

Part II

Trend in MLIT Policies

Chapter 1

Initiatives towards Restoration and Reconstruction from the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake

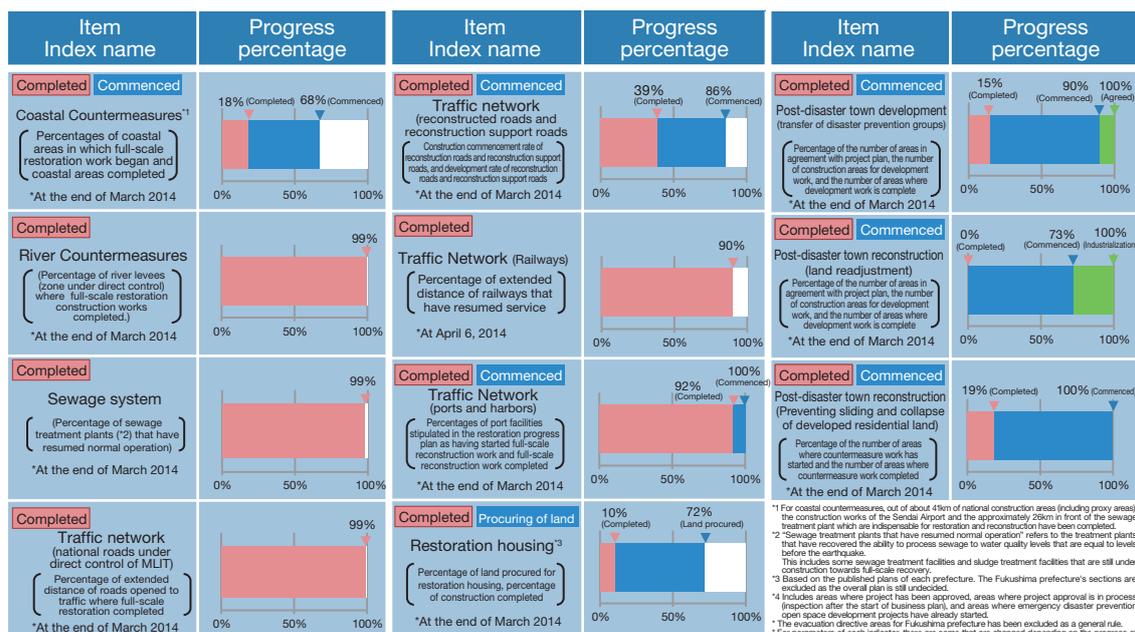
Section 1 The Current Status and Measures towards Restoration and Reconstruction

Accelerating the restoration from the Great East Japan Earthquake is currently the most important task the MLIT currently faces. Although the number of refugees has decreased from the initial 470 thousand individuals at the time of the earthquake, around 260 thousand people^{Note1} currently lead lives in evacuation in approximately 1,200 municipalities^{Note2} throughout 47 prefectures. The MLIT is working on further expediting the restoration and reconstruction process, making an all-out effort so that the people from the affected areas can begin to experience reconstruction in their lives.

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 Meteorological Agency, and the Japan Coastguard. 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 emergency restorations of basic infrastructures such as roads and ports are mostly complete, and full-scale reconstruction work advances steadily as well. We will continue to faithfully execute the work according to the infrastructure progress schedule. Meanwhile, due to the necessity of expediting housing reconstruction and post-disaster town development, we will implement measures in the housing reconstruction and post-disaster town development process that will help accelerate progress. Specifically, we will do this by conducting a flexible review of the labor unit cost, securing human resources and materials by facilitating the supplying of ready-mixed concrete, and shortening the amount of time it takes to acquire land, so that we can help breakthrough any bottleneck in the process for affected area municipalities, according to the situation. 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



Note 1 263,958 people, at March 13, 2014, according to Reconstruction Agency investigations.

Note 2 At March 13, 2014, according to Reconstruction Agency investigations.

Section 2 The Steady Recovery and Reconstruction of Infrastructures and Transportation



(1) Outline

For the public infrastructures under the jurisdiction of the MLIT, we are steadily working towards transitioning from emergency restoration phase 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 the full recovery of north-eastern Japan as soon as possible, while staying mindful of requests from disaster stricken areas.

