

GENERAL INSTRUCTION / TERMS AND CONDITIONS GRANT ASSISTANCE FOR GRASS-ROOTS PROJECTS (GGP)

Embassy of Japan in Samoa
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Japan aims through the GGP to aid self-supporting socio-economic development activities that benefit sectors at the grass-roots level in the Independent State of Samoa. The GGP is a framework that essentially supports local non-government organisations (NGOs) and local public organisations, in order to respond to various development needs in a prompt and responsive manner, but on a comparatively small scale. It is recommended that applicants should first contact the Embassy of Japan in Samoa to confirm whether a proposed project would be eligible for the GGP.

APPLICATION PERIOD

Applications are accepted throughout the year. However, only those received by the end of October will be considered for screening under the next Japanese Fiscal Year (JFY). For example, applications submitted by the end of October 2026 will be considered under GGP 2027 and screened in November–December 2026, with the results communicated shortly thereafter.

In principle, the screening is scheduled to take place around November–December; however, please note that the schedule is subject to change depending on circumstances.

Applications received between November 2026 and the end of October 2027 will be carried over and considered for screening under GGP 2028. Screening is expected to take place in November–December 2027, and the results will be communicated shortly thereafter.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

The Embassy accepts applications from the following organisations that have at least **2 years** background of operation in the Independent State of Samoa:

- (1) NGOs;
- (2) Non-profit organisations such as local public authorities, educational institutions and medical institutions; and
- (3) Non-profit organisations that implement development projects at the grass-roots level.

We DO NOT accept applications from INDIVIDUALS OR PROFIT ORGANISATIONS such as private companies, commercial institutions etc.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Eligible projects include those that fall within the following areas:

(1) Basic Human Needs

- Health and Medical Care
 - Upgrading of health clinics, medical centres, and hospitals in rural areas and in strategic outlying areas
 - Maternal and Child Health, Family Planning or Reproductive Health in areas with high fertility rates
- Potable Water
 - Water system development in rural areas with no access to water
 - Water quality improvement in areas with high incidence of water-borne diseases

(2) Social Welfare

Welfare and empowerment of marginalised sectors (children, elderly, people with disabilities, women, etc.)

(3) Basic Education and Human Resource Development

- Building and repairing school buildings in rural areas and schools with poor educational environments
- Building and repairing training centre buildings for human resource development and community development

(4) Environmental Protection/Disaster Relief

- Community-Based Resource Management
 - Coastal Resource Management
 - Agro-Forestry/Reforestation
 - Biodiversity Conservation
 - Solid Waste Management
- Emergency Services and Disaster Relief (for internally displaced people and victims of natural disaster)

(5) Reduce Vulnerability

Strengthening sustainable economic infrastructure

- Community Fisheries Development
- Community Agriculture Development
- Community access development

GRANT AMOUNT

The GGP fund is generally capped at JPY 20,000,000 per project (for example, approximately USD 134,000 / SAT 355,000 per project under GGP 2026). However, in case there are extraordinary reasons, such as where the project strongly reflects the concept of human security, an exception can be made.

The exchange rate for USD/WST fluctuates over time, therefore the final grant amount received by Recipients may be higher or lower than the proposed amount.

SELECTION CRITERIA

It is important to note that not all applications lodged with the Embassy will be approved. These guidelines describes the criteria that will be used to select each project. When all the required information has been submitted, the Embassy will assess each application according to the validity of supporting information and finally weigh it according to all criteria outlined here. The projects that will be selected in the end will be those that have been weighed against the criteria and justified in accomplishing the overall objectives of the GGP.

