

Through technical cooperation, grant assistance and ODA loan, JICA has been providing assistance in the areas of environmental protection and private sector development in North Macedonia.

ADVISOR FOR STRENGTHENING FOREST FIRE INFORMATION SYSTEM AND ECO-DRR CAPACITY IN THE WESTERN BALKAN REGION

Scheme: **Technical Cooperation (Individual Expert)**
 Project period: **2024 - 2027**
 Counterpart organization: **Crisis Management Centre, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Economy, Public Enterprise National Forests**

JICA's assistance to North Macedonia in disaster management started in 2011 when the **Project on Integrated System for Prevention and Early Warning of Forest Fires (MKFFIS)** started, and it was successfully completed in 2014, after which, through the Third Country Training Program the results were disseminated to the countries in the region. In 2017 the cooperation continued through the **Project on Capacity Building for Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction** which was completed in 2023. Through this project, theoretical and practical measures of the concept for ecosystem-based disaster risk reduction (Eco-DRR) were applied, with an aim to lower the intensity and frequency of natural disasters such as torrential floods, landslides, and soil erosion which in the past decades have caused great damages, socio economic consequences and led to great natural degradation.

To continue the support in this area, in October 2024, JICA has dispatched an **Advisor for Strengthening Forest Fire Information System and Eco-DRR Capacity in the Western Balkan Region**.



Site Visit of Radovich Municipality

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE WESTERN BALKANS (ALBANIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, KOSOVO, MONTENEGRO, NORTH MACEDONIA, AND SERBIA)

Scheme: **Individual Expert**
 Project Period: **October 2024 to October 2026**
 Counterpart organization: **Ministry of Culture and Tourism and the Agency for Promotion and Support of Tourism**

The Western Balkan region is one of diverse cultures and rich tourism resources. In 2019, 12 million people visited the region, generating the profit of EUR 7.2 billion for the entire region. Tourism is an important sector that accounts for 10.2% of GDP in the region. However, insufficient tourism infrastructure, tourism workers, and lack of connectivity between the tourist destinations in the region are some of the recognized issues. The project, therefore, aims at strengthening regional cooperation and promoting sustainable tourism in the region through the dispatching of an expert who will work closely with the ministries and tourism sector personnel in the Western Balkans.

STRENGTHENING AND EXPANDING THE MENTORING SERVICE FOR SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

Scheme: **Technical Cooperation**
 Project Period: **January 2022 – January 2026**
 Counterpart organization: **Agency for Promotion of Entrepreneurship of the Republic of North Macedonia (APERNM)**

This regional project is a continuation of the successful cooperation in mentoring of small and medium-sized enterprises, which APERNM joined in 2017. The goal of the project is strengthening and standardizing mentoring services and creating a regional online platform for knowledge and good practice exchange. The project will enhance the current mentoring service, set up a regional system, develop a Master Trainer program, train and certify mentors, and implement KAIZEN tools. In 2024, for the first time, a Macedonian mentor started the practical implementation of KAIZEN methodology.

FOLLOW UP FOR KCCP LOCAL INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT IN AGRICULTURAL REGIONS BY STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING

Scheme: **Follow-up cooperation**
 Project period: **September 2023- July 2024**
 Counterpart organization: **National Farmers' Federation of North Macedonia**

The project aimed at setting up a model for one village-one product (OVOP) in the village of Timjanik, Negotino, by promoting the principles and the operations of work of OVOP through one selected product- madzun (natural grape sweetener). By providing the assistance for formulating the Strategy for OVOP, developing a Business plan for promotion and marketing of the product and registration of bar-code, the Women association of madzun producers from Negotino will be able to standardize and brand their product and set up the promotion on the scale of the whole village and further gain the recognition of Negotino as the madzun area. It is expected for this pilot project to serve as a good example of OVOP and to be replicated for other products in different regions across North Macedonia.



At the Final presentation of the project results and experiences in Negotino (June 2024)



KAIZEN implementation in a company

ABOUT JICA

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) assists and supports developing countries as the executing agency of the Japanese Official Development Assistance (ODA).

In accordance with its vision of “Leading the world with trust”, JICA supports the resolution of issues of developing and transient countries by using the most suitable tools of various assistance methods and a combined regional-, country- and issue-oriented approach.

JICA is in charge of administering ODA such as technical cooperation, finance and investment cooperation and grants in an integrated manner. JICA, one of the world's largest bilateral aid agencies, operates in approximately 140 countries and regions and has approximately 100 overseas offices.

Technical Cooperation

For the human resources development and the formulation of administrative systems of developing countries, technical cooperation involves the dispatch of experts, the provision of necessary equipment and the training of personnel from developing countries in Japan and other countries. The cooperation plans can be tailored to address a broad range of issues.



SME mentoring service at the company



Participants from North Macedonia at Knowledge Co-Creation Program (KCCP) Strengthening of Community Health System for Infectious Diseases Control in Japan

ODA loan

ODA Loan

The ODA loans support developing countries by providing low-interest, long-term and concessional funds. The ODA loans are used for large-scale infrastructure and other forms of development that require substantial funds.

Private Sector Investment Finance

JICA supports the acceleration of developing countries' economic/social growth through the private sector, through debt and equity investment for the development projects of private companies.



Zletovica Basin Water Utilization Improvement Project

Grants

Grants are the provisions of funds to developing countries that have low income levels, without the obligation of repayment. Grants are used for the improvement of basic infrastructures such as schools, hospitals, water-supply facilities and roads, along with obtaining health and medical care, equipment and other requirements.



Cultural Grant Aid at National Opera and Ballet in Skopje

Disaster Relief

Research

Cooperation through Citizen Participation



ABOUT JICA BALKAN OFFICE

Established in 2006 in Belgrade, Serbia, JICA Balkan Office covers Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia. JICA Balkan Office aids with growth and stability to the countries of the region, operating mainly in the areas of environmental conservation, Disaster Risk Reduction, private sector development and consolidation of peace.

*The Government of Japan recognized Kosovo as an independent country on March 18th, 2008.

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JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY BALKAN OFFICE

Business Centre USCE, 17th floor
Bulevar Mihajla Pupina 6, 11070 Beograd, Serbia

TEL: +381-(0)-11-4350-400

www.jica.go.jp/balkan/english/office/index.html

Facebook: www.facebook.com/jicabalkanoffice/

