

2 What is Debt Management Policy?

(1) Overview

Under the FY2021 budget (April-March), the central government plans to issue JGBs worth 236.0 trillion yen, posting an increase of 82.5 trillion yen from the initial level for FY2020. Construction Bonds and Special Deficit-Financing Bonds to provide General Account revenues increase by 11.0 trillion yen from the initial level for the previous year to 43.6 trillion yen. On the other hand, JGBs outstanding at the end of FY2020 totaled as much as 1,065.3 trillion yen.

The government raises funds with Financing Bills and Borrowings as well as JGBs. If including Financing Bills and Borrowings, outstanding government debts except government-guaranteed debt came to 1,216.5 trillion yen. Moreover, the government gives guarantees to Incorporated Administrative Agencies in order for them to carry out funding to implement public projects, and the government-guaranteed debt totals 34.0 trillion yen (The figures are at the end of FY2020).

The government's fundraising amount or flow has become enormous. Outstanding debts on stock basis have been increasing persistently. Government debt management affects not only the choice of financial assets of economic entities such as corporations and households, but also the flow of funds on a macro-scale, which eventually would influence interest rates. In turn, changes in market interest rates influence government funding activities and the activities of every economic entity.

Based on these points, the government, while trying to mitigate fiscal burden, implements JGB issuance, absorption, distribution and redemption measures to allow government debts (JGBs, Financing Bills, Borrowings, Government-Guaranteed Debt and Subsidy Bonds) to be smoothly accepted at each stage of the national economy. These measures represent "debt management policy." In Japan, based on the following basic goals for JGB Management Policy, the government carefully implements "communications with the market" through various meetings for the development and operation of the JGB Issuance Plan, tries to base JGB issuance fully on market needs and tackles the diversification of JGB holders:

- (1) Ensuring the smooth and secure issuance of Japanese Government Bonds
- (2) Minimizing medium- to long-term fundraising costs

Meanwhile, any excessive response to temporary or short-term changes in market demand could affect the market's transparency and predictability for market participants, leading to a rise in medium- to long-term fundraising costs. In Japan where massive government debt issuance is expected for the future, therefore, the government will try to issue JGBs more stably and transparently while identifying medium- to long-term demand trends.

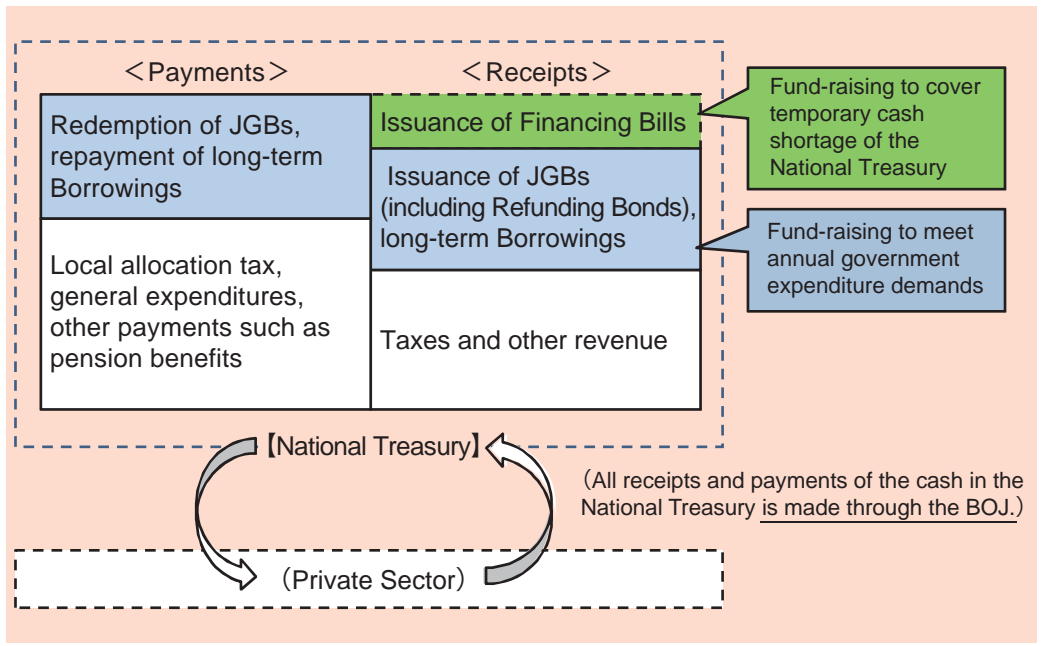
The "Guidelines for Public Debt Management," published by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in 2001, describes sovereign debt management as "the process of establishing and executing a strategy for managing the government's debt in order to raise the required amount of funding" and the objective of sovereign debt management as "to ensure that the government's financing needs and its payment obligations are met at the lowest possible cost over the medium to long run, consistent with a prudent degree of risk."