- (1) **Necessity, urgency and impact:** The Embassy will assess received applications according to its necessity, urgency and impact on target community. It will assess the scale of how the proposal will improve the situation of its target beneficiaries. Therefore, applicants must clarify the problems that they want to address and the expected direct benefits of the project to its target beneficiaries.
- (2) **Human capacity development:** The Embassy will score highly in its evaluation an applicant who makes tireless efforts not only to improve the facility but also to develop its human resources capacity to better serve the needs of the applicant organisation (e.g. for school projects, efforts for further training of teachers with the support of teaching volunteers, efforts to conduct workshops for teachers, Parent-Teacher Association, and school committee in preparation of Annual Maintenance Plans, Fundraising Plans, Budget Planning and School Facilities Management according to the MEC Minimum Service Standards etc.).
- (3) **Capability (adequate understanding of GGP terms and conditions, track record, financial management capacity, implementation capability and monitoring system):** Priority will be given to applicants with the capability to manage the financial and reporting requirements of the project. Inclusion of members who are qualified professionals and have experience in project management will be an advantage. Sincerity and honesty in addressing any enquiries from the Embassy will also be taken into account.
- (4) **Project feasibility:** Applicants must discuss in complete detail how the proposed project will be implemented especially with participation of residents. The Embassy will take into account whether applicants have attained full support of all its stakeholders.
- (5) **Sustainability:** The Embassy will prioritise those projects that can proactively continue to create value long even after the project closes.
- (6) **Appropriateness and cost-effectiveness of requested amount:** The Embassy assesses whether project budgets are appropriate and supported by detailed documentation. Proposals should remain within the Grant ceiling; if they exceed it, applicants must justify the cost with supporting documents. Three (3) competitive quotes should be submitted for each budgeted item. If not feasible, applicants must explain why and submit available quotes. The Embassy will consider not only price but also justification, availability, and provider reliability to ensure fairness and avoid manipulated estimates.
- (7) **In line with Samoa's national priorities and Japan's Country Assistance Policy for Samoa:** Applications that are in line with national priorities of the Government of Samoa reflecting critical areas needed for community development and Japan's Country Assistance Policy for Samoa below will be highly assessed. The Embassy seeks to assist the Government of Samoa and is committed to contributing towards the progress of its national priorities and strategic development direction as well as accomplishing Japan's foreign aid policies.
(https://www.ws.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/bilateral_relations.html)

CONTENTS OF ASSISTANCE

The GGP mainly supports tangible items such as the construction of school buildings, health clinics, and water supply systems as well as the provision of equipment for public health and safety such as medical supplies and firefighting equipment and emergency vehicles. However, intangible items such as capacity building activities, technical assistance for operation and maintenance, awareness-raising campaigns and reinforcement of community association contingent on tangible items may also be eligible for support if determined to satisfy the selection criteria outlined above.

The GGP **CAN** be used mainly for the following:

- (1) Purchase of equipment, supplies, or machines for public welfare and safety;

Note: general vehicles and personal computers are not among GGP priorities, except for medical and firefighting equipment, ambulances and fire engines depending on their availability in Japan.

- (2) Construct buildings to undertake small-scale infrastructure projects; and

Under the above main components, examples of overhead costs that **CAN** be supported are:

- (a) Expenses related to hiring individuals exclusively for the implementation of the project (i.e. supervision consultants, technical specialists etc. but excludes salary for regular staff);
- (b) Expenses related to hiring professionals for technical transfer e.g., engineers to train an organisation's staff in the operation of machines purchased from GGP funds;
- (c) Expenses related to facilitating the convening of conferences or seminars through the following:
 - Providing accommodations, transportation, and honoraria for resource persons or lecturers;
 - Covering rental costs for conferences and equipment (such as audio-visual aids); and
 - Covering costs related to preparing necessary documents (e.g. documenters, researchers, writers).

Note: Costs for the participants e.g., meals, transportation, and accommodation are **NOT APPLICABLE**.

- (d) Expenses related to conducting necessary surveys for project implementation (e.g. land-mine mapping for land-mine clearance and health surveys for polio eradication);
- (e) Expenses related to communication and travel necessary for project implementation and monitoring;
- (f) Expenses related to the production of information, education and communication materials necessary for project implementation; and

- (3) Soft-Components relating to the above (1) and (2) including capacity building will be also considered for assistance if this is recognised as significant necessity.

