

## The Role of Japanese Official Development Assistance in Strengthening Tajikistan's Security

Cooperation between Tajikistan and Japan is inextricably connected with the Tajik state security, which is important for strengthening the security in the whole Central Asia.

The Tajik-Japanese security dialogue runs through the following institutions:

1. Bilateral visits at the highest level. Thus, after the visit of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to Tajikistan in 2015, both parties agreed that Tajikistan would receive \$7.4 million aid from Japan [1, 263];
2. The Tajik-Japanese Intergovernmental Commission on Economic, Technical and Scientific Cooperation (the first meeting was held in 2017), as well as the Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group between the Tajikistan Parliament and the House of Representatives of the National Diet (the first meeting was held in 2019) [2];
3. The opening of the Embassy of Japan in Dushanbe (in 2002) and the Embassy of Tajikistan in Tokyo (in 2007), which simplifies communication;
4. Official Development Assistance institutions. For Japan, Asian countries have always been a priority, and the Central Asia is no exception. The ODA institutions include the "Central Asia+ Japan" dialogue, the Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), whose branch office is open in Dushanbe, etc.

I should mention that it is ODA that largely promote the relations. For Tajikistan, Japan is one of the most important donors – in 2017, Japanese ODA to this country totally accounted \$400 million [1, 261]. Japan does not provide loans to Tajikistan, but gives grants and technical assistance. Nevertheless, the volume of ODA to Tajikistan (especially through grant assistance) is slowly but steadily increasing.

*Table 1*

### **Japan's ODA to Tajikistan by Fiscal Year (in million dollars)**

Fiscal Year	Loan Aid	Grant Aid	Technical Cooperation
<b>2012</b>	-	16.5	3.71
<b>2013</b>	-	11.01	5.48
<b>2014</b>	-	20.88	4.25
<b>2015</b>	-	44.16	4.04
<b>2016</b>	-	32.71	5.35

<b>2017</b>	-	24.09	n/a
<b>2018</b>	-	37.89	n/a
<b>2019</b>	-	22.34	n/a
<b>2020</b>	-	26.65	n/a
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>365.65</b>	<b>72.17</b>

Note. Compiled on the basis of data from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and Query Wizard for International Development Statistics by OECD. URL: [https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/page\\_000010.html#tajikistan](https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/page_000010.html#tajikistan) (accessed: 7. 12. 2022)

JICA has identified three main areas of cooperation with Tajikistan:

1. Improving the basis of economic and industrial development;
2. Improving the situation with basic social services;
3. Acceleration of stability, but in the Action Plan for the Development of Tajikistan from the Japanese Foreign Ministry, this goal is described as "promoting social sustainability" [2].

Speaking in detail about the goals of JICA in this country, it is necessary to name the following projects:

As part of the basis of economic and industrial development, both parties implemented a licorice processing plant – this is the only joint venture in the country [1, 262]. Another project is on its way to enhance locust management, which will improve the situation in the agricultural sector [1, 263]. In addition, a number of projects have been implemented to build and transport links – the reconstruction of the Dushanbe Airport, the Dusti– Nizhny Panj, Kurgan-Tube – Dusti highways, Kizilkala — Bokhtar, etc. It is also necessary to mention the Energy Efficiency Improvement Program, which includes specialized energy training projects and Dushanbe energy substations restoration [2].

As part of the situation with basic social services, there are even more projects (apparently, this is the main JICA activity in Tajikistan). JICA has implemented the projects to improve the water supply system, maternal and child health in the Khatlon region, to purchase medicines aimed at children's health, etc. Additionally, Japanese funds are building two new schools and a medical center (three more schools were commissioned in 2019).

As part of the social stability acceleration, JICA has implemented the rural development project in the Tajik-Afghan border (in the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBRD)). There are several projects which are to be done. For example, the program for border control and security specialized training (especially against drugs) [2], as well as programs for the human resources development (7 humanities master's degree scholarships, granted every year since

2008), jointly knowledge creation (annual invitation of about 80 civil servants of Tajikistan to Japan to participate in different level training courses), to promote effective Tajikistan – Afghanistan border management, to improve the border population welfare, etc. Interestingly, the program also provides a Course on training Global Leaders in Sustainable Development Goals [2].

As a result of the analysis, the conclusions are as follows:

1) Japan and Tajikistan have a very extensive and multidisciplinary ODA, which allow Tajikistan to increase the pace of its development, and Japan – to create an image of a friendly country to the entire Central Asia;

2) Japan due to the Tajikistan difficult economic situation, mainly uses the ODA tools, contributing to the jobs creation and improving the overall standard of living, which makes ODA to this country one of the most important tools in strengthening Tajikistan and the whole Central Asia security;

3) Japan is particularly focusing on the mechanisms of cross-border cooperation between Tajikistan and Afghanistan at the same time strengthening the border of both states, seeking to reduce the degree of tension.

#### *Reference*

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2. MOFA of Japan (2022), “ODA by Region. Tajikistan Rolling Plan”, available at: [https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/page\\_000010.html#tajikistan](https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/page_000010.html#tajikistan) (accessed: 7. 12. 2022).

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