

0. Summary

This project promoted the implementation of policy actions related to pre-disaster investment and mainstreaming disaster reduction, and prepared for temporarily increased financing needs during post-disaster recovery, thereby ensuring rapid recovery after disasters. This project was consistent with Fiji's development policy and development needs at both the time of appraisal and ex-post evaluation, and the project content and approach were appropriate. It was also in line with Japan's development cooperation policy and the international framework at the time of appraisal, although no specific outcomes could be said to have been confirmed in terms of internal or external coherence. Therefore, the relevance and coherence are high. As for project effectiveness, efforts to enhance capacity were delayed due to movement restrictions caused by the global spread of the COVID-19, and at the time of ex-post evaluation, the project had not fully achieved the outcomes, but the project adequately responded to the temporarily increased funding needs caused by the disasters and led to rapid recoveries. In terms of impacts, it can be said that the project played a role in alleviating the deteriorating financial situation and also supported the rehabilitation and strengthening of transport infrastructure such as roads and bridges, and the smooth continuation of production activities in the sugar industry. Therefore, the effectiveness and impacts of the project are high. Regarding sustainability, some items were not analysed due to the nature of this project, but no major concerns were found as a whole.

1. Project Description



Project Location Map (throughout Fiji)
(Source: External Evaluator)



Scoured Point of a River Restored with the Project
Fund (Source: External Evaluator)

1.1 Background

In Fiji, natural disasters, which occur almost every year, cause damage to the social infrastructure having a long-term impact on economic activities. The scale of damage from the major natural disasters since 2010 was approximately USD 45 million from the 2010 cyclone and approximately USD 49 million from the 2012 tropical cyclone floods. In addition, the damage caused by Cyclone Winston in February 2016, the largest cyclone in the Southern Hemisphere in recorded history, amounted to approximately USD 600 million (approximately 13% of GDP at that time and 36% of the annual national budget), and the population affected by electricity, water and gas outages reached approximately 540,000 people (approximately 60% of the population). In the event of these disasters, the Government of Fiji declared a state of emergency and undertook rehabilitation works such as housing reconstruction.

With natural disaster losses acting as an impediment to development, securing funds for disaster recovery is a pressing issue for Fiji, and the Government of Fiji placed an emphasis in its National Development Plan (2017–2021) on securing contingent finance¹ as a contingency fund for disaster preparedness.

1.2 Project Outline

The objective of this programme is to ensure rapid post-disaster recovery by promoting the implementation of policy actions related to pre-disaster investment and mainstreaming disaster reduction in Fiji, where the disaster risk is high, and by preparing for temporarily increased financial needs during the post-disaster recovery, thereby contributing to Fiji's sustainable growth.

<ODA Loan Project>

Loan Approved Amount / Disbursed Amount	5,000 million yen / 5,000 million yen
Exchange of Notes Date / Loan Agreement Signing Date	December 2019 / February 2020
Terms and Conditions	Interest Rate 0.01% Repayment Period 40 years (Grace Period 10 years) Conditions for Procurement General untied

¹ A mechanism to provide loans in the event of natural disasters above a certain level, in accordance with pre-determined contractual conditions

Borrower / Executing Agency	Government of the Republic of Fiji / Ministry of Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics
Project Completion ²	February 2021
Target Area	Throughout Fiji
Main Contractor	None
Main Consultant	None
Related Studies (Feasibility Studies, etc.)	None
Related Projects	[Technical Cooperation] JICA DRR ³ National/Regional Advisor (2016–2018, 2021–) The Project for the Planning of the Nadi River Flood Control Structures (2014–2016) Project for Capacity Building of Meteorological Human Resources in Oceania' (2014–2018) The Project for Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction (2020–2024) [Grant Aid] The Project for Improvement of Equipment for Disaster Risk Management (2012) The Project for the Rehabilitation of the Medium Wave Radio Transmission (2015)

2. Outline of the Evaluation Study

2.1 External Evaluator

Keisuke Nishikawa, QUNIE CORPORATION

2.2 Duration of Evaluation Study

This ex-post evaluation study was conducted with the following schedule.

Duration of the Study: November, 2022 – January, 2024

Duration of the Field Study: 18 February – 4 March, 2023 and 7 – 9 June, 2023

² It was planned that the loan disbursement period would be three years from the loan agreement coming into effect and that the project would be completed either by disbursing the entire project amount or by the end of the loan disbursement period (the loan disbursement period could be extended four times, for a total of up to 15 years).

³ DRR: Disaster Risk Reduction

2.3 Constraints During the Evaluation Study

(1) Evaluation Items

As this project is a programme-type yen loan and quantitative comparison of project inputs and outputs is difficult, efficiency is not evaluated. In addition, only a partial analysis of sustainability is conducted, as analyses of technical aspects and operation and maintenance status are not applicable. Sub-rating is therefore only given for ‘Relevance and Coherence’ and ‘Effectiveness and Impacts’, and no judgment is made on the overall rating.

