

# Japanese rebuilding seen as opportunity for 'smart cities'

September 16 2011, By Yu Toda

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Japanese corporations and municipalities are exploring plans to rebuild areas devastated by the March earthquake as environmentally friendly "smart cities."

The plans are also meant to create jobs by promoting large-scale projects such as power-generation facilities using renewable energy and smart grids. Some companies and local governments have already started working together on these projects.

Major electronics manufacturer [Toshiba Corp.](#) has spoken to some municipalities about an integrated system, with facilities ranging from power generation and water-treatment systems to "smart" power meters.

An official of the company's smart community division said, "In the future, (we want) to export technologies created domestically."

[Hitachi](#) Ltd. is considering ways to transport electricity generated at its factory in Hitachi, Ibaraki Prefecture, to evacuation centers by buses equipped with storage batteries in the event of a disaster.

Plans to construct mega solar-power plants are also under way. Mitsui & Co. Ltd. is considering building a solar power plant on quake-hit vacant land, and SoftBank Corp. has established an organization to promote cooperation with [local governments](#) across the country.

Governments in quake-hit areas are eager to restore their infrastructure

by introducing high-tech and solar-power projects.

Rikuzen-Takata in Iwate Prefecture is considering a solar and large-scale power storage system in collaboration with Ofunato and Sumitacho in the prefecture. The plan aims to build a smart city and create jobs, according to an official at the Rikuzen-Takata municipal government.

Sendai is also considering a plan to build a solar [power](#) plant on devastated farmland in the city and run food-processing facilities with electricity from the plant.

But the plans being considered are based on the assumption that the use of farmland will be deregulated and tax breaks will be available.

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