

Country Assistance Policy for The Cook Islands

December 2012

1. Relevance of Assistance

The development of the Cook Islands faces a number of challenges, including being many small islands dispersed over a broad marine area (dispersion), a limited domestic market (size), along with being distant from international markets (remoteness). Although the per capita GNP of the Cook Islands exceeds NZ\$10,000, there is still a need to improve living standards due to serious problems attributed to population decline and development in remote islands.

In the “National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP) 2011-2015” the Government of the Cook Islands set priority areas including economic development, infrastructure improvement, energy security, social development, resilient and sustainable community development and ecological sustainability. As one of the instruments to achieve the NSDP, there is an expectation that development assistance from foreign governments will be in line with these targeted areas.

Japan and the Cook Islands established official diplomatic relations in June 2011. The Cook Islands has consistently maintained good bilateral relations with Japan and contributed as a co-chair of the successful PALM6 (the Sixth Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting) held in May 2012. The Cook Islands has also expressed its support and cooperation for Japan’s position in various international arenas.

Japan remains committed to providing continued assistance and support to strengthen the bilateral relationship between Japan and the Cook Islands and to encourage self-reliant and sustainable development of the Cook Islands.

2. Basic Policy of Assistance (Long-term Goal): To achieve sustainable and environmentally-friendly economic growth and improvements in living standards.

As well as providing assistance centring on overcoming vulnerability through improvements in basic social services based on the policies of Japan’s Development Assistance identified at the Pacific Islands Leaders’ Meeting which has been held triennially since 1997, Japan also focuses on environmental conservation and actions against climate change.

3. Priority Areas (Medium-term goals)

(1) Reduce vulnerability

The provision of assistance focuses on strengthening sustainable economic infrastructure by concentrating on human resource development in major industries such as infrastructure development, tourism and fisheries. Assistance is also directed at the grassroots level such as social welfare, education and health standards.

(2) Environment/Climate Change

The provision of assistance focuses on environmental conservation such as improvements to the environment and public health through improved waste management systems.

Disaster prevention and climate change adaptation and mitigation such as the development of renewal energy are also target areas.

4. Points to be considered

(1) Japan ensures that assistance provided is aligned with the targeted areas adopted as the “Okinawa Kizuna Declaration” at PALM6 in May 2012;

‘Response to Natural Disasters based on experience of the Great East Japan Earthquake’, ‘environment and climate change’, ‘sustainable development and human security’, ‘people-to-people exchanges’ and ‘maritime issues’.

(2) Assistance in areas including waste and water management is provided taking into consideration Okinawa Knowledge which shares common ground with Pacific Islands countries as per the “Okinawa Kizuna Declaration”.

(3) Assistance is provided taking into consideration the development difficulties the Cook Islands faces such as geographic challenges (dispersion, size and remoteness).

(4) Japan continues to communicate and exchange views with major partner countries such as New Zealand, Australia along with other development partners in order to minimise duplication in development assistance and to promote effective and efficient synergistic assistance.

(5) Technical Cooperation such as the acceptance of trainees to Japan will remain a central part of Japan’s assistance to the Cook Islands.

Annex: Rolling Plan

