

Chapter 3 New Efforts

Section 1 Reconstruction Grants

1. Overview of the System

(1) Overview

Reconstruction Grants are grants to the disaster-affected local governments to cover the cost of implementing projects necessary for the development of reconstruction areas in areas that were severely damaged by the Great East Japan Earthquake. They were established based on the Act on Special Zones for Reconstruction in Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake (Act No. 122 of 2011, hereinafter referred to as the “Special Zones Act”) in light of the stipulation in the “Basic Guidelines for Reconstruction in Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake” that “the grant is to be established in a user-friendly and flexible manner to enable local governments to develop various measures necessary for recovery under their own recovery plans.”

Based on the Special Zones Act, this is a core system to support the reconstruction of the disaster-affected areas by consolidating related projects in areas severely damaged by the Great East Japan Earthquake and providing grants to the disaster-affected local governments through a single project plan application.

It is also an extremely flexible mechanism that has not been used in past earthquakes, including features such as highly flexible benefit promotion projects, expense allowances for local governments, and use of funds.

(2) Core projects

As core projects, the Reconstruction Grants target the physical infrastructure projects necessary for the development of reconstruction areas by disaster-affected local governments, and 40 projects of five ministries (the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology; the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare; the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism; the Ministry of the Environment) have been collectively implemented. The “basic national expenditure rate” is set as the subsidy rate for each project, and the local government expenses is fully covered by additional national subsidies and local allocation tax (*).

* Excluding disaster public housing development projects, etc.

Figure 3-1-1 Reconstruction grant core project

Number	Project Name	Number	Project Name
Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology		Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism	
A-1	Public school facility development project funded by the national treasury (new extension and integration of public elementary and junior high schools, etc.)	D-1	Road projects (interconnected roads between urban areas, etc.)
A-2	School facility environment improvement projects (earthquake proofing of public schools, etc.)	D-2	Road project (road improvement (land readjustment) associated with relocation to higher ground)
A-3	Project to promote complex and multifunctional kindergartens	D-3	Road projects (road disaster prevention, earthquake disaster countermeasures, etc.)
A-4	Excavation and research project for buried cultural properties	D-4	Disaster public housing development projects, etc. (development of disaster public housing, acquisition and development of land for disaster public housing, etc.)
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare		D-5	Disaster public housing rent reduction project
B-1	Earthquake retrofitting of medical facilities	D-6	Special rent reduction project for the Great East Japan Earthquake
B-2	Nursing care infrastructure reconstruction and community development project (Development of "periodic patrols and emergency response services" and "home-visit nursing stations")	D-7	Comprehensive improvement project for public housing stock (seismic retrofitting, elevator retrofitting)
		D-8	Residential district improvement project (Removal of defective housing, construction of improved housing, etc.)
B-3	Project to promote complex and multifunctional nursery schools	D-9	Small-scale residential district improvement project (Removal of defective housing, small-scale construction of improved housing, etc.)
Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries		D-10	Comprehensive residential urban development projects (rehabilitation and development of residential urban areas)
C-1	Comprehensive infrastructure development project for reconstruction of rural areas (Village infrastructure such as village drainage, development of production infrastructure such as farmland, etc.)	D-11	Project for improvement of excellent buildings, etc.
		D-12	Housing and building safety stock formation project (seismic retrofit project for housing and buildings)
C-2	Support for rural revitalization projects (reconstruction measures) (Development of disaster-affected production facilities, living environment facilities, regional exchange centers, etc.)	D-13	Housing and building safety stock formation project (project for relocation of houses at risk due to proximity to cliffs, etc.)
C-3	Earthquake preparedness and strategic crop production infrastructure development projects (Development of water utilization facilities necessary for the production of wheat, soybeans, etc.)	D-14	Emergency measures for landslides and collapses on developed residential land
		D-15	Tsunami reconstruction hub development project
C-4	Comprehensive support project for reconstruction of agriculture in the disaster-affected areas (agricultural facility development, etc.)	D-16	Urban redevelopment project
C-5	Fishing village disaster prevention function enhancement project (Raising the ground of fishing villages and improving the living infrastructure)	D-17	Urban redevelopment rezoning project (land readjustment project for urban disaster recovery, etc.)
C-6	Fishing port facility enhancement project (Raising land for fishing port facilities, drainage measures, etc.)	D-18	Urban redevelopment rezoning project (Urban liquefaction countermeasure project)
		D-19	Urban disaster prevention promotion projects (Urban liquefaction countermeasure project)
C-7	Project for reconstruction of joint-use facilities for fisheries (Development of facilities for joint use by fisheries, fishing port facilities, and facilities for the production of seeds for release, etc.)	D-20	Urban disaster prevention promotion project (Comprehensive urban disaster prevention promotion project)
		D-21	Sewerage project
C-8	Emergency improvement project for agriculture, forestry, and fisheries related testing and research institutes	D-22	Urban park project
C-9	Urgent improvement project for woody biomass facilities, etc.	D-23	Disaster prevention collective relocation promotion project
		Ministry of the Environment	
		E-1	Project for intensive introduction of low-carbon society compatible septic tanks, etc.

Source) the Reconstruction Agency HP https://www.reconstruction.go.jp/topics/main-cat1/sub-cat1-14/sub-cat1-14-9/20160406_kohukin-1.pdf (browsed July 27, 2023)

(3) Benefit promotion projects

Benefit promotion projects are related to core projects and are implemented voluntarily and independently by disaster-affected local governments. They respond to various needs according to the stage of reconstruction, from the concept of reconstruction area development to the utilization of the sites after disaster prevention collective relocation promotion projects. The subsidy rate is 80%, with the upper limit being 35% of the core project costs.

Examples of benefit promotion projects include:

- Concept of community development during the period of reconstruction and revitalization
Estimation of maintenance costs and preparation of development plans for public facilities in the city, etc.
- Establishment of new livelihoods in disaster public housing
Community facilities, etc. in the disaster prevention housing complex
- Utilization of the land left after disaster prevention collective relocation
Review and preparation of land use plans
Development of open spaces, roads, etc. in the land left after disaster prevention collective relocation
- Measures for preservation of earthquake historic ruins

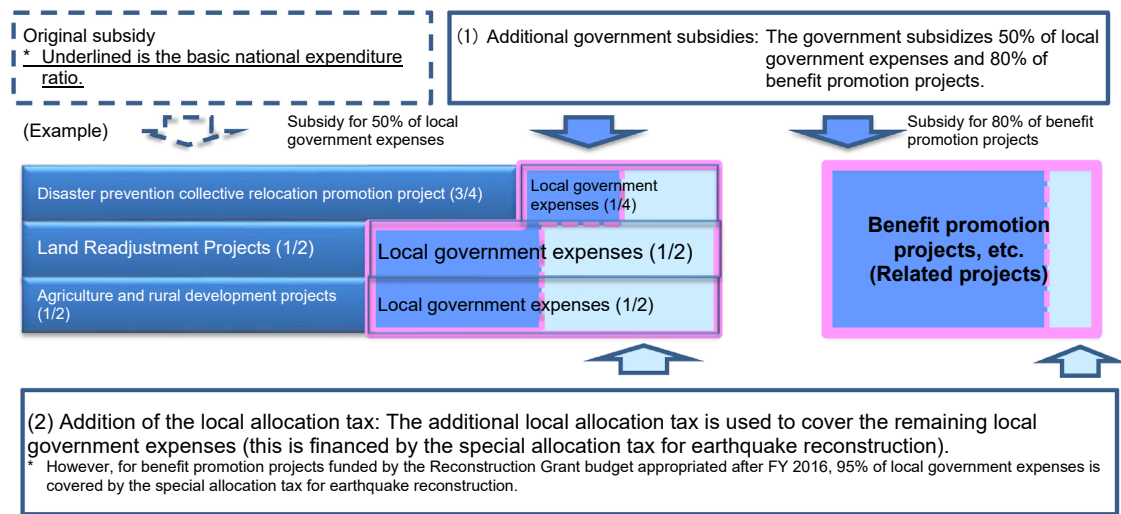
(4) Reduction of local government expenses

An additional 50% of local government expenses related to core projects is subsidized by the national government, and the remaining local burden is fully covered by the local allocation tax.

