

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 pleasure trips with lodging made in 2014 averaged 2.12 overnight stays per capita (against 2.25 a year earlier) and the average number of trips per capita was 1.29 times (against 1.39 a year earlier). Spending on the domestic trips with lodging, including homecoming and business trips, amounted to about 14.3 trillion yen (against 15.8 trillion yen a year earlier), and the number of overnight stays, the number of trips taken and the amount of spending all decreased from their year earlier levels.

The number of overseas tourists in 2014 dipped 3.3% (about 570,000) from the previous year to about 16.90 million, with their spending in the same year falling to about 4.5 trillion yen from its year earlier level of (about 4.5 trillion yen).

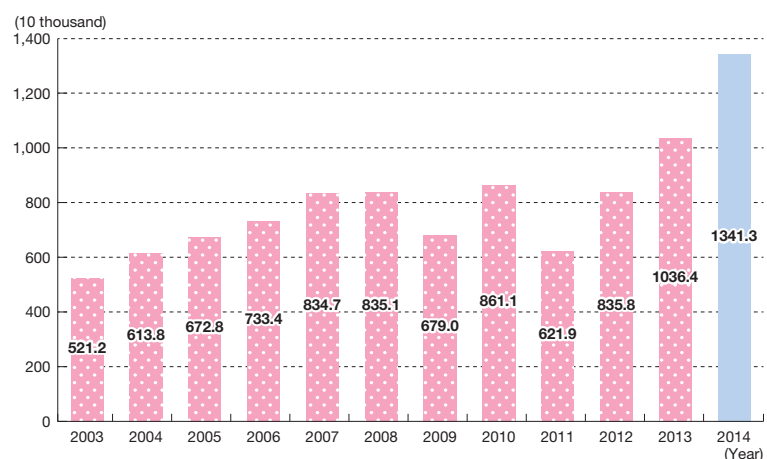
(2) Trends in foreigners touring Japan

In 2014, approximately 13.41 million foreign tourists visited Japan (up 29% from a year earlier), three million more than the record-breaking 10-million-tourist mark attained in 2013, a major step towards nearing the goal of 20 million tourists set for 2020.

By nationality and region, Taiwan accounted for about 2.83 million (up 28% from the previous year), followed by Korea with about 2.76 million (up 12%) and China with about 2.41 million (up 83% from the previous year). By Visit Japan Campaign market, Korea, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, India, Australia, the U.S., Canada, France and Germany registered their record highs.

With increases in the number of inbound foreign tourists, they spent an all-time high of 2.278 trillion yen in 2014, an advance of 43.1% (611.1 billion yen) from 2013.

Figure II-3-1-1 Changes in the Number of Inbound Foreign Tourists



(Note) Values for 2013 and before are definite values. Values for January through October 2014 are preliminary values. Values for November to December 2014 are estimates. % indicates a change from the year-earlier month.

(Source) Japan National Tourist Organization (JNTO)

Column Inbound Spending Grabs Attention

As more foreign tourists visit Japan, they are expected to spend more to contribute to the nation's economy and help revitalize regional economies. High expectations are placed on their shopping in Japan, mainly among Asian travelers, as it accounts for about 33% of their total amount of spending. This may be due partly to Japanese tours made relatively less costly than before with the exchange rate of the yen trending lower, and also to a broadening of the list of consumption tax exempt-items from October 1, 2014 to stimulate buying motivations.

Since the inauguration of the consumption tax in 1989, consumable supplies, such as food, drinks, drugs and medicines and cosmetics, had not been tax-exempt. The FY2014 tax reform, however, allowed these supplies into the scope of tax exemption on the condition that certain measures to prevent frauds are taken, and at the same time, made the forms of tax exemption documentation more flexible and simplified the procedural routines for added convenience.

Consequently, unique local specialties, such as renowned sweets and locally brewed sake, have been newly made tax-exempt, with a total of 9,361 duty-free shops proliferating nationwide as of October 1, 2014, amazing increase of 3,584 duty-free shops in half year — at souvenir corners in hotels and Japanese inns, specialty centers, regional airport stores and elsewhere. From a viewpoint of further expanding the list of duty-free shops and augmenting their conveniences, a program allowing tax-exempt sale procedures for shops in shopping malls, etc. to be completed all together at a Tax-Exemption Procedures Counter has been inaugurated since April 2015.

