

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 nonresident population visting 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 Situation

(1) Japanese Domestic Tourism Consumption

Japanese domestic tourism consumption in 2016, including overnight travels and same-day trips, was 20.95 trillion yen (up 2.7% from the previous year).

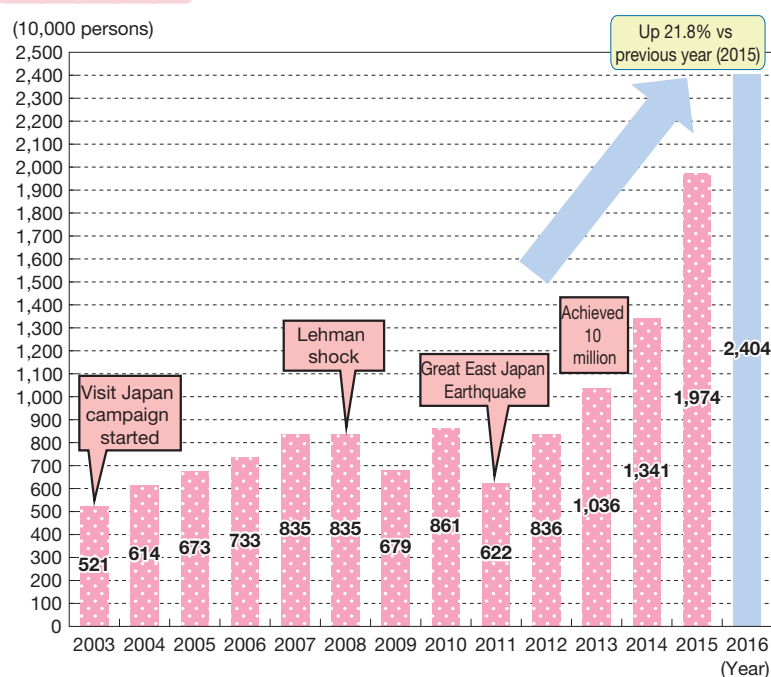
Breaking down Japanese domestic tourism consumption, spending on overnight travel was 16.03 trillion yen (up 1.4% from the previous year) and spending on same-day trips was 4.92 trillion yen (up 7.1% from the previous year).

(2) Number of Foreign Visitors to Japan

The number of foreign visitors in 2016 increased to 24.04 million (up 21.8% from the previous year). It was the first time in Japanese history that the number of foreign visitors has exceeded 20 million.

By nationality and region, China accounted for about 6.37 million (up 27.6% from the previous year), followed by South Korea with about 5.09 million (up 27.2% from the previous year) and Taiwan with about 4.17 million (up 13.3% from the previous year). By market, the following 19 markets registered their annual record highs: South Korea, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, India, Australia, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain.

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



(Note) Definite values for 2015 and before and preliminary value for 2016.
Source) Japan National Tourist Organization (JNTO)

(3) Tourism Consumption by Foreign Visitors to Japan

With the increase in the number of foreign visitors, tourism consumption by foreign visitors in 2016 reached a record high of 3,747.6 billion yen (up 7.8% from the previous year).

By nationality and region, China accounted for 1,475.4 billion yen (up 4.1% from the previous year), followed by Taiwan with 524.5 billion yen (up 0.7% from the previous year), South Korea with 357.7 billion yen (up 18.9% from the previous year), Hong Kong with 294.7 billion yen (up 12.2% from the previous year), and the United States with 213.0 billion yen (up 17.4% from the previous year). These top five countries accounted for 76.5% of total travel spending by foreign visitors in 2016.

(4) Number of Repeaters among Foreign Visitors to Japan

The number of repeaters among foreign visitors in 2016 was 14.26 million (up 23.0% from the previous year).

By nationality and region, South Korea accounted for 3.41 million (up 26.2% from the previous year), followed by Taiwan with 3.38 million (up 16.1% from the previous year), China with 2.61 million (up 41.5% from the previous year), Hong Kong with 1.49 million (up 19.5% from the previous year), and the United States with 630,000 (up 7.4% from the previous year). Taiwan and Hong Kong especially produced high rates of repeaters, with the percentage of travelers in 2016 visiting for their second time or more being 81.2% for Taiwan and 81.1% for Hong Kong.

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

The preliminary number of guest nights of foreign visitors in the outlying areas in 2016 was 28.45 million (up 13.2% from the previous year). Year on year, this exceeds that for the three major metropolitan areas (which were up 4.8%), with large increases by prefecture in Kagawa (up 69.5% from the previous year), Okayama (up 63.2% from the previous year), and Fukushima (up 41.3% from the previous year).

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

The number of international conferences held in Japan in 2016 was 410 (up 15.5% from the previous year), ranking 7th in the world together with China. Japan's share of international conferences out of those held in major Asian countries was 28%, remaining in the top position in Asia.

(7) Number of Japanese Overseas Travelers

The number of Japanese overseas travelers in 2016 was 17.12 million (up 5.6% from the previous year), the first increase in four years since 2012.

