

Chapter 3

Realizing a Tourism Nation and Building a Beautiful Nation

Section 1 Trends in Tourism

1 Significance of a Tourism Nation

Tourism is an industrial segment of vital importance to Japan, for it helps the nation maintain regional vitalities to keep up with its social development by capturing global demands, as from rapidly advancing Asian nations, to expand nonresident population visiting from both at home and abroad in a depopulating and aging society with falling birthrates, and also consolidate its position in an international community by promoting deeper global mutual understanding through two-way exchanges with the nations abroad.

2 Tourism Now

(1) Trends in the nation's tourism

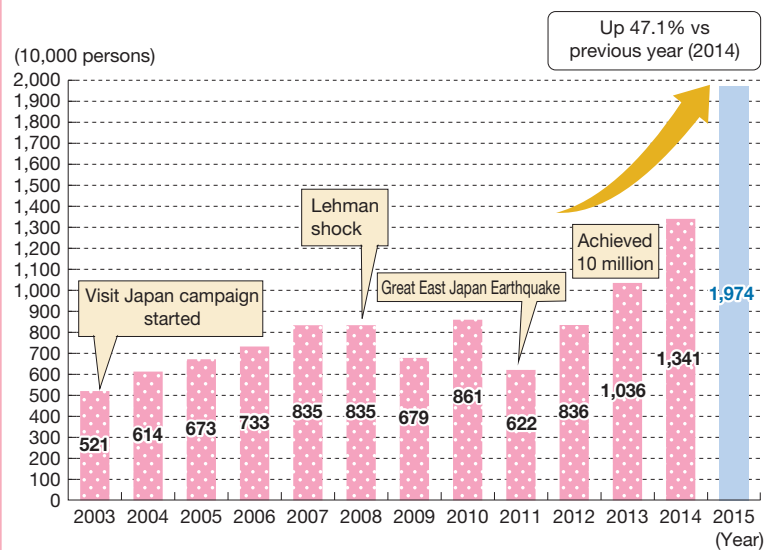
The number of domestic overnight travels for sightseeing made in 2015 averaged 2.45 per capita (against 2.06 a year earlier) and the average number of trips per capita was 1.45 times (against 1.26 a year earlier). Spending on the domestic overnight travels, including homecoming and business trips, amounted to about 16.5 trillion yen (against 14.4 trillion yen a year earlier), and the number of overnight stays, the number of trips taken and the amount of spending all increased from their year earlier levels.

The number of Japanese overseas travelers in 2015 decreased 4.1% (about 700,000 persons) from the previous year to about 16.22 million with their overseas travel consumption in the same year falling from the previous year (about 4.3 trillion yen) to about 3.9 trillion yen.

(2) Trends in foreigners touring Japan

The number of foreign visitors in 2015 increased to 19.74 million (up 47.1% from the previous year), with the number of increase in the past three years exceeding 10 million. By nationality and region, China accounted for about 4.99 million (up 107.3% from the previous year), followed by South Korea with about 4.00 million (up 45.3% from the previous year) and Taiwan with about 3.68 million (up 29.9% from the previous year). By market, the following 19 markets registered their annual record highs: South Korea, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, India, Australia, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain.

Figure II-3-1-1 Change in the Number of Foreign visitors



(Note) Definite values for 2014 and before and preliminary value for 2015.
Source) Japan National Tourist Organization (JNTO)

With increases in the number of foreign visitors, they spent an all-time high of 3,477.1 billion yen in 2015, an advance of 71.5% (1,449.3 billion yen) from 2014.

(3) Trends in the tourism industry

(i) Travel trade

In FY 2015, Japan's 50 major travel agencies had a total transaction value of 6,636.3 billion yen (against 103.2% a year earlier), broken down into approximately 2,018.6 billion yen (91.6%) for overseas trips, approximately 4,443.5 billion yen (108.3%) and approximately 174.2 billion yen (144%) for inbound foreigner tours.

(ii) Guestroom occupancy ratios at accommodation facilities (hotels and Japanese inns)

The guestroom occupancy ratios (preliminary figures) at the hotels and Japanese inns in 2015 were 79.9% for city hotels (against 77.3% a year earlier), 57.3% (54.0%) for resort hotels, 75.1% (72.1%) for business hotels and 37.8% (35.2%) for Japanese inns.

Section 2 Approaches to Forging Tourism Nation

At the Ministerial Council on the Promotion of Japan as a Tourism-Oriented Country hosted by the prime minister, 2015 Action Program Toward the Realization of Japan as a Tourism-Oriented Country was decided in June 2015, and united efforts of the government in cooperation with the private sector were made toward the realization of a tourism nation.