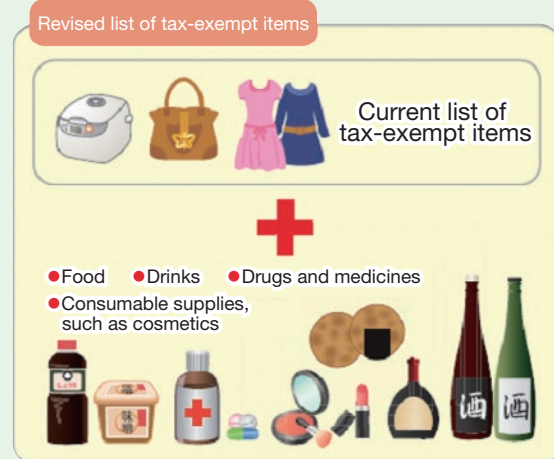
In addition, the “Duty-Free Shop Logotype” has been newly launched to promote the public recognition of duty-free shops as a brand. As duty-free shop owners apply for using the logotype, they are invited to provide information about themselves, which is posted at a JNTO website. So far, “live information” about approximately 8,600 duty-free shops nationwide has been collected for wide dissemination.

- Expanding list of regional duty-free shops (Case Study)

Kagawa speciality center “Ritsurin-an” (Kagawa Prefecture)

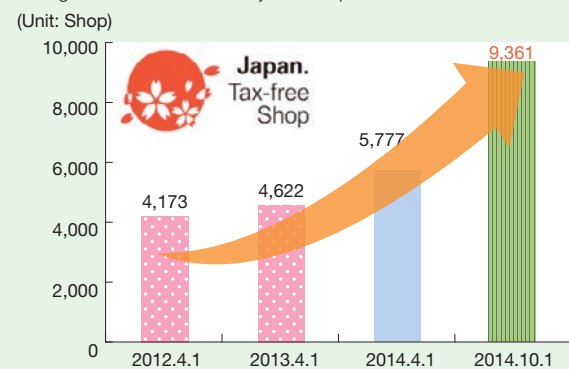
- A shop located in the premises of Ritsurin Garden, a state-designated Special Place of Scenic Beauty, has been made duty-free.
- The shop is furnished with a counter to receive foreign tourists and with other facilities designed to expedite their reception, such as a duty-free shopping counter and a POS register system.
- The shop sells udon (Japanese noodles), typical of Kagawa' local food, olives, paper tigers manufactured in a time-honored fashion, rare sugar and more.

List of Tax-Exempt Items Expanded (since October 2014)



Source) MLIT

Changes in the number of duty-free shops nationwide



Source) MLIT

Kuroshio City (Wakayama Prefecture)

- Shops in Kuroshio Market in Wakayama Marina City and in the hotel have been made duty-free.
- Not only guidance boards, posters, etc. are posted but staff members capable of speaking Chinese are in position.
- The shops sell locally manufactured dried marine products, shoyu, ume (plum) liquor, Wakayama ramen noodles and more.



Source) MLIT



Source) MLIT

(3) Trends in the tourism industry**a. Travel trade**

In FY2014, Japan's 50 major travel agencies had a total transaction value of 6,419.6 billion yen (against 101.2% a year earlier), broken down into approximately 2,203.3 billion yen (98.4%) for overseas trips, approximately 4,103.6 billion yen (102.1%) and approximately 112.5 billion yen (135.2%) for inbound foreigner tours.

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

The guestroom occupancy ratios (preliminary figures at the hotels and Japanese inns for FY2014) were 78.0% for city hotels (against 75.7% a year earlier), 54.5% (52.5%) for resort hotels, 73.8% (69.5%) for business hotels and 35.9% (35.9%) for Japanese inns.