Section 2 Initiatives to Realize a World-Class Tourist Destination

On May 13, 2016, the Ministerial Council on the Promotion of Japan as a Tourism-Oriented Country decided on a "Tourism Vision Implementation Program 2016" as a short-term action plan for the "Tourism Vision to Support the Future of Japan." 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 Infrastructure Tourism

Bridges, dams, ports, and other such infrastructure are assets specific to each region, and display various regional characteristics. These facilities exist in our immediate surroundings and support our lifestyles, but did you know you can observe, experience and enjoy them up close? In recent years, there has been a surge of interest in infrastructure tourism, or schemes that utilize infrastructure as regional assets and tourism resources to promote regional revitalization. In addition to its role in revitalizing regions, infrastructure tourism is also expected to contribute to promoting greater understanding of infrastructure development, maintenance and management.

Regional development bureaus and other public agencies are actively organizing facility tours and tie-up schemes with private sector travel agencies, and the MLIT opened an infrastructure tourism portal site in January 2016 to provide information on nationwide infrastructure tours. The infrastructure tourism boom has spread throughout Japan, and the number of tours offered by private sector companies has increased from five tours at the time the portal site was opened, to 23 tours by September of the same year. The media has spotlighted many of the tours, and a new aspect of infrastructure facilities is being presented to the public.

In this way, infrastructure not only supports our lifestyles, but plays an important role in revitalizing the regions as precious regional 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 Pref.)



Amagikita Road (Shizuoka Pref.)



Managawa Dam (Fukui Pref.)

Seto-ohashi Bridge (Kagawa Pref.)
Photo provided by Honshu-Shikoku Bridge Expressway Co., Ltd.

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 during construction of new roads or widening of existing roads and implemented model construction works to introduce low-cost methods.

Additionally, through workshops for all prefectures and municipalities, we encouraged municipalities that are major tourist sites to develop landscape plans. We also made information boards in national government parks multilingual.

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

In order to encourage the formation of extensive sightseeing routes with themes and stories that help draw foreign visitors to the countryside, four new routes across Japan were newly certified in FY2016 (making 11 routes in all). Also, focusing on specific model courses, we supported enhancement of stay-contents using regional tourism resources, initiatives to encourage foreign visitors to tour an area, and promotion of target cities. 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.

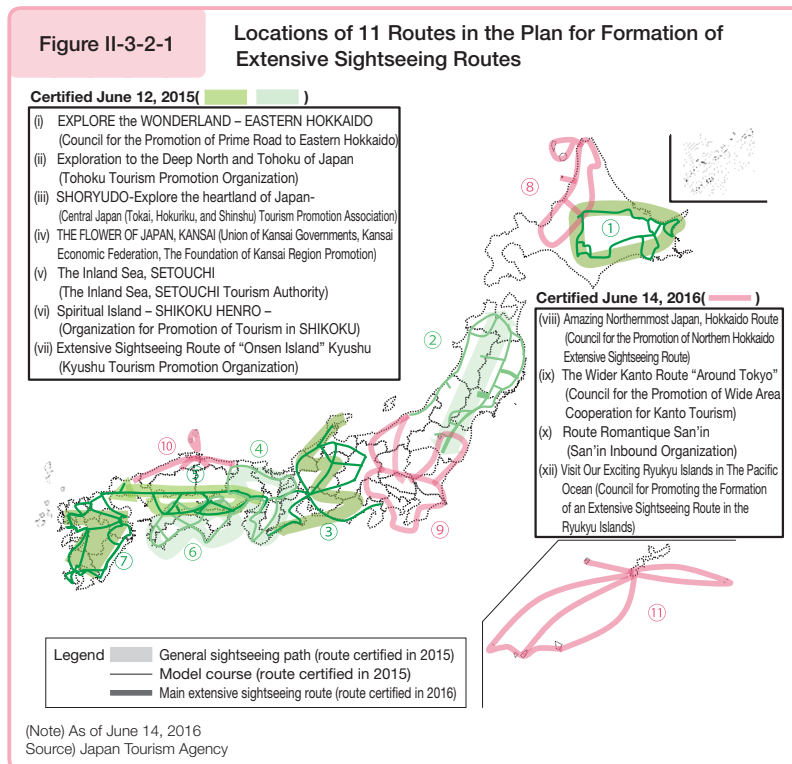
We also used a "Theme-based Tourism Program for Drawing Visitors to the Countryside" to support attractive tourist destinations around the country with shared themes such as sake breweries or movie/TV shooting locations.

Furthermore, in January 2017, we released Flow of Foreigners-Data (FF-Data), which enables users to grasp not only the flows of foreign visitors in Japan, but also factors such as their nationalities and modes of transportation used within the country. It is expected that this information will be used as basic data that contributes to the planning and revision of extensive sightseeing routes and strategic promotion measures.

We also 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, we implemented a congestion measure that used wide shoulders in the Furano/Biei region of Hokkaido to separate vehicles waiting to park from through traffic. At the Hitachi Seaside Park in Ibaraki, we conducted a pilot program of a reservation system to encourage the use of surrounding parking lots through smooth, reliable parking during the season when the *Bassia scoparia* (summer cypress) are displaying their autumn colors.

(4) Revival of Tourism in Tohoku Region and Responses to Natural Disasters such as the Kumamoto Earthquake

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



Note Refer to Section 4-2, Chapter 1 for Revival of Tourism in Tohoku.

When the Kumamoto Earthquake struck in April 2016, we strove for early recovery of travel demand by establishing a general support program for the revival of tourism in Kyushu and instituting a subsidy for travel costs through a “Kyushu Revival Discount” and visit Japan promotions focused on Kyushu. Also, to eliminate damage caused by rumors about seismic activity of the Kumamoto Earthquake and volcanic activity of Mt. Aso, in January 2017, we established the Kumamoto Support Program jointly with Kumamoto Prefecture and subsidized travel costs through the “Aso (Central and Southern Areas) Support Tour.”