(2) Judgement of Effectiveness

The Policy Action Matrix of this project consisted of ‘Prior Actions (2019)’ and ‘Expected Actions (2022 target)’. The former was confirmed to have been achieved at the time of signing the loan agreement. The latter was to be supported in its achievement mainly through JICA’s technical cooperation, and the progress was to be monitored every six months by the Executing Agency and JICA.

In this project, the loan implementation period was envisaged to be 2020–2023 when the contract was signed in 2020, but due to a series of major disasters that occurred immediately after the contract was signed and the declaration of a state of emergency by the Government of Fiji, which triggered the loan implementation, it was completed in February 2021. On the other hand, support for the implementation of the ‘Expected Actions’ established with the signing of the contract was delayed by about a year and a half due to the international and domestic movement restrictions imposed as a result of the global spread of the COVID-19. Therefore, when the ex-post evaluation was conducted in 2023, the implementation of the ‘Expected Actions’ had not progressed as originally planned, and the indicators for measuring the project effects could not be fully verified. In this ex-post evaluation, the achievement status of the relevant indicators was judged at the time of ex-post evaluation, while the expected achievement in 2025, when the support for the implementation of ‘Expected Actions’ is scheduled to be completed, was also indicated.

3. Results of the Evaluation (Overall Rating: N/A)

3.1 Relevance/Coherence (Rating: ③⁴)

3.1.1. Relevance (Rating: ③)

3.1.1.1 Consistency with the Development Plan of Fiji

At the time of appraisal of this project, the Fiji Government's strategy in the *National Development Plan* (2017–2021) was to prepare contingency funds to meet the financial needs in the event of a disaster. For the disaster management sector, the *National Disaster Risk*

⁴ ④: Very High, ③: High, ②: Moderately Low, ①: Low

Reduction Policy (hereinafter referred to as ‘NDRRP’) was approved by Cabinet in 2019, setting out policy guidelines, projects to be implemented by 2030 and responsible agencies for disaster management. In response to this, the *Natural Disaster Management Act* (hereinafter referred to as ‘NDMA’, set in 1998), which was the basic law in the field of disaster management, and the *National Disaster Management Plan* (hereinafter referred to as ‘NDMP’), which was the specific implementation plan of the NDRRP, were being revised and their relationships were being sorted out.

Fiji had a change of government in the 2022 general election, and at the time of ex-post evaluation (January 2024), consultations were ongoing for the formulation of new *National Development Plans* to replace the *National Development Plan (2017–2021)*. However, according to the National Disaster Management Office (hereinafter referred to as ‘NDMO’), the direction regarding disaster management was not expected to change in the next *National Development Plan*. In addition, the NDMA was in the process of finalising a revised bill at the time of ex-post evaluation, which was expected to cover all types of disasters, including domestic disturbances and turmoil, and the revised law would give greater powers in emergency response to the Divisional Commissioners of the four divisions of the country (Northern, Eastern, Central and Western) compared to the current law. The NDMP will also be revised after the NDMA Amendment Bill is passed by Parliament.

Based on the above, it was confirmed that although the new *National Development Plans* were being formulated since the new Government took office, the direction regarding disaster management is not expected to change, and the work on organising the relationship between the NDMA, NDRRP and NDMP is continuing, which confirms the prospect of the Government's emergency response to a disaster to be also responsive from a policy and legal perspective.

Therefore, it can be said that this project is in line with Fiji’s development policy both at the times of appraisal and ex-post evaluation.

3.1.1.2 Consistency with the Development Needs of Fiji

At the time of appraisal of this project, securing the necessary funds for disaster recovery was a pressing issue for Fiji, where losses due to natural disasters had been an impediment to development. In response to this challenge, the Government of Fiji had made a budgetary provision of 5 million Fijian dollars each fiscal year in case of the occurrence of disasters. However, additional budgets would be required in the case of major disasters, and it was difficult for the Government to always raise a large amount of fund solely from issuance of bonds and short-term treasury bills.

Similarly, at the time of ex-post evaluation, the situation remains unchanged, with the difficulties in quickly securing the necessary funds for emergency and recovery after a natural

disaster. The Government of Fiji has made a budgetary allocation of 1.4 million Fijian dollars to the NDMO for the FY2022/2023, as well as an annual transfer of 0.5 million Fijian dollars to the Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation Fund administered by the NDMO, with the balance being set aside in the Prime Minister's Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation Fund⁵. A contingent financing measure from the World Bank of 10 million US dollars is also in place, which can be withdrawn if a state of emergency is declared in the event of a disaster. Furthermore, according to the executing agency, in the event of a funding gap, funding needs would be met through internal government budget transfers, bond issues and donor support⁶.

In this way, the Government of Fiji has secured contingent finance as well as certain budgetary measures to prepare for disasters. However, the immediate funding available for the amount of damage that occurs is small and further funding needs can be said to exist at the time of ex-post evaluation. Cyclones continue to cause damage after the final funding under this project, and there is a continuing need for natural disaster preparedness and post-disaster recovery. This project is therefore consistent with the disaster preparedness needs in Fiji.

