

Part IV

Regional Profiles



A Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer (JOCV) distributing school lunches at a primary school in Malawi

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East Asia

East Asia consists of countries with diverse economic circumstances, including least developed countries (LDCs), ¹ such as Cambodia and Laos, and countries like Indonesia, the Philippines, and Viet Nam, which have achieved significant economic growth but still face various domestic challenges.

The stability and development of these countries at the heart of the Indo-Pacific region are directly connected to Japan's own security and economic prosperity. From this perspective, Japan engages in development cooperation, responding to the diverse socio-economic contexts and the shifting needs of development projects of the East Asian countries.

Japan's Efforts

Japan has contributed to the remarkable economic growth of East Asia through development cooperation that integrates ODA with trade and investment. This includes developing socio-economic infrastructure through "quality infrastructure investment," ² supporting institutional and human resources development, promoting trade, and stimulating private investment. In recent years, Japan has sought to further enhance open regional cooperation and integration based on shared fundamental values. At the same time, it has worked to foster mutual understanding and sustained regional stability through youth and cultural exchanges, as well as the promotion of Japanese language. In order for East Asia, which drives the global economy, to prosper further and become a global center of growth, Japan provides support to strengthen the region's potential and expand domestic demand in each country.

Support for Southeast Asia

The ASEAN member states, ³ occupying a strategically vital position in the region, have strong economic ties with Japan, with approximately 19,800 Japanese-affiliated company offices operating in the region as of October 2024. The region is of great importance to Japan, both politically and economically, and is key to the realization of a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)." In May 2025, ASEAN adopted the "ASEAN Community Vision 2045" along with four strategic plans related to political-security, economic, socio-cultural, and connectivity matters within the region, and is working

toward further integration. Moreover, the "ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP)"* (2019) advocates openness, transparency, and inclusivity, among others, as ASEAN's guiding principles of action and the fundamental principles that it shares with FOIP.

The "Joint Statement of the 23rd ASEAN-Japan Summit on Cooperation on ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific," adopted at the ASEAN-Japan Summit in November 2020, affirmed that AOIP shares fundamental principles with FOIP. The leaders also agreed on the implementation of practical cooperation in the four areas as outlined in the AOIP (maritime cooperation, connectivity, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and economic and other possible areas of cooperation). In September 2023, the year which marked the historic milestone of the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, Japan announced the "Japan-ASEAN Comprehensive Connectivity Initiative" to further promote both structural and non-structural aspects of connectivity. Moreover, the Joint Vision Statement on ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation was adopted at the Commemorative Summit for the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation, held in December of the same year, outlining a new vision for cooperation, along with its Implementation Plan, which outlines 130 specific cooperation items.



A Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer (JOCV) working at the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office in La Trinidad, Benguet Province, the Philippines (Photo: JICA)

Building on ASEAN's initiatives and needs, Japan implements ODA across a wide range of areas, such as infrastructure development, the rule of law, maritime safety, disaster risk reduction, health and medical care, and peacebuilding. In particular, Japan aims to co-create

¹ See the glossary on page 37.

² See Part III, Section 1 (3) on page 45.

³ The 11 ASEAN Member States are Indonesia, Cambodia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Brunei, Viet Nam, Malaysia, Myanmar, Laos, and Timor-Leste (newly joined in October 2025).

a vibrant future by also advancing cooperation in new areas, including Green Transformation (GX) and Digital Transformation (DX).

With regard to strengthening connectivity, Japan has been promoting cooperation based on the “Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025,”⁴ which aims to strengthen “physical connectivity,” “institutional connectivity,” and “people-to-people connectivity” in the region. In 2019, Japan signed the Japan-ASEAN Technical Cooperation Agreement to support the reinforcement of ASEAN unity and centrality. In accordance with the Agreement, by FY2024 Japan conducted human resources development and training in areas such as cyber security (see Part III, Section 1 (2) on page 40 for details), marine plastic litter management, public international law, treatment of criminal offenders, disaster medical management, food value chain development,⁴ promotion of local industries, customs administration, and prevention and control of infectious diseases. Under the “Japan-ASEAN Comprehensive Connectivity Initiative,” Japan supported infrastructure projects such as the Metro Manila Subway and Jakarta Mass Rapid Transit. Japan also provided capacity-building support in the field of digital connectivity through the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity Capacity Building Centre (AJCCBC). Furthermore, Japan is also advancing cooperation that strengthens human and knowledge connectivity, such as accepting trainees for the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan.

