

Part II

Trend in MLIT Policies

Chapter 1

Initiatives towards Restoration and Reconstruction from the Great East Japan Earthquake

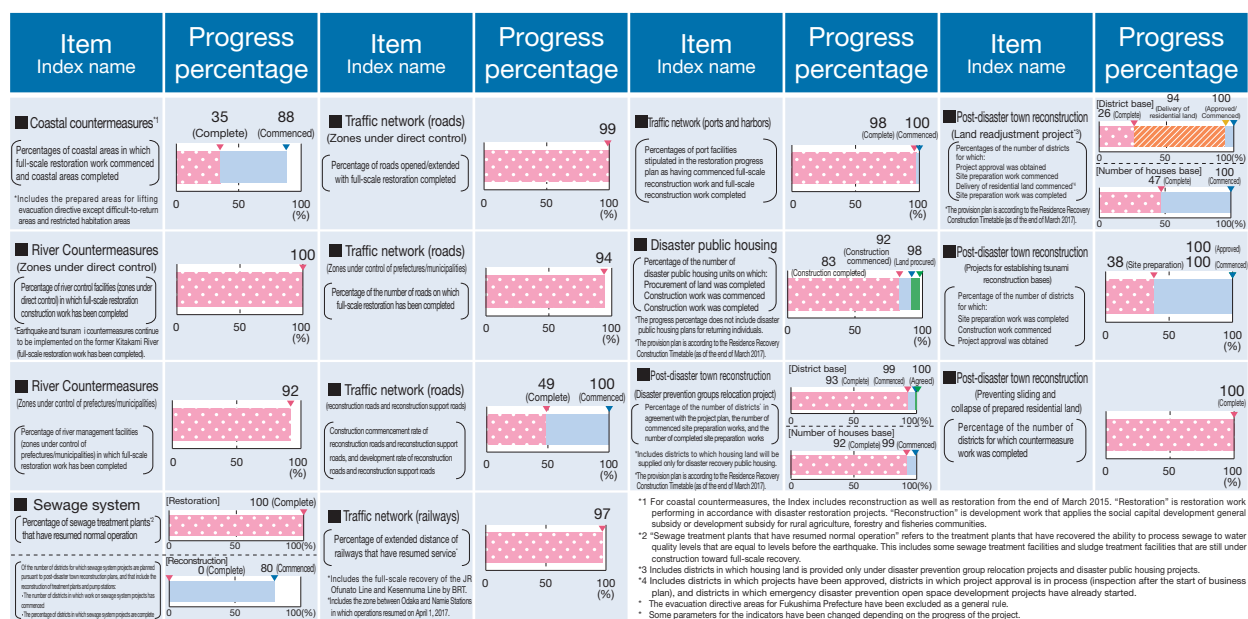
Section 1 Current Status and Measures Towards Restoration and Reconstruction

Accelerating restoration from the Great East Japan Earthquake is one of the top priorities of the MLIT. Although the number of refugees has decreased from the initial 470 thousand individuals at the time of the earthquake, around 119 thousand people^{Note 1} currently lead lives in evacuation in approximately 1,090 municipalities^{Note 2} throughout 47 prefectures. Six years after the earthquake, we are in the second year of the Reconstruction and Revitalization Period that started in April 2016. The MLIT is working to further expedite the restoration and reconstruction processes, making an all-out effort so that people from the affected areas can actually experience the progress in restoration.

Attentive to voices from areas affected by disaster, the MLIT will work as a united body to swiftly respond to on-site needs of the Regional Development Bureau, the District Transport Bureau, the Japan Meteorological Agency, and the Japan Coast Guard. In order to achieve this goal, in January 2013, we split the parliamentary secretaries into groups of three, and assigned a prefecture to each group as an Affected Area Assistance Team within the MLIT to respond sensitively to requests from each area affected by disaster.