3.1.1.3 Appropriateness of the Project Plan and Approach

The areas of disaster risk management, proactive investment in risk reduction and promotion of disaster understanding and preparedness are necessary components of disaster management capacity building, and the measures toward disaster preparedness through risk assessment, investment in disaster risk resilience, hazard assessments and the formulation of disaster management plans in all divisions of the country were important for disaster management in Fiji.

In the areas related to this project, as described below, JICA is implementing a project on the dispatch of JICA DRR National/Regional Advisor and technical cooperation in the field of disaster management 'The Project for Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction'. The former supports the development of policy frameworks such as the formulation of a disaster risk reduction policy and guidelines, while the latter, which is being implemented in conjunction with this project, is technical cooperation with elements that support the overall implementation of the Policy Action Matrix of this project. The effective approach in fully enhancing the project outcomes was taken.

In addition, the ex-post evaluation of similar projects in the past had drawn the lesson that 'planning the policy matrix in consideration of relevant JICA technical cooperation was a

⁵ The Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation Fund allocated annually to the NDMO is a mechanism whereby the balance at the end of the financial year is transferred to the Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation Fund, which is directly managed by the Prime Minister, allowing the Prime Minister to flexibly spend in the event of a disaster.

⁶ Natural disasters have continued to occur after the funding under this project, with Tropical Cyclone Cody hitting Fiji in January 2022, causing damage in the order of 50 million Fijian dollars (approximately 3 billion yen).

success factor in achieving the policy actions'. In this project, the Policy Action Matrix was planned in a way that utilised this lesson learned and the technical cooperation that led to facilitating the implementation of the policy matrix was implemented.

Therefore, the project plan and approach of this project are considered to be appropriate.

3.1.2 Coherence (Rating: ②)

3.1.2.1 Consistency with Japan's ODA Policy

The Leaders' Declaration adopted at the 8th Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting in 2018 stated that 'Strengthening the Basis for Resilient and Sustainable Development' was one of the pillars of Japan's cooperation with the Pacific region. In addition, the programme was positioned in one of the priority areas in Country Development Cooperation Policy for Fiji (April 2019), namely 'climate change and environmental measures'.

Based on the above, it can be said that the programme is highly consistent with Japan's development cooperation policy for the Pacific region and Fiji at the time of appraisal.

3.1.2.2 Internal Coherence

JICA has provided support to the disaster management sector in Fiji through grant aid and technical cooperation. Since the 2010s, Grant Aid 'The Project for Improvement of Equipment for Disaster Risk Management' (2012), Grant Aid 'The Project for the Rehabilitation of the Medium Wave Radio Transmission' (2015), Development Studies Programme-type Technical Cooperation 'The Project for the Planning of the Nadi River Flood Control Structures' (2014–2016), Technical Cooperation 'Project for Capacity Building of Meteorological Human Resources in Oceania' (2014–2018) and Technical Cooperation 'JICA DRR National/Regional Advisor' (2016–2018) were implemented. Since April 2021, a successor expert has been dispatched under the technical cooperation 'JICA DRR National/Regional Advisor' and Technical Cooperation 'The Project for Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction' (2020–2024) are being implemented.

Although the JICA DRR National/Regional Advisor was not envisaged to have a direct role in the implementation of the policy actions developed during the planning phase of this project, he has supported the development of guidelines for monitoring and evaluation of the NDRRP, which indirectly contributes to Policy Action Area 1 'Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk'. 'The Project for Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction' has been keenly aware of promoting the implementation of the project's policy actions since the planning stage, and the Outputs of the Technical Cooperation have included each of the project's Policy Action areas⁷. Due to the impact of the global spread

⁷ Supporting the implementation of items marked '●' in a table in 'Effectiveness'

of the COVID-19, which at times imposed restrictions on the entry of Technical Cooperation Experts into Fiji and the movement of Fijian officials within the country, the project activities started about one and a half years later than originally planned, and at the time of ex-post evaluation, only about one and a half years had passed since the commencement of the project. Therefore, no concrete and sufficient effects were found, but as the project could be extended until 2025, there is a good chance that all Outputs will be generally achieved by the time the project is completed.

With regard to the implementation of priority projects in Policy Action Area 2, the Nadi River Flood Control Master Plan, JICA was ready to implement what it was going to support (construction of urban embankments and drainage measures for inland water), but the widening of the Nadi River, which was to be supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), was ultimately not supported as a result of the environmental impact assessment due to its negative impacts on fish ecosystems. At the time of ex-post evaluation, Australia was considering the possibility of supporting the project. However, JICA had not started implementing the project as it would not be effective even if only the JICA component was implemented, and no outcomes had been achieved at the time of ex-post evaluation.

Based on the above, although there is sufficient cooperation and coordination between this project and other JICA projects, the generation of project effects are limited. Therefore, synergistic effects between this project and other JICA projects could not be fully confirmed at the time of ex-post evaluation, but they may increase in the future.

