the third country in the Middle East to join the JOCV program, after Morocco

and Syria, in July 1974. A cooperation agreement was signed after the first world oil crisis, in a context of rapprochement between Japan, which was experiencing rapid economic and technological growth and was keen to participate in the development of other countries, and the Arab countries, which were seeking to modernize their societies culturally and educationally.



## 532 Japanese volunteers deployed in Tunisia since 1975 .....

The program began in 1975 with the sending of 2 junior volunteers, followed by 7 others in the fields of health, electronics and secretarial work. Since then, the activities and areas of intervention have diversified, reaching 36 volunteers in 2003. Over the years, the program has evolved to meet the needs of the young Tunisian population, expanding its fields of action to various sectors such as sports, agriculture, music, audiovisual arts and the teaching of Japanese language, thus covering the entire Tunisian territory. In addition, efforts have been made to increase the dispatch to rural areas, with a view to reducing regional disparities (see page 25). This development testifies the sustainable and adaptive commitment of the programme to Tunisia's socio-economic and cultural development.

In 2001, the senior volunteers program was introduced to further enhance the experience and expertise. Almost 160 senior volunteers have been working closely with the local population, particularly in Greater Tunis area, the Central and Southern Tunisia regions, such as Sfax,

Nabeul and Sousse. Their missions focused on strategic areas such as the economy, the environment, science and technology, investment promotion, as well as the development of industry and exports. These actions have been carried out in partnership with technical and sectoral centres, particularly in the fields of textiles, packaging and agri-food industries.

In half a century, 532 Japanese volunteers have been deployed in Tunisia, including 372 young volunteers and 160 seniors.

For fifty years, the tireless efforts of Japanese volunteers, in collaboration with their counterparts and Tunisian citizens, have consolidated exceptional friendship and cooperation. This strong relationship has withstood challenges, including periods of instability between 2015 and 2019, followed by the Covid-19 pandemic, which temporarily suspended some activities. This longevity is a testament to the resilience and generosity of a partnership rooted in a shared vision of development and progress.

## Objectives and future directions of the JOCV.....

In December 2024, the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) program reached a significant milestone, with a total of 57,000 volunteers deployed in 99 countries around the world. Recognized for its impact and excellence, the program was awarded the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay Prize in 2016, considered as the Asian equivalent of the Nobel Prize.

This year also marks the 60th anniversary of the program, which is celebrated through a series of ambitious events and projects under the theme: «The Power of JICA Volunteers—Change the World, Change Japan—.» This focus underscores the program's ambition to continue to inspire positive transformations, both internationally and within Japan itself, by leveraging the commitment and expertise of its volunteers.







## MARTIAL ARTS (JUDO, KARATÉ, KENDO)

Martial arts occupy an important place in Japanese culture and are among the most popular sports disciplines throughout the world. Since 1976, Tunisia has benefited from the expertise of 16 Japanese volunteers, masters in various martial disciplines. Among them, ten were judokas, five karatekas and one kendoka.

## Mr. Takahito Nakamura

*Judo (2022-2024)*

Tunisian Judo Federation

Kalâat el-Andalous



My name is Takahito Nakamura. I was dispatched in 2022 as a judo coach to the Tunisian Judo Federation. For two years, I worked in the Kalâat el-Andalous judo club, in the governorate of Ariana. Although this period seemed short to me, my days were quite busy.

My duty station was in a small town about forty minutes' drive from Tunis. Being the only Japanese resident there, the inhabitants approached me friendly to start a small discussion. I quickly adapted to the life of this locality, attracted by the beauty of the sea, the delicious local cuisine and the kindness of the inhabitants. I lived on the first floor of a house where a Tunisian family lived, who were very kind towards me. We shared dinners every night and spent our days off together. Even today, I stay in touch with them through social networks.

During my mission, I set myself the goal of improving the competitive ability of the local team and developing human potential through the practice of judo.

My activities consisted in promoting judo by developing the human potential of young judokas, boys and girls, aged 3 to 18 years. In my teaching, I attach particular importance to three fundamental values: discipline, courtesy and the ability to reflect.

On the other hand, one of the most important aspects to look out for when practicing judo is injury prevention. Nothing is more essential than ensuring that children can train safely. This requires rigorous discipline and constant vigilance during training.

In addition, judo is a sport that is necessarily practiced against an opponent. It is therefore essential to treat this opponent without any form of insolence. We make it a point of honor to strictly respect the rules of etiquette in order to ensure a practice of judo that is both safe and enriching.

Finally, I developed the students' ability to think on their own. I integrate active learning methods into my teaching, encouraging children to take initiative and to reason for themselves. This approach has allowed the Cadet team (15-17 years old) to win as many medals as possible at national tournaments and to reveal talents selected to represent Tunisia on the international stage.

The coach I worked with continues the teaching methods and won two titles in national competitions.

What impressed me most about Tunisia was the big cultural difference with Japan. As an Islamic country, Tunisia has traditions, holidays and religious beliefs that contrast profoundly with those of my country of origin. I learned a lot about Muslims and realized that it is a wonderful culture.

During Ramadan, in particular, I fasted with the community. I spent very intense days, but at the end of the month, I had forged such strong links with the locals who considered me as one of their own, even recognizing me as Tunisian. I felt a sense of accomplishment like I've never felt before. This experience gave me a sense of accomplishment like no other. I am convinced that this experience would not have been possible without my posting to Tunisia.

I hope one day to return to Tunisia, especially through judo. I would also like to express my deep gratitude to the entire team at the JICA Tunisia office, who gave me the opportunity to share my testimony. Finally, I wish Tunisia continued prosperity and happiness.



## Mr. Béchir Khiari

Technical Director

Tunisian Judo Federation

It is with deep pride and great pleasure that I share my testimony on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the JICA office in Tunisia.

*What a long way we have come,*

*How many obstacles overcome,*

*What good accomplishments,*

I would like to express our gratitude for your great presence at our side.

Judo, a martial art of Japanese origin, has conquered the hearts of millions of practitioners around the world. Founded by Master Jigoro Kano in 1882, it quickly established itself as an internationally renowned sport.

October 28, 1960 marked a decisive turning point for Tunisian judo, when several clubs chose to unite under the aegis of the Tunisian Federation of Judo and assimilated disciplines.

The Federation's mission is the management and development of judo and the disciplines associated with it. Our role is based on the following areas:

- Promote and publicize judo and related disciplines at the national level.
- Ensure compliance with the rules and standards governing these sports disciplines.
- Organize, supervise and structure the practice of judo and assimilated disciplines.
- Hold the exclusive right to organize national and international competitions.

The contribution of Japanese volunteers, who have succeeded each other in Tunisia as part of this fruitful cooperation, has imprinted a new identity on Tunisian judo. In total, ten «Sensei» have worked in Tunisia:



Hiroshi Enomoto, Susumu Abe, Takashi Hagino, Shinichi Oguchi, Masahiro Kubo, Mitsuharu Sahara, Masayoshi Kato and Kineo Hori.

More recently, we salute the valuable contribution of Mr. Takahito Nakamura to Kalâat Andalous, and the brilliant participation of Mr. Taiga Mori along with our young judokas.

The presence of the Japanese volunteers allowed us to dive into the heart of the fundamental values of judo, because judo, much more than a simple martial art, is a way of life guided by a deeply rooted moral code.

They influenced us with their respect for others, their sincerity, their courage, their fidelity to their word, their modesty, their spirit of friendship and their self-control. This spirit continues to be respected since the creation of this discipline in Japan to this day, despite the evolutions and new rules that govern this discipline.

We are convinced that this cooperation, which has lasted for more than 50 years between the Tunisian Judo Federation and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), has enormously contributed to the development of judo in Tunisia and to the remarkable performances of our judokas on the international and continental scenes in recent years.

The presence of JICA volunteers at our side will allow us to go further and realize the achievement that everyone wants. We are happy about this new age, and we wish we had bigger ones.

We hope to continue to count on you for the future. Together we can do better. Together we will go further.



## **YOUTH SUPPORT** (SPORTS, MUSIC, YOUTH CENTRES)

In response to the growing needs on the Tunisian side, Japanese volunteers worked in Tunisia with the main aim of promoting the economic and social inclusion of young people, particularly through access to culture and sports.

These volunteers have been deployed in structures dedicated to youth in various regions of the country, in order to promote youth empowerment through extracurricular activities. They have launched and reinforced several initiatives, in collaboration with the music and dance public schools located in Tunis,

Monastir, Mahdia, Sousse and Nabeul. Since 1995, a total of 14 volunteers specializing in various musical fields and 11 volunteers in classical dance have enriched cultural exchanges between Japan and Tunisia.

As for sports, 48 volunteers were mobilized, including 23 in volleyball, 17 in table tennis, 4 in swimming and 4 in gymnastics. In addition, 28 volunteers have been assigned to youth centres across the country, and this collaboration continues successfully to this day.



## Mr. Masahiko Nishioka

*Table Tennis (1984-1986)*

Ministry of Youth and Sports, Tunis

My name is Masahiko Nishioka. I was dispatched as a volunteer with the Table Tennis Association to teach this sport from 1984 to 1986. I found this experience «extremely stimulating», especially because it was for me the first immersion abroad and teaching in a foreign language.

My main tasks were to provide technical training for the national team players and advise them in international competitions, as well as to raise the level of talented young players.

My main activity venue was a training room dedicated to table tennis, located within the El Menzah National Sports Complex. I worked closely with the coach, Mr. Abdelkrim, and the technical director, Mr. Mokhtar.

I was particularly struck by the cultural contrasts, such as the surprising juxtaposition of donkeys and sheep alongside luxurious foreign cars on the same roads, a typical scene of that time.

In my home, I had no air conditioning, no fans, no washing machine, not even a refrigerator. In winter, I was forced to use a kerosene stove, an experience far from today's comforts.