In terms of infrastructure development, Japan works to promote “quality infrastructure” investment based on its past experiences of assisting Southeast Asian countries and in accordance with the “G20 Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investment.” For example, since 2017, Japan has been advancing the development of the first subway in Metro Manila in the Philippines, aiming to meet the growing transportation demand in Metro Manila, to relieve serious traffic congestion, as well as to ease atmospheric pollution and climate change. In response to the decision of the Government of the Philippines to establish the Philippine Railway Institute (PRI) for human resources development related to railway operation and maintenance, Japan also provides assistance for the development of PRI facilities, provision of training equipment such as simulators, and assistance in organizational management and capacity building. In March 2024, Japan decided on new financial cooperation for the development of a bypass road in Dalton Pass, which is the main trunk road directly connecting Metro Manila and the north-central part of Luzon Island. The construction of an alternative road that is resilient to disasters and has excellent driving performance is expected to improve access between north-central Luzon Island and Metro Manila, thereby strengthening

connectivity and contributing to the revitalization of the Philippine economy. Through such efforts, Japan provides ODA that strategically combines loan aid, grants, and technical cooperation to realize “quality infrastructure” in the Philippines.



The yen loan project “North-South Commuter Railway Project (Malolos–Tutuban)” in the Philippines is contributing to the alleviation of serious traffic congestion in Metro Manila. (Photo: JICA)

In January 2026, Foreign Minister Motegi visited the Philippines, which holds the ASEAN Chairmanship that year, and held a foreign ministerial meeting with Foreign Minister Lazaro. In the meeting, Foreign Minister Motegi conveyed Japan’s wish to further strengthen bilateral relations, noting that 2026 marks the 70th anniversary of the normalization of diplomatic relations between Japan and the Philippines. The two ministers also signed and exchanged notes concerning a grant for the provision of wireless communication equipment to support development in Mindanao.

In regard to disaster risk reduction, Japan has continued its efforts since 2009 to enhance disaster management and disaster response capacity in ASEAN with support for the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) through the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF).⁵ These efforts include the establishment of the Disaster Emergency Logistic System for ASEAN (DELSA), capacity building of the ASEAN-Emergency Response and Assessment Team (ASEAN-ERAT), and the AHA Centre Executive (ACE) Leadership in Emergency and Disaster Management Programme (ACE-LEDMP). At the ASEAN-Japan Summit in October 2024, Japan decided to dispatch JICA experts to the AHA Centre.

In the field of health, Japan fully supports the establishment of the ASEAN Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases (ACPHEED), including approximately ¥5.5 billion (\$50 million) in contributions to JAIF in 2020. Through these efforts, Japan has been contributing to strengthening the

⁴ Systems that link added value across all stages of the food production process—from farming to processing, distribution, and consumption—through the coordinated involvement of multiple stakeholders, including farmers; suppliers of inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, and machinery; agri-food processors; transport and logistics providers; and retailers.

⁵ See 59 on page 68.

capacity of the ASEAN region to address public health emergencies and to prepare for, prevent, detect, and respond to emerging infectious diseases. From 2025, Japan has also been dispatching JICA experts to ACPHEED.



A Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer (JOCV) giving a lecture on dentistry in Timor-Leste (Photo: JICA)

With regard to the area of human resources development, Japan has been working on developing approximately 80,000 people over five years from 2019, including in the digital sector such as artificial intelligence (AI), under the “Industrial Human Resource Development Cooperation Initiative 2.0” announced at the ASEAN-Japan Summit in 2018. In Thailand, Japan supports the establishment of two “Kosen schools (Technical Colleges),” that incorporate Japan’s unique “Kosen education” system, providing education at the same level as in Japan to develop engineers who will lead innovation. Currently, five departments are operating at these two Kosen schools, and in March 2025, the second cohort of 24 students graduated.

