

Chapter 3

Realizing a World-Class Tourist Destination 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 the nonresident population visiting from both at home and abroad in a decreasing population 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 Situation

(1) Japanese Domestic Tourism Consumption

Japanese domestic tourism consumption for 2018 was 20.5 trillion yen (down 3.0% from the previous year) as a total of guest nights and day trips.

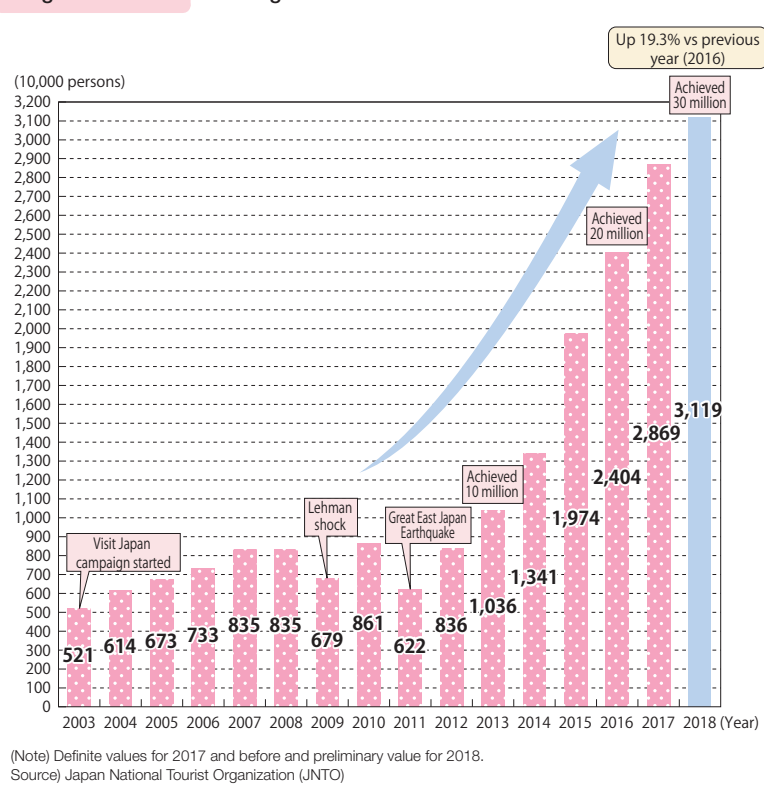
The breakdown of this domestic tourism consumption was 15.8 trillion yen for guest nights (down 1.7% from the previous year) and 4.7 trillion yen for day trips (down 7.0% from the previous year).

(2) Number of International Visitors to Japan

The number of international visitors to Japan in 2018 was 31.19 million (up 8.7% from the previous year), topping 30 million for the first time and marking a record high for the sixth consecutive year.

By nationality/region, visitors from China were the largest segment, at about 8.38 million, topping 8 million for the first time. Also, of the top 20 priority markets^{Note 1} in the Visit Japan program^{Note 2}, all 19 markets except for Hong Kong marked records for the year.

Figure II-3-1-1 Change in the Number of international Visitors



Note 1 Korea, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, India, Australia, USA, Canada, UK, France, Germany, Italy, Russia, Spain

Note 2 Inbound tourist promotion project started in 2003, aimed at increasing the number of international visitors to Japan

(3) Tourism Consumption by International Visitors to Japan

With the increase in the number of international visitors, tourism consumption by international visitors in 2018 reached a record high of 4,518.9 billion yen.

By nationality and region, China accounted for 1,545.0 billion yen (34.2% of total), followed by South Korea with 588.1 billion yen (13.0% of total), Taiwan with 581.7 billion yen (12.9% of total), Hong Kong with 335.8 billion yen (7.4% of total), and the United States with 289.3 billion yen (6.4% of total). These top five countries accounted for 73.9% of total travel spending by international visitors in 2018.

(4) Number of Repeaters among International Visitors to Japan

The number of repeaters among international visitors in 2018 was 19.38 million (up 10.0% from the previous year).

Taiwan and Hong Kong especially produced high rates of repeaters, with the percentage of travelers in 2017 visiting for their second time or more being 85.6% and 82.4%, respectively.

(5) Total Number of Guest Nights of International Visitors in the Outlying Areas

The total number of guest nights of international visitors in the outlying areas in 2018 (preliminary figures) was 36.36 million (up 11.3% from the previous year). Year on year, this exceeds that for the three major metropolitan areas (which were up 11.1%), with large increases by prefecture in Aomori (up 45.7% from the previous year), Miyagi (up 45.1% from the previous year), and Yamagata (up 37.0% from the previous year).

(6) Percentage of International Conferences Held in Major Asian Countries

There were 492 international conferences held in 2018 (up 18.8% from the previous year), ranking 7th in the world after Italy. Japan's share of international conferences out of those held in major Asian countries was 30.3%, remaining in the top position in Asia.

(7) Number of Japanese Going Overseas

The number of Japanese who went overseas in 2018 was 18.95 million (up 6.0% from the previous year), marking a record high.

Section 2**Initiatives to Realize a World-Class Tourist Destination**

On June 12, 2018, the Ministerial Council on the Promotion of Japan as a Tourism-Oriented Country decided on a "Tourism Vision Realization Program 2018" as a short-term action plan for the "New Tourism Strategy to Invigorate the Japanese Economy." Based on this program, the government made united efforts to promote various measures to realize a world-class tourist destination.