In response to typhoon damage in Hokkaido caused in August 2016, we promoted Hokkaido through the Japan National Tourism Organization (JNTO) by disseminating tourism information about Hokkaido, including eastern Hokkaido, using Facebook between October and November 2016 and, in 2017, implementing a campaign to promote the sale of travel products to Hokkaido.

When the Tottori Central Earthquake struck in October 2016, we established a “Tottori Support Program” and subsidized travel costs through the “Tottori is Waiting for You Campaign.”

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 Residence Accommodation) Services

In March 2017, we submitted to the Diet a bill to amend the Licensed Guide Interpreters Act and the Travel Agency Act, in order to respond to the overwhelming shortage of interpreter guides and cases such as malicious land operators bringing tourists to souvenir shops on condition of receiving large kickbacks. The bill’s contents included the abolition of regulations on monopolization of the interpreter guide business while keeping in place a monopoly on the name, ensuring the quality of interpreter guides, introduction of a registration system for land operators, and deregulation of travel services limited to a specific area.

Also, in light of the content of a plan to implement regulatory reform (approved by the Cabinet on June 2, 2016) and of the final report of the review meeting on *minpaku* services (compiled in June 2016), we drew up the Residential Accommodation Business Bill, to promote *minpaku* services that meet needs under appropriate regulations, and submitted it to the Diet in March 2017.

(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, with the objective of developing human resources who can drive Japan’s tourism industry overall, we began considering curricula through industry-university-government cooperation. Our aim was to establish bases to continually develop management personnel for tourism at the graduate school level (including MBAs) at Hitotsubashi University and Kyoto University in 2018.

Regarding personnel at the core level, we horizontally extended an educational program conducted at Otaru University of Commerce in FY2015 and offered courses at Wakayama University and Oita University to increase managerial capabilities in the regional lodging industry. We also conducted a survey related to the industry’s human resources needs.

As for working level personnel, as a response to the labor shortage in the tourism industry, we conducted a survey of the curricula of specialized training colleges as well as a survey of the employment needs of students hoping to enter the tourism industry and of seniors and women wanting to work.

As for tour operators that make travel arrangements for foreign visitors, the MLIT promoted the certification system operated by Japan Association of Travel Agents (JATA) as secretariat for indicating the levels of service quality and reliability of companies, as well as certified business operators by the system.

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

We established guidelines that clarify the operation of a system for relaxing floor area ratios, which is focused on development of accommodation facilities, and sent out notifications thereof to local governments. Also, to improve the satisfaction of travelers by matching services provided by accommodation facilities and travelers' needs, we are examining the kinds of services that are possible in accommodation facilities by first of all analyzing the diverse needs of travelers.

(4) Formation and Development of World-class DMOs

In order to encourage the formation and development in each part of the country of DMOs^{Note}, which are specialized organizations that strategically promote the revival of tourism, under consensus building with diverse stakeholders in the community, we provided assistance to DMO candidates in three ways: information, personnel, and financial/monetary support. As of the end of FY2016, 134 DMO candidates have been registered.

(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 FY2016 in different regions, including Saga, together with local financial institutions. These funds have provided investment and loans to 26 projects. The Japan Tourism Agency supported REVIC's initiatives, 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, from the perspective of combining economic revitalization and the achievement of fiscal soundness by becoming a tourism-oriented country, we are striving to continue to secure an appropriate tourism-related budget and will consider measures to secure additional fiscal resources for the nation, in order to implement high-level tourism policies in response to growing tourism demand, including inbound expansion in the future.

(6) Strategic Enhancement of Promotion on Visit to Japan With the Post Olympic and Paralympic Period in Mind and Better Dissemination of Wide Variety of Tourism Attraction of Japan

In an effort to increase repeat foreign visitors to Japan and appeal to wealthy travelers, we enhanced the Japan National Tourism Organization's (JNTO) website from the perspective of foreigners to disseminate needed information in a form that is easy to obtain anytime and anywhere, and also made vigorous efforts to publicize Japanese history and traditional culture, such as by inviting media, including influential magazines, and travel companies to different parts of Japan.

Also, in an effort to further diversify the areas visited by travelers from Europe, the United States, and Australia, as well as their seasons of travel and the contents targeted at them, we exhibited at snow-related travel fairs, such as the UK's Ski & Snowboard Show, and extended invitations to travel companies that handle ski trips. In our general invitation programs as well, we conducted PR by incorporating activities such as cycling into the itineraries. Furthermore, in FY2016 we established an advisory board made up of foreign experts and others, in order to advance promotions from the local perspective.

In order to powerfully and strategically showcase the allures of Japan as a tourist destination, we took the opportunity of the Rio de Janeiro Olympic and Paralympic Games held in August 2016 and set up a Visit Japan Booth with other ministries inside the Japanese government area at the Tokyo 2020 JAPAN HOUSE to maximize increased attention as the next host country. Additionally, we used global media to disseminate to the world images of Olympic gold medalists' experiences of tourist destinations around Japan.

Note DMO : Destination Management/Marketing Organization.