1 Strategic Initiatives Toward a New Inbound Tourism Era

Starting from 2015, JNTO (Japan National Tourist Organization) became the implementing entity of the Visit Japan Campaign, which was previously carried out by the Japan Tourism Agency, and is conducting effective visit Japan promotions, leveraging its local networks overseas. It disseminated attractions of regions in the countryside to allure inbound foreign tourists concentrated in Tokyo, Kyoto, Osaka, and other cities in the so-called golden route. Also, in order to create demand for inbound tourism throughout the year, JNTO communicated the charms of four seasons such as winter snow, in addition to spring cherry blossoms and autumn leaves.

The MLIT worked to relax visa requirements in coordination with relevant ministries. Multiple-entry visas were introduced for Brazilians on June 15, 2015 and for Mongolians on August 10 of the same year, followed by the significant relaxation of requirements for multiple-entry visas for Indians on January 11, 2016 and the extension of validity of multiple-entry visas for Vietnamese and Indians (e.g., for business, cultural and intellectual persons) on February 15, 2016 which was the Japan's first case of introducing a multiple-entry visa with a maximum validity of 10 years.

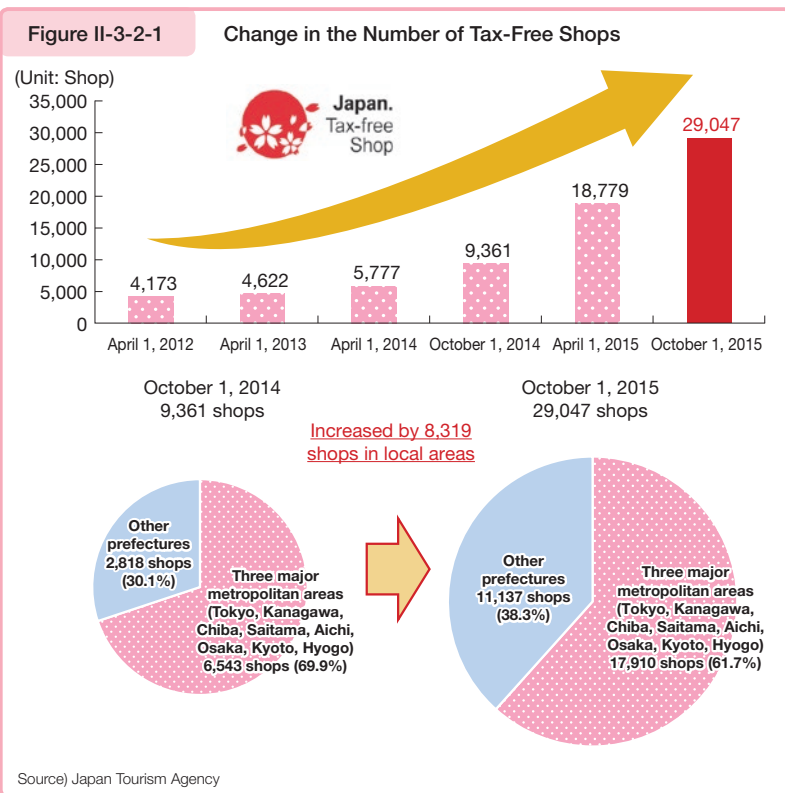
Furthermore, in order to tap the long-stay demand of wealthy foreigners, the "longer stays program for sightseeing" was introduced on June 23, 2015.

2 Increasing Consumption of Foreign Visitors, Tapping Demand for Wide-Ranging Tourism-Related Industries and Strengthening the Tourism Industry

(1) Expansion of the Consumption Tax-Free System for Foreign Visitors

We have made expansion of the consumption tax-free system for foreign visitors, such as by expanding the range of tax-free items and introducing the system of tax-free procedure counters in shopping streets etc. Due to these efforts, the number of tax-free shops increased from 5,777 in April 2014 to 29,047 in October 2015.

In the FY 2016 tax reform, the system was further expanded from the perspective of increasing consumption in the countryside, including the reduction of the lower limit purchase amount for general goods.



(2) Enhancing the Appeals of Shopping by Expanding Bonded Shops in Cities

In FY 2015, two bonded shops (airport-type duty-free shops) were opened in Ginza, Tokyo and started the services that enable travelers who purchase goods in these bonded shops to receive them at Haneda Airport and Narita Airport.

(3) Developing Talent to Revitalize and Improve Productivity in the Tourism Industry

Management talent development courses were opened in collaboration with regional universities for senior management and managers of Japanese inns and hotels who play important roles in regional economies. In addition, an internship model project was carried out for college students with help from tourism-related bodies and enterprises to help them develop a better understanding of the tourism industry and brew a sense of employment in it.

Furthermore, in order to facilitate the engagement by foreigners in Japan in the tourism industry, approaches to the application of the status of residence and specific examples of cases where work is permitted or not permitted were posted on the website of the Ministry of Justice for foreigners wishing to work at accommodation facilities. Also, given that the number of foreign travelers who enjoy real skiing is increasing, the status of residence requirements for foreign ski instructors in lieu of the years of practical experience were examined after surveying persons related to ski resorts on the status of residence requirements, and it was decided to approve certain qualifications of ski instructors as alternative requirements. As for tour operators that make travel arrangements for foreign travelers, the Japan Tourism Agency promoted the certification system operated by Japan Association of Travel Agents (JATA) as secretariat for indicating the levels of service quality and reliability of companies, as well as certified business operators by the system.