(2) Coastal Countermeasures

Of the 471 coastal districts, the full-scale restoration work on the sea embankment has started in 318 districts, and completed in 86 districts by the end of March 2014. Out of these areas, within the approximately 41km of the national construction section (including sections where disaster restoration is nationally covered), the construction has been completed for about a 26km section, and the rest is aimed to be completed around the end of March 2016. The bay entrance breakwaters, which will take some time to restore, are being reconstructed according to plan, to keep from hindering the city development and industrial activities as much as possible. The aim is to complete the reconstruction by around the end of March 2016.

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

(3) River Countermeasures

Aside from 2 of the sections that were inflicted with immense damages, we have completed the full-scale recovery of damaged embankments under government jurisdiction to safety levels (including for subsidence) equal to those before the earthquake. We will continue efforts while conforming to reconstruction plans formulated by municipalities in areas with the possibility of being struck by tsunamis and promote the elevation of embankments. As we aim to complete this project by the end of FY2015, we will progressively effectuate earthquake-resistant measures in embankments, liquefaction countermeasures, and the automation and remote operation of floodgates.

(4) Sewage System

Out of the 120 sewage treatment plants affected by the disaster (not including the 9 plants within the evacuation order area in the Fukushima prefecture), 2 plants do not need to be in operation as there is no waste-water being generated, and for the 117 other plants—not including the Sendai Minami Gamo Purification Center where the damage was extensive—the recovery of normal processing levels were completed by the end of FY2012. Of the treatment plants located within Fukushima prefecture’s “evacuation order cancellation ready area,” 3 plants have already completed full-scale recovery. In regards to the 675km of sewer pipes affected by the disaster, 603km of it was fully recovered from the of FY2013 to the present. We will continue to work in accordance with the reconstruction plan, and aim for earliest possible restoration and reconstruction, combined with the incorporation of earthquake and tsunami-resistant structures.

(5) Countermeasures against Sediment-related Disasters

Within Miyagi, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Tochigi, and Niigata prefectures, we have completed the sediment-related disaster countermeasures in 41 of the most urgent areas that were at risk of a collapse occurring. In addition, we are working on landslide countermeasures in water system areas like the Abukuma River, where there is a strong possibility that an intense seismic movement would cause unstable sediment to fluidize, which would lead to extensive damage to important transportation networks that are essential to the reconstruction work in the affected areas. Our goal is to complete these countermeasures by the end of FY2015.

(6) Roads

In regards to roads, 1) For expressways, of the sections restricted before the review of the Joban Expressway, the road

between the Joban Tomioka IC and Hirono IC that had been closed due to effects from the disaster, was re-opened on February 22, 2014, while the road between Minamisoma IC and Namie IC—which had been under construction when the disaster occurred—is scheduled to re-open sometime in 2014, and the road between Namie IC and Joban Tomioka IC has ongoing maintenance work being done with the goal of opening for use before Golden Week holiday period (from the last week of April to the second week of May) in 2015, 2) National highways under direct control had mostly completed full-scale recovery by the end of FY2012 (National highway No.45, which had been damaged in major areas like bridges, was recovered according to the reconstruction plan), 3) Reconstruction roads and reconstruction support roads, with the inclusion of sections that had been newly added to the project, are moving forward with construction work by using the technical capabilities of the private sector in a project development system (project promotion PPP), and started construction work on 4 roads in 18 sections by the end of FY2013. Furthermore, in April 2014, the prospect of the roads being opened to traffic was confirmed for the first time for reconstruction roads and reconstruction support roads that were added to the project after the disaster. 5 sections—42km—of roads is expected to be opened for use within 6 to 7 years after commercialization, which is an unusually quick time frame. This has confirmed the opening of approximately 60% of the total area, including sections that have already been opened for use.

(7) Railroads

Out of all the railways affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake, there are 6 railway lines from the Sanriku Railway and JR East that still have sections that have suspended services (JR Yamada line, Ofunato line, Kesennuma line, Ishinomaki line, Senseki line, and Joban line).

The Sanriku Railway used the support system that was newly established in the FY2011 Third Supplementary Budget to start reconstruction work during that same year, and re-opened services between the Tanohata station and Rikuchunoda station on the Kita-riasu line by April 1, 2012, and service between Yoshihama station and Mori station on the Minami-riasu line by April 3, 2013. Currently, reconstruction work on the remaining suspended service sections continues, and it is expected that the service between the Kamaishi station and the Yoshihama station on the Minami-riasu line, and service between Tanohata station and Shohon station on the Kita-riasu line, will be re-opened by April 5 or 6 of 2014, which would mean full recovery of the Sankiru Railway lines.