3.1.2.3 External Coherence

At the time of the project appraisal, no donor agency was providing contingent finance for the occurrence of natural disasters. At that time, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) was supporting the development of the early warning system in several municipalities under the Fiji Resilient Informal Settlements (2018–2020), but no specific linkage with this project was envisaged. In addition, among the actions listed in the policy matrix established under this project, ADB was considering specific support for the priority projects related to flood control on the Nadi River, as mentioned above, but no specific coordination effects had been generated at the time of ex-post evaluation.

In terms of the financial aspect, it was envisaged that, in the event of a major disaster, this project would respond to urgent financing needs and the World Bank and ADB would formulate and provide loan projects for disaster recovery and reconstruction, and the World Bank was considering the provision of a ‘Disaster Risk Management Development Policy Loan with a Catastrophe-Deferred Drawdown Option’ (hereinafter referred to as ‘CAT-DDO’) to Fiji and could consider linking with the policy actions of this project. In

this regard, ADB actually provided 20 million US dollars during the damage caused by the large Cyclone Harold (Tropical Cyclone Harold, hereinafter referred to as 'TC Harold') and 2.75 million US dollars after Cyclone Yasa (Tropical Cyclone Yasa, hereinafter referred to as 'TC Yasa') through the Pacific Disaster Resilience Program. In addition, an agreement between the World Bank and the Government of Fiji was signed on 28 April 2021 for the CAT-DDO up to 10 million US dollars.

In terms of the alignment with international frameworks, this project was considered to contribute to Goal 11 (Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable) and 13 (Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts) of the SDGs. The support through this project is consistent with SDG 11 in terms of identifying the level of risks through disaster risk reduction efforts and promoting development in accordance with such risks, and it is also consistent with SDG 13 in terms of taking measures by addressing climate change issues and making predictions. In this way, the support through this project can be said to be consistent with the international framework for disaster prevention.

Based on the above, while this project is highly consistent with the international framework, no concrete effects were observed through the collaboration and coordination with the projects supported by other donors, and no specific collaboration was actively carried out between the donors in terms of financial support, and as a whole, no concrete effects were fully confirmed through the collaboration between this project and the projects of other organisations.

Based on the above, it can be said that this project was in line with Fiji's development policy and development needs in the disaster management sector at the times of both appraisal and ex-post evaluation, and that the project contents and approach are also judged to have been appropriate. This project was also in line with Japan's development cooperation policy for Fiji and the Pacific region at the time of appraisal and consistent with the international framework. On the other hand, it could not be said that any specific effects were identified regarding the synergistic effects of this project in collaboration with other projects of JICA and other organisations.

Therefore, its relevance and coherence are high.

3.2 Efficiency (Rating: N/A)

As stated in '2.3 Constraints During the Evaluation Study', the efficiency of the project is not evaluated because it is a programme-type loan project and quantitative comparisons of project inputs and outputs are difficult.

3.3 Effectiveness and Impacts⁸ (Rating: ③)

3.3.1 Effectiveness

3.3.1.1 Quantitative Effects (Operation and Effect Indicators)

Under this project, in addition to the financial provision to meet the temporarily increased financing needs during the post-disaster recovery period, a Policy Action Matrix was developed to strengthen disaster risk reduction governance to manage disaster risks, promote investment in disaster risk reduction to enhance resilience, and promote understandings of disaster risks and effective disaster preparedness, with each activity being implemented in the relevant technical cooperation.

The policy actions are shown in the table below, and through their implementation, the number of hazard assessments conducted and the number of local disaster risk reduction plans formulated would increase, and the proportion of disaster management-related projects that should be prioritised for investment and for 80% of which the budget allocation would be made was set as the indicators to measure the generation of project effects.

Table 1: Achievement Status of the Policy Action Matrix

Area	Prior Actions (2019)	Expected Actions (Target: 2022)	Achievement Status at the Time of Ex-Post Evaluation (June 2023)
Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk Implementing agency: NDMO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cabinet approved National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy (NDRRP) - National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) allocated DRR officers who look after four Divisions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Municipal Councils shall develop Local Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Plan based on the hazard assessment. ● NDMO shall develop the Guidelines for Local DRR Plan to accelerate Local DRR in each municipal council. ● NDMO shall issue a DRR white paper every year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The hazard assessment in the Western Division was completed and consultations with relevant stakeholders have been concluded, and a Local Disaster Risk Reduction Plan is being developed. ● The Local Disaster Risk Reduction Plan Guideline is being developed accordingly. ● Fiji's first White Paper on disaster management is being prepared and the first one is expected to be published by the end of 2023.
Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience Implementing Agency:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Government of Fiji developed Master Plan of Nadi River Flood Control. - Ministry of Waterway and Environment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ministry of Waterways and Environment shall implement the priority project for the Nadi River Flood Control. ● NDMO and Ministry of Economy shall 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No concrete progress has been made on the implementation of priority projects related to the flood control on the Nandi River, as noted above, as Australia was still considering the

⁸ When providing the sub-rating, Effectiveness and Impacts are to be considered together.