INELIGIBLE ITEMS

(1) The GGP **CANNOT** cover the following items:

- Office expenses (office rental fee, salary for employees, electricity and water consumption, fuel etc.);
- Contingency Funds;
- Expenses incurred on individual or corporate profit-making activities;
- Funding and items aimed at providing direct funds and assets to specific individuals (such as scholarships, accommodations, clothing; however, this does not include situations of emergency humanitarian aid in the event of natural disasters, etc.);
- Expenses linked to indulgences that may be harmful to the human body, such as alcohol and cigarettes;
- Research expenses that do not have clear direct benefits for the residents;
- Specific church or religious/missionary related activities, specific political activities or political campaign related to elections, commercial projects, and projects supporting specific doctrines or ideologies, or military projects.

(2) In general, the following items are **NOT eligible** for the GGP and should be shouldered by the recipient organisation.

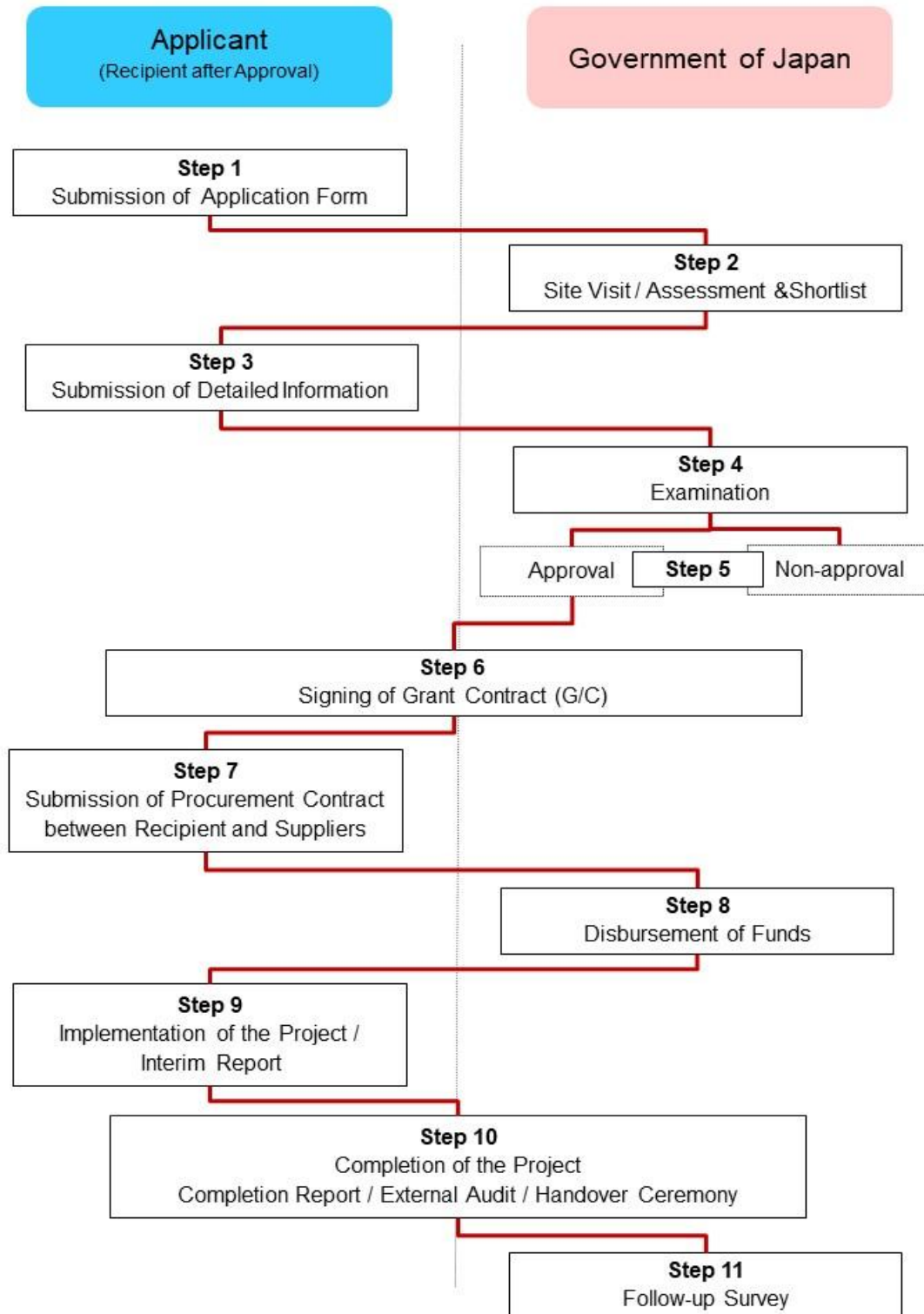
- Operation-related costs (personnel and operational costs, etc. that are indispensable to the project);
- Maintenance and management costs for the provided goods;
- Vaccines;
- Consumables, small fixtures;
- Books (teaching materials, reference materials for educational projects, books for library collections, etc.);
- General passenger vehicles (vehicles that are highly universal and can be used for private purpose.);
- Electronic equipment such as personal computers, photocopy machine, cellular phones etc.;
- **Banking fees** (remittance charge from the Embassy of Japan to the bank account of the recipient, opening and closing fee of a dedicated bank account for the GGP, account maintenance commission, foreign-exchange fee, etc.);
- Administrative fees, vehicle registration fees, etc. that can be a source of revenue for the national and local governments;
- **Import-related taxes** (customs duty, internal tax, value-added tax etc.).

