Business Trip to Canada

International Affairs Department

I traveled to Calgary, Alberta, last October as part of our project development work. This business trip aimed to explore the possibility of collaboration between ACWA (Advancing Canadian Water Asset), a water treatment research institute affiliated with the University of Calgary, and JS.

During this business trip, we first visited the ACWA laboratory and the University of Calgary, followed by a site visit to wastewater treatment plants in the city and its suburbs, and concluded with a visit to the city of Calgary.

Visit to the ACWA Laboratory and the University of Calgary

The research carried out by ACWA was unique and interesting. ACWA has its research facilities within the wastewater treatment plant owned by the City of Calgary, where it researches the effective use of reclaimed wastewater and the impact of treated wastewater on the ecosystem. At the University of Calgary, which we visited, we were greeted by the university's top management and faculty, and we had a lively discussion about Japanese technology and future collaboration with JS [1].

The state of wastewater treatment in Canada

What became clear during the site visit was that while Canadian cities have excellent wastewater treatment systems, the lagoon is still the norm in suburban areas. Many communities still have untreated wastewater (Photos 1 and 2). As you can see in Photo 2, I never imagined I would see lagoons in a developed country. Wastewater treatment in these suburbs and rural areas has become a significant issue in Canada due to recent developments such as the SDGs, increased environmental awareness, a rapid increase in population due to immigration, and the introduction of uniform wastewater standards across Canada.

Photo 1. Leading-edge sewerage system (MBBR)

Photo 2. Suburb's lagoon

Visit to the City of Calgary and Prospects for the Project

During the visit to the City of Calgary, we toured a wastewater treatment plant and held a presentation and discussion on the city's concerns. We observed equipment and design methods not commonly used in Japan at the wastewater treatment plant we visited. While we felt the importance of regularly incorporating knowledge and technology from overseas, we also confirmed that there is an expectation that Japanese technology will be introduced at key points.

Summary

The business trip to Canada was a step that will expand the possibilities for new international development. The combination of the Canadian market's vitality and JS's advanced technology is expected to lead to further international cooperation in wastewater treatment.

This business trip was made possible by an introduction from a private company with which JS had established a relationship through international business in the past, and an offer from ACWA to consider collaboration with JS due to their interest in small-scale wastewater treatment technology from Japan. While there are many unexpected encounters in international business, I was again reminded of the importance of building and maintaining a broad network.

Extra

On the last day, I had little time to spare, so I walked around the city (photos 3 and 4) and visited Banff National Park (photos 5 and 6), which is located close to the town and is a famous tourist destination. Calgary has a futuristic feel, with its geometric skyscrapers and beautiful natural surroundings.

At Banff National Park, I saw a beautiful cobalt blue lake formed by the melting of a glacier, and I experienced a different kind of natural beauty than that of Japan.


Photos 3 and 4: The City of Calgary


Photos 5 and 6: Banff National Park

[1] JS and the University of Calgary signed a memorandum of understanding on January 16th.
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