1 Enhancing the Appeal of Tourism Resources as a Cornerstone of Regional Revitalization**(1) Opening Appealing Public Facilities and Infrastructure to the Public**

The MLIT promoted infrastructure tourism to encourage regional promotion by utilizing and opening infrastructure as tourism resources, such as expanding the number of tours held at the Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel.

Column

Promotion of Tourism and Regional Development through Infrastructure Tourism

There has been a surge of interest in infrastructure tourism, which utilizes dams, bridges, ports, and world-class civil engineering technology as tourism resources to promote tourism and regional development, with the number of visitors reaching about 500,000 per year. Infrastructure tourism involves viewing, experiencing and enjoying property unique to various regions in closer proximity, developing a deeper understanding of infrastructure, and contributing to the revitalization of regions around this infrastructure.

The number of private sector-sponsored tours listed on the MLIT Infrastructure Tourism Portal Site created in January 2016 increased from 32 in FY2016 to 107 in FY2018, and tours are offered with cooperation between infrastructure and the local community, such as discharge of water from a dam for tourists plus local dining. Additionally, we are incorporating new perspectives, such as through solicitation of ideas from university students around the country, and promoting regional revitalization using infrastructure as tourism resources. We invite you to also participate in an infrastructure tour and see, learn, enjoy and experience infrastructure in Japan.



Metropolitan Area Outer Underground Discharge Channel (Saitama)



Akashi Kaikyo Bridge (Hyogo)



Miyagase Dam (Kanagawa)



Coast battery No.2

Source: MLIT

(2) Increasing the Attraction of Tourist Sites through the Preservation and Utilization of Tourism Assets with Excellent Scenery

From such viewpoints as creating pleasing landscapes, promoting tourism, keeping the driving environment safe and comfortable, and making roads disaster-ready, we promoted the removal of utility poles by the maintenance of technical manuals and implementation of model construction towards the spread of low-cost methods.

In April 2018, a Utility Pole Removal Plan was formulated to encourage the comprehensive, planned and rapid promotion of measures to remove utility poles.

Furthermore, through workshops for all prefectures and municipalities, we encouraged municipalities that are major

tourist sites to develop landscape plans. We also made multilingual information boards in national government parks.

For rivers, with the easing of permission rules on exclusive use for river sites, open cafes and riverbeds were established in cooperation with private-sector operators. We integrated rivers and towns, promoting the formation of favorable spaces that appeal to travelers.

(3) Promoting Tourism Town Development Using Historical Resources such as Japanese Traditional Houses

In order to make use of historical resources that are unused assets in local communities, such as using Japanese traditional houses as accommodations, and to connect that to regional revitalization, we cooperated with the ministries concerned to respond to inquiries from local communities by setting up a one-stop consultation hotline about Japanese traditional houses and providing support such as dispatching experts.

Also, by developing guidelines on specific business methods for newly established small-scale real estate joint ventures and crowdfunding, we promoted the regeneration of Japanese traditional houses utilizing small investments.

(4) Development of New Tourism Attractions

We implemented a new project for experiential tourism utilizing tourism resources such as local culture and nature to expand travel consumption by prolonging regional visits by international visitors to Japan.

(5) Improving Extensive Sightseeing Routes to a World-class Level

To promote the travel of international visitors to Japan into regional areas, we provided support for efforts such as the enhancement of tour content based on research and strategy formulation, and environmental maintenance, information sharing and promotion for sightseeing in wider areas, collaborating with regional stakeholders to encourage tourists to visit and stay. We also dispatched experts to each region to help identify an area's attractions and challenges, suggest measures, and help improve the skills of relevant persons in the community.

We used a “Theme-based Tourism Program for Drawing Visitors to the Countryside” to support networked regions in order to attract visitors to areas in the countryside that have specific tourism resources, such as anime and ninja.

Additionally, as part of the promotion of sake tourism, the 2017 tax reforms established an export alcohol market system that allows liquor tax exemptions to international visitors, and efforts were made to promote this system by posting the names of sake breweries, wineries and distilleries where it can be used on JNTO website.

Furthermore, in December 2018, we released the latest annual (2017) FF-Data, which enables users to grasp the movement of international visitors to Japan (modes of transportation used and routes taken within the country). It is expected that this information will be used to analyze sightseeing routes and for the planning and revision of strategic promotion measures.

In addition, we used big data in an effort to strengthen quick-impact congestion measures by making smart use of the capacity and space of existing roads and parking lots. Specifically, in the Furano/Biei region of Hokkaido, we implemented congestion measures using wide shoulders to separate vehicles waiting to park from through traffic, as well as a park & bus ride scheme from a temporary parking lot.

(6) Promoting Formation of “Tourism Nation Showcases”

In order to form model cases for drawing international visitors to the countryside, we selected Kushiro City, Kanazawa City, and Nagasaki City, and are supporting the improvement of tourism resources to promote the Tourism Nation Showcases Plans formulated by each city.

(7) Revival of Tourism in Tohoku Region and Responses to Natural Disasters

We designated 2016 as the “First Year of Tohoku Tourism Recovery” and are taking various measures to further promote tourism revival initiatives in Tohoku^{Note}.

In 2018, there was a series of major natural disasters, including Typhoon Jebi of 2018, the July 2018 torrential rain and the 2018 Hokkaido Eastern Iburi Earthquake, and these had a serious impact on each tourist destination. The Japan

Note See Chapter 1 Section 4 (2) about the restoration of tourism in Tohoku.

Tourism Agency took various measures to support tourism and to minimize the effect of reputational damage due to these disasters^{Note}.