The scale reconstruction work of basic infrastructures such as roads and ports is advancing steadily as well. We will continue to faithfully execute the work according to the infrastructure progress schedule. Also, the rebuilding of homes and urban development towards restoration are steadily making progress in line with the Residence Recovery Construction Timetable, and we will continue to provide support to the affected areas with care. We will also work to secure local public transportation and promote tourism in the affected areas.

Figure II-1-1-1 Status of Progress Towards Full-scale Restoration and Reconstruction of Public Infrastructures (as of the end of March 2017)



Source) MLIT

Note 1 119,163 people as of March 13, 2017, based on study by Reconstruction Agency

Note 2 As of March 13, 2017, based on study by Reconstruction Agency

Section 2 Steady Recovery and Reconstruction of Infrastructure and Transportation

(1) Outline

For the public infrastructure under the jurisdiction of the MLIT, we are steadily working toward transitioning to full-scale restoration and reconstruction based on the project plan and progress schedule. We will continue our endeavors now and in the future to achieve a full recovery of northeastern Japan as soon as possible, while staying mindful of requests from other disaster-stricken areas.

(2) Coastal Countermeasures

In terms of the full-scale restoration and reconstruction of the coastal levees and so on, of the shores of the 677 districts where restoration and reconstruction is to be done, construction has begun in 595 districts and had been completed in 236 districts as of the end of March 2017. Of these, a section of the approximately 40 km of national construction area (including the section for which the national government will cover disaster recovery) was completed at the end of March 2017. Also, reconstruction of the bay mouth breakwaters will be continued systematically so that there will be as little hindrance as possible to city building and industry activity, which is targeted to be completed around the end of March 2018.

In proceeding with construction, whenever possible we are incorporating structures where the effects of the levees will persistently demonstrate their capabilities, even when they are struck by tsunamis. In Iwanuma City and Yamamoto Town, Miyagi, we have established a model in which the coastal levees are integrated with green coastal levees comprised of coastal levees with vegetation planted throughout. We also actively use disaster waste for coastal levee material, while paying careful attention to the surrounding landscape and natural environment during reconstruction.

(3) River Countermeasures

Full-scale restoration work to secure pre-earthquake safety levels has been completed for the affected river management facilities in zones managed by the national government. Building on this, we will implement the necessary earthquake and tsunami countermeasures. In addition, full-scale restoration work has been completed in approximately 90 percent of locations in zones under control of prefectures/municipalities.

(4) Sewage System

A total of 126 wastewater treatment plants (excluding three facilities located in evacuation order areas in Fukushima) were affected. Sendai Minami Gamo Purification Center was severely damaged, and was restored at the end of FY2015. In total, 124 treatment plants were restored to normal-level operations by the end of FY2015. Two plants without wastewater were not completed. Of the treatment plants located within Fukushima's evacuation order cancellation ready area, two plants have already completed full-scale recovery. In regards to the 960 km of sewer pipes affected by the disaster, 814 km was fully recovered as of the end of March 2017. We will continue to work in accordance with the reconstruction plan and aim for the earliest possible restoration and reconstruction, combined with the incorporation of earthquake- and tsunami-resistant structures.

(5) Countermeasures against Sediment-related Disasters

We will push ahead with countermeasures against sediment-related disasters in Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima Prefectures, where sediment-related disasters occurred at the time of the Great East Japan Earthquake.

(6) Roads

(1) In regard to expressways, the Joban Expressway, which was fully opened to traffic on March 1, 2015, is frequently used. The Joban Expressway also encourages companies to move in the area along this expressway in Hamadori, Fukushima, which generates employment in this area. The conversion of some sections into four-lane expressway and the installation of additional lane at Joban Expressway are planned to be completed within the Reconstruction and Revitalization Period. Additional interchanges, Okuma IC and Futaba IC, were newly planned to develop on June 12, 2015.(2) In regard to the national highways that are under direct control of MLIT, full-scale reconstructions were basically completed by the end of 2012. Furthermore, the major disaster areas were reconstructed based on the restoration plan, including the

bridges on national road route 45 and other structures. (3) In regard to the Reconstruction Roads and Reconstruction Support Roads, to contribute to the post-disaster reconstruction of afflicted areas, reconstruction has been undertaken at the fastest pace possible through public-private partnership (PPP) for quick delivery, which makes use of the private sector's technological skills. Of a total of 550 km, including the section opened after the Great East Japan Earthquake, over 90% (or 503 km) of the roads have been re-opened or have moved a step forward toward reopening.

