

# CO-CREATING A BETTER FUTURE FOR ALL

Annual Report 2020



# Table of Contents

- 1 ..... Foreword
- 2 ..... About the Japan International Cooperation Agency
- 3 ..... Types of Cooperation

## Development Cooperation in Luzon

- 5 ..... Transforming expressway network in Central Luzon
- 6 ..... Philippines' first subway project gets moving
- 7 ..... Boosting skills development in the Philippine railway sector
- 8 ..... Building a disaster-resilient capital
- 10 ..... Stronger together in times of disasters

## Development Cooperation in Visayas

- 12 ..... Bridging urban resilience and development
- 13 ..... Empowering schools to cope with disasters

## Development Cooperation in Mindanao

- 15 ..... Transforming urban growth centers
- 16 ..... Securing peace for the next generation of Bangsamoro people
- 18 ..... Youth sports as platform to promote human security

## Nationwide Development Cooperation

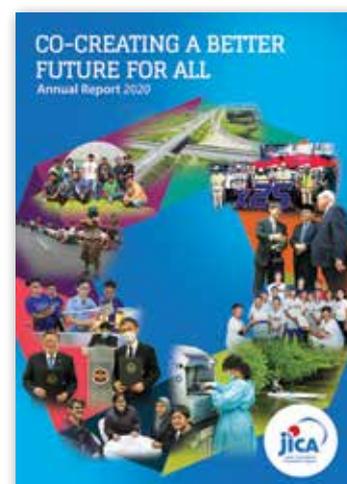
- 20 ..... Collaboration and knowledge sharing for maritime safety
- 22 ..... Enhancing trade facilitation between Japan and Philippines
- 23 ..... Unlocking access to finance for small and medium enterprises
- 24 ..... Farmers under JICA-DENR project offer lessons in forest management
- 25 ..... Local coastal preservation for future generations

## Special Features

- 27 ..... JICA and Philippines: Bayanihan and Trusted Partnership in the midst of COVID-19 Pandemic
- 28 ..... International cooperation in the 'new normal'
- 29 ..... Lending a hand for post-disaster recovery
- 30 ..... Protecting the welfare of children in time of COVID-19
- 31 ..... Enhancing Philippine response in fight against COVID-19
- 33 ..... Food security for all amid COVID-19
- 36 ..... Creating sustainable water supply in the time of COVID-19
- 37 ..... Supporting pandemic response in conflict areas
- 38 ..... Q&A Feature: Building back better
- 41 ..... Op-Ed: Sustaining the Partnership by Cielito F. Habito
- 43 ..... Young JICA scholars join pursuit of sustainable development
- 45 ..... Beyond ordinary help in extraordinary times
- 47 ..... Fast Facts
- 48 ..... Operations Map
- 49 ..... Project List
- 50 ..... Organizational Chart and Staff Photos

## About The Cover

The year 2020 has been a year of uncertainties. While the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic was felt in various areas of our lives, the cover design reflects the efforts of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to continue working with stakeholders from government, academe, and communities in the Philippines. The theme "Co-Creating a Better Future for All" likewise reflects JICA's commitment to work with other nations so we can rise above the pandemic and create opportunities for a better future for all.



# Foreword

## Message from Chief Representative



“

*When we do things right, we can emerge stronger from the crisis and build a future worthy for the next generation.*

”

Greetings to all our friends and partners in the Philippines!

The year 2020 has taught all of us to be agile, and adjust our lives to a global public health crisis. Also, the coronavirus pandemic challenged the way international cooperation is executed all over the world, accelerating shifts in the supply chain, technology use, and systems.

In this context, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has been working steadfast with our partner nations in addressing the pandemic through mutual trust and effort. The Philippines, as our development partner for more than 60 years, has received JICA financial and technical assistance to support the response against and recovery from COVID-19.

Thus, through our Annual Report publication, we hope that you will appreciate JICA's commitment to the Philippines' changing needs and priorities, and the role of our partnership in achieving human security. While we had challenges in our operations brought by movement restrictions, we are pleased to share with you stories of opportunities and impact in 2020 that further strengthened our partnership. In ASEAN, a rapid assessment evaluation of the pandemic's impact to the economy showed that COVID-19 is likely to push back the region's poverty reduction efforts. This could mean that those already in poverty will feel the hardest impact, while those that live above the poverty line are threatened. With this, JICA therefore aims to continue working with ASEAN member countries like the Philippines under the rule of law, pursue economic prosperity via quality infrastructure and increased connectivity, and promote peace and stability in the region. By working together, we can help narrow economic disparities and promote human security.

To this end, I encourage our friends and partners in the Philippines to work with us in turning the COVID-19 crisis into an opportunity to co-create a better future for everyone.

Again, thank you for your support to JICA's work in the Philippines. Mabuhay!

AZUKIZAWA Eigo

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eigo Azukizawa". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

AZUKIZAWA Eigo  
Chief Representative

## About the Japan International Cooperation Agency



### Who We Are

The Japan International Cooperation Agency, an incorporated administrative agency, is responsible for Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) to support socio-economic development in developing countries in different parts of the world.



### Our Mission

Our mission, in accordance with the Development Cooperation Charter, is to work on human security and quality growth.



### Our Vision

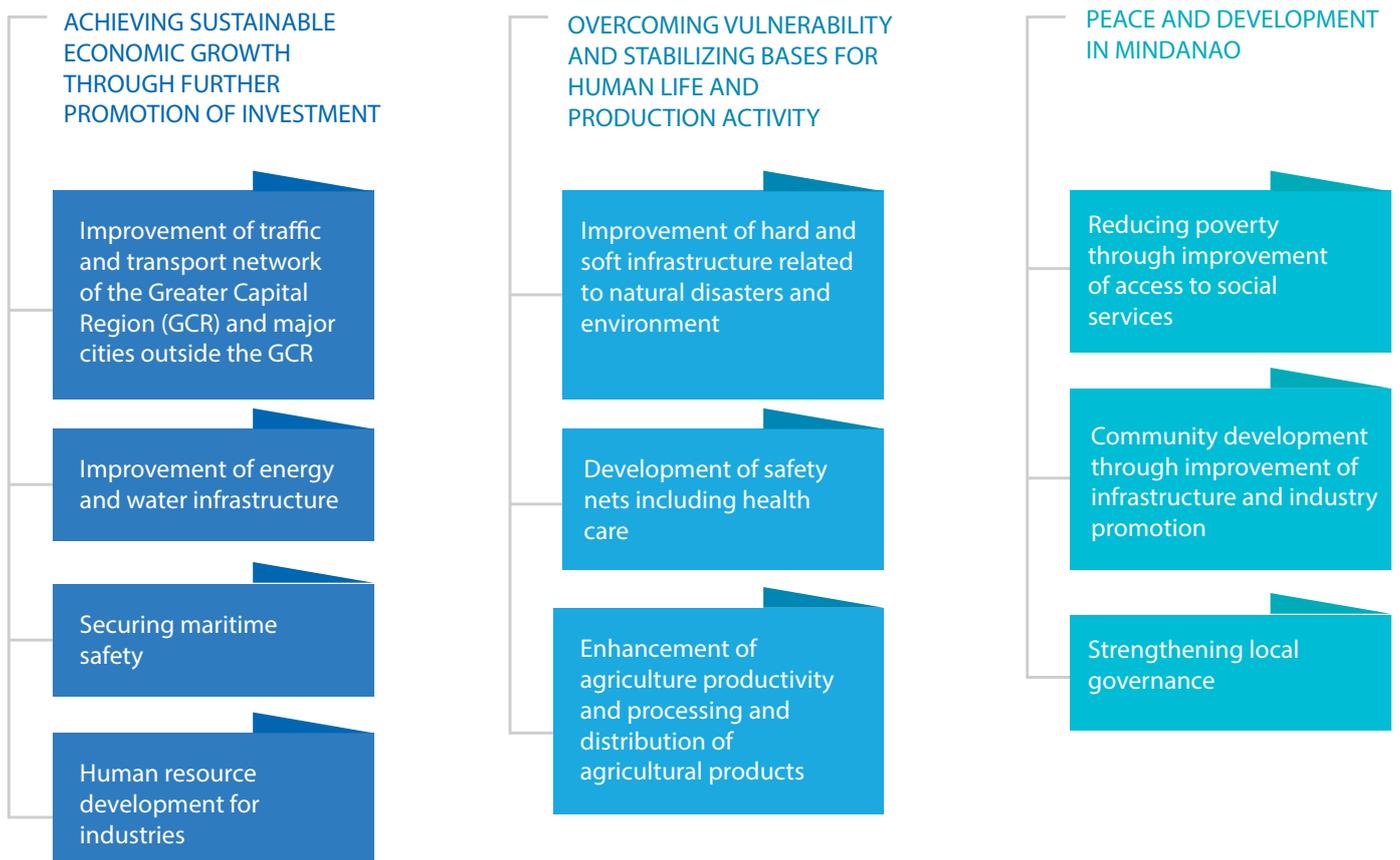
Leading the world with trust



### What We Do

We undertake various types of assistance schemes in implementing Japan's ODA.

## Our Assistance Pillars in the Philippines



## Types of Cooperation



### Technical Cooperation

We support the development of human resources, improvement of technical standards, and establishment of administrative systems using the knowledge, experience, and technologies of Japan. By accepting training participants in Japan and dispatching Japanese experts, we assist countries in developing their capacity in solving problems.



### Finance and Investment Cooperation

We extend ODA loans to developing countries under generous lending conditions (long repayment periods, low interest rates). By providing such, partner countries are able to build infrastructure and implement programs that require large amount of funding. The Private Sector Investment Finance assistance of JICA, meanwhile, provides financial support to private sector activities in developing countries.



### Grants

We provide grants to low-income countries without obligation of repayment to support socio-economic development through construction of schools, hospitals, wells, roads, and provision of equipment and supplies.



### Emergency Disaster Relief

We support countries during large-scale disasters through the Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) Team in response to governments' requests. The JDR engages in rescue efforts and emergency relief activities.



### Public-Private Partnerships

We work with Japanese private companies by giving them opportunity to introduce their technology and products that address socio-economic issues. The schemes under this assistance are Private Sector Investment Finance and support program for SMEs.



### Citizen Participation

We also work closely with non-government organizations, local governments, universities, and other organizations. JICA sends volunteers under the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCV) Program to encourage citizen participation in development. We also promote development education to deepen understanding of challenges and issues in developing countries.



# Development Cooperation in Luzon

Luzon is the largest island of the Philippines. Manila, the Philippines' capital, is located in Luzon and is known for its role in the galleon trade, a turning point in global trade history connecting Asia, America, and Europe. JICA's cooperation in Luzon is helping transform the region's economic growth prospects through quality, resilient infrastructure.



Photo from DPWH

It's a common route for agriculture produce and tourists coming to and from the northern and central parts of Luzon. Trailing along the vast provinces of Tarlac and Nueva Ecija, commuters are greeted with stretches of green sceneries, bountiful harvests carried through trucks, and unfortunately, heavy traffic.

Every day, around 11,200 motorists and commuters travel between Tarlac City and Cabanatuan City. It takes 70 minutes to two hours to travel between these two major cities via existing national highways and passing through neighboring towns.

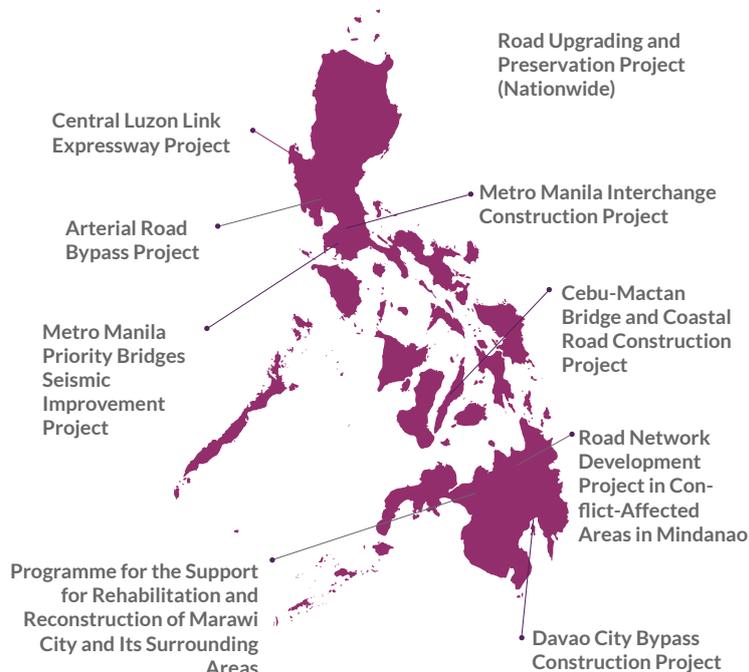
Aside from weighing heavily on people's quality of life, traffic congestion in the Philippines' major highways and expressways slow economic growth and pose hazards in the environment.

Through the assistance of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the long stretch of inter-city commute is given a new life with the 30-kilometer Central Luzon Link Expressway (CLLEX) Phase I project of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH). The completion of the segments in the Tarlac Section and Rio Chico River Bridge Section is a welcome boost in expanding road network options for travelers in nearby municipalities. Once the remaining sections are completed, travel time between Tarlac City and Cabanatuan City will be reduced to 20 minutes.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic that hampered supply chain and mobility, the CLLEX project offers a welcome respite in reducing traffic in Central Luzon, expanding the country's expressway network and improving the Filipino commuting experience. •

## Transforming expressway network in Central Luzon

### JICA-Supported Roads and Bridges Projects under the Philippines' Build, Build, Build Agenda



#### PROJECT DETAILS



**PROJECT TITLE**  
Central Luzon Link Expressway Project



**LOAN AMOUNT**  
¥ 22.796 billion



**PERIOD**  
2012-2022



**PARTNERS**  
Department of Public Works and Highways



**PURPOSE**  
To improve physical distribution between Metro Manila and Central Luzon by expanding the Subic-Clark-Manila-Batangas Corridor northward through construction of an expressway connecting Tarlac and Cabanatuan Cities, thereby contributing to the formulation of industrial space and economic development in the region



*As a consequence of the imposition of Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ), all construction activities in the country were suspended including big ticket projects of the Build, Build, Build program. Fortunately, for CLLEX, despite restricted mobility and delivery of materials, the contractors were able to continue their work. Prior to the imposition of ECQ, construction materials for major works were already on site. It is also worth mentioning that about 80% of the labor force are located within the vicinity of the project.*

*Once completed, CLLEX will provide fast, safe, comfortable and reliable means of transport in Central Luzon and decongest the Pan-Philippine Highway by as much as 48% percent. Faster and safer transportation in the region will also aid in the socio-economic development of the two regional growth pole cities (Tarlac and Cabanatuan) and help decongest Metro Manila.*

**Engr. Ben Bautista,**  
Project Manager  
DPWH





## Philippines' first subway project gets moving

 Tunnel boring machine

It is touted to be the “transport infrastructure project of the century” and truly a welcome change in the Filipinos’ commuting experience. Despite COVID-19, the Metro Manila Subway project is finally speeding ahead with construction kicking off in 2020.

The subway project, a development cooperation of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Department of Transportation (DOTr), is a critical government investment in its transport network. It is expected to ensure seamless and reliable mobility of Filipinos.

The JICA Follow-Up Survey on Roadmap for Transport Infrastructure Development for the Greater Capital Region showed that without interventions, economic cost of transportation in Metro Manila will reach PHP 5.4 billion a day by 2035.

The subway project is indeed poised to go a long way towards expanding the Philippines’ meager 79-kilometers existing rail lines and addressing the transport needs of Metro Manila with a population density of 20,785 persons for every square kilometer.

In 2020, the first batch consisting of six tunnel boring machines to be used in constructing the subway have started construction in JIM Technology Corporation’s manufacturing plant in Kanagawa Prefecture in Japan. The contract for 240 train cars was signed in the same year.

The first Philippine subway will not only decongest commuter bottlenecks in Metro Manila but also promote growth of neighboring urban centers. The subway will connect the capital’s business districts in Quezon City, Ortigas (Pasig City), and Bonifacio Global City (Taguig), shaving off commuter time from north to south by reducing it to 30 minutes from the typical one to two hours. The subway will likewise be connected to existing railway lines such as the Metro Rail Transit Line 3 (MRT-3), Light Rail Transit Lines 1 and 2 (LRT-1 & 2), and the forthcoming North-South Commuter Railway (NSCR).

