

3. Oceania

The Pacific Island countries are not only Japan's "neighbors" bound by the Pacific Ocean, but also share deep historical ties with Japan. Also, in possessing vast Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ, maritime zones where a sovereign nation has certain economic rights), these countries are key to maritime transport activity and provide essential fishing grounds for bonito and tuna fisheries. As a result, the stability and prosperity of Pacific Island countries are very important to Japan.

Meanwhile, many Pacific Island countries are relatively new independent states with the urgent task of becoming economically independent. In addition, they face common challenges particular to small island countries, such as small-scale economies dependent on primary industry, territories geographically scattered over the vast area of the sea, difficulty in accessing international markets, and vulnerability to natural hazards. Based on this situation, as a good partner with Pacific Island countries, Japan provides assistance to support their self-reliant and sustainable development.

Japan's Efforts

In order for Pacific Island countries to achieve political stability and self-reliant economic development, it is crucial not only to support each country in overcoming their socio-economic vulnerabilities, but also to provide comprehensive assistance for the region. In addition to promoting cooperation with the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF)⁷, a framework for regional cooperation composed of Pacific Island countries, Japan has hosted the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM), a summit meeting between Japan and Pacific Island countries every three years since 1997. Furthermore, the PALM Ministerial Interim Meeting has been held approximately 18 months after each PALM since 2010.

In May 2018, the Eighth Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting



Training under the ongoing technical cooperation "Project for Capacity Building on Climate Resilience in the Pacific" in Samoa (Photo: JICA)

(PALM8) was held in Iwaki City, Fukushima Prefecture. With the pillars of "(i) free, open, and sustainable oceans; (ii) strengthening the basis for resilient and sustainable development; and (iii) Connecting Pacific Citizens" and based on the achievements so far, Japan announced plans to continue the steady implementation of development assistance as before, as well as further strengthen human resource development and exchanges (over 5,000 people in three years), which are the foundation for growth and prosperity.

In May 2019, the Interagency Committee for the Promotion of Cooperation with Pacific Island Countries determined the basic policy of reinforcing and concentrating resources for Pacific Island countries and strengthening initiatives with all-Japan efforts. Based on the basic policy, Japan implements bilateral cooperation, including the development of basic infrastructure such as ports and airports, as well as technical cooperation targeting multiple Pacific Island countries.

Under the first pillar of PALM8, "free, open, and sustainable oceans," Japan conducted training on the prevention of illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing for officials from Pacific Island countries. Under the second pillar of "strengthening the basis for resilient and sustainable development," Japan provides comprehensive assistance through "mainstreaming disaster risk reduction," which includes training meteorological agency personnel and developing rapid evacuation systems, as well as strengthening human resources and systems related to waste management. For example, as part of the "MARINE Initiative" (see page 80 for details) launched by Japan in order to achieve the "Osaka Blue Ocean Vision" shared at the G20 Osaka Summit, Japan provides support for strengthening human resources development as well as organizational and systematic foundations for sustainable waste management in the Oceania region. Through this Initiative, training was provided for approximately 300 people in FY2019, with indirect benefits reaching approximately 50,000 people. Furthermore, to support Pacific Island countries' efforts addressing climate change, Japan has collaborated with the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), a regional international organization based in Samoa, in fostering human resources engaged in formulating countermeasures against climate change. Finally, under the third pillar of "Connecting Pacific Citizens," Japan provides support for master's education programs in Japanese graduate institutions and implements internship programs in Japanese ministries and agencies for young government officials.

⁷ The 16 PIF member countries and two member regions are Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Fiji, Samoa, Solomon, Vanuatu, Tonga, Nauru, Kiribati, Tuvalu, Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall, Palau, Cook, Niue, French Polynesia, and New Caledonia.



Activities at a waste disposal site in Papua New Guinea as part of the Project for the Promotion of Regional Initiative on Solid Waste Management in Pacific Island Countries (Photo: JICA)

Furthermore, in response to the global spread of COVID-19, Japan has provided health and medical equipment worth approximately ¥4 billion in total and technical cooperation for 14 countries in the Oceania region in 2020. Additionally, Japan has decided to provide a total of ¥42.5 billion in financial assistance loans for Papua New Guinea, Fiji, and Solomon to support economic recovery.

Japan will continue to support Pacific Island countries in strengthening health care systems and recovering the economies impacted by COVID-19 in collaboration with the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and other partners. Through such efforts, Japan will work hand in hand with them in building a stable, resilient, and prosperous Oceania region in the post-COVID-19 era.