Column Reconstruction Support for Disaster-Stricken Tourist Areas (Disasters in 2018)

In 2018, there was a series of major natural disasters, including the July 2018 torrential rain, Typhoon Jebi of 2018, and the 2018 Hokkaido Eastern Iburi Earthquake, which had a serious impact on various tourist destinations. In order to mitigate any reputational damage from these disasters, the Japan Tourism Agency took a variety of measures to support various types of tourism.

Concerning the July 2018 torrential rain, the July 2018 Torrential Rain Tourism Support Project Subsidy was established by the government based on its July 2018 Torrential Rain Lifestyle and Business Reconstruction Support Package, which, in addition to providing support for discounted accommodation costs (Fukko Tour Discount) for tours to 13 disaster-affected prefectures (Gifu, Kyoto, Hyogo, Tottori, Shimane, Okayama, Hiroshima, Yamaguchi, Ehime, Kochi, Fukuoka, Tokushima, and Kagawa), also promoted visits to Japan with the aim of the fast recovery of tourism demand and the prevention of reputational damage.

Also, in response to Typhoon Jebi of 2018 and the associated damage to Kansai International Airport, the Kansai Inbound Tourism Revival Plan was formulated for the revitalization of inbound tourism to the Kansai region, providing detailed information on the Kansai region and implementing various measures in the public and private sectors, such as setting discount products for airlines and travel agencies.

Further, when the 2018 Hokkaido Eastern Iburi Earthquake occurred, the “Genki Desu Hokkaido/Welcome! HOKKAIDO, Japan” campaign was implemented to support Hokkaido tourism, with cooperation between the Hokkaido Tourism Organization and Hokkaido government from September 28 for travel product and accommodation support in both the public and private sectors, using Hokkaido Fukko Discounts and various other discount fares, and the JNTO conducted the accurate dissemination of information and overseas promotion of tourism.

By minimizing the impact of these disasters through such measures, while the number of inbound tourists visiting Japan in 2018 after the disasters in September turned negative year on year, by December these numbers had recovered to see more than 30 million inbound visitors in a year for the first time ever, marking a record of 31.19 million visitors. We will continue to work on various measures toward the realization of an advanced tourism country that does not lose to disasters going forward.




“Genki Desu Hokkaido/Welcome! HOKKAIDO, Japan” campaign logo

Note See the columns for details on how each natural disaster was handled.

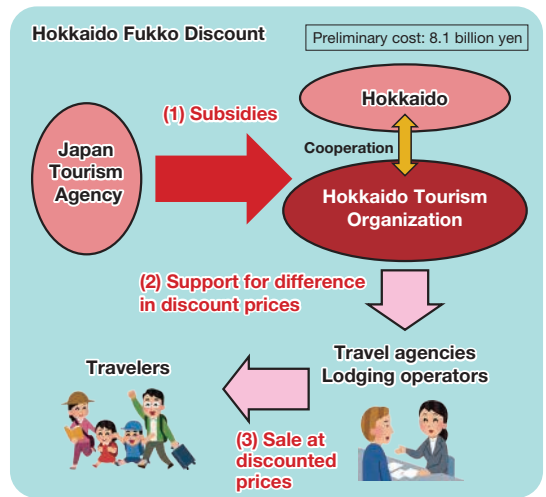
With the cooperation of a wide range of stakeholders, including the Hokkaido Tourism Organization, Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO), private business operators and local governments, the “Genki Desu Hokkaido/Welcome! HOKKAIDO, Japan” campaign is being implemented during tourist seasons to welcome visitors from Japan and overseas, incorporating the “Hokkaido Fukko Discount” to encourage enjoyment for visitors from Japan and overseas during their stay and experiences in Hokkaido, sharing the charms of Hokkaido’s abundant nature, culture and foods.

4 Pillars and Case Study

(As of Feb 28, 317 cases ← As of Sept 28, 252 cases)

Get people to know	180 cases
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set common campaign logo - <u>Sharing detailed information in Japan and overseas on the wonderful tourism resources of Hokkaido through the Hokkaido Tourism Organization, Japan National Tourism Organization, etc.</u> - <u>Joint promotion between the Japan National Tourism Organization and airlines/travel agencies</u> - Sharing information in cooperation with relevant ministries to mitigate reputational damage 	
Get people to come	70 cases
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support for discounts for travel products and accommodation expenses throughout Hokkaido (Hokkaido Fukko Discount) - Setting of discount products by airlines, railway companies and travel agencies <p>(ANA: Fares for visitors to Japan cut by up to approx. 50% JAL: Reduced domestic fares for international visitors to Japan to/from Hokkaido by 30% JR East: Set up special “Ekinetto Mobile Suica” product (50% discount))</p>	
Get people to go	26 cases
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activities to promote use by public transport operators in Hokkaido 	
Get people to enjoy themselves	41 cases
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of experience and stay-type tourism to enjoy nature and culture - Discounts for tourist facilities in Hokkaido such as hotels and inns, restaurants and retail stores, etc. 	
 <p>Campaign Logo</p>	

*Some underlined portions implemented using preliminary cost



Source) Japan Tourism Agency

Column Ensuring Safety and Security for International Visitors during Emergencies

Last year, there was a series of natural disasters, including the 2018 Osaka earthquake, Typhoon Jebi and the 2018 Hokkaido Eastern Iburi earthquake. Visitors to Japan were unable to obtain proper information about the state of the disaster and the operation of transportation, etc., and also experienced issues with using smartphones, which were an important source of information.

Based on lessons learned, the Emergency Measures for the Safety and Security of International Visitors in Disasters were decided by the Tourist Strategic Promotion Meeting on September 28, 2018. Based on this, the Japan Tourism Agency is working to improve the provision of information to international visitors during disasters, in cooperation with relevant organizations and businesses. The following are some of these measures.

