

# The Pacific

Key Aid Strategies

## Providing Effective Cooperation by Applying Japanese Knowledge and Experience

The Pacific island countries have a number of common characteristics. They have small-scale domestic markets (small size), comprise many islands separated by vast expanses of ocean (isolation), and have limited access to international markets (remoteness). They are also prone to environmental degradation and extremely vulnerable to natural disasters, climate change, and sharp increases in the prices of fuel and food.

JICA's development cooperation for this region builds on the assistance pledges that the Japanese government made at the Seventh Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting in May 2015. It addresses different issues for different countries and common concerns throughout the region, such as disaster risk reduction, climate change management, and environmental protection.

JICA provides assistance to the 14 Pacific island countries (see the map below). These countries have diverse languages and their own distinct cultures and customs. While they differ in their status of development, they face common issues derived from the common characteristics unique to island nations: small size, isolation, and remoteness. JICA's development cooperation for the region is twofold: bilateral cooperation designed to overcome each country's priority issues, and regionwide cooperation designed to address common issues. As appropriate, JICA's development cooperation also takes advantage of the knowledge and experience of Okinawa, an island prefecture in Japan.

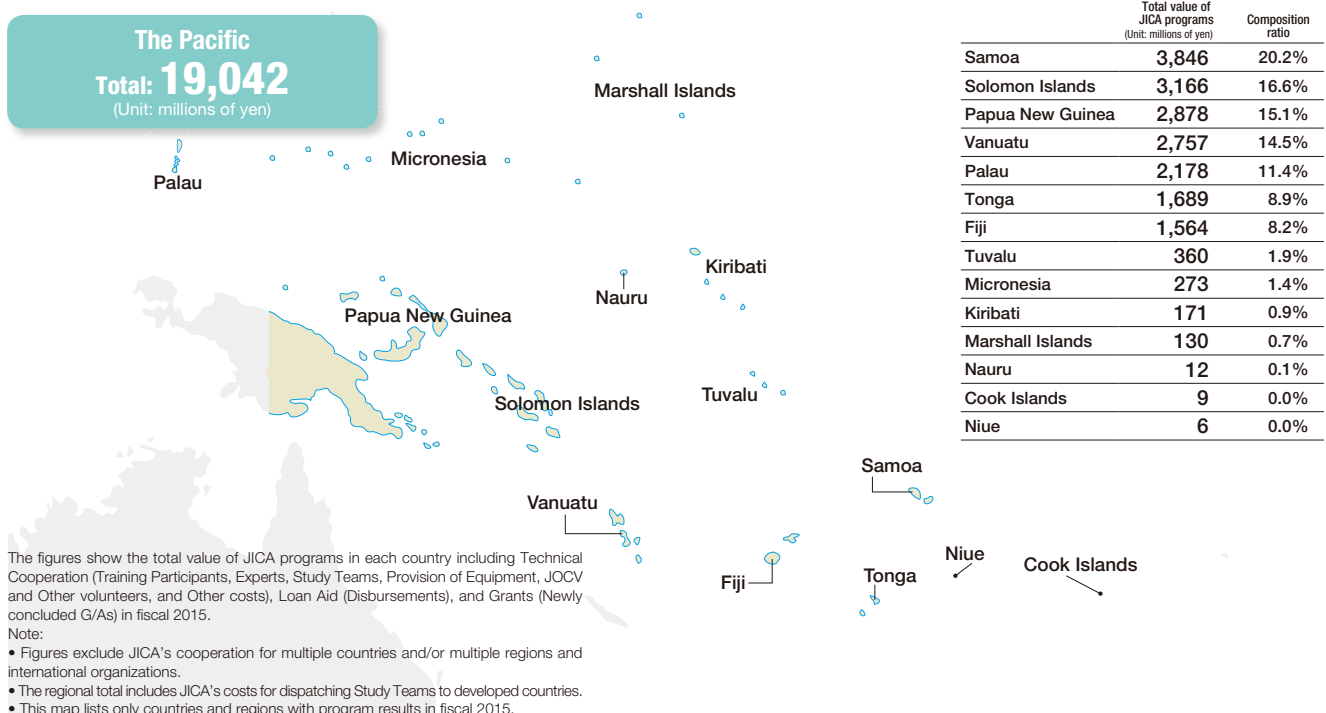
## Priority Issues and Activities

### ● Environmental Management

Solid waste poses a serious problem to the small islands of the Pacific region. JICA works with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) to support institution building for sustainable waste management at the regional and national levels.