Area	Prior Actions (2019)	Expected Actions (Target: 2022)	Achievement Status at the Time of Ex-Post Evaluation (June 2023)
Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Waterways and Environment	identified the prioritised flood risk area other than Nadi, constructed sea walls, and conducted dredging.	develop the list of priority investment project (National Disaster Risk Reduction Plan (NDRRP) Roadmap) to mitigate the disaster impact. ● Ministry of Economy shall allocate national budget or finance from donor partners to the priority investment projects listed in the NDRRP Roadmap	possibility of supporting the project at the time of ex-post evaluation. ● For the National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy Roadmap, 28 projects out of 122 action items had just been selected. ● The budgetary allocation for the priority investment projects on the Roadmap had not been made at the time of ex-post evaluation.
Understanding disaster risk and enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response Implementing Agency: NDMO, Fiji Meteorological Service (FMS)	- FMS started meteorological and hydrological observation for the accurate and timely weather observation. - FMS is ready to start storm surge forecasting - Fiji Broadcasting Corporation rehabilitated mediumwave radio (Grant Aid 'The Project for the Rehabilitation of the Medium Wave Radio Transmission) for the prompt and precise delivery of disaster information.	● NDMO shall facilitate understanding of disaster risks through conducting hazard assessment at Municipal councils - NDMO shall compile the past Natural Disaster related data into the document or system.	● The hazard assessment was completed for the Western Division and multiple hazards such as flood, tsunami, landslide, storm surge and earthquake were included. - NDMO had already compiled the cyclone damage for the past 10 years.

Note: Items marked with '●' in the table are those supported for implementation under the Technical Cooperation 'The Project for Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction'.

Source: Prepared from the Ex-Ante Project Evaluation Paper and the information provided by NDMO

Regarding the policy actions, multiple items had been achieved through the efforts of the Government of Fiji and JICA's technical cooperation by the time of the project appraisal, and the items in the 'Future Actions' above were to be implemented through further efforts by the Government of Fiji and the capacity development support through the 'The Project for Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction'. As a result, the indicators shown in Table 2 had been set.

Table 2: Achievement of Quantitative Effect Indicators

	Baseline Value	Target Value	Actual Value	
	2019	2023	2021	2023
		Completion Year Expected	Completion Year	2 Years After Completion
Number of Municipal Councils for which Local Disaster Risk Reduction Plan is developed	0	5	0	0
Percentage of priority investment projects out of the projects to be carried out by 2022 whose budget is allocated based on the NDRRP Roadmap	0%	80%	0%	0%
Number of hazard assessment conducted*	1	6	1	6

*Counted by disaster type

Source: Prepared from the Ex-Ante Project Evaluation Paper and the information provided by NDMO

The status of achievement of each indicator in Table 2 at the time of ex-post evaluation was as follows.

Indicator 1: The number of local disaster risk reduction plans developed was zero at the time of ex-post evaluation, as the first one being worked on in the Western Division, has not yet been completed. Regular monitoring is carried out at the Joint Coordinating Committee (JCC) of the Technical Cooperation ‘The Project for Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction’.

Indicator 2: 28 priority investment projects were selected in 2023 from the 122 action items identified in the NDRRP. However, at the time of ex-post evaluation, budget allocations for those projects had not yet been made.

Indicator 3: Hazard assessments were to be counted by disaster type, and as of the ex-post evaluation, assessments for five hazards had been completed in the Western Division, which means that Indicator 3 has been achieved according to this definition. It is planned that similar assessments will be conducted in other Divisions and several municipalities in the Western Division will be supported in conducting hazard assessments and formulating local disaster risk reduction plans in a manner more in line with the actual conditions in their respective jurisdictions.

With regard to the status of implementation of 'Future Actions' in the Policy Action Matrix, the implementation of hazard assessments and the organisation of information on the past cyclone disasters were fully conducted, but the activities related to 'Strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk' and 'Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience' had

only been partially achieved. This was due to the fact that the activities of the relevant Technical Cooperation 'The Project for Mainstreaming Disaster Risk Reduction' could not be fully implemented for a period of practically one and a half years, as described in section '2.3 Constraints During the Evaluation Study'. It should be noted that the Technical Cooperation is likely to be extended until 2025. The outlook at the time of ex-post evaluation (mid-2023) is that the quantitative indicators of this project will be generally achieved if hazard assessments and local disaster risk reduction plans are carried out at the municipal level in the Western Division, hazard assessments and local disaster risk reduction plans are developed in other Divisions outside the Western Division, and budgetary measures are taken for the priority investment projects of the NDRRP. In addition, capacity development of NDMOs and local municipalities is underway, and through the implementation of 'Future Actions' with the support of JICA experts, capacity will be improved, particularly in terms of hazard assessment and planning of countermeasures.

However, at the time of ex-post evaluation, neither the implementation of the 'Future Actions' nor the achievement of the quantitative indicators can be said to be satisfactory.

3.3.1.2 Qualitative Effects (Other Effects)

At the time of project appraisal, it was envisaged that the qualitative effect of the project would be to provide for temporarily increased funding needs during the post-disaster recovery period, thereby facilitating rapid post-disaster recovery.

