

Part 3 Formulation and Promotion of the Regional Plan

As mentioned in part 1, this plan should aim to create a national land structure where each regional block pushes forward exchange and cooperation with East Asia and maintains and develops reciprocal relationships between individual blocks to draw up distinctive regional strategies for autonomous development utilizing their own resources to the maximum extent. To this end, it is necessary for each block to push forward national land creation utilizing unique ideas and strategies.

In part 3, guidelines for the creation and promotion of the Regional Plan will be presented, the purpose of which is to create distinctive regional blocks.

Chapter 1 Basic Conception

Section 1 Meaning and Roles of the Regional Plan

With the legal changes implemented in 2005, the Regional Plan as well as the National Plan was formulated. As mentioned in part 1, it is more appropriate to aim for autonomous regional development – rather than uniformly dealing with the whole nation - by promoting measures suited to individual regional characteristics which cross the boundaries of prefectures. This can be achieved by taking into account the progress of the development of an environment that fosters regional independence and an increase in wide-area issues. The Regional Plan was established taking these ideas as the frameworks for on-site plans which stipulate future plans in accordance with the regions' actual conditions. This describes the basic direction of and goals concerning national land creation in the regional blocks, and specific strategic measures from the viewpoint of the wide-area extension of prefectural boundaries.

In formulating the Regional Plan, regional plan council discussions are necessary. For the purpose of putting together the Regional Plan, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism, related local branch/national government offices, local governments and local businesses address the creation of visions in a collaborative manner under appropriate role-sharing. This promotes the sharing of long-term principles and goals where each entity pushes forward regional development. Moreover, the plan will be formulated in such a way that the formulation process in each block will be cross-referenced and compared in order to promote new measures and cooperation.

Section 2 Basic Conception for the Regional Plan

(1) Creating autonomous regional blocks

The Order for Enforcement of the National Spatial Planning Act was enforced in July 2006, and the eight Regional Plan blocks were stipulated based on the provisions of Article 9 of the National Spatial Planning Act as follows:

1. Tohoku area: an area consisting of the prefectures of Aomori, Iwate, Miyagi, Akita, Yamagata, Fukushima and Niigata
2. Tokyo metropolitan area (National capital region): an area consisting of the prefectures of Ibaraki, Tochigi, Gunma, Saitama, Chiba, Tokyo, Kanagawa and Yamanashi

3. Hokuriku area: an area consisting of the prefectures of Toyama, Ishikawa and Fukui
4. Chubu area: an area consisting of the prefectures of Nagano, Gifu, Shizuoka, Aichi and Mie
5. Kinki area: an area consisting of the prefectures of Shiga, Kyoto, Osaka, Hyogo, Nara and Wakayama
6. Chugoku area: an area consisting of the prefectures of Tottori, Shimane, Okayama, Hiroshima and Yamaguchi
7. Shikoku area: an area consisting of the prefectures of Tokushima, Kagawa, Ehime and Kochi
8. Kyushu area: an area consisting of the prefectures of Fukuoka, Saga, Nagasaki, Kumamoto, Oita, Miyazaki and Kagoshima

The regional plan blocks were established on the basis of research and deliberations in the National Land Development Council. The following are the basic principles. It is necessary to reinforce and strengthen efforts in each block based on the principles for the purpose of creating diverse and autonomous regional blocks.

(Size and concentration from the viewpoints of autonomous regional development and international competitiveness)

- a. Regional blocks should be sufficiently diverse in terms of industry, economy, human resources and other regional resources and have a certain size of population and economy
- b. Regional blocks should have adequate urban, industrial and academic/cultural concentration
- c. There should exist or be plans to construct core infrastructure for international exchange such as airports which offer regular international flights and major ports which handle international marine containerized cargo
- d. Regional blocks should be in a position to be able to utilize both the Sea of Japan and the Pacific Ocean with a view to cooperation with East Asia, where drastic development is expected in the future, taking advantage of Japan being a maritime state

(Potential for interregional cooperation from the viewpoint of securing a safe and affluent environment)

