

Building a bridge between tradition and innovation



"Japanese companies provide not only infrastructure and equipment themselves, but they also work to transfer technologies and knowledge to local partners, and that's exactly what we have done so far and will continue to do."

Susumu Ishihara,
Vice President of Social Infrastructure & Offshore Facilities, IHI Corporation (Former President of IHI Infrastructure Systems Co., Ltd.)

"We would like to have contributed to infrastructure construction all around the world," says Susumu Ishihara, former president of IHI Infrastructure Systems Co., Ltd. (now Vice President of Social Infrastructure & Offshore Facilities of IHI Corporation), when asked about plans for the next five years. And work on that expansion is already in motion.

"Our first key markets are Asia and Europe, where we have been involved in localization for decades. Since the 1980s, we have built large-scale bridges in Turkey and Vietnam and expanded our business to other European and Asian markets, such as Romania, Bangladesh and India. In these countries, we have not only built new bridges but provided all kinds of maintenance services throughout the bridges' lifecycle. Having accumulated experience and developed human resources in those markets, we would like to expand into the next Asian and European markets."

"Africa is quite an interesting market as there's a growing population and definitely a need for transport infrastructure develop-

IHI Infrastructure Systems is a company that has been firmly combining history, technology and human resources to support the world of infrastructure, pursuing new R&D and DX solutions.



Nhat Tan Bridge (Vietnam)



IHI INFRASTRUCTURE ASIA CO.,LTD. (Vietnam)



Osman Gazi Bridge (Turkey)



Sakai Works (Japan)

ment," Mr. Ishihara adds. "Also, this year's Eighth Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) will be held in Tunisia, and therefore we are expecting bigger opportunities and more projects in the region."

Big opportunities in the United States are also on the mind, especially given President Joe Biden's infrastructure plan, with commitment a key aspect to any of IHI's foreign expansions.

"We have been involved in the American infrastructure market for a long time, but we are now developing a new strategy to meet its evolving needs," Mr. Ishihara says. "Once we've decided on a country or area to focus on," he

continues, "we want to commit to it for a long time, just as we have, for example, in Vietnam, Myanmar and Turkey by establishing local business centers and factories. It's not about hopping from one project to another solely for revenue."

And it's not only about providing infrastructure and equipment, but also working to pass on technologies and knowledge to local partners, an example of this being the Nhat Tan Bridge in Vietnam, which showcases the company's expertise while transferring the technology and skills to local engineers. Yet more partnerships are desired.

"We need a business partner," Mr. Ishihara shares. "Our main busi-

ness is bridge construction, but if you look at European markets there aren't many projects planned solely for bridge construction; there are more projects in the form of integrated infrastructure packages, which include adjoining roads and tunnels, along with the bridges. We have vast global experience in tunnel boring machinery and our goal is to move from a manufacturer to a contractor in the tunneling business fields. Acquiring tunnel construction technology will provide us with more opportunities, so this is our immediate objective.

"The other partner we desire is one to help us speed up our processes in the areas of R&D and DX (digital transformation). We've already started discussions with startups that could aid our pursuit of new technology for this."

IHI's future growth is also very much aligned to environmental and sustainability targets. "Our goal is to make our value chain carbon neutral by 2050," Mr. Ishihara states. "In order to achieve this, we have separated carbon emissions from our main supply chain into three distinct scopes — fuels, electricity and raw materials — and we are currently preparing the detailed plans for reducing carbon emissions in all three."

Given that the company's main function here is to manufacture and produce steel structures, IHI's CO2 reduction plans and carbon neutral technology will focus on the electricity scope, while the company is also offering solutions to reduce steel materials by involving itself from the design stage. "We believe that shortening the construction period and limiting traffic restrictions will alleviate congestion and, as a result, reduce CO2 release," Mr. Ishihara says.

To conclude, Mr. Ishihara articulates IHI's two management philosophies: "to contribute to the development of society through technology" and that "human resources are our single most valuable asset."

IHI

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