***Notes on taxes**

- In principle, the import-related taxes for the items covered by the GGP should be exempted or reimbursed. It is the responsibility of the recipient organisation to take necessary duty-free measures.
- Even in cases where Samoa does not agree to the exemption of import-related taxes, in principle, the recipient should bear the burden of these taxes.
- However, in cases where Samoa does not agree to the exemption or reimbursement of import-related taxes, and in cases where there is a need to provide assistance considering the financial situation of the recipient organisation, the grant may cover the cost of these taxes.

- As for other taxes not related to import, in cases where there is a true necessity, taking into account the financial situation of the applicant, the grant may cover the cost of these taxes. *Please consult the Embassy for more details.*

PROCESS (APPLICATION – APPROVAL - IMPLEMENTATION - COMPLETION)



Step 1: Submission of Application Form

An applicant submits a completed Application form and supporting information to the Embassy. Please refer to the Checklist for required information. Once all the necessary information for the application stage is submitted to the Embassy, an Application number will be issued to the applicants.

Steps 2: Site Visit / Assessment and Shortlist of Projects

The Embassy conducts a thorough background check on the requesting organisation and the validity of the documents provided. To check the feasibility of the project proposed, the Embassy may conduct an appraisal visit to the project site. After site visit, reporting and assessment of all information in the forms, the Embassy will shortlist projects most urgently needed for implementation.

Steps 3: Submission of Detailed Information Form

Once a project has been shortlisted, Embassy will inform the applicant to prepare Detailed Information Form and submit all information required to support the proposal. Please refer to the Checklist for required information during application phase. Please note that being shortlisted is not a guarantee that the project will be approved.

If an applicant fails to submit all required information outlined in the Checklist or if the submitted information suggested by the Embassy does not satisfy the requirements, the application will not be accepted and will not be lodged.

The applicant should be sincere and cooperative in responding all inquiries from the Embassy and also be attentive to any suggestion or modification made during the application phase.

In principle, changes to plans are not accepted after the approval. Therefore, an applicant must make every effort to finalise the proposed project at the application phase.

Steps 4 and 5: Examination / Approval or Non-Approval

Funds will be provided only to those projects found to be most suitable among all the applied projects. This means that even proposals which meet the requirements may not be selected or approved.

The reason for approval/non-approval of each application will not be disclosed. Please refer to SELECTION CRITERIA on page 2. The Embassy will inform all applicants once the result is made available. Applications that were unsuccessful in the selection process may be re-submitted as new proposals during application stage for the next Japanese Fiscal Year intake period.

Steps 6: Signing of Grant Contract (G/C)

Representatives of the Embassy and the Recipient will sign a Grant Contract. The Grant Contract covers information of the approved project including the relevant grant conditions and the funds granted in the USD.

