

# The Pacific

## Using Region-Wide Cooperation to Overcome the Island Country Challenges of Small Size, Isolation and Remoteness

The countries of the Pacific Region have a number of common characteristics. One is their small domestic markets due to limited land areas and populations. Another is isolation because countries consist of many islands separated by vast expanses of ocean. A third characteristic is remoteness because of the poor access to international markets. In addition, this region is vulnerable to natural disasters and the effects of climate change as well as to the environmental burden from waste materials and other sources. Furthermore, countries in the Pacific Region have very little resilience to economic crises such as sharp increases in the price of fuel or food.

Taking the situation of each country into consideration, JICA is providing a wide range of cooperation to overcome such challenges. JICA is also extending region-wide cooperation to address common concerns throughout the region, such as disaster risk management and the environment.

### Key Aid Strategies

### Region-Wide Cooperation Using Japanese Resources Applicable for Island Countries

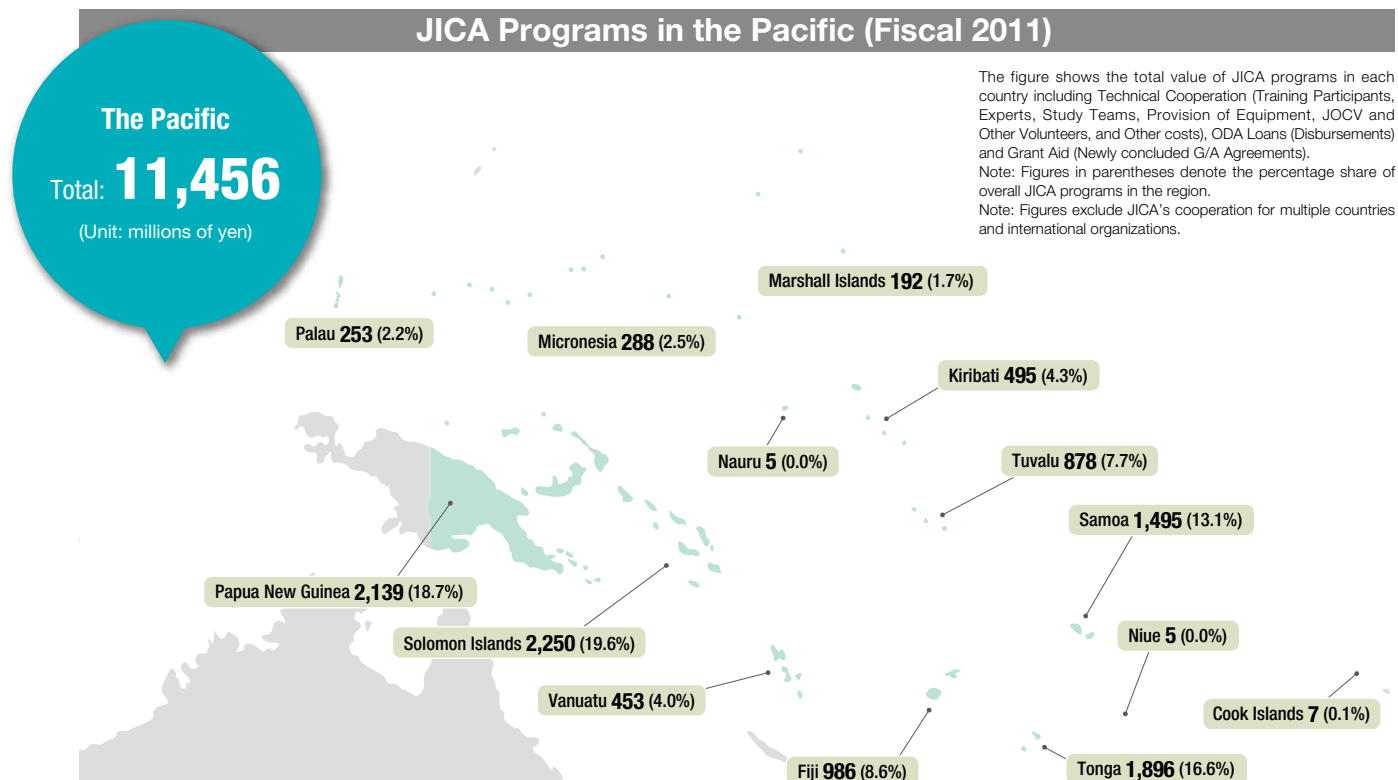
JICA provides assistance to the following members of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF): Fiji, Kiribati, the Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, the Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, the Cook Islands and Niue. These countries are dispersed across the three sub-regions of Polynesia, Melanesia and Micronesia, each with its own diverse languages and cultures.

The island countries of the Pacific have shifted to import-dependent economies as the influx of modern economic and cultural influences altered their traditional self-sufficient economies. Many countries have large trade deficits as a result. Countries must also deal with the environmental issue of accumulations of waste materials that cannot all be treated on

the islands. Furthermore, since these countries consist of many small islands, they face a lack of transportation infrastructure and cannot easily deliver such social services as education and health. These problems have made it difficult to achieve social and economic development and become self-reliant.