Despite these difficult conditions, it was a very impressive experience, full of discoveries and enriching moments.

Among the most notable results of my work, I remember the fourth place of the men's team at the 1984 Arab competition in Amman, Jordan, as well as the third place at the 1985 African Championship in Alexandria, Egypt. I am also proud to mention my most talented student, Mr. Mourad Sta, who placed fourth in the junior individual competition.

After my departure, Mourad became a true legend of table tennis in Tunisia, winning multiple national championship titles and participating in prestigious international competitions, such as the World Championships and the Olympic Games. I very much hope to have the opportunity to see him again one day.

Today, I continue to teach table tennis in Costa Rica as a JICA Senior Volunteer. I have had the privilege of training many students around the world, including in Tunisia, and I find great satisfaction in seeing them progress thanks to table tennis.





## Mr. Taoufik Lazghab

*Director*  
Youth Hostel  
University Campus of Gabes

My name is Taoufik Lazghab and I am the director of the Youth Hostel at the University Campus in Gabes. Since 1989, I have been involved in the youth sector in Tunisia.

I had the opportunity to collaborate with Japanese JICA volunteers between 1991 and 2001, working in the audiovisual field, at the Muhammad Ali Youth Center in Gabes.

During this period, I worked successively with four volunteers: Mr. Hitoshi Nakano, Mr. Akira Takeda, Ms. Mizuho Baba and Mr. Jiro Momoi. At the same time, another Japanese volunteer was assigned to the electronics club and another to the computer club of the same institution. Their presence brought a real Japanese atmosphere to the Youth Centre, to the point that the whole city of Gabès was impacted and influenced by it at that time.

In addition to their professional assignments, these volunteers lived in the city of Gabès for ten years, frequenting public places like any other inhabitant. They also made friends and neighbors, which made them become citizens of the municipality of Gabès. They have integrated well into society, even managed to speak Arabic and appreciate the local cuisine.

As for the young beneficiaries, supported by the Japanese volunteers, they have benefited not only from technological progress, but also from social, educational and intellectual added values, and I can affirm that there are currently several professional photographers and videographers in Gabès, who have mastered the technique thanks to the volunteers of JICA.

During these years, we organized Japanese cultural days in Gabès, thanks to JICA support with the presence of the Japanese Ambassador to Tunisia, as well as the active participation of JICA volunteers and experts stationed in Tunisia.



Today, we maintain good relations with the former volunteers who came from Japan to visit us and review the places where they lived pleasant moments.

On a personal level, this experience was extremely enriching, both culturally and technically. I discovered Japanese culture and I acquired a lot of knowledge thanks to my friends the volunteers of JICA, as well as to their families and their friends who visited Tunisia during their period of assignment in Tunisia.

In 2001, I had the opportunity to take part in a two-month training course in the field of video editing at the television channel «NHK» in Japan.

In conclusion, I am extremely grateful for the knowledge and values I have gained from my friends, the Japanese volunteers. I would also like to point out that after twenty-five years, the footprints of the JICA volunteers are still present in the city of Gabès.

Congratulations to JICA and thank you Japan.







## SUPPORT TO DISABLED PEOPLE

When it comes to supporting people with disabilities, the contribution of Japanese volunteers in specialized associations has been of major importance. Many volunteers were posted in several regions of Tunisia, working closely with organizations dedicated to this cause. These Japanese volunteers taught their counterparts new methodologies and shared international best practices, ensuring that each beneficiary was offered support tailored to their needs. Their action has thus made it possible to significantly improve education and rehabilitation services for people with mental, motor or hearing disabilities.

A total of 11 occupational therapists, 11 physiotherapists, 3 orthopedists and 4 volunteers specializing in supporting people with disabilities have

been deployed in various facilities across the country. In 2004, a group of volunteers was deployed in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Solidarity to support people with disabilities in Kasserine. After the revolution, access to this region became more complicated because of the security situation.

The main objective of the volunteers was to participate in the implementation of strategies to guarantee the fundamental rights of people with special needs, mainly in terms of education, training, employment, and well-being.



## Matsui Kayo

*Programme Officer (2004-2006)*

**Ministry of Social Affairs and Solidarity,  
Kasserine**

My name is Kayo Matsui. I served as a JICA volunteer from 2004 to 2006 in Kasserine Governorate, one of the most disadvantaged regions of Tunisia, where it was particularly difficult to support people with disabilities.

To improve this situation, JICA has deployed a group of specialized volunteers, including speech therapists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, school nurses, and physical education instructors, to several host facilities in Kasserine. Together, we formed a working group to provide innovative support and assistance. As a coordinator, I contributed to facilitating exchanges between Japanese volunteers and the local community.

Centers supporting disabled people welcomed beneficiaries and provided them with essential services such as special education, vocational training and rehabilitation. These centres faced many challenges, requiring joint concerted efforts to strengthen their impact.

Firstly, the lack of qualified personnel was a major challenge. Many professionals were leaving Kasserine in search of better working conditions elsewhere.



In addition, associations found themselves in precarious financial situations due to the fragility of the local economy. Also, complex family and social factors, such as poverty and consanguineous marriages, reduced support for people with disabilities, often leaving them without adequate support.

To address these challenges, I played a pivotal role in working closely with other volunteers and institutions to sensitize the entire local community to the need for support for people with disabilities. I identified the problems encountered and worked tirelessly to propose appropriate solutions.

Ultimately, my work provided emotional support and eased the burden on people with disabilities and their families in the community. We can say that my activities have gone beyond simple physical assistance: they offered the opportunity to transform local mentalities, offering a new perspective for supporting people with disabilities.



## Prof. Imed Abdeljaoued

*President*

**Federation of Tunisian Associations  
of Disabled People (FATH)**



The «Federation of Tunisian Associations of Persons with Disabilities» (FATH) is an organization created in 2012 by National Associations recognized as being of public interest. It represents the four main types of disabilities – motor, mental, hearing and visual – as well as parents of people with disabilities. These associations are: AGIM (General Association of Motor Insufficiencies), UTAIM (Tunisian Union for Aid to the Mentally Insufficient), ATAS (Tunisian Association for Aid to the Deaf), UNAT (National Union of the Tunisian Blind) and APAHT (Association of Parents and Friends of Tunisian Handicapped). FATH also brings together local and regional associations.

FATH works for the effective implementation of the articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The consolidation of links between all associations working in the field of disability is crucial in order to exchange experiences and expertise and create joint projects that benefit everyone and to play the role of lead negotiator with the public authorities and the whole society on various aspects that concern disabled people and their associations.



FATH also develops an active policy of cooperation and exchanges with international associations and organizations working in the field of disability. In this context, Tunisian associations in the sector have benefited from the valuable support of Japanese volunteers for many years. They have brought to our associations their expertise, technical know-how, rich professional experience and enthusiasm in various fields such as physiotherapy, psychomotor skills, assistance to hearing loss, hearing aids, vocational training and environmental education.

The volunteers have done an excellent job in all the associations where they had the opportunity to work, despite the material difficulties. The impact of their intervention is tangible, both for local staff they worked with and for people with disabilities in specialized centers. They have contributed significantly to the introduction of new methods of re-education, rehabilitation and care, as well as to the socio-economic integration of many people with disabilities.

On a human level, the volunteers have demonstrated exceptional qualities, which enormously facilitated their integration into the social environment. The staff of the associations, the disabled people and their families show them deep respect, sincere gratitude and unreserved recognition.

On behalf of all the associations of people with disabilities, the people with disabilities themselves, their families and all the staff, I would like to express my deepest thanks to the Japanese volunteers. I say to them: a big BRAVO! Your commitment and dedication to people with disabilities is a true inspiration to us all.





## **DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES *IN THE INDUSTRIAL AND ECONOMIC FIELDS AND THE TEACHING OF MODERN LANGUAGES***

Pages would not be sufficient to cover all various professions exercised by Japanese volunteers in Tunisia. Many of them have contributed to economic growth, working in various sectors such as industry, tourism, teaching of the Japanese language, handicrafts, and many others. Generally, these volunteers were assigned to teach in various vocational training institutions spread over several regions of the country, including Tunis, Bizerte, Sousse, Nabeul, Korba, etc. Their areas of expertise covered electrical engineering, business management, computer technology and car maintenance, with 37, 28, 33 and 9 volunteers engaged in these specialties respectively.

## Saida Toshiaki

*Car Maintenance (2013-2015)*

**Korba Vocational Training Center**

**Car maintenance (1978-1980)**

**Kairouan**



My name is Toshiaki Saida. I joined the JICA Volunteer Program in 1978 as an instructor of automobile repair and maintenance at the Kairouan Technical High School. This first experience proved to be extremely rewarding.

Years later, as I approached retirement around 2011-2012, I embarked on a new trip to Tunisia. This is how I decided to rejoin the JICA program in 2013. After 35 years, I noticed that the Tunisian population had doubled and that the country had developed considerably, while retaining the image of carts pulled by donkeys in the countryside.

This time, I was assigned to the Korba Vocational Training Center (CFP). I provided technical assistance

in vehicle maintenance to local instructors of vocational schools. The CFPA director, having heard the news of the great earthquake that hit Japan in March 2011, had sent a letter of support to Japan. This act led to the sending of volunteers by the Japanese embassy in Tunisia. By discovering this story, I have found the deep ties that unite me to Tunisia more profoundly.

I hope to be able to maintain this relationship and see my friends in Tunisia again in the near future, if circumstances allow. The JOCV program has given me a lot; it is a great asset. Rebuilding with others is an experience that feels good.





## Ms Hanène Turki

*Director*

Bourguiba Institute of Modern Languages (IBLV)



I would like to express my deep gratitude for the interest shown in the Bourguiba Institute of Modern Languages (IBLV) on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Japanese volunteers' program in Tunisia. It is an honor for us to participate in this landmark event, which highlights the importance of cultural exchanges and international cooperation.