(2) Framework of “Government Funding Activities”

Government expenditures in a year should basically be covered by tax and other revenues in the year. To satisfy expenditure demand that cannot be covered by such revenues, however, the government issues JGBs or carries out Borrowings (🏦). The government also issues Financing Bills to cover temporary cash shortages for daily cash management of the National Treasury. The following discusses the framework of these government fundraising activities.

🏦 Unlike JGBs, Borrowings are a form of funding that does not involve the issuing of securities.

Fig.1 National Treasury Receipts and Payments



The central government budget consists of the General Account and 13 Special Accounts (as of April 1, 2021), and all receipts and payments in these accounts are managed through the Bank of Japan (BOJ). As follows, the government smoothly implements spending under the budget by using JGBs and Borrowings to satisfy expenditure demand that cannot be covered by tax and other revenues and by issuing Financing Bills to cover temporary cash shortages of the National Treasury.

A. JGBs and Borrowings to meet annual government expenditure demand

The government issues JGBs or carries out Borrowings to satisfy expenditure demand that cannot be covered by tax and other revenues and books funds raised through JGBs and Borrowings as revenues. The government smoothly implements budget spending by raising funds in this way as necessary.

In addition to planning the government debt management policy, the Financial Bureau of the Ministry of Finance implements the policy through conducting JGB auctions, issuance and redemption, and auctions for Borrowings.

B. Financing Bills to cover temporary cash shortage of the National Treasury

Government ministries, agencies or special accounts carry out a lot of fiscal activities every day. All the receipts and payments are made through the BOJ for their integrated handling

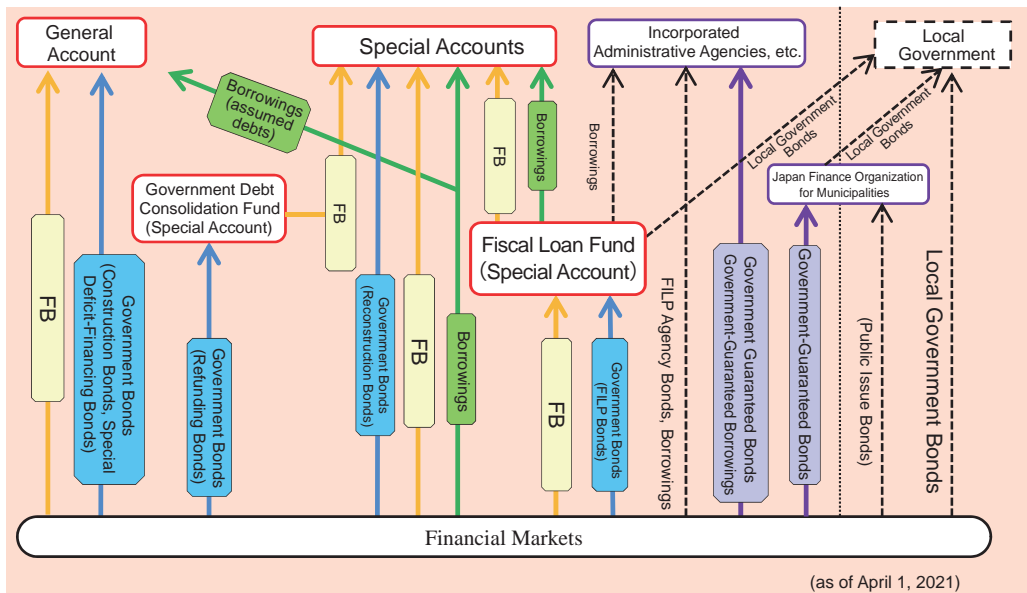
in the National Treasury. As explained in section A, the government raises funds with JGBs and Borrowings to meet expenditure demand that cannot be covered by tax and other revenues. However, the government sees temporary cash shortages and surpluses due to lags of day-to-day receipts and payments of National Treasury funds. The Financial Bureau of the Ministry of Finance makes adjustments through the issuance of Financing Bills in the case of shortage, and through the temporary use of the treasury surplus in the case of surplus (“Cash Management in the National Treasury”) (④).

