

PERSON OF THE YEAR

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY & THE SPIRIT OF UKRAINE



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Building a Better Future at Home and Overseas

The construction industry is being revolutionized by automation and sustainability.



Katsuhiko Karasuda, President & Representative Director, Wakachiku Construction Co., Ltd.

A Japanese construction company is proving that neither the sky nor the seas set the limits when it comes to innovation and forward thinking that can change the world. Famous for its high reputation for products such as a sea-going dredger, wind turbines and civil projects like bridges, harbors and tunnels, Wakachiku Construction Co., Ltd. has been a key player in the Japanese construction industry for more than 130 years. The company is now building upon its proud history and rich experience by making progress every day with new innovations and technologies positively impacting the future of human life on land and at sea. These include seaweed-farm carbon-capture projects, electric-vehicle (EV) ships and automation to help mitigate a looming workforce crisis. Also among them are disaster-prevention systems to help better survive natural disasters that have often caused significant damage in Japan and the Asia-Pacific region.

With extensive public and private contracts at home in Japan, and international projects in nations such as Sri Lanka and Indonesia, the company has become one of the go-to suppliers for major civil and building works across different industries and countries. According to company CEO Katsuhiko Karasuda, the simple principle for success is Wakachiku's inherent and ever-continuing commitment to high standards. "Our policy is to maintain safety and quality, it is the core of our business," he said. "That is how we get trust and reliability from customers. We have been upholding this motto for the past 130 years and will continue to do so." "Demonstrating the quality and safety of our products is the only way to persuade our customers that it is worthwhile to pay more. Although it is often difficult to do so when facing low-cost oriented

"Our number one sales point is high quality and safety. This is the top priority of Wakachiku."

Katsuhiko Karasuda

competitors, Wakachiku will never change its policy on high standards. Wakachiku has never betrayed the expectations of the clients, and they do understand our commitment to high standards," Karasuda said.



Offshore innovation is key for Wakachiku.

On land, the company has an excellent reputation for civil engineering projects such as bridges, tunnels and roads, as well as important infrastructure works such as airports and ports. Agility and flexibility are central to Wakachiku's corporate structure and its 800 employees. With the company's diverse range of products and technologies, Wakachiku can meet customers' every need in whichever field they require. Wakachiku is proud that its engineers can integrate the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with R&D to create more efficient and innovative construction techniques, and can finally fulfill its social responsibilities. Regarding its innovative techniques, Karasuda said: "Achieving carbon neutrality is a major concern for the industry. Our R&D divisions are trying to develop new technologies so that we can better visualize the sea bed, as well as technologies for automating sea works. We are working on a fully electric ship that does not require any fossil fuels to operate."

In addition to groundbreaking work in wind turbines, the company is extending work in solar and biomass generation. While the company's key commitment to the SDGs is also shown in its Blue-Carbon projects that encourage carbon-capturing seaweed growth in the ocean. This system of seaweed farming is under trial in the waters along the coast of Iwate Prefecture. This project can be rolled out across the nation - and possibly around the world - in due course. "In Japan, it was more than 20 years ago that the first wind turbines were introduced, and now it is the time for maintenance and replacement," Karasuda said. "An interesting area we have been recently looking at is renewable energy and we have quite a lot of experience in wind energy, as well as solar, water, and biomass energy systems," he added. "Engaging ourselves with producing off-shore windmills is just a step forward. We see these fields of renewable energy as areas with high potential for future growth," Karasuda said.

