

Alumni Newsletter

Special Graduate Program in Civil Engineering & Infrastructure Management Program
YOKOHAMA National University, JAPAN

Latest Issue of the Alumni Association Newsletter

September , 2026

Dear colleagues and friends,

It is my pleasure to share with you another issue of our Alumni Newsletter.

Over the past year, we have had many opportunities to strengthen our international connections, both at YNU and abroad. One particularly memorable event was the visit of H.E. Mr. Erkinbek Osoev, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Kyrgyz Republic to Japan, on October 7, 2025. Ambassador Osoev is also a graduate of our Infrastructure Management Program (IMP). During his visit, he gave a special lecture entitled "The Ambassador's Journey: From Kyrgyzstan to Japan – A Personal Story of Education and Diplomacy," sharing his experiences from his days at YNU to his present career. It was a great pleasure for us to welcome back an IMP alumnus who is now playing an important role internationally.



Our international activities have also continued in many other ways. Faculty members have visited Thailand, Mongolia, China (Shanghai), Ethiopia, Bangladesh, and Germany for academic exchange and to introduce our educational programs to prospective students and partner institutions. At the same time, we have welcomed many visitors and invited researchers to YNU. Academic seminars and exchanges were held with researchers from the University of Science and Technology Beijing, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Sriwijaya University, Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU), and Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar. These activities provide valuable opportunities not only for faculty members but also for our students to build international academic networks.

There have also been some changes in our faculty. During this period, two assistant professors left YNU to take the next steps in their careers, while one new associate professor joined us. Although members of our department change over time, we hope to continue and further develop the international and friendly environment that has long been an important part of our program.

In this issue, we are very pleased to feature contributions from two alumni. One is Ambassador Osoev, an IMP alumnus, whose visit to YNU was mentioned above. The other is Dr. Min-Koan Kim, a graduate of our MEXT-supported program, who is currently working as a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Korea Construction Standards Center (KCSC), Korea Institute of Civil Engineering and Building Technology (KICT). We sincerely thank both of them for sharing their experiences and recent activities with us.

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The Civil Engineering Building is currently being renovated. By spring 2027, it is expected to be transformed into a completely renewed building.

I would also like to express my appreciation to the administrative staff of the Civil-FSO/IMP Office for their continuous support of our international students and programs.

Through this newsletter, we hope to keep our alumni connected with YNU and with each other, wherever they are now working and living. We are always happy to hear about your recent activities, and we hope that you will continue to stay in touch with us.

Warm regards,

Chikako Fujiyama
Professor, Civil Engineering Department
Yokohama National University

Voices of IMP Alumni

Infrastructure Management Program

H.E. Mr. Erkinbek Osoev

- *Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic to Japan*
- *A graduate of the Infrastructure Management Program (joined in 2007)*

It is a great honour to write to the IMP community as Ambassador of the Kyrgyz Republic to Japan — a role I have held since 2023. In this position I work to strengthen the friendship between our two countries across various fields, including political cooperation, trade and investment, cultural exchange and education, transport and connectivity, digital cooperation, and to represent



Kyrgyzstan in a nation that shaped so much of my own thinking.

My path here began far from diplomacy. I was born and raised in Kyrgyzstan, a mountainous country in the heart of Central Asia, and trained as an engineer and ecologist before starting my career in road construction and infrastructure. Working in road planning at the Ministry of Transport and Communications, I came to see that infrastructure is never only a matter of engineering — it is about connecting people and enabling development. That conviction, and a desire for deeper knowledge of strategy and sustainability, led me to Yokohama National University and the Infrastructure Management Program in 2007.

My time at YNU was truly transformative. I learned to approach infrastructure not as isolated projects but as part of a national system that must balance technical, economic, and social factors — to set priorities under limited budgets, plan across the full life cycle, assess environmental and social impacts, and coordinate among ministries, local governments, and partners. What made the program unique was its balance of global vision and local precision. I remain deeply grateful to Shibayama Sensei, whose mentorship and kindness helped me stay focused and confident so far from home.

The principles I gained in Japan became the foundation of my work in national infrastructure policy. In time I was appointed Deputy Minister and, in 2021, Minister of Transport and Communications of the Kyrgyz Republic. Returning to Japan in 2023 as Ambassador closed a meaningful circle — from student to representative of my country.

To current students, allow me to share a few reflections. Value your time here: knowledge matters, but so do discipline, respect for time, and perseverance. Learn from your surroundings — Japan teaches through attention to detail, humility, and care for others. Build relationships, because the classmates beside you today, from many countries, can one day become strong professional and diplomatic bridges. Stay curious and open-minded in a world that changes quickly, since adaptability and lifelong learning matter as much as expertise. And remember that true success is built on sincerity: people everywhere trust those who work honestly and keep their word.

To my fellow alumni and the wider IMP community, YNU gave me far more than a degree — it gave me a way of thinking, and a lasting bond with Japan. Let us continue to strengthen the friendship between our countries through education, research, and human connection.



Mr. Min-Koan KIM

Program Name: A graduate of the Special Graduate Program under the MEXT scholarship

Academic Advisor: Prof. Cui Ying

Year of Graduation: 2023

1. My current affiliation and job description

After graduating from YNU in 2023, I joined the Korea Institute of Civil Engineering and Building Technology (KICT), and I now work as a postdoctoral researcher at the Korea Construction Standards Center (KCSC). My main work is to operate and revise the Korean Design and Construction Standards (KDS/KCS). I also study how other countries manage their construction standards, and I do research on using AI to make our standards digital. At the same time, I am continuing the research I started at YNU on internal erosion, so that my research can support the development of Korea standards



PhD Graduation Ceremony (in Academic Regalia)

2. Message for everyone.

The time we spend at YNU changes us in ways we only understand much later. The talks in the lab, the friends from all over the world, and even the hard days of research slowly become our strength as the years go by. I am truly thankful for those days. I hope this newsletter helps us stay in touch across countries and fields, and that we can keep supporting each other just as we did on campus. I hope to see you all again someday, maybe under the cherry blossoms at YNU.

**Voices
of SGP
Alumni**

Special Graduate Program



Group Photo with Students in Front of the Civil Engineering

3. My Future Prospects

The education I received at YNU made me the researcher I am today. Thanks to Prof. Cui's warm and careful guidance, and the international life on campus, I grew from a student into an independent researcher. Building on this, I now try to connect my research on internal erosion with the Korean construction standards, so that research can help protect real infrastructure. In the future, I hope to continue exchange and joint research with YNU, and to build more international cooperation between the Korea Construction Standards Center and standards organizations overseas. In this way, I hope to give back what I learned in Japan.

Special Graduate Program



The completion ceremony of Japanese Language Classes for the Year 2026 was held on July 31, 2026.

The Department of Civil Engineering has offered these classes for more than 20 years and currently opens them as "International Infrastructure Studio in Basic Japanese" and "International Infrastructure Practice in Basic Japanese".

After awarding certificates for their completion, students gave wonderful speeches in Japanese including their research topics.

A reception was also held after the ceremony, and everyone had a good time at the end of the spring semester.



Civil-FSO/IMP Office

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