In regards to the service between Tatsuta station and Hirono station on the Joban line, the service is expected to re-open in accordance with Nahara Town's "returning to the town decision," which will be determined in the spring of 2014. Furthermore, the reconstruction work has already been started to re-open services on the Ishinomaki line and Senseki line within 2015, and the service between Hamayoshida station and Soma station on the Joban line to be re-opened by the spring of 2017.

Meanwhile, the MLIT Tohoku Department of Transportation has been appointed the secretariat for the Yamada line, Ofunato line, and the Kesennuma line at the reconstruction coordination meetings—comprised of municipalities along the railway lines, JR East, and restoration offices—of each railway line, in order to move forward ideas for integrating the restoration of the railway lines with the city development. In addition, to secure public transportation for the time being, BRT ^{Note} has been set up as a temporary recovery measure for the Kesennuma line since December 22, 2012, and for the Ofunato line since March 2, 2013.

(8) Ports and Harbors

The disaster recovery work was completed for the Port of Hachinohe at the end of July 2013. In regards to the other ports, we have been advancing the restoration of things like the bay entrance breakwaters according to the 'Industry and Logistics Reconstruction Plan,' while working to restore port facilities like quays and breakwaters, which will become the foundation for economic recovery.

Meanwhile, the sea area landfill sites of 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.

Note Abbreviation for Bus Rapid Transit. Refers to a bus transportation system that is faster and more punctual than regular bus systems by using bus-only roads.

Section 3 Promoting Post-Disaster Town Reconstruction and Securing Stability of Residency

(1) Promoting Post-disaster Town Reconstruction

We are working on making smooth progress in the reconstruction projects, in accordance with residential reconstruction plans that incorporate flexible reviews of project techniques and project zones, and ingenuity, such as the stage-based execution of reconstruction projects.

By the end of March 2014, Promoting Group Relocation for Disaster Mitigation, such as the relocation of group to upland, had already secured the consent of the Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism which is the legal procedure for undertaking projects and all 339 districts scheduled to be relocated, based on the “Work Schedule for Housing Reconstruction,” and have already commenced construction work on 304 districts. For the land readjustment projects, all 51 districts scheduled to be done according to the “Residence Recovery Construction Time Table” are already in the project commencing stage, with construction started at 37 districts. 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 public organizations, implementing procurement methods for relieving the burden of procurement operations in disaster affected local public organizations, and utilizing the Urban Renaissance Agency, we also disseminate information by providing technical support through notifications regarding procedures for the efficient execution of reconstruction projects, and also by posting the ‘Reconstructive City Development INDEX,’ an online website for compiling support initiatives.

(2) Securing Stability of Residency

Similar to town development, based on the residential reconstruction plan comprised of reconstruction schedules respective to district, we are working to swiftly secure stability of residency through support projects mentioned below. For victims who are able to build or obtain housing by their own means, 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 have suffered damages to their sites. Pre-existing loans are given extensions of payment term and payment deferment which are up to 5years, as well as interest rates being lowered for loans during deferment.

Victims who face difficulties in building or obtaining housing by their own means are being provided public housing (restoration housing) by local public organizations. 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 the stability of residency for the refugees residing in evacuation zones by providing them the same accommodations as the natural disaster victims of the earthquake and tsunami, such as moving into restoration housing.

Figure II-1-3-1 Development Status of Restoration Housing (March 31, 2014)

Prefecture	Building sites	Planning initiated	Construction initiated	Construction completed	Provision plan
Iwate prefecture	107 districts 4,028 houses	89 districts 3,461 houses	51 districts 1,862 houses	23 districts 574 houses	Approximately 6,000 houses (11 municipalities)
Miyagi prefecture	237 districts 11,363 houses	190 districts 10,129 houses	88 districts 4,757 houses	30 districts 1,343 houses	Approximately 15,000 houses (21 municipalities)
Fukushima prefecture	72 districts 3,274 houses	64 districts 2,944 houses	36 districts 2,072 houses	12 districts 357 houses	Overall plan is yet to be decided

Source) MLIT

Column

Efforts towards Creating the “New Tohoku”

Even before the earthquake disaster, the Tohoku region faced significant amounts of the challenges of which many other regions currently face, like population decline, aging population, and de-industrialization. For this reason, instead of merely restoring the region to the level before the earthquake, we are working on using the reconstruction opportunities of disaster recovery to overcome some of these challenges to create a national and global model of “New Tohoku.”

