

Australia-Japan Strategy for Cooperation in the Pacific

Preamble

Australia and Japan enjoy a special strategic partnership based on common values and strategic interests including democracy, human rights, the rule of law, open markets and free trade. The Governments of Australia and Japan have decided that both countries will strengthen their cooperation in the Pacific to help the region achieve a peaceful and prosperous future.

Both countries value their political, economic and community links with the Pacific Island Countries. This strategy aims to support the Pacific Island Countries' efforts to strengthen economic prosperity, peace and stability in the region through effective governance, economic growth and sustainable development, security and defence cooperation, and diplomatic initiatives.

Australia and Japan underline the importance of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), and its coordination with the Pacific Islands Leaders Meeting (PALM) process.

Scope of Cooperation

Effective governance

Recognising that accountability, transparency and the rule of law are essential to inclusive economic growth and sustainable development, Japan and Australia resolve to strengthen Pacific public sector capacities in this regard. Both countries will work together to promote democratic institutions in the Pacific, including providing assistance to Pacific Island Countries to prepare for elections and through cooperation on election monitoring.

Economic growth and Sustainable development

Recognising that development assistance should be a catalyst to promote economic growth and sustainable development, Japan and Australia will cooperate in the following key areas of focus:

Trade and investment: Australia and Japan will work together to support the development of resilient economies and a strong private sector in the Pacific through trade and investment promotion.

Quality infrastructure: Considering the important role that quality infrastructure plays in unlocking the economic potential of the region, Australia and Japan will work together in the Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility to ensure funds are prioritised and spent effectively to maximise the Pacific Island Countries economic potential.

Fisheries: Considering that fisheries are an essential resource to Pacific Island Countries and have the potential to increase their economic growth, Australia and Japan will work together to strengthen effective conservation and management measures with Pacific Island Countries under the framework of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC). To maintain the sustainability of fish stocks, both countries will work cooperatively to eradicate illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing in the Pacific.

Agriculture: noting the importance of agriculture to the economies of the Pacific Island Countries, Australia and Japan will work toward increasing opportunities for agriculture in Pacific Island Countries.

To give effect to the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* and consistent with the principles of the Forum Compact, Australia and Japan will build on existing activities to enhance complementarity between projects and create synergy between respective efforts. Key areas of focus will be the following:

- Climate change—Australia and Japan will cooperate to support Pacific Island Countries to tackle this major challenge to sustainable development, including with respect to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) including the Paris Agreement recently adopted and in their capacity as contributors and members of the Green Climate Fund (GCF).
- Women’s economic empowerment and gender equality—Australia and Japan support the empowerment of women and girls as one of the most effective ways to achieve higher economic growth and better living standards among the people of the Pacific.
- Health and education—Australia and Japan will continue to support health and education in the Pacific as fundamental factors in ensuring that women, men and children can lead healthy and productive lives.
- Water management—recognising that access to fresh water is a key vulnerability for Pacific communities, Australia and Japan will work to help protecting this precious resource.
- Disaster risk reduction—Australia and Japan will assist the Pacific Island Countries to strengthen their resilience to disasters, for example through implementing the *Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030*.
- Disaster relief—Australia and Japan will closely consult in extending humanitarian assistance to deploy their resources in a most effective manner to help Pacific Island Countries facing natural disasters.

Security and defence cooperation

Australia and Japan have a close security relationship. Australia and Japan, as countries recognising the importance of the rule of law at sea, consider that maritime order should be maintained in accordance with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and that all countries should respect universally recognised principles, including freedom of navigation and overflight. Both countries will continue to work together in the Pacific on the priority areas of maritime security and surveillance. Both countries will look for opportunities for cooperation in areas of capacity building assistance, training and joint exercises.

Diplomatic initiatives

Australia and Japan will enhance their diplomatic partnership in order to pursue common strategic, political and economic interests in the Pacific, in conjunction with the Pacific Island Countries.

Both countries will work closely together with multilateral organisations active in the region, such as the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

Implementation and Monitoring

This strategy will be implemented and monitored through the Australia-Japan Joint Foreign and Defence Consultations (“2+2” Meetings). A matrix of specific activities to be conducted under this strategy may be developed through joint consultation between officials.