

How to Restart Affected Businesses – Four-Year Experience by a Public-Private Joint Team -

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In 2011 an evacuation order was given due to the accident at Tokyo Electric Power Co.'s Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant. Residents, businesses, and farmers were forced to evacuate from 12 cities, towns, and villages, and industry disappeared from Fukushima Soso region. In 2014 the Japanese government began lifting evacuation orders but without industry or employment, residents were unable to return even if they wanted to. In response, in 2015 the government established an organization to assist affected businesses in returning to their hometowns to restart their businesses. That organization is the Public-Private Fukushima Soso Revitalization Joint Team.

We began our work by individually visiting each business, and in the 4 and half years since then, we have visited 5,300 businesses. Around 30% of those businesses restarted in their hometown, and that figure rises to more than 50% if we include businesses that have reopened in another location.

Next, we gradually have expanded our initiative from the “point” of businesses to the “area” of the region itself and also provided help to farmers through farmland consolidation and “smart agriculture” initiatives. In addition, we are currently stepping up our efforts to rebuild industry accumulation through attracting companies from outside the region and matching local businesses based around the Fukushima Innovation Coast Framework.

Defining features of our support are that we can get close with the businesses to build “trust”, we acquire diversified talents and cooperate with professionals for responding the various issues, and promptly reflect local needs in government support measures and deliver to the businesses.

Although some businesses have restarted, there still remains many issues to be tackled, for example, business continuity or deep-rooted reputational damage caused by harmful rumors. We will enhance our support by strengthening businesses' management and technological capabilities, and creating better business environment.

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