First, we are implementing the “New Tohoku” cutting edge model creation project, based on advice from a wide range of leaders (such as companies, universities, and NPOs), to accelerate the pioneering efforts. For example, in terms of town development, in FY2013 Rikuzentakata City, Iwate adopted the concept of “Sharing life with family and friends, appreciating enjoyments close to home,” and began to work on designing residential districts that reflected the opinions and ideas of actual residents. This included having workshops for residents to endeavour to design meeting facilities that are easy to gather at, and makes people want to meet there.

Also, in the construction of disaster public housing being advanced in each area, there are many that have incorporated “creativity” for solving future regional challenges, and “particularity” in design to highlight the advantages and

characteristics of the region and towns. For example, at the housing complex constructed in Otsuchi Town, Iwate, in addition to installing verandas in each residential unit, they have also placed a meeting facility and a square at the entrance to the housing complex as a place for community building for the whole region, using creativity to create opportunities for pedestrians and residents to have daily interaction.

In these ways, the areas affected by disaster are using both ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ approaches to start initiatives that aim for community development, and active, comfortable lifestyles. These initiatives are not limited to disaster affected areas. Our hope is to extend these efforts to other regions nation-wide that are facing the same challenges.

Disaster Public Housing, Ogakuchi District,
Otsuchi Town, Iwate Prefecture



Source) Reconstruction Agency
(Reference) “New Tohoku” Case Studies of Well-Designed Residences
http://www.reconstruction.go.jp/portal/juutaku_koukyou/20131206171957.html

Section 4 Securing Local Public Transportation and Promoting Tourism

(1) Securing Local Public Transportation

In regards to the local public transportation, which suffered damages from the Great East Japan Earthquake, we are taking exceptional measures such as mitigating the auxiliary requirements for The Program for Ensuring, Maintenance and Improvement of Local Public Transportation Systems to support the securing and maintaining of local public transportation systems such as buses and 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 newly built housing, hospitals, shops and public agencies. From FY 2012, the maximum limit for financial aid to community bus transportation was increased for conditions that meet specific requirements.

(2) Reviving Tourism

To recover the major drop in the number of foreign tourists coming to the Tohoku and North Kanto areas after the earthquake, we are working on dispelling harmful rumors in major overseas markets and engaging in PR work regarding the recovering of tourism in these regions.

To be more specific, we posted accurate information regarding things like radiation doses on the Japan Government Tourist Office website for the benefit of overseas consumers, and we invited members of foreign media to the Tohoku region to promote the appeal of the Tohoku as a tourist destination. In addition, we invited overseas travel companies to the Tohoku region, and communicated tourism information about the Tohoku region by supporting the development of travel products and having an overseas travel exposition. Furthermore, for overseas governments, we held the Japan/ASEAN Tourism Cooperation Policy Dialogue in the Tohoku region. These visits to the Tohoku area, and the sending out of accurate information and appealing to the attraction of Tohoku, as well as other efforts to recover the demand for tourism, resulted in the number of overseas tourists visiting Japan reaching the highest it ever had of 10.36 million visitors in 2013 (24% increase compared to previous year, 67% increase compared to two years ago).

We are also implementing different initiatives to recover national tourism. For the Pacific Ocean coastal areas in particular, we have supported efforts for both going to other regions and receiving visitors from other regions by developing public relations, improving the dispatch of information, advancing the creation of travel products and recovery tours that are unique to the region, passing on the memories from the earthquake, and creating systems to promote visitation exchanges. In addition, to facilitate the earliest possible recovery of tourism in Fukushima prefecture, we supported tourism-related businesses that contributed to the efforts for reputation damage control and disaster recovery. Furthermore, starting in March 2012, we began the full-scale promotion of the “Tohoku & North Kanto Visiting Campaign,” which supports the recovery of Tohoku and the North Kanto regions through visitation. Aiming to expand the scale of solidarity, we are widely requesting the cooperation of local citizens by collecting and disseminating information regarding activities of endorsement organizations on the Japan Tourism Agency website.

According to the Accommodation Survey conducted by the Japan Tourism Agency, the annual values of 2013 ^{Note 1} showed that the number of overnight guest was about 456 million overnights, the highest value since the survey had been conducted from 2007, and an increase of 3.8% compared to the previous year, showing a noticeable trend of recovery in the domestic economy.