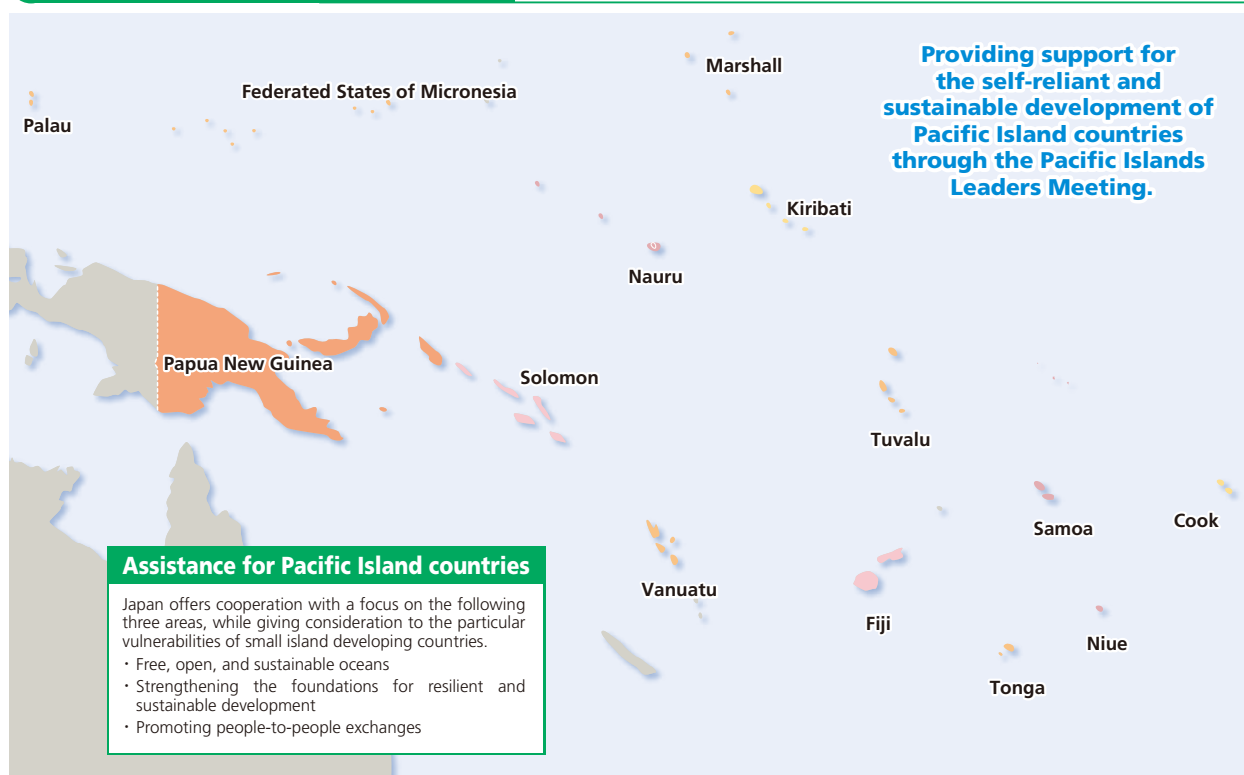


Chart III-4

Japan's Assistance in Oceania

Calendar year: 2019

(Unit: US\$ million)

Rank	Country or region	Grants				Loan aid			Total (Net disbursement)	Total (Gross disbursement)
		Grant aid		Technical cooperation	Total	Amount disbursed (A)	Amount recovered (B)	(A)-(B)		
			Grants provided through multilateral institutions							
1	Papua New Guinea	20.92	—	7.91	28.82	36.12	11.95	24.17	52.99	64.94
2	Samoa	34.12	—	3.15	37.26	—	1.83	-1.83	35.44	37.26
3	Palau	11.84	—	2.34	14.18	4.22	—	4.22	18.40	18.40
4	Tonga	15.23	—	1.55	16.78	—	—	—	16.78	16.78
5	Fiji	4.42	0.10	7.19	11.61	—	1.11	-1.11	10.49	11.61
6	Kiribati	10.81	—	0.76	11.56	—	—	—	11.56	11.56
7	Federated States of Micronesia	9.29	—	2.12	11.41	—	—	—	11.41	11.41
8	Marshall	9.38	—	1.03	10.41	—	—	—	10.41	10.41
9	Nauru	8.33	—	0.06	8.39	—	—	—	8.39	8.39
10	Solomon	1.84	—	6.31	8.15	—	—	—	8.15	8.15
11	Vanuatu	2.66	—	3.32	5.98	1.12	—	1.12	7.10	7.10
12	Tuvalu	3.38	—	0.12	3.50	—	—	—	3.50	3.50
13	Cook	0.39	—	0.07	0.46	—	—	—	0.46	0.46
14	Niue	0.16	—	0.10	0.26	—	—	—	0.26	0.26
15	[Tokelau]	—	—	0.00	0.00	—	—	—	0.00	0.00
	Multiple countries in Oceania	6.87	6.25	3.95	10.81	—	—	—	10.81	10.81
Oceania region total		139.62	6.35	39.97	179.59	41.45	14.89	26.56	206.16	221.04

Notes:

- Ranking is based on gross disbursements.
- The sum of adding up each figure may not be exactly the same as the total figure due to rounding.
- [—] indicates that no assistance was provided.
- Grant aid includes aid provided through multilateral institutions that can be classified by country.