Section 2 Approaches to Forging a Tourism Nation

The "Action Program toward Realization of Japan as a Tourism Nation" was approved at the June 11, 2013 meeting of the Ministerial Council on the Promotion of Japan as a Tourism-Oriented Country chaired by the Prime Minister. After toughened approaches subsequently taken to forge a tourism nation, the year 2013 witnessed a record-high inbound foreign tourist count of 10.36 million. Since an instruction was given by the Prime Minister on January 17, 2014 to revise the Action Program to target an inbound foreign tourist count of 20 million by 2020, "Action Program toward Realization of Japan as a Tourism Nation 2014" was decided on June 17 of the same year. As a result of the government, public and private sectors having worked in hand in hand to get Actin Program 2014 fulfilled, the number of inbound foreign tourists in 2014 reached a record high of 13.41 million.

1 Promoting Tourism in Time for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games

In FY2014, the MLIT took part in “Japan Omotenashi Pavillion,” which was run from June 12 to July 13, 2014 in a unified governmental-private endeavor at Fifa World Cup Brazil held in Brazil, to promote the charms of Japan to the global soccer fans that gathered there and to play Japanese tour promotion videos and sponsor special events,etc. featuring Japanese fashion, traditional art and pop cultures to get them better know of Japan and cherish desires to visit Japan. Efforts made to condition the environment for receiving inbound foreign tourists include developing and promoting a free public wireless LAN environment, improving on multilingual support, reinforcing reception of Musulim tourists, simplifying and expediting the procedural flow of immigration at airports and ports, including improved CIQ, enhancing the means of secondary transportation, improving on the payment environment and more.

2 Approaches to Expanding Inbound Tourism Drastically

The Visit Japan Campaign has been run in a unified “All Japan” effort of public and private sectors to promote the charms of Japanese tourism to stir inbound Japanese tourism.

The campaign has focused on the nations holding a prospective population of visitors to Japan (Korea, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Australia, U.S., Canada, U.K., France, Germany) by launching: a. Projects targeting overseas travel agencies, such as inviting them or putting joint tour ads; b. Projects targeting overseas consumers, such as putting overseas ads and inviting overseas media; c. Regional collaborative projects jointly implemented in a wide area by Transport Bureaus, etc. with local authorities to grab foreign tourists; and d. Approaches to promoting inbound Japanese tourism in a unified “All Japan” of with the government ministries and agencies concerned, including overseas diplomatic establishments abroad, and private enterprises.

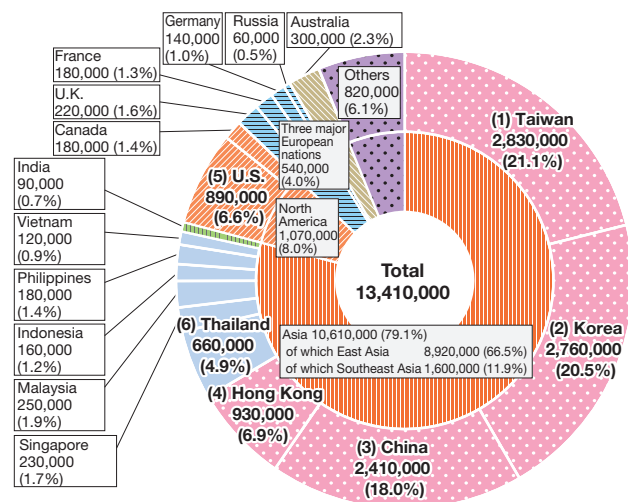
3 Fueling Japanese Travel with Eased Visa Requirements, etc.

Requirements for multiple-entry visa approval were relaxed for Indonesians, Filipinos and Vietnamese on September 30, 2014 and procedures for applying for single-entry visas were simplified on November 20 of the same year. An exemption of visas subject to prior registration of microchipped passports was granted to Indonesians on December 1 of the same year. Multiple-entry visas for Indians were introduced on July 3 of the same year, followed by a decision to introduce multiple-entry visas for Brazilians in August. In addition, the requirements for multiple-entry visas for Chinese were relaxed effective January 19, 2015.

