

Chapter 7 Response Specific to the Nuclear Disaster

Section 1 Rebuilding of Businesses, Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries

1. Joint Public-Private Fukushima Soso Region Reconstruction Team

(1) Overview and background

To help business operators affected by the nuclear disaster rebuild their businesses and livelihoods, a “Joint Public-Private Fukushima Soso Region Reconstruction Team” consisting of the national government, Fukushima Prefecture, and the private sector (Fukushima Soso Reconstruction Promotion Organization) was formed on August 24, 2015, based on the revised “For Accelerating the Reconstruction of Fukushima from the Nuclear Disaster” (Cabinet Decision of June 12, 2015). The following year, in December 2016, the Fukushima Soso Reconstruction Promotion Organization became a public interest incorporated association.

The Act on Special Measures for the Reconstruction and Revitalization of Fukushima was partially amended (May 2017) to allow national government employees to be dispatched to the Fukushima Soso Reconstruction Promotion Organization in response to requests from the Organization while retaining their status, and government employees have been dispatched to the Organization since July 2017. As a result, the system has been strengthened so that national, prefectural and private sector employees can work together in a more integrated manner.

(2) Purpose of the Joint Public-Private Team

- Promote the reconstruction and revitalization of the 12 municipalities in Fukushima Prefecture that were affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake and were subject to evacuation orders following the TEPCO Fukushima Daiichi and Daini Nuclear Power Station accidents (Tamura City, Minamisoma City, Town of Kawamata, Town of Hirono, Town of Naraha, Town of Tomioka, Village of Kawauchi, Town of Okuma, Town of Futaba, Town of Namie, Village of Katsurao, and Village of Iitate)
- Facilitate the resumption and continuation of operations by “people who were operating businesses in the region at the time of the Great East Japan Earthquake” and “people engaged in fishery-related processing or as seafood brokers in the Hamadori District and environs (Iwaki City, Soma City and Town of Shinchi)”
- Contribute to the reconstruction of livelihoods of people who lived in the area at the time of the Great East Japan Earthquake.

(3) Efforts and support

Through individual visits to affected businesses, the Public-Private Joint Team is providing expert consulting and support for capital investment, securing of human resources, and development of sales channels, all of which is tailored to individual circumstances. Currently, Team members are stationed at 6 bases in Fukushima Prefecture and Tokyo, and they visited about 5,800 business operators by the end of March 2023. In addition, visits to individual farmers were initiated in April 2017, and by the end of March 2023, approximately 2,600 farmers had been visited. Since September 2017, the Public-Private

Joint Team has provided expert support for community development to 12 municipalities, and in April 2019, it also began providing consulting support to people from outside the region who are starting new businesses in Fukushima.

In May 2021, support was expanded beyond the original 12 municipalities to encompass fishery brokerages and processing companies in three additional municipalities (Iwaki City, Soma City, and Town of Shinchi), and by the end of March 2023, the Team had visited 99 business operators and assisted 60 business operators with securing human resources and developing sales channels.

2. Efforts to rebuild businesses and livelihoods

(1) Business resumption support for SMEs and small-scale entrepreneurs

To create employment opportunities and quickly recover community functions through the return of business operators and the reconstruction of businesses and livelihoods, support is being provided for the efforts of business operators in the 12 affected municipalities to reopen their businesses, make new investments, and develop sales channels. As of FY 2022, support has been provided to 1,273 SMEs or social welfare corporations that had been operating in the 12 municipalities at the time of the nuclear disaster and were resuming business, making new investments, or investing in growing their businesses through sales channel development, including persons that suspended business operations or were legally considered to have suspended business operations after the nuclear disaster¹ who were resuming business outside the 12 municipalities (including outside Fukushima Prefecture).

(2) Support for capital investment to promote start-ups and attract companies

In order to quickly restore community functions such as places to work and shop, and to encourage the reconstruction of livelihoods by business operators affected by the disaster, support is being provided for business start-ups in the 12 municipalities affected by the disaster and for business development by operators from outside the 12 municipalities. As of FY 2022, 142 entrepreneurs who were starting new businesses in the 12 municipalities, or were extending extra-regional businesses into the 12 municipalities, have received subsidies to cover part of the necessary capital investment.

(3) Project to Support Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Industries Through Business Matching

To resolve the issues that business operators in the 12 affected municipalities face when attempting to expand their sales channels, support is being provided by creating primary x secondary x tertiary business matchups within and beyond the 12 municipalities to develop sales channels or create new businesses. The specific nature of support is as follows.

- Make visits to individual business operators and conduct interviews to accurately grasp issues and needs.

¹ “Persons that were legally considered to have suspended business operations” denotes business operators whose recent sales figures are less than 50% of those before the earthquake or who had been doing business in the difficult-to-return zone, etc. (However, it does not include those who have already resumed business in the 12 municipalities).

- After the interview, coordinate support from experts and specialists to meet the needs of the business operators.
- Support the development of sales channels and the creation of new businesses to address the issues faced by the businesses.

As of fiscal 2022, support has been provided to about 240 businesses, and about 1,200 new sales channels have been developed.

(4) Project to Provide Support for Securing Human Resources

To resolve the issues that business operators in the 12 affected municipalities face when attempting to secure human resources, support is being provided for the activities that business operators in the 12 municipalities conduct to secure human resources. The specific nature of support is as follows.

- A human resources coordinator visits business operators who wish to resume business, carefully listens to their human resource requirements, and determines their needs.
- Based on the needs identified, media that publish job listings are used to support the creation and publication of recruitment advertisements that reflect the wishes of the business operators.
- When employment in one of the 12 municipalities involves a relocation, a moving allowance of up to 300,000 yen is provided to cover moving expenses, etc.

As of fiscal 2022, support has been provided to about 1,000 businesses, and about 3,700 people have been hired.

(5) Project for the Support of Regional Revitalization Through the Creation of Connections

In the 12 municipalities affected by the disaster, support is being provided for efforts that create links among disaster victims and contribute to regional revitalization, the promotion of industries, and community development.

As of FY 2022, 655 businesses have received support to cover costs for intangible aspects such as building regional consensus, discussing content, and inviting experts to advise organizations engaged in reconstruction.