Steps 7: Submission of Procurement Contract

The Recipient will prepare contracts with relevant suppliers/contractors for the procurement of goods and/or services. Contracts should include the Terms of Reference, the Scope of Works for any installation of equipment or materials and mode of payment.

Steps 8: Disbursement of Funds

The Recipient must submit a request for payment with relevant documents before the funds are actually received.

Opening of a dedicated bank account

The Recipient will be required to open a dedicated bank account, separate from other bank accounts used for the operating expenses or other projects of the organisation, for the disbursement of the fund. It is preferable to adopt the special banking contract schemes, where a written consent of the Embassy is required for the recipient organisation to make every payment to suppliers or other relevant parties out of the dedicated bank account.

Steps 9 and 10: Implementation to Completion of Project / Submission of Reports / External Audit / Handover Ceremony

Responsibilities of the recipient organisation

It is the responsibility of the Recipient to use the grant in accordance with the conditions of the Grant Contract. The Recipient must use approved funds exclusively for the project and according to the estimated budget submitted in the application. The Recipient must give due regard to the proper execution and implementation of activities during the project and honor its commitment to the appropriate operation and regular maintenance of facilities and equipment after the completion of the project.

In the event that upon official investigation approved GGP funds have been used in a way that is not consistent with the Grant Contract, the Recipient may be liable to full refund of the GGP fund.

Or should, for any reason during the implementation of the project, the approved plan is changed however significant or minor the change may be, the Recipient must first contact the Embassy and seek approval before any change takes place.

For building and small scale infrastructure projects, the Recipient is required to prepare legal documents with the Builders/Contractors to be signed by both parties and submit copies to the Embassy. The Recipient will monitor proper use of funds and satisfactory work performance using these legal documents and ensure that the project will be completed successfully within budget and on time.

In case of unforeseen circumstances

It is the Recipient's responsibility to ensure that every effort is made to complete the project even where unexpected circumstances occur such as cost overruns, shortage of materials, Builder/Contractor/Supplier dispute, delays due to extreme weather conditions or global pandemic. Failure to do so, will result in the breaching of conditions of the Grant Contract and cause the Recipient to make full refund of the GGP fund to the Embassy.

Reports

The Recipient is required to submit interim report/s during implementation and a completion report with financial statements attached and official receipts for procurement.

Should there be a remaining balance of the grant funds, the Recipient is required to return it.

External audit

- (1) In principle, after the completion of the project, the recipient organisation shall perform an external audit in order to verify that the funds for the project have been used in a proper manner. In principle, the external audit shall be performed by an organisation or individual with official audit qualification in the country where the project is being implemented.
- (2) The necessary fees for performing the external audit may be eligible for support by the GGP. In principle, like other items, a comparison of estimates from three suppliers should be carried out.
- (3) Upon the completion of the project, an audit report shall be submitted by the auditor to the Recipient. The Recipient is required to submit a copy of this report to the Embassy. This report should contain the following elements:
 - A Verification of financial records (income, direct expenditure, operational expenditure related to the project, etc.);
 - B Verification of facts (procurement and delivery of equipment, use of equipment, etc.);
 - C Inspections of the project site (attach photographs to the report).
- (4) In some exceptional cases, where there are no qualified organisations or individuals in the country, where there is little need or where it is extremely difficult to perform, the external audit may be exempted but some alternative measures should be taken. *Please consult the Embassy for more details*

Visibility

In order to ensure the visibility of Japan's grant assistance, the Recipient shall endeavor to cooperate with the Embassy in carrying out some PR activities such as organising a handover ceremony, in putting stickers and attaching a plaque or a signboard displaying the flag of Japan onto the provided supplies and buildings.

Steps 11: Follow-up Survey

About two years after the completion of the project, a follow-up survey on whether the granted items are still utilised and maintained properly is conducted by the Embassy. The Recipient must put all of the materials and correspondence that occur between Step 1 and Step 10 in the Recipient's record keeping files for at least 5 years after the project completion.

The use of the facilities/equipment procured under GGP must not deviate from the original objectives addressed in the project.