Founded in 1964, the Bourguiba Institute of Modern Languages is a emblematic institution in Tunisia, dedicated to language teaching. It welcomes Tunisian and international learners wishing to acquire or improve their language skills.

The Japanese volunteers of the IBLV have been contributing significantly to strengthening our academic programs, especially in terms of teaching the Japanese language. Thanks to their expertise and dedication, our learners acquire solid language skills and discover the many facets of the Japanese culture.

The volunteers have also implemented innovative work methodologies adapted to the specific needs of our learners, all age groups combined, thanks to their rigorous approach and their ability to create a stimulating learning environment.

It must be noted that the influence of the Japanese volunteers within IBLV goes far beyond their teaching mission. Indeed, they have significantly strengthened the cultural ties between Tunisia and Japan, transmitting fundamental values such as mutual respect, perseverance and

commitment to excellence. Their presence has enriched our institutional environment by bringing a diversity of ideas and practices, which has strengthened our ability to meet various academic and cultural challenges. The interactions with the volunteers also allowed our learners to develop an open mind and an increased interest in Japan, its millennial traditions and its innovations.

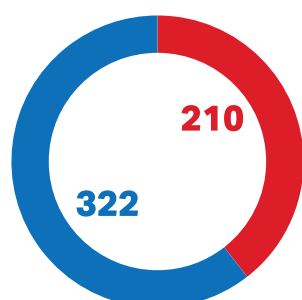
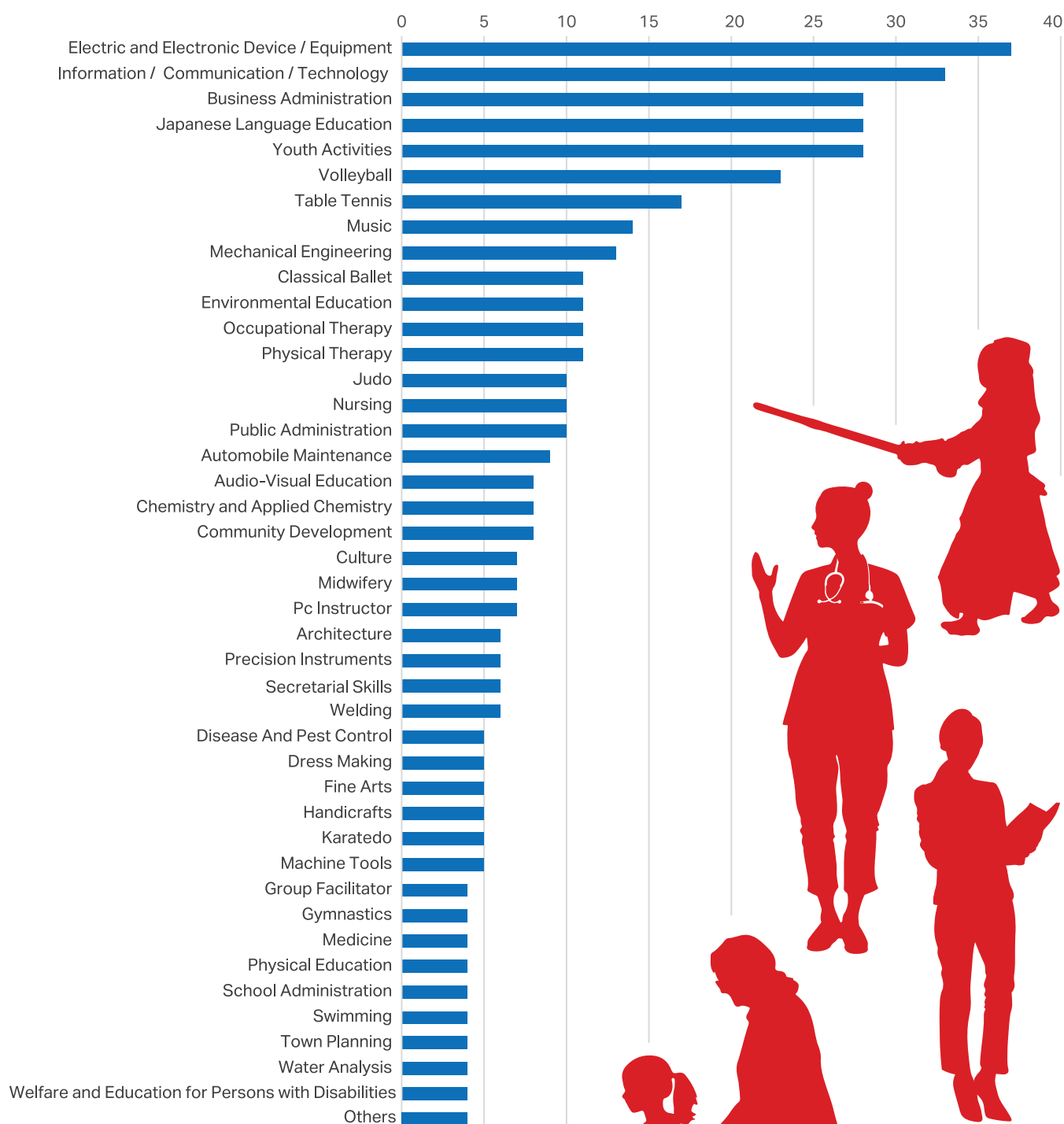
The collaboration between the Japanese volunteers and our team has not only strengthened professional relations but also generated lasting friendships. These interactions have allowed our learners and teachers to broaden their horizons, while valuing diversity and intercultural understanding.

In short, the IBLV is honored to contribute to highlighting achievements of the Japanese volunteers' program in Tunisia thanks to this fruitful collaboration with JICA. Their dedication and hard work have left an indelible imprint on our institution. We hope that this cooperation will continue, mutually enriching our cultures and promoting a harmonious and prosperous future for our two nations. Through these ongoing interactions, we are building a solid bridge of understanding and appreciation that will prove beneficial for future generations.

\*The Japanese volunteers who have succeeded each other at the IBLV have greatly contributed to the dissemination of the Japanese language and culture. From 1978 to the present day, their number has risen to 25 volunteers.



# DISTRIBUTION OF VOLUNTEERS BY SPECIALITY



## 532

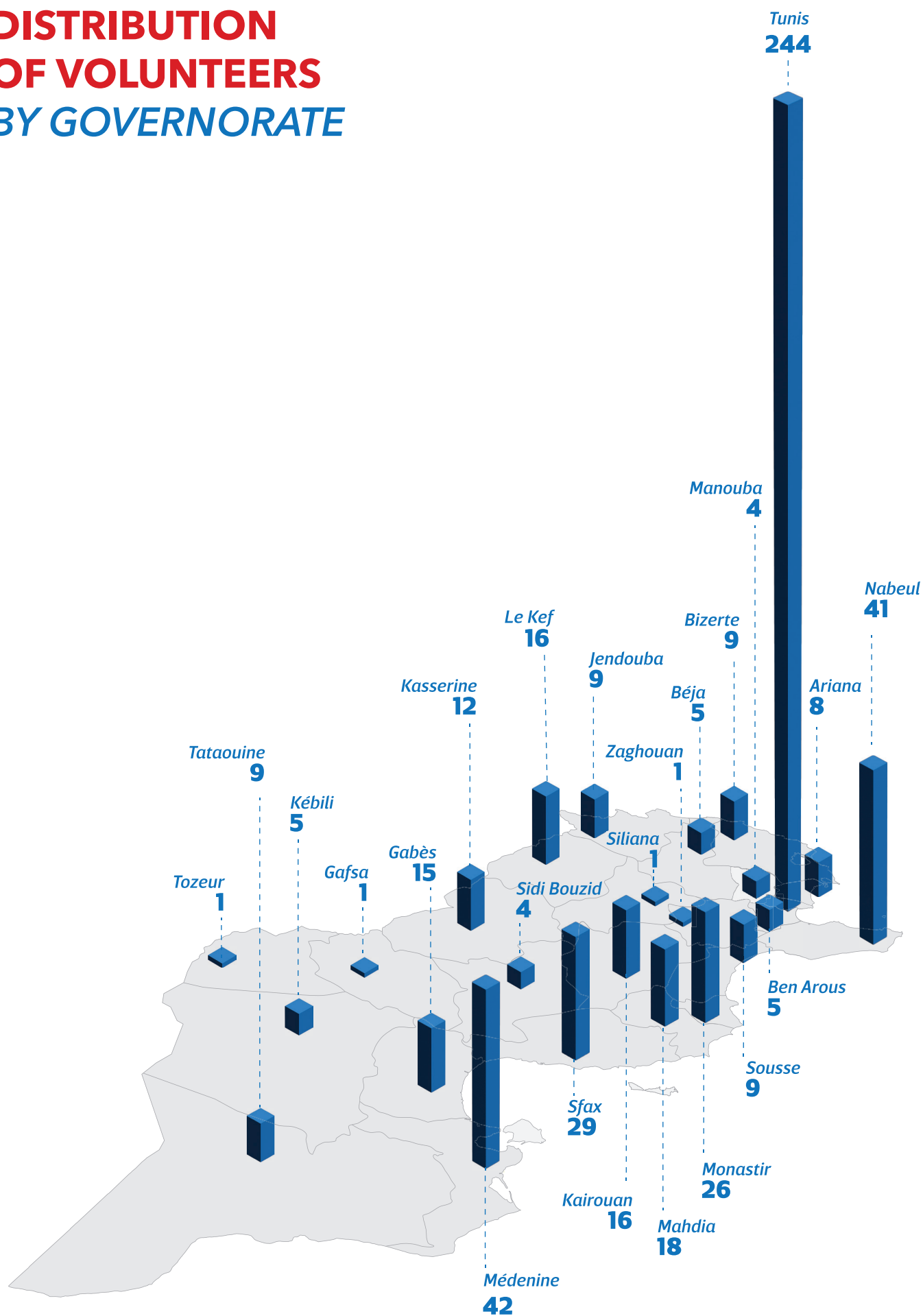
volunteers in Tunisia  
since 1975

Women

Men



## DISTRIBUTION OF VOLUNTEERS BY GOVERNORATE









# Tunisia-Japan: *a strategic partnership*







## THE HISTORY OF JICA'S OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE (ODA) IN TUNISIA

The history of Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) in Tunisia (including the former Japanese Foreign Economic Cooperation Fund – OECF and part of the Japanese Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) can be divided into three periods. In 2008, JICA, in charge

of technical cooperation, and a part of JBIC, responsible for ODA lending projects, merged to give birth to the “new JICA” with the purpose of strengthening the effectiveness and coordination of Japan's ODA.