The project will be using Japan’s railway technology, applying seismic design and technology in case of earthquakes. In addition, the subway’s depot will house the country’s first Philippine Railways Institute (PRI) to train Filipino railway personnel on rail operations and maintenance.

For ordinary Filipino commuters, the subway project sends a clear signal that what was once a transport dream will soon become a reality. •



*Under the Build, Build, Build program, the Philippine government is investing heavily in the rapid expansion of our railway network and train fleet, recognizing the simple fact that, for example, one subway train set alone, with a capacity of more than 2,200 passengers per train, can potentially remove from our roads up to 1,300 cars, 220 jeepneys, or 60 buses. The sustainable solution to our traffic congestion is a buildup of our mass transportation network including high-capacity rail lines. Together with our partners, we continue to deliver on our promise of a more comfortable life for every Filipino.*

**Timothy John R. Batan**  
Undersecretary  
Department of Transportation



### PROJECT DETAILS



#### PROJECT TITLE

Metro Manila Subway Project Phase 1



#### LOAN AMOUNT

¥ 104.53 billion (first tranche)



#### PERIOD

2018-2025



#### PARTNERS

Department of Transportation



#### PURPOSE

To accommodate increasing transportation demand by constructing subway line in Metro Manila, thereby contributing to alleviate serious traffic congestion as well as to mitigate air pollution and climate change

## Boosting skills development in the Philippine railway sector

The year 2020 paved the path for new possibilities in enhancing the railway services in the Philippines. With the Government's massive investments in railway infrastructure under the Build, Build, Build Program, the development of the human resources in railway operations and management (O&M) became a challenge.

In 2017, when Philippine officials visited the Tokyo Metro Comprehensive Learning and Training Center, they envisioned the Philippines to have its own facilities to train railway personnel to ensure a qualified workforce and the sustainability of the railway infrastructure projects.

This vision came to reality when the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) provided technical assistance to establish the Philippine Railways Institute (PRI), including a grant for the fully-equipped PRI building located at the depot of the Metro Manila Subway. In 2019, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) and JICA launched PRI's training courses.

At present, more than 300 existing railway O&M personnel were already trained on various competencies such as Passenger Management, Fare and Ticketing Management, Commercial Train Driving, and Railway Maintenance through the Refresher Training (RT) Course. This training course was developed in partnership with the JICA Expert Team (JET). When the COVID-19 pandemic led to restrictions in movement and gathering, the said training course shifted to an online training – the Web Refresher Training (WRT) Course, still with mentoring from the JET. By 2022, the PRI aims to train at least 6,000 railway personnel on the Refresher and Fundamental courses.

The RT/WRT Course requires participants to complete 40 hours of training on railway O&M with emphasis on railway safety and passengers' satisfaction. An examination and assessment is given after each training.

Transportation Secretary Arthur P. Tugade said, "The graduates of PRI will play a big role in the maintenance and sustainable operations of our railways. Their contribution will be also be vital especially as we embrace the new normal in the transport sector."



PHOTO Photos from PRI

Aside from the institutional set-up and training components, the project also supports the preparation of regulations and guidelines on human resource capacity of railway operators, functions of research and development in the industry, and policies toward sustainable railway operations.

Reinforcing the Philippine Government's efforts to address the transport demand of its growing population, JICA is lending support to the DOTr not just in building its human resources, but also in railway infrastructure that includes the first Metro Manila Subway, North-South Commuter Railway (NSCR), Metro Rail Transit Line 3 Rehabilitation, Light Rail Transit (LRT) Line 1 Cavite Extension, and LRT Line 2 East Extension Projects. Such close partnership between the DOTr and JICA lays down the foundation for the Philippines' evolving transport needs. •



PHOTO PRI Training

### PROJECT DETAILS



#### PROJECT TITLE

Technical Cooperation Institute Project to Establish the Philippine Railway Institute



#### LOCATION

Metro Manila



#### PERIOD

2018-2023



#### PARTNERS

Department of Transportation-Philippine Railways Institute, Tokyo Metro Co., Ltd.



#### PURPOSE

To promote human resources development and enhance the skills of railway operators' personnel for more reliable and efficient railway systems in the Philippines



*I participated in the PRI classroom and online trainings, simulation activities of our job, and exercises on how we can apply our knowledge to a real-world situation. My fellow trainees and I learned the importance of a safety culture and behavior as railway personnel. Now, every time, I wear my uniform at work, I'm proud to carry the values of integrity, conscientiousness, respect, and work ethic of being punctual, reliable, responsible, and consistent.*

**Jean Casana,**  
Ticket seller at MRT-3  
PRI graduate





## Building a disaster-resilient capital

 Manggahan Control Gate Structure (MCGS)

Metro Manila is not a stranger to disasters, nor to change and vision. Since its establishment as a metropolis in 1975, it has faced countless challenges. Like other metropolitan areas in the world, it continues to rebuild its contemporary identity amid realities of urban traffic, climate change, and other disruptions in daily life.

Home to more than 12 million people and contributing 40% to the Philippines' GDP, Metro Manila is at the cusp of transforming itself into a disaster-proof region ready for the challenges of the coming century. Through cooperation projects with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), the Philippine government accorded priorities to promote disaster resiliency under the Pasig-Marikina River Channel Improvement Project (PMRCIP) Phase IV and Metro Manila Priority Bridges Seismic Improvement Project II.

### Adapting to climate change

As intense storms and flooding occur more frequently in the Philippines, Metro Manila as a low-lying area is prone to typhoon-related disasters. In 2020, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) recorded nearly one million families affected in Metro Manila by Typhoon Ulysses and PHP 17 billion damage in city infrastructure.

Hence, PMRCIP Phase IV is meant to reduce overflow of river water by enlarging river channel and regulating flow distribution by MCGS. With that, it will mitigate the damages from huge floods, similar to those resulting from Typhoon Ondoy and Ulysses.

In addition, two gate structures along the floodway will be constructed to protect low-lying areas in Cainta and Taytay from back-flow flood from the floodway by closing the gates at confluence points with Cainta Creek and Taytay Box Culvert.

By rehabilitating the Pasig-Marikina River Channel and adjusting the flow of floods coming from the Marikina weir, the project enables Metro Manila's flood management infrastructure to better respond to catastrophic events, manage flooding, and protect the livelihood of its people.



## Promoting quality infrastructure

Infrastructure such as roads, railways, and buildings form part of Metro Manila's backbone. Infrastructure are critical investments against unexpected disasters like earthquakes or typhoons. A JICA Earthquake Impact Reduction Study in 2002 underscored comprehensive disaster management planning for Metro Manila to mitigate impact in case a massive earthquake occurs. If it becomes active again, the Valley Fault System that can potentially affect Metro Manila can cause serious aftermath to infrastructure and more importantly, human lives.

Part of JICA's continuing assistance to building the Philippines' seismic resiliency is the signing of the supplemental loan for the Metro Manila Priority Bridges Seismic Improvement Project with DPWH in March 2020. The project will replace and strengthen the Guadalupe and Lambingan bridges using Japanese seismic design technology.

In the 2013 Study on Improvement of Bridges through Disaster Mitigating Measures for Large Scale Earthquakes in the Republic of the Philippines, these bridges built in the 1980s showed signs of seismic vulnerability while carrying an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) ranging from 24,000 to 220,000 vehicles passing per day.

The project includes sharing Japanese expertise on building quality infrastructure. Like the Philippines, Japan is prone to natural disasters and has learned its lessons by instilling tougher standards in constructing lifeline systems like infrastructure. Japanese technology such as the use of Steel Pipe Sheet Pile (SPSP) Foundation using Gyropress method will be introduced for limited headroom or clearance areas for Guadalupe Bridge. For Lambingan Bridge, Rapid Construction Method for steel superstructures by block erection and horizontal sliding of assembled bridge superstructure will be applied to reduce working area. Both methods would expedite construction time while minimizing traffic.



Along Marikina River bank

## A Resilient Tomorrow

While there may always be gaps and challenges in institutionalizing disaster resilience in Metro Manila, the Philippines' cooperation efforts with JICA and other stakeholders present an opportunity to build a disaster-proof Metro Manila for generations to come. •



*With the collaboration and assistance of international partners like JICA, the DPWH as an executing agency in charge of constructing infrastructure projects will be able to acquire knowledge of disaster resilience activities being conducted in other development countries like Japan. It will also obtain leading-edge techniques, advanced technologies, and measures to prevent and mitigate damages of disasters.*

**Ramon A. Arriola III,**  
Project Director  
Unified Project Management Office-Flood Control  
Management Cluster (UPMO-FCMC), DPWH



### PROJECT DETAILS



#### PROJECT TITLE

Pasig-Marikina River Channel Improvement Project (Phase IV)



#### LOAN AMOUNT

¥ 37.905 billion



#### PERIOD

2019-2027



#### PARTNERS

Department of Public Works and Highways



#### PURPOSE

To mitigate flood damages in Metro Manila caused by channel overflow of the Pasig-Marikina River by implementing river channel improvement works and constructing of a movable weir together with non-structural measures in consideration with the flood risk management, and thereby contributing to overcoming vulnerabilities and stabilizing livelihood and production basis of the said region

### PROJECT DETAILS



#### PROJECT TITLE

Metro Manila Priority Bridges Seismic Improvement Project (I and II)



#### LOAN AMOUNT

¥ 14.192 billion



#### PERIOD

2015-2023



#### PARTNERS

Department of Public Works and Highways



#### PURPOSE

To strengthen the resilience of the transport network in Metro Manila by replacing and strengthening major bridges referring to the improved bridge seismic design specifications, thereby contributing to a more secure and sustainable economic and social development of Metro Manila and to realizing the speedy recovery in case of large-scale earthquakes in the National Capital Region



## Stronger together in times of disasters

There is a line that says, “The human capacity for burden is like a bamboo, far more flexible than one ever believes at first glance.” Such is the story of the Taal Volcano disaster.

The year 2020 began with a dire headline that nobody expected. Known as a tourist attraction, the Taal Volcano rumbled and spewed ashes, displacing more than 120,000 families living around the volcano island.

Touted to be one of the Philippines’ active volcanoes, Taal Volcano last erupted in the ‘70s, and a very violent eruption was recorded in the early 19th century, historians said. Volcanic disasters are just but one of the many natural hazards that threaten the Philippines because of its geographic location on the Pacific Ring of Fire. The Taal Volcano sits inside a lake that the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) has marked as a permanent danger zone. Majority of those living in surrounding areas of Taal subsist on agriculture and fishing, while industrial economic zones are situated nearby. The wrath of the Taal Volcano unfortunately halted most of the economic activities and daily life in communities around it.

When the volcano erupted on the week of January 14, displaced families stayed in more than 700 evacuation centers in Batangas,

Cavite, Laguna, and Quezon, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) reported. The ashfall, that reached even nearby Metro Manila, has posed health consequences and potable water became immediate concerns.

With these, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) partnered with the DSWD to distribute thousands of N95 masks, 5,500 five-gallon potable water, 5,000 portable jerry cans, and five generator sets. These were distributed to families in evacuation centers to address their immediate needs.

Even prior to this, JICA has worked in solidarity with the Philippines in disaster risk reduction and management, sharing Japan’s expertise and providing equipment and infrastructure to strengthen disaster resiliency. PHIVOLCS has received numerous technical cooperation since the 1990s on research and capacity building to support local seismologists and scientists on volcano monitoring and earthquakes.

JICA’s support to the Taal Volcano disaster is just but one of many continuing cooperation projects that JICA extends to the Philippines, leveraging decades of friendship between Japan and the Philippines for the generations to come. •



*In response to the enormous task of alleviating the suffering of affected families during the Taal Volcano disaster, JICA supported the Department of Social Welfare and Development’s efforts in providing food and non-food items in the relief operations. Beyond the Taal Volcano disaster, JICA has provided valuable direction in integrating disaster response in social development in the Philippines. JICA supported our activities in times of disasters through technical assistance, while the Japanese Embassy provided us with trucks and radio equipment under a grant.”*



**Emmanuel P. Privado**  
Director IV  
National Resource and Logistics Management Bureau  
Department of Social Welfare and Development

### PROJECT DETAILS



#### PROJECT TITLE

Emergency Assistance to the Philippines in Response to the Eruption of Mt. Taal



#### PERIOD

January 2020



#### PARTNERS

Department of Social Welfare and Development



#### PURPOSE

To assist in the relief efforts for the families affected by Taal Volcano eruption

# Development Cooperation in Visayas

Visayas, composed of several hundred small island clusters, is known for its vast mountains and lovely coast lines. Its languages, like its culture and arts, are diverse and rich. JICA's cooperation in Visayas is helping the region attain its far-reaching development potential through infrastructure and resilient systems.



## Bridging urban resilience and development

Perspective of the bridge

It has often been said that building infrastructure is like building assets for the nation's future. In the case of an urban growth center like Cebu, a fourth long-span bridge is a public works project that can make a difference in the region's rising population and urban growth.

The Cebu-Mactan Bridge (4th Bridge) and Coastal Road Construction Project, a cooperation between the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), is a 119.225 billion yen Official Development Assistance (ODA) applying Japanese technology in bridge design and construction.

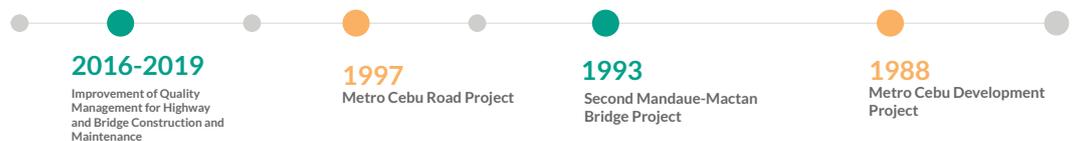
A Roadmap Study for Sustainable Urban Development in Metro Cebu (2013-2015) reported that Metro Cebu's population is likely to reach 3.80 million by 2030. It is therefore expected that the urban sprawl will lead to increasing traffic demand and rapid urbanization. Likewise, the Mega Cebu Vision, a blueprint for the city's sustainable development with Japan's Yokohama City, underscored connectivity as a key strategy for urban centers like Cebu to become more competitive

and attractive for investments. Thus, the Cebu-Mactan (4th Bridge) and Coastal Road loan agreement signed this 2020 between JICA and the Department of Finance (DOF) will set the course towards a more interconnected metropolis. Once completed, the bridge project is expected to reduce travel time during peak hour for a trip from the Mactan-Cebu International Airport to the Cebu Port area to approximately 20 minutes.

The Marcelo Fernan Bridge (2nd Cebu-Mactan Bridge), also built with Japanese ODA, will cater to approximately 50,000 vehicles or Passenger Car Units (PCU) per day between the inland side of Mandaue City or Consolacion via UN Avenue and Cebu North Hagnaya Wharf Road. On the other hand, the 4th Cebu-Mactan Bridge will cater to approximately 60,000 PCU per day, which will be the directional traffic between the Cebu Port area and Lapu-Lapu City, and Consolacion and Lapu-Lapu City via Mandaue Coastal Road.

The Cebu-Mactan Bridge is an investment that is well worth waiting for in a post-pandemic economy, bridging resilience and opening up opportunities for seamless mobility and sustainable growth. •

### Other JICA Development Cooperation in Metro Cebu



*The Project is a STEP (Special Terms for Economic Partnership) Loan which will use Japanese materials and technologies for the development of high-quality infrastructure. With the 4th Cebu-Mactan Bridge's main span of 215 meters over the navigable waterway of Mactan Channel, it will be the longest steel box girder bridge in Southeast Asia. Filipino engineers will greatly benefit from the transfer of technology program under this loan agreement through their involvement in the design, contract administration, project supervision, and operation and maintenance (O&M).*

Virgilio C. Castillo,  
Director  
Roads Management Cluster I, DPWH



#### PROJECT DETAILS



**PROJECT TITLE**  
Cebu-Mactan Bridge (4th Bridge) and Coastal Road Construction Project



**LOAN AMOUNT**  
¥ 119,225 billion



**PERIOD**  
2020-2029



**PARTNERS**  
Department of Public Works and Highways



**PURPOSE**  
To respond to increasing traffic demand in Metro Cebu by constructing a long-span road bridge between Cebu and Mactan Island and connecting coastal road, thereby contributing to socio-economic development through mitigating the traffic congestion

## Empowering schools to cope with disasters

Disaster education in Cebu has gone beyond “duck and cover” in case of emergencies. Using the knowledge sharing from Japanese non-profit group SEEDS Asia and Hyogo Prefectural Board of Education based in Kobe, Japan, schools in Cebu Province developed a comprehensive response to ensure school safety in times of disasters.