(7) Promotion of MICE

In order to promote international conferences and other MICE events, we provided support to five cities as “Global MICE Cities” that can win competitions with overseas competitors and supported the activities of persons certified as MICE Ambassadors, people who have influence over academic conferences and the like and are involved in the promotion of international conferences. We also promoted the use of unique venues that provide a sense of specialness, such as by holding receptions at historical buildings.

In September 2016, we established a support system for the development of conference and other facilities that underpin the business activities of global companies, and in December 2016, we newly organized the “Liaison Meeting for Promotion of MICE by Related Ministries,” in order to establish a structure for promotion of MICE at the government level.

(8) Strategic Relaxation of Visa Requirements

Five countries (China, the Philippines, Vietnam, India, and Russia) have been chosen for a strategic relaxation of visa requirements under the Tourism Vision. With respect to the relaxation of visa requirements for China, India, and Russia, which was the goal for FY2016, the partial simplification of application procedures, the introduction of new multiple-entry visas, and the expansion of the kind of people eligible for multiple-entry business visas were achieved in coordination with relevant ministries.

(9) Increase School Trips to Japan

In light of the Tourism Vision, in April 2016, we set up a centralized point of contact at the JNTO and began inbound matching for educational travel to Japan. We also conducted invitation programs for educators and others from cities in Taiwan and elsewhere.

(10) Enhancement of Tourism Education

We collected case examples of children learning about attractive historical and cultural tourism resources in their communities and other parts of Japan and the communication of the appeal of those resources. We also began considering the production and spread of teaching materials.

(11) Stimulation of Outbound Travel by Young People

We analyzed the reasons outbound travel by young Japanese has not expanded, and developed and spread services such as discounts for young people to further encourage overseas travel in cooperation with travel industry organizations. We also coordinated with organizations such as the Outbound Promotion Council, established in February 2017 by the Japan Association of Travel Agents, with the participation of relevant parties, and considered promotion policies such as the conduct of annual exchanges with foreign papers aimed at stimulation of both the inbound and outbound markets.

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, BioCart that use the waiting time for passport control to acquire biometric information in advance were installed at three airports, including Kansai International Airport, and system development began on a face authentication gate for Japanese people. Also, demonstration tests were conducted for measuring and disclosing the time for immigration procedures at Narita International Airport and Kansai International Airport.

Furthermore, in order to reduce the burden on travelers of aviation security screenings at the time of departure and to achieve smoother yet more rigorous screenings body scanners that have already been introduced in Europe, the United States, and elsewhere were installed at eight airports, including Haneda, Narita, Kansai, Chubu, New Chitose, and Fukuoka.

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

We promoted 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. Additionally, an amendment of the Act on Special Measures concerning Urban Reconstruction made it possible for tourist information centers, etc., to exclusively use city parks.

We also moved forward with examination of the tentatively named City Future Gallery concept for connecting the dissemination of information on the attractions of Japanese cities into inbound demand initiatives and overseas expansion of urban development.

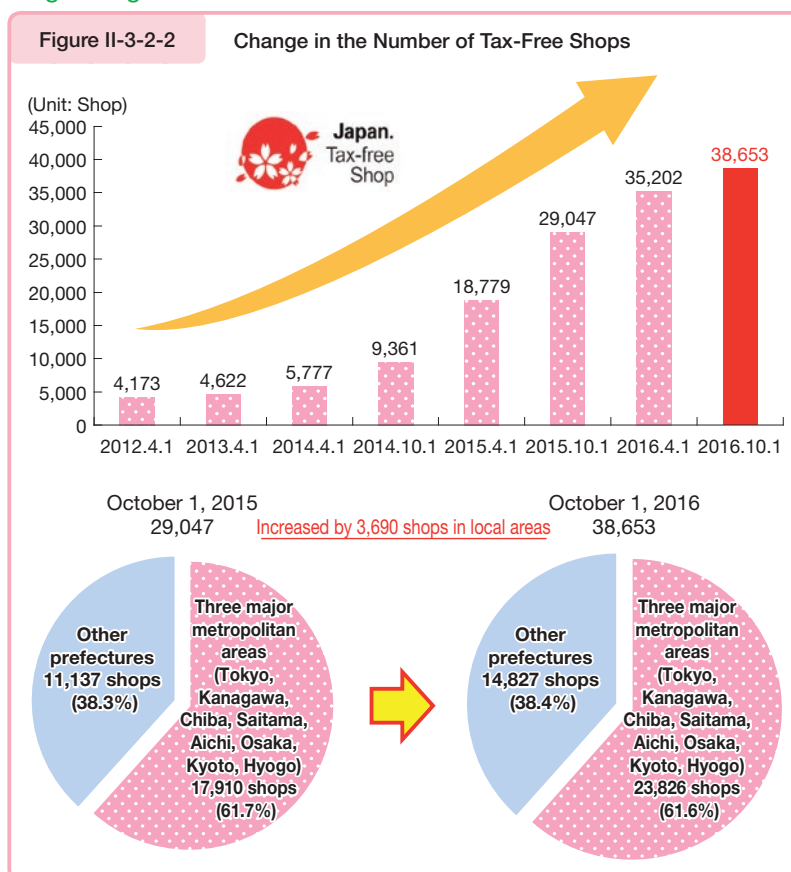
(3) Developing the Environment for Receiving Foreign visitors

We provided support for multilingual services in public transportation and tourist information centers, and the development of free public wireless LAN environment.