(3) Debts with Public Characteristics

Besides government debts, there are several forms of public debts including local government bonds and debt of Incorporated Administrative Agencies, etc. Such public debt would affect government debt management through the market interest rate formation mechanism.

④ The term “revenue” shall refer to all the income in one fiscal year and the term “income” shall mean received funds that serve as the source of payment to meet the demands arising on the various levels of the State. Financing Bills, which are issued to manage the National Treasury, are not counted as revenue, since Financing Bills are redeemed with the revenue of the same fiscal year.

Fig.2 Public Debts (Conceptional Diagram) (④①~④③)



④① The shaded area represents government debts.

④② In addition to these debts, there are government bonds that are held by the Bank of Japan as a means of open market operations.

④③ The Government-Guaranteed Bonds issued by the Japan Finance Organization for Municipalities, are issued only for refunding of Government-Guaranteed Bonds converted from the former Japan Finance Corporation for Municipal Enterprises.

Based on what was described above, the chart below provides an overview of the various elements of public debts and lists the relevant reference points in this report.

Fig.3 Various Elements of Public Debts and Relevant Reference Points in This Report

		Topics inside this report (for details, see Contents)			
		I	II (Framework)	III (Appendices)	
Public Debts	Government Debts	General Bonds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1 Trends of JGB Market in FY2020 P12 ■ 2 JGB Issuance Plan for FY2021 P18 ■ 3 Diversification of JGB Investor Base P29 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Chapter 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1 Primary Market for Government Bonds P38 ■ 2 Secondary Market for Government Bonds P64 ■ 3 Debt Management Systems P79 ■ 4 Taxation of Government Bonds P93 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Chapter 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 1 Primary Market for Government Bonds P116 ■ 2 Secondary Market for Government Bonds P127 ■ 3 Debt Management Systems P138
		FILP Bonds			
		Financing Bills		◆ Chapter 2 ■ 1 Financing Bills P99	◆ Chapter 2 ■ 1 Financing Bills P151
		Borrowings		◆ Chapter 2 ■ 2 Borrowings P101	◆ Chapter 2 ■ 2 Borrowings P153
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	Other Public Debts	Local Government Bonds		◆ Chapter 3 ■ 1 Local Government Bonds P109	◆ Chapter 3 ■ 1 Local Government Bonds P162
		Debt of Incorporated Administrative Agencies, etc.		◆ Chapter 3 ■ 2 Debt of Incorporated Administrative Agencies, etc. P113	◆ Chapter 3 ■ 2 Debt of Incorporated Administrative Agencies, etc. P165

Column 1 JGB Yields

Japanese government bond is a bond the government issues by promising to pay a certain amount of money after a certain period of time. The MOF presets a coupon and maturity for a JGB issuance. While the JGB par value (an amount that a JGB holder will receive upon redemption) remains unchanged, a JGB price at which market participants buy fluctuates depending on the conditions, including supply and demand. For example, a JGB with a par value of 100 yen may be priced at 95 yen, below the par value, or at 105 yen, above the par value. JGB yield is an annual percentage rate of return on a JGB based on the purchase price.

In the case a market participant buys a JGB with the par value of 100 yen, for example, the investment return includes the following:

- (1) An annual interest income (an income gain represented by a coupon), and
- (2) A gap between the par value and the purchase price (capital gain or loss) that is annualized.