However, for benefit promotion projects funded by the Reconstruction Grant budget appropriated after FY 2016, 95% of local government expenses is covered by the local allocation tax.

Figure 3-1-2 “Basic National Expenditure Ratio” and Reduction of Local Government Expenses

- The “basic national expenditure ratio” in this document refers to the original subsidy rate for core projects.
- All of the remaining local government expenses will be paid through (1) additional government subsidies and (2) addition of local allocation tax.



* Core projects include projects for which the private sector, etc. bears part of the project costs, but in such cases, the amount borne by the private sector is not subject to the above-mentioned mitigation measures.

Source) the Reconstruction Agency HP https://www.reconstruction.go.jp/topics/main-cat1/sub-cat1-14/sub-cat1-14-9/20160406_kohukin-1.pdf (browsed July 27, 2023)

(5) Flexibility of execution and simplification of procedures

The Reconstruction Grants are designed to bundle together a wide range of projects necessary for the development of the reconstruction area, and the disaster-affected local governments can apply for the grants with a single project plan. In addition, the Reconstruction Agency or each Regional Bureau of Reconstruction serves as a single point of contact for the application and other procedures, which reduces the administrative burden on local governments and enables them to proceed with procedures simply and quickly. Furthermore, the establishment of funds and the flexible transfer of funds between projects has enabled flexible execution.

In April 2012, the following review was conducted based on the opinions of municipalities.

① Simplifying documents, etc.

Elimination of one third of application documents and introduction of automatic calculation to reduce document preparation burden

② Special provisions for starting projects prior to grant decisions

Establishment of special provisions concerning the commencement of projects prior to the notification of the allowable grant amount to enable the flexible commencement of projects

③ Ensuring the time necessary for adjustments, etc., prior to notification of the allowable amount of grant

It was also announced that sufficient time should be ensured between application and notification so that sufficient time can be secured for coordination with municipalities, etc., and that the Reconstruction Agency and Regional Bureau of Reconstruction should make direct visits to the sites as necessary to listen to and respond to each request, and that the Reconstruction Agency and Regional Bureau of Reconstruction should coordinate closely with each ministry to deal with the requests in an integrated manner and that unified instructions should be given.¹

¹ Source) Reconstruction Agency, “Outline of the Review of Procedures, etc. for Reconstruction Grants ” (April 10, 2014)

2. Review of the system

Since the establishment of the Reconstruction Grants, the program has been reviewed from time to time in light of changes in needs as reconstruction progresses, and its operation has been made more flexible.

(1) Creation of a lump-sum allocation for benefit promotion project

In order to drastically improve the usability of the Reconstruction Grants and accelerate the revitalization of urban areas in the disaster-affected area through free implementation of projects by municipalities, 20% of the allocated amount for core projects will be allocated in one lump sum for benefit promotion projects related to projects that form the basis for the development of reconstruction areas (fishing village disaster prevention function enhancement project, tsunami reconstruction hub development project, urban redevelopment rezoning project, disaster prevention collective relocation promotion project), and a system has been established that allows certain projects to be implemented without requiring a grant application and decision, but by submitting a detailed account of the intended use to the ministry or agency in charge of the grant. This was announced along with the second allocation (May 2012).

As a result, the following projects became possible.

- Surveys necessary for the promotion of urban development, such as coordination costs for urban development (research costs), dispatch of experts, and support for consensus building (research costs)
- Projects necessary to promote land readjustment, such as right-of-way adjustment (research costs) and embankment environment improvement (project cost)
- Support for disaster victims, including lifestyle and health counseling, support for patrolling activities (research costs), and support for community bus operation for disaster victims (project costs)
- Disaster prevention related projects such as disaster prevention local government radio, disaster prevention stockpile warehouse development (project costs), and disaster prevention drills (research costs)
- Industry location and tourism resource development projects such as local enterprise management reconstruction guidance projects (survey costs) and tourism resource PR projects (research costs)

With the establishment of this mechanism, approximately 45.25 billion yen, which is 20% of the amount of the first and second allocations to fishing village disaster prevention function enhancement, etc. (approximately 226.27 billion yen), was allocated in a lump sum to 32 municipalities in 3 prefectures in the second allocation.

(2) Announcement of “Flexible Operation of Reconstruction Grants”

In light of the heightened stage of reconstruction and various requests from the affected areas, the “Flexible Operation of Reconstruction Grants” was announced in March 2013, and the management of the grants was made more flexible in conjunction with the fifth allocation.

1) Expanding the scope of core projects

The 40 core projects have so far been allocated mainly to disaster prevention collective relocation promotion project, urban redevelopment rezoning project, disaster public housing development, and core facilities for agriculture and fisheries. Based on the fact that the foundation of community development is being developed, new issues for future community development are being raised. In order to respond to these new issues and accelerate reconstruction, the scope of adoption of core projects was newly expanded, and the following projects were also made possible.

a. Project examples

- Development of facilities at tsunami reconstruction hub
Public facilities (community exchange centers), disaster prevention base facilities (tsunami evacuation deck and disaster prevention center), and other recreational facilities (parking lot, plaza)

- Measures to utilize the sites after disaster prevention collective relocation
Development of tsunami disaster prevention green spaces, parks, and raising of fishing communities
- Development of machinery and facilities related to agriculture and fisheries for the future
Introduction of agricultural machinery (tractors, combines harvesters, etc.) and development of fisheries-related facilities (large-scale joint wastewater treatment facilities) to accommodate future resumption of farming
- Development of tourist and exchange facilities
Refurbishment and maintenance of community halls and campsites

2) Expansion of the scope of benefit promotion projects

With regard to the benefit promotion projects, etc., in light of the higher stages of reconstruction, various needs that have relevance to the core projects have been raised by the disaster-affected areas. Under the policy of basically responding to those that are not blacklisted, the following requests can be flexibly responded to.

- Projects to revitalize tourism and liveliness
Survey and maintenance of beach restoration and aquarium tank maintenance
- Meeting needs beyond disaster recovery
Development of land for private kindergartens and rehabilitation of adaptive guidance classrooms for truant students
- Responding to needs associated with new community development
Compensation for relocation of existing conduits for telecommunication facilities in the urban redevelopment rezoning project implementation area, support for temporary storage sites of embankment materials, support for installation of temporary pumps (to eliminate internal water), construction of bicycle parking lots in front of stations, construction of rest areas around disaster public housing, research for preservation of earthquake historic ruins*, raising of commercial and industrial land with certain potential for use*, development of storage of buried cultural properties*.

* Those partially allocated in the past.

3) Revision of benefit promotion projects

The benefit promotion projects were reviewed as follows, based on requests for greater freedom of use and establishment of a lump-sum allocation to prefectures.

a. More flexible operation of project implementing entities

In the past, benefit promotion projects, etc. were operated by the same entity as core projects. However, it is now possible for prefectures to implement benefit promotion projects, etc. in relation to municipal core projects and municipalities in relation to prefectural core projects.

For example, it became possible to deal with the following cases.

- In connection with the municipal rezoning project, the prefectural government will develop temporary grounds for disaster-affected schools as a benefit promotion project.
- Municipalities carry out PR projects as benefit promotion projects related to farmland field improvement in the prefecture.