The natural disasters targeted for funding under this project were TC Harold in 2020 and TC Yasa in 2021, which, according to the NDMO, caused the following amounts of damage in Fiji respectively.

TC Harold (Category 5 (largest)): 100,930,000 Fijian dollars (approximately 6 billion yen)

TC Yasa (Category 5 (largest)): 381,720,000 Fijian dollars (approximately 22.9 billion yen)

In response to the damage caused by these cyclones, the Government of Fiji declared a State of Emergency⁹, based on which the loans of 2,150 million yen and 2,850 million yen were disbursed for the respective cyclones. As shown in Table 3, the number of days taken from the time of loan request by the Government of Fiji to JICA to the actual receipt of funds by the Government of Fiji was approximately two weeks, 16 days for the first and 14 days for the second, which can be said to have been a quick process. In addition, as described below, these funds were used to rehabilitate roads and bridges, which are the basic infrastructure for

⁹ The declaration of a state of emergency by the Government of Fiji was stipulated as a trigger clause for the provision of funds (loan disbursement) through this project.

economic and social activities, and to compensate for the income of sugarcane farmers who suffered major damage in the sugar industry, which is a major industry in Fiji generating many jobs.

From the above, it can be said that this project adequately responded to the increased financial needs caused by the cyclone damage and contributed to the rapid recovery of the affected areas.

Table 3: Loan Disbursements under the Project

Loan disbursement	Date	Procedure	Yen (million)	Fijian dollars (thousand)
First withdrawal	4 May, 2020	Request for loan disbursement	2,150	-
	20 May, 2020	Front end fee	-25	-520
	20 May, 2020	Receipt of fund	2,125	44,410
	28 May, 2020	Transfer to the Ministry of Economy from the Reserve Bank of Fiji	2,125	44,410
Second withdrawal	1 February, 2021	Request for loan disbursement	2,850	-
	15 February, 2021	Receipt of fund	2,850	54,966
	15 February, 2021	Transfer to the Ministry of Economy from the Reserve Bank of Fiji	2,850	54,966

Note: 'Ministry of Economy' in the table refers to the current 'Ministry of Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics'.

Source: Materials provided by JICA

3.3.2 Impacts

3.3.2.1 Intended Impacts

The impact of this project was envisaged as the stabilisation of the financial base of the Government of Fiji after a disaster, the recovery and stabilisation of the livelihoods of the affected people, and sustainable economic growth.

This project can be said to have made a certain contribution to the stabilisation of the Government of Fiji's post-disaster fiscal base while the Fijian economy was in the significant decline due to the impact of COVID-19. The revenues in the budgets for the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 financial years, when affected by the two major cyclones, were 3,492 million Fijian dollars and 1,674 million Fijian dollars respectively, with deficit budgets in both years with the expenditures already exceeding the revenues. Therefore, in a situation where it was not easy to reallocate the budgets in the event of a disaster, the project provided additional amounts equivalent to 1.29% and 3.28% of the revenues of the respective years, which contributed to a certain extent to curbing additional bond issuance by the Government of Fiji and avoiding the reallocation of the Government budget. The executing agency also commented that the funds from the project enabled them to respond quickly and to redirect government budgets to other responses.

With regard to the restoration and stabilisation of the livelihoods of the affected people and sustainable economic growth, the first loan disbursement of this project (after TC Harold) allocated 75% of the disbursed loan amount to the Fiji Roads Authority (FRA) and 25% to the Fiji Sugar Corporation (FSC). In the second loan disbursement (after TC Yasa), 64% was allocated to FRA and 36% to FSC.

At FRA, 61% of the funds from this project were used for disaster rehabilitation and 39% for road maintenance in the first disbursement, while the entire funds in the second disbursement were allocated to the projects aiming to strengthen the resilience of roads, bridges and equipment. According to FRA, the funds provided through this project made it possible to take urgent action to shorten the period of closures of roads etc., and strengthen the resilience of ageing bridges. It can be said that the funds provided through this project had the effect of ensuring that the FRA did not face major financial challenges in implementing road rehabilitation works, as well as in implementing the strengthening of bridges and other infrastructure. Infrastructure resilience building contributes to Area 2 of the Policy Action Matrix, ‘Investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience’, and is considered to have been in line with the direction of this project.

Funds from this project were also provided to FSC and distributed to sugarcane farmers in the form of government grants on a total of four occasions. This is because the sugar industry is an industry with which about a quarter of the total population in Fiji has some connections, and the Government purchases sugarcane annually from the 10,600 sugarcane farmers in the country¹⁰. Two major cyclones significantly reduced the quantity and quality of sugarcane production, resulting in insufficient funds for farmers to start production activities for the following season, requiring farmers to be subsidised beyond the budgeted amount. According to FSC, the funds provided through this project enabled the farmers who received them to plant the crop in the following season without running short of cash on hand. In this regard, the provision of funds to FSC was a very important measure for the continuation of production activities in the Fijian sugar industry.

