

Part II

Trend in MLIT Policies

Chapter 1

Initiatives towards Restoration and Reconstruction from the Great East Japan Earthquake

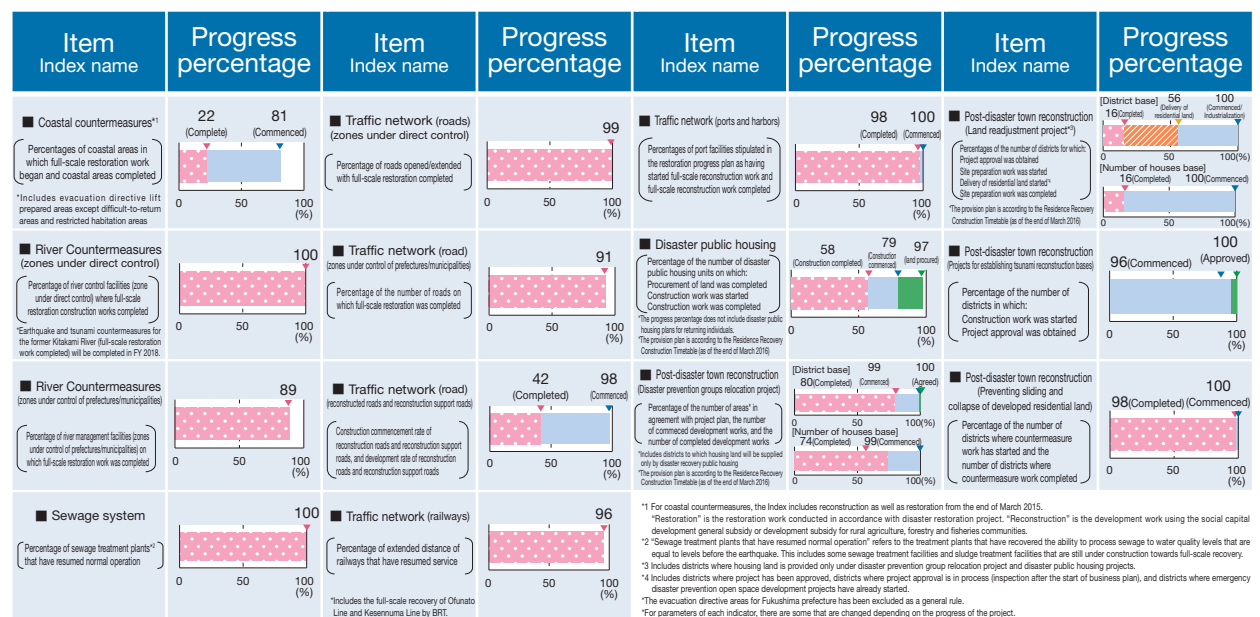
Section 1 Current Status and Measures Towards Restoration and Reconstruction

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 171 thousand people ^{Note 1} currently lead lives in evacuation in approximately 1,138 municipalities ^{Note 2} throughout 47 prefectures. Five years on from the earthquake, a new phase entitled Reconstruction and Revitalization Period started from 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 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. 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 2016)



Source) MLIT

Note 1 170,841 people as of March 10, 2016, based on study by Reconstruction Agency

Note 2 As of March 10, 2016, based on study by Reconstruction Agency

Section 2 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 the 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 northeastern Japan as soon as possible, while staying mindful of requests from 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 550 districts and has been completed in 152 districts as of the end of March 2016. Of these, a section of about 36 km has been finished out of the approximately 40 km of the national construction area (including the section for which the national government will cover disaster recovery) with the completion of its entirety aimed to be around 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 the city building and industry activity, which is targeted to be completed around the end of March 2019.

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, Miyagi, we have established a model where 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.

(4) Sewage System

122 wastewater treatment plants (excluding seven facilities located in evacuation order areas in Fukushima) were affected. Sendai Minami Gamo Purification Center was restored from its severe damage at the end of FY 2015. All 120 treatment plants, except for the two without wastewater, were restored to normal-level operations by the end of FY 2015. 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 680 km of sewer pipes affected by the disaster, 669 km was fully recovered as of the end of March 2016. 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