The JGB yield is represented by the following equation.

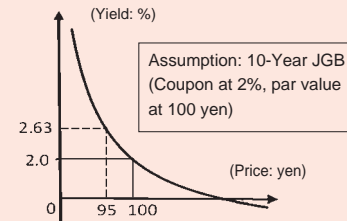
Fig. c1-1 Calculating yield

$$\text{Yield} = \frac{\text{(1) Annual interest income (yen)} + \frac{\text{(2) Par value (100 yen) - Purchase price (yen)}}{\text{Maturity (years)}}}{\text{Purchase price (yen)}} \times 100$$

(Before tax, simple interest, %)

The annual interest income in (1) is fixed by the coupon determined upon issuance and will remain unchanged until redemption. However, the purchase price in (2) fluctuates depending on the purchase timing. Therefore, the JGB yield fluctuates. The right graph (Fig. c1-2) indicates the relationship between the JGB price and yield in the above equation for a 10-Year JGB that has a 2% coupon and a par value of 100 yen. As the purchase price falls (from 100 yen to 95 yen), the yield rises (from 2.0% to 2.63%). Conversely, as the price rises (from 95 yen to 100 yen), the yield declines (from 2.63% to 2.0%).

Fig.c1-2 Relationship between yield and price



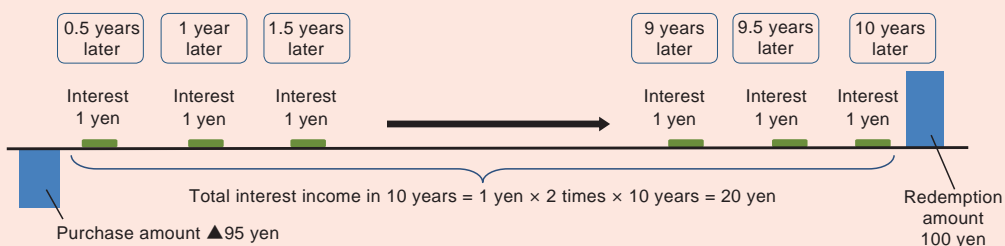
Note: The figure is for illustrative purposes only.

The figure below (Fig. c1-3) shows a cash flow indicating fund receipts and payments from purchasing to redemption for a 10-Year JGB that has a 2% coupon and a par value of 100 yen.

If an investor buys the 10-Year JGB at a price of 95 yen and holds it until its redemption, for example, the investor will get a total investment return of 25 yen including the interest income of 20 yen and the gap of 5 yen between the par value and the purchase price. The annual yield (simple interest) comes to about 2.63% with the interest income of 2 yen and the capital gain of 0.5 yen.

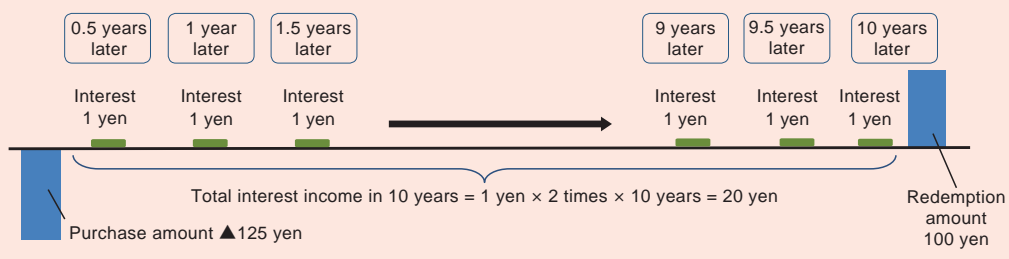
Fig. c1-3 Bond investment cash flow

(10-Year JGB priced at 95 yen that has a 2% coupon and a par value of 100 yen)



In recent years, JGB yields in the short- to medium-term zone have been negative. If an investor buys the 10-Year JGB at a price of 125 yen and holds it until its redemption, for example, the combination of an interest income (20 yen) and the gap (▲25 yen) between the par value and the purchase price will bring about a loss (▲5 yen). On an annual basis, the combination of an annual interest income (2 yen) and the annual capital loss (▲2.5 yen) brings a yield (simple interest) of ▲0.40%.