- e. Disaster-prevention/mitigation measures and securing of redundancy of bypasses in the event of a disaster
- f. Stable supply of water resources, etc
- g. Handing down inland seas and forests in good conditions as precious assets to the next generation as a maritime and forest state

(Close relationships between nature, economy, society and culture)

- h. Strong socioeconomic activities
- i. Common features of natural environments (plains, inland seas, catchment basin of large rivers and large-scale mountainous areas) and similar historical/cultural backgrounds

(Necessity for national land creation as a whole and organization of the regional plan councils by related organizations)

j. Integrated formulation/implementation of the plan should be carried out smoothly utilizing proactive efforts in the regional blocks

(2) The current situation of each block; potential for autonomous development

In the light of, for example, population, economic scale, urban/industrial concentration and infrastructure for international exchange, the current situations of each regional plan block are as follows.²² Each block has the potential for autonomous development.

1. Tohoku area

The Tohoku area has a scale of population and economy comparable to that of a medium-sized European country (Belgium, Switzerland or the Netherlands), with a gross regional product of approx. 42 trillion yen. There are 6 cities with a population of more than 0.3 million, including ordinance-designated cities. Moreover, it has several airports which offer regular international flights and ports which handle international marine containers of a certain scale. Its food self-sufficiency on a calorie basis is high and companies in the electromechanical industry, etc., are increasingly relocating there. Furthermore, there are ties that have been formed through socioeconomic activities and there is a past record of efforts for wide-area cooperation with neighboring prefectures.

2. Tokyo metropolitan area

The Tokyo metropolitan area has an economic scale comparable to that of some G8 countries such as Great Britain and France, with a population of approx. 4.24 million and a gross regional product of approx. 190 trillion yen. There are a number of cities with a population of more than 0.3 million, including ordinance-designated cities, in addition to the Tokyo "special district" with its central political and administrative functions such as the Diet. Moreover, there are hub airports which offer regular international flights and several ports which handle international marine containers. This area has a huge concentration of urban, industrial, academic, information and central management, and also has the country's best international exchange functions. Three prefectures in the northern Kanto area have a population of approx. 7 million and a gross regional product of approx. 27 trillion yen, indicating that the scale of their population and economy is comparable to that of a medium-sized European country. There are several cities with a population of more than 0.3 million with a considerable level of concentration. Furthermore, as for socioeconomic activities, although Tokyo exerts significant influence on the whole national land and the eastern part of Japan, seven prefectures in the Tokyo metropolitan area have even stronger ties with Tokyo. Also in recent years, efforts for wide-area cooperation have been made

²² As for population, data is based on the 2005 National Census by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (As of October 1st 2005) and effects of subsequent municipal mergers are not reflected. As for the gross regional product, data is based on the 2004 Prefectural Economic Accounts by the Cabinet Office.

in the northern Kanto area, including with neighboring prefectures.

3. Hokuriku area

Although the population of the Hokuriku area is only approx. 3.1 million, its economic scale is comparable to that of Ireland and New Zealand, with a gross regional product of approx. 12 trillion yen, and there are several cities with a population of more than 0.3 million. Moreover, it has several airports which offer regular international flights and ports which deal with international marine containers of a certain scale, and its industrial concentration is considered one of the best on the Sea of Japan side. Furthermore, strong ties have been formed through socioeconomic activities and residents' awareness. This area is well organized as seen in past efforts for wide-area cooperation beyond prefectural borders.

4. Chubu area

The Chubu area has a scale of economy comparable to Canada among G8 countries, with a population of approx. 17.2 million and a gross regional product of approx. 73 trillion yen, and there are a number of cities with a population of more than 0.3 million, including ordinance-designated cities. Moreover, it has several airports which offer regular international flights and ports which deal with international marine containers. In addition, the area has a world-leading concentration of industrial technologies, and its urban/academic concentration and functions for international exchange are one of the best in the country. Furthermore, there are socioeconomic activities centering on Nagoya, and there are records of efforts for wide-area cooperation including neighboring prefectures.