Also, we provided support for costs to cope with inbound travelers in approximately 2,000 Japanese inns, hotels, and other accommodation facilities and, in order to make effective use of existing accommodation facilities, we supported projects to strengthen the ability to disseminate vacancy information at information centers, such as tourist information centers in stations and airports.

To further deploy tax-free shops and increase consumption in the countryside, the consumption tax-free system for foreign visitors was further expanded, including the reduction of the lower limit purchase amount for general goods.

We also carried out initiatives to make Michi-no-Eki (Roadside Stations) into sites for the dissemination of local information by encouraging support for inbound tourism responses such as the establishment of tax-free shops and tourist information centers and the development of free public wireless LAN spots at Michi-no-Eki.



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

In FY2016, in coordination with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and with the cooperation of prefectural governments, we created and disseminated a list of approximately 900 medical institutions that can receive foreign visitors. Also, we encouraged foreign visitors to subscribe to travel insurance that they can get after arriving in Japan so that they can receive treatment without worrying about medical costs.

(5) Establishing “Regional Economic Development Corridors”

In March 2017, we began demonstration tests at various passenger railway companies to enable the purchasing of Japan Rail Pass tickets—which foreign travelers used to be able to purchase only at a limited number of overseas travel agents before departure—after arriving in Japan.

We also aimed to establish low-cost and continuous air networks from gateways to the countryside and linking countryside points by reducing the landing fees at regional airports.

Furthermore, to create environment with a variety of easy-to-use transportation modes and encourage the flow of people and goods and local revitalization, we enhanced inter-modal connections, focusing on buses. In April 2016, the Shinjuku Expressway Bus Terminal, which is one of the largest bus terminals in Japan, opened at the Shinjuku Station South Exit, consolidating 19 expressway bus stops that had been scattered around the Shinjuku Station West Exit.

In order to create easy-to-understand road signs by adding route numbers to expressways, a Review Committee on Expressway Numbering was convened in April 2016, which compiled its recommendations the following October. In light of these recommendations, in February 2017, relevant ministerial ordinances were amended to newly establish signs with “Expressway Numbers,” and Japan’s first signs with expressway numbering were installed along the open section of the Ken-O Expressway (between Sakai-Koga IC and Tsukuba-Chuo IC). Additionally, to improve convenience for users, public and private entities cooperated to establish guidelines on how to display expressway numbers (excluding how to display numbering on road signs) and uniformity in readings. To provide appropriate directional guidance to foreign visitors, 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.

Additionally, to encourage the creation of new services related to boat travel, in April 2016, we began operations to allow more flexibility in regulations on the passenger ship business in Model Zones for Boat Travel Revitalization (13 zones established as of the end of March 2017).

To secure means of transportation for tourists in depopulated areas, the “Private Car Compensated Passenger Transport System” was expanded to tourists, including foreign visitors, in National Strategic Special Districts.

(6) Functional Enhancement of Local Airport as Gateway to the World and the Promotion of Low-cost Carrier (LCC) Services

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, maintenance of CIQ facilities at Kansai Airport, and expansion of arrival and departure slots at New Chitose Airport.

Also, we proceeded with examination and preparation for consignment of airport operation to the private sector, including Takamatsu Airport and several airports in Hokkaido, with the aim of revitalizing airports by making use of private-sector wisdom and funds.

Furthermore, to encourage airlines to open new routes, we exhibited and engaged in business negotiations at business fairs, such as World Routes 2016, attended by major airlines and airports from around the world.

(7) Further Expanding the Ability to Receive Cruise Ships

To attain the goal of achieving five million foreign 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, including the upgrading of mooring posts and fenders for receiving large cruise ships using existing stock and starting the provision of a “matching service between cruise ships and ports of call” that attempts to match cruise ships companies and port administrators.

Also, we encouraged the use of a system to provide interest-free loans for the development of passenger facilities by newly established private businesses. In March 2017, we submitted to the Diet a bill to amend the Port and Harbor Act so as to create an arrangement system that would allow priority use of quays to private businesses that develop passenger facilities and make them available for use by the general public at international passenger ship hub ports designated by the Minister of Land, Infrastructure and Transportation.

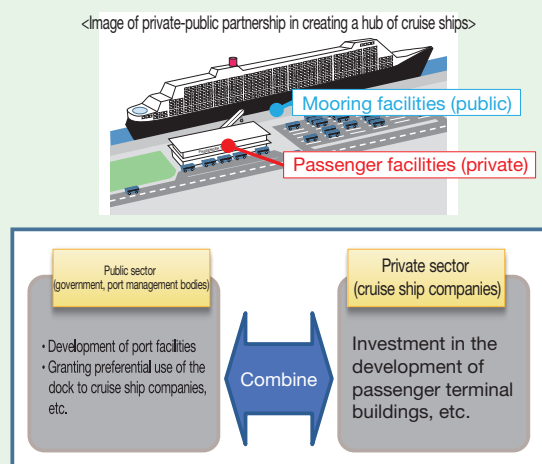
Furthermore, we held seminars for local travel companies in Singapore and Thailand as well as business negotiation meetings between cruise ship companies and port administrators with the cooperation of the National Cruise Vitalization Conference. We also enhanced the website for centrally disseminating specifications of port facilities and tourist information around ports of call.