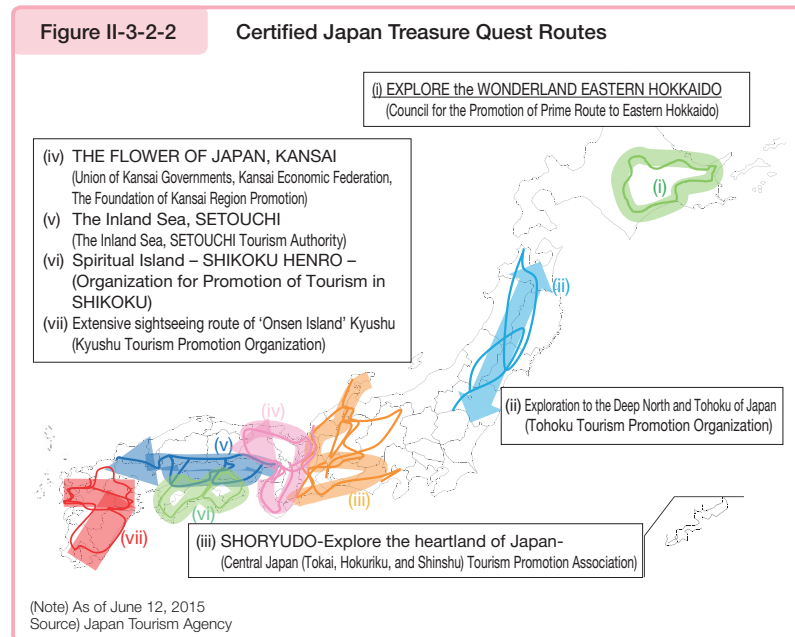
3 Creation of Tourism Areas that Contribute to Regional Revitalization and Development of Domestic Tourism

(1) Developing attractive tourism areas with high international competitiveness

In order to create tourism areas with outstanding attractions that appeal to people inside and outside Japan with specified themes, three tourism zones including Kagawa Setouchi Art Tourism Zone were certified and received business support in FY 2015 as areas that can respond to stay-and-exchange type tourism in accordance with the Act on Promotion of Tourists' Visit and Stay Through Development of Tourism Areas.

Also, the aim of development of extensive sightseeing routes (broad sightseeing flow lines) according to the number of days travelers from overseas are staying in Japan by creating a network of the most attractive sightseeing spots in many prefectures based on themes and

stories, taking transportation access into account, and to positively disseminate it overseas to attract visitors to Japan, and seven routes across Japan were newly certified in FY 2015 in an effort to support regional initiatives.



(2) Supporting the development of tourism areas that leverages tourist resources

It is necessary to create tourism areas that leverage tourism resources, such as historical sceneries, beautiful nature, marine resources, rich and varied rural areas, and attractive food culture, and appeal to various needs of travelers.

To this end, we decided to support measures for developing regions that leverage their tourism resources and for reviving tourism such as by improving the environment to receive tourists and enhancing secondary transportation, in a unified manner in FY 2015. Leveraging this project, we supported the development of tourism in 30 regions across Japan including the industrial tourism that uses Arita ware of Arita-cho and the residential tourism having the Tomioka Silk Mill in Tomioka-shi, Gunma Prefecture at its core.

About 80% of all Michi-no-Ekis across Japan are furnished with a tourist information center, which not only serves as a gateway for first-time visitors to the localities but as a site to host optional tours. In FY 2015, we started installing free public WiFi at Michi-no-ekis (called Michi-no-eki SPOT) and information centers in coordination with the Japan Tourism Agency to provide easier access to road traffic information and enhance tourist information for inbound foreign visitors. Furthermore, starting from FY 2015, we are working to improve tourist spot signs by indicating names of tourist spots on intersection signs placed at the entrance of adjacent or access roads to tourist spots so that tourist spot signs will become easier to understand.

4 Proactive Improvement of the Environment to Receive Tourists

Establishing an environment for comfortable and smooth transportation and stay is critical in terms of being well prepared to receive rapidly increasing number of foreign travelers and ensuring that they are satisfied with their visit and become repeated visitors.

(1) Securing supply of accommodation facilities

With the aim of addressing the continued tight supply of accommodations mainly for hotels in urban areas due to a rapid increase in the number of inbound foreign visitors, Japanese inns and accommodations in the countryside that were not operating at full capacity in terms of room occupancy ratios improved their facilities in an effort to attract foreign guests to them, such as by establishing the Wi-Fi environment and changing toilets to western-style one. Also, information on various Japanese accommodation facilities targeted to foreign travelers was disseminated via the JNTO website in addition to enhancing the provision of vacancy information at information centers and facilities for attracting visitors. With respect to *minpaku* (private residence accommodation) services, the MLIT and the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) jointly launched a review meeting on *minpaku* services in November 2015, which will reach conclusions within June 2016 to establish necessary laws.