Regarding countermeasures against sediment-related disasters in order to safeguard traffic networks that are indispensable in reconstructing stricken areas of water systems, such as the Abukuma River, reconstruction was completed at the end of FY 2015. We will continue to push ahead with countermeasures against sediment-related disasters in such areas 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, with traffic volumes of 10,000 vehicles or higher per day in many sections. The Joban Expressway also encourages companies to move in the area along this expressway in Hamadori, Fukushima, which generates employment in this area. 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 of roads/support roads, the work on the main

structures, such as bridges, has begun in earnest. The work is simultaneously being completed on all areas, including zones that have been newly privatized, and through the application of the Project Promotion Process (PPP), we are able to make use of the private sector's technological skills. Among many Reconstruction Road and Reconstruction Support Road projects that were planned after the Great East Japan Earthquake, 15 sections with a total length of 110km have moved a step forward toward their 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, where the BRT ^{Note 1} has been operated as a temporary restoration measure to secure public transportation, the meeting of local government heads in areas along the lines, which was presided over by the senior vice-minister of MILT, was held in June 2015 for the purpose of having high-level discussions on restoration policy. In the second meeting in July 2015, the East Japan Railway Company proposed full-scale restoration by BRT. In the third meeting in December 2015, the acceptance of full-scale restoration by BRT was agreed for the Ofunato Line, as well as Minami Sanriku-cho and Tome-shi of the Kesenuma Line, with continued discussions for Kesenuma-shi. Subsequently, Kesenuma-shi expressed its acceptance in March 2016, and full-scale restoration by BRT was decided for the Kesenuma Line as well. As a result, the only railway lines with zones where service is still suspended are two of Japan Railways East Japan lines (JR 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 previously undecided target date for the opening of the route between the Namie and Tomioka stations was scheduled at the end of FY 2019. This provides the clear prospect of resuming operations for the entire Joban Line ^{Note 2}.

(8) Ports/Harbors

For the ports and harbors, the disaster restoration of the port/harbor facilities vital to industry and logistics was mostly completed in FY 2014. 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 breakwater, have been repaired. The Japan Coast Guard plans to complete the restoration of incomplete 16 (as of March 2016) 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.

Note 1 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.

Note 2 Scheduled opening of the Joban Line
 Route between Hamayoshida and Soma Stations: Operations to be resumed by the end of December 2016 (announcement by JR East on November 26, 2015)
 Route between Haranomachi and Odaka Stations: Operations to resume by spring of 2016 ("Outlook for resumption of operation of the entire Joban Line" dated on March 10, 2015)
 Route between Odaka and Namie Stations: Targeting opening within two years (spring 2017) (ditto)
 Route between Tomioka and Tatsuta Stations: Targeting opening within 2017 (report by JR East at the Hamadori's restoration promotion council for the Joban Line restoration council on February 23, 2016).
 Route between Namie and Tomioka Stations: Targeting opening by the end of FY 2019 ("About outlook for opening of the entire Joban Line" dated March 10, 2016)

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 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 the zones considered unsuitable for residences, and the disaster urban area land recovery and readjustment project, which supports comprehensive town building by combining work on the public facilities, such as building sites and roads with the site reconstruction work on tsunami disaster affected urban areas, as well as the preparation of building sites for relocation to higher grounds.

As of the end of March 2016, the disaster-prevention group relocation project 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”; 328 districts started site preparation works and 266 districts completed the 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 eight of those districts completed the construction work.

(2) Securing Stability of Residency

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 only suffered damages to their real estate. Pre-existing loans were given up to five-year extensions on payments and payment deadlines, as well as interest rates being lowered for loans amid payment.

Victims who face difficulties in building or obtaining housing by their own means 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 the stability of residency for refugees residing in evacuation order areas (evacuees or returnees) by providing them the same accommodations as the disaster victims, such as moving into disaster public housing.

Figure II-1-3-1 Development Status of Disaster Public Housing (March 31, 2016)

Prefecture	Procuring of land	Design started	Construction commenced	Construction completed	Overall plan
Iwate prefecture	5,636 houses 188 districts	5,085 houses 169 districts	4,631 houses 138 districts	3,168 houses 102 districts	5,771 houses
Miyagi prefecture	15,290 houses 399 districts	14,746 houses 379 districts	13,394 houses 342 districts	9,812 houses 262 districts	15,919 houses
Fukushima prefecture	7,716 houses 156 districts	7,105 houses 148 districts	5,163 houses 123 districts	3,767 houses 97 districts	7,885 houses ^(Note)

(Note) 1 The plan number is from the Residence Recovery Construction Timetable (as of the end of March 2016).

2 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 newly built housing, hospitals, shops, and public agencies.

(2) Reviving Tourism

To recover the major drop in the number of foreign tourists coming to the Tohoku area 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 this area.

To be more specific, we posted accurate information regarding radiation doses on the Japan National Tourist Organization website for the benefit of overseas consumers, and we invited members of foreign media to the Tohoku region and implemented the transmission of information about Tohoku through SNS to promote the appeal of 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.