(7) Railroads

Of the railways that were damaged by the Great East Japan Earthquake, the Sanriku Railway resumed full operations in April 2014, the Ishinomaki Line in March 2015, and the Senseki Line in May 2015. Regarding the Ofunato Line and the Kesenuma Line, the BRT^{Note} has been operated as a temporary restoration measure to secure public transportation, and acceptance of full-scale restoration by BRT was agreed for the Ofunato Line in December 2015 and for Kesenuma Line in March 2016. As a result, the only railway lines with zones where service is still suspended are two of Japan Railways East Japan lines (Yamada Line and Joban Line).

As for the Yamada Line, JR East and relevant parties, including local government bodies, agreed to transfer the management of the line from JR East to Sanriku Railway in February 2015. The restoration work, which started on March 2015, is now underway, targeting completion by the end of FY 2018.

In regards to the Joban Line, the policy to resume operations for the entire line in the future was decided in March 2015. In March 2016, the goal became to open the entire line by the end of FY2019. The route between Haranomachi and Odaka Stations opened in July 2016, and the route between Soma and Hamayoshida Stations opened in December of that year. Of the remaining routes where service is still suspended, the zone between Odaka and Namie Stations will open on April 1, 2017, in accordance with the lifting of the evacuation directive in Namie Town on March 31, 2017, and operations will resume on the route between Tomioka and Tatsuta Stations in October 2017. In addition, the goal is to open the route between Namie and Tomioka Stations by the end of FY2019.

(8) Ports/Harbors

With regard to ports and harbors, disaster restoration of the bay mouth breakwaters at the Port of Ofunato was completed in FY2016. The restoration of the bay mouth breakwater will be continued according to plan, while the port/harbor facilities that are foundational to the economic recovery, such as quay walls and breakwaters, have been repaired. The Japan Coast Guard plans to complete the restoration of incomplete 9 (as of March 2017) of the 158 aids to navigation that were damaged by the Great East Japan Earthquake in concert with the restoration of ports and harbors and breakwaters.

Meanwhile, the sea area landfill sites of the Sendai Shiogama and Ishinomaki ports zone and the Ibaraki and Hitachi-Naka ports zone are undergoing maintenance in order to advance the disposal of disaster waste produced by the Great East Japan Earthquake. Landfill disposal has started in the Sendai Shiogama and Ishinomaki ports zone in February 2013 and in the Ibaraki and Hitachi-Naka ports zone in July 2012.

Section 3

Promoting Post-Disaster Town Reconstruction and Securing Stability of Residency

To give the disaster victims a prospect as to when they will be able to secure a residence, we are working on the promotion of post-disaster town reconstruction and securing the stability of residency, taking into account the "Residence Recovery Construction Timetable" that organizes the prospects for the provision of building lots for private residences and the completion of disaster public housing based on reports from local governments. As the reconstruction projects progress full-scale in the disaster affected areas, we need to compensate for the lack of personnel and know-how in the disaster affected municipalities to help the projects progress smoothly.

For these reasons, in addition to supporting the progress of projects by providing personnel support to disaster affected local governments, implementing procurement methods for relieving the burden of procurement operations in disaster affected local governments, and utilizing the Urban Renaissance Agency, we also disseminate information by providing

Note Abbreviation for Bus Rapid Transit, meaning a bus transportation system that is faster and more punctual than regular route buses by operating trains on bus-only roads.

technical support through notifications regarding procedures for the efficient execution of reconstruction projects and by posting the “Reconstructive City Development Index”, an online website for compiling support initiatives.