Feasibility studies of a long-term stay plan were also carried forward to help capture the demand for longer-term stays among overseas wealthy travelers.

Figure II-3-2-1

Ratios of the Number of Inbound Foreign Tourists in 2014 (by nation and region)



(Notes) 1 Parentheses enclose the percentage shares of the total number of inbound foreign tourists.
 2 “Others” includes unaccounted-for nations and regions from Asia, Europe and elsewhere.
 3 Values may not add up to totals because their fractions are rounded.
 Source) Prepared by the Japan Tourism Agency from data available from the Japan National Tourist Organization (JNTO)

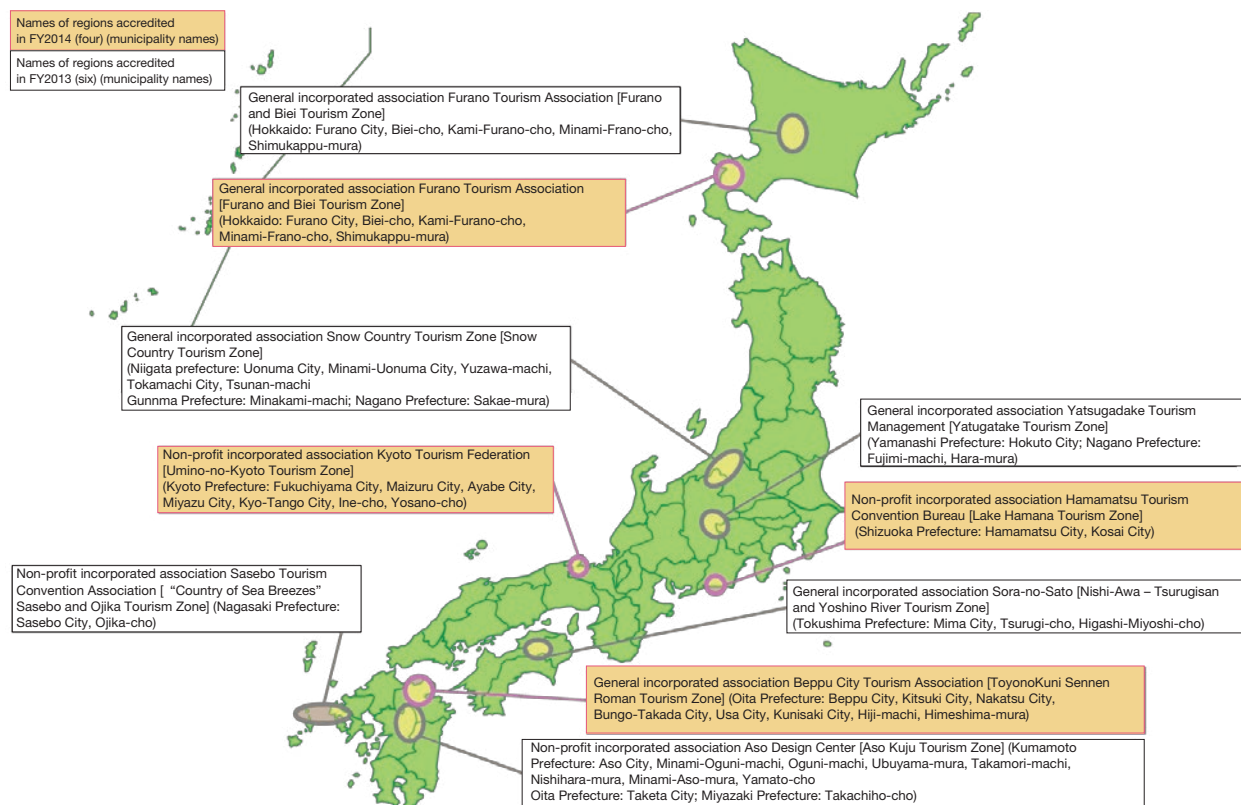
4 Developing Attractive Tourism Areas Appealing to the Whole World

(1) Developing attractive tourism areas with high international competitiveness

The development of “Tourism Zones” readied for the stay-and-exchange type of tourism has been promoted pursuant to the “Act on Promotion of Tourists' Visit and Stay Through Development of Tourism Areas (Tourism Zones Development Act)” to create special-interest tourism areas with exceptional charms to appeal both at home and abroad. In FY2014, four Tourism Zones were designated, including the “Umino-Kyoto” tourism zone. For these 10 tourism zones, local branding strategies were formulated and the projects based on the branding strategies were supported by the “Tourism Area Branding Support Projects.”