JICA is providing region-wide cooperation in order to address issues common to these island countries while paying due regard to the uniqueness of each country. In this kind of cooperation, JICA's approach involves the creation of development models to be shared across the region by sending experts to countries that play key roles. These models are then extended to neighboring countries through such schemes as third-country training programs. As declared at the Sixth

### JICA Programs in the Pacific (Fiscal 2011)





Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM6) of May 2012, JICA is also providing cooperation that utilized Japanese resources, such as Okinawa's experience in overcoming issues unique to islands.

## Priority Issues and Efforts

### ■ Protecting the Environment

Waste management is a challenge for all of the small islands in the Pacific. JICA has supported Samoa since 2000 in its efforts to improve waste disposal sites and enhance management and operation capacities. JICA subsequently supported activities in neighboring countries for improving waste management practices. In cooperation with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP)\*, JICA has provided support to 11 countries in the region since 2011. The goals are building systems for sustainable waste management and training programs. Cooperation is provided at the regional level and the individual country level for implementing the Solid Waste Regional Strategy 2010-2015, which is the target of the entire region. By conducting these activities, JICA is supporting a reduction in the environmental impact of human activity, such as the generation of waste materials, and helping to establish a sound

material-cycle society on these small islands [[See the Case Study on page 63](#)].

\*SPREP: An organization consisting of 21 Pacific island countries and Australia, France, New Zealand and the United States.

### ■ Natural Disasters and Climate Change

Countries in the Pacific Region are highly vulnerable to damage from frequent natural disasters including cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, and floods. Communications and transportation are limited due to the large number of remote islands, which makes it difficult to provide residents with disaster warnings as well as to deliver emergency aid.

JICA is combining Technical Cooperation and Grant Aid to make the entire region better prepared for natural disasters. One theme is enhancing capabilities involving weather observation and issuing forecasts and warnings. In Fiji, experts from neighboring countries gathered to participate in training at the country's Meteorological Service. JICA also provided support for weather observation facilities in Samoa and for other activities. In Tuvalu and the Solomon Islands, radio broadcast networks for disaster information were established to give residents quick access to the information. In Fiji and the Solomon Islands, JICA is offering cooperation for creating a framework for enabling residents to evacuate properly in accordance with the



A JICA expert and counterparts examine the volume and contents of trash at a disposal site.



information provided. Overall, JICA is supplying a broad range of cooperation for disaster preparedness.

Pacific Region countries are very vulnerable to the effects of climate change, too. In particular, Tuvalu and other low-lying coral reef countries are vulnerable to sea level rise and other events associated with climate change. With the cooperation of the University of Tokyo and the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST), JICA is providing Science and Technology Cooperation for bioengineering research concerning the mechanism by which coral reefs, foraminifera and other organisms produce, transport and pile up sand.



Scientists study a beach in Tuvalu.

### ■ Transportation Infrastructure

Consisting of islands that cover a vast area of the ocean, Pacific Region countries have a critical need for infrastructures for the transportation of people and cargo. Marine transport is truly a lifeline for these countries. JICA has provided Grant Aid for rehabilitation of harbors and provision of passenger and cargo vessels in Micronesia, Samoa, Tuvalu, Tonga and other countries in this region. In June 2012, an ODA Loan agreement was signed for the construction of an international cargo wharf in Port Vila, the capital of Vanuatu. By implementing this project, JICA will help facilitate stable imports of vital household goods as well as the development of the tourism industry, which supports Vanuatu's economy.



The Lady Samoa III, a ferry given to Samoa, operates between the islands of Upolu, the capital city of Apia, and Savaii.

### ■ Social Services

In the Pacific Region, the World Health Organization (WHO) and many other donor organizations have been achieving some successes, including the eradication of Poliomyelitis from the region. Previously, many countries in the region had an insufficient capacity to manage the networks needed for the transport and storage of vaccines. As a result, systems required for safe immunizations were not adequately established. To address this issue, in 2004 the governments in the region, international aid organizations such as the WHO and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and bilateral donor agencies from countries such as Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Japan committed themselves to extending cooperation for the Pacific Immunization Programme Strengthening (PIPS) framework as a means of invigorating immunization projects. Since 2005, JICA has been playing a leading role in PIPS by supporting the dissemination of technology and human resource development related to the management of immunization projects and vaccines in the Pacific Region.

In remote areas and islands, limited access to education is a serious issue. JICA is providing cooperation for using television, radio and satellite communication networks, as well as other methods, to increase opportunities for education and improve the quality of education. With the support of Australia and New Zealand, Grant Aid was provided in 1998 to the University of the South Pacific (USP), which was established by 12 Pacific Region countries, for establishing a satellite network. This network allows interactive communication between the main campus in



A junior high school class in Papua New Guinea that uses video teaching materials prepared with the cooperation of JICA

Fiji and branch campuses located throughout the region. JICA is currently providing support to upgrade facilities and equipment and enhance the ICT education implementation system [\[See the Case Study on page 73\]](#). In Papua New Guinea, where the basic education enrollment rate is low, JICA has constructed a national education media center and provided cooperation for the production of educational programs. Cooperation has also been provided for using television for delivering classes in model schools to elementary and junior high schools in other areas of the country. These activities are making basic education available to more people and upgrading the quality of this education.