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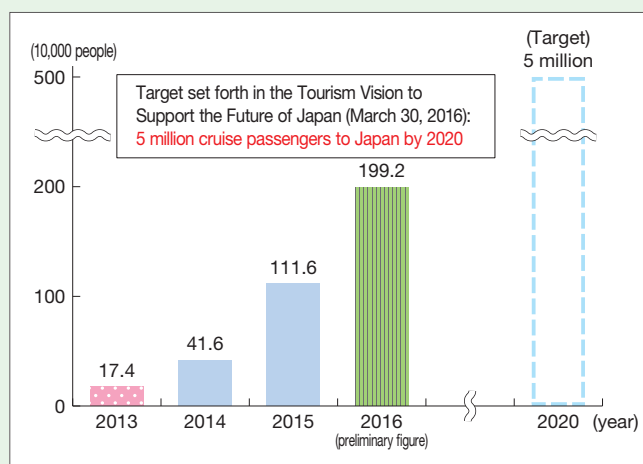
5 Million Foreign Cruise Passengers to Japan by 2020

The population of cruise passengers has increased in Asia and throughout the world in recent years, and the number of passengers to Japan has also surged. The target of realizing “an era of a million cruise passengers to Japan in 2020,” which was set forth in the 2014 Action Program toward the Realization of a Tourism-Oriented Country, was attained in 2015, five years ahead of time. Therefore, a new target to increase the number of cruise passengers to Japan to 5 million by 2020 was set forth in the Tourism Vision to Support the Future of Japan, compiled in March 2016.

The MLIT will make active efforts to realize this new target by improving existing stock to create an environment for accepting cruise ships that are becoming larger year by year, and implementing a variety of relevant measures, such as developing an international hub for cruise ships through private-public partnership.



Source) MLIT



(Note) 1. Figures have been approximated from the number of foreign visitors to Japan (excl. crew members) as announced by the Ministry of Justice's Immigration Bureau.
2. Even in cases in which a single cruise makes a call at multiple ports, the number of foreign passengers to Japan is tabulated by counting each passenger as one visit (rather than totaling the number of passengers counted at each port).

(8) Innovating the Environment for Using Public Transportation

We launched the Highway Bus Information Platform –Japan Bus-Gateway–, an information site for foreigners, to encourage foreign travelers to use highway buses.

We also began examining methods of efficient delivery of the information needed for route searching between transportation operators and route searching service providers, in order to enable route searching that covers public transportation nationwide.

During FY2016, we completed the numbering of all railway stations in Tokyo's 23 wards. We also made progress in considering the implementation of alphabet/Roman numeral numbering of large city bus routes by FY2020.

In order to spur tourism demand among foreign visitors and everyday life demand among seniors by lowering the starting taxi fare, which is at a high level compared to major foreign cities, we conducted a demonstration test at four locations in Tokyo, after which starting taxi fares were lowered throughout the Tokyo area from January 2017.

To reduce foreign travelers' inconvenience of carrying large suitcases onto trains, we use a common Hands-Free Travel logo mark to encourage 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. (Use of the common logo mark has been approved at 163 Hands-Free Travel service counters as of March 2017.)

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

In order to promote the development of a society that adheres to the precepts of universal design (Mental barrier-free, Universal design town building) in response to the upcoming Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics in 2020 and to leave behind a concrete legacy after the Games come to an end, we oriented alterations to be made to the barrier-free transportation standards and guidelines and conducted a model evaluation of the overall status of barrier-free arrangements at tourist destinations, based on the Universal Design 2020 Action Plan decided at the Ministerial Council on Universal Design 2020 held in February 2017.

We encouraged the introduction of barrier-free buses and taxis. We also gathered and disseminated information on good cases of barrier-free practices on passenger ships.

In January 2016, we formulated Tokyo the Policy on Road Sign Improvements toward the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games. In September 2016, we formulated similar policies in Chiba, Saitama, and Kanagawa Prefectures and started improving road signs based on these policies, including the improvement of English signs, use of route numbers, use of pictograms and reversed characters, use of nicknames, enlarged letters, and enhancement of road signs for pedestrians.

Furthermore, with regard to roads around major railway stations and tourist destinations nationwide, we focused on supporting the adoption of universal design in walking spaces, such as the plazas in front of stations.

Additionally, we supported barrier-free improvements, such as the construction of elevators and platform doors at stations related to the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games.

At airports, we established numerical targets related to the handling of passenger terminal buildings. In order to improve traveler convenience, we relocated the taxi stands at Haneda Airport's international terminal.

At tourist information centers, we worked on model structures that add a barrier-free travel consultation counter to create an environment that allows anyone, including the elderly and people with disabilities, to enjoy traveling.

Column

Aiming to Realize an Attractive, World-Class Tourist Destination

The Japan Tourism Agency presents a Commissioner Award to individuals and organizations who have made an outstanding contribution to the promotion and development of tourism in Japan, such as by creating attractive tourist sites, disseminating information on such sites, or attracting foreign visitors to Japan. Below, we introduce the initiatives of the award-winning organizations of the 8th Japan Tourism Agency Commissioner Award.

[Preservation and utilization of historical buildings]

Founded in 1996, NPO Bunkyo Link for Architectural Preservation has paved the way for the preservation of the Former Kusuo Yasuda Residence, a valuable historical building built in 1919 (Sendagi, Bunkyo City, Tokyo), by conducting surveys of the building, proposing preservation measures, engaging in volunteer housekeeping work, and offering public tours of the house. For more than 20 years after its founding, it has continued to manage and run the house through a staff of volunteers, and spotlights the house as a tourism resource by participating in public activities and implementing events rooted in local culture. It also undertakes similar activities for the preservation of Shimazono House, a Registered Tangible Cultural Heritage of Japan, and the Komagome Village Headman's House, designated a historical site of Tokyo, and also makes a significant contribution to the revitalization of the Yanasen district in Tokyo.