3.3.2.2 Other Positive and Negative Impacts

1) Impacts on the Environment

The environmental category was C in the environmental and social consideration guideline applied to this project ‘JICA Guidelines for Environmental and Social Considerations (2010)’, as it was assumed that there would be minimal undesirable impacts on the environment.

¹⁰ The purchase price in 2021 was 85 Fijian dollars per ton, of which about 30 Fijian dollars was subsidised by the government.

According to the executing agency, there were no undesirable impacts on the environment due to this project. The restoration of the partially collapsed embankment can be seen as an example of the positive impact that can be inferred, as it can be said to have played a role in preventing future negative impacts on the environment due to embankment breaches and so on.

2) Resettlement and Land Acquisition

There was no resettlement or land acquisition related to this project and no specific concerns were identified.

3) Gender Equality, Marginalised People, Social Systems and Norms, Human Well-being and Human Rights

No gender bias or people inhibited from equitable social participation were specifically identified, and this project is considered to have had an aspect of promoting a sense of security through the rapid restoration of normal life for all people and strengthening of the resilience of infrastructure, resulting in an overall positive impact.

In this project, while the loan disbursement was completed within one year after the signing of the loan agreement, the implementation of the 'Future Actions' in the Policy Action Matrix was practically started with a substantial delay due to COVID-19, and the quantitative indicators had not been fully achieved at the time of ex-post evaluation. The hazard assessment has already achieved the target values, and the indicators are expected to be achieved by 2025 if the local disaster risk reduction plans and the selection of priority projects and budgetary measures for disaster risk reduction are steadily implemented in each Division. With regard to the qualitative effects, it can be said that the loan disbursements were implemented promptly, responding adequately to the temporarily increased financing needs and leading to the rapid restoration.

With regard to the impacts, the ex-post evaluation revealed that this project played a role in reducing the deterioration of financial situations and supported the rehabilitation and strengthening of transport infrastructure such as roads and bridges, and the smooth continuation of production activities in the sugar industry.

Based on the above, the implementation of this project has shown that the project effects have been generated as planned, and effectiveness and impacts of the project are high.

3.4 Sustainability (Rating: N/A)

3.4.1 Policy and System

As indicated in 'Relevance', no medium- or long-term national development plan for the

new government had been announced at the time of ex-post evaluation. However, according to NDMO, the direction regarding disaster management is not expected to change. Specifically, the NDRRP was already formulated in 2019 and 28 priority projects have been selected and will be implemented. There is no policy risk as the NDMA is in the final stage of review work and the NDMP will be reviewed after its passage and the relationship between policy, act and plan will be organised. In addition, one of the policy actions being implemented under this project is the development of local disaster risk reduction plans through hazard assessments, which will also lead to the implementation of the NDRRP and will be utilised in facilitating disaster preparedness in Fiji as a whole.

NDMO is expected to continue to be the agency responsible for promoting disaster management in Fiji, and no institutional risks are observed.

Therefore, while the disaster management-related policies and other matters still need to be sorted out, it can be said that the sustainability in terms of policy and system is generally ensured.

3.4.2 Institutional/Organizational Aspect

NDMO is an organisation with 30 staff members under the Director and disaster mainstreaming is led by four officers in charge of disaster risk reduction. In addition, a disaster liaison officer has been appointed in each government ministry, who will be responsible for responding to disasters in coordination with NDMO. At the local level¹¹, the response authority of the respective Divisional Commissioner in the event of a disaster is planned to be strengthened. Each local municipality in the country has its own plan on disaster prevention and response, but as local disaster risk reduction plans are developed, it is important to establish an institutional system to reduce disaster risk and minimise damages.

As a whole, the number of staff at NDMO is considered adequate for its role in coordinating disaster management. There is a certain degree of coordination with ministries and local authorities, and no particular major challenges were identified. In addition, at the local level, it is planned to strengthen the response authority of the Divisional Commissioner, which should enable a more rapid response that is more in line with the actual situations on the ground.

Therefore, it can be said that there are no organisational or institutional concerns.

3.4.3 Financial Aspect

As noted in 'Relevance', NDMO sets aside 500,000 Fijian dollars annually as the Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation Fund, with the balance at the end of the year to be transferred to the Prime Minister's Disaster Relief and Rehabilitation Fund. The ex-post evaluation also

¹¹ Fiji is administratively divided into four regions (Divisions) and 14 municipalities (Districts).

confirmed that up to 10 million US dollars can be drawn from the World Bank in the event of a major disaster.

Thus, it can be said that, while the size of the amount is not necessarily sufficient, a certain amount of budget and contingency finance has been secured for emergency response in the event of a disaster.

3.4.4 Preventative Measures to Risks

In preparation for the occurrence of a major disaster, the executing agency has secured the budgeted funds and the contingent finance from the World Bank, and expects a certain amount of donor support in the event of an actual disaster. Therefore, no serious situation is envisaged where disaster recovery cannot be financed at all.

Therefore, although a larger amount of contingent finance is necessary as there is a certain level of risk in terms of funding when the amount of damage caused by a disaster is large, it is considered that there are no major risks.