The upper limit of benefit promotion projects, etc. (35% of total core projects) is implemented within the framework of the entity implementing the benefit promotion projects.

b. Review of lump-sum allocation

Since there are a wide range of related projects in the five projects that form the basis of reconstruction

community development (fishing village disaster prevention function enhancement project, tsunami reconstruction hub development project, urban redevelopment project, urban redevelopment rezoning project, disaster prevention collective relocation promotion project), in order to simplify the grant procedure, it was decided to review the following points regarding the lump-sum allocation in which a certain percentage of the budget for the benefit promotion projects, etc. is given to the municipalities that are the project implementation entities in advance.

- Establishment of lump-sum allocation to prefectures

In order to make it possible for prefectures to implement community development support related to the above five projects conducted by municipalities, a lump-sum allocation to prefectures was established. For example, in relation to the municipalities' disaster prevention collective relocation promotion project, the prefectural government is now able to provide research support for the formation of consensus among residents in a lump sum allocation.

- Elimination of the whitelist

Eliminated the whitelist, which was a limited enumeration of eligible projects that could be implemented through lump-sum allocated benefit promotion projects. Submission of a detailed account of the intended use enabling a wide range of projects to be implemented at the discretion of local governments*.

- * The whitelist will be continually produced for example purposes.
- * Projects with project costs exceeding 100 million yen and projects that may fall under the blacklist of benefit promotion projects will not be subject to lump-sum allocation, but will be applied for and allocated to individual projects as before.
- * Based on the request to implement the project upon receiving a response from the ministry in charge, it was decided to promptly respond to the submitted detailed account of the intended use with or without modifications.

4) Coordination of response by other support systems

Many of the requests from the disaster-affected areas are projects that are difficult to be addressed by the Reconstruction Grants, but which should be addressed by other systems for the disaster-affected areas, such as the Withdrawal-type Reconstruction Fund, the General Subsidy for Social Infrastructure Development, and the National Disaster Prevention Project (such as making schools earthquake-resistant). Therefore, when implementing measures for reconstruction, it was decided to consider and coordinate the utilization of not only the Reconstruction Grants but also these support systems.

5) Response to urban park project

Regarding the urban park project, which was widely requested by the disaster-affected areas, it was decided to respond with Reconstruction Grants based on the following concepts.

a. Necessity in reconstructive community development

Regarding tsunami disaster prevention green spaces (parks with functions of tsunami attenuation and capture of floating objects), there should be consistency with the relationship with the underlying urban area to be protected and the concept of multiple defenses for the region as a whole. In addition, economic comparison with alternative plans including tsunami simulation should be conducted where necessary.

With regard to disaster prevention parks (parks that function as evacuation sites, etc.), the number of evacuees assumed and evacuation routes, etc. should be reasonable. It should also be consistent with the tsunami evacuation plan for the entire region.

b. Scale of development

The area of urban parks, etc. shall be of a reasonable size for the purpose and expected functions of the project. In addition, efficient development should be carried out, mainly by making effective use of the sites after disaster prevention collective relocation and public lands.

If an embankment is to be created, it should be suitable for the expected function. In addition, costs should be reduced as much as possible by utilizing surplus soil generated by construction work in the vicinity. In addition, facility development other than infrastructure development shall not be excessive in light of the purpose of the project.

(3) **Announcement of the “Policy for Promoting the Use of Reconstruction Grants in Accordance with the Progress of the Stages of Reconstruction”**

In November 2014, the government announced the “Policy for Promoting the Use of Reconstruction Grants in Accordance with the Progress of the Stages of Reconstruction” to flexibly support the efforts of the disaster-affected areas toward the completion of reconstruction by utilizing the Reconstruction Grants after examining the needs of the disaster-affected areas and considering the transition to the stage of moving into disaster public housing and delivering upland housing complexes.

Specifically, in addition to the following three policies, it was decided that Reconstruction Agency staff would be dispatched to the affected areas to assist municipalities in formulating business plans.

1) Flexible support for establishment of new livelihoods in line with full-scale housing supply (including the addition of disaster public housing development projects to the lump-sum allocation of benefit promotion projects)

As the reconstruction community development is progressing, it is important to provide support in a timely and flexible manner in response to the actual situation of the region for establishment of new livelihoods in the disaster-affected area. Therefore, the public housing development project for disaster victims was added to the core projects subject to the lump-sum allocation of benefit promotion projects. By forwarding a certain percentage of the budget to municipalities, etc., it became possible to implement the projects promptly and flexibly according to the actual situation of the region. Examples include the development of facilities that contribute to community building in areas including housing complexes (community facilities such as exchange facilities, and living support facilities for elderly and child-raising households), support for the establishment of community activities by residents and local residents, and the introduction of community buses that connect disaster public housing complexes with urban areas.²

In addition, the upper limit of project costs subject to the lump-sum allocation of benefit promotion projects was raised (from 100 million yen to 300 million yen).

This has made it possible, for example, to develop roads connecting to disaster public housing, to develop intersections and drainage channels relating to new urban areas, and to develop tourist exchange facilities and sports grounds.

2) Development of memorial and prayer facilities by municipalities (establish places of mourning and pass on memories and lessons from the disaster)

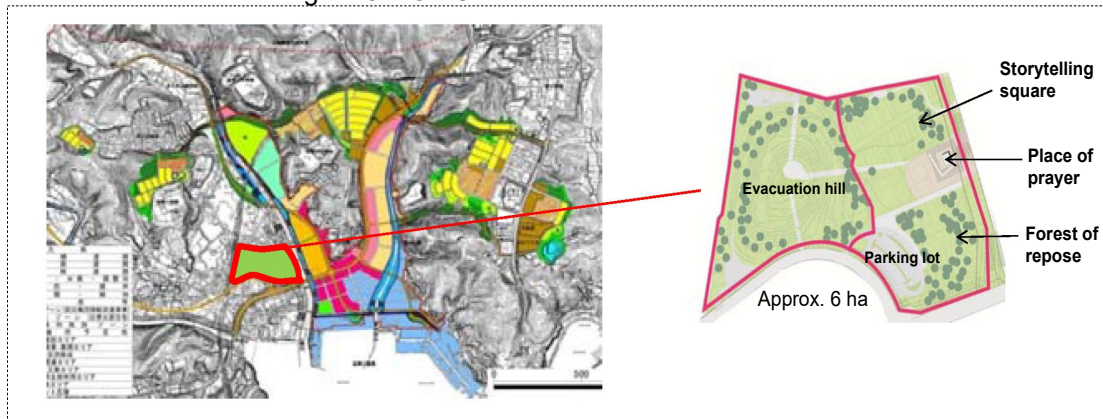
The development of places to commemorate the victims of the earthquake in accordance with the actual conditions of the region is of great significance in passing down the memories and lessons of the earthquake to future generations. Therefore, it was decided to support the development of so-called memorial and prayer facilities for local residents by municipalities with Reconstruction Grants for reconstruction community development after confirming that they are appropriate plans in terms of scale, contents of facilities, and utilization of public lands (such as the land left after disaster prevention collective relocation).

² Municipalities conducting area development projects related to urban development are eligible.

(Specific example) Minamisanriku Town, Miyagi Prefecture (Shizugawa District)

A 6-hectare Reconstruction Memorial Park with a place for mourning and repose of souls and a shelter mountain was developed in the vicinity of the former disaster prevention office building.