(2) Strengthening multilingual services and tourism information

As for multilingual support, in coordination with relevant ministers, we pushed forward initiatives to ensure consistency and continuity of markings used in a broad range of facilities, such as art galleries, museums, natural parks, tourist sites, roads and public transport facilities in accordance with common guidelines for multilingual services formulated and published in March 2014. For example, we improved road information signs to include English in 49 major tourist sites nationwide and other places in coordination with information signs of various organizations to guide inbound foreign visitors appropriately. Furthermore, the committee for appropriate road signs of each prefecture coordinated with relevant organizations so that road information signs will be consistent with English indications of road related facilities and names of places, such as mountains used in information signs and the English map at the scale of 1:1,000,000 prepared by the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan.

In addition, as the result of working to further enhance JNTO certified information centers for foreign travelers, category 2 or above foreign tourist information centers that provide wide-area tourist information were established in all prefectures in FY 2015.

(3) Review of the guide interpreter system

In regard to the guide interpreter system, the Act on Special Zones for Structural Reform was amended in September 2015 to meet regional needs, and a newly created system for regional special guides was adopted in Kyoto-shi, Takayama-shi and other cities.

(4) Improvement of communications environment for foreign travelers such as pushing forward the establishment of the free public wireless LAN environment

The MLIT set up the council for promoting free public wireless LAN in coordination with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, and pushed forward the further improvement of the free public wireless LAN environment, dissemination and promotion by introducing common symbol marks, and simplifying authentication procedures with the aim of creating an environment where foreign travelers can walk around on their own. Also, with the aim of promoting the use of SIM cards and mobile Wi-Fi routers, a campaign for expanding available areas and increasing recognition was conducted from December 2015.

(5) Securing the security and safety of foreign travelers

Prefectural governments selected medical institutions that can receive foreign travelers and treat a wide-variety of cases based on the requirements presented by the Japan Tourism Agency and the MHLW. The list of about 320 medical institutions selected as such was put together and disseminated in March 2016. Furthermore, as the result of calling for the development of travel insurance that foreign travelers can subscribe to after visiting Japan so that they can receive treatment without worrying about medical insurance, nonlife insurance companies are now working on the development of such products.

(6) Improving the environment to receive cruise ships

In response to requests from foreign shipping companies, the website for centrally disseminating specifications of port facilities and tourist information around ports of call was enhanced in cooperation with the National Cruise Vitalization

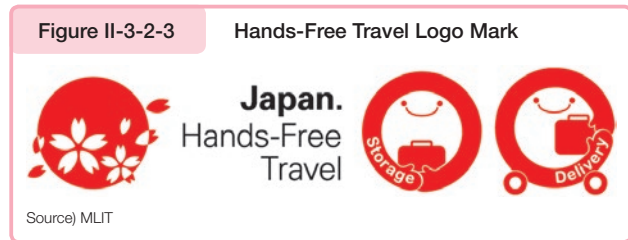
Conference. Also, meetings for business negotiations participated by cruise shipping companies, port administrators, and the like were held and the establishment of the notification system for temporary tax-free shops at cruise piers was promoted. As the result of these efforts, the era of welcoming 1 million foreign visitors by cruise ships was achieved five years ahead of the plan.

(7) Promotion for receiving more Muslim travelers

In order to promote visits from Islamic countries to Japan, the guidebook for welcoming Muslims was published in August 2015 and support was provided to initiatives of regions motivated to receive Muslim travelers.

Other initiatives taken include expediting and facilitating the procedural flow of immigration at airports and ports toward improved CIQ, enhancing the means of secondary transportation, improving the payment environment, such as promoting the installation of ATMs where credit cards issued overseas can be used, and encouraging Hands-Free Travel for inbound foreign tourists by introducing logo marks indicating the Hands-Free Travel service bases and expansion of service bases utilizing the marks, and strengthening information provision to inbound foreign travelers at times of disaster event.

Also, regional outposts of the MLIT led efforts to resolve specific regional issues at the Tourism strategy meeting in each regional block toward receiving 20 million inbound foreign tourists (established in March 2015) in enhancing the structure to receive the surging number of inbound foreign tourists.



5 Attracting Foreign Business guests and Others, High Quality Tourism Exchanges

(1) Attracting foreign business guests

In order to expedite immigration procedures for participants in international conferences and important business travelers, fast lanes were set up at Narita International Airport and Kansai International Airport in March 2016 as a starter. Furthermore, necessary preparations and examinations are underway for the implementation of a system within 2016 for identifying frequent foreign visitors to Japan with low immigration control risk as trusted travelers and make them subject to automation gates. Also, the environment for receiving business jets was improved by, among other measures, advancing the monthly application deadline and finalization date for flight schedules at Haneda Airport (advanced by five days) and increasing the spots where business jets are available at Narita Airport.