In addition, the Overseas Demand Basic Survey Project for Promoting Formation of Wide-Area Round-Trip Routes” has been implemented to reinforce inter-regional wide-area alliances to augment the abilities to disseminate information and also to promote the formation of wide-area round-trip routes full of tales and subjects appealing to the target markets. The project has so far probed into trends among the inbound foreign tourists to identify the areas that should dictate more efforts directed at conditioning the environment to host tourists than anywhere else and has surveyed and analyzed the Japanese travel market to define what measures should be targeted to solicit tourists in the future.

Figure II-3-2-2 Regions Accredited According to the Tourism Region Development Enforcement Plan Based on the New Basic Policy



(Note) As of July 4, 2014.

Source) MLIT

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

It would be essential for locals to have a framework of developing and selling optional tour products (experience- and exchange-type programs) on their own autonomously and continuously to revitalize local economies by leveraging attractive local tourism resources.

For this reason, the “Tourist Business Creation Total Support Project” was implemented in FY2014 to extend support to 45 areas selected from across the nation. More specifically, experts (cognoscenti) were dispatched to these areas to conduct monitoring tours with regard to the travel products that had been developed through workshops or other occasions. The resultant information was then disseminated through Websites or the like. In addition, practical training sessions and

business talks with travel agencies were held in these 45 areas to get their tourist resources closer to a state of commercialization and to build business models that appropriate profits for the development of more optional tour products.

About 70% of the *Michi-no-Ekis* located nationwide 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 FY2014, the priority Michinoeki program was inaugurated to extend prioritized support to excellent Michinoekis and was pursued in conjunction with authorities who were concerned with their current abilities to serve as a general point of guidance for local tourism, promote inbound tourism, etc.

5 Conditioning the Environment to Host Foreign Tourists

To attain a milestone of 20 million inbound foreign tourists by 2020, it would be of exceptional importance to create an environment for these tourists to be able to move and stay in with comfort and to allow them leave Japan at the end of their tours satisfied, and then come back to Japan in the future as repeat customers.

To attain this goal, the following approaches were taken during FY2014.

As for multilingual support, approaches to pursuing the 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, were driven in conjunction with the relevant government ministries and agencies pursuant to guidelines commonly applicable to these facilities formulated and published in March 2014, so that foreign tourists can enjoy their tours of Japan without being frustrated by “language barriers” to the extent possible. In addition, amendments were made to the “Ordinance on Road Signage and Marking” to encourage the conversion of road guide signs from Romanized letters to English at major tourist spots and elsewhere, so that the signs would be more intelligible for foreign tourists. In the meantime, more than 60 years on after the inauguration of the Licensed Guide-Interpreter Program, problems have been raised concerning the quality and quantity of Licensed Guide-Interpreters as the number of inbound foreign tourists has topped 13 million and now aims to attain 20 million. In December 2014, the Review Committee on the Licensed Guide-Interpreter Program organized of representatives of a broad class of stakeholders met to start exploring possible solutions to these problems.

In August 2014, the “Free Public Wireless LAN Development Promotion Conference” was incorporated jointly with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications to develop an environment in which foreign travelers can walk out on their own. Efforts have been driven through the medium of this Conference to promote further development, broader recognition and acceptance of a free public wireless LAN environment and to simplify authentication procedures.

Efforts directed at bracing for the “Era of One Million Cruising Tourists” to come include answering queries from cruise ship companies and others at a single one-stop point of contact installed at the MLIT’s Ports and Harbours Bureau, sponsoring sessions of business negotiations and symposiums with the participation of cruise ship companies, port management bodies and others in collaboration with “National Cruise Vitalization Conference” and improving an integrated website from which to release information about the specifications of port and harbor facilities and tourist information about the ports of call. Also, the functions of passenger terminals have been enhanced by efficiently utilizing the existing facilities.

