

**Shiga Prefecture wins the international contribution award at the Japan Water Prize
in recognition of its initiatives to support the conservation
of the water environment in Vietnam!**

Shiga Prefecture won the international contribution award at the 23rd Japan Water Prize on June 15, 2021, in recognition of the activities conducted by Shiga Prefecture and companies to support the conservation of the water environment in Ha Long Bay/Cat Ba Island and their surrounding areas in Vietnam.



Taizo MIKAZUKI
Governor of Shiga Prefecture

What is the Japan Water Prize?

The Japan Water Prize was established in 1998 to recognize activities that contribute to the improvement of water circulation with the aim of honoring those who have made great contributions to society, especially those who have done so excellently, and publicizing them widely to the public.

This international contribution award that Shiga Prefecture received is given to those whose activities are international in scope and effect and who have demonstrated outstanding achievement, including exchanges of people, culture and technology with Japan.

Sponsorship: The Japan Water Prize Committee and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism

Honorary President: His Imperial Highness Crown Prince Akishino

Lake Biwa Model through an industry-government-academia collaboration

Shiga Prefecture is home to Lake Biwa, Japan's largest and one of the world's ancient lakes.

Now Lake Biwa is beautiful, but in the 1970s, deterioration of water quality in the lake became a matter of serious concern due to population growth, an increasing number of factories and other factors during the period of high economic growth. In particular, in the late 1970s, a massive fresh water red tide bloomed in Lake Biwa. The reddish-brown lake shocked prefectural residents.

Under such circumstances, continuous scientific examination and analysis by local governments and research institutes through monitoring of Lake Biwa determined the cause to be the phosphorus contained in synthetic detergents. The determination then triggered the so-called “Soap Movement,” which was initiated primarily by housewives who use detergents and involved prefectural residents. This campaign encouraged people to use powdered soap instead of detergents.

These activities to protect Lake Biwa became a major movement, prompting Shiga Prefecture to enact an ordinance (Ordinance for the Prevention of Eutrophication of Lake Biwa) on July 1, 1980, which regulates the discharge of nitrogen and phosphorus. Although the standards were stringent, companies and factories in the prefecture worked hard to meet them. In addition, the local government rapidly constructed sewage treatment plants and introduced advanced water treatment systems capable of removing nitrogen and phosphorus ahead of the rest of Japan.

Thus, Shiga Prefecture has overcome environmental pollution resulting from economic growth through cooperation and collaboration based on four pillars: (1) contributions to scientific examination and analysis by research institutes, (2) activities by residents to protect Lake Biwa, (3) the creation of rules via an ordinance and advanced water treatment systems by local governments and (4) initiatives by companies to meet stringent discharge standards.

Shiga Prefecture has designated July 1 as Lake Biwa Day. On that day, when the ordinance was enacted, prefectural residents share the same affection for Lake Biwa with everyone and make efforts to protect the environment by participating in activities such as prefecture-wide cleaning of Lake Biwa.

The balancing act between economic development and conservation of the environment achieved by Shiga Prefecture is called the Lake Biwa Model.

In 2013, to contribute to the solution of problems on conservation of the water environment inside and outside the country by making use of the Lake Biwa Model, Shiga Prefecture established the Shiga Water Environment Business Promotion Forum (Team Water Shiga), a platform by an industry-government-academia collaboration.

Together with mainly the members of the forum, Shiga Prefecture has been providing support for mainly Asian countries that have environmental problems, like Shiga Prefecture in the past, with the aim of promoting local economic growth and environmental protection.

Details of international contribution award-winning activities

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This time, the following two activities to support Vietnam using the Lake Biwa Model were appreciated by the committee:

1. Collaborative support for organizing a structure for cooperation in improving the aquatic environment on the attractive tourism island Cat Ba (phase 1)

- As the number of tourists increases, deterioration of the water environment on Cat Ba Island has become increasingly serious. We have supported the local people involved, who aim for “green growth” while protecting the beautiful environment and unique ecosystems by making use of the know-how accumulated by Shiga Prefecture.

- With training programs and environmental learning on Cat Ba Island, momentum was created for tackling water environment protection and industry development through an industry-government-

academia collaboration. “Green Cat Ba” an industry-government-academia partnership organization, was formed on the island and has been continuing its voluntary activities even after the project was completed.

- Currently, the following project (phase 2) is being carried out. Due to the novel coronavirus pandemic, a full-scale launch of the project has been delayed, so it is being conducted mainly online.



2. Project for Green Growth Promotion in the Halong Bay Area, Quang Ninh Province

- As with Cat Ba Island, Quang Ninh Province, which faces Halong Bay, is facing the problem of deterioration of the water environment due to rapid development and an increase in the number of tourists along the coast. Shiga Prefecture has supported the promotion of “green growth” in Quang Ninh Province through JICA’s technological partnership project.

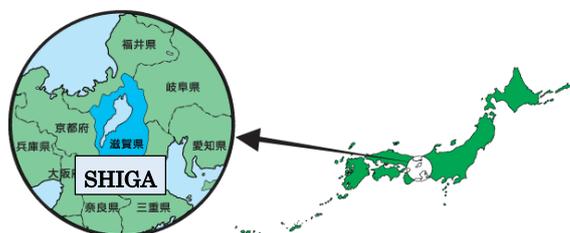
- We have been involved in support activities by utilizing technologies related to sewage treatment and the know-how accumulated through the Lake Biwa Model carried out by Shiga Prefecture. These initiatives led to the issuance of a white paper on Green Growth by Quang Ninh Province, the establishment of the Ha Long Bay Research Center, and other achievements.



What is Shiga Prefecture like?

Shiga Prefecture is located near the middle of Japan. Surrounded by mountains, the prefecture is home to Lake Biwa, Japan’s largest lake, which is located in the middle of the prefecture and accounts for about one-sixth of the total area.

This fiscal year, we will deliver news introducing Shiga Prefecture multiple times to journalists who have registered with the foreign press center.



(画像作成:琵琶湖研究所)