The NPO also assumes the role of disseminating its expertise and skills nationwide as a pioneer in the preservation and utilization of historical buildings through citizens' efforts.



Former Kusuo Yasuda Residence, which was miraculously saved by the efforts of Bunkyo Link for Architectural Preservation



Hanayome Noren (bride's curtain) Exhibition
(place: Former Kusuo Yasuda Residence)

[Revitalization of marginal villages and rural areas]

Since 2009, Note Inc. has engaged in activities for the revitalization of marginal villages and rural areas and the utilization of historical buildings, mainly in Sasayama City, Hyogo Prefecture. In Sasayama City, it has renovated more than forty traditional houses, and has invited entrepreneurs and businesses to create an attractive castle town environment that is now home to Hotel Nipponia, built under a distributed hotel concept that regards the entire historical district as a single hotel, as well as an assortment of restaurants, cafes, and craft workshops.

In the Maruyama district of Sasayama City, which used to be a marginal village with a population of only 19, the company launched "Maruyama Village" by transforming abandoned traditional homes in the village into lodging facilities for visitors. The initiative has lured back four residents who had previously moved away from the village, and is otherwise making a large contribution to regional revitalization through tourism.



A traditional Japanese house transformed into a hotel



Maruyama Village

[Local resources as tools for experienced-based school trips]

Since fiscal 2009, the Hiroshima Bay Area Marine Metropolis Research Council has utilized the diverse resources of the Hiroshima Bay area as tools for educational travel in combination with peace education, and welcomes homestay-type, experience-based school trips. The Hiroshima Chamber of Commerce and Industry assumes a central role in promoting the program via public-private partnership, and has established an "experience-based school trip invitation promotion office" within the chamber for interested travel agencies, as part of a one-stop coordination scheme for accelerating the initiative.

The number of participants has increased yearly, and surpassed 12,000 in fiscal 2016. The program not only makes a positive economic contribution by promoting the use of local inns and hotels before and after the homestay school trips and increasing the sales of goods accompanying these stays, but also makes a large contribution to promoting tourism and regional development by generating regional vitality through interactions between local residents and students on school trips.



Students on a homestay school trip



River rafting experience on Ota River in Akiota Town in a mountainous area of Hiroshima Prefecture



Kaidenma traditional rowing boat race experience in Osakikamijima Town on a remote island of Hiroshima Prefecture

[Inbound tours that highlight regional attractions]

Abercrombie & Kent USA, LLC is a long-standing tour operator founded in 1962. It is also one of the largest tour operators in the United States, and has promoted Japan as a travel destination for many years. Owing to its brisk sales of tours to Japan in recent years in particular, it is actively marketing exclusive Japanese tours, including luxury small group tours, arrangements for private travels to attractions throughout Japan, and arrangements for cruises in Japan.

The company also organizes tours that highlight regional attractions in Japan (such as group tours that include visits to the remote islands of Okinawa, Sado, etc.), in an effort to cultivate new Japanese inbound demand and expand the upper-class market. In 2015, it partnered with the Visit Japan campaign to promote Japan travel, and has contributed to increasing the number of visitors to Japan from the United States.



Cruise ship for upper-class travelers



Regional tour routes



Joint campaign

Continued efforts will be made to identify and laterally share best practices throughout Japan, to realize Japan's vision of becoming "a World-Class Tourist Destination."

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 681 groups as of the end of March 2016, with 523 of them pursuing their own landscape

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

plans. Further, the number of municipalities that formulated ministerial ordinances pursuant to the Outdoor Advertisement Act, which is prefectural administrative affairs, by becoming landscape administrative bodies, rose to 85 groups as of October 1, 2016, and comprehensive formation of pleasing landscape is ongoing.

(2) Approaching Landscape Discussions as Part of Social Capital Development

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

(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 are removing utility poles by promoting simultaneous development when constructing new roads or widening existing roads and implementing model construction works for introduction of low-cost methods.

Also, the Act on Promoting Removal of Utility Poles was enacted and took effect in December 2016.

(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 2017, 138 routes had been 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).

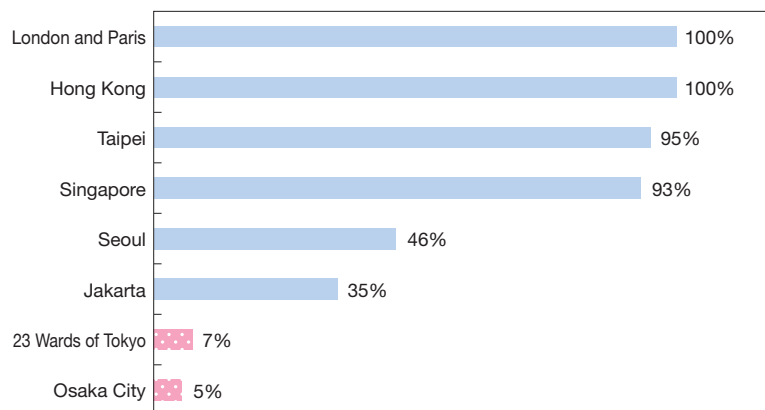
(5) Promoting the Development of Waterfront Spaces, etc.