- Aid to multiple countries refers to the aid, such as seminars and dispatchment of survey teams in multiple countries within a region.
- Country or region shows DAC recipients but including graduated countries in total.
- Negative numbers show the recovered amount of loans exceeded the disbursed amount.
- Square brackets [] denote region names.

Stories from the Field



Papua New Guinea's First National Textbooks and Teacher's Manuals Completed!

—Japan's know-how of developing textbooks is contributing to locally tailored learning for children—

Papua New Guinea, with a large number of primary and secondary schools scattered far from the city, has faced a major challenge in the quality of teachers in remote areas that are difficult to access. For example, some teachers have to conduct classes without sufficient subject knowledge. An advanced Outcomes-Based Education was introduced in 2001 as part of a curriculum reform, but no nationally standardized textbooks or teacher's manuals were developed, and the teachers, left largely to their own discretion, conducted classes relying on their own teaching skills using reference materials produced by various overseas publishers. As a result, the quality of education could not be ensured and teachers were unable to provide adequate instruction for the children, and it has drawn mounting criticisms that children's academic abilities had declined.

Thus, the Papua New Guinean National Department of Education decided to discontinue the Outcomes-Based Education in 2014, replacing it with a newly introduced Standards-Based Curriculum and developing national textbooks. However, as the country had never developed national textbooks before, there was a lack of sufficient knowledge and experience.

Under these circumstances, the National Department of Education requested cooperation from Japan, which had been providing support in the field of science and mathematics education in the country since 2005. In 2016, the "Project for Improving the Quality of Mathematics and Science Education" was launched to develop national textbooks and teacher's manuals for third to sixth grade primary school students and teachers across the country.

Teachers and curriculum development staff appointed by Papua New Guinea and Japanese experts gathered together and collaborated to develop the first national textbooks for approximately four years. Incorporating Japan's lesson study methods (mock lessons) and know-how provided by the Japanese textbook publishing company GAKKOTOSHO Co., Ltd., they devised various ways to make the content easy to understand for the children and teachers in Papua New Guinea by including plenty of photographs and illustrations and introducing the country's nature and culture. When setting math questions,



Papua New Guinean children learning with the newly developed textbooks (Photo: JICA)

as units of money and other familiar items differ from those in Japan, they consulted with the Papua New Guinean teachers on each and every aspect to adjust the content to reflect their local situation.

"The experience of being entrusted with developing national textbooks, which are at the foundation of nation-building and human resources development, was an extremely precious opportunity. From the second year, the teachers' mock lessons to verify the contents of the textbooks were held in a training camp style, and between classes, verification, and preparations for the next class, they worked barely without rest," said Mr. ITO Akinori, a JICA Expert involved in the textbook development looking back on that time.

"Most amazing of all, the passion of the Papua New Guinean teachers to improve the level of education in their country could be seen. It was a great honor for us to be able to witness the starting point of the future of education in Papua New Guinea," said Mr. SERIZAWA Katsuaki and Mr. KOMAZAWA Susumu of GAKKOTOSHO Co., Ltd., who participated in the project. They continued as follows: "Japanese textbooks are excellent because the learning contents are exceptionally systematic. For example, after learning multiplication, students learn to calculate area. They are devised so that each unit teaches new items based on the content completed in previous ones. In this way, each unit is completed step by step. Students can properly acquire all of the necessary knowledge in just six years. We received jubilant comments from Papua New Guinean teachers about the Japanese textbooks, saying, 'I really learned a lot,' and 'Now for the first time I understand what kind of learning content is needed.'"

The science and mathematics textbooks and teacher's manuals, which took approximately four years to complete, have been in use since the new school term in February 2020. Unlike Japan, where the textbooks are distributed to each and every child for their own use, in Papua New Guinea, teachers collect them at the end of lesson. These new textbooks that made use of Japanese know-how are used over and over again in places of learning, and are contributing greatly to improving the quality of education in Papua New Guinea.



Japanese experts and their Papua New Guinean counterparts developing textbooks and teacher's manuals suited to the local situation (Photo: JICA)