1. Raise awareness of the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) Japan Visitor Hotline and establish a system providing detailed consultations in English, Chinese and Korean 365 days a year, 24 hours a day, and support the development of emergency power supplies and mobile phone charging equipment at JNTO Tourist Information Centers to further strengthen business continuity. Further, improve the functions of the Japan Tourism Agency app, enhancing push notifications for disaster information and disaster guidance functions.

2. Disseminate accurate disaster-related information through the establishment of a new Twitter account (Japan Safe Travel) for sharing disaster information from the JNTO, as well as through the official website and social media accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Weibo) of the JNTO.
3. Promote the improvement of English broadcasting on the Shinkansen and at stations, and provide operating information in foreign languages at station ticket gates, ticket vending machines and ticket offices, etc., to improve the provision of railway information.
4. Secure airport staff who can handle multiple languages, build a cooperative system of relevant organization staff within the airport, such as from airlines and other tenants, based on BCP and disaster support agreements, and secure adequate mobile phone charging environments to improve the provision of information at airports.

In addition, for the Shinkansen, which transport a large number of international visitors, because of the importance of providing information in the event of transportation problems, the Guidelines for the Provision of Information to International Visitors in Emergencies (Shinkansen) were formulated on January 30 of this year, and notice has been given to all JR companies, which are working to 1) provide broadcasts in 4 languages, in principle, every 10 minutes at stations, 2) provide guidance to websites using QR codes, and 3) update websites every 30 minutes.

We will continue to take measures to improve the environment for international visitors to Japan so that they can travel with peace of mind.

Figure 1 Many tourists gathered at the tourist information center after the disaster



Figure 2 Examples of improvements to information provision by railway companies (information provision through tablets)



2 Innovating the Tourism Industry to Boost its International Competitiveness and Develop It into a Core Industry

(1) Comprehensive Review of Tourism-related Regulations and Systems and Response to Minpaku (Private Lodging) Services

Based on the Act to Amend the Licensed Guide Interpreters Act and the Travel Agency Act, which went into effect in January 2018, a regional guide interpreter system was established in 5 new areas, and under the travel service arrangement business registration system, a total of 1,037 companies had registered as of March 2019, after efforts in cooperation with prefectures to raise awareness of this system.

Also, under the Private Lodging Business Act, which went into effect in June 2018, and other relevant government ordinances to promote healthy minpaku under appropriate regulations, operation began of a notification system for those running lodging businesses and a registration system for those running lodging management businesses and lodging agency businesses.

(2) Developing and Enhancing Tourism Management Personnel Based on Industry Needs

We took initiatives at each level - the top, core, and working levels - to develop and secure personnel in the tourism field.

With respect to the top level, to develop human resources to lead the tourism industry in Japan, “Tourism MBAs” were established in April 2018 at the graduate school level (including MBAs) at Hitotsubashi University and Kyoto University as a base for the continuous development of management personnel, with the examination of curriculum content, public relations and awareness-raising activities carried out in cooperation between industry, academia and government.

Regarding the core level, an educational program conducted at Otaru University of Commerce in FY2015 was adopted by Aomori University, Kagoshima University, Toyo University and Meikai University in FY2017, and Kobe Yamate University, Shinshu University and Yokohama College of Commerce in FY2018, providing courses to increase managerial capabilities in the regional lodging industry.

On the working level, in response to a shortage of labor in the tourism industry, we conducted a survey and posting of advanced practical classes through industry-academia collaboration and held workshops to develop and secure practical human resources.

(3) Quick Resolution of the Shortage of Accommodation Facilities and Provision of Accommodation Facilities that Meet Diverse Needs

Based on notifications sent out in June 2016 related to the creation of a system for relaxing floor area ratios, which is focused on the development of accommodation facilities, we carried out positive initiatives and provided financial support through the Organization for Promoting Urban Development (MINTO) for the development of accommodation facilities operated by private enterprises.

We also provided support for the handling of inbound tourists at accommodation facilities, such as inns and hotels, by promoting the provision of accommodation facilities to meet diverse needs.

(4) Formation and Development of World-class DMOs

Toward the formation and development in each part of the country of Destination Management Organizations^{Note}, which are corporations that handle the management and marketing of tourism regions, we had registered 237 corporations as of March 29, 2019 under the Japan DMO registration system, and provided assistance for initiatives in each region in three ways: information, personnel, and financial/monetary support.

(5) Continual Operation of the Tourist Area Regeneration/Revitalization Fund and Deployment of Fiscal Resources to Become a Next-generation Tourism-oriented Country

The Regional Economy Vitalization Corporation of Japan (REVIC), which has entered into a comprehensive collaboration with the Japan Tourism Agency, had set up 12 tourism revitalization funds by the end of FY2018 in different regions together with local financial institutions. These funds have provided investment and loans to 50 projects, contributing to area-wide regeneration/revitalization of tourist areas. The Japan Tourism Agency supported REVIC’s efforts, including the provision of information on businesses with high relevance to REVIC’s initiatives and efforts to get the word out about the funds, including through its website.

Also, with a view toward expanding and reinforcing the foundations of tourism, in order to make Japan an advanced tourism nation, an International Tourist Tax was created as a tax for promoting tourism (this system began on January 7, 2019). The source of funds is to be applied to uses that win the understanding of those paying the tax, including Japanese traveling abroad, based on the relationship between the benefits and burden, that are highly advanced and demonstrate good cost effectiveness, and that are in line with the important policy issues, including regional development, that Japan faces.