## Preserving the Beauty of Islands for a Better Future

At small, isolated islands, there is a great impact on the overall environment from the growth of cities and modernization. For example, the accumulation of large volumes of waste and declining water and air quality can have a negative effect on public health. Since tourism is critical to these islands, the deteriorating coastal environment, which ruins an island's scenery, is a serious problem.

JICA is working with the SPREP to assist in formulating a waste material strategy for the entire region in developing waste management systems and training people in each country. JICA and the SPREP have also been working on a model project. The objective of this support is to establish a sound material-cycle society that will facilitate economic and environmental sustainability for small islands.

### Obtaining the Cooperation of Local Governments, Universities, Residents and Others

JICA has been working on waste management since 2000, which is an issue for all countries in the Pacific Region. In Samoa, the Tafaigata disposal site was upgraded to serve as a landfill that can be operated and managed at a low cost. The facility is based on the semi-aerobic landfill method developed by Fukuoka City and University of Fukuoka. The same method was then used to upgrade landfills in Palau, Vanuatu and Micronesia.

Proper disposing of waste is vital. Equally important are measures to prevent the one-way flow of goods to islands from external sources. Islands must do as much as possible to stop the accumulation of waste materials. Countermeasures include limitations on inflows of goods, promotion of on-island recycling, and shipping recyclable and hazardous materials off the islands. In collaboration with Shibushi City in Kagoshima Prefecture, which has devised a way to reduce the amount of waste and raised the recycling rate without the use of an incinerator, JICA assists Pacific countries to promote waste separation to reduce the volume of waste and raise the recycling rate. In Palau, there is an organic garbage composting program with the cooperation of Mie Prefecture and the International Center for Environmental Technology Transfer. In Tonga, JICA is helping reduce the amount of waste produced and use waste materials effectively with the cooperation of Naha City in Okinawa Prefecture and the Okinawa Citizens Recycling Movement. Through programs like these, JICA is providing cooperation in association with local governments and non-governmental organizations in Japan.

### Formulating a Strategy for the Entire Region

JICA formulated the Solid Waste Regional Strategy for the Pacific in 2005 with the cooperation of the SPREP. Based on this strategy, JICA has subsequently provided support for creating national plans for dealing with solid waste in each country and training people in the field of waste management.

In January 2011, JICA and the SPREP started

a new cooperation program based on more than 10 years of experience in order to achieve the targets of the Solid Waste Regional Strategy, which is a goal for the entire Pacific Region. Cooperation is provided for human resources development within the Pacific Region by people trained by past cooperation, strengthening cooperation among countries in this region, and implementing sustainable solid waste management using the know-how of the 11 Pacific Region countries.

### The Sixth Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting

Japan held the first Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting in 1997 and the sixth meeting took place in May 2012 in Nago City in Okinawa Prefecture. At this gathering, participants reaffirmed the importance of initiatives concerning environmental problems that include waste and water management.

Okinawa is similar to Pacific island countries in terms of its climate and geography. Over time, Okinawa has overcome many problems while struggling with issues that are unique to islands. JICA is planning to provide comprehensive support for the establishment sound material-cycle societies for the sustainability of people's lives and the environment on Pacific islands. To accomplish this, the experiences of Okinawa Prefecture and other locations will be used for solid waste countermeasures as well as for protecting water resources and other components of the environment.

#### From Our Expert

### Japanese Technical Cooperation Project for Promotion of Regional Initiative on Solid Waste Management in Pacific Island Countries (J-PRISM)

Shiro Amano  
Chief Advisor

J-PRISM is region-wide Technical Cooperation based on cooperation extended over the past 10 years. The project truly demonstrates that "endurance makes you stronger." To enable residents of this region to acquire and pass on skills themselves, we want to use as much as



possible the local capacity developed through past cooperation. This is why we are increasing mutual horizontal transfers with counterparts in the region. Furthermore, many former JOCVs and other people from Japan who were involved in this project have come back and are working with J-PRISM again. We will continue to support the creation of systems for sustainable solid waste management and the training of the people to operate these systems.

#### From Our Partner

David Sheppard  
SPREP Director-General

SPREP has been cooperating with JICA since 2000 with initiatives involving the solid waste management, which is one of the most important challenges in the Pacific. Our partnership has enabled Pacific island countries to benefit from an outstanding Japanese waste disposal technology called the Fukuoka method in the Pacific. In recent years, our collaboration has become even greater with the launch of the J-PRISM project. With the cooperation of JICA, we are working on improving the capacities of governments in this region for reducing the volume of waste, promoting recycling, and collecting and disposing waste materials properly.



#### Before



#### After



The Tafaigata landfill in Samoa  
This landfill adopts the Fukuoka method, the standard structure for ordinary landfills in Japan that can be used at a low cost to match the needs of developing countries.