Fig. c1-4 Bond investment cash flow
(10-Year JGB priced at 125 yen that has a 2% coupon and a per value of 100 yen)



If an investor buys a JGB with a negative yield and holds it until its redemption, a combination of the interest income and the redemption amount will slip below the purchase amount, bringing about a loss. If the investor can sell the JGB at a higher price than the purchase price before its redemption, however, the investor will eventually get a gain.

Besides the “simple interest” as described above, the yield may take the form of “compound interest” reflecting the reinvestment of the interest income.

Column 2 Demand for JGBs with negative yields

In recent years, JGB yields in the short- to medium-term zone have been negative. If an investor buys a JGB with a negative yield and holds it until its redemption, the combination of the interest income and the redemption amount will slip below the purchase amount, bringing about a loss.

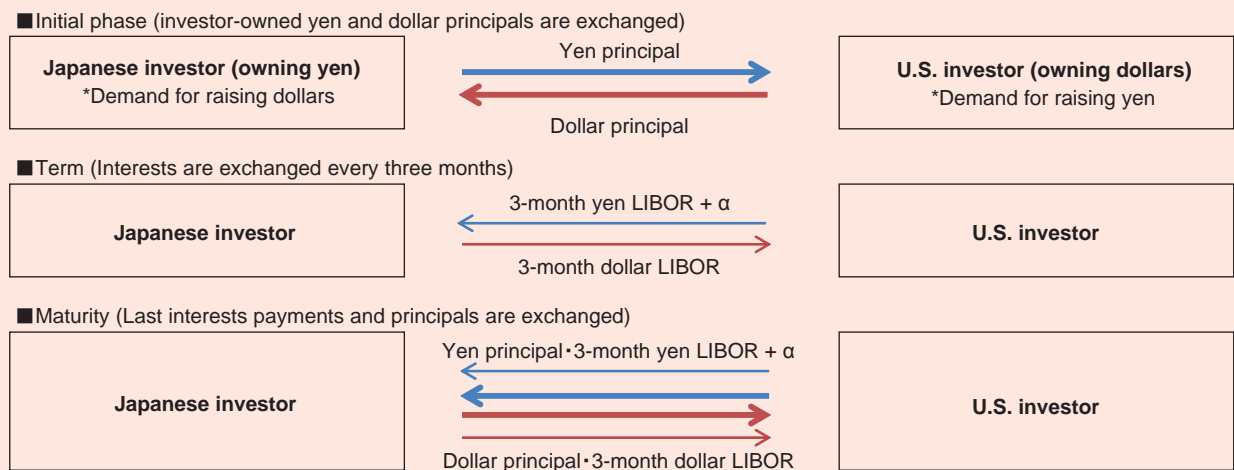
If an investor who bought a JGB with a negative yield sells the JGB at a higher price than the purchase price before its redemption, however, the investor may earn a gain eventually. If the price of the JGB rises due to monetary policy measures, the so-called flight to quality, etc., for instance, the investor may earn a gain by selling the JGB at a higher price than the purchase price.

Financial institutions, when borrowing funds from the Bank of Japan (BOJ) or conducting foreign exchange and derivatives transactions with each other, may use JGBs as collateral. For instance, the BOJ has adopted JGBs as eligible collateral for operations to supply yen or dollar funds. JGBs are purchased to be used as collateral for such BOJ's operations. Particularly since FY2020, the BOJ has introduced the "Special Funds-Supplying Operations to Facilitate Financing in Response to the Novel Coronavirus " to expand fund supply, leading demand to increase for JGBs as collateral.

In addition, investors with foreign currencies (mainly foreign investors) can earn gains by combining JGB purchases with currency basis swaps.