Note DMO: Destination Management/Marketing Organization

(6) Strategic Advancement of Visit Japan Promotions With the Post Olympic and Paralympic Period in Mind and Strengthening of Foreign Publicity on Japan's Diverse Attractions to Encourage Inbound Tourism

In order to further promote inbound tourism from Europe, the United States and Australia, the Japan Tourism Agency and JNTO began the Enjoy My Japan Global Campaign with the objective of increasing recognition of Japan as a travel destination, utilizing digital technologies to disseminate advertisements and information mainly online.

Also, by accumulating and utilizing data on the usage of the JNTO website, etc., we have been able to make a quantitative analysis of the interests of international travelers and have worked to provide content that meets their needs.

Further, to attract more visitors to rural areas, the JNTO held seminars for local governments to provide them with the latest trends in relation to inbound tourism

(7) Promotion of MICE

To further strengthen Japan's international competitiveness in MICE, relevant ministries and organizations came together in July 2018 to formulate both the Relevant Ministries' MICE Support Action Plan 2018, and the implementation of the recommendations of the MICE International Competitiveness Enhancement Committee for initiatives in the MICE industry. In line with these guidelines, we further strengthened our initiatives, including providing support for functional advancement for cities hoping to attract MICE. We also provided support to improve conference facilities that help the business activities of global companies.

(8) Strategic Relaxation of Visa Requirements

We partially simplified application procedures for travelers from China, Philippines and India, which are target markets for the strategic relaxation of visa requirements under the Tourism Vision, we extended the maximum validity period and expanded the kind of people eligible, and simplified some application procedures, while for Russia we also introduced a short-term visa verification system for group package tour participants.

(9) Stimulation of Educational Travel to Japan

In addition to supporting the matching of educational travel to Japan through a centralized point of contact at the JNTO, we also conducted an invitation program for educators in the Taiwan market and others.

(10) Enhancement of Tourism Education

We examined model classes and produced videos to promote tourism education so that children can learn about attractive historical and cultural tourism resources in their communities and other parts of Japan and communicate the appeal of those resources on their own, and published them at symposiums and online, etc.

(11) Stimulation of Outbound Travel by Young People

In July 2018, we published the findings of the Review Committee for Stimulation of Outbound Travel by Young People. Based on these findings, the Committee for Promotion of Outbound Travel by Young People was established in January 2019, and support programs are being developed in collaboration with stakeholders while fostering a national movement to promote overseas experiences for young people.

Also, toward the national deployment of the Youth Travel Classes, which have been implemented since 2013 mainly in the Tokyo metropolis and which share the significance and wonder of travel by young people, we have strengthened cooperation with MEXT, regional transportation bureaus, education boards and related organizations, holding 14 such classes in total (5 of these in rural areas) in FY2018.

3 Ensure All Visitors May Enjoy a Satisfying, Comfortable and Stress-free Sightseeing Experience

(1) Realization of Innovative Immigration Control Using Cutting-edge Technologies

In coordination with the relevant ministries, installation of "Bio Carts", which use the waiting time for passport control to acquire biometric information in advance, was expanded from 15 to 17 airports, and facial recognition automated gates

for Japanese departure and return procedures were fully installed at Haneda, Narita, Chubu, Kansai and Fukuoka airports.

Furthermore, body scanners were installed at 13 airports, including Sendai, and high-performance automatic explosives detectors were installed in some major airports, including Narita Airport.

(2) Promotion of “Integrated Tourism/Town Revitalization” through Private Sector Town Development Activities

We are promoting the establishment of networks of clear, easy-to-use walking spaces by supporting the development of information signs around terminal stations and barrier-free transportation facilities and walking spaces.

Also, to capture inbound demand, we have implemented initiatives to introduce the attractiveness of Japanese cities to promote the overseas expansion of urban development.

(3) Improving the Environment for the Visitor Experience in Japan

In public transportation and tourist information centers, we provided support for multilingual services, the development of free public wireless LAN environments, and the westernization of toilets in public restrooms.

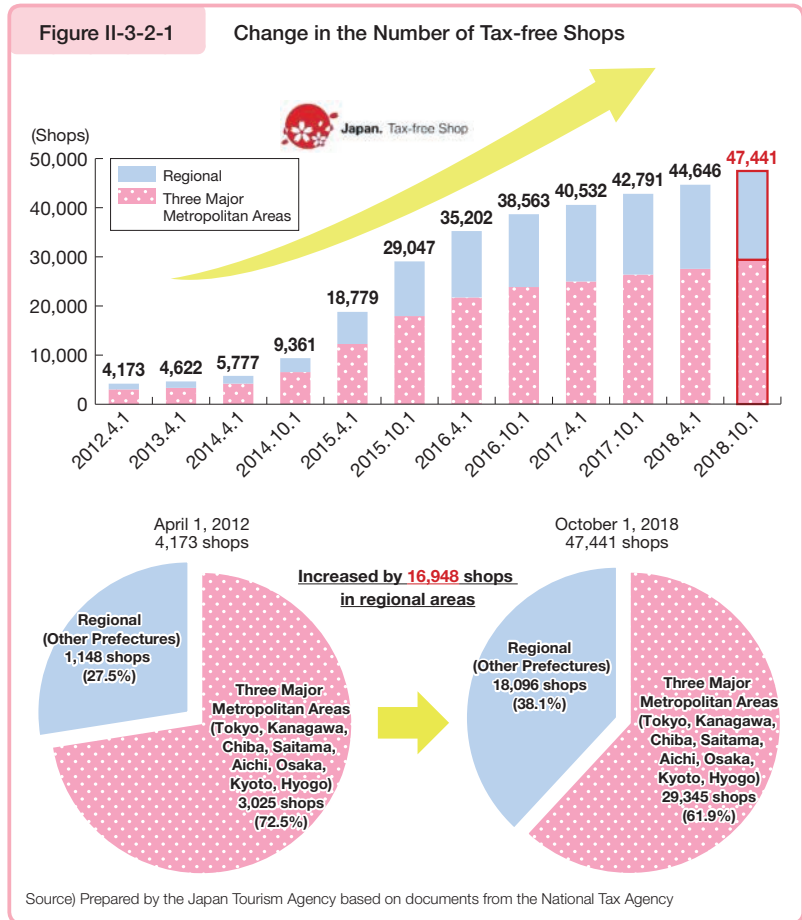
We also provided support for costs to cope with inbound travelers for inns, hotels and other accommodation facilities.