### 1. Early stage (1970s-1980s) .....

Training in Japan began in 1970 in the field of transport. Since then, JICA has dispatched over 1,800 Tunisian trainees (see page 44). The first ODA loan project dates back to 1977 with the Maritime Transport Capacity Reinforcement Project. For 13 years, until 1989, six projects were implemented, at a rate of one project every two years, for a total amount of 40,550 million yen. These

projects covered a variety of fields: transport, cement plants, telecommunications facilities, energy production and raw material loans. Among these achievements, the «Rades A» power plant, built by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI), is still operational in 2025. In 1978, the first two technical cooperation projects were launched in the fields of fisheries and health.



## 2. Diversification and expansion (1990s-2000s) .....

In the 1990s, JICA provided 14 loans for a total amount of 83,655 million yen, and in the 2000s, 15 loans for a total of 95,178 million yen, thus supporting Tunisia's strong economic growth. Since 1996, the country has benefited from yen loans every year. JICA has made significant contributions in key areas such as basic infrastructure development (roads, bridges, railways, and communications), agriculture, reforestation, water resources management (including water supply), and environmental improvement (wastewater treatment). In addition, a total of 10 projects funded in the form of Grant Aid were implemented, including 3 projects in the fisheries sector and 4 others in culture.

In 1999, the JICA and the Tunisian Agency for Technical Cooperation (ATCT) signed an agreement for the training of third countries, marking the beginning of triangular cooperation, particularly in French-speaking

Africa. At the same time, bilateral technical cooperation took the form of the «Project for the Strengthening of Reproductive Health Education» (1999-2004), which subsequently evolved into a training programme for third countries.

Over the years, the scope of technical cooperation has gradually expanded, encompassing everything from improving industrial quality to long-term support for the fisheries sector and strengthening the research base on biological resources. In addition, during the 2000s, several technical cooperation projects, such as development studies, were implemented, including the development of a national water supply plan and a comprehensive plan for the management of water resources in the Mejerda River.

## 3. Post-revolution and pandemic support (2010s and beyond) .....

Between 2010 and 2024, the volume of concessional loans granted by Japan reached a cumulative amount of 133,794 million yen, with a sustained dynamic until 2014, followed by a fewer number of projects with the adoption of large-scale projects, such as the Rades combined cycle power plant (Radès C) and the Sfax seawater desalination plant, with the impact of internal challenges, including the political turmoil and economic stagnation following the 2011 revolution, as well as external shocks related to the COVID-19 pandemic from 2020 onwards and the impact of the war in Ukraine.

Despite a deteriorating security context, technical cooperation has continued by building on the achievements of the previous period, such as research projects within the Borj Cédria technology park and the project for the sustainable management of fisheries resources. In addition, specific support was provided to the tourism sector, which is facing a protracted crisis, as well as emergency assistance to the health sector during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the midst of the health crisis, Tunis hosted the Eighth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD 8) in 2022, during which a long-awaited technical cooperation framework agreement was signed. This agreement has enabled the launch of five new technical cooperation projects, aligned with initiatives financed by yen loans, in strategic sectors such as energy, transport infrastructure management, and the optimization of non-potable water resources.

All of these initiatives illustrate the ambition to strengthen our partnership and maximize the impact of our cooperation in key areas for Tunisia's development.

Details of the main areas of intervention are set out in the following pages. However, given space constraints, this document cannot cover all the actions undertaken. A full list of projects can be found in the appendix on page 48.



## WATER

Since the implementation of the «Water Supply and Sewage System Improvement Project in South Tunisia», signed in 1995, JICA's support to the water sector has focused on the main following priority areas: improving water supply, optimizing irrigation systems, wastewater management, strengthening desalination infrastructure and flood prevention. To date, JICA's assistance in this area has covered a vast territory, stretching from the northern regions to the arid areas of the south of the country. This assistance has mainly been provided in the form of loans in yen, the cumulative amount of which now exceeds 100 billion yen.

The first collaboration in the field of water supply dates back to 1995, with support for the aforementioned project, followed by “Water Pipeline Construction and Irrigation Project in Northern Tunisia (signed in 1996)” and “Northern Region Water Supply Project (signed in 2004)”. All these projects, among others, have played a decisive role in stabilizing the water supply in the northern region of Tunisia and in improving the quality of this vital resource. These initiatives have enabled the establishment of a network of water pipes connecting

the governorate of Béja to the outskirts of Tunis, thus ensuring the supply of drinking water to more than 2 million inhabitants and promoting an increase of more than 100,000 tons of citrus production. These achievements show JICA's continuous commitment to sustainable development and water resilience in Tunisia.

In addition to the work on the water pipes, the work has continued since the year 2000 by strengthening support for the development of water supply infrastructure in the region, in particular through the Regional Water Supply Project” (signed in 2000). Subsequently, initiatives such as the “Jendouba Rural Water Supply Project (signed in 2006)” and the “Local Cities Water Supply Network Improvement Project (signed in 2012)” have been deployed until recently. Thanks to these projects, more than 400 kilometers of pipelines have been built, covering about twenty Tunisian governorates. These achievements have thus contributed to strengthening access to drinking water and improving the living conditions of the populations concerned.





*The objectives set by these two projects have been fully achieved. The rural water project in Jendouba and Béja has ensured access to drinking water for 204,000 inhabitants spread over 30 priority localities, in governorates where the supply rates were among the lowest in the country.*



**Mr. Imed Ben Lili**  
Central Director of Studies  
at SONEDE

As for the desalination infrastructure, the initiative has strengthened groundwater treatment in the region of Medenine through the “The Project for Desalination of Groundwater in Southern Region”, financed by a grant of about 1 billion yen. In addition, the Sfax desalination plant, carried out as part of the «Sfax Seawater Desalination Plant Construction Project» (signed in 2017), has been completed in 2024. As of now, it ensures the water supply of 900,000 inhabitants of Sfax, thus consolidating the region’s water resilience.

In addition to the projects financed by Yen loans, JICA also carries out several technical cooperation initiatives. Among them, the «Capacity Development Project for the Reduction of Non-Revenue Water in the Southern Region (2023-2025)» aims to provide technical assistance to reduce the rate of leaks in the Sfax water network. This initiative is part of a broader strategy for optimizing water resources and sustainable water management.

In the field of sanitation, the “Sewage System Development Project in Four Cities”, signed in 1996, made it possible to support the construction of wastewater treatment facilities in Sfax, Douz, Kébili and Zriba. More recently, JICA has supported the development of wastewater treatment infrastructures and networks in the provinces of Béja and Bizerte as part of the «Local Cities Water Environment Improvement project», signed in 2013. From 2025, JICA will also provide assistance in the form of Grant Aid for the construction of a state-of-the-art wastewater treatment plant in Gabès thanks to the «Project for the Construction of an Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant in Gabes» (signed in 2024).

*“I would like to thank JICA for funding the two projects and for its valuable support and guidance throughout their implementation. I also salute the quality of the exchanges and the relationship of trust established between SONEDE and JICA.*

Its commitment in the water sector is not limited to wastewater treatment, but also includes their reuse, thus contributing to a more sustainable and integrated management of water resources.

Moreover, JICA’s action in the water sector goes beyond the supply and sanitation fields alone to also encompass the fight against floods. This commitment has resulted in several projects financed by Yen loans, in particular the «Inundation Protection Project» (signed in 1998), the «Greater Tunis flood Control Project» (signed in 2008) and the «Mejerda River Flood Control Project» (signed in 2014). These initiatives have made it possible to strengthen flood resilience in the Tunis and Kairouan regions, thanks to the construction of control reservoirs and drainage channels, thus ensuring better protection of populations and infrastructure.



*The Sfax seawater desalination plant project is one of the most significant achievements of the last decade in Tunisia, with a final capacity able to reach 250,000 m<sup>3</sup> per day. The contribution of JICA, both financially and technically, was essential for the realization of this project on time and with an exemplary level of quality that will allow to solve the water supply problem in the Sfax region in a sustainable way.*



**Mr. Mohamed Zaara**  
Former Central Director of the Management  
Unit of the desalination plant project



## TRANSPORTATION

For many years, JICA has been providing considerable support to Tunisia for the development of its transport infrastructure, contributing to the realization of megaprojects. Among the emblematic infrastructures is in the first place the Rades - La Goulette Bridge, the construction of which was financed by a loan of 8.4 billion yen, signed in 1999. This work of art, used daily by more than 30,000 vehicles, plays an essential role in facilitating mobility and exchanges between the north and south shores of Lake Tunis, thus making it possible to decongest the center of the capital.

In addition, JICA has played a key role in the development of intercity motorway networks by financing two major projects :

- **The «El Jem - Sfax Motorway Construction Project»,** signed in 2002, with a loan of 12.5 billion yen;
- **The «Gabes-Medenine Trans-Maghrebin Corridor Construction Project»,** signed in 2012, with a loan of 15.1 billion yen.