To encourage tourist visits to Japan from Islamic nations, including Southeast nations that promise further leaps, guides designed for eating and drinking establishments, etc. that expect to host Muslim tourists so that they can make smoother choices of their orders at these establishments. At the same time, seminars have been held to promote the dissemination of information about the menus, foodstuffs, eating utensils, cooking environment and so on. The dissemination of information sought by the Muslim tourists, such as the places of eating and drinking establishments and places of worship in the localities, etc. has also been reinforced.

Other efforts made include simplifying the procedural flow of immigration at airports and ports with improved CIQ, improving means of secondary transportation, improvement of the payment environment, such as promoting the installation of ATMs ready for credit cards issued overseas and encouraging “Hands-Free Travel” for inbound foreign tourists leveraging home-delivery and other services.

6 Promoting Attraction and Holding of MICE and Grabbing Foreign Business Guests

Promoting the attraction and holding of international conventions, etc. (MICE) ^{Note} is meaningful in a broad range of aspects, including capturing overseas people and their wisdom into Japan, producing major economic benefits in and around the places of the conventions, creating chances of business innovation and boosting national and municipal competitiveness and brand power. According to International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) statistics, the number of times international conventions are held is on the rise worldwide and its growth is most pronounced in Asia on the support of its rapid rates of economic growth. In Japan, 342 international conventions were held in 2013, the seventh in number in the world and the largest for the second consecutive year in Asia. Asian competitors have been staging proactive campaigns to grab MICE, with the consequence of proportionately declining Japanese international competitiveness as Japan is faced with increasingly tough rivalry. Hence, its international competitiveness needs to be built up.

To attain the goal of “building the untottering number one position in Asia as an international convention host nation in 2030” set forth in the Japan Revitalization Strategy, approaches have been started, including:

- a. Fostering global MICE cities to win tough competition from overseas competitors for hosting MICE.
- b. Appointing individuals who are influential at home and abroad through academic societies, etc. as “MICE Ambassadors” to publicize and promote the attraction of international conferences and stage attraction and other activities.
- c. Seeking qualitative and quantitative expansion in the usage and promotion of unique venues to create a sense of distinction or regional characteristics by holding conventions or reception in buildings of historic significance, public spaces or elsewhere.

After these efforts directed at inviting MICE into Japan, the holding of a chain of massive international conferences in Japan has been decided, including SIGGRAPH Asia 2015 scheduled in Kobe (6,000 participants scheduled) and the World Buiatrics Congress 2018 scheduled in Sapporo (2,000 participants scheduled). The number of large incentive tours has also increased, including those from Taiwan containing a total party of about 2,000.

7 Consolidating the tourism industry

(1) Dissemination of the concept of safety management for travel agencies

The concept of safety management was disseminated and promoted among travel agencies, including smaller agencies who are not familiar with it, since the importance of a thorough implementation of safety management in the tourism industry as a whole had been suggested at a FY2013 meeting of the Tourism Industry Study Group.

(2) Formulating guidelines relating to online travel trasactions

While Internet transactions continue to proliferate, numerous overseas online travel agencies (OTAs), site loaners that do not take liability as a subject of a contract by themselves and others exist. Considering the fact that many consumers sign up with them without knowledge of their partners or terms of the contracts, guidelines have been formulated relating to online travel transactions to keep the travel contracts both safe and secure and thus to prevent troubles.

(3) Disseminating information about accomodation facilities

A general portal site has been opened at a JNTO website to provide foreign tourists with information about Japan’s diverse accomodation facilities in an intelligible manner. The portal site has made it possible to augment the public awareness of, and interest in, the brand of Japanese inns, or Japan’s unique accomodation facilities, and to refer the foreign tourists to websites run by the individual facilities wanting in their abilities to disseminate information overseas.