From July 2018, under certain conditions (special packaging, etc.), purchases in which the total amount of general goods and consumables is 5,000 yen or more may also be eligible for the tax-free program. We have continued to spread information about the consumption tax-free program for international visitors, and expand tax-free shops, including in the countryside. Also, to increase sales opportunities for international visitors of specialty products at regional events, etc., a program was established from July 2019 which allows businesses that already hold tax-free licenses to set up temporary tax-free shops at regional festivals, etc. with prior application.

Further, at Michi-no-Eki (Roadside Stations), measures were taken to promote the handling of inbound visitors and the establishment of bases for the dissemination of local information, such as the establishment of tourist information centers and the provision of free public wireless LAN (“Michi-no-Eki” SPOT).

(4) Enhancing Systems for Receiving Foreign Patients to Enable Adequate Responses to Emergency and Non-emergency Cases

In FY2018, a list of about 1,600 medical institutions capable of accepting international visitors to Japan was created and disseminated in multiple languages. We also encouraged international visitors at various stages (prior to entry, at entry, and after entry into the country) to subscribe to travel insurance so that they could continue to have the peace of mind of being able to receive treatment without worrying about medical costs.



(5) Establishing “Regional Economic Development Corridors”

The system of sales outlets for Japan Rail Passes was expanded to 59 train stations and 79 airports, with the addition of JR East Hamamatsucho Station in July 2018 and JR West Toyama, Sannomiya and Nara stations in March 2019.

Also, to further accelerate the flow of people and goods and to encourage local revitalization by creating an environment with choices among diverse, easy-to-use modes of transportation, we promoted the strengthening of inter-mode connections, focusing on buses. Improvements were also made to the location of souvenir shops and to the line of National Highway 20 to improve the waiting environment and reduce traffic congestion at the Shinjuku Expressway Bus Terminal, which opened in April 2016. We will continue to look at ways to improve convenience and strengthen traffic congestion countermeasures in this area. Going forward, we will look to further develop strategic integrated transportation terminals with road projects, beginning with plans for Shinagawa Station and Kobe Sannomiya Station, while strengthening public-private partnerships.

In order to create road signs that are easy for all users to understand, including international visitors, we introduced a “Numbering System” for expressways, in addition to route names, for Japan’s developing expressway network. Cooperating with the different road administrators, we pushed forward with the development, aiming to be almost complete by 2020. Also, we improved the display of English on road information signs at 49 major tourist sites nationwide and other places in coordination with the information signs of various organizations and also promoted the display of the names of tourist sites on intersection name signs at famous tourist destinations and places of interest.

Expressway companies are implementing fixed-price expressway passes for various areas around Japan for international visitors using rental cars.

To encourage the development of new boat tourism-related services, the “Model Zones for Boat Travel Revitalization” system was established for a three-year trial period from April 2016 to improve the operation of passenger ship businesses targeting specialized tourism routes. Based on the results of this trial, the “Boat Travel Promotion for Inbound Tourist” system will be established from April 2019 to develop the environment for inbound tourism demand.

To secure means of transportation for tourists in depopulated areas, the “Private Car Compensated Passenger Transport System” was expanded to tourists, including international visitors, in the National Strategic Special District, and operation began in May 2018 in Yabu City, Hyogo.

(6) Strengthening Gateway Functions at Regional Airports and Encouraging LCC (Low-cost Carrier) Services

To attract visitors to Japan through international air routes, 27 airports nationwide were approved as Air Travel Support Airports in July 2017, providing support for upgrading environments to receive travelers and to establish new international routes and an increased number of flights.

Additionally, the JNTO exhibited and engaged in business negotiations at international aviation trade fairs and carried out joint advertising in each market in conjunction with the new routes and the increase in the number of flights.

We also continued with procedures toward the privatization of airport operations at Fukuoka Airport, Kumamoto Airport, seven airports in Hokkaido, and Hiroshima Airport, making use of private-sector wisdom and funds to revitalize these airports.

Furthermore, we carried out initiatives to expand the arrival and departure capacity at airports, including facility maintenance needed to revise flight routes at Haneda Airport, construction of rapid exit taxiways at Narita Airport, construction of a terminal exclusively for LCCs at Chubu Airport, and construction of additional runways at Fukuoka Airport and Naha Airport.

(7) Further Expanding the Ability to Receive Cruise Ships

To attain the goal of achieving five million international visitors from cruise ships in 2020, which was set out in the Tourism Vision, we carried out initiatives aimed at “zero rejections” of cruise ship port calls. This included the upgrading of mooring posts and fenders for receiving large cruise ships using existing stock, we established a subsidy system (project to make functional improvements for receiving international cruise passengers) for local governments and other organizations conducting projects to ensure the convenience and safety of cruise passengers.