5. Kinki area

The Kinki area has a scale of economy after Canada among G8 countries, with a population of approx. 20.9 million and a gross regional product of approx. 80 trillion yen, and there are a number of cities with a population of more than 0.3 million, including ordinance-designated cities. Moreover, it has several airports which offer regular international flights and ports which deal with international marine containers. This area has a concentration comparable to the Tokyo metropolitan area in urban, industrial, academic, informational and central management functions and international exchange, and has distinctive cultures which have been nurtured over a long history. Furthermore, strong socioeconomic activities centering on Osaka have created organization. Moreover, there are records of efforts for wide-area cooperation including neighboring prefectures.

6. Chugoku area

The Chugoku area has a scale of population and economy comparable to that of a medium-sized Europe country (Austria, Belgium or Denmark), with a population of approx 7.7 million and a gross regional product of approx. 29 trillion yen. There are 4 cities with a population of more than 0.3 million, including ordinance-designated cities. Moreover, it has

several airports which offer regular international flights and ports which handle international marine containers of a certain scale. In recent years, the concentration of the electromechanical industry has increased in addition to the existing concentration of the basic material industry, etc. Furthermore, there are socioeconomic activities and records of efforts for wide-area cooperation beyond prefectural boundaries.

7. Shikoku area

Although the population of the Shikoku area is only approx. 4.1 million, its economic scale is comparable to that of Ireland and New Zealand with a gross regional product of approx. 14 trillion yen, and there are several cities with a population of more than 0.3 million. Moreover, it has several airports which offer regular international flights and ports which deal with international marine containers of a certain scale. In addition, convenience levels of connections inside and outside the area are improving following the development of the Honshu-Shikoku Bridge, etc, and locations of industries which have distinctive technologies in broad fields are found. Furthermore, there are socioeconomic activities and records of efforts for wide-area cooperation beyond prefectural boundaries.

8. Kyushu area

The Kyushu area has a scale of population and economy comparable to that of a medium-sized European country (Belgium, Switzerland and the Netherlands), with a population of approx. 1.34 million and a gross regional product of approx. 44 trillion yen. There are 8 cities with a population of more than 0.3 million, including ordinance-designated cities. Moreover, it has several airports which offer regular international flights and ports which handle international marine containers of a certain scale, and trades show high growth based on the relocation of manufacturing companies to the area in recent years. Furthermore, there are strong socioeconomic activities centering on Fukuoka, creating organization. Moreover, there are records of efforts for wide-area cooperation beyond prefectural boundaries.

(3) Cooperation and mutual adjustment between regional blocks

In addition to regional efforts, it is necessary to push cooperation and mutual adjustment between blocks or multiple prefectures beyond prefectural borders.

In particular, as for the Chugoku and Shikoku areas as well as the Hokuriku and Chubu areas, a sense of unity is growing from the Sea of Japan to the Pacific Ocean following the development of transportation infrastructure. At the same time, because they are dealing with common issues such as the construction of wide-area logistics systems and international tourism routes utilizing both the Sea of Japan and the Pacific Ocean and the integrated conservation/management of national land in central mountainous areas and in the Seto Inland Sea, it is required that the overall conception for developments from the Sea of Japan to the Pacific Ocean be jointly considered. Moreover, 3 prefectures in the northern Kanto area and neighboring Fukushima and Niigata Prefectures in the Tokyo metropolitan area have pushed forwarded efforts for wide-area

cooperation beyond regional boundaries. As future development in these areas can be expected following the development of transportation infrastructure, it is necessary to draw up development plans at section meetings according to the areas' characteristics.

In addition, some of prefectures on the borders of the Regional Plan blocks have close relationships with neighboring blocks and a variety of efforts have been made. Thus, in formulating the Regional Plan, it is hoped that the necessary cooperation and mutual adjustment will be carried out.

Section 3 Aligning the National Plan and the Regional Plan

The Regional Plan should be formulated based on the National Plan. It is therefore necessary to ensure consistency between the National Plan and Regional Plan.

Therefore, in formulating the Regional Plan, directions shown in the National Plan should be taken into account and efforts will be made to familiarize those involved with these ideas.