In addition, Japan implements the “Innovative Asia” initiative, which supports the circulation of competent human resources in Asian countries including ASEAN through studying abroad at Japanese graduate schools or other institutions, internships at Japanese companies, etc., with the aim of promoting innovation in Asia including Japan. Over the five years from FY2017, Japan accepted a total of 908 people from across Asia for both long-term and short-term programs. Under the “Japan-Singapore Partnership Programme for the 21st Century (JSPP21),” a joint initiative through which Japan and Singapore cooperate to provide technical assistance to third countries, the two countries jointly conducted training in FY2024 with focus on the priority areas of (i) connectivity, (ii) maritime cooperation, (iii) urban governance and smart initiatives, (iv) economic development, and (v) resilience building. Moreover, as part of Japan’s efforts to share its expertise more widely, the Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) operator, which

accumulated sufficient Japanese expertise in Phase 1 of the project, is now conducting training for capacity building of MRT operators in other countries, such as those in Ho Chi Minh City and Dhaka.

Japan also engages in economic cooperation, holding investment seminars, invitation programs, and the “BIMP-EAGA+Japan” dialogue for the East ASEAN Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA).⁶ For Indonesia, Japan has been developing local fishing ports and markets as part of its maritime and remote island development cooperation. Since 2022, tuna landed at the fishing port on Biak Island in Papua Province, which was developed through Japanese ODA, has been exported to Japan. In addition, since 2023, the development of fishing ports and markets has been undertaken on other remote islands, namely Sabang (Aceh Province), Morotai (North Maluku Province), Moa (Maluku Province), and Saumlaki (Maluku Province).

With regard to the Mekong region,⁷ which has great potential for development among the ASEAN countries, the “Mekong-Japan Cooperation Strategy 2024” was adopted in 2024, with a view to steadily implementing Mekong-Japan cooperation projects based on three pillars: (i) Resilient and connected society in the post-COVID-19 world, (ii) Digitalization, and (iii) Proactive responses to non-traditional security issues. At the Mekong-Japan Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in July 2025, the Mekong countries and Japan discussed the progress of Mekong-Japan cooperation based on this strategy, and decided to further deepen cooperation in each field.

Japan places strong emphasis on strengthening connectivity, which is critical for economic growth in the Mekong region. Japan has been steadily implementing Mekong-Japan cooperation projects including the development of Sihanoukville Port and the rehabilitation of National Road No. 5 connecting the capital Phnom Penh and the Thai border in Cambodia, the improvement of Vientiane International Airport and the “Monsoon Wind Power Project” to promote the export of renewable energy in Laos, the construction of the Ho Chi Minh City urban railway in Viet Nam, and the development of the Mass Transit System (Red Line) in Bangkok, Thailand.

Regarding Cambodia, in July 2024, Japan announced the “three new cooperation approaches,” focusing on human resources development and the application of Japanese technology in the fields of social infrastructure, maritime connectivity, and mine action. These initiatives aim to promote cooperation toward strengthening the sustainability of Cambodia’s development and further co-creation of social value, and Japan is advancing these cooperative efforts.

In the DX field, following the public-private roundtable held in Cambodia in 2024 to promote the Co-creation

⁶ A regional framework established in 1994 by Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines to promote economic growth in the developing regions of these four countries.

⁷ A region including the five countries of Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam.



Then State Minister for Foreign Affairs Miyaji attending a ceremony held on the occasion of the Japan Vietnam Festival in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, in March 2025

for common agenda initiative, Japan has continued to expand its cooperation initiatives in collaboration with various actors, including private enterprises and relevant government ministries. In response to urgent humanitarian needs arising in the border areas of Cambodia and Thailand due to a military clash between the two countries, Japan decided in August 2025, following the ceasefire, to extend Emergency Grants totaling \$1.8 million.

Regarding Thailand, in response to the major earthquake that struck in March 2025 with its epicenter in Myanmar, Japan dispatched expert teams in the fields of architecture and roads and bridges, and also held a workshop on road bridge inspection and related matters.