Based on the above, there are no particular concerns in terms of the policy and system, organisation and institution, finance and preventative measures to risks to sustain the project effects, and the sustainability of the project is considered to be secured to a certain extent.

4. Conclusion, Lessons Learned and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusion

This project promoted the implementation of policy actions related to pre-disaster investment and mainstreaming disaster reduction, and prepared for temporarily increased financing needs during post-disaster recovery, thereby ensuring rapid recovery after disasters. This project was consistent with Fiji's development policy and development needs at both the time of appraisal and ex-post evaluation, and the project content and approach were appropriate. It was also in line with Japan's development cooperation policy and the international framework at the time of appraisal, although no specific outcomes could be said to have been confirmed in terms of internal or external coherence. Therefore, the relevance and coherence are high. As for project effectiveness, efforts to enhance capacity were delayed due to movement restrictions caused by the global spread of the COVID-19, and at the time of ex-post evaluation, the project had not fully achieved the outcomes, but the project adequately responded to the temporarily increased funding needs caused by the disasters and led to rapid recoveries. In terms of impacts, it can be said that the project played a role in alleviating the deteriorating financial situation and also supported the rehabilitation and strengthening of transport infrastructure such as roads and bridges, and the smooth continuation of production activities in the sugar industry. Therefore, the effectiveness and impacts of the project are high. Regarding sustainability, some items were

not analysed due to the nature of this project, but no major concerns were found as a whole.

4.2 Recommendations

4.2.1 Recommendations to the Executing Agency

This project identified the development of local disaster risk reduction plans as one of the effect indicators to be achieved. At the national level, the NDRRP was developed in 2019, but the relevant law and plan remained at the review stage at the time of ex-post evaluation. The formulation of local disaster risk reduction plans has also been delayed due to the global spread of COVID-19, and it is therefore important to make steady progress in formulating these law and plan and establishing a systematic policy and institution.

In terms of funding, the Government of Fiji has budgetary measures in place for emergency expenditure in the event of a disaster, and has also secured the contingency finance. While it is highly commendable that a certain amount of contingency finance has been secured in this way, the amount is not considered sufficient and it may be necessary to secure further concessional funding channels in preparation for the occurrence of a major disaster.

4.2.2 Recommendations to JICA

None.

4.3 Lessons Learned

Combining technical cooperation for steady implementation of policy actions

While this project was a stand-by loan to prepare for the temporarily increased demand for funds in the event of a disaster, the project was also designed to encourage the implementation of policy actions for advance investment in disaster risk reduction and mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction at the same time. As it is impossible to predict when a disaster will strike and therefore it is not possible to make the achievement of actions a condition for the loan disbursement, the implementation of technical cooperation closely related to the project as a separate project and the promotion of capacity development of disaster risk management personnel were considered to be very effective in terms of long-term disaster risk management. In the future, when JICA seeks to implement policy actions in similar projects (stand-by loans for disaster recovery and rehabilitation), it is important for disaster risk reduction in the country that JICA also provides support for the steady implementation of the policy actions, as was observed in this project.

Need to pay attention to the timing and scope of the ex-post evaluation

It was envisaged in this project that the 'Future Actions' in the Policy Action Matrix would be achieved by 2023. A loan disbursement period of three years was planned, but due to the

damage caused by the two major cyclones of a magnitude that would have led to the declarations of state of emergency within one year of the signing of the loan agreement, the entire loan disbursement was completed within a year, which was a very short period of time. On the other hand, support for the implementation of 'Future Actions' through the technical cooperation was delayed by one and a half years from the planned date due to movement restrictions caused by the global spread of COVID-19. Therefore, the quantitative indicators that were closely related to the support provided by the technical cooperation could not adequately assessed in the ex-post evaluation. In addition, the technical cooperation, providing support for the implementation of 'Future Actions', was not directly subject to evaluation.

Because of the nature of the project, if a project is implemented in close cooperation between a programme-type loan and technical cooperation, it is desirable that the timing of the ex-post evaluation be two years after the completion of the loan implementation and the completion of the capacity development support through the technical cooperation (to continue the prior policy actions) at the time of project formulation. This would allow for adequate evaluation of the financial aspect of the stand-by loan as well as the aspect of the policy and institutional improvement. On that occasion, depending on the nature of the related technical cooperation, it may also be worth considering an integrated evaluation with the loan project.

5. Non-Score Criteria

5.1 Performance

5.1.1 Objective Perspective

The support of JICA experts in policy formulation and monitoring has improved the capacity of NDMO in formulating and implementing policies and plans, and it is highly likely that the progress in implementing the Policy Action Matrix set out in the project would not have been possible without the technical cooperation in promoting disaster management mainstreaming. Therefore, the introduction of the technical cooperation activities in conjunction with this project not only had the effect of reducing the funding shortage, but also played a significant role in strengthening Fiji's disaster preparedness capacity beyond the financial aspect. It can be said that this project was planned in a way that fully utilised the lessons learned from similar projects in the past, which also led to the generation of expected effects.

5.2 Additionality

None.

(End)