Also, an agreement system has been created to allow priority use of quays to private businesses that develop passenger facilities and make them available for use by the general public at ports designated by the Minister of Land, Infrastruc-

ture, Transport and Tourism, and in June 2018, an additional port (Kagoshima Port) was added to the six ports designated up to 2017.

We also held seminars in Indonesia for local travel agencies, exchanges with cruise ship companies and port administrators to encourage the development of high-quality tourism port programs and a National Cruise Vitalization Conference, and enhanced the website for centrally disseminating specifications of port facilities and tourist information around ports of call.

(8) Innovating the Environment for Using Public Transportation

We added dynamic data on bus delays and operating information to the standard bus information format that was established between bus operators and route searching service providers for the easy transfer of data to improve route searches for public transportation nationwide.

A free onboard Wi-Fi service was started for all Shinkansen from May 2018, beginning with the JR East Tohoku Shinkansen, to cater to the needs of foreign tourists visiting Japan. Discussions were also held in a review committee composed of relevant stakeholders, established in February 2018, with a view toward improving routes on which bus numbering had already been introduced and encouraging its introduction on routes that do not yet have numbering. Bus System Numbering Guidelines were also formulated in October 2018 to improve the user environment of buses to make them easy to understand for all users, including international visitors to Japan.

With respect to taxis, demonstration tests were carried out, with one test performed from October to November 2018 in which an app was used and pick-up charges fluctuated depending on demand, while another test from October 2018 to February 2019 involved operators setting a specific area of use and conditions such as the number of uses, and then offering unlimited rides for a fixed price and period within those conditions.

To reduce the inconvenience to foreign travelers of carrying large suitcases onto trains, we promoted hands-free travel that offers temporary storage of luggage at airports and stations as well as delivery of luggage to airports, hotels, and homes outside Japan. (Locations approved to use the common Hands-Free Travel logo mark: 296, as of March 2019)

In April 2018, a partial amendment to the Act on the Promotion of International Tourism by Encouraging Visits by Foreign Tourists was enacted, expanding measures to encourage public transport operators in their duties to provide information in multiple languages, and to improve the convenience of international visitors by encouraging Wi-Fi development, the westernization of toilets and responding to a wide range of needs.

(9) Promoting Universal Design Ahead of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics

Based on the Universal Design 2020 Action Plan decided in February 2017, it has been decided to make large train stations more barrier-free and to promote the development of a high level of barrier-free environments across Japan, with a view toward assuring the success of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics and the future beyond the Games. In relation to this, in May 2018, the Act on the Partial Amendment of the Act on Promotion of Smooth Transportation, etc., of Elderly Persons, Disabled Persons, etc., was enacted, and necessary government ordinances were promulgated (effective from November 1, 2018. However, some provisions came into effect from April 1, 2019).

At airports, we established numerical targets related to the handling of passenger terminal buildings, and installed flashlights at all toilets at Narita Airport and the Haneda Airport International Terminal.

In addition to encouraging the introduction of barrier-free buses and taxis, we provided support for the addition of elevators and the development of barrier-free platform doors, etc., at stations that will be used during the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games.

For lodging facilities such as inns and hotels, we provided support for barrier-free renovations and created and published a manual on sharing information on barrier-free facilities for lodging facilities.

In September of this year, we also formulated a similar approach to the Tokyo Metropolis' Policy on Road Sign Improvements toward the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games, which had been applied to the Tokyo Metropolis since January 2016, for Chiba, Saitama and Kanagawa prefectures. We are working on improving road signs based on these policies, including the improvement of English signage, the use of route numbers, the use of pictograms and reversed characters, the expansion of common naming and font sizes and the enhancement of pedestrian signage. Also, we have promoted area-wide improvements of particular roads near the venues, including accessible routes, for better accessibility in a way that they would be distributed continually.

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 create pleasing landscapes have been accelerated by landscape administrative bodies based on the Landscape Act, which numbered 713 groups as of the end of March 2018, with 558 of them pursuing their own landscape plans. Also, landscape administrative bodies that have established provisions under the Outdoor Advertising Act rose to 209 groups as of April 1, 2018, and the comprehensive formation of pleasing landscapes 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.

(3) Accelerating Removal of Utility Poles

From the viewpoints of creating pleasing landscapes, promoting tourism, keeping the driving environment safe and comfortable, and making roads that are prepared for disasters, we implemented a model to spread low-cost construction methods and encouraged the use of no utility poles in technical manuals.

We also formulated a plan to remove utility poles in April 2018, to promote the comprehensive, systematic and swift implementation of these measures.

(4) Promoting the “Japan Scenic Trails” campaign

The “Japan Scenic Trails” campaign has been promoted 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-oriented country and contribute to regional revitalization. As of the end of March 2019, 142 routes had been registered as Scenic Trails. Activities include those that help create pleasing landscapes and add to the charm of roadside localities by working in conjunction with Michi-no-Eki (Roadside Stations).