These strategic infrastructures have significantly strengthened national and regional connectivity, thus supporting the economic and social development of the country.

Thanks to the support of JICA, more than 134 kilometers of highways have been completed, thus significantly improving the traffic conditions between the north and the south of the country in terms of

safety, comfort, and reduced travel times. At the same time, JICA also played a key role in the development of urban transport, in particular through the «Metropolitan Railway Electrification Project», financed by loans totaling 17.8 billion yen, signed in 2001 and 2010. This project has allowed :

- The electrification of 23 kilometers of the railway line serving the southern suburbs of Tunis;
- The acquisition of 96 electrified train sets, providing passengers with a more reliable and modern transport solution.

Today, this infrastructure has made it possible to improve daily mobility in terms of comfort and safety to nearly 70,000 passengers/day among the inhabitants of the southern suburbs of Tunis which represents about a quarter of the population of Greater Tunis.

In addition to these achievements, JICA plans to launch, from April 2025, technical assistance for the development of a master plan for urban mobility in Greater Tunis.

This initiative aims to strengthen the strategic planning of mobility and transport infrastructure, in order to improve the fluidity and sustainability of travel in the capital.

The impact of these projects on the quality of life of Tunisian citizens is undeniable, as evidenced by the testimonies and positive feedback from the beneficiaries.





*The Rades-La Goulette bridge is the first bridge of its kind in Tunisia. It offers the capital an architectural signature worthy of major international metropolises. This project was also distinguished by the integration of advanced technologies and the management of exceptional*

*technical challenges for the execution of foundation works of an unprecedented scale reaching impressive depths on muddy soils and earthworks of land reclaimed from the sea.*



**Mrs. Lilia Sifaoui**  
project manager of the  
Radès-La Goulette bridge



*This bridge is a special structure supported by cables since it is built in a lake. This bridge, the first of its kind in Tunisia, was completed in 2009 thanks to a successful collaboration with the Ministry of Equipment, the technical contribution of Tunisian construction companies, the ambition of young engineers and the support of the Japanese Embassy and JICA.*

*In addition, signs stating the fundamental Japanese policies of «quality, process, safety, environment» and «verification first» were posted on the site. These panels have helped all concerned to better understand these basic policies.*

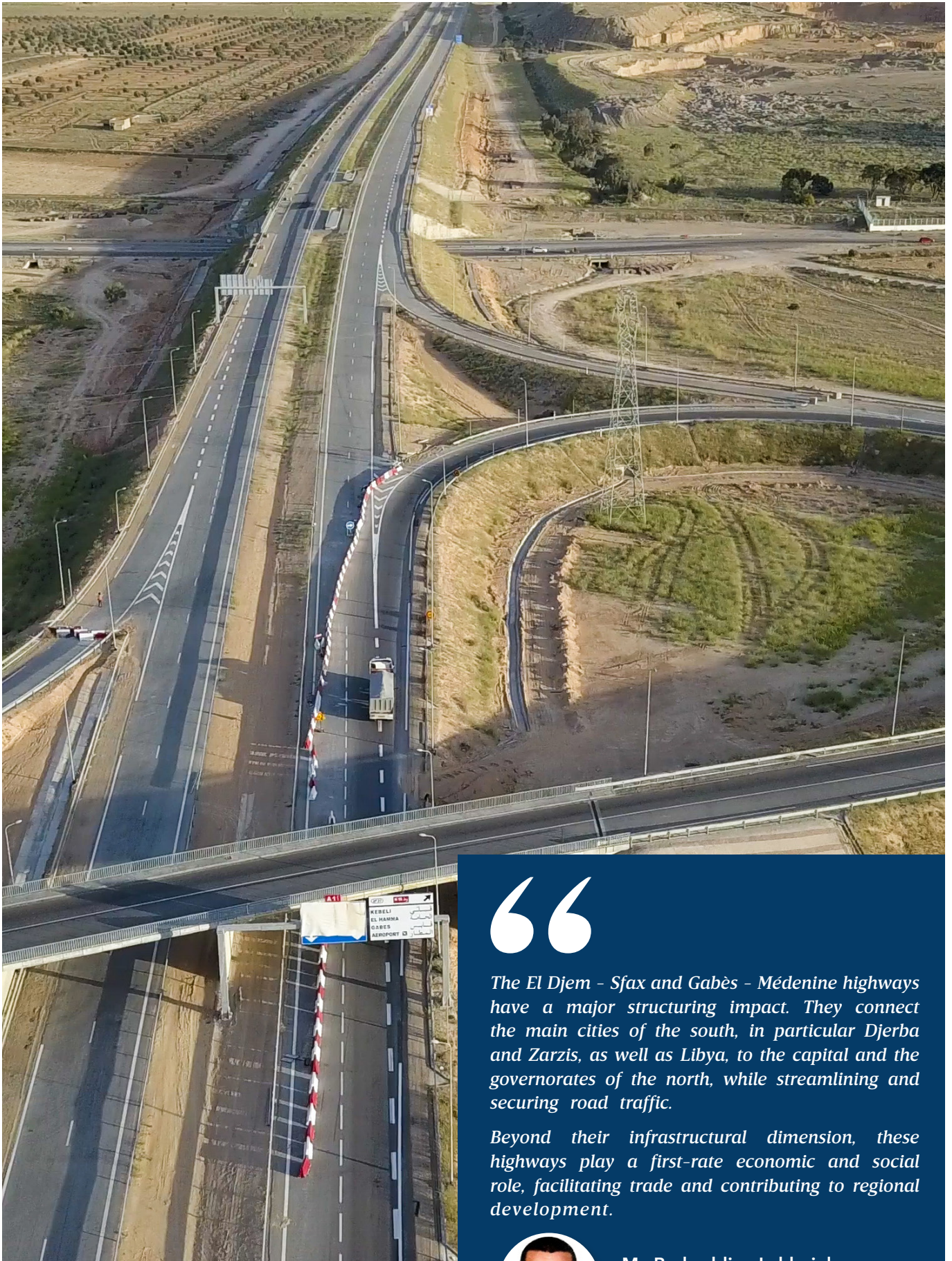
*I think that what supports this bridge, in addition to technology, is the cultural exchange between the two countries. I felt the Tunisian «family spirit» during the wedding ceremony and other events, and therefore I hung a Japanese «koinobori» (carp banner) near the site, which attracted a lot of attention at the same time as the bridge.*

*We are proud that this bridge appears on postage stamps and banknotes as proof of the cooperation between our two countries. Many souvenirs remain engraved in my memory, as well as the beard that I started to grow by telling myself: «When you are in Tunisia, you have to do like Tunisians.»*



**Mr. Shinichi Tasaki**  
Former Project Manager,  
Taisei Corporation





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*The El Djem - Sfax and Gabès - Médenine highways have a major structuring impact. They connect the main cities of the south, in particular Djerba and Zarzis, as well as Libya, to the capital and the governorates of the north, while streamlining and securing road traffic.*

*Beyond their infrastructural dimension, these highways play a first-rate economic and social role, facilitating trade and contributing to regional development.*



**Mr. Badreddine Lahbaïel**  
Former Chairman and CEO of the  
Tunisia Autoroutes Company (STA)





## ENERGY

JICA's commitment to the Tunisian energy sector is part of a cooperation of more than 40 years, beginning in 1982 with a first loan of 6.8 billion yen to finance the Rades A thermal power plant. Even today, this installation with a capacity of 340 MW continues to contribute to the national electricity supply. This collaboration continued with the Rades C combined cycle power plant project, financed by a loan of 38.1 billion yen in 2014 and fully operational since 2022, with a maximum capacity of 450 MW. Together, these power plants represent more than 10% of STEG's total electricity production, thus playing a key role in the country's energy security.

Beyond these major infrastructures, JICA launched in 2023 a technical assistance project with STEG, aimed at optimizing the management of the electricity grid in a context of increasing integration of renewable energies. This initiative illustrates JICA's desire to support Tunisia's energy transition towards a more sustainable and resilient model.

Beyond the mobilized financing and the transfer of Japanese technical know-how, JICA has also invested in strengthening local skills. Thanks to its support, a few dozen Tunisian managers from the transport and energy

sectors have benefited from specialized training in Japan. These initiatives contribute to ensuring the sustainability of the developed infrastructures and to providing Tunisia with cutting-edge expertise in these strategic areas.



*I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation for the exceptional support provided by JICA as part of its collaboration with the Tunisian Electricity and Gas Company.*

*Words cannot fully illustrate the added value that JICA brings to the development of our projects, in particular its unwavering support in the development of stable and low-carbon electricity supply as well as the establishment of the Rades C power plant near the capital Tunis.*

*As a partner, I have had the privilege of witnessing the commitment, professionalism and quality that characterize each of the actions carried out by JICA.*



**Mr. Fayçal Tarifa**  
Chairman and CEO of STEG



## RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Since sending the first Tunisian official to Japan in 1976 for training in the field of fisheries, JICA has consistently supported rural development in Tunisia, with a focus on strategic sectors such as fisheries and afforestation.

With more than 1,300 kilometres of coastline and 7.6 million inhabitants living in coastal areas, Tunisia has considerable potential in the fisheries sector, an area that generates economic opportunities and jobs. In this context, JICA has established itself as a long-term partner, providing leading technical assistance to build capacity in the sector.

The first pillar of JICA's commitment has been capacity building for training institutions. It has implemented major initiatives through technical cooperation projects, such as:

- **The National Fisheries Center Project (1978-1982)**
- **The Fishing Training Project in Mahdia (1998-2001)**

These efforts have been complemented by Grant Aid projects, including :

- **The Construction Project of the Bizerte Fishing School (1999)**
- **The Project to Strengthen Training Equipment for the Mahdia Professional Fishing Training Center (2001)**

Today, the Bizerte Fishing School has been promoted as the Higher Institute of Fisheries and Aquaculture of Bizerte, thus consolidating its role in the training of professionals in the sector.