(1) Promoting Post-disaster Town Reconstruction

For post-disaster town reconstruction, various projects are being carried out, such as the Disaster Prevention Group Relocation Project, which helps people whose homes are in zones considered unsuitable for residence, and the Disaster Urban Area Land Recovery and Readjustment Project, which supports comprehensive town building by combining work on public facilities, such as building sites and roads, with site reconstruction work on tsunami disaster-affected urban areas, as well as the preparation of building sites for relocation to higher ground.

As of the end of March 2017, the Disaster Prevention Group Relocation Project had secured the consent of the Minister, which is a statutory procedure required for starting the project, for all 331 districts in which implementation of the project was planned under the Residence Recovery Construction Timetable; almost all districts have started site preparation work and 307 districts have completed such work. As for the land readjustment project, project approval was obtained and construction work started in all 50 districts under the Residence Recovery Construction Timetable, and 13 of those districts have completed site preparation work.

(2) Securing Stability of Residency

For victims who are able to build or obtain housing on their own, interest rates are lowered for disaster recovery housing loans provided by the Japan Housing Finance Agency. Disaster recovery housing loans are also provided to victims who only suffered damage to real estate. Pre-existing loans were given up to five-year extensions on payments and payment deadlines, and interest rates were lowered for such loans.

Victims who face difficulties in building or obtaining housing on their own are being provided public housing (disaster public housing) by local governments. In addition to distributing grants to offset the cost of maintenance in these facilities and expenses resulting from lowering rent for victims, we are devising special arrangements concerning the requirements for occupant qualification and assignment of housing facilities.

Moreover, in response to the Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant accident, we plan to secure stability of residency for refugees residing in evacuation order areas (evacuees or returnees) by providing them the same accommodations as disaster victims, such as moving into disaster public housing.

Figure II-1-3-1 Development Status of Disaster Public Housing (March 31, 2017)

Prefecture	Procuring of land	Design started	Construction started	Construction completed	Overall plan
Iwate Prefecture	5,666 houses 207 districts	5,401 houses 200 districts	5,008 houses 169 districts	4,594 houses 152 districts	5,964 houses
Miyagi Prefecture	15,722 houses 432 districts	15,541 houses 429 districts	15,176 houses 416 districts	13,784 houses 376 districts	16,149 houses
Fukushima Prefecture	7,973 houses 183 districts	7,850 houses 179 districts	7,224 houses 169 districts	6,227 houses 152 districts	8,016 houses ^(Note)

(Note) - The plan number is from the Residence Recovery Construction Timetable (as of the end of March 2017).

- Regarding Fukushima's disaster public housing, the overall plan is not finalized for disaster public housing for returnees from evacuation due to the nuclear disaster.

Source) MLIT

Section 4 Securing Local Public Transportation and Promoting Tourism

(1) Securing Local Public Transportation

In regards to local public transportation, which suffered damage from the Great East Japan Earthquake, we are implementing exceptional measures, such as mitigating the auxiliary requirements for the Regional Public Transportation Securement, Sustentation, and Improvement Projects to support the securing and maintaining of local public transportation systems, such as buses, and to share taxis in disaster affected areas.

Specifically, these measures support the securing and maintaining of inter-regional mainline bus transportation networks, as well as community bus transportation for daily commutes between evacuation shelters, temporary housing, remaining settlements, and hospitals, shops, and public agencies.

(2) Reviving of Tourism

According to the Overnight Travel Statistics Survey by the Japan Tourism Agency, the number of guest nights of foreign visitors throughout Japan in 2016^{Note 1} was 246.2% of the benchmark of 100% in 2010, before the earthquake. Although tourism in the six prefectures of Tohoku^{Note 2}, which recorded a figure of 126.8% over the same period, has recovered to the level of tourism prior to the earthquake, it still lags far behind the rapid increase in the rest of Japan. Fukushima Prefecture is particularly far behind at 82.4% of pre-disaster tourism.

