

Photo credit: Jelena Mitrović,
Nusreta Pusina, worker at Mizan Line textile company, which installed a heat pump for heating and cooling of their facility in Sjenica, as well as solar panels

UNDP Partnership with Japan in Serbia

June 2025



The partnership between Japan and UNDP in Serbia is characterised by strong and committed support to people and local communities affected by crises and economic hardship. Following the devastating floods in 2014, Japan provided USD 3.64 million to improve resilience and disaster preparedness in the 27 most affected municipalities in Serbia. Thanks to this support, UNDP was able to improve public utility infrastructure damaged by the floods, repair and improve water supply systems, wastewater treatment and disposal, and rehabilitate landslides. Together, we helped improve safety for 1.3 million people in these communities. Later, in response to the 2015 migrant crisis, Japan provided USD 1.1 million to support municipal coordination and service delivery in local communities that experienced a large influx of migrants and refugees. Thanks to this support, UNDP helped strengthen local institutions and service delivery and maintain community cohesion. For example, local roads and public buildings such as schools and primary health care facilities have been renovated to ensure that both the local and incoming population benefit from improved healthcare services at the local level. In recent years, Japan has been one of UNDP's key partners in promoting a just green transition in Serbia, ensuring that no one is left behind.

Focus areas:



GREEN TRANSITION

- Decarbonization
- Just Transition
- Innovation and Technology Transfer
- Energy Security



RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT

- Human Security and Crisis response
- Local resilience and disaster preparedness
- Improving public utility infrastructure and public services
- Strengthening community cohesion

UNDP projects in Serbia supported by JAPAN

▼ PROJECT TITLE	▼ FUNDING SOURCE	▼ PERIOD	▼ TOTAL BUDGET USD
GREEN TRANSITION			
Just Green Transition and Decarbonization in Serbia	Government of Japan	March 2022 – – March 2023	\$ 1M
Innovative and Just Green Transition as Tool for Securing Systemic Energy Security and Reducing Energy Poverty	Government of Japan	May 2023 – – March 2024	\$ 1M
RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT			
Increased Resilience to Respond to Emergency Situations	Government of Japan	March 2015 – – December 2016	\$3.64M
Strengthening local resilience in Serbia: Mitigating the impact of the migration crisis	Government of Japan	March 2016 – – March 2017	\$1.1M

Just Green Transition and Decarbonisation in Serbia

This initiative ran from March 2022 till March 2023, with the aim to identify and support innovative initiatives for decarbonization of the economy and industry across Serbia. The focus was on sectors most affected by the shift to a low-carbon economy, while ensuring that economic security is provided for people living in the areas of the country that rely on these sectors, and minimising job losses. The wider goal of this initiative was to contribute to Serbia achieving its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) targets, i.e. to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 33.3% by 2030 compared to 1990 levels.

Through the Innovation Challenge Call, the project has triggered investments in Serbia's green transformation and contributed to making the Serbian economy not only more competitive, but also more socially just and responsible.



GREEN TRANSITION

Key results

Support to innovations

- Supported the implementation of 8 innovative solutions that a) contributed to reduced environmental pollution and development of alternatives to the coal industry and b) supported the retraining of workers for the green jobs.

Leveraging financing for green transition

- USD 600.000 invested in co-financing of the 8 innovative solutions mobilized approximately USD 1 million in additional investment from the corporate sector.

Policy support

- Provided policy recommendations for concrete steps on how best to support those who will be most affected by the decarbonisation of the economy, including impact assessments for specific communities and regions. Wide consultations with relevant actors at national, local and corporate level, preceded the drafting of recommendations.
- More than 270 representatives of stakeholders at national and local level and from the corporate sector were included in the dialogues on the green transition for increased climate ambition and the implementation of the NDCs



Meris Ugljanin, manager of Join company in Novi Pazar, which is a green textile producer. **Photo credit:** Jelena Mitrović



Novi Pazar city sanitation workers who received a vehicle for processing green waste through the project. **Photo credit:** Jelena Mitrović



Key results - continued

Skills Improvement

- 110 beneficiaries, including workers and people from vulnerable groups, trained for green jobs;
- 38 representatives of public and private companies trained in the field of decarbonisation and just transition;
- 15 representatives of businesses and institutions trained in the KAIZEN management methodology.

Cooperation with Japanese partners:

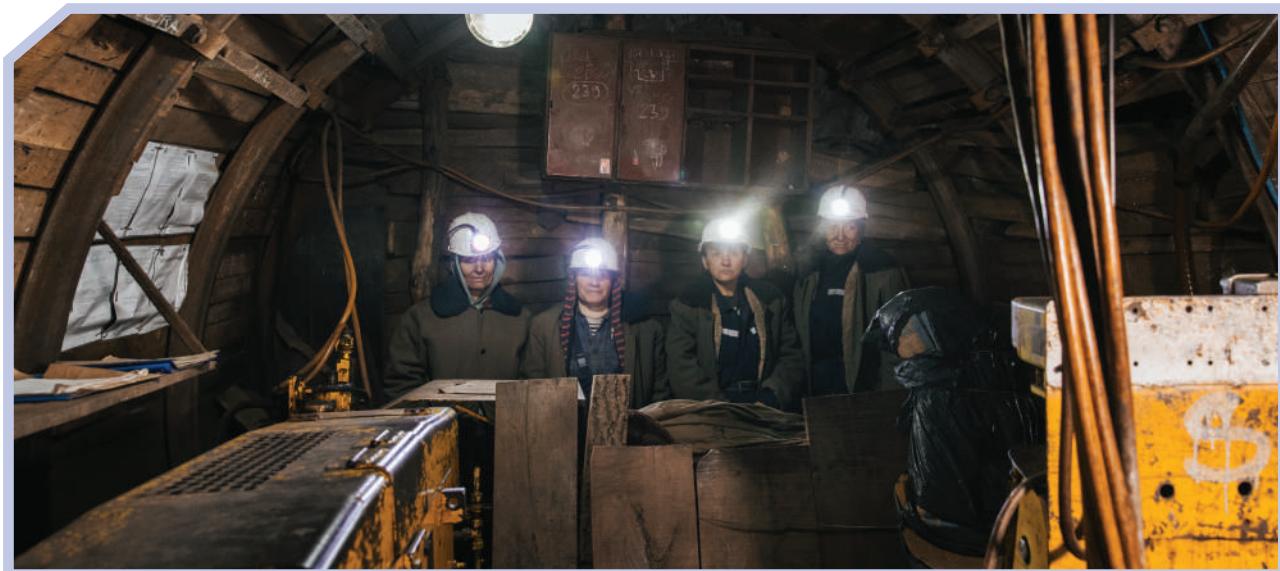
Continuous support of the Embassy of Japan has helped to accelerate the green transition in Serbia, drive decarbonisation and create a foundation for addressing just transition and energy poverty. The Japanese Business Alliance in Serbia (JBAS) acted as a key project partner in strengthening cooperation between Japanese and Serbian companies.