Through collaboration of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Department of Education in Cebu, SEEDS Asia, and Hyogo Prefectural Board of Education under the Support Project on Promotion of School Disaster Risk Reduction and Management (DRRM) in Cebu Province, Cebu school teachers and education officials received trainings on emergency preparedness for multi-hazards in their respective area of locality.

It can be recalled that islands in Cebu were battered when Typhoon Yolanda hit the Philippines in 2013. The typhoon’s damage to school infrastructure has reached P174 million based on Philippine government data. The school DRRM project in Cebu became a response to help the education sector prepare for future disasters through trainings, mitigation and preparedness measures, as well as establishment of an inspection checklist and simulation with harmonized disaster response protocols among stakeholders.

Since the Philippines is located on the Pacific Ring of Fire, making it geographically prone to natural disasters, the project developed a school DRRM model to promote school safety. The pilot schools developed an inspection checklist, conducted hazard mapping, and crafted a response manual on the hazards that exist in their locality using the framework of Hyogo Prefectural Board of Education. These practices were shared to other regions throughout the Philippines during the National Conference conducted by the Department of Education and SEEDS Asia on July 31, 2019 at Great Eastern Hotel, Quezon City.

As the project concluded in 2020, the project has so far benefited 25,325 students in schools in Bogo, Carcar, Cebu, Daanbantayan, Danao, Lapu-Lapu, Mandaue, Naga, Talisay, and Toledo in Cebu Province. •



Disaster simulation exercise at school



Fire fighting training with students



Teacher meeting for school safety inspection

### PROJECT DETAILS



#### PROJECT TITLE

Promotion of School Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in Cebu Province



#### PERIOD

March 2017 - March 2020



#### PARTNERS

NGO SEEDS Asia  
Department of Education - Region VII Office



#### PURPOSE

To properly implement School Disaster Risk Reduction and Management to pilots in Cebu Province



*The project benefited Cebu schools through their increased capacity in identifying hazards, crafting mitigating measures and response mechanisms to various hazards. In the future, the learnings from the project may be used in developing further extensive response manual amid COVID-19 and in broadening the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of educators towards a safe and resilient learning environment.*

**Ranilo Edar**  
Regional DRRM Focal Person  
Department of Education Region VII





# Development Cooperation in Mindanao

Mindanao is the second largest island of the Philippines and home to many ethnic minorities. It presents a balance of mesmerizing nature spots and its economic growth potential remains relevant despite history of strife in its conflict-affected areas. JICA's cooperation in Mindanao helps bridge the gaps towards lasting peace and development.



## Transforming urban growth centers

 Perspective of mountain tunnel

The urban landscape of Davao City is about to be transformed. Despite the lockdown challenges from COVID-19, financing for the supplemental loan of the 45.5-kilometer Davao City Bypass Construction Project was signed between Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Department of Finance (DOF) this year.

The project, the first to feature a long-distance mountain tunnel in the Philippines using Japanese engineering technology, is seen to reduce traffic congestion and improve logistics flow in Mindanao. The four-lane road will divert traffic from the bustling city center by providing an alternate route connecting port areas to different parts of the city. Travel time between the Toril District in the south and Panabo City in the north can be reduced to 49 minutes from the current 1 hour and 44 minutes via the Pan Philippine Highway Diversion Road.

As one of the nine (9) roads and bridges projects that JICA is supporting under the Philippines' Build, Build, Build infrastructure development program, JICA's support to the project amounts to a total of 58.7 billion yen under the Special Terms for Economic Partnership (STEP) where projects receive technology transfer from Japan. This year, one of the civil works contracts for the project's phase I that includes the portion of the 2.3-kilometer mountain tunnel has been signed between the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and Shimizu-Ulticon-Takenaka Joint Venture.

This bypass project is expected to contribute significantly for the city as recognized in the 2018 Davao City Infrastructure Development Plan and Capacity Building Project (IM4Davao) spearheaded by JICA, the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), and the City Government of Davao. The Plan recommended the prioritization of infrastructure development as a driver of urban development to guide investments in housing, commerce, business, manufacturing, and tourism.

The bypass project will likewise include capacity building for DPWH staff on tunnel maintenance. With the city's first ever mountain tunnel, Davao's infrastructure landscape is ready for change. •



 Traffic congestion at the city center



*The Davao City Bypass Construction Project, just like any other project, encountered many challenges prior to the start of actual construction – from upgrading to four-lane single-stage construction to securing additional funding from JICA and the Philippine Government to being delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite all of these, DPWH and JICA worked hand in hand to commence this big-ticket project in the Philippines.*

*Having experienced several projects funded through JICA and constructed by Japanese contractors, I would say that this project will be implemented with the highest level of quality and observing safety during construction. I am also positive that with the collaborative effort between Filipinos and Japanese for this project, it will result in economic and social development not only for the city but also for the whole of Mindanao.”*

**Virgilio C. Castillo**  
Director  
Roads Management Cluster I, DPWH



### PROJECT DETAILS



**PROJECT TITLE**  
Davao City Bypass Construction Project I and II



**LOAN AMOUNT**  
¥ 58.736 billion



**PERIOD**  
2015-2025



**PARTNERS**  
Department of Public Works and Highways



**PURPOSE**  
To respond to increasing traffic demand, mitigate traffic congestion in Davao City and improve logistics in the biggest economic region in Mindanao, the center of which is Davao City, by constructing a bypass road connecting the southern tip and the center part of the City in Mindanao, thereby contributing to economic development in Mindanao

## Securing peace for the next generation of Bangsamoro people

They say good governance is not just a philosophy. Rather, steps have to be taken to fully realize it. Such is the case of the recent technical support of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) towards building the capacity of Bangsamoro executives on public financial management and budgetary governance. The support is a component of JICA's comprehensive assistance to realize the vision of the Bangsamoro people towards an autonomous government. By working with the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA), JICA is helping promote the principles of good budgetary governance in the Bangsamoro, one of the key elements to help local executives carry out their functions with effectivity and efficiency.

Following the establishment of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) in 2019, JICA took steps and supported the Ministry of Finance, Budget, and Management (MFBM) through capacity building activities. JICA's support greatly contributed to the signing into law of the first Bangsamoro Appropriations Act for FY 2020.

Through seminars and study visits in Japan, JICA shared Japan's experience in central and local government finance, development planning, infrastructure, and agriculture. JICA also supported the Bangsamoro Development and Planning Authority in the crafting of the Bangsamoro Development Plan (BDP), an instrument that is to be the foundation of the budget of each ministry or government office in the Bangsamoro. Essentially, the trainings also enabled Bangsamoro authorities to understand the value of planning and budget governance if they are to attain their development agenda. The mantra, 'No plan, No budget. No budget, No development' resonated in the capacity building activities.

As Bangsamoro transitions to autonomous government, ensuring good governance through effective financial planning and administrative management is a right move for them to transform their vision of peace and development into reality.



Signing Ceremony of the FY2020 Bangsamoro Appropriations Act



*JICA has been one of our most trusted partners in our journey to peace starting from the peace talks up to the transition period. To realize self-reliant and resilient communities, we hope we can create sustainable programs that highlight our experience, our people, and our desire for human security and transition the regional government towards a more responsive system.*



**Ahod Al Haj Murad Ebrahim**  
Interim Chief Minister  
Bangsamoro Transition Authority



Interim Chief Minister Ebrahim with JICA President KITAOKA Shinichi and Philippine Ambassador to Japan H.E. Jose C. Laurel V

### PROJECT DETAILS



#### PROJECT TITLE

- Comprehensive Capacity Development Project for the Bangsamoro (2013-2019)
- Capacity Development Project for the Bangsamoro (2019-2022)
- Other assistance (2013-ongoing)



#### PARTNERS

- Regional Government of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao
- Bangsamoro Transition Commission
- Bangsamoro Transition Authority



#### PURPOSE

To support the transition to the Bangsamoro Government

## Learning from Japan's experience

In support of the transition to a Bangsamoro autonomous government, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) hosted a study visit of executives from the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) in Japan in 2020.

The BTA participation to the study visit follows the ongoing capacity building activities of JICA and BTA to promote good governance, public services, and socio-economic development in Bangsamoro.

The delegation visited the Japanese Parliament, JICA Chugoku Center, and Hiroshima Prefecture. The visits sought to improve knowledge of the delegates on parliamentary operations and share with them Japan's restoration experience after the war, as well as the latter's industrialization and local government administration.

At the Hiroshima University, Japanese professors shared with the delegates the budget priority given to education to empower schools, teachers, and students. The professors also pointed out the role of social enterprise development in poverty alleviation in Hiroshima as well as government-academe-private sector collaboration. The BTA delegation also met with local government executives and attended lectures on disaster management at the Otagawa River Office and on urban policy and development at the Urban Planning Department of Hiroshima. During the study visit, JICA President KITAOKA Shinichi met with Interim Chief Minister (ICM) Ahod Al Haj Murad Ebrahim at JICA Headquarters to discuss JICA's contribution in capacity building and inclusive development initiatives in the Bangsamoro.

The BTA delegation underscored their appreciation of JICA's role in peace building and in improving Bangsamoro's operations and governance.

## An Overview of JICA's Support to Transition to Bangsamoro Government

### From 2013 – 2019

Following the signing of the Framework Agreement on the Bangsamoro in 2012, JICA implemented the Comprehensive Capacity Development Project for the Bangsamoro. The Project aimed at supporting the transition to the Bangsamoro Government through the following sectors: (i) institutional and organizational building, human resource development, governance, economic enhancement, service delivery and development planning.

### 2018 November – December

Following the signing of the Bangsamoro Organic Law in 2018, JICA supported the Coordination Team for the Transition to an autonomous Bangsamoro government through the conduct of a series of workshops on (i) Transitioning from ARMM to BARMM; (ii) Recruitment, Selection and Placement in the organization, and, (iii) Results-Based Design Monitoring and Evaluation

### 2019 – 2022

When the BOL was ratified in 2019 and transition to Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao began, JICA launched Capacity Development Project for the Bangsamoro. The project features strengthening the organizational and institutional capacity of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA) and improving living conditions in the region.

### Beyond 2022

JICA emphasizes that human security will remain a foreign policy pillar promoting self-reliance and resilience. It has been supporting peace and development in Mindanao even before the signing of the peace agreement in 2014, and will continue to do in support of human security where people can live in peace and with dignity. •



JICA officials led by President KITAOKA Shinichi meeting with BTA officials



BTA officials in Hiroshima Prefecture



BTA officials in Hiroshima University

## Youth sports as platform to promote human security

There is no denying the impact of sports in the endurance of the human spirit and strengthening friendships among nations. When groups of youngsters ran baseball drills outdoors in Davao City, while members of the Japanese baseball team Yomiuri Giants coached them, the sport no longer just becomes a display of talent and skills but a means to cement friendship and inspire the youth to overcome their limitations.

Players from Yomiuri Giants visited the Philippines in 2020 to coach some 300 elementary and high school students from Davao City and surrounding municipalities. The activity is part of a cooperation of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), Department of Education-Davao City Division, and Philippine Nikkei Jin Kai International School. Seen as a platform to promote JICA's efforts to promote human security in Mindanao, the activity also featured a disaster risk reduction and management education campaign for students.

Schools which participated in the activity helped improve their students' fitness and skills in baseball, as well as disaster preparedness and awareness, following the strong magnitude earthquake that hit Davao in the previous year. JICA and the Davao City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office also held preparedness drills to the participants.

As part of their work in the Philippines, JICA has been promoting disaster education and has already piloted disaster education curriculum in some select schools in the Philippines. The youth program in Davao complements this effort as well as other peace building initiatives in Mindanao.

JICA's support in sports and development also aligns with the Tokyo Olympics and its potential contribution to some of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) particularly in areas such as social inclusion and empowerment of youth, women, individuals and communities. JICA is also a steering committee member of Japan's Sport for Tomorrow, a joint program by the public and private sectors to promote the value of sports and the Olympic and Paralympic movement to people worldwide. •



Yomiuri Giants teaching young baseball players from Davao



Yomiuri Giants with the baseball team of Buhasan | Elementary School of Davao

“

*The 2019 Davao earthquake had psychological effects to students in terms of outdoor participation. Some developed post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and other earthquake-related fears. That's why the visit of Japan's Yomiuri Giants brought joy and motivation to our students. They personally met the players and were trained by them. The activity promoted collaboration and unity. Filipinos can build friendship with Japanese by sharing our love for sports.*

”

**Eric Gauran**  
Baseball Coach  
Bago National School of Arts and Trades

### PROJECT DETAILS



#### PROJECT TITLE

Mindanao Youth Baseball Training Camp for Elementary and High School Students in Davao City with Yomiuri Giants



#### PERIOD

January 11, 2020



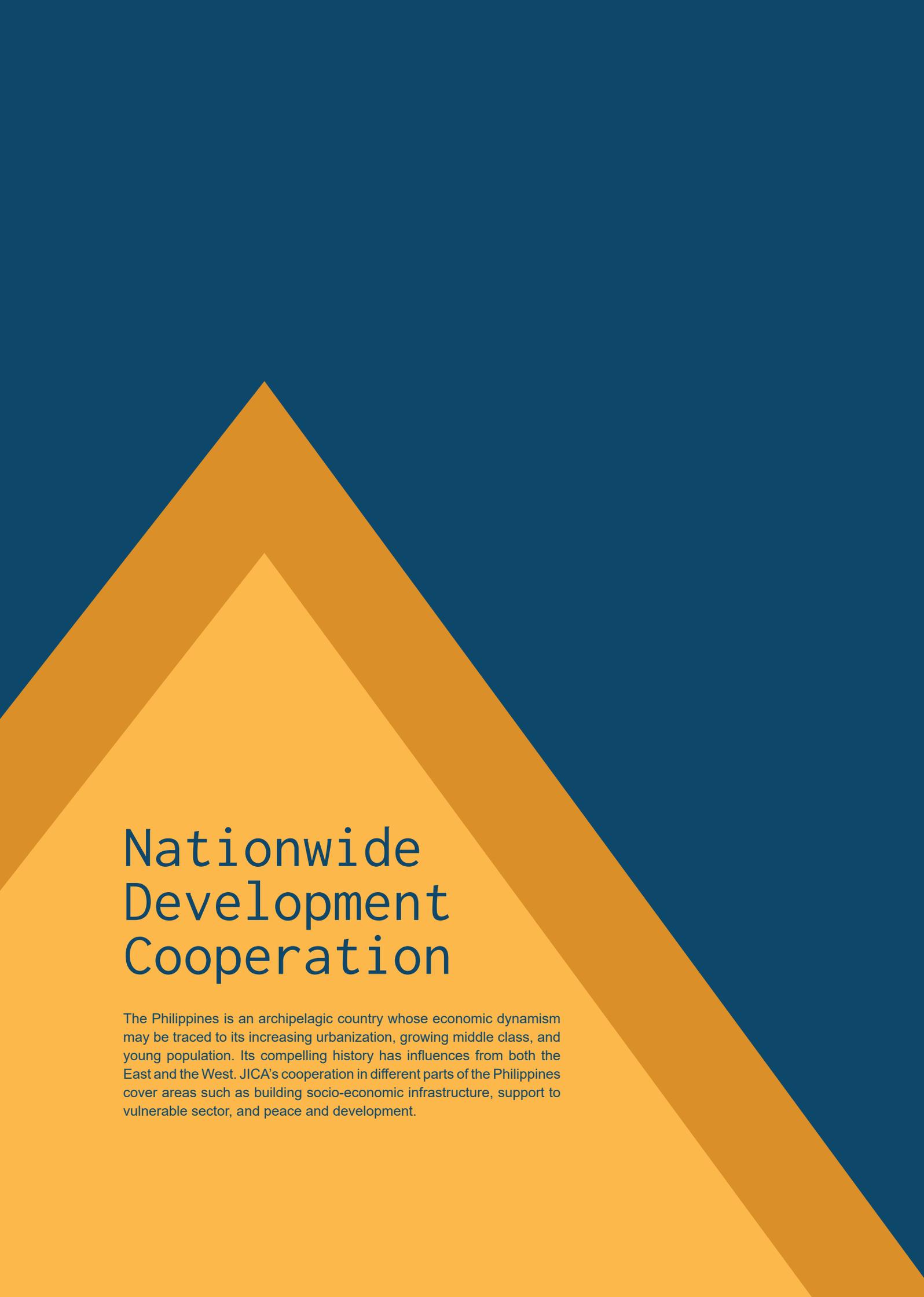
#### PARTNERS

Department of Education - Davao City Division  
Philippine Nikkei Jin Kai International School  
Davao City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office



#### PURPOSE

To promote healthy development of youth thru sports such as baseball;  
To raise awareness on disaster prevention and management



# Nationwide Development Cooperation

The Philippines is an archipelagic country whose economic dynamism may be traced to its increasing urbanization, growing middle class, and young population. Its compelling history has influences from both the East and the West. JICA's cooperation in different parts of the Philippines cover areas such as building socio-economic infrastructure, support to vulnerable sector, and peace and development.