In response, 2016 was dubbed the “First Year of Tohoku Tourism Recovery,” and the goal was set to reach 1.5 million foreign visitors guest nights (triple the amount in 2015) in the six prefectures of Tohoku by 2020. The Japan Tourism Agency and the Japan National Tourist Organization (JNTO) have established the nation’s first intensive tourist destination campaign in Japan, in which they are collaborating with the Tohoku Tourism Promotion Organization, local governments and people in the tourism industry to promote the appeal of Tohoku around the world.

In addition, in FY2016, we established the Reconstruction Grant for Tohoku Tourism Recovery Measures, which has supported a variety of efforts to attract inbound tourists. These efforts include the improvement and enhancement of tourist activities, such as hands-on experiences in programs drawn up and implemented by local communities; intensification of promotions; and development of an environment for receiving foreign travelers. These are worthy efforts because capitalizing on the effects of the rapid increase in inbound tourism to Japan will accelerate the recovery of afflicted areas. In addition, to facilitate the earliest possible recovery of tourism in Fukushima Prefecture, we have supported tourism-related businesses that contributed to the efforts for disaster recovery and reputation damage control, such as domestic promotions implemented by the prefectural government, and a project to revive educational travel. Additionally, we have supported community efforts to create far-ranging sightseeing routes throughout Tohoku.

Section 5 Ensuring the Smooth Execution of Reconstruction Projects

The restoration/reconstruction projects for the disaster areas are moving forward steadily and the home rebuilding/town reconstruction is basically progressing according to the “Residence Recovery Construction Time Table”.

MLIT has been taking necessary measures to assist the smooth execution of reconstruction projects by cooperating with the institutions concerned and related industries in “Restoration Acceleration Meetings” (held 7 times since March 2013) and the “Council to Secure Execution of Reconstruction Projects” (held 8 times since December 2011). In order to set predetermined prices that reflect current market prices, the unit price of design work for public works in the three affected prefectures has been raised five times since April 2013, and reconstruction production rates, which are based on construction works conducted, and the reconstruction coefficient were introduced. Also, the national and prefectural governments established public ready-mixed concrete plants.

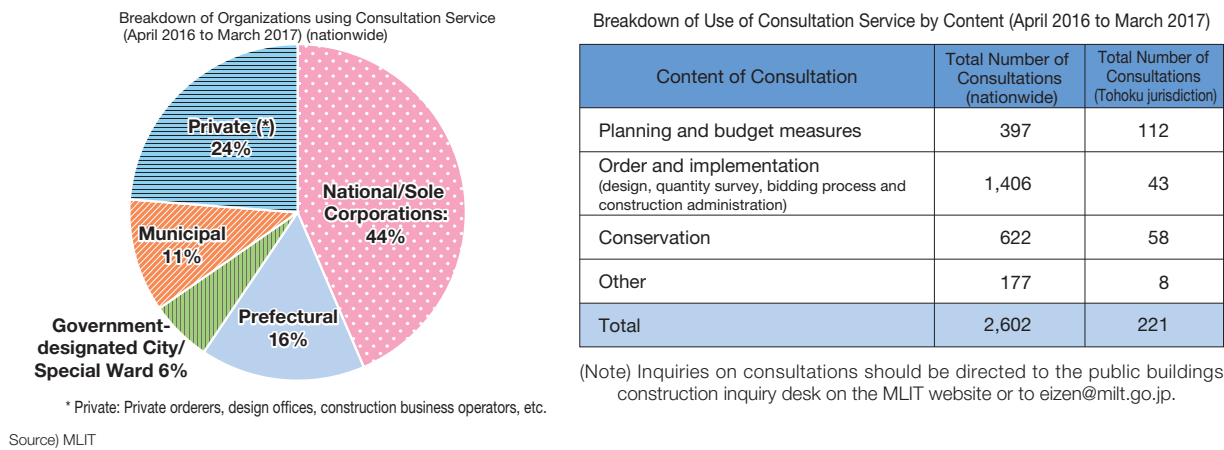
Furthermore, the MLIT is also working on measures to ensure smooth execution of projects for public building construction, such as disaster public housing, schools, government offices, and hospitals. These measures include the reflection of current market prices and the actual status of construction sites at predetermined prices, such as by continuing the

Note 1 Preliminary figures.