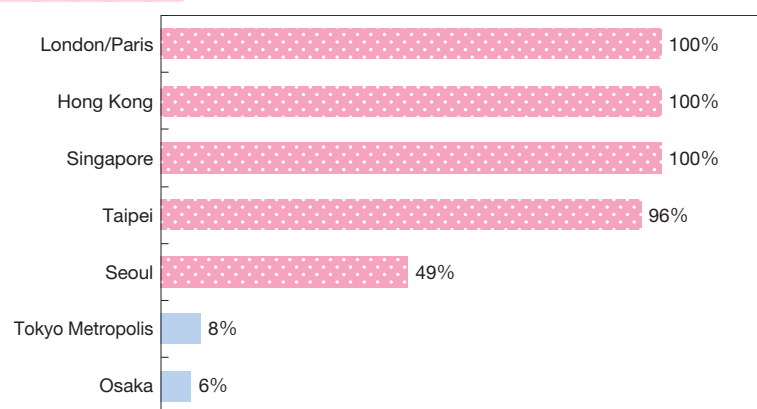
(5) Promoting Landscape-conscious Road Design

We revised draft Road Design Guidelines, which are general and technical guidelines on road improvement combining aspects of aesthetic landscape safety, smoothness of traffic, and comfort, and promoted an approach to the formation of beautiful landscapes based on the Guidelines on Landscape-conscious Auxiliary Road Structures to show consideration for landscapes when installing or updating road facilities.

(6) Promoting the Development of Waterfront Spaces, etc.

The 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 organisms inherent in rivers and diversities of river landscape while keeping the rivers in harmony with local livelihood, history, and cultures with the workings of nature

Figure II-3-3-1 Present Status of Removal of Utility Poles 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 length)
 *2 2004 status for Hong Kong, surveyed by the Infrastructure Development Institute (in terms of total cable length)
 *3 2001 status for Singapore, according to “Power Quality Initiatives in Singapore, CIRE2001, Singapore, 2001” (in terms of total cable length)
 *4 2015 status for Taipei, based on data from the Taipei City Road Information Center for Taipei City (in terms of total cable length)
 *5 2017 status for Seoul, according to 2017 Korean electricity statistics (in terms of total cable length)
 *6 2017 status for Japan, surveyed by the MLIT (in terms of total cable length)
 Source: MLIT

taken into consideration.

In order to revitalize rivers and towns connected to them from the mouth of river to the source, we use “resources” such as regional landscape, history, culture and tourism infrastructure and “wisdom” with regional ideas, formulate river-town planning with coordination among municipalities, private businesses, local residents, and river administrators, and promote 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, make exceptions to the permission rules on exclusive use for river sites in order to open river spaces, create a water resource area vision that aims to revitalize water source regions leveraging dams, and promote the Mizubering Project, which provides the wide public with opportunities to find value in rivers.

Other ongoing efforts directed at regenerating and creating waterside environments include putting treated sewage water to use in babbling water channels. 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 Culture

The development of National Government Parks has been driven to ensure the preservation, utilization, etc. of Japan's superb indigenous culture. A total of 17 National Government Parks are already open. In FY2018, facilities were constructed in Asuka-Nara Palace Site Historical National Government Park and other locations. Also, as part of measures related to the 150th anniversary of the Meiji Restoration, some areas of the Meiji Memorial Oiso Garden were opened to the public in accordance with a Cabinet decision.

(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 community development, we are promoting the preservation and utilization of historically significant government buildings and facilities locally beloved in their areas for a long time. We have developed the environment of historic Sabo facilities (Two Important Cultural Properties and 201 Registered Tangible Cultural Properties as of March 31, 2019) 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.

Figure II-3-3-2

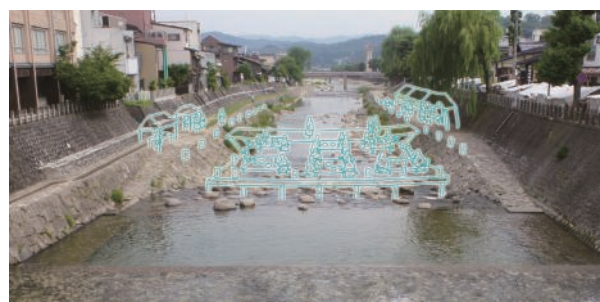
Promoting Tourism and Exchange Events Around Historical Flood and Sediment Control Facilities in the Arakawa River Basin (Fukushima City, Fukushima)



Source) MLIT

Figure II-3-3-3

Riverbed Sketch (Miyagawa River, Takayama City, Gifu)



Source) Junior Chamber International Takayama

(4) Community Development Leveraging Histories and Cultures

Historic landscape maintenance and improvement plans for 72 municipalities (as of January 31, 2019) have been accredited in order to promote 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 have provided renovation and other support for buildings that serve as landscape and historic resources in order to encourage the formation of pleasing scenic and historic landscapes.

(5) Promotion of Mizubering Project

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

Utilizing familiar rivers, Mizubering is an activity taking place in more than 60 locations nationwide aimed at realizing regional revitalization, starting from waterfronts across Japan, while creating a new social design that uses rivers as a new frontier and has various entities collaborating with each other.

We will continue to provide support for the efforts of locals and private companies through Mizubering so that the value of rivers can be further leveraged in fulfilling their roles as regional treasures.

(6) Promoting Green Infrastructure Initiatives

Green infrastructure aims to utilize the natural environment's diverse functions (providing habitats for wildlife, creating pleasing landscapes, and controlling atmospheric warming) and obtain diverse effects such as improving local charm and the living environment and preventing/reducing disasters, in terms of both structural and non-structural issues, such as infrastructure development and land use. With regard to this, we carry out initiatives in various fields, including the creation of rich river environments and the development of green coastal levees, as well as parks and green spaces that function to prevent the spread of fires. In FY2018, we held a Green Infrastructure Round Table in which future promotion measures were discussed.

Figure II-3-3-4

Riverbed Created (Miyagawa River, Takayama City, Gifu)



Source) Junior Chamber International Takayama