(2) Increasing international competitiveness in the area of MICE such as international conferences

In order to actively invite international conferences and other MICE events ^{Note}, (i) five cities were newly selected and received support as global MICE cities that can win tough competitions with overseas competitors; (ii) persons who have influence over academic conferences and the like inside and outside Japan and are engaged in specific projects to invite international conferences are certified as MICE Ambassadors; and (iii) use of unique venues that provide the sense of specialness and regional characteristics, such as by holding meetings and receptions at historical buildings and public spaces, were promoted. Also, by using the MICE brand Japan. Meetings & Events, efforts were made to increase recognition among overseas hosts at such occasions as overseas MICE trade fairs.



Note MICE is a collective term for business meetings (Meetings), incentive and study travels of businesses (Incentive), international conferences (Convention), and exhibitions and events (Exhibitions/Events).

As the result of these efforts, Japan was ranked top among Asian countries in the number of international conferences held for the third consecutive year, and holding of a series of large conferences in Japan was decided, including the 2016 annual world conference of the International Association for Impact Assessment (expected number of participants: 1,000) and the 25th General Conference of the International Council of Museums (expected number of participants: 2,500) in 2019.

6 Acceleration of Tourism Promotion, Having Post-Rio de Janeiro Games, 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games and Post-2020 Games in Sight

(1) Visit Japan promotion taking the opportunities of large-scale international sports games

We participated in PRESENTING JAPAN, a public and private sector joint event, from October 24 through 30, 2015, taking the opportunity of the 2015 Rugby World Cup held in the UK. Effective visit Japan promotion was carried out to deepen the understanding of Japan by disseminating Japan's travel information to rugby fans and the media gathered from all over the world by such means as airing videos for promoting visit to Japan and setting up a tourism concierge booth.

(2) Accelerating a barrier-free environment taking the opportunity of hosting Olympic and Paralympic Games

We have enhanced activities aimed at creating an environment in which all people, including elderly people and people with disabilities, can enjoy touring. These activities included provision of integrated regional consultation services in multiple languages. In addition, efforts were made to spread the universal tourism further, conducting surveys and reviews on travelers with small children and expectant mothers.

(3) Establishing an environment to receive foreign tourists who visit Japan for Olympic and Paralympic Games

In coordination with the Council of Multilingual Services for the 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, we have improved and enhanced multilingual services and shared cases to be followed.

Also, the Toei Subway and others started the provision of the free public wireless LAN environment from FY 2015 due to encouragement leveraging the framework of the Free Public Wireless LAN Development Promotion Conference. From FY 2016, the provision will start in other places including the Tokyo Metro.

At Tokyo Station, surveys were conducted on the status regarding the ease of understanding and continuity of information signs: a review meeting to examine improvements from the viewpoints of people with restricted movement such as those who have disabilities was held, and measures to improve information signs were put together.

In January 2016, the Tokyo section of the committee for appropriate road signs formulated for Tokyo the Policy on Road Sign Improvements toward Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and started working on improvements of road signs in Akihabara and Kamata (around Haneda Airport) in February of the same year. This included addition of English to signs, use of route numbers, use of pictograms and reversed characters, indication of common names and bigger font sizes, and enhancement of signs for pedestrians. In the neighboring prefectures (Chiba, Saitama, and Kanagawa), policies on road sign improvement were discussed.

7 New Tourism Strategy to Invigorate the Japanese Economy

As the achievement of 20 million foreign visitors is in sight, the Meeting of the Council for A Tourism Vision to support the future of Japan chaired by Prime Minister Abe was held on November 9, 2015, and the New Tourism Strategy to Invigorate the Japanese Economy (Tourism Strategy) was put together on March 30, 2016.

The Tourism Strategy sets new targets for the number of foreign visitors, amount of consumption by foreign visitors to Japan, total number of foreign lodgers in localities, the number of repeated foreign visitors, and the amount of domestic travel consumption by Japanese (e.g., 40 million foreign visitors by 2020 and 60 million by 2030, consumption by foreign visitors of 8 trillion yen by 2020 and 15 trillion yen by 2030). Also, with the awareness that tourism is truly the pillar of Japan's growth strategy and regional revitalization, 35 projects of measures in line with three vision were set out with the aim of becoming a developed country in tourism, and key measures among them were put together as 10 reforms.