Figure 3-1-3 Overview of Reconstruction Memorial Park



Source) Reconstruction Agency “Policy for Promoting the Use of Reconstruction Grants in Accordance with the Progress of the Stages of Reconstruction: Flexible Support for Efforts in Affected Areas with a View to Finishing Reconstruction in the Future” November 25, 2014

https://www.reconstruction.go.jp/topics/main-cat1/sub-cat1-14/20141125_koufukinkatsuyousokushinnohoushin.pdf
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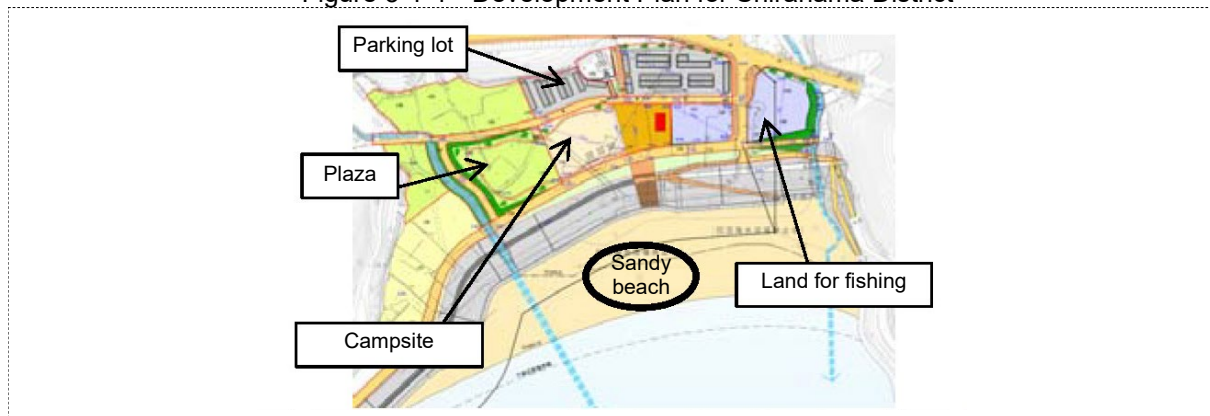
3) Promotion of reconstruction utilizing local resources by utilizing the land left after disaster prevention collective relocation (promoting the revitalization of local prosperity and liveliness through meticulous support)

In regard to ambitious efforts utilizing local resources created by land left after disaster prevention collective relocation, etc., after confirming that the plan is appropriate in terms of the degree to which it contributes to the reconstruction of the region, the prospect of using the land left after relocation, the sustainability, and the balance with costs, etc., the revitalization of the local prosperity and liveliness was promoted by supporting the plan through benefit promotion projects, etc.

(Exaple 1) Ishinomaki City, Miyagi Prefecture (Shirahama District)

Since the beach has been restored naturally after the disaster, it is used as tourism resources. Through the benefit promotion project, the hinterland of the beach has been leveled and inexpensive plazas and parking lots have been developed.

Figure 3-1-4 Development Plan for Shirahama District



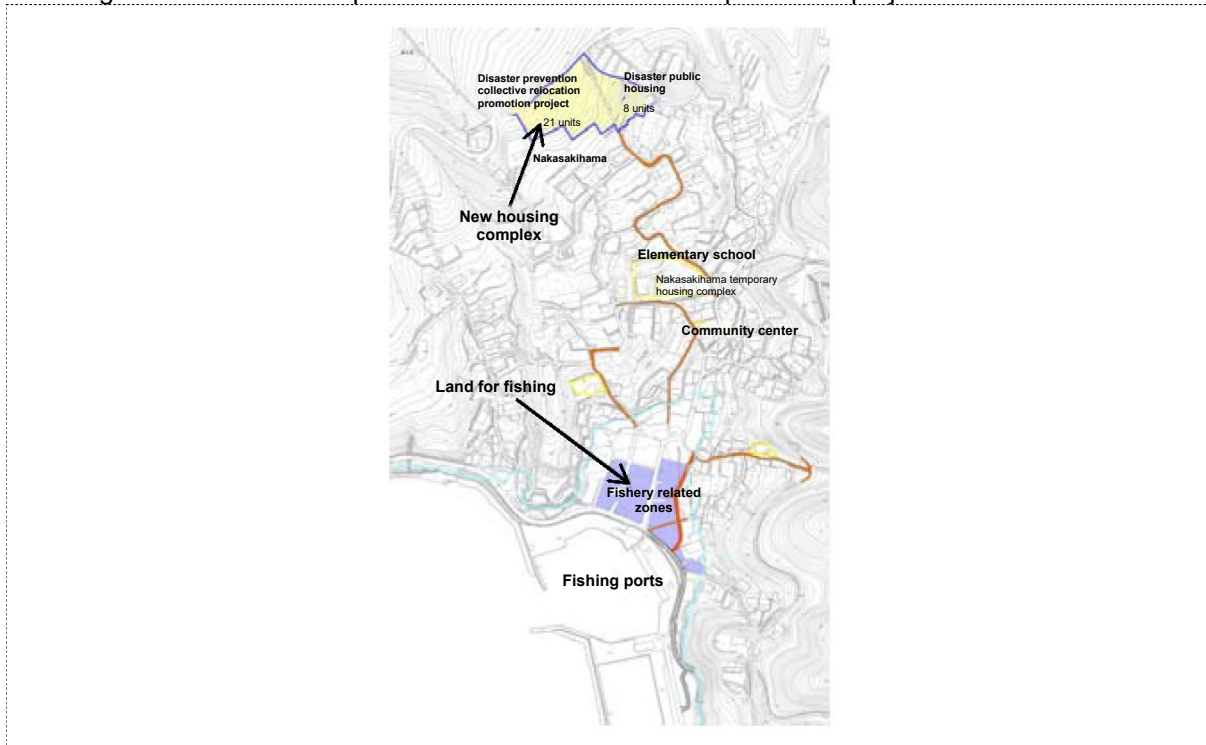
Source) Reconstruction Agency “Policy for Promoting the Use of Reconstruction Grants in Accordance with the Progress of the Stages of Reconstruction: Flexible Support for Efforts in Affected Areas with a View to Finishing Reconstruction in the Future” November 25, 2014

https://www.reconstruction.go.jp/topics/main-cat1/sub-cat1-14/20141125_koufukinkatsuyousokushinnohoushin.pdf
(browsed July 27, 2023)

(Example 2) Ofunato City, Iwate Prefecture (Sakihama District)

The former residential areas moved to higher ground as part of the disaster prevention collective relocation promotion project were utilized to develop aquaculture material storage areas, drying areas and net storage areas for fishermen.

Figure 3-1-5 Disaster prevention collective relocation promotion project in Sakihama District



Source) Reconstruction Agency “Policy for Promoting the Use of Reconstruction Grants in Accordance with the Progress of the Stages of Reconstruction: Flexible Support for Efforts in Affected Areas with a View to Finishing Reconstruction in the Future” November 25, 2014

https://www.reconstruction.go.jp/topics/main-cat1/sub-cat1-14/20141125_koufukinkatsuyousokushinnohoushin.pdf

(browsed July 27, 2023)

(4) Announcement of the “Package for Promoting the Utilization of Benefit Promotion Projects to Strengthen Responses to Local Issues”

Based on Basic Approach to the Development of Reconstruction Measures Leading to “Self-Reliance” (announced by the Reconstruction Agency on June 3, 2015) and other factors, a package to promote the use of benefit promotion projects to strengthen the response to local issues was released in June 2015 with the aim of accurately responding to local issues that arise in the new stage of reconstruction and leading to the reconstruction and self-reliance of the disaster-affected area by making efforts in the benefit promotion projects “visible” and promoting horizontal development of case studies. The revised version was published in April 2016 and the third version in June 2017.

In this package, the project menu is classified into the following eight categories to provide examples and organize the benefit promotion projects. After the release of this package, officials from the Reconstruction Agency and the Regional Bureau of Reconstruction visited municipalities, etc. to hold repeated dialogues toward the resolution of regional issues, and support for the formulation of Reconstruction Grant Project Plan was provided, including the revision of this package based on the requests of the disaster-affected areas.

1) Concept of community development during the period of reconstruction and revitalization

Research and study work on local issues and their solutions, including urban development districts. Examples

include the preparation of plans for regional revitalization utilizing the results of reconstruction projects.