As part of the last mentioned project above in 2001, JICA equipped the Professional Fishing Training Center (CFPTT) in Mahdia with a training ship, in order to strengthen the training capacities of future professionals in the sector. The training ship «Amilcar» is still in use today.



Moreover, since the 1990s, and in collaboration with the Tunisian government, JICA has been working to promote fisheries resources to ensure their sustainability. In this line, in 1997, JICA financed the acquisition of a fisheries research vessel «Hannibal», worth 841 million yen, intended to produce reliable scientific data to inform public policies in the fishing sector and to train high-level Tunisian researchers in marine sciences.

In order to strengthen the co-management approach, JICA has also implemented several technical cooperation projects, including:

- **The Project for Coastal Fisheries Resource Management in Tunisia (2005-2010)**
- **The Project for Co-Management of Coastal Fisheries in the Gulf of Gabes (2012-2016), also known as COGEPECT**

These major initiatives have made it possible to establish a framework for collaboration between local actors, including fishermen, in order to set up a concerted and sustainable management of fisheries resources. They have thus played a key role in promoting sustainable fishing in Tunisia, combining the preservation of marine ecosystems and socio-economic development of coastal communities.

Recently, JICA and the Tunisian government have intensified their efforts to combat illegal fishing and improve the traceability of seafood products. In this context, in 2024, the Japanese government provided a Grant Aid of two illegal fishing surveillance vessels «Hannibal 3 and 4» worth 1.2 billion yen. In parallel, JICA organized a country-specific training entitled

«Measures against IUU fishing (illegal, unreported and unregulated) and strengthening the traceability of fishery products», in which 24 Tunisian trainees participated. This initiative aims not only to strengthen the surveillance system in the fight against illegal fishing, but also to promote sustainable co-management of fish resources in Tunisia. Since the year 2000, JICA has also trained 124 Tunisian professionals in the fishing sector through training and human resource development programs in Japan, thus strengthening local expertise.

Beyond the fishing sector, JICA also supports the forestry sector in Tunisia. Within the framework of the projects entitled «Integrated Reforestation Project (I) and (II)» and financed by loans of 4.080 billion yen in 2000 and 3.128 billion yen in 2008, respectively. JICA contributes to reforestation, sustainable management, improvement of the natural environment and community development in forest areas of five Tunisian governorates: Béja, Jendouba, Kef, Siliana Zaghuan, and Kasserine. This project includes comprehensive forest conservation activities, including afforestation, forest fire prevention and support for the livelihoods of local populations. It has allowed the revegetation of more than 14,000 hectares, while benefiting more than 9,000 people through community activities.

For example, in the village of Ordha Khadouma in Ain Drahem, an agricultural group benefited from the installation of five individual water reservoirs, serving about 100 people and significantly improving their living conditions. These achievements illustrate JICA's commitment to supporting sustainable and inclusive rural development in Tunisia.





## SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT FOR THE BORJ CEDRIA TECHNOPOLE (BCTP)

### Early initiatives through the volunteer dispatch (2002-2005) .....

JICA's support to BCTP began in the early 2000s with the dispatch of seven Japanese volunteers to Tunisia. These volunteers brought their expertise in various fields, including environmental education, chemistry,

architecture, agricultural technologies and Japanese language teaching, thus laying the foundations for a promising and fruitful collaboration.

### Development of the Technopark through financial cooperation (2005-2018) .....

Subsequently, in 2005, JICA initiated a project entitled «Borj Cedria Science and Technology Park Development Project», financed by a loan of about 8.2 million yen. This project aimed to strengthen human resources in the fields of science and technology, to improve research capacities and to encourage industry-government-academia collaboration.

The main achievements of this project include the construction of two higher education institutions: the Higher Institute of Information and Communication Technologies (ISTIC) and the National Higher School of Advanced Technologies of Borj Cedria (ENSTAB). Other infrastructures dedicated to services have also

been set up. The project has enabled the acquisition of state-of-the-art scientific equipment, the establishment of specialized consulting services and the granting of doctoral scholarships in Japan for the benefit of 29 Tunisian students.

According to the ex-post evaluation of the project carried out in 2024, the results are particularly encouraging: ISTIC now has 1,527 students enrolled, while 217 are following the engineering program at ENSTAB. These figures confirm the success of this project, which has been assessed as «highly satisfactory», and its lasting impact on skills training and the development of innovation in Tunisia.



## Support to the Valorization of Bioresources (2010-2015 & 2016-2021) .....

Following the yen loan project and in the framework of the JICA SATREPS (Science and Technology Research Partnership for Sustainable Development) cooperation program, the Borj Cedria Technopole (BCTP) has benefited from two major projects :

- **Project for Valorization of Bio-resources in Semi Arid and Arid Land for Regional Development (2010-2015):** This project aimed to strengthen Research and Development (R & D) capacities in Tunisia, with an emphasis on the analysis of functional ingredients from plants specific to the Mediterranean region.
- **Project for Valorization of Bioresources in Semi-Arid and Arid Land Based on Scientific Evidence for Creation of New Industry**

**(2016-2021):** Building on objectives of the first project, this initiative promoted collaborations between the industrial and academic worlds. It resulted in the signing of 19 agreements between Tunisian and Japanese research institutions as well as companies from both countries. These partnerships have stimulated a dynamic of innovation and opened up new industrial perspectives based on the sustainable exploitation of bioresources.

These initiatives have not only strengthened R&D capacities in Tunisia, but they have also promoted the emergence of an innovative industry, anchored in sustainable management of bioresources and contributing to regional development.

## Human Resource Development for ICT Start-ups (2023-2025) .....

Recently, JICA launched a project aimed at establishing a human resource development model for start-ups in the field of information and communication technologies (ICT). This program, which targets particularly women and young people in Tunisia, is implemented in partnership with Fukushima Prefecture and Aizu University.

Its main objective is to promote entrepreneurship and strengthen the employability of young people and women, developing their skills and promoting innovation in the ICT sector.



*BCTP, reflects a long-term partnership between Tunisia and Japan in science, technology and innovation. Underpinned by well-established Tunisian Japanese scientific networks, JICA's technical and financial support contributed to implementing a successful model of eco-innovation driven by the 'triple helix' – academia, research,*

*industry and government working in synergy to address sustainable development challenges. The project exemplifies how science diplomacy can create value through the development of human capital and the emergence of innovative industries while strengthening international cooperation.*



**Mr. Malek Kochlef**  
Director General of International  
Cooperation, Ministry of Higher Education  
and Scientific Research



“

*BCTP led pioneering efforts to address global issues such as global warming, desertification, and climate change through the fields of biotechnology, water environment, materials chemistry, and energy research. It contributed as a core center for international joint research by hosting*

*the Tunisia-Japan Science and Technology Conference (TJASST) under the JSPS bilateral program and two JST-JICA-SATREPS projects. In the future, we expect BCTP to become a flagship center for start-up promotion based on the results of international joint research.*



**Prof. Hiroko Isoda**  
Director, Alliance for Research on  
Mediterranean and North Africa,  
University of Tsukuba





## HEALTHCARE

In the field of health, the commitment of JICA in Tunisia dates back to 1975 with dispatch of seven Japanese volunteers, marking the beginning of a promising and lasting technical cooperation and a fruitful collaboration. As early as 1976, a pilot project was launched with a preliminary study on pharmaceutical quality control. Subsequently, this cooperation was strengthened with the supply of ophthalmic equipment to the Rabta Hospital in 1987 and the initiation of the project on reproductive health enhancement in 1995, which evolved into a training program for third countries in 1999.

Faced with the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, JICA has intensified its commitment in Tunisia through two technical cooperation projects carried out in partnership with the Ministry of Health, the Charles Nicolle Hospital and the Higher Institute of Medical Technologies of Tunis (ISTMT).

- **Project to Strengthen the Detecting and Analyzing Capacity in the Fight Against COVID-19 (2021-2022)**
- **Project to Strengthen Human Resources Development in Medical Equipment Administration during the COVID-19 Era (2021-2023)**

Totalling 80 million Japanese yen together, these initiatives aimed, on the one hand, to strengthen detection and analysis capacities in the fight against COVID-19 and, on the other hand, to develop skills in the management of medical equipment in this new health context. To this end, JICA has equipped the ISTMT with a genome analyzer (CNH) as well as PCR test equipment, among other essential equipment.

Since 2023, JICA has also been supporting the training of African practitioners through a training program in third countries (TCTP), in partnership with the ISTMT. Entitled «Medical Equipment Management for African Countries», this program so far welcomed 35 engineers from 10 sub-Saharan Francophone countries during two separate sessions. Beyond the transfer of skills, this initiative promotes the dissemination of Tunisian know-how on a regional scale. Several participants have already organized restitution sessions in their countries of origin, thus illustrating the concrete impact of this program and its anchoring in a dynamic of South-South cooperation, in perfect alignment with the spirit of the TCTP.





## INDUSTRY

### *JICA'S SUPPORT FOR THE DISSEMINATION OF THE KAIZEN CONCEPT IN TUNISIA*

Since 2006, JICA has been supporting the Ministry of Industry of Tunisia through the promotion and dissemination of the Japanese concept of continuous improvement of quality and productivity, more commonly referred to as “Kaizen”. This engagement had initially materialized by a study aimed at establishing a master plan for the promotion of quality and productivity (QP), conducted between 2006 and 2008.

Subsequently, JICA initiated the first phase of the QP/I (KAIZEN) project (2009-2013), mobilizing a budget of 358 million yen and calling on the expertise of 11 consultants. This collaboration has taken on an increased scale with the launch of a second phase (2016-2021) during which there was the mobilization of a significantly increased budget of 659 million yen and a dozen Japanese experts. During this period, 86 Tunisian trainers were introduced to productivity improvement tools, while 99 industrial companies received tailor-made support. Within these structures, more than 200 employees have been sensitized and trained in Kaizen practices.