For Malaysia, which assumed the Chair of ASEAN in 2025, Japan has been providing support to the Malaysia-Japan International Institute of Technology since 2012, contributing to the development of highly productive and competitive human resources for the ASEAN region. This support includes the provision of educational and research equipment and the introduction of Japanese-style engineering education through a yen loan project and technical cooperation projects. Japan is also supporting the dispatch of Japanese language teachers as Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteers (JOCVs), and strengthening collaboration with Japanese industries and universities. In July 2025, Japan co-hosted the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the Conference on Cooperation among East Asian Countries for Palestinian Development

(CEAPAD IV) together with Malaysia and Palestine. With the 13 countries and regions and 2 organizations that participated, Japan discussed ways to support Palestine, leveraging the resources and economic development expertise of East Asian countries, in responding to the humanitarian crisis in the Gaza Strip and addressing future early recovery and reconstruction needs (see Part IV, Section 7 on page 121 for details on CEAPAD IV).

■ Assistance for Myanmar

In Myanmar, since the coup d'état in February 2021, the Government of Japan has consistently urged the Myanmar military to take concrete actions to (i) immediately stop the violence, (ii) release those detained, including State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and (iii) swiftly restore Myanmar's democratic political system. In view of the current situation in the country, Japan decided not to initiate new bilateral ODA projects with the military regime.

Meanwhile, the humanitarian situation in Myanmar continues to deteriorate, and delivering humanitarian assistance is an urgent issue. According to the Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan for Myanmar 2025 announced by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in December 2024, 19.9 million people, including 6.3 million children and 7.1 million women, are still in need of humanitarian assistance. Therefore, in 2024, Japan implemented additional ODA projects through multiple international organizations and NGOs for the distribution of food and medical supplies, water and sanitation infrastructure, nutrition improvement for pregnant women and infants, medical services, access to education, support for female victims of human trafficking, and drug countermeasures and rehabilitation support for those affected by the coup. An earthquake that struck central Myanmar in March 2025 further worsened this situation, with OCHA reporting that the number of people requiring assistance has risen to 21.9 million. In response to the earthquake-affected areas, Japan dispatched Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) medical teams, provided emergency relief supplies, extended emergency support such as water tanks and emergency evacuation tents through the Grant Assistance for Grass-Roots Human Security Projects and also provided \$6 million in Emergency Grants through international organizations. Japan proactively provides humanitarian assistance via international organizations, NGOs, and other organizations, directly benefiting the people of Myanmar, and has provided a total of more than \$200 million in humanitarian assistance since the coup. In addition, in 2025, support rooted in emergency humanitarian assistance and transitioning to medium-

term development is being implemented in Myanmar and Thailand through the Japan Platform (JPF) ⁸ for humanitarian activities carried out by Japanese NGOs. On July 31, 2025, the Myanmar “regime” lifted the state of emergency, and general elections were held from December 2025 through the end of January 2026. Japan will continue to strongly urge Myanmar to ensure safe and unhindered humanitarian access

and will remain committed to proactively delivering humanitarian assistance and support that contribute to the improvement of people’s lives, directly benefiting the people of Myanmar, in coordination with international organizations, NGOs, and other partners, based on the on-the-ground situation as well as the urgency of humanitarian needs.



Emergency Assistance in Response to the Myanmar Earthquake

Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) Teams, Emergency Relief Goods, Emergency Grants, Grant Assistance for Grass-Roots Human Security Projects (March 2025 – April 2025)
Response to the Earthquake Damage in Central Myanmar

Myanmar



On March 28, 2025, a major earthquake with a magnitude of 7.7 and a depth of approximately 10 km struck Myanmar, with its epicenter near Mandalay in central Myanmar. It was the country's largest earthquake in 113 years, and a large number of casualties were reported.

Just four days after the earthquake, Japan began successively dispatching Japan Disaster Relief (JDR) Medical Teams, including doctors and nurses. Over a 20-day period, a total of 69 personnel provided medical care to a cumulative total of 2,100 people affected by the disaster. To support operations on the ground, Self-Defense Forces aircraft also carried out rapid airlifts of medical supplies and equipment, including medicines and testing reagents, realizing an integrated initial response in which “personnel and relief supplies were delivered in tandem.”

Subsequently, Japan provided an Emergency Grant of approximately 900 million yen to provide humanitarian assistance in the areas of health and medical care, water and sanitation, hygiene (WASH), and food through international organizations. In addition, under the Grant Assistance for Grass-Roots Human Security Projects scheme, emergency relief goods such as water tanks and tents were provided to schools in the affected areas, and efforts to support community livelihoods at an early stage were

carried out. In this way, Japan delivered fine-tuned and seamless assistance from the initial response through to the recovery phase.

