As the 10th anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake approaches, Fukushima finds renewed hope as recovery picks up pace.

One project moving Fukushima’s reconstruction forward is the Fukushima Innovation Coast Framework. To bring back industries lost to the disaster, the project is setting up research centers and other facilities seen as key to creating cutting-edge industries in coastal areas of Fukushima. Companies and students are being encouraged to take on new challenges in such fields as energy and reactor decommissioning, as well as agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. In March 2020, the Fukushima Robot Test Field opened fully to serve as a hub for the development and testing of robots on land, sea, and air. It is one of the world’s largest robot testing centers, with various facilities, including a runway for launching unmanned aerial vehicles, an indoor tank for testing robots running on and under water, and an urban field for emergency search and rescue drills.

Furthermore, the following September saw the opening of the Great East Japan Earthquake and Nuclear Disaster Memorial Museum to share the memories and lessons of the earthquake and nuclear accident with future generations. The museum is welcoming numerous visitors from Fukushima Prefecture and beyond.

Almost 10 years have passed since March 11, 2011, when the Great East Japan Earthquake inflicted massive damage on eastern Japan. In a policy speech, Prime Minister SUGA Yoshihide said, “Without the reconstruction of Fukushima, there will be no reconstruction of Tohoku. And without the reconstruction of Tohoku, there will be no revival of Japan.” Today in Fukushima, great progress is being made toward overcoming the destruction wreaked by the earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear accident.

Since the earthquake, over 360 companies have come to coastal Fukushima to run their business. ITO Yasuo, executive managing director of the Fukushima Innovation Coast Promotion Organization, said, “The local residents and children who are actively working toward Fukushima’s reconstruction have collaborated with highly motivated young people and companies from across Japan to make Fukushima a leader in solving problems. The exchange is enabling further revitalization in Fukushima and injecting a fresh stimulus.”

The avid interactions of people and their activities taking place in Fukushima are making the region’s future more and more promising.