In addition, the introduction of Serbian companies to Japanese best practices and KAIZEN management has motivated them to invest in new, cleaner technologies and green business models and to adopt KAIZEN as an excellent methodology for increasing efficiency in the processing industry. Two companies operating in Serbia, founded by Japanese corporations, have directly contributed to the goals of the project by sharing their knowledge, promoting best practices and reducing greenhouse gas emissions: Beo Čista Energija Ltd. and Toyo Tires Serbia.

Impact

- 12,563 t/CO₂ emissions reduced in the 1st year of implementation of 8 supported projects, with prospects of reaching a cumulative level of 230,147.82 t/CO₂e in a 20-year horizon.
- 7,8 MW of renewable energy sources (RES) installed.
- 25 new green jobs created in the fields of solar power plants maintenance, organic waste management, compost machine area maintenance, as well as scientific research, software and blockchain development related to the green transition.

Find out more: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8OwMA-w5ow&t=1s>



Senjski Rudnik Mine, one of the oldest in Serbia, received a grant to support a transition towards other, cleaner, industries and sources of income for the local community. **Photo credit:** Jelena Mitrović



Innovative and Just Green Transition as Tool for Securing Systemic Energy Security and Reducing Energy Poverty

Building on the results of the first Japan-supported just green transition initiative, the project ran from May 2023 till March 2024 with the overall aim to ensure energy security and reduce energy poverty in Serbia, while helping the country achieve its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) targets.

The specific project goals were to address increasing energy poverty by developing a set of policy measures to ensure access to clean and affordable energy sources for all. The focus was on a) including vulnerable citizens, especially in rural and inaccessible areas, and those economically dependent on the intensive use of fossil fuels, and b) on supporting innovative solutions for the reduction of energy consumption and the production of energy from renewable sources.



GREEN TRANSITION

Key results

Support to innovations

- Supported the implementation of 12 solutions by private and public sector companies that contribute to depolluting the environment, decarbonising and reducing energy intensity of the economy, diversifying electricity generation mix, and enabling affordable clean energy, especially for vulnerable consumers.
- These solutions also enabled reskilling and upskilling of the workforce and their re-employment.

Leveraging financing for green transition

- USD 450.000 invested in co-financing of the 12 innovative solutions mobilized approximately USD 1.1 million in additional investment from the corporate sector.



Vesna Rajski, manager of the Magdon housing community in the city of Nis, which installed solar panels that supply energy to 120 households.
Photo credit: UNDP Serbia



Key results

Policy support

- Assisted the development of plans and recommendations for improvements of legal and policy system on just green transition and energy poverty, which will serve to set the framework for sustainable development initiatives.
- Continued the process of dialogue on energy transition in local communities largely dependent on mining and industry that relies on fossil fuels, and raised awareness of the importance of creating employment opportunities within new economic activities to avoid the negative consequences that abandoning the use of fossil fuels might have on the local population.
- Supported policy improvements that enhance data collection, exchange of information and the development of concrete measures at national and local level aimed to accelerate a just green transition and the prevention of energy poverty in Serbia.

Outreach and community engagement

- More than 170 representatives of various stakeholders at national and local level, as well as from the corporate sector participated in the dialogues on just green transition and energy poverty.
- 21 public outreach events by supported companies to raise awareness and knowledge on the topic of just green transition and energy poverty organized.

Skills Improvement

- 34 representatives from public and private companies trained for innovative and equitable green transition.
- 7 representatives of businesses and institutional stakeholders trained in the KAIZEN methodology.
- 420 direct beneficiaries (206 women and 214 men) – company employees, cooperative members, representatives of vulnerable groups benefitted from training and investments in their companies and their community.
- 23 workshops with 126 participants organized, contributing to the development of women's entrepreneurship, green jobs, the role of agricultural producers in the management of wood waste, fire prevention and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, as well as new employment opportunities in mining regions.

Energy Security

- 163 socially vulnerable people helped by public and private companies with energy efficiency improvements in their family homes, including facade installations and the donation of eco-friendly furnaces.

Impact

- 15,656 t/CO₂ emissions avoided or reduced in the first year of implementation of 12 innovative solutions, with expected emission reductions of 313,125 t/CO₂ for the period of 20 years.
- 324 kW of renewable energy sources installed.
- 33 new green jobs created.

Find out more: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TfQFdXMRuNg&t=85s>



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Photo credit: Jelena Mitrović

One of the few female miners in the Senjski Rudnik Mine, which received a grant to support a transition towards other, cleaner, industries and sources of income for the local community.