(Example) Estimation of maintenance costs and preparation of development plans for public facilities in the city, etc. (Rikuzentakata City)

Rikuzentakata planned to reduce the area of public facilities to be built after the earthquake by about 10% from before the disaster, based on the results of a survey on the city's benefit promotion project.

2) Acceleration of core project construction

Project required to accelerate construction of core project. Examples include the use of consultants to coordinate Reconstruction Grant projects with other projects and the provision of information to citizens on the progress of Reconstruction Grant projects.

(Example) Maintenance of a stockyard (Kesennuma City)

A stockyard was constructed as a temporary storage site for leftover soil from reconstruction projects in the city. Plans to use the leftover soil for other projects were also prepared.

3) Implementation of community development in line with local conditions

A project to promote further community development by utilizing the results of core projects. Examples of projects include land raising that is expected to be used for specific purposes, traffic lights, residential signs, fire fighting water facilities, etc. in urban development districts.

(Specific example) Land raising measures to eliminate internal water (Ofunato City)

Land raising to eliminate internal water at the industrial site in front of the station.

4) Establishment of new livelihoods in disaster public housing, etc.

A project related to starting up lives of users of disaster public housing and new housing complexes. Examples are community facilities, etc. in the housing complex.

(Example) Development of community facilities in the housing complex (Iwanuma City)

Six meeting places in the affected coastal areas were relocated and consolidated, and a community center for residents in the housing complex was built in the Tamauranishi district, which will become a new urban area. In consideration of the number of users, the size of the facility was decided to be about 74% (850m²) of the total number of meeting places damaged (1,150m²).

5) Support for self-reconstruction of housing in relocated housing complexes, etc.

A project to support smooth and rapid self-reconstruction of housing. Examples of projects include the holding of consultation meetings for housing reconstruction and the provision of temporary housing for construction workers involved in housing reconstruction.

(Example) Development of temporary housing for construction workers involved in housing reconstruction (Project in Iwate Prefecture (Miyako City and Kamaishi City))

Rental of vacant emergency temporary housing, the use of which is abolished, to construction companies that have been contracted for self-reconstruction of housing as simple accommodations for workers from distant locations.

6) Revitalization of local prosperity and liveliness

Projects related to revitalization of local prosperity and liveliness for the sustainable development of the region. Development of new products and marketing channels for primary products (invitation of experts, seminars, etc.), development of industrial sites and tourist exchange facilities, etc.

(Example) Developing sales channels for local fishery products and strengthening cooperation with other industries (Miyako City)

Development of private fishery processing and distribution facilities as a core project, development of sales channels for local fishery products through lump-sum allocation, and strengthening of cooperation among various industries including fisheries (inviting buyers to develop sales channels in the Tokyo metropolitan area, holding PR events such as exhibitions, and holding processed goods contests)

7) Utilization of the land left after disaster prevention collective relocation

Using the core project, it is possible to develop industrial sites through land readjustment projects, etc., and to study, examine, and prepare land use plans for the surrounding area, including the land left after disaster prevention collective relocation, through benefit promotion projects, etc., depending on the use of the land. Examples of projects include the study and preparation of land use plans, and the development of open spaces, roads, and exchange facilities at the land left after disaster prevention collective relocation.

(Examples of applications) Industrial sites, fishery-related sites such as net yards, plazas and parking lots in the hinterland of sandy beaches, event spaces and roads in the district that is the center of the region, consolidation and development of damage-affected plazas in the city, etc.

(Example) Development of industrial land (Watari Town)

Development of industrial land in the land left after disaster prevention collective relocation through the benefit promotion project. It was completed in March 2015. Restaurants and retail stores (fresh fish, processed marine products, prepared foods, bicycles, surfing equipment) were located there. These business operators used group subsidies to develop commercial facilities.

8) Measures for preservation of earthquake historic ruins

Initial construction costs for the preservation of the earthquake historic ruins (*¹), development of the Reconstruction Memorial Park (*²), preservation of the earthquake archives, etc.

*¹ Support through Reconstruction Grants is limited to one location per municipality, and is subject to the agreement of local residents, the relationship with reconstruction community development, and the burden of maintenance and management costs. The Reconstruction Grant does not cover maintenance costs.

*² The Reconstruction Grants supported the development of so-called memorial and prayer facilities for local residents by municipalities, and it was decided to confirm that the plans were appropriate in terms of scale, contents of facilities, and utilization of public land (such as the land left after disaster prevention collective relocation).

(Example) Preservation of Taro Kanko Hotel (Miyako City)

(5) “Utilization of Reconstruction Grants (Benefit Promotion Projects)” announced

1) Utilization of Reconstruction Grants (Benefit Promotion Projects) (April 26, 2016)

As housing development, etc. has steadily progressed and the earthquake reconstruction has entered a new stage, in order to support the reconstruction of the disaster-affected areas in response to newly emerging regional issues, the “Utilization of Reconstruction Grants (Benefit Promotion Projects)” was announced in April 2016, and the following three points were clarified as targets of Reconstruction Grants (benefit promotion projects).

a. Repair of road pavement damaged by restoration and reconstruction projects

Damage of pavement was confirmed on some municipal roads due to the increase in traffic of large construction vehicles accompanied with restoration and reconstruction works, and repair was required to secure safe traffic. Based on this, it was decided that the cost of repairing the damage to municipal roads caused by various government-related restoration and reconstruction projects will be collectively supported by the Reconstruction Grants.

b. Promotion of tourism in disaster-affected areas

Reconstruction of tourism in the disaster-affected area is an important issue for the revival of industries and livelihoods, and based on the recommendations of the Tohoku Tourism Advisory Council, the following support will be provided through the Reconstruction Grants.

- Support for renovation of closed school buildings for use as accommodation and experience facilities
- Support for creating content and experience programs for tourists that utilize local and tourism resources
- Support for efforts to disseminate information on tourist content

Figure 3-1-6 Former school building renovated as an experience facility

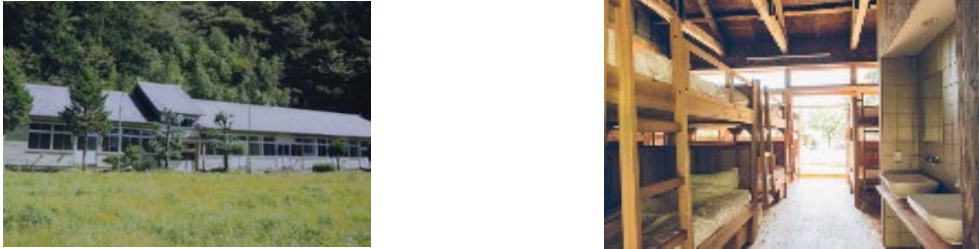


Figure 3-1-7 Experiential activities taking advantage of abundant nature



Source) Reconstruction Agency, “Utilization of Reconstruction Grants (Benefit Promotion Projects)” (April 26, 2016)
https://www.reconstruction.go.jp/topics/m16/04/20160426_kouhukinkatuyou.pdf (browsed July 27, 2023)

c. Support for reconstruction of livelihoods in peninsular and other regions

In remote peninsula areas where it is difficult to rebuild livelihoods through infrastructure development alone, it was decided to provide the following support through Reconstruction Grants in conjunction with the development of new settlements by relocating to higher ground, etc.

- Support for the development of small stores selling food and daily necessities
- Support for part of the initial costs associated with the introduction of community buses
- Support for the development of parking spaces for electric-assisted bicycles at bus stops

Figure 3-1-8 Community bus for hospital visits, shopping, etc.