(1) Vision 1: Maximizing the attractiveness of tourism resources in order to make tourism the base of regional revitalization

In order to refine the rich and various tourist resources of Japan with pride and communicate the value to foreigners in a easily understandable manner, we will work on, among other measures, to (i) boldly open appealing public facilities, including the Geihin-kan (State Guest House), to the wide public and the world as tourism attractions, (ii) drastically shift from prioritizing conservation of cultural properties to utilizing them by promoting understanding from tourists viewpoints, (iii) branding national parks, the condensed form of abundant nature to become the world-class national parks (iv) formulate the landscape plan in major tourist sites to make thorough improvements to create beautiful towns.

(2) Vision 2: Foster innovation in the tourism industry to boost its international competitiveness and develop it into a core industry

In order to change the tourism industry in ways that create regional jobs and grow people and become a highly productive and internationally competitive industry, we will (v) review the interpreter guide related regulations, which are established more than 60 years ago, to transform the tourism industry to emphasize productivity, (vi) develop new markets such as those for European, US and Australian tourists and the wealthy with the aim of improving the quality of tourism, thereby realizing long-stay and increased consumption at the same time, and (vii) revitalize and activate exhausted hot spring resort areas and regional towns and cities steadily through future-oriented management such as the formation of DMO ^{Note} and human resources development.

(3) Vision 3: Ensure all visitors may enjoy a satisfying, comfortable and stress-free sightseeing experience

In order to expedite the environment to receive travelers such as CIQ, accommodation facilities, communications, transportation and payment, and build society where all people, including elderly people and people with disabilities, can enjoy touring, we will work to (viii) realize the world most comfortable stay by drastically improving soft infrastructure in every aspect, including CIQ, communications, transportation, payment and barrier-free, (ix) realize comfortable travels across Japan by establishing "regional economic development corridor" plan leveraging high-speed transportation networks and (x) creating dynamic society by changing the ways of working and time off.

Note DMO Destination Management/Marketing Organizations

Column the Tourism strategy meeting in each regional block toward receiving 20 million inbound foreign tourists

In March 2015, in order to enhance structures to accept rapidly increasing inbound foreign tourists and promptly implement measures to solve regional issues, a liaison conference to accept 20 million inbound foreign tourists was organized in each of 10 regional blocks around the nation, consisting of regional offices of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT), local governments, and related enterprises.

In December of the same year, each block put together the results and issues of its activities, and in February of this year, the blocks reported on the contents to the Tourism Nation Promotion Headquarters of MLIT (the 6th) headed by the Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism. Some of the problem-solving cases in FY 2015 are introduced below.

○ Hokkaido Block

[Measures to supply a sufficient number of taxis at New Chitose Airport]

In order to respond to the increasing demand for taxis at New Chitose Airport from the increase in foreign travelers to Hokkaido, an official notice was issued by the Hokkaido District Transport Bureau in December 2015 to approve the expansion of the areas of operation for the taxi business associated with New Chitose Airport for the stable supply of taxis.



Source) Japan Tourism Agency

○ Kanto Block

[Measures to relieve the road congestion caused by chartered busses]

For the purpose of solving the problem of road congestion by chartered busses in Ginza, Akihabara, and other areas, a conference organization was established in December 2015, consisting of the Kanto District Transport Bureau, the Kanto Regional Development Bureau, the Tokyo metropolitan government, the Metropolitan Police Department, and enterprise organizations. In February 2016, campaigns to improve the manners of travel agencies and the chartered bus business were conducted.



Source) Japan Tourism Agency

○ Hokuriku Shinetsu Block

[Measures to install more coin-operated lockers in Kanazawa Station]

Because users of Kanazawa Station, including foreign travelers, have increased more rapidly than planned following the opening of the Hokuriku Shinkansen, more coin-operated lockers have been installed inside the station to solve the locker shortage in July 2015.



Source) Japan Tourism Agency

○ Chugoku Block

[Measures to improve the free public wireless LAN environment in Michi-no-ekis (Roadside Stations)]

In Michi-no-ekis (Roadside Stations) placed along national roads under the direct control of the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT) within the jurisdiction of the Chugoku Regional Development Bureau, the improvement project for Michi-no-eki SPOT, the free public wireless LAN service, was launched in December, 2015 to enhance the information transmission function in the Michi-no-ekis.



Source) MLIT

In FY 2016 as well, efforts are to be made to solve issues concerning the structures to accept inbound foreign tourists.

Column

Rules for English Translation of Japanese Geographical Names and Map Symbols for Overseas Visitors have been settled

• Introduction

In order to improve the environment for the efficient travel of inbound foreign tourists and to support realization of a tourism nation and uninterrupted delivery of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Geospatial Information Authority of Japan (GSI) had considered the rules for translating Japanese geographical names into English and map symbols designed for overseas visitors as standards for creating foreign-language maps.

For this effort, public comments were invited for inclusion in the Working Rules for Operating Specifications, which stipulates standard methods of public surveys conducted by the government, local governments, and other agencies.