 PCG engine training (onboard): Electronic chart display & information system and radar maintenance

## Collaboration and knowledge sharing for maritime safety

From protecting natural resources to providing maritime security, the role of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) has never been more important than today when security at sea is a paramount priority.

Improving a nation's fleet is just as crucial in addressing maritime accidents, aging vessels, and search and rescue during frequent natural disasters.

This year, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Philippine Coast Guard facilitated training of 45 coast guard personnel on maintenance of multi-role response vessels, troubleshooting engine and equipment, machinery management, and safety at work under the ongoing Project for Enhancement of the Capability of PCG on Vessel Operation, Maintenance Planning, and Maritime Law Enforcement.

JICA has emphasized the importance of international cooperation in Philippine maritime security and safety since the 1960s and has been working closely with the PCG and other maritime organizations in the Philippines to promote safety at sea.

Developed by JICA, PCG, and the Magsaysay Institute of Shipping (MIS), the training is a combination of twelve (12) days of classroom or shore-based courses at the MIS Campus in Cavite and eight (8) days of application or ship-based courses aboard the BRP-Malabrigo and BRP-Malapascua, two of the 10 JICA-assisted Multi-Role Response Vessels (MRRVs) provided to the Philippines to help build the country's maritime fleet and support maritime safety and security.

Already, there has been more than 300 PCG personnel trained under JICA in various knowledge sharing programs in the Philippines and in Japan, enabling the coast guards to benefit from Japanese expertise



 Engine troubleshooting and maintenance

## Number of Missions Accomplished by 10 JICA-Assisted Multi-Role Response Vessels



**190**  
Maritime  
Search and  
Rescue



**24**  
Maritime  
Environmental  
Protection



**721**  
Maritime  
Law  
Enforcement



**1,448**  
Maritime  
Security

As of 17 December 2020

and emerging technologies on safety at sea. Aside from this soft component, JICA is also supporting the construction of two 97-meter MRRVs under the Maritime Safety Capability Improvement Project Phase II amounting to 16.455 billion yen. Said vessels will feature a helicopter hangar and equipment for helicopter operations, marine environment protection room, and use of special clad steel plate durable for extreme weather condition.

The vessels, when completed by 2022, will be used for Philippine maritime law enforcement and security. The construction of the additional MRRVs began this year with a traditional prayer ceremony held in Japan for safe construction.

As the COVID-19 pandemic creates a new normal in maritime operations, the JICA-PCG collaboration and knowledge sharing is fostering a new way to look at safety and standards in maritime governance and security. •



caption Photo during safety prayer ceremony from Mitsubishi Shipping Co. Ltd.

“ Through the JICA training, I had better appreciation of engine maintenance and operations as well as other parts of a vessel. I was able to learn how to operate and maintain the vessel and detect possible engine problems, an important skill that we must possess to ensure successful delivery of our mission especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. ”



**Lieutenant Junior Grade (LTJG)  
Argie B. Lubon  
Engineering Officer I**

### PROJECT DETAILS



**PROJECT TITLE**  
Enhancement of the Capability of PCG on Vessel Operation, Maintenance Planning, and Maritime Law Enforcement



**PERIOD**  
2019-2022



**PARTNERS**  
Philippine Coast Guard



**PURPOSE**  
To effectively operate and maintain the multi-role response vessels and other PCG assets as well as enhancing it's maritime law enforcement capability

### PROJECT DETAILS



**PROJECT TITLE**  
Maritime Safety Capability Improvement Project Phase II



**LOAN AMOUNT**  
¥ 16.455 billion



**PERIOD**  
2012-2022



**PARTNERS**  
Department of Transportation, Philippine Coast Guard



**PURPOSE**  
To improve the PCG's capabilities to quickly and appropriately respond to coastal maritime incidents, such as search and rescue, maritime law enforcement, and maritime security

## Enhancing trade facilitation between Japan and Philippines

As early as the 18th century, Japan has been trading with Southeast Asia, playing a major part in shaping the region's economic development. Japan became the first bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA) partner of the Philippines under the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (JPEPA) in 2008.

However, Philippine utilization of FTAs through the years has been wanting. A Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) study pointed to low FTA utilization of the Philippines compared to other Southeast Asian countries at 11.8% in 2008, with earlier studies even pointing to just 5% utilization.

Thus, JICA has been dispatching experts to the Philippine Bureau of Customs (BOC) to enhance customs operations based on international standards, promote JPEPA, and help Filipino and Japanese companies make adequate use of FTAs to create jobs and increase trade. The incumbent Japanese expert is SUZUKI Mitsuo dispatched since August 2019.

In 2020, JICA and the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) organized a webinar regarding Rules of Origin (ROO) for BOC officials, importers, exporters, manufacturers, and trading firms. The seminar focused on how to secure Certificate of Origin from BOC and promoted understanding on applicable tariff rates on goods based on country of origin and trade agreements.

The dispatch of experts is part of JICA's Official Development Assistance (ODA) to help other countries develop their human resources, strengthen organizations, formulate policies, and build institutions. The expert dispatch to BOC is part of JICA's continuing assistance to equip BOC staff with new customs procedures, harmonize operations with international conventions, and improve effective customs operations in the Philippines.

For example, the Japanese experts have shared technical knowledge with BOC on the Authorized Economic Operator Program based on the international framework on the movement of goods that the World Customs Organization adopted in recent years. Under the AEO Program, Customs can provide benefits such as simplified and expeditious procedures to those operators approved by Customs for meeting the requirements for security and compliance, among others. In the Philippines, the AEO program was introduced officially for exporters and importers in December 2019.

Such technical cooperation with international experts will be helpful in addressing customs operation issues and enhance the Philippines' image as a trading destination. In a future of increasing trade competition, improving both inward and outward processes and systems can fill the missing link to the Philippines' connection to a competitive globalized trading world. •

### A Timeline of JICA's Assistance to Philippine Customs Operations

- 2014  
Provided narcotic drug test kits for the Customs Anti-Illegal Task Force
- 2012  
Introduced Authorized Economic Operator Program
- 2011  
Held seminars on Japan-Philippine Economic Partnership Agreement
- 2008-2011  
Technical Cooperation for Post-Entry Audit
- 2003, 2010, and 2012  
Completed time release study on problems in import procedures
- 2001-Present  
Present dispatch of expert for enhancement of customs operation
- 1996-2001  
Dispatch of expert for risk management
- 1993-2009  
Provided analytical equipment for Philippine Customs Laboratory
- 1991-1996  
Dispatch of expert for intelligence management
- 1990-1991  
Dispatch of expert for tariff systems



*JICA has always been of assistance to the Philippine Customs through information sharing, especially this 2020 on the Electric Gate Systems at airports, as well as the outline of Japan Customs Water Patrol Division and their Trace Detection System (TDS). JICA also facilitated the conduct of the Annual NEEDS Survey that will identify areas that the Customs still need to develop and initiate. With BOC's 10-point priority program for this year, JICA could further help our efforts to implement the Customs Modernization Program.*

**Gen. Rey Leonardo B. Guerrero (Ret.),**  
Commissioner,  
BOC



#### PROJECT DETAILS



**PROJECT TITLE**  
Enhancement of Customs Operation



**PERIOD**  
2019-2022



**PARTNERS**  
Bureau of Customs



**PURPOSE**  
To increase revenue collection, facilitate trade, and curb illicit trade and all forms of Customs fraud



## Unlocking access to finance for small and medium enterprises

In the Philippines, micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) make up 99.6% of all registered enterprises, making them the lifeblood of the economy. The COVID-19 pandemic has, unfortunately, made them especially vulnerable, placing a heavy burden on MSME owners in looking for funds to sustain or grow their enterprises.

A landmark law, the Philippine Magna Carta for Small Enterprises has consolidated all programs for MSME development in the Philippines. This included mandating lending institutions from 2008 to 2018 to set aside 8% of their total loan portfolio to MSMEs. However, access to finance remains a challenge for most enterprises. Most banks have also treated SMEs as high credit risk, a perception that hindered small businesses to benefit from loans to fuel their operations. The pandemic even made their business future more unsure.

To support SMEs and ensure their participation in the economy, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) launched a technical cooperation project called the Project for Establishment of Credit Risk Database (CRD), creating a credit database and a scoring model which can be used by banks to evaluate loan applications. This way, financial institutions will be encouraged to provide loans to SMEs as they have now a statistical tool to analyze their credit risk.

Japan established a CRD in 2001 and it is now maintained under an association with 167 financial institutions, guarantee corporations, and rating agencies as members. Through this system, Japan was able to improve credit access of SMEs and encourage risk-based lending to SMEs.

Through the project, Japanese experts will be working with BSP and financial institutions to create a database composed of financial statement data, non-financial data, and default-related data as well as a credit scoring model for SMEs.

As Nobel Prize winner Muhammad Yunus said, “If you want to do something, you have to imagine it for it to happen.” The CRD project certainly went beyond imagination to help Filipino small enterprises access finance to thrive and grow. •



Virtual project launch in December, photo from BSP



*The CRD project is a tangible step in building a sustainable financing ecosystem for MSMEs, the driver of the country's inclusive economic development. As the CRD will augment the access of SMEs to credit, it will lead to their enhanced productivity and competitiveness. This in turn will contribute to the growth in production of goods and services and will also generate much-needed jobs and source of income for many Filipinos. Indeed, the project will provide long-term support to SMEs to help them recover and thrive beyond this pandemic, thus, complementing efforts toward post-COVID economic recovery.*

**Louie Mel R. Intia, Project Director**  
Credit Risk Database Project Implementation Unit  
Center for Learning and Inclusion Advocacy  
BSP



### PROJECT DETAILS



**PROJECT TITLE**  
Technical Cooperation Project for the Establishment of Credit Risk Database in the Philippines



**PERIOD**  
2020-2022



**PARTNERS**  
Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas



**PURPOSE**  
To establish Credit Risk Database for permanent operation focusing on facilitating SME/business lending as well as strengthening Philippine financial sector

## Farmers under JICA-DENR project offer lessons in forest management

The dangers of massive flooding in Cagayan Valley became clearer to local folks as Typhoon Ulysses battered their homes in 2020.

In a country where flood hazards occur frequently, management of its more than 15 million hectares of forestlands need a re-imagined approach.

A group of upland farmers in Quirino Province in Cagayan Valley is showing the way on how community-based strategies could work to help people improve their lives while also managing the forests sustainably. The Ifugao Village Upland Farmers Association (IVUFA) is a people's organization in Quirino and a beneficiary of the 10-year Forestland Management Project (FMP) of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) that aims to boost forest conservation strategies in the Philippines through community development.

DENR and IVUFA are working together to manage 138 hectares of agroforestry land. The project provided IVUFA with PHP 100,000 seed money for enterprise development in 2018. The group is composed of 138 farmers and members (99 women, 39 men), with mostly women venturing into agricultural farm supply and trading. With their income from the enterprise, they were able to open a second store in 2020. JICA and DENR also turned over an agroforestry support facility for irrigation in 2019 to help farmer members improve crop production.

This community development model paved the way for the conservation of 5,158 hectares of forests in Quirino. The protection of the remaining forest and the establishment of additional agroforestry and tree plantations increased land cover, stabilized slopes, and helped to mitigate flooding in the downstream. The remaining forest served as the carbon sink and additional plantations helps sequester more carbon that can otherwise remain in the atmosphere to exacerbate climate change. A DENR analysis of causes of deforestation in the Philippines points to kaingin-making (slash and burn), mining, and forest conversion to non-forest uses. When forests are depleted, mudslides and flooding in low-lying areas due to heavy rains combined with climate change conditions pose hazards to communities, as well as private and public investments.

IVUFA's story proves that forestland management anchored on collaboration with community, government, and an international development partner can have positive impact to the lives of people and in the conservation of natural resources. •



Turnover of irrigation facility



Capacity building for IVUFA members



*The Forestland Management Project (FMP) strengthened our organization, forest conservation efforts, and networking with other agencies. The project also empowered our women members who are also working as officers of our organization. We were inspired by the support of the government and our Japanese counterparts when the agroforestry facility was turned over to us. Mas naging matatag ang aming organisasyon dahil sa pagkakaisa. (Our organization became stronger because of unity.)*

**Mr. Felix Tungawon,  
President of IVUFA**



### PROJECT DETAILS



**PROJECT TITLE**  
Forestland Management Project



**LOCATION**  
Ifugao, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, Nueva Ecija, Iloilo



**PERIOD**  
2012-2022



**PARTNERS**  
Department of Environment and Natural Resources



**PURPOSE**  
To strengthen forestland management through implementing community-based forestland management strategies in three (3) river basins (Upper Magat and Cagayan, Pampanga, and Jalaur) in a sustainable manner, thereby improving forest conservation and socio-economic conditions of upland dwellers and contributing to disaster risk mitigation efforts in vulnerable areas

## Local coastal preservation for future generations

It is surely our responsibility to do everything within our power to create a planet that provides a home not just for us, but for all life on earth, so says environmentalist David Attenborough.

Indeed, the scale of destruction brought about by global warming such as massive flooding is all too familiar in the Philippines. Such is the reason that integrated river watershed and coastal management plans are being crafted for Aklan including Batan Bay in Western Visayas. These plans form part of a localized Blue Carbon Strategy under the Comprehensive Assessment and Conservation of Blue Carbon Ecosystems and their Services in the Coral Triangle or BlueCARES project.

Aklan is home to Batan Bay, a major fishing ground and source of livelihood to thousands of people. As rivers in Aklan are interconnected with Batan Bay, any discharges from soil erosion in the upland going to Aklan river consequently affect the quality of coastal waters in the bay. Likewise, sediment discharges in the river result in rising riverbeds that eventually cause flooding in downstream areas in Kalibo, Aklan.

Under BlueCARES, scientists study integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) in places like Aklan to look into the impact of soil erosion in upland areas to coastal waters. The study has coined the term Green and Blue Carbon Link to explain this connection and included stakeholders from watershed and coastal areas in the Aklan River and Batan Bay Summit held at the Aklan State University in 2020.

Coastal ecosystems help store blue carbon and mitigate climate-related disasters and the Blue Carbon Strategy that the study will formulate hopes to guide policymakers on science-based solutions to coastal management. A tripartite cooperation of the University of the Philippines Diliman, Tokyo Institute of Technology, and the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries in Indonesia, the project is being supported by the Japan International Cooperation Agency's (JICA) Science and Technology Research Partnership for Sustainable Development or SATREPS.

Already, field surveys are being conducted in Aklan and Batan Bay study sites – steps needed for a localized version of said Blue Carbon Strategy. With typhoons and floods accounting for 80% of natural disasters in the Philippines in 2019 (UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction Report, 2019), the BlueCARES project is a chance to protect and preserve natural resources and build a sustainable future for the next generation. •



Batan Bay



Green and Blue Carbon Link as explained by Dr. NADAOKA Kazuo, Chief Technical Advisor of BlueCARES



The partnership of Aklan State University-College of Fisheries and Marine Sciences with the BlueCARES project has benefited the faculty, staff and students in terms of exposure, capability building, and exchange of ideas in research methodologies and approaches in extension and community work. Together with the local government units and community stakeholders in Aklan, we look forward to taking a more active role in the dissemination of research outputs to help build the critical mass needed to mobilize an integrated management body and operationalize an action plan for the Blue Carbon Strategy at the community level.