Moreover, if a new national response becomes necessary through the promotion of regional strategies stipulated in the Regional Plan, the government will appropriately address this matter.

Section 4 Aligning the Comprehensive Development Plan of Hokkaido and the Okinawa Promotion and Development Plans with the National Spatial Strategies

As for the Hokkaido area and the Okinawa prefecture, because of existence of the Comprehensive Development Plan of Hokkaido and the Okinawa Promotion and Development Plans respectively, they come under the Regional Plan from a legal viewpoint. However, as shown below, they are highly distinctive areas. They should therefore be considered equivalent to the regional blocks. It is also necessary to push forward national land creation in these areas utilizing unique ideas and strategies in accordance with the actual conditions of the areas. Therefore, it is necessary to make adjustments between the Comprehensive Development Plan of Hokkaido and the Okinawa Promotion and Development Plans to bring them in line with the National Spatial Strategies and to promote mutual cooperation between them for the purpose of their autonomous development.

1. Hokkaido

Hokkaido has a scale of population and economy comparable to that of Denmark, Finland or Ireland, with a population of approx. 5.6 million and a gross regional product of approx. 20 trillion yen. There are 2 cities with a population of more than 0.3 million including ordinance-designated cities. Moreover, it has several airports which offer regular international flights and ports which handle international marine containers of a certain scale.

Hokkaido has a history of the development of different resources being pushed forward systematically in order to respond to issues and demands of the time. Hokkaido faces challenges such as snow and low temperatures, a low population density, and remoteness. On the other hand, Hokkaido has resources and characteristics that distinguish it from the rest of Asia, including water and forests, natural environments peculiar to the northern areas and Ainu culture. Its

geographic conditions may allow Hokkaido to be a hub for international logistics and exchange linking North America to Europe and East Asia. In particular, due to growth throughout East Asia, exports of farm and marine products and tourists from overseas are increasing. Also, Hokkaido has abundant new energy sources such as wind power and biomass.

Based on this, it is necessary to promote the strengthening of Hokkaido's food supply capacity and the stable development of the regional economy by developing and strengthening competitive industries such as tourism and to create sustainable areas utilizing the rich natural environment and new energy sources. Therefore, a New Comprehensive Development Plan of Hokkaido should be formulated to demonstrate clear visions for resolving issues Japan is facing and vibrant regional development; this is the meaning of the development of Hokkaido. At the same time, strategic efforts should be drawn up to implement comprehensive measures with cooperation between the government and areas.

2. Okinawa prefecture

Okinawa prefecture has a relatively small scale of population and economy compared to other regional blocks, with a population of 1.4 million and a gross regional product of 4 trillion yen. Naha city has a population of more than 0.3 million and there is an airport which offers regular international flights and a port which handles international marine containers of a certain scale. Okinawa is a distinctive remote island prefecture.

Okinawa prefecture faces particular natural and geographical challenges as a result of its remoteness from the main island and the concentration of U.S. military facilities. On the other hand, even though the national population is decreasing, the population growth rate of Okinawa is high and the proportion of young people is considerable. Moreover, it is a similar distance from major cities in East Asia as Tokyo. There is potential for its location to be converted into an advantage through the construction of transportation/information and communication networks, because the relationship between Japan and Asia-Pacific region is becoming ever more interdependent. Furthermore, because Okinawa is blessed with rich tropical natural resources and has a unique climate and culture, it can be said that it is an attractive tourist destination. Also, Okinawa plays an important role in furthering national interests such as the securing of exclusive economic zones.

Moreover, the Okinawa Promotion and Development Plans covering the period from 2002 to 2011 stipulates that measures should be implemented to construct an independent economy led by the private sector, become capable of contributing to the development of the Asia-Pacific region, create world-class knowledge clusters and develop relaxing and affluent living spaces, with the ultimate aim of realizing a "peaceful, relaxing and vibrant Okinawa."

Taking into account these trends, it is necessary for Okinawa prefecture to function as an exchange hub which contributes to development of the Asia-Pacific region as a high-quality tourism/resort destination with knowledge clusters and air/marine transport networks. Moreover, it is also necessary to actively address the conservation of the rich natural environment and the promotion of remote islands including those near the border. It is necessary to promote the

development of distinctive areas by further pushing forward the sustainable development of Okinawa prefecture through those efforts.