In response to Japan’s cooperation, many messages of gratitude were received from those affected by the disaster, including comments such as, “We are deeply grateful for the compassionate support extended to the people of Myanmar.” A video posted on the Facebook page of the Embassy of Japan in Myanmar announcing the start of operations by the Japanese medical team recorded the highest number of views in the account’s history, helping to widely publicize Japan’s assistance.

This assistance stands as a good example of Japan’s commitment to standing alongside people facing hardship, while demonstrating the compassion and empathy of the Japanese people through action. In recent years, the risks posed by natural disasters have increased worldwide, with the associated economic losses expanding year by year. As a country highly prone to earthquakes, Japan will continue to draw on its extensive knowledge and experience in disaster risk reduction and recovery, and in close cooperation with disaster-affected countries and international organizations, will continue to deliver effective assistance ranging from rapid emergency response to medium- to long-term recovery support.



The Leader of the JDR Medical Team announcing the start of medical treatment



A Self-Defense Forces aircraft arriving at Mandalay Airport

⁸ See the glossary on page 151.



Supporting the Conservation of Bali's Coastline, a Key Tourism Resource of Indonesia

Yen Loan (December 1996 – December 2008 (Phase 1);
March 2017 – November 2028 (planned) (Phase 2))

Bali Beach Conservation Project (Phases 1 & 2)

Indonesia



Indonesia, the world's largest archipelagic nation with a coastline extending approximately 99,000 km, experiences coastal erosion in many areas. The problem is particularly acute in Bali, where approximately 66% of the coastline is used for tourism. Since the 1970s, rapid tourism development and the expansion of coastal land use, combined with excessive extraction of river sand and coral for construction materials, have accelerated coastal erosion.

In response to this situation, Phase 1 of this project implemented coastal conservation measures in the southern part of Bali (Sanur, Kuta, and Nusa Dua beaches), where erosion was most pronounced and concerns had arisen over the impact on residents' livelihoods and tourism resources. The measures combined beach replenishment (the replenishment of sand) with the construction of breakwaters and seawalls. As a result, the rate of sand loss after beach replenishment was kept to approximately 10%, demonstrating its effectiveness in preventing coastal erosion damage. In the currently ongoing Phase 2, coastal conservation measures similar to those implemented in Phase 1 are being carried

out primarily along the eastern coast of Bali (Candidasa Beach), an area expected to be developed as a new tourist destination, while also supporting the capacity building of local organizations responsible for coastal maintenance and management through the supervision of and advice on coastal monitoring and maintenance.

Furthermore, Phase 1 of the project also reinforced the cliff face and implemented wave protection measures for Tanah Lot Temple, a renowned tourist attraction. The reinforcement of the temple's cliff face contributed to the promotion of regional tourism, with the number of visitors to the temple doubling since the time of project completion.

Local tourism operators have shared feedback that "a sense of responsibility and obligation to protect the coastline and the environment is taking root among local people." Japan will continue to advance initiatives such as coastal conservation, with a view to the sustainable utilization of tourism resources in developing countries.



Nusa Dua Beach before the project, with visible damage and collapse of the seawall (Photo: Nippon Koei Co., Ltd.)



Nusa Dua Beach after the project, with the seawall and sandy beach restored (Photo: Nippon Koei Co., Ltd.)



Glossary

ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP)

An initiative to create a vision for closer cooperation in the Indo-Pacific and strengthen ASEAN-centered regional architecture. It is not aimed at creating new mechanisms or replacing existing ones; rather, it is intended to enhance ASEAN's community building process and to better face challenges arising from the current and future regional and global environments. The initiative shares fundamental principles with a "Free and Open Indo-Pacific (FOIP)" promoted by Japan.

Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity 2025 (MPAC 2025)

An action plan for strengthening ASEAN connectivity that was adopted at the ASEAN Summit in 2016 to succeed the "Master Plan on ASEAN Connectivity" (adopted in 2010). It is positioned as a part of "ASEAN 2025: Forging Ahead Together" (adopted in 2015). The document outlines five strategic areas of "sustainable infrastructure," "digital innovation," "seamless logistics," "regulatory excellence," and "people mobility," under which key initiatives are identified.