Figure 3-1-9 Bicycle parking space at bus stops



Source) Reconstruction Agency, “Utilization of Reconstruction Grants (Benefit Promotion Projects)” (April 26, 2016)
https://www.reconstruction.go.jp/topics/m16/04/20160426_kouhukinkatuyou.pdf (browsed July 27, 2023)

2) Utilization of Reconstruction Grants (Benefit Promotion Projects) (Third Edition) (June 23, 2017)

In June 2017, Utilization of Reconstruction Grants (Benefit Promotion Projects) (Third Edition) was announced in order to clarify that responses to newly emerging issues should be covered by benefit promotion projects, and to support reconstruction in the disaster-affected areas by horizontally expanding examples of responses to issues that are considered to have increased needs. The following two points were clarified as targets of Reconstruction Grants (benefit promotion projects):

a. Support for the building of new communities in new housing complexes

In order to facilitate the building of new communities in relocated housing complexes, etc., to provide mental and physical care of relocated residents and prevent their isolation, and to create purpose in life, it was decided to support soft measures for creating purpose in life and the provision of locations to create such a purpose.

(Examples) Formulation of programs for efforts to create purpose in life and development of information provision and management systems related to such initiatives. The support targets programs such as group activities and events.

Figure 3-1-10 Example event (cooking class)



Source) Reconstruction Agency, “Utilization of Reconstruction Grants (Benefit Promotion Project) (Third Edition)” (June 23, 2017)
https://www.reconstruction.go.jp/topics/main-cat1/sub-cat1-14/sub-cat1-14-18/20170623_package_gaiyou.pdf (browsed July 27, 2023)

(Examples) Development of community plazas that can also be used as allotment gardens, multipurpose exercise plazas, etc.

Figure 3-1-11 Allotment garden



Source) Reconstruction Agency, “Utilization of Reconstruction Grants (Benefit Promotion Project) (Third Edition)” (June 23, 2017)
https://www.reconstruction.go.jp/topics/main-cat1/sub-cat1-14/sub-cat1-14-18/20170623_package_gaiyou.pdf (browsed July 27, 2023)

b. Support for efforts that contribute to land utilization

In addition to promoting the elimination of vacant lots in land readjustment project areas and the effective use of land left after disaster prevention collective relocation, it was decided to support soft measures to promote land use and the consolidation and development of facilities in the central city area in order to revitalize industries and livelihoods and restore the liveliness of the town.

(Example) Holding meetings between landowners who wish to sell their land and business operators who wish to open stores in land readjustment project areas

Figure 3-1-12 Status of meetings between landowners and business operators



Source) Reconstruction Agency, “Utilization of Reconstruction Grants (Benefit Promotion Project) (Third Edition)” (June 23, 2017)
https://www.reconstruction.go.jp/topics/main-cat1/sub-cat1-14/sub-cat1-14-18/20170623_package_gaiyou.pdf (browsed July 27, 2023)

(Examples) Implementation of Public-Private Partnership Community Development Council in which enterprises participate proactively in order to create liveliness for the future in tsunami reconstruction hub project areas

Figure 3-1-13 Status of the Public-Private Partnership Community Development Council



Source) Reconstruction Agency, “Utilization of Reconstruction Grants (Benefit Promotion Project) (Third Edition)” (June 23, 2017)
https://www.reconstruction.go.jp/topics/main-cat1/sub-cat1-14/sub-cat1-14-18/20170623_package_gaiyou.pdf (browsed July 27, 2023)

(Example) Support for the consolidation and development of tourist information and product introduction facilities and parking lots in order to attract visitors to commercial facilities of land readjustment project areas, etc. in the center of town

Figure 3-1-14 Tourist exchange facilities



Source) Reconstruction Agency, “Utilization of Reconstruction Grants (Benefit Promotion Project) (Third Edition)” (June 23, 2017)
https://www.reconstruction.go.jp/topics/main-cat1/sub-cat1-14/sub-cat1-14-18/20170623_package_gaiyou.pdf (browsed July 27, 2023)

3. Changes in budget amounts and allocations

(1) Budget amount

For the first time, 1,561.2 billion yen was earmarked for Reconstruction Grants in the third supplementary budget for FY 2011, bringing the total to 3,483.4 billion yen up to the FY 2020 budget.

Figure 3-1-15 List of budget amounts

(単位：億円)

	国費	事業費
平成 23 年度第三次補正予算	15,612	19,307
平成 24 年度予算	2,868	3,584
平成 25 年度予算	5,918	7,397
平成 25 年度第一次補正予算	611	763
平成 26 年度予算	3,638	4,547
平成 27 年度予算	3,173	3,931
平成 28 年度予算（補正後）	930	1,165
平成 29 年度予算	525	655
平成 30 年度予算	805	1,027
令和元年度予算	573	735
令和元年度第一次補正予算	153	197
令和 2 年度予算（補正後）	30	37
合計	34,834	43,346

Source) 39th Reconstruction Promotion Council Reference Material 2, “Reconstruction Efforts and Related Systems,” p. 77 (June 6, 2022)

(2) Allocation amount

Between the third supplementary budget for FY 2011 and the supplementary budget for FY 2020, 102 municipalities submitted Reconstruction Grants Project Plans and the allocation was made 29 times. The total amount allocated is 3,328.4 billion yen (project costs 4,169.5 billion yen).

Of the total amount allocated by local government, Miyagi Prefecture had the largest share at 1,980 billion yen (project cost: 2,475 billion yen), followed by Iwate Prefecture at 891.4 billion yen (project cost: 1,112.8 billion yen).

Details of the allocation amount are as follows.

Figure 3-1-16 Allocation amount by prefecture

(単位：億円)

	国費	事業費
岩手県	8,914	11,128
宮城県	19,800	24,750
福島県	3,509	4,428
その他	1,060	1,463
合計	33,284	41,769

* Amounts are national expenses and project costs after diversion between projects.

Source) 39th Reconstruction Promotion Council Reference Material 2, “Reconstruction Efforts and Related Systems,” p. 77 (June 6, 2022)

Figure 3-1-17 Amount allocated each time

(単位：億円)

	国費	事業費		国費	事業費
第1回(平成24年3月2日)	2,510	3,055	第16回(平成28年12月1日)	779	991
第2回(平成24年5月25日)	2,612	3,165	第17回(平成29年2月28日)	688	873
第3回(平成24年8月24日)	1,435	1,806	第18回(平成29年6月23日)	55	74
第4回(平成24年11月30日)	7,148	8,803	第19回(平成29年12月1日)	722	942
第5回(平成25年3月8日)	1,997	2,538	第20回(平成30年2月28日)	319	418
第6回(平成25年6月25日)	527	632	第21回(平成30年6月27日)	40	52
第7回(平成25年11月29日)	1,832	2,338	第22回(平成30年11月30日)	573	760
第8回(平成26年3月7日)	2,142	2,616	第23回(平成31年2月28日)	200	247
第9回(平成26年6月24日)	542	702	第24回(令和元年6月27日)	43	57
第10回(平成26年11月25日)	3,365	4,242	第25回(令和元年11月29日)	652	856
第11回(平成27年2月27日)	1,538	2,037	第26回(令和2年2月28日)	296	367
第12回(平成27年6月25日)	544	735	第27回(令和2年6月26日)	16	20
第13回(平成27年12月1日)	1,345	1,667	第28回(令和3年2月26日)	0.4	0.5
第14回(平成28年2月29日)	1,187	1,487	第29回(令和3年3月19日)	3.6	4.8
第15回(平成28年6月24日)	172	210	合計	33,284	41,695

Source) 39th Reconstruction Promotion Council Reference Material 2, "Reconstruction Efforts and Related Systems," p. 77 (June 6, 2022)

Note) The budget amount and the allocated amount are the amounts at the time of budget appropriation and allocation, respectively.

The breakdown of the allocated amount by prefecture is the amount after diversion between projects. Additionally, the total may not equal the sum due to fractional processing.