Based on the results, the rules for translation and 15 map symbols were determined at the end of March and published on the following website:

<http://www.gsi.go.jp/kihonjohochousa/kihonjohochousa60019.html>

• Rules for English Translation of Japanese Geographical Names

“Rules for English Translation of Japanese Geographical Names” identify how to translate Japanese geographical names such as those of mountains and rivers into English. Mainly, there are two methods of translation. The following are the characteristics of each method.

1. Substitution format

Like Mt. Tsukuba for Tsukuba-san, the san (mount) is replaced by “Mt”. Tone-gawa is translated as the Tone River. This method has less redundancy in the names and shows the names concisely on maps.

2. Addition format
















Like Mt. Gassan for Gassan, “Mt.” is added to the Japanese name written in Roman letters. If using the replacement method, Gassan becomes Mt. Gatsu, which is difficult for Japanese to understand. Similarly, for Arakawa, Arakawa River instead of Ara River is more easily communicated to the Japanese. The addition format is applied when the substitution format is hard to use, or Japanese cannot easily identify the original Japanese names from the English names translated by the substitution format.

The Rules for English Translation of Japanese Geographical Names summarize how to use each method properly.

• Map Symbols for Overseas Visitors

Map symbols designed for overseas visitors have been determined for 15 facilities frequently used by foreign visitors, such as hotels and restaurants.

Map Symbols for Overseas Visitors

| Item | Symbol Decided | Item | Symbol Decided | Item | Symbol Decided |
|--------------------|---|------------------------------------|---|--------------------|---|
| Post office |  | Hospital |  | Restaurant |  |
| Police box (Koban) |  | Bank/ATM |  | Toilet |  |
| Shrine |  | Shopping center / department store |  | Hot spring |  |
| Church |  | Convenience store / supermarket |  | Railway station |  |
| Museum |  | Hotel |  | Airport / airfield |  |

• Conclusion

The rules and symbols settled will be adopted as standards when GSI creates foreign-language maps and will be disseminated among local governments and map-making companies to facilitate their use.

Section 3 Building a Beautiful Nation Blessed with Pleasing Landscapes, etc.

1 Pleasing Landscape Formation

(1) Accelerating community development leveraged by the Landscape Act, etc.

Efforts to form pleasing landscapes have been accelerated by landscape administrative bodies ^{Note} based on the Landscape Act, which numbered 673 groups as of the end of September 2015, with 492 of them pursuing their own landscape plans. Further, the number of municipalities that formulated ministerial ordinances pursuant to the Outdoor Advertisement Act by becoming landscape administrative bodies rose to 68 groups as of the end of March 2016, and comprehensive formation of pleasing landscape is ongoing.

(2) Approaching landscape discussions as part of social capital development

To move ahead with landscape-conscious social capital development, a scheme of making post-project predictions and assessments of landscapes and factoring them into project plans while hearing diverse opinions from the local residents, academic experts and others has been pursued.

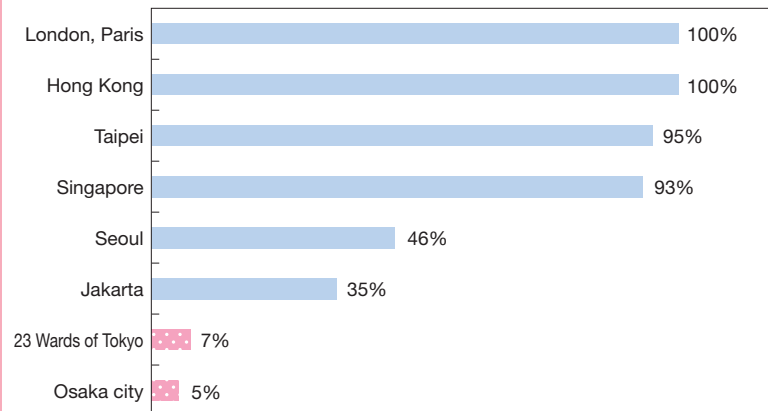
Note A landscape administrative body is a prefecture, government-ordinance-designated city, core city or any municipality that handles landscape administrative affairs (those based on the provisions of Section 1 to 4 of Chapter 2 and Chapters 4 and 5 of the Landscape Act) upon prior consultation with the governor of its prefecture.

(3) Accelerating removal of utility poles

From viewpoints of creating pleasing landscapes, promoting tourism, keeping driving environment safe and comfortable, making roads disasterprepared, we remove utility poles by promoting simultaneous development when constructing new roads or widening existing roads and implementing model construction works for introduction of lowcost methods.