**Professor Yasmin H. Primavera-Tirol**  
Aklan State University

### PROJECT DETAILS



#### PROJECT TITLE

The Comprehensive Assessment and Conservation of Blue Carbon Ecosystems and their Services in the Coral Triangle (BlueCARES)



#### LOCATION

Aklan, Eastern Samar, Leyte, Palawan, Pangasinan



#### PERIOD

2017-2022



#### PARTNERS

University of the Philippines-Diliman,  
Tokyo Institute of Technology



#### PURPOSE

To conserve blue carbon ecosystem through Blue Carbon Strategy based on analyses and predictions of blue carbon dynamics by an integrated monitoring and modeling system

# Special Features

The COVID-19 pandemic formed a new way of life for many Filipinos, and while it looks like a long road to recovery, JICA supports the Philippines' efforts to overcome this health crisis through international cooperation. JICA, along with different decision makers, thought leaders, and communities, are partnering with Filipinos in facing the needs of the "new normal."



## JICA and Philippines: Bayanihan and Trusted Partnership in the midst of COVID-19 Pandemic

“The COVID-19 pandemic teaches us how to sort out priorities and show us reality. It underlines the inequalities of opportunity and resources in which society lives globally. It also brings the message that we are one family.”

- Isabel Allende, novelist

Life certainly changed when the COVID-19 disease outbreak hit most of the countries around the world. Business activities were at virtual standstill costing jobs to millions and shelter-in-place life created an economic divide that pushed back economic development efforts in the global scale.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) recognizes the disruptive and lasting impact of COVID-19 to development. According to the United Nations (UN) Policy Brief on the pandemic’s impact on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it is likely that 71 million will be pushed back to extreme poverty and 132 million will suffer from undernourishment.

As a trusted development partner, JICA rolled out comprehensive COVID-19 Official Development Assistance (ODA) not only to support the Philippines’ response efforts but also to ensure a better recovery after the pandemic. (See infographic).

“We will continue to support Philippine recovery in the spirit of Bayanihan. Our COVID-19 support to the Philippines complements all our other development cooperation to boost the economy, create jobs for Filipinos, and promote a quality of life for all,” said JICA Philippines Chief Representative AZUKIZAWA Eigo.

As people live through a new normal way of living onto a post-pandemic future, the COVID-19 experience has taught nations that we are a connected global community. •

### JICA COVID-19 Response Support to the Philippines



#### COVID-19 CRISIS RESPONSE EMERGENCY SUPPORT LOAN

¥ 50 billion or roughly ₱ 23 billion  
Finance support for medical response, social assistance, small businesses, support to agriculture and other economic sectors, and local government support



#### POST-DISASTER STANDBY LOAN PHASE 2

¥ 50 billion or roughly ₱ 23 billion  
Contingent funds for the financial demands of post-disaster recovery



#### GRANT FOR LABORATORY EQUIPMENT FOR RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR TROPICAL MEDICINE AND SAN LAZARO HOSPITAL

Equipment for quality testing and treatment of COVID-19 cases



#### FUTURE TECHNICAL COOPERATION ON PREVENTION OF FUTURE INFECTIOUS DISEASE OUTBREAKS

Establishing an integrated public health laboratory network and building capacity in laboratory management and biosafety

## International cooperation in the 'new normal'

"The secret of change is to focus the energy, not on fighting the old but on building the new." -Socrates, philosopher

Most would agree that the COVID-19 pandemic is not letting us do business as usual. Nations all over the world have focused on restructuring the economy and the impact of the pandemic has factored in many of people's decision making.

The Philippines is no exception. Once hailed as one of the emerging economies in Asia with over 6% GDP pre-pandemic, COVID-19 challenges sent the Philippine economy into a tailspin. Temporary closures, flexible working arrangements, and shelter-in-place measures to contain COVID-19 pushed unemployment rate to 17.7% or about 7.3 million unemployed in April 2020 and full year GDP to -9.5%. In addition, uncertainties from the pandemic also weighed down the country's trade and investment prospects. Foreign companies like Japanese manufacturers in the Philippines reported only 0.8% operations of some 1,500 Japanese firms in the Philippines during the early months of the lockdown, according to a survey of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

As such, financial support to the Philippine economic recovery is also relevant for bilateral partners like Japan. On July 2020, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) announced a 50 billion yen COVID-19 Crisis Response Emergency Support Loan (CCRESL). The support is meant to help curtail the spread of COVID-19 and support the Philippine government's social protection and relief efforts.

JICA said the support is part of its 'bayanihan' (collective effort) to the Philippines whose history, people-to-people relations, and international trade ties has been strongly linked with Japan.

The JICA support complements PH-PROGRESO or the Philippine Program for Recovery with Equity and Solidarity supporting (1) vulnerable groups; (2) COVID-19 response; (3) fiscal and monetary actions; and (4) economic recovery plan to create jobs and sustain growth.

With this backdrop and as the world economy expects to bounce back with vaccine development, JICA's support to the Philippines provides a gleam of hope in a world that is slowly but surely recovering from COVID-19. •

“

*We cannot underestimate the importance of the JICA emergency support loan. As you may know, the Philippine deficit-to-GDP ratio will more than double this year as tax collections are down even as the government spends more to beef up our health care system and to provide relief to families, workers, and other sectors hardest hit by the pandemic. We also need to fund our economic recovery program. This will require us to bridge the wider budget gap with additional borrowings. This facility will help us cover our budget expenditures during this very challenging time.*

**Carlos Dominguez III**  
Philippine Finance Secretary

”

### Impact of COVID-19 to the Philippines: A Quick Glance

9,244

**Deaths**  
as of December 31, 2020  
(DOH)

-9.5%

**GDP growth**  
as of October 2020  
(NEDA)

8.7%

**Unemployment**  
as of October 2020  
(PSA)

3.8M

**Filipinos unemployment**  
as of October 2020  
(PSA)

### Components of JICA COVID-19 Crisis Response Emergency Support Loan



#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Additional budget allocations  
and emergency lending to local  
governments for COVID-19  
response



#### SCALING UP MEDICAL RESPONSE

Medical and personal protective  
equipment, response capacity for  
testing and research, health security  
to patients and healthcare providers



#### SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

Cash transfer, unemployment  
allowances, and vocational  
training to unemployed people



#### SMALL BUSINESSES RELIEF

Wage subsidies, credit  
guarantees, tax debt relief, and  
financing facilities for small  
businesses



#### SUPPORT TO AGRICULTURE AND OTHER ECONOMIC SECTORS

Interest-free loans for farmers  
and crop producers,  
emergency rice stocks

## Lending a hand for post-disaster recovery

First it was Typhoon Yolanda. It was a natural disaster with an impact so huge that lives and incomes of families in Eastern Visayas were devastated.

Then came COVID-19, a public health disaster that struck millions globally and put 'build back better' once again in public discourse. In the Philippines, the pandemic led to an unexpected economic contraction of 16.7% in the second quarter of 2020 alone.

However, the bilateral relationship between Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Philippines paves the way for Japan and the Philippines to work hand in hand towards a post-disaster resilient future. Since the 50 billion yen JICA Post Disaster Stand-by Loan Phase 2 (PDSL 2) was signed in September 2020, disbursement was already made for COVID-19 in October. Another disbursement was made in January 2021 to finance rehabilitation efforts from the back-to-back typhoons that hit the Philippines in the last quarter of 2020.

The Philippine government declared a State of Calamity in 2020 under Proclamation No. 929 owing to the disruptions that COVID-19 brought to the Filipinos' way of living. Even as the country battled the pandemic, the entire island of Luzon later had to deal with back-to-back typhoons Quinta, Rolly, and Ulysses damaging infrastructure and agriculture, which



Signing ceremony for PDSL 2

prompted the government to put Luzon in a State of Calamity to hasten rescue, relief, and rehabilitation efforts of government, private sector, and the international community.

The PDSL 2 disbursements aim to provide contingent financial support to the Philippines' post-disaster recovery and cover both natural disasters and public health.

PDSL 2 complements JICA's COVID-19 Crisis Response Emergency Support Loan assistance, as well as infrastructure projects under the Build, Build, Build agenda of the Philippine government.

Though we live in a time where natural disasters and public health emergencies are happening, it is when countries lend a hand and come together that we can achieve a sustainable post-disaster recovery. •





## Protecting the welfare of children in time of COVID-19

Turnover of hygiene kits to ACTION



Handwashing activity in RCF

It is often repeatedly said that children are the most valuable resource in the world and the best hope for the future. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic has altered the lives of many young children, disproportionately affecting those from marginalized and vulnerable communities.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has in fact warned that the pandemic increased the risk factors on the prevalence of violence against children. More specifically, residential care facilities (RCFs) that take care of at-risk children had been running in full capacity with widely documented increase of abuse and exploitation of children.

With this, a Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Post Monitoring Follow-Up Program under its Technical Cooperation for Grassroots Project involving Japanese organizations, academe, and non-profit groups in development work spearheaded activities on hygiene and sanitation management as well as stress and anxiety management in these RCFs.

Together with Japanese non-profit group A Child's Trust is Ours to Nurture (ACTION) and Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), JICA provided hygiene kits to some 2,000 children and personnel at RCFs in Region 3 and National Capital Region.

Also, since the house parents taking care of at-risk children have crucial roles in the RCFs, the JICA assistance also provided more than 900 house parents with capacity building activities on anxiety management and teaching children how to cope with the pandemic. The trainings, in the form of webinars, were based on the manual on house parenting standards that JICA, ACTION, and DSWD developed in previous technical cooperation in 2013 to 2019.

While COVID-19 becomes a collective hardship of many, it becomes comforting that cooperation among government, grassroots organizations, and international partners has advocated for the common good of children, our future. •

“

*Residential care facilities (RCF) for children are among those severely affected by the COVID-19 situation. RCF personnel experience anxiety and stress from their work load and uncertainties of the situation, while children in RCFs are also expected to have anxiety. The JICA assistance did not only help RCFs respond better to the pandemic, children especially those new at RCFs were also given support in terms of personal welfare and hygiene.*

**YOKOTA Hajime**  
President and Founder  
ACTION

”

## Enhancing Philippine response in fight against COVID-19

A quick glance at the World Health Organization's (WHO) COVID-19 data tracker shows that "higher transmission intensity and indications of widespread community transmission" remains prevalent in the Philippines.

This has prompted the government to continuously increase laboratory capacity as part of its response to the situation. This is also why the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) as

part of its support to addressing public health challenges worked with the Philippines' Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) and San Lazaro Hospital.

The Philippines had one of the longest lockdowns in the world, imposing strict movement restrictions since March 2020. Despite this, WHO data pointed to an increasing trend in transmission in certain areas, including the National Capital Region (NCR).

### Equipment for COVID-19 Testing

The RITM and San Lazaro Hospital, both in the NCR and institutional partners of JICA, received new laboratory equipment and supplies from JICA to boost testing facilities, and ensure quality of test results.

Prior to COVID-19, JICA and RITM had been partners during the height of the cholera outbreak in the Philippines with the Philippine-Japan Joint Commission on Cholera Research paving the way for the establishment of RITM. JICA provided the grant to build the institute in partnership with Department of Health (DOH) back then. Today, the RITM is at the forefront of the Philippines' response against COVID-19.

"The pandemic highlighted the Philippines' lack of experience and preparedness in mounting a rapid, full-scale, whole-of-society approach, whole-of-government public health response. As the Philippines understands more about the pandemic and the course of the disease, serologic testing for COVID-19 will provide more information about the infection, determine the extent of COVID-19 to the population, and provide information for the national vaccination program. The JICA assistance for testing equipment will help enhance our surveillance and testing capacity even beyond the pandemic, particularly on future outbreaks," shared Dr. Celia C. Carlos, RITM Director. Meanwhile, JICA and San Lazaro Hospital piloted a rapid diagnosis technology against Tuberculosis that a Japanese compa-

ny developed. The partnership helped decrease the risks of secondary infection among TB patients. A TB Advisor will also be dispatched to the Department of Health (DOH) to further assist in the activities towards the reduction and elimination of TB in the country.

Both RITM and San Lazaro Hospital are also involved in the Japan-Philippine One Health Rabies Project (JAPOHR) that JICA implements with Japan's Oita University where rapid diagnostic kits for rabies in canines and humans are being developed.

"For COVID-19, JICA's support for laboratory equipment and diagnostic kits complemented the assistance of the Department of Health on manpower for better diagnosis and treatment of the disease. There is a need for Philippines to improve on producing bioinformatics data that can contribute to the surveillance activities on the pandemic. International organizations like JICA can help improve the Philippines' data management on emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases towards effective public health policies," said Dr. Edmundo Lopez, San Lazaro Hospital Medical Center Chief II.

With the COVID-19 threatening the capacity of other public health institutions, JICA has also offered support to provide medical supplies to drug treatment and rehabilitation centers of DOH to minimize exposure and infection in these facilities. JICA and DOH are currently working to improve



Pharmaceutical refrigerator provided to RITM will ensure safe and secure storage of temperature sensitive pharmaceuticals, medicines, and biologicals.

treatment of Filipino drug dependents under an ongoing project Introducing Evidence-Based Relapse Prevention Program to Drug Dependence Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers (IntERlaPP). •



**CAPTION** The cobas e 411 analyzer provided to San Lazaro Hospital is a fully automated analyzer that has high sensitivity, reliability, and reproducibility of results which uses ElectroChemiluminescence (ECL) technology for immunoassay analysis that can be used for a broad range of applications including infectious diseases.

## Equipment for COVID-19 Testing

One of the challenges that COVID-19 revealed in the Philippine health sector is the need for strengthening existing network of laboratories for surveillance, detection, and response to Emerging Infectious Diseases (EIDs). In 2021, JICA and DOH are to start the Strengthening the Philippine National Health Laboratory Network project to enhance the capacity of an integrated national laboratory and other laboratories on management and biosafety.

Having an integrated surveillance network will help the Philippines mount improved future pandemic response. Under this cooperation, JICA and DOH will develop a roadmap, manuals, and training modules to enhance the Philippines' response strategies. •

## Follow-Up Assistance to Past Health Projects

Leveraging on past cooperation in the Philippine health sector, JICA continues to work with organizations involved in previous JICA projects through equipment assistance to Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center (EVRMC) and Philippine General Hospital (PGH). Also, in partnership with Japanese non-profit organization A Child's Trust is Ours to Nurture (ACTION), JICA distributed hygiene kits to benefit almost 2,000 children and personnel in selected Residential Care Facilities of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) in Region 3 and the National Capital Region to support COVID-19 response.

As the Philippines pushes its efforts to flatten the COVID-19 curve, enhancing the response capacity of key hospitals, laboratories, and research institutions will hopefully turn things around. •



**CAPTION** RITM received an ultra-low temperature freezer which can be utilized to store biological samples and COVID-19 vaccines providing uncompromised protection since the temperature can be as low as -86 degrees Celsius.

# Food security for all amid COVID-19

As pandemic lingers, food security has become a pervasive challenge that countries face along with staggering job losses and shrinking incomes.

A United Nations (UN) paper, in fact, pointed out that each percentage drop in GDP is expected to result in 0.7 million nutrition-deficient children, and that the COVID-19 income effects can lead to acute food insecurity in the coming months. Food security became a critical issue in the Philippines after strict

community quarantine measures were imposed nationwide for several months in 2020. With the sudden restriction of movement of people, the food value chain was disrupted and its players from the farmers up to the retailers were left unprepared to address these challenges, compromising the food security in the country.

With this, several outputs of Japan International Cooperation Agency's (JICA) past projects in the agriculture sector have provided some form of assistance to help meet the challenge.

## Improving the value chain

The shelter-in-place and border control measures suddenly imposed under strict community quarantine arrangement on March 2020 disrupted the food supply chain in the country, and caused heavy damage on farmers' businesses and resulted in consumers' fear of food shortage. In such situation, a group of farmers, the Buguias-Japan Agricultural Trainees Association (BJATA) in Benguet who had built up their capacity in JICA's past cooperation were able to address this. They had been maintaining market linkages and stable production of various vegetables in large volumes for delivery within Benguet and to Metro Manila during the strictest Enhanced Community Quarantine period.