Note MICE is an acronym for (Meetings), or meetings held by businesses and the like, incentive and study tours (Incentive (Travel) conducted by businesses, (Conventions), or international conferences and (Exhibitions), or trade fairs and exhibitions.

(4) Promoting universal tourism

Approaches have been taken to boost activities aimed at creating an environment in which all people, including elderly people or people with disabilities, can enjoy touring. These approaches include launching an integrated point of regional consultation, and releasing information from websites in multiple languages. In addition, studies have been made to add to the number of tourist agencies working towards the goal of universal tourism.

(5) Developing human resources in the tourism industry

Seminars have been conducted and e-learning lectures delivered to hotel and Japanese inn executives, who play a significant role in a regional economy, to raise their awareness for the significance of improved management. 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.

(6) Inviting Tourism-Related Industries from Overseas

The JETRO has discovered overseas promising tourism-related industries (LCCs, hotels, tour operators and more) and invited them to expand into Japan to help revitalize Japan's tourism industry.

8 Encouraging holiday taking

The government currently recommends that "Hometown Holidays" be appointed as locally unique holidays to meet regional traditions or events for better work-life balances and for local revitalization. In response, the Japan Tourism Agency has expanded the "Family Time Making Project," which had pursued matching between children and adults' holidays by encouraging flexible setting of school holidays and taking of paid holidays by workers, to extend support to the implementation of Hometown Holidays, as well as creation of chains of holidays, thereby guiding the nationwide trend towards reforming the way of taking one's holidays.

Further, the MLIT has been promoting the "Positive Off" campaign, or a movement that encourages taking a vacation in a forward-looking stance, for businesses and associations jointly with the Cabinet Office, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry. As of the end of 2014, 450 businesses and associations have subscribed to this movement.

9 Preparing tourism statistics

The "Tour and Sightseeing Consumption Trend Survey," "Hotel-Staying Tour Statistical Survey" and "Inbound Foreigner Consumption Trend Survey" have been conducted to aid in strategic planning of tourism policies and verification of their accomplishments.

Among these, the timing of the Hotel-Staying Tour Statistical Survey has been changed from quarterly as it had been in the past to every month, starting from the April 2015 survey, to reinforce its immediacy aspect as a result of enhanced coordination with the departments concerned. In addition, the sample size per quarter for the Inbound Foreigner Consumption Trend Survey has been changed from 6,600 to 9,700 to reflect an increase in the number of airports and ports under survey from 11 to 18 and an increase in the number of nations and regions under survey from 18 to 20 markets, including Italy and Spain, starting from the January-March 2015 survey, to gain a more precise insight into the status of inbound foreign tourists.

PR activities have also been stage at each individual Transport Bureau, including holding explanatory sessions for prefectural and municipal authorities, think tanks and the press.

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 638 groups as of September 30, 2014, with 449 of them pursuing their own landscape plans. Further, the number of municipalities that have been designated a landscape administrative body to take over the prefectural authority of formulating ministerial ordinances pursuant to the “Outdoor Advertisement Act” rose to 68 groups as of April 1, 2015 as part of the consolidated approaches to pleasing landscape formation.

(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 elimination of utility poles

From viewpoints of forming pleasing landscapes, promoting tourism, keeping passage spaces safe and comfortable, getting roads disaster-prepared and so on, the elimination of utility poles has been driven through the dissemination, etc. of various development techniques, such as constructing new roads or widening existing roads.

(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 2015, 135 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).

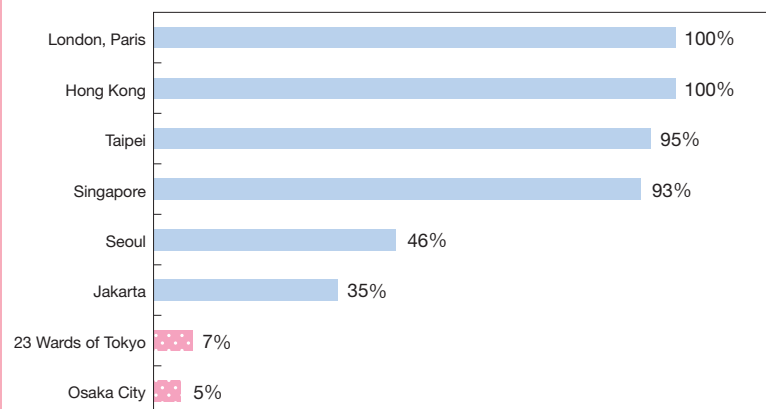
(5) Promoting the development of waterfront spaces, etc.