Some beneficiary companies, such as Eleonetech, TF-PROD, PM-ELCOM and Asteelflash, have particularly distinguished themselves by winning the prestigious

African Kaizen Prize, thus attesting to the relevance and success of this approach within the Tunisian industrial fabric.

The second phase of the project also marked an opening on the international scene, with the organization of training sessions for participants from French-speaking African countries as well as Libya, thus initiating a sharing of expertise beyond the Tunisian borders.

In this dynamic, JICA launched in August 2024 the third phase of the Kaizen project in Tunisia, which will be implemented until 2028. This new step aims not only to strengthen the dissemination of Kaizen on a national and regional scale, but also to involve vocational training institutions in the dissemination of this concept. By promoting a culture of productivity and quality, this initiative will contribute to improving the competitiveness of the industrial base.



“

During my participation in the implementation of the quality and productivity improvement project as head of the UGPQP, we faced challenges such as convincing businesses to join the project, overcoming difficulties related to COVID-19 and engaging consultants from technical centers for extended periods of free assistance. Despite these challenges, we succeeded in establishing a strong Kaizen culture in various sectors, creating a recognized Kaizen competence network, and preparing the ground for a specialized Kaizen institution in the country.



**Mr. Zouheir Makhoulfi**  
Former Director General of the Quality  
and Productivity Project Management Unit  
(UGPQP) (2017-2023)



More detail paths on Tunisian Kaizen experience can be found in the following publication, available in English via the link below:

Kikuchi T. (2022), *Comparative Study of Kaizen Projects in Tunisia and Ethiopia*, in: Jin K., Ohno I. (eds.), *Promoting Quality and Productivity Improvement in*

*Africa*, JICA Ogata Sadako Research Institute for Peace and Development, Tokyo, pp. 119-163

[https://www.jica.go.jp/Resource/jica-ri/publication/booksandreports/uc7fig000000278y-att/kaizen\\_Chapter04.pdf](https://www.jica.go.jp/Resource/jica-ri/publication/booksandreports/uc7fig000000278y-att/kaizen_Chapter04.pdf)



## TRAINING PROGRAMS IN JAPAN

The KCCP (Knowledge Co-Creation Programs) program is one of the main technical cooperation modalities deployed by JICA. It also represents the central pillar of Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA).

Japan's engagement to technical cooperation has its roots in its accession to the Colombo Plan on October 6, 1954, thus marking the first reception of international trainees and the first dispatch of experts abroad. In tribute to this pioneering initiative, the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs and JICA have declared October 6 as the «International Cooperation Day».



The KCCP program, or «Knowledge Co-Creation Program», offers trainings in Japan, including short and long-term sessions. Some of the expertise developed by Japanese society, in particular in terms of organizational governance and social systems, can only be fully assimilated through direct experience in the Japanese context. These programs thus constitute a strategic lever for technical cooperation, promoting the development of human resources and providing concrete solutions to the challenges faced by developing countries.

Since 1970, Japan has welcomed more than 1,800 Tunisian participants from various fields. In recent years, JICA has welcomed more participants in strategic areas such as infrastructure, industry, transport, water, environment, higher education and health. To give one concrete example, the training program entitled «Medical Equipment Management and Maintenance» contributes to the strengthening of the skills of Tunisian engineers in terms of maintenance of medical equipment. These initiatives reflect a lasting commitment to the socio-economic development of Tunisia, through a sharing of expertise and know-how at the service of mutual prosperity.

In addition, as for long-term training, the ABE initiative (African Business Education Initiative) is also defined as part of the KCCP programs. This initiative offers young African talents the opportunity to pursue master's or doctoral studies at Japanese universities. Its objective is to train a new generation of highly qualified executives, capable of strengthening the links between Japanese and African companies. Several Tunisian graduates who have benefited from this program have joined Japanese companies at the end of their studies, thus playing a key role as a bridge between Tunisia and the Japanese private sector.



*It was a good opportunity for me to develop my knowledge in project management and monitoring. I have acquired modest experience in the follow-up of projects signed by the two governments. This program really interested me and brought me a lot of information and opportunities.*



**Mr. Jamel Boujdaria**  
Former participant in the KCCP program  
and President of the Association of  
Beneficiaries of Training Sessions in Japan  
by JICA (ABTSJ)

Eager to perpetuate and energize these fruitful exchanges, Mr. Boujdaria was recently elected at the head of a new association to bring together the former beneficiaries of the training provided by the JICA: the Assembly of the Beneficiaries of Training Sessions in Japan by JICA (ABTSJ).

Convinced of the unifying and mobilizing role of this initiative, Mr. Boujdaria aspires to make this new structure a lever to strengthen the links between the Tunisian former participants and to enhance the knowledge they acquired in Japan. It should be noted that membership in the ABTSJ is open to all former participants of the KCCP program.



# JICA PROJECTS IN TUNISIA *IN FIGURES*



Yen Loans

**353.177** billions of yen  
(7.258 billions of dinar)\*



Grants and Technical Cooperation

**38.43** billions of yen  
(789 billions of dinar)\*



Trainings

**1842** participants in short  
and long-term training



Experts

**759** experts sent

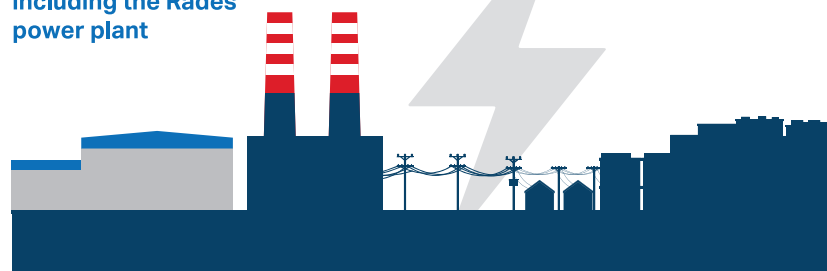
Highways

**134** kilometers constructed

Electricity

**790 MW**

including the Radès  
power plant



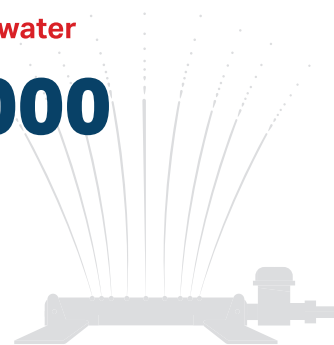
Access to drinking water

**+10** millions of persons

Irrigation water

**42 000**

farms



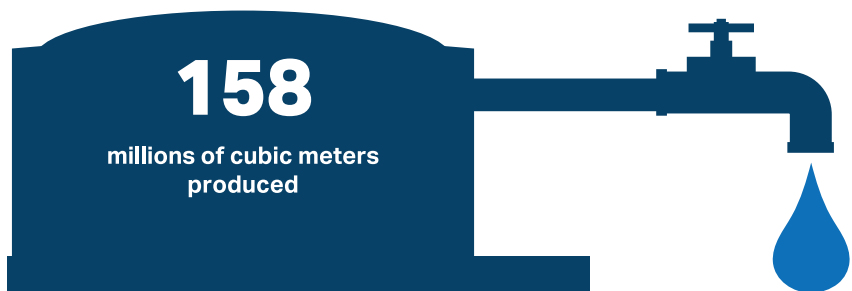
**158**

millions of cubic meters  
produced

Irrigated zones

**68 585**

hectares in total






\*Exchange rate (June 2025) : 1 TND = 48.660 yen



# MAP OF MAJOR JICA PROJECTS IN TUNISIA





## TUNIS Energy

-  Project for the Construction of Radès Thermal Power Plant
-  Rades Combined Cycle Power Plant Construction Project
-  The Project for low carbon and stable supply at power system in Tunisia




## TUNIS Transportation

-  Rades-La Goulette Bridge Construction Project
-  Metropolitan Railway Electrification Project
-  Project for Elaboration of the Bridge Maintenance Plan
-  Project for Urban Mobility Master Plan Study in Greater Tunis

## Oued Mejerda Water Resources

-  Mejerda River Flood Control Project
-  Greater Tunis Flood Control Project
-  Study on Forest Management for the Oued Mejerda Basin
-  Inundation Protection Project





## NORTHERN REGION Water supply

-  Jendouba Rural Water Supply Project
-  Water Pipeline Construction and Irrigation Project in Northern Tunisia
-  Water Pipeline Construction Project in Northern Tunisia



## BORJ-CEDRIA Technopark

-  Borj Cedria Science and Technology Park Development Project
-  SATREPS : Valorization of Bio-resources in Semi-Arid and Arid Land for Regional Development
-  SATREPS : Valorization of Bioresources in Semi-Arid and Arid Land Based on Scientific Evidence for Creation of New Industry

## MAHDIA Fishery

-  Fishing Training and Recycling Project in Mahdia
-  Project for the construction of fishery research vessel
-  The Fishing Training Project in Mahdia
-  The Project to Strengthen Training Equipment for the Mahdia Professional Fishing Training Center


## SFAX Water supply

-  Sea Water Desalination Plant Construction Project
-  Project for Capacity Development on Non-Revenue Water Reduction in the South Region

## ELJEM-SFAX-MÉDENINE Transportation

-  El Jem – Sfax Motorway Construction Project
-  Gabes-Medenine Trans-Maghrebin Corridor Construction Project

## GABÈS Fishery

-  Project for Sustainable Management of Coastal Fisheries Resources
-  Project on Co-management of Coastal Fisheries in the Gulf of Gabes

- .....
-  Loan
  -  Technical Cooperation
  -  Grant

\*This map does not represent all of JICA's projects in Tunisia.