Chapter 2 Formulation of an Individualized Regional Plan

It is expected that each block will formulate individual plans for the purpose of realizing the aim of beautiful and comfortable national land where individual and unique regional blocks develop autonomously. Therefore, in formulating the Regional Plan, although its basic framework, such as the time frame, is based on the National Plan, the contents should be highly conscious of regional individuality with respect to principles and goals.

Based on these viewpoints, agendas to be considered individually are presented below. At the same time, particularly important points are presented from the viewpoint of giving shape to the basic ideas shown in the National Plan.

Section 1 Agendas to be Considered

In formulating the Regional Plan, consideration of each of the following items should be pushed forward while encouraging collaboration and consensus building between relevant entities utilizing frameworks such as regional planning councils. The government provides necessary support for regional planning councils by providing information related to the formulation and review of the plan.

1. Understanding regional characteristics based on an analysis of current conditions

Firstly, it is necessary to identify each region's individual geographic, socioeconomic and cultural conditions, and to draw up strategies for the development of regions with individuality.

Specifically, objective data concerning current regional populations, industries, resources, city locations and the provision of urban services will be shared among related entities and then analyzed. At the same time, it is necessary to consider strategies for regional development by fully taking into account the advantages and disadvantages identified in the analysis. In doing so, it is important to request the participation of a wide range of entities.

2. Individual regional development strategies

Secondly, it is necessary to promote collaboration and consensus building between the national government, local governments, businesses and relevant regional entities and to plan strategies for regional development taking into account individual regional characteristics. In doing so, the strategies shown in the National Plan should be taken into account, and consideration should be given to on-site and specific countermeasures according to regional individual characteristics with respect to national issues.

Moreover, it is expected that individual regional issues, stemming from individual regional characteristics, which are not clearly shown in the National Plan and other issues whose importance was recognized through consensus between relevant entities will be actively addressed. In doing so, the possibility of utilizing systems such as designated structural reform

blocks and regional restoration may be considered.

3. Prioritized and selective injections of resources based on individual regional strategies

In order to implement the above-mentioned regional strategies, it is necessary to plan and implement specific projects and programs for regional development under the consensus of relevant entities and through appropriate role-sharing. In the planning process, prioritized and selective injections of resources are required in order to effectively utilize limited financial and human resources taking into account wide-area characteristics and strategic characteristics as well as the need for comprehensive and effective projects and programs. In doing so, it is important that comprehensive adjustments are fully made among regions and fields. Moreover, it is also important to consider in advance appropriate promotion and monitoring systems in order to ensure effective implementation.

Section 2 Planning Regional Strategies

The Regional Plan should be in line with the basic ideas shown in the National Plan and fully reflect individual regional characteristics. From this viewpoint, the following perspectives should be taken into account particularly when considering the formulation of the plan.

1. Positioning a region in relation to the national land; displaying individuality throughout East Asia

In analyzing the current regional conditions and recognizing and sharing regional identities, it is important not only to make comparisons with other areas in Japan, such as Tokyo, but also to consider exchange and cooperation with East Asia and marketing individuality in East Asia. On this basis, it is necessary to promote the concentration of competitive industries in East Asia, the use of distinctive cultural and tourist resources and the strengthening of international functions. Moreover, each region is expected to utilize its individual characteristics and demonstrate leadership qualities.

For example, it is necessary to enhance the effect of policies for the purpose of strengthening industries. This can be achieved by identifying fields and targets to be prioritized and the required regional role-sharing and by pushing forward efficient resource distribution taking into account existing industrial concentration, R&D functions and geographical conditions. Accordingly, regional individuality may be enhanced by promoting the concentration of competitive industries supported by regional resources and by deepening the interdependent economic relationship with each area in Japan and other areas across the East China Sea, the Sea of Japan and the Pacific Ocean.

