

Japan's JICA to aid irrigation facility in Phnom Penh, Cambodia

04 May 2023 | News

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The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has signed a loan agreement with the Royal Government of Cambodia in Phnom Penh, the capital city of Cambodia, to provide a Japanese ODA loan of up to 2,482 million yen for the Southwest Phnom Penh Irrigation and Drainage Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (II). Planned Implementation Schedule (1) of the project is to be completed and operational in February 2026.

The objective of the project is to increase the productivity of agriculture in the impoverished region comprising Kampong Speu province, Takeo province, and Kandal province, mostly located southwest of Phnom Penh, by improving irrigation and drainage facilities. In doing so, the project will increase farmers' incomes as well as help the region recover from COVID-19, thereby contributing to the achievement of SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) Goals 1 (No poverty) and 2 (Zero hunger).

A major goal of this project was to improve agricultural productivity in Southwest Phnom Penh by repairing and constructing irrigation facilities, thereby improving the livelihoods of agricultural workers in the area. Phase I of the Project was signed in July 2014 (total project cost 6,772 million yen, Japanese ODA loan 5,606 million yen) and is already been provided, and the current yen loan will cover the second term.

The government of Cambodia has set promoting agriculture and agricultural villages as one target in its 4th Rectangular Strategy (2018 to 2023) and National Strategic Development Plan (2019 to 2023), aiming to invest in agricultural productivity improvement and irrigation systems. In response to the continued focus on irrigation in government policy, the Government of Cambodia requested an additional loan (this Loan) from the Government of Japan.

An important goal of the National Strategic Development Plan (2009-2013) is to improve agricultural productivity in order to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable economic growth. Through repair and construction of irrigation facilities, the plan aims to improve agricultural productivity and expand irrigation areas. In September 2012, the Cambodian government requested the Government of Japan to fund the Southwest Phnom Penh Irrigation and Drainage Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (the Project).

In the Kingdom of Cambodia, agriculture accounts for 22.8% of GDP and 35% of the employed population (World Bank, 2022), and it is the primary means of earning a living in rural and agricultural areas. Cambodia uses rainwater for cultivation. As of 2011, irrigation water is used in 30% of rice paddies in Cambodia during the rainy season and only 9% during the dry season (MOWRAM, 2012), presenting a challenge for increasing productivity. Many of the existing irrigation facilities were constructed by the Pol Pot regime (1975 to 1978). Rainwater is required to operate many of them due to design and construction issues, as well as degradation. Repairs and improvements are urgently needed to irrigation facilities.