Figure 3-1-18 Amount allocated by municipality (as of March 2021)

(unit: millions of yen)

Prefecture name	Name of city, town, or village	Allocation amount	
		Project cost	National expenditure
Hokkaido	Hiroo Town	97	74
Hokkaido Total		97	74
Aomori Prefecture	Hachinohe City	5,607	4,569
	Misawa City	485	370
	Oirase Town	524	408
	Hashikami Town	470	369
	Aomori Prefecture Total	7,086	5,716
Iwate Prefecture	Morioka City	6,048	5,282
	Miyako City	114,053	92,346
	Ofunato City	123,283	99,649
	Hanamaki City	1,171	1,021
	Kitakami City	1,044	907
	Kuji City	7,451	5,606
	Tono City	727	634
	Ichinoseki City	2,351	2,024
	Rikuzentakata City	313,168	246,632
	Kamaishi City	187,977	150,349
	Oshu City	306	267
	Otsuchi Town	151,323	121,707
	Yamada Town	145,146	118,192
	Iwaizumi Town	7,192	5,629
	Tanohata Village	26,414	21,029
	Fudai Village	2,032	1,481
	Noda Village	20,270	16,543
	Hirono Town	2,802	2,139
Iwate Prefecture Total		1,112,759	891,436
Miyagi Prefecture	Sendai City	242,072	200,336
	Ishinomaki City	691,226	551,656
	Shiogama City	67,799	52,793
	Kesennuma City	375,345	300,930
	Shiroishi City	997	749
	Natori City	120,304	95,725
	Tagajo City	57,664	46,214
	Iwanuma City	89,984	70,745
	Tome City	2,815	2,446
	Kurihara City	309	268
	Higashimatsushima City	201,860	162,186
	Osaki City	6,697	5,706
	Watari Town	85,236	67,379
	Yamamoto Town	109,731	86,613
	Matsushima Town	30,296	23,123
	Shichigahama Town	42,125	34,018
	Rifu City	7,710	5,957
	Osato Town	91	76
	Wakuya Town	1,606	1,390
	Misato Town	779	674
	Onagawa Town	197,907	155,869
	Minamisanriku Town	142,275	115,171
Miyagi Prefecture Total		2,474,827	1,980,024
Prefecture name	Name of city, town, or village	Allocation amount	
		Project cost	National expenditure
Tochigi Prefecture	Yaita City	872	663
Tochigi Prefecture Total		872	663
Saitama Prefecture	Kuki City	5,155	3,866
Saitama Prefecture Total		5,155	3,866
Chiba Prefecture	Chiba City	6,790	5,093
	Choshi City	11	8
	Asahi City	3,675	2,690
	Narashino City	106	80
	Abiko City	807	616
	Urayasu City	42,834	26,695
	Sosa City	49	36
	Katori City	6,519	4,949
	Sammu City	1,395	1,074
Chiba Prefecture Total		62,186	41,241
Niigata Prefecture	Tokamachi City	148	123
Niigata Prefecture Total		148	123
Nagano Prefecture	Sakae Village	2,617	2,118
Nagano Prefecture Total		2,617	2,118
Total		4,176,715	3,328,371
Prefecture name	Name of city, town, or village	Allocation amount	
		Project cost	National expenditure
Fukushima Prefecture	Fukushima City	72	55
	Aizuwakamatsu City	2,317	2,023
	Koriyama City	4,593	3,998
	Iwaki City	171,198	134,741
	Shirakawa City	974	796
	Sukagawa City	15,244	11,615
	Soma City	87,498	69,186
	Nihonmatsu City	226	169
	Tamura City	11	7
	Minamisoma City	59,294	48,966
	Date City	20	15
	Koori Town	1,207	1,027
	Kunimi Town	45	34
	Kawamata Town	88	66
	Kagamiishi Town	1,283	1,076
	Nishigo Village	714	541
	Yabuki Town	2,043	1,759
	Yamatsuri Town	350	262
	Hanawa Town	6,072	3,036
	Ishikawa Town	163	122
	Furudono Town	9	7
	Miharu Town	90	67
	Hirono Town	11,158	8,773
	Naraha Town	8,591	7,394
	Tomioaka Town	3,340	2,704
	Kawauchi Village	545	415
	Okuma Town	141	106
	Futaba Town	278	211
	Namie Town	10,835	8,727
	Katsurao Village	136	103
	Shinchi Town	53,301	42,081
	Iitate Village	1,001	780
Fukushima Prefecture Total		442,835	350,863
Ibaraki Prefecture	Mito City	1,058	921
	Hitachi City	1,858	1,426
	Takahagi City	2,347	1,871
	Kitaibaraki City	10,095	8,011
	Kasama City	30	23
	Hitachinaka City	3,064	2,336
	Kashima City	9,905	7,500
	Itako City	20,535	15,626
	Inashiki City	466	349
	Kamisu City	10,008	7,506
	Oarai Town	5,428	4,172
	Tokai Village	3,339	2,506
Ibaraki Prefecture Total		68,134	52,246

*The amount reflects diversion between projects.

*The total may not equal the sum due to fractional processing.

4. Main examples of utilization

(1) Core projects

1) Project costs of core projects

The core projects accounted for 3,674.5 billion yen in project costs, of which 1,719.6 billion yen was allocated to securing housing (disaster public housing development project, disaster prevention collective relocation promotion project, urban redevelopment rezoning project), accounting for about 47% of the core projects, followed by 1,085 billion yen to form urban functions (road, sewerage, etc.), accounting for about 30% of the core projects, and 488.9 billion yen to rebuild livelihoods (fishery and fishing port facilities development projects, agricultural land and agricultural facilities development projects), accounting for 13% of the core projects, so these projects account for about 90% of the total amount allocated to core projects.

Figure 3-1-19 Examples of core business utilization

Securing of housing	Disaster public housing development projects	63 cities, towns, or villages	704.9 billion yen
	Disaster prevention collective relocation promotion project	28 cities, towns, or villages	551.9 billion yen
	Urban redevelopment rezoning project	22 cities, towns, or villages	462.8 billion yen
Livelihood reconstruction	Fisheries and fishing port facility development project	36 cities, towns, or villages	277.8 billion yen
	Development of farmland and agricultural facilities	40 cities, towns, or villages	211.1 billion yen
Formation of urban functions	Tsunami reconstruction hub development project	17 cities and towns	137.1 billion yen
	Road project	50 cities, towns, or villages	569.2 billion yen
	Sewerage project	27 cities, towns, or villages	313.5 billion yen
	Urban park project	21 cities, towns, or villages	65.2 billion yen
Improvement of educational environment, etc.	Projects to improve facilities and the environment at public schools, etc.	22 cities, towns, or villages	14.7 billion yen
	In addition, the construction of nursery schools and the installation of septic tanks outside sewerage areas were implemented.		

* Amounts are project costs after diversion between projects

Source) the Reconstruction Agency HP https://www.reconstruction.go.jp/topics/20220729_fukkoukoufukinseidogaiyou.pdf
(browsed July 27, 2023)

2) Examples of utilization

- ① Examples of projects related to securing housing
 - Utilizing a project to promote disaster prevention collective relocation to improve residential land and move to higher ground (Higashimatsushima City, Miyagi Prefecture)
 - Urban development utilizing urban redevelopment rezoning project (Ishinomaki City, Miyagi Prefecture)
- ② Examples of projects related to the formation of urban functions
 - Utilizing the urban park project to create a disaster prevention park “Millennium Hope Hills” (Iwanuma City, Miyagi Prefecture)
- ③ Examples of projects related to the reconstruction of livelihoods
 - Leveraging a comprehensive support project for agricultural reconstruction in the disaster-affected areas, the Strawberry Complex large-scale horticulture facility was developed (Watari and Yamamoto towns)
 - Utilizing the project for reconstruction and improvement of fisheries joint-use facilities, marine products processing and treatment facilities, fish markets, and other facilities were developed (Miyako City, Iwate Prefecture)

(2) Benefit promotion projects

As mentioned above, the benefit promotion project (project cost 502.3 billion yen) covered a wide range of projects, from the concept of community development during the reconstruction and revitalization period to the preservation of the earthquake historic ruins.