In recent years, coastal ecosystems have been damaged by multiple factors, including the overexploitation of marine resources and coastal development. To address this problem, JICA assists the management of coastal resources in Vanuatu and the Solomon Islands. It also works with universities and research institutions in Japan to support the Palau International Coral Reef Center in building its capacities in research as well as operations

## JICA Programs in the Pacific (Fiscal 2015)



and maintenance.

### ● Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change

With many isolated islands, the Pacific island countries are prone and vulnerable to natural disasters such as cyclones, floods, earthquakes, and tsunamis. JICA's assistance includes a program designed to train meteorological personnel using the Fiji Meteorological Service as the regional hub, support for the establishment of the Pacific Climate Change Center in cooperation with SPREP, and training for working-level officials responsible for addressing climate change in the region. Through these activities, JICA is engaged in the establishment of an early disaster warning system at the regional level and the development of planning and implementing capacities for climate change strategies [→ see the Case Study below].

JICA is also conducting a pilot project for gravel beach nourishment<sup>1</sup> against coastal disasters in Tuvalu, a low-lying atoll country vulnerable to sea level rise.

### ● Transport Infrastructure Development

Transport infrastructure for carrying people and supplies constitutes a lifeline indeed for the Pacific island countries, whose territories cover a vast area of ocean. JICA's assistance in this sector involves the development of airports, roads, bridges, and harbors and the provision of passenger and cargo vessels through financial assistance to individual countries, as well as technical cooperation for the operation and maintenance of vessels and

port facilities through the dispatch of regional advisors.

### ● Stable Supply of Energy

The Pacific island countries, with limited natural energy resources, face the challenge of how to reduce their reliance on diesel power generation—which is subject to the fluctuations of international fuel prices—and secure the stable supply of renewable energy.

JICA extends bilateral financial assistance and regional technical cooperation to promote the optimal introduction of renewable energy while stabilizing electric power systems and making efficient use of diesel power generation.

### ● Social Services

Until recently, JICA's assistance in health for the Pacific region centered on the control of infectious diseases such as malaria. From fiscal 2015, however, it is shifting to technical cooperation that focuses on controlling non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and encouraging health promotion in the face of the disease structure tilting toward NCDs in recent years.

In the education sector, JICA has been working to increase access to education in remote areas and isolated islands. Grants and technical cooperation for the University of the South Pacific, which was established by 12 countries in the region, are designed to establish an information and communication technology (ICT) center and to train ICT staff.

<sup>1</sup> A coastal protection method using shingles to bed the coast

#### Case Study

#### Fiji: (Regional) Project for Reinforcing Meteorological Training Function of FMS

### FMS as a Base for Building Resilience in the Region

**Because the Pacific island countries are generally small in scale, it is difficult to train meteorological personnel at the national level. JICA is assisting the Fiji Meteorological Service (FMS) in building its training capacity to train meteorological personnel and strengthen relevant institutions in nine neighboring countries, including the Solomon Islands and Samoa.**

#### Upgrading Meteorological Skills in the Neighboring Countries

The Pacific island countries are vulnerable to natural disasters. Flooding and other damage brought about by cyclones is increasing year by year as the weather conditions are changing and socioeconomic activity is increasing in the region. In February 2016, Cyclone Winston, the

most powerful cyclone in history in the southern hemisphere, hit Fiji, leaving 44 people dead and causing economic losses totaling \$900 million.

The Fukushima Iwaki Declaration, adopted at the Seventh Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM7) in May 2015, stressed the need to build resilience to natural hazards. Yet the Pacific island countries, which are small in scale, have

difficulty in working on disaster risk reduction on their own. A regional framework is essential in this regard. It is therefore necessary to further strengthen the FMS, which has been designated as the Regional Specialized Meteorological Centre (RSMC) in the Southwest Pacific Basin by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and plays a pivotal role in making weather forecasts and training related human resources development (HRD) in the region.

Japan has been assisting the FMS since 1995. The assistance involves capacity development for FMS through the provision of meteorological observation equipment and a third country training program, as well as capacity development for meteorological personnel and organizations in the Pacific island countries. These cooperation arrangements serve as a model for South-South cooperation.

Building on this track record, this project aims to ensure that FMS will be able to train meteorological personnel for the region on its own. Specifically, the project involves assessment of HRD needs in each country, development of HRD tools, and support for capacity building for FMS personnel so that they will be able to serve as lecturers.



FMS staff members and a Japanese expert provide meteorological training.