We are also implementing different initiatives to recover national tourism. For the Pacific Ocean coastal areas in particular, we supported efforts by both people in departing and arriving areas by developing public relations for the recovery and dispelling of harmful rumors, preventing the memories of the earthquake from being forgotten, promoting regional systems for the recovery of tourism, and advancing the creation of travel products and recovery tours that are unique to the region. 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.

According to the Accommodation Survey by the Japan Tourism Agency, among the six Tohoku prefectures ^{Note 1}, the total number of guest nights was approximately 32.51 million in 2015 ^{Note 2}, which is a 7.5% increase compared to 2010 before the earthquake. However, if we look at the total number of guest night at tourist oriented accommodations ^{Note 3}, the number decreased by 13.3% compared to 2010, showing that the major scars left by the earthquake disaster are preventing the national economic boom from reaching these areas ^{Note 4}.

Note 1 The six prefectures in Tohoku Region: Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, Akita, Yamagata, and Fukushima.

Note 2 Provisional values.

Note 3 Accommodations have at least 50% of overnight guest staying for tourism.

Note 4 Because surveys conducted for March 2010 figures and prior to that were conducted on facilities with at least 10 employees, the number of guest nights at facilities with at least 10 employees was also used for 2015 figures.

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”.

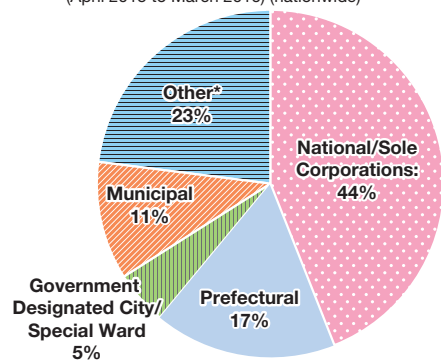
Cases of unsuccessful bidding are decreasing overall, and contracts were concluded for most of the projects for which bidding was previously unsuccessful by devising ways, such as revising predetermined prices to reflect current market prices at the time of reordering and making the size of orders more appropriate.

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 6 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 four 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 that are in the full-scale implementation stage, such as disaster public housing, schools, government offices, and hospitals. These measures include the reflection of the current market prices and the actual state of construction sites in the predetermined prices, such as by continuation of the 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 providing individual consultation with care at the public buildings construction inquiry desk from the ordering phase in coordination with the Reconstruction Agency and other relevant parties.

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

Breakdown of Organizations using Consultation Service (April 2015 to March 2016) (nationwide)



*Other: design offices, construction business operators, etc.

Source) MLIT

Breakdown of Contents using Consultation Service (April 2015 to March 2016)

Content of Consultation	Total Number of Consultations(nationwide)	Total Number of Consultations (Tohoku jurisdiction)
Quantity survey, design and bidding process	1,053	38
Conservation	578	26
Construction supervision	294	2
Planning	342	62
Other	221	4
Total	2,488	132

(Note) Consultation should be directed to the public buildings construction inquiry desk in the MLIT website or eizen@mlit.go.jp

Section 6 Reconstruction, Revitalization, and Etc. of Fukushima

After the occurrence of the Tokyo Electric Power Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Reactor accident, the number of refugees from the evacuation zones was approximately 70,000 individuals ^{Note 1}, while the total number of refugees in Fukushima prefecture, including self-imposed evacuees, climbed to approximately 97,000 individuals ^{Note 2} (according to studies by the Reconstruction Agency). Following the lifting of the evacuation directive for Tamura-shi, Kawachi-mura, and Naraha-machi, moves toward the lifting of the evacuation directive are gathering pace in other municipalities. Based on this, in order to enable the rebuilding of lives and regional revitalization as soon as possible, the government needs to deepen support measures for the early return and new life and enhance initiatives toward rebuilding and self-sustenance

Note 1 As of September 5, 2015.

Note 2 As of March 28, 2016.

of businesses and livelihoods.

The MLIT strives to realize the soonest possible return of those in evacuation centers through efforts to reconstruct infrastructures in accordance with the progress schedule, implement measures for the toll-free use of expressways for refugees, and overcome harmful rumors in accordance with the Early Return and Resettlement Plan (established in March 2013), the Evacuation Lifted Districts Reconstruction and Revitalization Plan (amended on June 2014), and the Speeding Up of Recovering Fukushima from the Effects of the Nuclear Accident (amended in June 2015), which were based on the Act on Special Measure for the Rebirth of Fukushima.

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.

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 27 prefectures (as of the end of March 2016). Also, since March 2014, Tsunami Disaster Caution Zones were designated in Tokushima, Yamaguchi, and Shizuoka (Minami Izu-cho and Kawazu-cho), and five municipalities have developed plans for comprehensively promoting 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 2015).

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.