Under the Safe Vegetable Production and Marketing Technology Project (2016-2019) of JICA and Japanese non-profit group Japan Agricultural Exchange Council (JAEC) in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture (DA), farmers in Benguet were trained on crop programming, post-harvest handling, transport, pricing, and marketing which contributed to food security. To avoid spoilage which reaches up to 40% of its weight through all processes of handling, farmers are encouraged to use plastic crates instead of directly piling up vegetables in the truck for transport. They also succeeded to create strong partnership with Japanese and local distributors, and were able to command premium price for their produce.

BJATA was one of the most successful groups whose vegetable transactions improved from two shops to 24 shops and volume production from 33 kg to as much as 4,000-5,000 kilograms per week through capacity development and technology transfer under the project. BJATA had continued to supply organic, quality vegetables in Metro Manila and Cavite areas even after the project was completed. All these features of BJATA strengthened through JICA's cooperation enabled them to remain stable in production, transporting vegetables, and transactions despite restricted and difficult situation under COVID-19. Considering such achievements of BJATA, DA plans to provide a refrigerator truck for improving their vegetable distribution in 2021.

"Improvement and strengthening of Food Value Chain in the Philippines" is a main pillar of expected contribution of Japan which was raised in 2nd "Japan-Philippines Agriculture Cooperation Dialogue" conducted in June 2017. In line with this direction, JICA and DA is preparing new Technical Cooperation Project targeting vegetable Value Chain. It is observed that JICA and our counterpart entities in Philippines and Japan are steadily moving ahead.

As COVID-19 continues to limit the supply chain, JAEC is looking into developing further linkages between Metro Manila and rural areas to improve vegetable distribution. •



SAVERS instructor training for producing wood vinegar plant



Sorting of vegetables



Conventional vegetable distribution in Benguet



Local market in La Trinidad



 JICA FMR in Datu Paglas, Maguindanao passing through a banana farm, photo from LGU of Datu Paglas, Maguindanao

## Socio-economic infrastructure in agriculture

The impact of the pandemic is also felt on basic services access and economic displacement of many people. In Datu Paglas, Maguindanao, a farm-to-market (FMR) road built under JICA's Community Development Project for Conflict-Affected Areas in Mindanao (CD-CAAM) and handed over to the LGU in 2018 is helping address this by linking farmers to agricultural markets. The road helped reduce travel time from farmlands to market from 60 to 15 minutes, consequently reducing the farmers' transportation costs that farmers endured for many years when bringing their products to the market.

The road, which spans 8.7 km and connects four (4) barangays in Datu Paglas, turned out to be one of the major thoroughfares in the municipality during the quarantine period. Likewise, the road project also gave income opportunities not just to farmers but to economically displaced residents. As an alternative source of income pending their return to their respective employments, they established small businesses along the road area, thus generating economic activities in times of COVID-19. Under this grant project, two (2) FMRs were also constructed in Bumbaran, Lanao del Sur and Alamada, North Cotabato. •



 Constructed bridge along Datu Paglas FMR in Maguindanao, photo from LGU of Datu Paglas, Maguindanao



**CAPTION** Weighing of cattle at Leon LOM in Iloilo, photo from DA Regional Field Office IV

## Market access for livestock farmers

As food security is not just about putting food on the table, a project to rehabilitate and modernize livestock markets in the Philippines with fund sourced from the Counterpart Funds of the Japanese Grant Assistance for the Food Security Project for Underprivileged Farmers (2KR) has been helping livestock producers find markets and boost their income. Through the Department of Agriculture (DA) and concerned Local Government Units (LGU), livestock Oksyon markets (LOM) in Batangas, Masbate, Negros Oriental, Iloilo, and Antique were rehabilitated and connected to information and communications technology (ICT). LOM is a marketplace where livestock and poultry raisers can trade their commodities at fair price based on exact weights during days set by the LGUs.

The project has helped livestock farmers whose market is still reeling from the effects of African swine fever (ASF) since 2019. The pandemic has exacerbated the situation particularly on the supply. In Western Visayas, the LOMs ensured efficient supply of livestock free from ASF cases. The project sites became trading hubs where hogs in the region can be consolidated for shipment to Metro Manila. In the last quarter of 2020, around 8,000 hogs were shipped to Metro Manila from the LOMs in the Western Visayas. Despite COVID-19, the LOMs helped secure income of farmers and food of local families. •



**CAPTION** Weighing scale house at Leon LOM in Iloilo, photo from DA Regional Field Office IV



**CAPTION** Negotiation of sellers and buyers of livestock in Sibalom LOM in Antique, photo courtesy of DA Regional Field Office VI, photo from DA Regional Field Office IV



## Creating sustainable water supply in time of COVID-19

The Philippines' water supply has been closely linked to its development. Despite the Philippines' rich water resources through its rivers and lakes, there remains one out of 10 Filipinos without access to improved water sources, a World Health Organization (WHO, 2019) report said. Climate change effect like El Niño has also dampened the consumption and stock of water resources.

The COVID-19 pandemic added further stress to this fundamental resource. Also, from the viewpoint of public health, the importance of stable water supply is recognized. This prompted the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), National Water Resources Board (NWRB), and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to roll out a data collection survey for the Philippines' National Water Resource Development and Management. The Survey emerged as a response to address water security in the Philippines as its population and economy grow, while confronting the challenges of a post-pandemic future.

The Philippines has long been taking efforts to deal with this problem. In 1998, the government initially worked with JICA for a nationwide Master Plan Study on Water Resources Management. This study laid down institutional recommendations as well as drew a comprehensive picture of water resources balance in the Philippines.

At the turn of the century and with the pandemic putting water security in public health issues, the JICA data collection survey with the Philippines aims to study 12 water resource regions in the Philippines, estimate water availability, project water demand, and develop a master plan for water resource development and management. The study also involves the latest remote sensing technology and hydrologic modeling to analyze the impact of climate change in water resources.

The Philippine government's partnership with JICA for the new study will highlight the priority given to its water resources, using research and study to identify strengths and explore new opportunities. •



“

*High demand for water arising from health and sanitation protocols calls for new water sources to ensure that demand is met. The current pandemic strengthens our case to pursue initiatives towards water security in the Philippines. And so, JICA's assistance on the conduct of data collection survey for national water resource development and management complements the Philippine Water Supply and Sanitation Master Plan, ensuring that up-to-date information will be available in implementing programs on Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation as well as integrated water resources management.*

**Roderick M. Planta,**  
Assistant Secretary for Infrastructure  
Development, National Economic and  
Development Authority

”

## Supporting pandemic response in conflict areas

As coronavirus spreads, vulnerable communities such as those in conflict-affected areas in southern Philippines, and their need for recovery assistance are put on spotlight. Understanding the needs of these communities plays a game-changing role in ensuring that conflict-affected areas bounce back from the economic setback while embracing resilience.

To this end, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Ministry of Interior and Local Government in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (MILG-BARMM) implemented a rapid assessment survey project to study the effect of COVID-19 in conflict-affected areas.

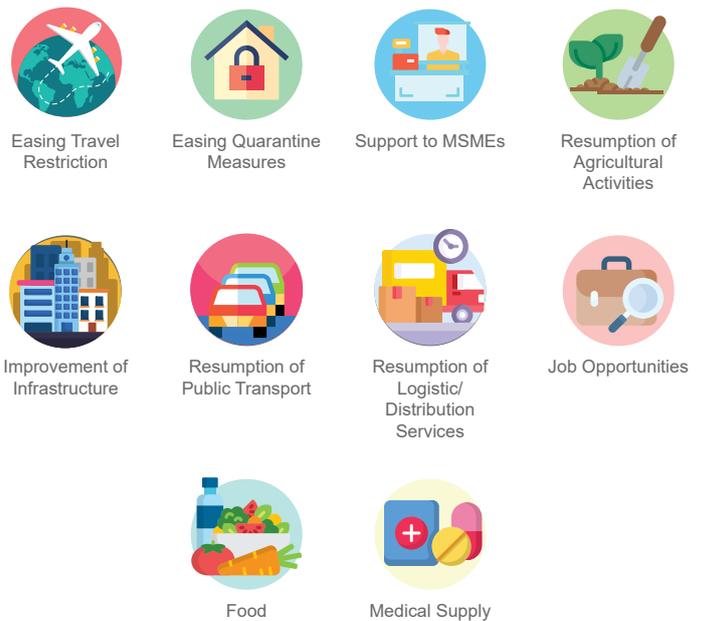
The survey was a starting point to explore future development interventions in the Bangsamoro as they transition to a Bangsamoro government by 2022. The activity was also under the ongoing JICA-assisted Capacity Development Project for the Bangsamoro (CDPB). There were 113 municipalities, two cities (Marawi and Lamitan), and 63 barangays in North Cotabato that were surveyed to find out COVID-19 impact in the Bangsamoro.

The activity showed that the pandemic provided wider challenges in conflict-affected areas that include access to basic services and emergency needs, transport of goods, anxiety, lack of public transport, high prices of food and daily necessities, insufficient supply of goods, and insufficient income.

In terms of intervention, the survey also showed that priorities were recommended for medical supplies and food, improving infrastructure, jobs, and resumption of agricultural activities to help communities recover from the public health crisis.

Despite the COVID-19 threat, however, leaders in the Bangsamoro transition process have been working closely with JICA towards a collective effort to create sustainable and responsive programs. In a message, Interim Chief Minister Ahod Al Haj Murad Ebrahim said, "We recognize the need for programs and policies that prioritize human security above anything else especially during a time that the world grapples with challenges brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. We hope to transition communities which suffered decades-long armed conflict into self-reliant and resilient communities in the Bangsamoro." ●

### BARMM Survey Result on "Needs Assessment and Recommended Programs/Intervention"



**CAPTION** MILG Staff processing survey data from the various LGUs



**CAPTION** MILG Staff assessing survey data

## Q&A Feature: Building back better



 Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez and JICA Philippines Chief Representative AZUKIZAWA Eigo

As nations all over the world focus on economic restructuring in a post-pandemic world, countries such as the Philippines are embracing cautious optimism to bounce back from the impact of COVID-19. The Philippine government has taken a whole of nation approach to steer the country in adjusting to the new normal.

Under the We Recover as One report, the government is implementing policies and strategies in partnership with individuals, communities, society, as well as international partners like Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). For the JICA Annual Report exclusive, Department of Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez shares with JICA Chief Representative AZUKIZAWA Eigo how the Philippines is building back better from the pandemic and implementing fiscal strategies to overcome the economic challenges COVID-19 brings.

**A:** Other countries in the world continue to face a rising number of COVID-19 cases. Given the global COVID-19 situation, what do you think is the pandemic's greatest impact to the Philippine economy?

**D:** Like the rest of the world, the Philippine economy was deeply scarred the past year. Our government made the difficult decision of imposing community quarantines to save lives and protect communities from COVID-19, while beefing up our healthcare capacity. This is not without any consequence. Like any policy decision that comes with trade-offs, this one came at a huge cost to the economy and the people.

Our gross domestic product (GDP) fell by 9.5% in 2020. Revenue collection also took a significant dive because of the slowdown in economic activity. However, we saw consistent and increasing positive signs of economic recovery when we gradually started re-opening the economy in last year's second half. Hunger and unemployment rates quickly fell by half from its peak during the lockdown. We managed to collect revenues amounting to PHP 2.84 trillion in 2020. This was just 0.4 percent short of our total collection outlook for the year, but 13 percent higher than our adjusted target set in July 2020. However, this is lower by 9 percent from the 2019 level.

We see hopeful signs that our economy will quickly rebound beginning this year. Our international reserves reached a historic high of USD 110 billion in 2020, equivalent to 11.8 months' worth of imports. Last year, the Philippine peso also appreciated by 5.4 percent against the US dollar, strengthening our ability to import the goods we need to support greater economic activity in the months ahead.

Our inflation rate remained low throughout the year and stood at 2.6 percent on average. This is well within our official target band of 2 to 4 percent. The timely enactment of the government's PHP 4.506 trillion 2021 national budget will provide us with sufficient means to hasten the recovery of the domestic economy along with the recent passage of majority of our key economic recovery bills.

Our proposed bill Financial Institutions Strategic Transfer (FIST) has been ratified by both chambers of Congress. This will allow banks to offload their souring loans and assets through asset management companies so they can extend more credit to pandemic-hit businesses.

Congress has ratified the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises Act (CREATE), which is the government's biggest stimulus ever for businesses. This will allow enterprises to avail of lower corporate income taxes and other benefits to aid in their recovery. The bill also proposes more flexibility in granting fiscal and non-fiscal incentives to private enterprises so the Philippines can compete internationally for more high-value investments.

We are also pushing for the passage of the Government Financial Institutions Unified Initiatives to Distressed Enterprises for Economic Recovery (GUIDE) bill. This will allow us to create a special holding company so government financial institutions can infuse equity, under strict conditions, to strategically important companies facing solvency issues.

**A:** Do you agree that the virus will be with us for the long-term? How do you think the Philippines can address the long-term situation?

**D:** We cannot predict how the virus will evolve over time, but we learned over the past year that we have the capability to take a whole of society approach to control and mitigate its risks on health and economy.

A safe and effective vaccine will no doubt be a game-changer when it becomes available to us. The DOF has secured financing to acquire and roll out vaccines to 100 percent of our adult population, which is approximately 70 million. The government is already in negotiations with pharmaceutical companies as well as the private sector to ensure that inoculation can proceed as soon as possible.

The public health emergency could last for months or possibly years. The battle against COVID-19 is going to be a marathon not a sprint. We appreciate the importance of continued fiscal discipline to ensure the resilience of our economy in the long-term.

Our deficit spending in 2020 reached 7.6 percent of our GDP. This is more than double the deficit-to-GDP ratio of 3.4 percent in 2019. We will maintain an elevated but manageable deficit-to-GDP ratio of 8.9 percent in 2021 behind the need for strong government fiscal support in restarting the economy. This will substantially decrease to 7.3 percent of GDP in 2022. Despite the large increase in our deficit spending, we expect our deficit-to-GDP ratio to remain within the median of our neighbors and credit-rating peers around the world.

We have made sure that the size of our deficit targets still takes into consideration our adherence to long-term debt sustainability.

We set out a clear strategy to financing our deficit. We prioritized domestic borrowings, followed by Official Development Assistance (ODA) and international capital markets. We determined this plan as the most prudent approach, ensuring sustainability in our debt service. Also, with our credit ratings at historic highs, we quickly accessed emergency financing from our development partners, such as JICA, and commercial markets at very low rates, tight spreads, and longer repayment periods.

Last year, our debt-to-GDP ratio stood at 54.5 percent from a historic low of 39.6 percent in 2019. This is projected to increase to 57.0 percent in 2021 and 59.7 percent in 2022. Even with the upscaling of our borrowing plan, we will still be able to keep our debt ratio within a sustainable threshold. This gives us the advantage over economies who were already saddled by heavy debt even prior to the crisis.

We will continue to exercise discipline and prudence in managing our fiscal affairs as this is the key to a strong and sustainable recovery.

**A:** The Philippine government came up with the We Recover as One report that identifies policies and programs for economic activities under the new normal. How do you think this will help government agencies like DOF make a difference post-COVID-19?

**D:** The We Recover as One report, drafted by our socio-economic planning department in coordination with other agencies, outlines many of the government's priorities for a strong economic recovery.

Among our priorities is investing in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) resources to make government operations more efficient. Our experience in implementing the Small Business Wage Subsidy (SBWS) government program during the pandemic taught us that to succeed in the new normal, government agencies have to embrace a digital first mindset. The SBWS is an automated and digitally-enabled social protection program, with manual processing kept to a minimum. With

this and with the electronic databases of the Social Security System (SSS) and the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR), implementing agencies were able to target beneficiaries accurately and distribute subsidies quickly with zero face-to-face contact with government employees.

The SBWS has become the model for future subsidy programs to follow. To complement this further, we are accelerating the rollout of the National ID program that will facilitate the government in accurately targeting beneficiaries and delivering public services.

**A:** People are curious how COVID-19 related decisions are made. How does DOF contribute to decisions as far as macro-economic policies related to COVID-19 are concerned?