In a currency basis swap, principals in two different currencies are exchanged at a certain exchange rate for a certain period, during which floating interests (for which the London Interbank Offered Rates, or the LIBORs, are usually used) for the currencies are exchanged. Fig. c2-1 below outlines a dollar-yen basis swap (dollar-yen basis). In the figure, α is the so-called basis spread. The spread means a premium on a yen interest rate (annual rate) and fluctuates depending on supply and demand between the currencies. If demand is strong for raising yen even at the cost of an increase in yen interest payments, for instance, upward pressure is exerted on α . If demand is strong for raising dollars even at the cost of a decline in yen interest receipts, downward pressure is exerted on α . In a recent dollar-yen basis swap, a negative value for α has meant that a premium has been generated in raising dollar funds.

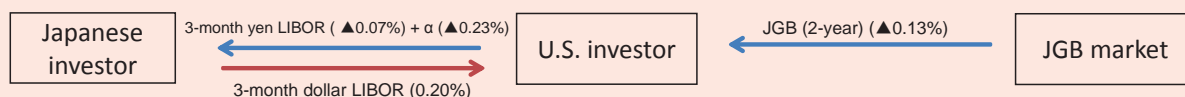
Fig. c2-1 Illustrated currency basis swap (dollar-yen basis) scheme



Given that α for a 2-year transaction (a basis spread for a dollar-yen basis maturing in 2 years) stands at around minus 0.23% (23 basis points) at the end of FY2020, for instance, the U.S. investor in Fig. c2-1, if using a 2-year dollar-yen basis, will receive a 3-month dollar LIBOR every three months and pay a 3-month yen LIBOR+ (▲ 23 bp) over 2 years. The U.S. investor's payment of interest equivalent to minus 23 bp means the receipt of interest equivalent to plus 23 bp. Given the current interest rate levels, the receipt of interest equivalent to 23 bp allows the U.S. investor to earn a higher yield by swapping dollars for yen and investing in JGBs than by investing in U.S. Treasury securities.

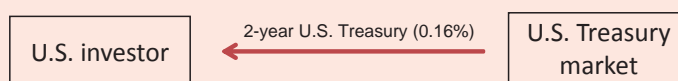
Fig. c2-2 Comparison of a U.S. investor’s swapping dollars for yen and investing in JGBs with investors investing in U.S. Treasury securities (using a 2-year dollar-yen basis) (Transaction in the term in Fig. c2-1)

(1) 2-year dollar-yen basis + JGB (2-year) purchase



→ The U.S. investor earns an annual yield of **0.37%** (= 0.20% – (▲0.07% + ▲0.23%) + (▲0.13%))

(2) 2-year U.S. Treasury purchase



→The U.S. investor earns an annual yield of **0.16%**.

→Comparison of (1) and (2) indicates a yield gap of **0.21%** (= 0.37% – 0.16%)

Fig. c2-2 compares U.S. investors swapping dollars for yen and investing in JGBs with investors investing in U.S. Treasury securities based on the interest rate levels at the end of FY2020. If a U.S. investor swaps dollars for yen and invests in JGBs (combining a 2-year dollar-yen basis with the purchase of a 2-year JGB), the investor will receive an annual yield of 0.37% (the 3-month dollar LIBOR (0.20%) – (the 3-month yen LIBOR (▲0.07%) + α (▲0.23%)) + the 2-year JGB (▲0.13%)). If the investor invests in U.S. Treasury securities (purchase 2-year Treasury securities), the investor will receive an annual yield of 0.16% on the 2-year Treasury securities. By swapping dollars for yen and investing in JGBs, therefore, the U.S. investor will earn a yield that is 0.21% (=0.37% – 0.16%) higher than the yield on investment in U.S. treasuries.

(Note 1) Although the 3-month yen LIBOR and the 3-month dollar LIBOR in the descriptions above are assumed to remain unchanged, they actually change every three months.

(Note 2) Interest rate swap transactions for fixing the 3-month yen LIBOR and the 3-month dollar LIBOR are omitted here to simplify the explanation.

(Note 3) The yen LIBOR will cease to be published at the end of December 2021 and the dollar LIBOR at the end of June 2023. Their successor indicators are now being considered mainly by central banks in relevant countries.