Moreover, it may be possible for regions to recognize and enhance their own amenities – including cultural ones - and to look for potentially receptive East Asian and global markets. This can be achieved by utilizing existing assets such as rich nature, climate, history and cultural heritages as tourism resources.

2. Future course of measures for cooperation between urban and rural areas within the blocks taking into account regional characteristics

In analyzing regional structure and considering policies for regional development, it is necessary to promote regional growth. At the same time, it is necessary to consider measures for regional development and cooperation between cities and urban areas taking into account the structure of cities and blocks in order to secure high-quality public services and maintain distinct living environments with a range of amenities.

For example, in order to secure regional growth and public services in areas, the concentration of functions is important. However, it may be that functions are concentrated in a hub city, which plays a core role and facilitates access to the city. Another option is to promote mutual networking by sharing functions among several cities. In the medical field, there are successful cases of wide-area cooperation by function and field. It may be possible to enhance capacity as bases through analysis of individual regional advantages and disadvantages taking into account the structures of cities and areas and through selective investment based on this analysis. Furthermore, it is necessary to consider the possibility of effects generated by improvement of functions in those bases transcending regional boundaries and becoming wide-scale achievements.

Moreover, in order to continuously provide necessary public services in hilly and mountainous areas, where population decline is significant, it is necessary to consider creating living environments taking into account surrounding conditions and concentration in regional cities.

For example, in considering the future image of rural communities where maintenance and even survival itself are a concern, it is necessary to fully take into account the different characteristics of rural communities' in each regional block. In some areas relatively large-scale rural communities are sparsely distributed whereas in other areas small-scale rural communities are close together. In addition, it is necessary to fully take into account geologic creation, climate and transport access. It may be possible to consider basic response strategies such as the maintenance/strengthening of functions key rural communities and the restructuring/merger of rural community functions in accordance with regional characteristics. In doing so, because such rural communities are mainly located in prefectural border areas, wide-area efforts beyond the prefectural boundaries are required.

3. Individual regional measures addressing national issues

Part 2 of this plan outlines national efforts for the purpose of creating distinct and autonomous regional blocks. However, appropriate measures addressing issues are not necessarily uniform throughout the country and they are generated by regional creativity and originality as well as competition. It is necessary to promote each area's individual efforts. This can be achieved through the enactment of tailored regulations based on flexible ideas free from conventional perspectives, the introduction of localized rules and the prioritized and selective injection of resources based on cooperation and consensus between a wide range of entities.

For example, as for a regional block gateway, it may be possible to identify measures for

improving facilities such as international ports, airports and sea routes by monitoring increases in transportation demand and of the possibility of capitalizing on existing stock. This aims at providing more frequent container vessel, passenger ferry and RORO ship services, the improvement of service standards through the reinforcement of airline route networks, the development of efficient customs, immigration and quarantine systems (CIQ), and efficient and effective access to high-speed land transportation networks.

Moreover, as for tourism, cooperation beyond prefectural boundaries such as the establishment of wide-area scenic routes, cooperation between regional blocks, and individual regional strategies for attracting tourists incorporating a wide range of tastes from East Asia, Oceania, Europe and the United States promoting regional tourist resources such as abundant nature, a cold climate, volcanoes and hot springs may be possible.

Furthermore, consideration may be given to the creation of ecological networks from an environmental viewpoint. This can be achieved by taking into account climate-related factors such as subtropical and subarctic zones, Pacific and Japan Sea climate, as well as habitat conditions of wildlife including migrant birds and marine organisms. This can be achieved by taking into account the natural characteristics of each regional block and of the degree of contact between humans and nature. In doing so, cooperation within a block and between blocks is expected by taking into consideration the natural environment beyond regional blocks such as mountainous backbones or the Seto Inland Sea. In addition, it is also expected that global warming countermeasures and the construction of a sound material-cycle society will be addressed under wide-area cooperation taking into account individual regional characteristics.

4. Efforts for individual regional issues

It is necessary to present and fully consider appropriate measures to address individual regional issues which stem from the region's geographical, socioeconomic and cultural conditions such as the conservation of inland sea water quality and the development of built-up areas in snowy cold regions.