Specific examples of use include:

- Utilizing the urban redevelopment rezoning project to develop Kamaishi Unosumai Memorial Stadium, a reconstruction square in the Unosumai district, in Kamaishi City, Iwate Prefecture.
- Utilizing the urban redevelopment rezoning project to raise ground to eliminate internal water in areas of ground subsidence (Ofunato City, Iwate Prefecture, etc.)
- Utilizing a disaster prevention collective relocation promotion project to develop corporate land in a former disaster prevention site (Higashimatsushima City, Miyagi Prefecture)
- Preservation of the Taro Kanko Hotel through the tsunami remains preservation and maintenance project (Miyako City, Iwate Prefecture)

Figure 3-1-20 Examples of utilization



Nobiru North Hill District (Higashimatsushima City, Miyagi Prefecture)



Shin-Hebita District (Ishinomaki City, Miyagi Prefecture)



Millennium Hope Hills (Iwanuma City, Miyagi Prefecture)



Watari Town Strawberry Complex (Watari Town, Miyagi Prefecture)



Miyako City Fish Market (Miyako City, Iwate Prefecture)



Kamaishi Unosumai Memorial Stadium (Kamaishi City, Iwate Prefecture)



Ofunato Station Area District (Ofunato City, Iwate Prefecture)



Taro Kanko Hotel (Miyako City, Iwate Prefecture)

5. Abolishment of Reconstruction Grants

Since almost all local governments were expected to complete their project plans by FY 2020, the “Basic Guidelines for Reconstruction in Response to the Great East Japan Earthquake after the ‘Reconstruction and Revitalization Period’” of December 2019 decided to abolish the Reconstruction Grants upon completion of the first reconstruction/revitalization period. They were abolished when the Act on Special Zones for Reconstruction was revised in June 2020. Support was provided for some projects that were not completed by FY 2020 within the scope of the budget appropriated by the same year.

6. Lessons for future large-scale disasters

In the Expert Meeting on Reflection on the Past Decade of Reconstruction Policy for the Great East Japan Earthquake, the following points were made by the experts regarding the Reconstruction Grants:

- Projects became excessive under the declining population³
- The project became excessive because there was no local expenses at first⁴

In terms of the scale of the project, the initial plan was based on the previous residence, livelihood, lifestyle, etc. of the disaster victims, and aimed at restoring the pre-disaster conditions as much as possible, but due to subsequent changes in their intentions, a review was forced to be made. There were cases in which the results of the initial assessment of the disaster victims’ intentions were not necessarily consistent with the future usage needs. In order to address this situation, the disaster-affected local governments carefully and continuously confirmed the intentions of the residents, reviewed the scale of the project and the contents of the plan based on the intentions of the residents, and promoted the implementation of the development in stages. The Reconstruction Agency closely cooperated with the disaster-affected local governments to examine the contents of the plan. This has had the effect of promoting the optimization and narrowing of the project scale.

On the other hand, in preparation for the occurrence of future large-scale disasters, it is also necessary to promote “advance preparation for reconstruction” to identify possible post-disaster problems and prepare measures for mitigation in advance, with an eye to future population decline and other factors.

At the same meeting, while representatives from the three disaster-affected prefectures said:

- Some projects that did not meet the requirements for core projects were effectively addressed through the flexible implementation of benefit promotion projects (Miyagi Prefecture)

On the other hand, there was an opinion that:

- In order to flexibly implement projects in a timely manner according to the actual conditions of individual disaster-affected areas, it is necessary to expand financial resource measures that allow local governments in disaster-affected area to some extent to exercise their discretion (Iwate Prefecture)
- For the approval of the Reconstruction Grants, in addition to the one-time application to the Reconstruction Agency, consultations with various ministries were required, which increased the administrative burden (Miyagi Prefecture)

In response to this, one of the expert committee members pointed out that, in order to reduce administrative burdens and speed up projects in the event of future disasters, the scope of the use of grant funds, etc., should be discussed in advance to determine the scope of the government policy and the scope of flexible responses at the discretion of local governments, and that a model should be created⁵. Regarding benefit promotion projects, some suggested that instead of introducing local government expenses, the affected local governments should be given

³ Remarks by Committee Members Akiike, Onishi, and Fujisawa, Expert Meeting on Reflection on the Past Decade of Reconstruction Policy for the Great East Japan Earthquake (2nd meeting)

⁴ Remark by Committee Member Masuda, Expert Meeting on Reflection on the Past Decade of Reconstruction Policy for the Great East Japan Earthquake (1st meeting)

⁵ Remark by Committee Member Akiike, Expert Meeting on Reflection on the Past Decade of Reconstruction Policy for the Great East Japan Earthquake (2nd meeting)

more freedom in the use of the funds⁶.

In addition, in a questionnaire survey, etc., many in disaster-affected municipalities said that the Reconstruction Grants were helpful, saying:

- It was a good idea to establish a grant program that was easy to use to promote reconstruction projects (Fukushima Prefecture municipalities)
- The subsidy system, in which money comes in first, was a big financial help (Miyagi Prefecture municipalities)

In addition, many commented that they appreciated the flexibility in the management of Reconstruction Grants, saying:

- Lump-sum allocation of Reconstruction Grants and benefit promotion projects were effective in accelerating reconstruction projects (Miyagi Prefecture municipalities)
- The conversion of Reconstruction Grants into funds was efficient because administrative procedures were simplified (Miyagi Prefecture municipalities)
- It was very good that the Reconstruction Agency itself visited local governments to discuss the allocation of grants for reconstruction projects, and through the “Formulation Support Conference,” etc., led to the decision to grant the grants, thereby creating a situation in which the implementation of the projects could be carried out smoothly (Miyagi Prefecture municipalities)

On the other hand, with regard to reducing the administrative burden of the affected municipalities, many pointed out issues:

- There was a lot of time and effort involved in budget requests (Miyagi Prefecture municipalities)
- It would have been easier to develop a project plan if detailed information on each project scheme and the calculation method of eligible project costs had been available from the initial stage for the menu of Reconstruction Grants presented at the initial stage (Miyagi Prefecture municipalities)

In addition, the following opinions were expressed regarding the concept of “restoration to the original state” in which restoration to the same extent as before the disaster is carried out in terms of reconstruction.⁷

- It took time to explain and discuss the core projects for the Reconstruction Grants, which were required to be based on “restoration to original state,” which is the same as before the disaster.
- In the event of a tsunami disaster, the system should not be premised on restoration to the original state.
- When considering future disasters, “build back better” is more commensurate with the reality.

In response, an expert committee member stated:

- It has become clear once again that in a society with a declining population, restoration to its original state would be an excessive undertaking. It may be necessary to discuss reconstruction based on indicators such as population decline.⁸

⁶ Based on “Comprehensive Verification of Reconstruction from the Great East Japan Earthquake,” Hyogo Earthquake Memorial 21st Century Research Institute (February 10, 2021) edited by Makoto Iokibe, Takashi Mikuriya, and Jun Iio.

⁷ Remarks by the Mayor of Minamisanriku Town, Miyagi Prefecture, Expert Meeting on Reflection on the Past Decade of Reconstruction Policy for the Great East Japan Earthquake (3rd meeting)

⁸ Remark by Committee Member Masuda, Expert Meeting on Reflection on the Past Decade of Reconstruction Policy for the Great East Japan Earthquake (3rd meeting)