In the 6 prefectures in the Tohoku area ^{Note 2}, the total number was about 39 million overnights, showing a 0.8% increase from 2010, from before the earthquake disaster. However, if we look at the total number that are mainly for tourists ^{Note 3}, the number has decreased by 21.2% compared to 2010, showing that the major scars left by the earthquake disaster is preventing the national economic boom from reaching these areas.

Section 5 Ensuring the Smooth Execution of Reconstruction Projects

Due to the increase in the number of construction work orders for restoration and reconstruction projects in the disaster affected areas, there have been cases of problematic bids and non-bidding, mainly for construction work with difficult execution conditions. Even for such construction projects though, by the ordering party being more creative when re-ordering—like increasing the size of the order lot—most projects have been able to reach the contract stage. In order to secure the smooth execution of construction projects by considering the amount of manpower and materials required for construction, the MLIT has taken the necessary measures by cooperating with relevant organizations and related businesses through the “Reconstruction Acceleration Conference,” (the meeting was held three times since March 2013) and the “Liaison Council for Securing Construction for Restoration and Reconstruction Projects” (the council was held eight times since December 2011). At these meetings, to set the estimated price in accordance with the prevailing price, the labor unit price at disaster affected areas was increased by approximately 21% in April 2013, and increased again about another 8% in February 2014. We are also introducing reconstruction factors that are derived from reconstruction unit prices and indirect construction costs that take into account the actual construction conditions in disaster affected areas.

Note 1 Provisional value

Note 2 The 6 prefectures in Tohoku region: Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, Akita, Yamagata, Fukushima.

Note 3 Facilities mainly for tourists refers to facilities that answered that over 50% of all their overnight guests stay there for tourism purposes.

In addition, the national and prefectural governments are working on setting up plants to address particular concerns regarding the shortage of raw concrete.

Section 6 Reconstruction, Revitalization and Etc. of Fukushima

After the occurrence of Tokyo Electric Power Fukushima No.1 Nuclear Reactor accident, the number of refugees from the evacuation zones was approximately 81,000 individuals, while the total number of refugees in the Fukushima prefecture including self-imposed evacuees climbed to approximately 135,000 individuals as of March, 2014 (according to studies by the Reconstruction Agency). Considering that the review of the evacuation directed areas was completed by August 2013, and that the evacuation directive was lifted from the Tamura City on April 1, 2014, the national government must now work on the recovery of infrastructures and daily living-related services in other municipalities, speeding up the progress in decontamination work, and expanding and improving the support provided for people starting over their lives and the early return support measures, so that the residents and local governments can begin to take new steps towards their future. The MLIT strives to actualize the soonest possible return of those in evacuation through efforts such as reconstructing infrastructures, implementing measures for the toll-free use of expressways for refugees, and overcoming harmful rumors, in accordance with the “Early Return and Resettlement Plan,” established in March 2013, and the “Speeding Up of Recovering Fukushima from the Effects of the Nuclear Accident,” which was approved by the cabinet in December of the same year.

Section 7 Developing Tsunami-resistant Communities learned from the Great East Japan Earthquake

Learned from the Great East Japan Earthquake, “Act concerning the Development of Tsunami Resistant Communities” was enacted and enforced in December of 2011. According to the principle of “Human life is most important,” this law promotes a development of tsunami-resistant communities based on the concept of multiple defenses which combines infrastructure development and other forms of measures targeting the largest class tsunami.

In 2012, the MLIT provided technical advice related to the enactment of the aforementioned law to support local governments in building communities resistant to tsunamis, and published guidance documents regarding the settings for tsunami flood measurement. We also established a consultation service for inquiries related to tsunami flood suppositions and exchanged opinions between municipalities.

As a result, since August 2012, tsunami flood suppositions for maximum level tsunami occurrences have been published for 17 prefectures (as of March 2014). In addition, in March 2014, for the first time nation-wide, a damage potential zone was specified for Tokushima prefecture, and a plan (Promotion Plan) was formulated to promote the overall tsunami-resistant community development for Yaizu City, Shizuoka.

In the disaster stricken areas, recovery efforts have been promoted by utilizing “Act concerning the Development of Tsunami Resistant Communities.” For example, 18 city planning districts of “Collective Facilities Forming Tsunami-resistant Urban District”, including Shizugawa district in Minamisanriku Town, have decided as of March 2014.

By maximum use of existing public and private facilities and relevant tsunami-resistant measures, the MLIT will actively put forward developing tsunami-resistant communities in order to protect the lives of citizens.