Note 2 The six prefectures in Tohoku Region: Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, Akita, Yamagata, and Fukushima.

special measure on standard construction expenses for disaster public housing and promoting the use of the construction and repair cost estimation method developed by the MLIT for the reconstruction of public buildings, as well as by providing individual consultation with care at the public buildings construction inquiry desk.

Figure II-1-5-1 Consultation at Public Buildings Construction Inquiry Desk (Nationwide Total)



Section 6 Reconstruction and Revitalization of Fukushima

After the Tokyo Electric Power Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant accident, the number of refugees from the evacuation zones was approximately 34,000 individuals^{Note 1}, while the total number of refugees in Fukushima Prefecture, including self-imposed evacuees, climbed to approximately 77,000 individuals^{Note 2} (according to studies by the Reconstruction Agency). Evacuation directives have been lifted in most restricted residential zones and zones that are ready for the lifting of the directives. In addition, a proposal to amend the Act on Special Measures for the Rebirth of Fukushima has been submitted to the Japanese Diet given the fact that the amount of radiation is decreasing in some zones where return has been deemed difficult; this amendment aims for the soonest possible launch of efforts to reconstruct and revitalize these zones. Now that the movement toward lifting evacuation directives is gaining steam, the government must further enhance support measures for the new lives and soonest possible return of residents to their communities, and must enhance initiatives toward the rebuilding and self-sustenance of businesses, livelihoods and lifestyles.

The MLIT strives to recover and reconstruct infrastructures in accordance with the Timetable, offer free charging at expressways for evacuees, and quash harmful rumors about tourism to Tohoku Region, and overcome harmful rumors. In addition, within the framework of the amended Act on Special Measures for the Rebirth of Fukushima, measures are taken so that we can carry out infrastructure improvement projects on behalf of municipalities and provide support for the establishment of new downtown areas in Special Reconstruction and Revitalization Zones in which the government aims to lift evacuation directives in five years' time based on the extent to which radiation has decreased, thereby allowing people to live in them.

Section 7 Building Tsunami-resistant Communities by Learning from the Great East Japan Earthquake

Based on the lessons learned from the Great East Japan Earthquake, in December 2011 the Law for Tsunami Disaster Prevention District Building was established and put into effect. This law is based on the thinking that even when a maximum level tsunami occurs, people's lives are the number one priority, and the promotes building districts that are well fortified against tsunami disasters with the concept of multiple defenses that combine structural and non-structural measures.

Note 1 As of March 31, 2016.

Note 2 As of March 27, 2017.

The MLIT provided technical advice related to the enactment of the aforementioned law to support local governments in building communities resistant to tsunamis, published guidance documents regarding the settings for tsunami flood suppositions, and opened a consultation desk for inquiries related to tsunami flood suppositions. Also, in order to configure a maximum class tsunami fault model for the Sea of Japan where the accumulation of scientific knowledge is insufficient, the MLIT is providing technical support by publishing reports of the Study Commission of a Large Scale Earthquake in the Sea of Japan.

Tsunami flood suppositions for maximum level tsunami occurrences have been published for 30 prefectures (as of the end of March 2017). Also, since March 2014, Tsunami Disaster Caution Zones were designated in Tokushima, Yamaguchi, Shizuoka (Higashi Izu Town and Kawazu Town), Wakayama (19 municipalities), Kyoto and Nagasaki, and eight municipalities have developed plans for comprehensively promoting the building of tsunami resistant regions (promotion plan).

In the disaster affected areas, 24 districts are proceeding with recovery efforts using the Law concerning the Construction of Tsunami-resistant Communities, like making city planning decisions regarding the Tsunami-resistant Urban District Forming Facility by Building a Housing Complex (as of the end of March 2017).

Going forward, we must take into consideration the characteristics of the entire region and using the existing public facilities to combine 'structural' measures like sea embankments with 'non-structural' measures like evacuation drills to further proactively advance the construction of tsunami-resistant communities to protect the lives of citizens.