Figure II-3-3-1

Present Status of Underground Utility Cables in Japan Compared with Major European and Asian cities



*1 2004 status for London and Paris surveyed by overseas power survey companies (in terms of total cable lengths)

*2 2004 status for Hong Kong surveyed by the Infrastructure Development Institute (in terms of total cable lengths)

*3 2013 status for Taipei surveyed by the MLIT (in road extension terms)

*4 1998 status for Singapore according to overseas electric industry statistics (in terms of total cable lengths)

*5 2011 status for Seoul surveyed by the MLIT (in terms of total cable lengths)

*6 2014 status for Jakarta surveyed by the MLIT (in road extension terms)

*7 End of FY 2013 status for Japan surveyed by the MLIT (in road extension terms)

Source) MLIT

(4) Driving the Japan Scenic Trails campaign

The Japan Scenic Trails campaign has been driven with the view of furthering roadside landscape designs and greening by leveraging regional resources and collaborating with various entities in order to help realize a tourism nation and contribute to regional revitalization. As of the end of March 2016, 138 routes were registered as Scenic Trails. Activities include those that help form pleasing landscapes and add to the charms of roadside localities by working in conjunction with Michi-no-Eki (Roadside Stations).

(5) Promoting the development of waterfront spaces, etc.

Practice of the concept of nature-rich river works has been promoted in all river restoration projects to preserve and create the habitat, growing and breeding environments of living organism inherent in rivers and diversities of river landscape while keeping the rivers in harmony with local livelihood, history, and cultures with their workings of nature taken into consideration. Also, in order to revitalize rivers and towns connected to them from the mouth of river to the source, we support the initiative of community development that utilizes rivers with coordination among municipalities, private businesses, local residents, and river administrators by promoting the formation of favorable spaces where rivers and towns integrate. Specifically, we provide support through the river environment project to preserve/restore and create a favorable river environment, exceptions of the permission rules on exclusive use for river sites for opening river spaces, water resource area vision that aims to revitalize water source regions leveraging dams, and Mizubering Project that provides the wide public with opportunities to find value in rivers.

Other ongoing efforts directed at regenerating and creating waterside environments from the facility spaces of sewage line and from sewage plant effluents include development of babbling water streams taking advantage of storm sewers and that of facilities for putting sewage plant effluents to use as babbling water. The conservation and creation of excellent waterside environments is also ensured by the implementation of appropriate wastewater treatment.

2 Community Development Leveraging Nature and History

(1) Developing National Government Parks to contribute to the preservation, utilization, etc. of Japan's indigenous cultures

The development of National Government Parks has been driven to ensure the preservation, utilization, etc. of Japan's superb indigenous cultures. A total of 17 National Government Parks are already open. In FY 2015, the area surrounding the Kitora Tumulus, etc. was refurbished in the Asuka Historical National Government Park (Asuka Zone).

(2) Preserving historic landscapes in ancient capitals

In Japan's ancient capital, such as Kyoto, Nara, and Kamakura, restrictions are placed on constructing new buildings, etc., making additions and modifications to existing ones, developing housing land and so on under the Act on Special Measures for Preservation of Historic Natural Features in Ancient Cities (Ancient Capitals Preservation Law). The Act also provides for the implementation of ancient city preservation projects, such as purchasing land, and publicity, educational and other activities, to help preserve historic landscapes in these cities.

(3) Preserving and utilizing historic public buildings of historical value, etc.

With the aim of contributing to regional town development, we are promoting the preservation and utilization of historic government facilities locally known for a long time. We have developed the environment of historic sediment control facilities (2 Important Cultural Properties and 191 Registered Tangible Cultural Properties as of March 31, 2016) by positioning them and their surrounding environment as a core of tourism resources, thereby encouraging efforts that contribute to the formation of a new forum of human interaction.

(4) Community development leveraging histories and cultures

Historic landscape maintenance and improvement plans for 53 municipalities (as of March 31, 2016) have been accredited to drive community development leveraging local histories and traditional cultures and approaches pursuant to the plans supported, based on the Law on the Maintenance and Improvement of Historic Landscape in a Community (Historical Urban Development Law). In addition, we provided renovation and other support on buildings that serve as landscape and historic resources in order to drive forward the formation of pleasing scenic and historic landscapes.

Figure II-3-3-2

Civil-Engineering Art Sediment-Control Dam Tour (Otari-mura, Nagano prefecture)

Tourism and exchange activities are promoted using historic sediment control facilities that protect the communities.



Source) Otari Village Tourism Association

(5) Promotion of Mizubering Project

Mizubering is an initiative to provide opportunities to find a new value in rivers from outside to people and private companies leading daily lives or engaging in economic activities without being conscious of rivers around them.

Mizubering is an activity taking place in more than 40 locations nationwide aimed at realizing regional revitalization starting from waterfronts across Japan while creating a new social design by using rivers as a new frontier and various entities collaborating with each other.

The MLIT will support efforts of regional people and private companies through Mizubering so that value of rivers can be leveraged further to serve their roles as regional treasures.

Figure II-3-3-3

Riverbed Sketch (Miyagawa River, Takayama city, Gifu)



Source) Junior Chamber International Takayama

Figure II-3-3-4

Riverbed Created (Miyagawa River, Takayama city, Gifu)



Source) Junior Chamber International Takayama