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. Other activities being driven include the implementation of the “Projects for Waterfront Schools for Fun” for creating a place of river environment education and a “River and Community Making” support program and the development of river management facilities relevant to flood control and safe and secure river usage, which are

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, Chapter 2 and Chapters 4 and 5, Landscape Act) upon prior consultation with the governor of its prefecture.

Figure II-3-3-1

Present Status of Buried Underground Utility Poles in Japan Compared with Major European Nations and the U.S.



*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 surveyed from 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 FY2013 status for Japan surveyed by the MLIT (in road extension terms)

Source) MLIT

positioned as part of “Reservoir area Vision.”

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, including the Asuka Historical National Government Park. In FY2014, 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.

The preservation and utilization of locally long-loved governmental and other public facilities has been promoted. In addition, efforts have been encouraged to turn erosion and sediment control facilities of historic significance (as of March 31, 2015, two designated Important Cultural Properties and 183 designated Registered Tangible Cultural Properties) and their ambient surroundings into a new forum of human interaction by positioning these facilities as a core of tourism resources.

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) MLIT

(4) Community development leveraging histories and cultures

Historic landscape maintenance and improvement plans for 49 municipalities (as of March 31, 2015) 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).” Further, empirical studies and surveys have been conducted in 10 regions nationwide and support extended to the refurbishing, etc. of building architectures of scenic or historic values with a view to resolving the common blocks that block the formation of historic townscape.

(5) Driving projects for creating futures of waterside and community

Local residents, businesses and administrative authorities are working in accord to drive efforts to create attractive waterside spaces that combine beauty and elegance as part of community development and thus preserving and creating vigors and vitalities, landscape rich in nature and so on. In Tokyo in particular, the implementation of relevant efforts along Sumida River and elsewhere is promoted with the opening of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games in sight.

Effort to enhance motivation using a logo



Source) MLIT

Column**Rejuvenating Waterborne Transportation in the Aqua Metropolis of Tokyo**

With the opening of the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games years ahead, the need for waterborne transportation looms into prominence as a complimentary means of transportation for Games spectators and staff members to ensure smoother travel during the period of the Games. Multilingual support and other efforts need also be highlighted to enhance conveniences for the growing number of inbound foreign tourists and others.

Because many of the facilities are located on the waterfront on and around Tokyo Bay, the Games should provide a good opportunity for promoting and boosting waterborne transportation in Tokyo proactively, together with its rivers and waterfront on the bay.

For this reason, the “Liaison Conference among Stakeholders for Rejuvenating Waterborne Transportation in the Aqua Metropolis of Tokyo” was inaugurated in February 2014 as a forum for stakeholders exchanging their views on, and coordinating their efforts to approach, a host of issues, such as receiving inbound foreign and Japanese tourists predicted to grow in volume as the Games near, promoting the waterfront and waterborne transportation in Tokyo and attracting visitors. The Conference met four times until the end of March 2015. In September 2014, a publicity event featuring a old-fashioned houseboat ride was conducted for foreign travel agents visiting Tourism EXPO Japan. The event met with an exceptional reception as many of the passengers expressed their emotion watching the night views of Tokyo from the boat. These foreign travel agents are expected to publicize the charms of riding an old-fashioned houseboat in Japan when they are back home.

The Liaison Conference is committed to further exploring the issues of responding to mounting demand for tourism in time for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games, promoting the waterfront and waterborne transportation in Tokyo, laying relevant groundwork and so on.

A water-bus navigating on Sumida River



Source) MLIT

A scene of the Liaison Conference



Foreigners enjoying an old-fashioned houseboat ride

