

JICA Has Been The Largest Bilateral Partner To India



JAPAN International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has been a leading bilateral partner for India, extending its support to major infrastructure projects, including, highways, metro rail in Delhi, Chennai, Bengaluru, high speed railway project and smart cities projects. **Takema Sakamoto**, Chief Representative, JICA, India Office in conversation with **Anuradha Shukla** of BWSC.

JICA is actively engaged in large ticket infrastructure projects in India. What is the total investment portfolio of JICA in India?

JICA is committed towards development of both urban and basic infrastructure in various regions of India. The total soft loan support amount of JICA in India for the last 10 years, starting Financial Year 2007-08 is 2,462 billion Japanese Yen which is approximately Rs. 150,000 crores.

Indian cabinet has approved permission to state government entities for availing extension assis-

tance from bilateral agencies for vital infra projects. Do you feel it will boost engagement of JICA with various state infra project?

We understand that the details of the said new policy is still under finalization and is not open to the public, thus, we shall wait and see the Government of India's policy to be introduced. We hope that the new policy will bring huge potential in our activities in the future.

What, according to you, are the bottlenecks for infrastructure projects in India?

We are afraid that various obstacles still exist such as land acquisition, timely implementation, source of funding, and risk and responsibility sharing between the private and public sectors. JICA is keen to mitigate as many bottlenecks as possible. The concentration of JICA is providing quality infrastructure to achieve sustainable development and bring benefits to people by assisting projects which prove to be cost effective in the long run and to be sustainable and inclusive. JICA enforces that timely execution of projects and initial in-



Consultancy of the Project. We have a committed team of experts between 2 countries for the Project.

JICA is also partner in many Smart Cities Project in India. Are you happy with how the smart city project are taking shape?

We are happy to support the concept of Smart Cities in India. We would like to bring in technologies and practices of our rich experience supporting various sectors. For example we have been supporting many Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) related project, such as Intelligent Transport System (ITS) and water supply and sanitation schemes of the projects. Japan has decided to cooperate in three cities, namely Ahmedabad, Chennai, and Varanasi. The terminal station for Mumbai-Ahmedabad HSR is planned to be developed through Japan's cooperation. In addition, Japan is supporting the construction of Ahmedabad Metro.

Urban Development Minister Venkaiah Naidu said that for most of the projects the procurement must be done in India. Do you feel this is feasible given the huge requirement of procurement for infra projects?

The procurement for projects depends on projects' specifications, and therefore, the detailed requirements may vary from case to case. We would like to align our activities with Make in India policy and JICA's regulations and continue to consult with Government of India including MOUD, and the Government of Japan for way forward.

vestment cost saving are important but not on the cost of compromising the quality.

Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Railway project is the most ambitious and Challenging project where JICA is a partner. Are you happy with the progress of the project?

Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Railway (HSR) Project is one of the most ambitious and important projects for boosting economy and introducing social innovation. There may be some challenges, but we have been collaborating very closely with the Government of India. Japanese actors include a joint venture consisting of Japan International Consultants for Transportation Co Ltd. (JIC), NIPPON KOEI CO., LTD., and Oriental Consultants Global Co., Ltd., to implement the General

'Our focus for the future would also be to continue providing support towards balanced sustainable development and inclusive growth'

What will be the future focus of JICA for India?

There are number of milestones that JICA has achieved in India, which includes being the largest bilateral partner and providing the largest amount of assistance to India among our recipient countries. Our focus

for the future would also be to continue providing support towards sustainable development and inclusive growth, with a final goal of poverty reduction. We focus on aligning our projects with India's national priorities and long-term vision of India. Cross cutting issues such as adequate environmental and social considerations, gender mainstreaming and people to people exchange will also be encouraged. ■