# TECHNICAL COOPERATION PROJECTS

Project	Sector	Period
Feasibility study for the Electricity Development Plan	Energy	1976-1977
Feasibility study for the development of Thermal Energy	Energy	1979
Study on the pumped storage project of Kasseb	Energy	1977-1980
Project for Pharmaceutical Quality Control	Health	1978-1983
Study on Topographic Map	Transport	1984-1988
The National Fisheries Center Project	Fishery	1978-1982
Study on Forest Management for the Oued Mejerda Basin	Forestry	1986-1991
Feasibility study for the construction of a fixed bridge between Radès and La Goulette	Transport	1988-1990
Topographical map of the central region of the Republic of Tunisia	Transport	1990-1994
Study on industrial waste treatment and the recycling plan for Sfax	Environment	1990-1993
Study on the flood protection in Greater Tunis and Sousse	Natural Disaster Prevention	1990-1994
Project to promote family planning education	Health	1993-1998
Feasibility study on improving irrigated areas in the southern oases of the Republic of Tunisia	Agriculture	1994-1996
Study on solid industrial waste management in the Republic of Tunisia	Environment	1997-1998
The Fishing Training Project in Mahdia	Fishery	1998-2001
Study on the development of a public technical support system for industry	Industry	1999-2000
Project for Strengthening of Reproductive Health Education	Health	1999-2004
Follow-up study for mining exploration in the Krib-Mejez El Bab region	Energy	1999-2002
Study on Tourism Development Plan	Tourism	2000-2001
Project for the Establishment of the Vocational Training Center for the Electric and Electronics Industry	Electricity	2001-2006
Project for Sustainable Management of Coastal Fisheries Resources in the Republic of Tunisia	Fishery	2005-2010



Project	Sector	Period
The Study On Integrated Basin Management Focused On Flood Control In Mejerda River In The Republic Of Tunisia	Natural Disaster Prevention	2006-2007
Study on Master Plan of Quality/Productivity Improvement	Industry	2006-2009
Project on Management of Technopark in Borj Cedria	Education	2006-2009
Project on Quality/Productivity Improvement	Industry	2009-2012
Valorisation of Bio-resources in Semi-Arid and Arid Land for Regional Development (SATREPS)	Industry	2010-2015
The Project for the Development of Irrigated Areas of Northern Tunisia	Agriculture	2010-2013
Project on Co-management of Coastal Fisheries in the Gulf of Gabes (COGEPECT)	Pêche	2012-2016
Project for Strengthening the Capacity for Tourism Promotion	Tourism	2013-2016
Project on Regional Development Planning of the Southern Region in the Republic of Tunisia	Regional Development	2013-2015
The Project on Quality/Productivity Improvement (Q/PI) Phase II	Industry	2016-2021
Valorization of Bio-resources in Semi-Arid and Arid Land for Regional Development (SATREPS)	Industry	2016-2022
Project to strengthen detecting and analyzing capacity in the fight against COVID 19	Health	2021-2022
Project to Strengthen Human Resource Development in Medical Equipment Administration during the COVID-19 Era	Health	2021-2022
Project for Capacity Development on Non-Revenue Water Reduction in the South Region	Water	2024-2026
Project for Promoting Quality/Productivity Improvement (Q/PI) and Business Development Services (BDS) (Phase III)	Industry	2024-2028
The Project for low carbon and stable supply at power system in Tunisia	Energy	2025-2028
Project for Urban Mobility Master Plan Study in Greater Tunis	Transport	2024-2027
Project for Elaboration of the Bridge Maintenance Plan	Transport	2025-2028

## GRANT AID PROJECTS

Project	Sector	Year or agreement	Amount in yen (million)
Project for the construction of fishery research vessel	Fishery	1997	841
The Construction Project of the Bizerte Fishing School	Fishery	1999	672
The Project for Improvement of Equipment for Research and Excavation of Historical Sites of the Carthaginian and the Roman Eras	Tourism	2001	157
The Project to Strengthen Training Equipment for the Mahdia Professional Fishing Training Center	Fishery	2001	789
The Project for Desalination of Groundwater in Southern Region	Water	2010	1023
The Project for Improvement of Equipment for Security Enhancement	Terrorism	2015	687
Strengthening the Capacities of Tunisian Television in terms of programs	Culture	2015	37
The Project for the Construction of Fishery Surveillance Vessels	Fishery	2021	1209
The Project for Construction of Advanced Waste Water Treatment Plant in Gabes	Environment	2023	3208



## YEN LOAN PROJECTS

Number of loan agreement	Project	Sector	Year of agreement	Amount in yen (million)
TS-C1	Balance of payments support loan	Finances	1988	7000
TS-C2	Structural adjustment project	Finances	1989	10000
TS-P1	Maritime transport capacity building project	Transport	1977	4000
TS-P2	Central cement plant construction project	Industry	1979	8610
TS-P3	Telecommunications facilities development project	Telecommunications	1982	4100
TS-P4	Project for the Construction of Radès Thermal Power Plant	Energy	1982	6840
TS-P5	Interurban telecommunication transmission network expansion project	Telecommunications	1993	8718
TS-P6	Water Supply and Sewage System Improvement Project in South Tunisia	Water	1995	7577
TS-P7	Water Pipeline Construction and Irrigation Project in Northern Tunisia	Water and Agriculture	1996	14130
TS-P8	Investment project in the agricultural sector	Agriculture	1996	4421
TS-P9	Sewage System Development Project in Four Cities	Water	1996	6389
TS-P10	Irrigation Perimeters Improvement Project in Oasis	Agriculture	1996	8106
TS-P11	Goubellat Irrigation Perimeters Construction Project	Agriculture	1996	2637
TS-P12	Engineering services for the El Zayatine dam construction project	Water	1996	201
TS-P13	Barbara Irrigation Project	Agriculture	1998	1913
TS-P14	Treated Sewage Irrigation Project	Agriculture	1998	1707
TS-P15	Inundation Protection Project	Natural Disaster Prevention	1998	3130

Number of loan agreement	Project	Sector	Year of agreement	Amount in yen (million)
TS-P16	Telecommunications Network Development Project (II)	Telecommunications	1998	9139
TS-P17	Water Resource Management Project	Water	1999	7148
TS-P18	Rades-La Goulette Bridge Construction Project	Transport	1999	8403
TS-P19	Rural Water Supply Project	Water	2000	3352
TS-P20	Integrated Reforestation Project	Forestry	2000	4080
TS-P21	Telecommunications Network Development Project (III)	Telecommunications	2000	8653
TS-P22	Metropolitan Railway Electrification Project	Transport	2001	13171
TS-P23	El Jem – Sfax Motorway Construction Project	Transport	2002	12501
TS-P24	Rural Water Supply Project (II)	Water	2003	4495
TS-P25	Water Pipeline Construction Project in Northern Tunisia	Water	2004	8026
TS-P26	Borj Cedria Science and Technology Park Development Project	Education / Industry	2005	8209
TS-P27	Photovoltaic Rural Electrification and Water Supply Project	Water / Energy	2005	1731
TS-P28	Jendouba Rural Water Supply Project	Water	2006	5412
TS-P29	National Television Broadcasting Center Project	Others	2007	4075
TS-P30	Water Saving Agriculture Project in Southern Oasis Area	Agriculture	2007	5260
TS-P31	Private Investment Credit Project	Industry	2007	6277
TS-P32	Greater Tunis Flood Control Project	Natural Disaster Prevention	2008	6808
TS-P33	Integrated Reforestation Project (II)	Forestry	2008	3128
TS-P34	Metropolitan Railway Electrification Project (II)	Transport	2010	4569
TS-P35	Gabes-Medenine Trans-Maghrebin Corridor Construction Project	Transport	2012	15084



Number of loan agreement	Project	Sector	Year of agreement	Amount in yen (million)
TS-P36	Local Cities Water Supply Network Improvement Project	Water	2012	6094
TS-P37	Local Cities Water Environment Improvement project	Water	2013	10871
TS-P38	Mejerda River Flood Control Project	Water	2014	10398
TS-P39	Rades Combined Cycle Power Plant Construction Project	Energy	2014	38075
TS-P40	Sfax Sea Water Desalination Plant Construction Project	Eau	2017	36676
TS-P41	Project for Support to Strengthen the Social Protection	Social Protection	2023	12000

## OTHER ACTIVITIES OF JICA

Project	Sector	Date
Improving Public Hospital Management	Health	2023-2025
Fishery Administration Advisor on Fight Against Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing	Fishery	2024-2027
Training Program for Africa on Medical Equipment Management	Health, Higher Education (Triangular Cooperation)	2023-2025
Training Program for Waste Management and Urban Sanitation in African Cities	Environment (Triangular Cooperation)	2023 - 2025
Training Program for Africa on Interventional Cardiology	Health (Triangular Cooperation)	2025-2027
Initiative JICA Chair	Governance	2021-2027

## Editor Note

Marking our 50th anniversary, we were reminded just how extensive and rich our history is. Summarizing half a century of cooperation was no small task. Due to space limitations, we were unable to include the full breadth of our activities. Many important initiatives—such as projects in telecommunications and broadcasting, or two-step loans to support small and medium-sized enterprises—could not be fully covered.

That said, compiling this booklet gave us a wonderful opportunity to bring together the many strands of our work into one coherent narrative. Until now, our efforts had been dispersed and not always easy to see as a whole. I have been particularly touched by many of the personal stories. Behind the figures – such as ‘532 volunteers’ – lie unique journeys marked by emotion, passion and compassion.

Each of these individuals has placed a stepping stone along the path of our shared history, and thanks to them, we now walk on a firm foundation of trust. Through this brochure, I hope I, too, have added a stone to the edifice for future generations.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to everyone who contributed articles or shared their stories. This booklet would not have been possible without your generous time and valuable accounts.

April 2025,  
Mayumi MIYATA

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