**D:** As the lead agency of the economic team and a member of Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC), we determine growth assumptions, revenue spending, deficit and borrowing targets, and other economic goals.

Our situation emphasizes the need to spend our limited resources and energy on the right things. Our first priority is to mitigate prevailing hunger, the most urgent concern of our most vulnerable countrymen.

Second is to provide vaccines to our health care and economic frontline workers. These are drivers of public transportation and other essential employees needed to maintain basic services. The vaccine will help us manage the risks of infection and allow us to safely reopen more of the economy and help restore jobs and incomes.

Both priorities are critical to economic recovery. Fully opening the economy will put the Philippines back on its pre-COVID solid growth and development trajectory.

**A:** Many countries are learning different ways of coping with COVID-19 depending on their local situation. In the Philippines, if you knew back then what you know now about the pandemic and its impact, what would you suggest be done differently?

**D:** Although no one anticipated the global health emergency and its impact, the Duterte administration did not shirk from its responsibility to protect its citizens. We quickly took stock of the situation and responded with everything we had. What I can share with you are the important lessons that we have learned throughout this calamitous episode that can help us better prepare for future adversities.

First is the importance of maintaining the highest standards of fiscal discipline. In our case, we maintained a “saving for rainy days” approach to handling public finance. Our financial readiness gave us solid footing in the battle against COVID-19. We owe this in large part to President Duterte’s prudent fiscal policy and political will to pursue reforms since the beginning of his term in 2016. This gave our government the confidence to do what was necessary to save our people and keep the economy afloat.

Our strong macroeconomic fundamentals have also inspired the trust of our global investors and development partners who continue to generously lend to us at concessional terms.

We do not know what the next health crisis or disaster will be, but we know that it will come. And we must be prepared. The Philippines, therefore, is pursuing policies targeted towards bolstering our fiscal position to withstand future adversities. At the same time, we are crafting and pursuing more reforms that will shape our societies towards greater financial inclusion for our people.

The second lesson we have learned from this crisis is the need to accelerate our move into e-government. We need to fast track the roll out of our national ID system to enable us to track all our citizens and rapidly deliver targeted subsidies to them whenever necessary.

**A:** As the Philippines transitions to a new normal, how do you see the role of bilateral partners like JICA in the post-pandemic future? Is there any change you see on how the Philippines will engage its development partners in moving forward from COVID-19 situation?

**D:** We express our heartfelt gratitude to the people and Government of Japan for their generosity and earnestness in supporting our infrastructure modernization program and COVID-19 response measures.

Despite the pandemic, the Philippines and JICA achieved major milestones through the signing of loan and grant agreements for six projects, a testament to the solidarity between our countries. With the generous assistance of JICA and other development partners, we are confident about overcoming this global crisis and coming out stronger and more resilient than ever.

In the post-pandemic future, the Philippines remains committed to exploring and continuing our development initiatives with our bilateral partners. Specifically, our economic recovery strategy relies heavily on rapidly restarting the Build, Build, Build program with strong support from Japan and JICA. With high multiplier effect on the economy, infrastructure investments will be the lead engine for high growth and rapid recovery in the near term. •

**Carlos Dominguez III**  
Philippine Finance Secretary





## Op-Ed: Sustaining the Partnership by Cielito F. Habito

Artwork by Kristelle Joyce Adami, winner of the 2018 JICA Digital Art Competition

The onslaught of the once-in-a-lifetime global scourge that COVID-19 makes it all too clear that international cooperation is the only way to go to overcome the difficulties the virus leaves in its wake. Now, more than ever, Filipinos must learn from and draw on the knowledge, experience and lessons other countries have to offer on battling and mitigating the human misery and economic hardship the virus has brought.

For the Philippines, the toll has been particularly severe. Even as it entered 2020 leading its neighbors in economic performance by various measures, it now finds itself at the opposite end, having suffered the worst contraction among its peers in Southeast Asia. Apart from a recession two to five times deeper than in its neighbors, joblessness is also the highest, and the rise in consumer prices second fastest in the region, eclipsed only by Vietnam whose economy, nonetheless, continued growing. But most telling has been the human cost of the economic decline, worsened by natural calamities late in the year that brought great destruction to properties, crops, and human lives. Hunger has tripled from 2019 levels, escalating already high rates of

severe malnutrition and stunting in young children. Education has likewise taken a severe blow under a situation that forces remote learning modes, to the great disadvantage of children in poor and far-flung communities with limited or no connectivity. Both threaten dire long-term consequences for the country.

The two sectors that withstood and defied the overall economic decline, agriculture and the digital economy, will be key to restoring the economy and people's jobs and livelihoods. Agriculture and agribusiness value chains can deliver more inclusive growth, with farming prevalent in practically all regions of the country, now including the National Capital Region where urban agriculture has found impetus under community quarantines. The lockdowns also forced a shift from shopping malls to e-commerce; from live entertainment to online streaming services; from face-to-face gatherings to virtual meetings, webinars and conferences; and from classroom learning to online classes. COVID-19 has sped up what many believed to be the natural and inevitable direction of business and the economy even well before the pandemic hit. Artificial intelligence, the internet of things

and blockchain shape new ways of producing, processing, marketing, transporting, buying and consuming products and services, and the Philippines must find its place in this unfolding Fourth Industrial Revolution. But in agriculture and the digital economy – and more urgently, in managing the pandemic – the country continues to face hurdles it must surmount, and handicaps it must overcome.

It is here where international development cooperation remains indispensable, especially to fill the infrastructure, material and knowledge gaps that continue to hamper the Philippines from achieving its fuller potential as it emerges from the pandemic crisis. Japan, through JICA, has consistently been the country's largest bilateral donor, and stands out as a dominant and versatile development partner able to respond to our needs in all the above areas, and more: from building the country's first subway line, to rehabilitation and improvement of irrigation facilities, promotion of health in local communities, flood prevention, coastal resources management, energizing the Bangsamoro region, rehabilitation and reconstruction in Marawi, deploying a steady flow of Japanese volunteers to handhold communities and institutions in addressing a wide range of development challenges –

plus many more. Both Japan and the Philippines face a dramatically changed environment as they navigate the “new normal” forced upon us by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the scope for even closer cooperation and mutual complementation grows even wider. Both economies have been battered by the pandemic crisis, the final resolution of which remains elusive and uncertain. Looking forward, [demographic trends suggest that Japan, facing long-term decline in its working age population, would stand to benefit from the projected sustained abundance of a young workforce in nearby Philippines, apart from vital goods and services the latter could supply. For its part, the Philippines could look to Japan as knowledge mentor, not only in technology, but in the social, institutional and governance arenas as well. It thus makes eminent sense that the two countries reaffirm their partnership and join hands in the recovery, restoration and renewal of their respective economies through the pandemic and beyond.

February 5, 2021

## About the Author

Cielito F. Habito is a distinguished Professor in the Department of Economics at the Ateneo de Manila University and a regular columnist in The Philippine Daily Inquirer. In addition, he was Visiting Research Fellow in Kyoto University in Japan in 1988-1989 and Visiting Fellow at the Asian Development Bank Institute in Tokyo in 2008-2009.

Dr. Habito served as Secretary of Socio-economic Planning in the Cabinet of President Fidel V. Ramos in 1992-1998, leading the economic reform programs and development strategy of the Philippines. He graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture, Summa cum laude from the University of the Philippines and a Ph.D. in Economics from Harvard University.



**Dr. Cielito F. Habito**  
Professor in the Department of Economics  
Ateneo de Manila University

**Columnist**  
Philippine Daily Inquirer

His professional involvements span work in academe, government, civil society and the private business sector. He has served in various capacities in corporate boards, NGOs and international development institutions, including membership in the JICA Advisory Committee in the Philippines.

The Outstanding Young Men Award for economics in 1992 and the Philippine Legion of Honor in 1998 are among numerous awards he has received in recognition of his exemplary work in the public service. •



## Young JICA scholars join pursuit of sustainable development

It was Steve Jobs who once said, “Innovation distinguishes between a leader and a follower.”

Such is true in the participation of three Filipino scholars in the Sustainable Development Goals Global Leadership Program (SDGs GLP) under the Knowledge Co-Creation Program of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). Formerly known as the Global Public Leadership Program, the SDGs GLP is a long-term training for young Filipinos in government in policy making and sustainable development. The program applies the framework of JICA’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) to underscore the impact of ODA in sustainable development.

Jason Yrvin Sol Establecida, Marc Jhuden Dela Cruz, and Justin Simon are scholars under the SDGs GLP, all set to use new ideas to make a difference in their fields in the Philippines.

### Business Continuity in Project Management

Establecida, a project evaluation officer at the Department of Finance-Municipal Development Fund Office (DOF-MDFO), studied Master of Arts in Global Environmental Studies in Sophia University. His paper “Battling Water Quality Deterioration Amid Rapid Tourism Growth” in El Nido, Palawan tackled the role of institutions and organizations in easing congestion in the tourism industry. “I’m also sharing my knowledge on business continuity and project appraisal models I learned in Japan to help make projects in the Philippines prioritize environment and safety,” he said.

“Hopefully my research will contribute to streamlining standards in projects that impact the environment,” he added.



Establecida (center) at a field visit

## Collective Monitoring

Another SDGs Global Leader Dela Cruz, also a development management officer at DOF-MDFO, finished the same course as Establecida in Sophia University. Dela Cruz reflected water issues in his paper “Water Quality Impact in Angat Dam in Norzagaray, Bulacan, Philippines,” concluding that, “Angat Dam supplies water to Metro Manila, Bulacan, and Pampanga. This water system was built in the 1960s and my research stressed the role of water quality monitoring in the dam to protect human health and aquatic systems.”

As water resource quality remains a pressing issue, Dela Cruz said, “Improving the dynamic between the local and national government officials is crucial to ensure water quality in our river networks and water systems.”



*caption* Dela Cruz on his first day in Sophia University

## Rethinking the role of local government

A fellow SDGs GLP scholar, Simon is a project evaluation officer at DOF-MDFO who completed Master of Economics in Kyoto University. His research “The Impact of the Comprehensive Tax Reform Program in the Philippine Economy,” found that the overall effect of combined tax packages significantly produced the intended directional effects to sectors of each region.

“Local governments have different needs, capabilities and resources. My goal is to help local governments fine-tune their projects so that future tax bills will back their economic priorities,” he said.

Most of the SDGs GLP scholars hope to introduce new ideas in their organizations after completing the program. “Every moment we spent learning in Japan contributed to our long-term goals and dreams not just for ourselves but also for our country,” said Simon.

In the end, the SDGs GLP scholars prove that everyone has a part to play in a nation’s journey to sustainable development. •



*caption* Establecida, Dela Cruz, and Simon met with JICA Philippines Chief Representative AZUKIZAWA Eigo (right) upon returning from their studies



*caption* Simon (center) on a research trip at the United Nations Office in Thailand

## Beyond ordinary help in extraordinary times

The spread of COVID-19 continues to impact vulnerable communities, but three organizations in Leyte, Cavite, and Iloilo are stepping up to continue what Japanese volunteers have done for their community.

Meet these organizations who are helping themselves cope with the pandemic, taking inspiration from the work of the Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs) who lived with them.

### Tigbauan Central Elementary School Transition Program for Special Education (SPED)



 Miura teaching children with special needs in Iloilo

“

*The work of the Japanese volunteer assigned to us inspired us to innovate and value teamwork and friendship,*

**Chriss Martin Magbanua**  
Special Education Teacher  
Tigbauan Central Elementary School

”

MIURA Haruhi was a teacher of special needs education in Japan before joining the JOCV Program of JICA. “In Japan, schools for special needs education guide students on their career and vocation. So, when I was assigned in the Philippines as volunteer, I found the chance to teach students with disabilities on different types of vocational education for their transition to independent living after SPED,” said Miura who worked with teachers and students at the Tigbauan Central Elementary School (TCES) in Iloilo.

In Iloilo, COVID-19 prompted communities to follow strict quarantine protocol but teachers in the elementary school felt the need to reach out to their students beyond the call of duty. “During the lockdown, we became front liners, visiting our students with special needs, and sharing food with them even if they live far from us,” said Chriss Martin Magbanua, a special education teacher in TCES.

Since Miura had to go back to Japan because of the pandemic, Magbanua said the school found inspiration in Miura’s proposal for the students and launched Project LISO. Project LISO stands for Learn new skills amidst the pandemic crisis, Initiate interactive engagement of parents and learners, Sustain activities that engage learning, and Output activities for survival. The school taught domestic, horticulture, and arts and crafts skills to students and worked with private individuals and non-government groups for the project.

## Matag-ob Rural Health Unit Non-Communicable Disease Program

AKAGI Chika was a nurse in Japan before becoming part of the JOCV Program. Since her work in Japan familiarized her with screening and follow-up system in healthcare, Akagi supported these at the Rural Health Unit (RHU) in Matag-ob, Leyte where she was assigned as JOCV. “I noticed that there are communities where people had difficulty accessing medical support. So, I stressed the importance of health and prevention in Leyte,” Akagi shared.

Through community groups, relationship building with residents, information and education, and Zumba classes, barangays in Matag-ob adopted health practices from Akagi. People with hypertension and diabetes became more aware of the importance of healthy lifestyle for their immune system.

Before Akagi returned to Japan, she teamed up with the RHU in creating t-shirts carrying health education messages in the local language. Despite the pandemic, Akagi hopes that the community will remember these messages and enjoy good nutrition and active lifestyles.



**Caption** Akagi leading the Zumba dance exercise of RHU Staff in Matag-ob, Leyte



*When COVID-19 happened, all our activities involving physical interaction were stopped. We continue the work of Akagi through our midwife and nurse staff who monitor the screening and promotion of healthy lifestyle to our patients.*

**Gypsy Peruda**  
Public Health Nurse  
Matag-ob Rural Health Unit



## Cavite State University On-the-Job Training for Bachelor of Science in Industrial Technology (BSIT) Students

IKEDA Takejiro was working in a manufacturing company in Japan before being deployed as a volunteer in the Philippines. At the Cavite State University – Cavite College of Arts and Trades (CavSU-CCAT) campus, Ikeda and the faculty at the industrial technology department did skills testing of students and introduced Japanese language classes. Ikeda said these will eventually help the students match the skills needed for an on-the-job training program he helped establish between CavSU and the company where he belongs.

In Cavite, many employees have been laid off and businesses closed because of COVID-19 restrictions. Rodel B. Lubong, Chairperson of the CavSU-CCAT Department of Industrial Technology, said, “The support from the volunteer will help us develop new ideas and projects for the community in addressing the economic impact of COVID-19.” For now, Ikeda and CavSU are exploring Zoom or Skype lectures to continue the learning of the students.

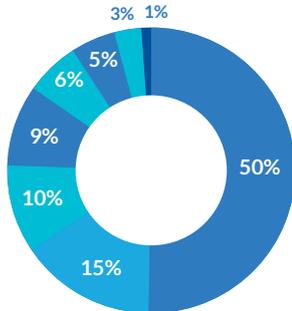


**Caption** Ikeda teaching the students of CavSU-CCAT

While these are extraordinary times, the mutual help of communities combined with volunteer support showed that no task can be done alone. When a stone is cast across the river, it can create many ripples. •

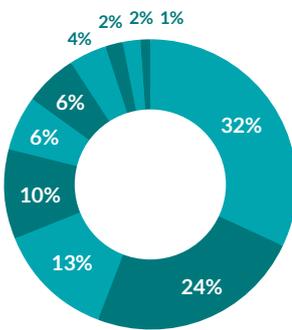
# Fast Facts

## Japan's Bilateral Assistance to the Philippines (Cumulative as of JFY 2019)



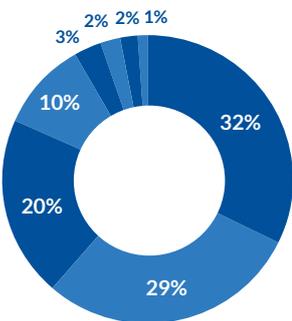
### ¥3,139,832 MILLION ODA LOAN AND PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT

50% Transportation  
15% Program Loans, etc.  
10% Irrigation and Flood Control  
9% Power and Energy  
6% Social Services  
5% Mining and Manufacturing  
3% Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries Industry  
1% Telecommunications



### ¥ 260,338 MILLION TECHNICAL COOPERATION

32% Public Works/Utilities  
24% Others  
13% Agriculture/Forestry/Fisheries  
10% Planning/Government  
6% Human Resources  
6% Health/Healthcare  
4% Mining and Manufacturing  
2% Energy  
2% Business/Tourism  
1% Social Welfare Services



### ¥ 244,066 MILLION GRANT AID

32% Agriculture/Forestry/Fisheries  
29% Public Works/Utilities  
20% Human Resources  
10% Health/Healthcare  
3% Social Welfare Services  
2% Business/Tourism  
2% Mining and Manufacturing  
1% Planning/Government  
1% Energy



**21,427**

Japanese study members sent to the Philippines



**10,468**

Japanese experts deployed to the Philippines



**42,265**

Filipinos trained by JICA



**1,677**

Japanese volunteers dispatched to the Philippines

(Cumulative as of JFY 2019)

### VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

**36**

**13** Male

**23** Female

Number of Volunteers  
Deployed in January 2020

### DISTRIBUTION BY REGION

- A 1** Region I, Ilocos
- B 2** Cordillera Administrative Region
- C 4** Region III, Central Luzon
- D 1** Region IVA, CALABARZON
- E 1** Region V, Bicol
- F 7** Region VI, Western Visayas
- G 10** Region VII, Central Visayas
- H 10** Region VIII, Eastern Visayas



### DISTRIBUTION BY SECTOR

**11** Education

**4** Safety and Resilience

**8** Agriculture and Fishery

**2** Science, Technology, and Innovation

**6** Industry and Services

**1** Social Services

**4** Health



## JICA Philippines Project List (Ongoing projects as of December 2020)

### Achieving economic growth through further promotion of investment

#### Governance

1. The Project for Enhancement of Philippine Coast Guard Capability on Vessel Operation, Maintenance Planning and Maritime Law Enforcement **Metro Manila**
2. Maritime Safety Capability Improvement Project (Phase I and II) **Nationwide**
3. The Project for Establishment of Credit Risk Database in the Philippines **Nationwide**

#### Economic Infrastructure

4. Arterial Road Bypass Project (Phase III) **Bulacan**
5. Road Upgrading and Preservation Project **Nationwide**
6. Central Luzon Link Expressway Construction Project (Phase I) **Tarlac, Nueva Ecija**
7. Metro Manila Interchange Construction Project (Phase VI) **Metro Manila**
8. Davao City Bypass Construction Project (Phase I) **Davao City**
9. Metro Manila Priority Bridges Seismic Improvement Project **Metro Manila**
10. Project for Comprehensive Traffic Management Plan for Metro Manila **Metro Manila**
11. Study on Masterplan for High Standard Highway Network Development in the Philippines (Phase II) **Nationwide**
12. Road Network Development Project in Conflict Affected Areas in Mindanao **Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao**
13. The Detailed Design Study of Road Network Development Project in Conflict Affected Areas in Mindanao **Sultan Kudarat, Maguindanao**
14. Capacity Enhancement of Mass Transit Systems in Metro Manila Project **Metro Manila**
15. North-South Commuter Railway Project (Malolos - Tutuban) **Metro Manila, Bulacan**
16. Preparatory Survey/Detailed Design Study for the Metro Manila Subway Project **Metro Manila**
17. Metro Manila Subway Project (Phase I) **Metro Manila**
18. North-South Commuter Railway Extension Project (Malolos - Clark Blumentritt - Calamba) **Metro Manila, Laguna, Bulacan, Pampanga**
19. Survey on Introducing Concrete Repairing Materials for Preventing Water Leakage **Manila**
20. Metro Rail Transit Line 3 Rehabilitation Project **Metro Manila**
21. Preparatory Survey for Dalton Pass East Alternative Road **Nueva Ecija, Nueva Vizcaya**
22. Preparatory Survey for Central Mindanao High Standard Highway Construction Project (Cagayan de Oro - Malaybalay Section) **Cagayan de Oro, Malaybalay**
23. The Detailed Design Study of Cebu-Mactan Bridge (4th Bridge) and Coastal Road Construction Project **Cebu**
24. Cebu-Mactan Bridge (4th Bridge) and Coastal Road Construction Project **Cebu**
25. Enhancement of Customs Operations **Metro Manila**

#### Investment Promotion and Industrial Development

26. Project for Industrial Competitive Enhancement thru Industrial Human Resource Development and Supply and Value Chain Development **CALABARZON**
27. Technical Assistance Project to Establish the Philippine Railway Institute **Metro Manila**
28. Technical Support to the Formulation of Subic Bay Regional Development Master Plan in the Republic of the Philippines **Subic Freeport Zone, Region IV-A**
29. The Detailed Design Study (including Supplementary Feasibility Study) of the Malolos-Clark Railway Project and the North South Railway Project - South Line (Commuter) **Greater Capital Manila**
30. Information Collection and Confirmation Survey on Digital Transformation (Dx) Promotion in ODA Projects **Nationwide**

### Overcoming vulnerability and stabilizing bases for human life and production activity

#### Disaster Risk Reduction and Management

31. Pasig Marikina River Channel Improvement Project (Phase IV) **Metro Manila**
32. Flood Risk Management Project for Cagayan River, Tagoloan River, and Imus River **Cagayan, Misamis Oriental, Cavite**
33. Flood Risk Management Project for Cagayan de Oro River **Cagayan de Oro**
34. Cavite Industrial Area Flood Risk Management Project **Cavite**
35. Promotion of School Disaster Risk Reduction and Management in Cebu **Cebu**
36. Master Plan and Feasibility Study on Flood Control and Drainage in Davao City **Davao**
37. The Project for Development of Extreme Weather Monitoring and Information Sharing System in the Philippines **Nationwide**
38. Improvement of Flood Forecasting and Warning System for Cagayan de Oro River Basin **Misamis Oriental**
39. Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Capacity Enhancement Project (Phase II) **Region IV-A, Region VII, Nationwide**
40. The Project for Capability Enhancement for High Quality Weather Observation, Forecast, Warning and Information in the Philippines **Nationwide**

#### Agriculture and Agribusiness Development

41. National Irrigation Sector Rehabilitation and Improvement Project **Nationwide**
42. Verification Survey with the Private Sector for Disseminating Japanese Technologies for Mulberry Tea Leaves Project in Pampanga **Pampanga**
43. Verification Survey with the Private Sector for Disseminating Japanese Technologies for Establishing Sustainable Organic Waste Composting Systems in Legazpi City **Legazpi City**
44. SDGs Business Model Formulation Survey with the Private Sector for the Formation of Highly Profitable and Sustainable Agricultural Area through Baby Leaf Production and Organic Seed Cultivation in Philippines **Negros Occidental, Cebu, Manila**
45. Strengthen Regional Vitalization for the Sustainable Development Project **Negros Occidental**

#### Environment and Energy

46. Forestland Management Project **Ifugao, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, Nueva Ecija, Iloilo**
47. The Project for Comprehensive Assessment & Conservation of Blue Carbon Ecosystems and Their Services in the Coral Triangle (BlueCARES) **Palawan, Iloilo, Aklan, Pangasinan, Boracay, Eastern Samar, Leyte**
48. Non-Revenue Water Improvement Project in the West Zone of Metro Manila **Metro Manila**
49. The Project for the Septage Management of Metro Cebu Water District **Cebu**
50. The Project for Capacity Development on Improving Solid Waste Management through Advanced/Innovative Technologies **Metro Manila, Quezon City, Davao City, Cebu City**
51. Verification Survey with the Private Sector for Disseminating Japanese Technologies for Recycling Waste Cooking Oil as a Substitution of Diesel Fuel with Renergy System in Boracay Island **Boracay Island**
52. The Project for Master Plan Study for Comprehensive Sewage System Development **Cebu**
53. Project on Promoting Sustainable Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle (3Rs) System through Education to Produce Environment-Minded Society for Development **Bohol**
54. Plastic Recycling Project for Improving Women's Income in Tagbilaran City **Bohol**
55. Verification Survey with the Private Sector for

Disseminating Japanese Technologies for Septage Management Improvement with Advanced Treatment Method in Panglao, Bohol **Bohol**

56. Collaboration Program with the Private Sector for Disseminating Japanese Technology for Electricity Distribution System and Management in Philippines **Batangas**
57. Data Collection Survey for the National Water Resources Development and Management **Nationwide**
58. Project for Enhancing Solid Waste Management in Davao City **Davao City**

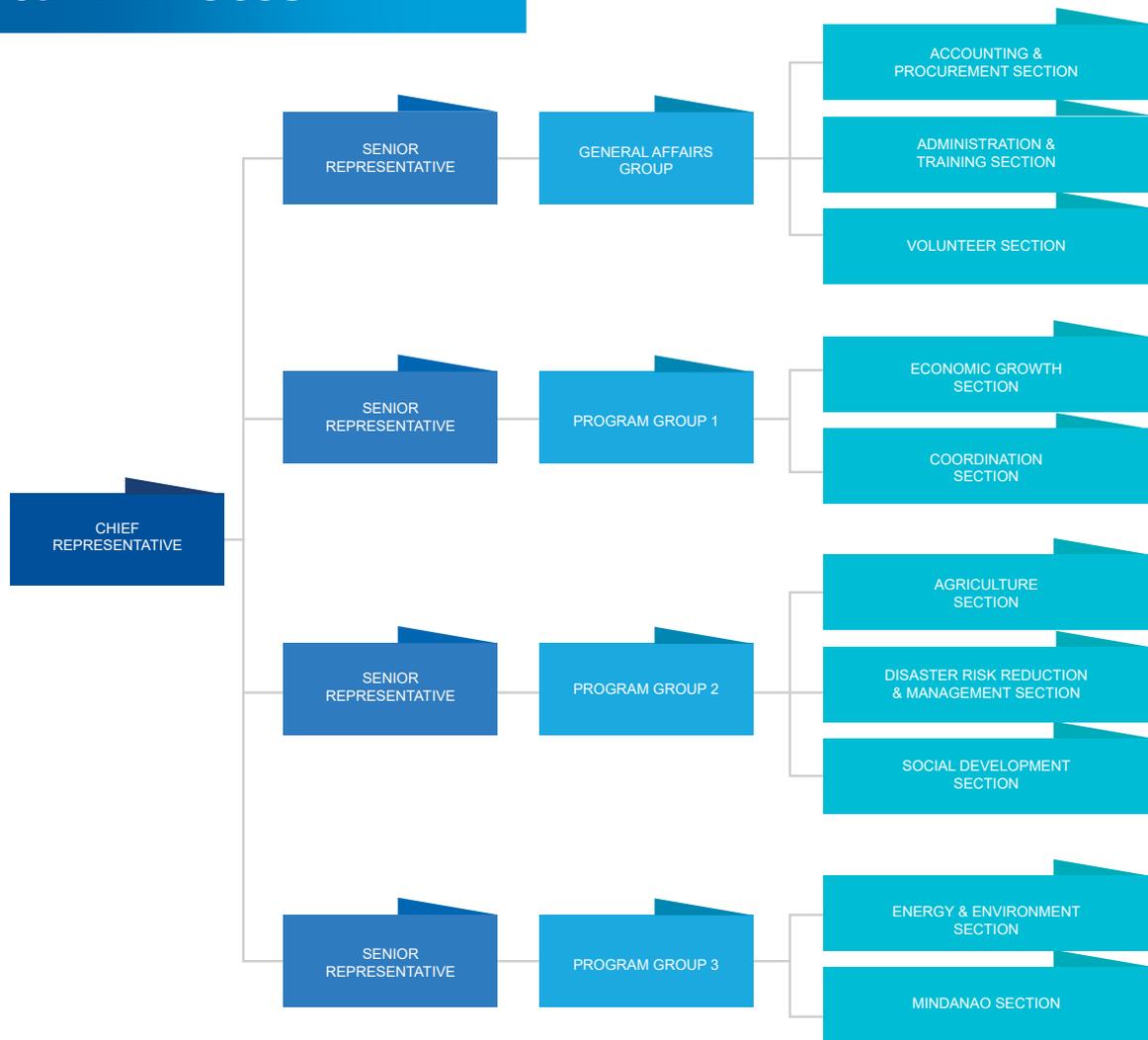
#### Health and Social Development

59. The Housing Design Support Project for Informal Settler Families (ISFs) through Human Resource Development **Metro Manila**
60. Project to Strengthen the Support Systems for Children in Residential Care Facilities (RCF) and Communities in 11 Regions in the Philippines **Regions I, II, III, CAR, IV-A, MIMAROPA, V, VI, VII, VIII and NCR**
61. Project on Knowledge Dissemination and Actual Implementation of Preventive Care Program for the Senior Citizens of Capas Municipality **Tarlac**
62. Verification Survey for the Improvement of Students' Math Performance Using the Hybrid Learning Material "Smart Lecture" **Cagayan de Oro**
63. Strengthening "Twinning" between Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS) Designated Sites, "Ifugao Rice Terraces" and "Noto's Satoyama and Satoumi" for Sustainable Development **Ifugao**
64. Project for Supporting Local Fisherfolk Communities through Training on Seafood Processing Methods and Disaster Prevention/Reduction Education **Cebu**
65. Japanese Grant Aid for Human Resource Development Scholarship (JDS) **Nationwide**
66. ASEAN University Network/South East Asia Engineering Education Development Network (AUN/SEED-Net) (Phase IV) **Nationwide**
67. The Programme for Consolidated Rehabilitation of Illegal Drug Users (CARE) **Cavite (Rehab center site)**  
**Nationwide for other program components**
68. The Project for Introducing Evidence-Based Relapse Prevention Programs to Drug Dependence Treatment & Rehabilitation Centers (IntERlaPP) **Nationwide**
69. The Project for the Establishment of the One Health Prevention and Treatment Network Model for the Elimination of Rabies in the Philippines **Metro Manila**  
**Region III**

### Peace and development in Mindanao

70. Mindanao Sustainable Agrarian and Agriculture Development Project "Lanao del Norte Bukidnon, Compostella Valley, Davao del Sur North Cotabato, South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat
71. Harnessing Agribusiness Opportunities through Robust and Vibrant Entrepreneurship Supportive of Peaceful Transformation (HARVEST) **BARM Conflict Affected Areas in Mindanao (CAAM)**
72. Road Network Development Project in Conflict - Affected Areas in Mindanao **Lanao Del Sur and Maguindanao**
73. Project for Improvement of Equipment for Power Distribution in Bangsamoro Area **BARM**
74. Programme for Urgent Improvement of Socio Economic Infrastructures in Bangsamoro Region **BARM**
75. Programme for the Support for Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Marawi City and Its Surrounding Areas **Lanao del Sur**
76. Capacity Development Project for the Bangsamoro **BARM**
77. Quick Impact Technical Assistance to the Bangsamoro Transition Authority **BARM**
78. Data Collection Survey on Infrastructure Needs in Bangsamoro (2) **BARM**
79. Data Collection Survey on Urban Infrastructure Development in Greater Cotabato City **Greater Cotabato**

# Organizational Chart and Staff Photos



## Program Group 1



## Program Group 2



## Program Group 3



# General Affairs Group



## Acknowledgements

Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Philippines thanks all government officials at the national and local levels, staff at implementing agencies, field staff, non-government organizations, private sector organizations, partner communities, and JICA staff who shared their stories, provided valuable information, arranged interviews, and worked for the success of JICA projects.

**Editorial Team:**

Jennifer Erice, Amanda Bacani,  
Roxanne De los Santos  
Maffy Carandang-Patio  
Rudy Liwanag

**Stories by:**

**Staff Photographs by:**

**Agency:**

**Art Director:**

**Coordinator:**

**Layout Artist:**

**Illustrator Artist:**

NRK Digital Media

Noriaki Isobe

Angelo Infante

Noriaki Isobe, Erica Balaan

Johin Mocil Nunez



## CO-CREATING A BETTER FUTURE FOR ALL

40F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza  
6819 Ayala Avenue, Makati City, Philippines 1200

 +63 2 8889-7119

 +63 2 8889-6850

 [pp\\_oso\\_rep@jica.go.jp](mailto:pp_oso_rep@jica.go.jp)

 [/jicaphilippines](https://www.facebook.com/jicaphilippines)

OFFICIAL WEBSITE



[www.jica.go.jp  
/philippine/english](http://www.jica.go.jp/philippine/english)