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 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 development of babbling water streams taking advantage of storm sewers and that of facilities for putting sewage plant effluents to use as babbling

Figure II-3-3-1

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

*7 End of FY2013 status for Japan, surveyed by the MLIT (in terms of road extension)

Source) MLIT

water. The conservation and creation of excellent waterside environments is also ensured by the implementation of appropriate wastewater treatment.

Column

Traveling from Haneda to the City Center via Boat and Enjoying the Attractive Waterfront Environment in Tokyo (Tokyo Waterways Pilot Project)

Waterfront areas in Tokyo are full of charm. For example, traditional yakatabune boats and boathouses create a nostalgic atmosphere of Edo, while historical bridges that were constructed more than 90 years ago provide an insight into the history of Tokyo and waterfront landscapes offer a view of a new Tokyo.

The Tokyo Waterways Pilot Project was implemented from autumn of 2015 to autumn of 2016 on four separate occasions, connecting the Tokyo city center with the coastal areas of Tennozu Isle and Haneda Airport, to study the possibility of creating new waterway routes as a means of waterborne transportation for carrying tourists and demonstrating Japanese hospitality.

In the fourth segment of the project, implemented from October to December 2016, long-distance main routes linking Akihabara and Yokohama at the longest and relatively short branch routes through Tokyo's rivers were established. Test runs of services that allow passengers to board without booking in advance were also conducted as a test of what actual services would eventually be like. The "Regional Support Team" initiative that commenced from the third segment of the project began to see an increase in its membership as the project took on momentum. It has now been launched full scale, with more than 20 participating stores distributing discount coupons and otherwise promoting the region. By the time the project was over, the participants of the project grew to 31 organizations, and some 5,000 people had boarded 275 boat services over a total of approximately 80 days during the four segments of the project.

It is hoped that the project will further bring together the passionate feelings of people who wish to promote awareness of Tokyo's waterfront attractions and invigorate the city, and ultimately realize regular boat services at the initiative of local communities and the private sector.



<Administrative bodies>Chiyoda Ward, Bunkyo Ward, Shinagawa Ward, Ota Ward, MLIT
 <Related institutions>Chiyoda City Tourism Association, Akihabara Town Management, Tennozu Comprehensive Development Council, Japan Airport Terminal Co., Ltd., Atomi University
 <Operating companies>Zeal Corporation, Funasei Ltd., Galleon Co., Ltd., JTB Japan Travel Corp.*, Tokyo Water Ways, Pokekaru-Club, Inc.*, Isetan Mitsukoshi Travel*, KMC Corporation, Haneda Passenger Service Co., Ltd.*
 <Support team>Tokyo Dome Corporation, Akiba.TV Co., Ltd., Mansei Co., Ltd., Tennozu Comprehensive Development Council, Warehouse Terrada, Keihin Electric Express Railway Co., Ltd., mAAcute Kanda Manseibashi, Koishikawa Korakuen (Tokyo Metropolitan Park Association), Hotel Metropolitan Edmont Tokyo, Tennozu Canal Side Association, Nakagawa Special Steel, Inc., Minato Travel and Tourism Association, Tokyo Monorail Co., Ltd.

Source) MLIT

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 FY 2016, Nara Palace Site Guidance Center and other facilities were constructed in Asuka-Nara Palace Site Historical National Government Park (Nara Palace Site).

(2) Preserving Historic Landscapes in Ancient Capitals

In Japan's ancient capital, such as Kyoto, Nara, and Kamakura, restrictions are placed on constructing new buildings, etc., making additions and modifications to existing ones, developing housing land and so on under the Act on Special

Measures for Preservation of Historic Natural Features in Ancient Cities (Ancient Capitals Preservation Law). The Act also provides for the implementation of ancient city preservation projects, such as purchasing land, and publicity, educational and other activities, to help preserve historic landscapes in these cities.

(3) Preserving and Utilizing Historic Public Buildings of Historical Value, etc.

With the aim of contributing to regional town development, we are promoting the preservation and utilization of historic government facilities locally known for a long time. We have developed the environment of historic sediment control facilities (Two Important Cultural Properties and 191 Registered Tangible Cultural Properties as of March 31, 2017) by positioning them and their surrounding environment as a core of tourism resources, thereby encouraging efforts that contribute to the formation of a new forum of human interaction.

(4) Community Development Leveraging Histories and Cultures

Historic landscape maintenance and improvement plans for 62 municipalities (as of March 31, 2017) 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 a new value in rivers from outside to people and private companies leading daily lives or engaging in economic activities without being conscious of rivers around them.

Mizubering is an activity taking place in more than 50 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.

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

(6) Promoting Green Infrastructure Initiatives

Green infrastructure aims to utilize the natural environment's diverse functions (e.g., providing habitats for wildlife, forming pleasing landscapes, and controlling atmospheric warming) and obtain diverse effects such as

Figure II-3-3-2

Inariyama Sediment Control Dams (Nikko, Tochigi): Promoting Tourism and Exchange Activities Using Historic Sediment Control Facilities that Protect Communities



Source) MLIT

Figure II-3-3-3

Riverbed Sketch (Miyagawa River, Takayama City, Gifu)



Source) Junior Chamber International Takayama

Figure II-3-3-4

Riverbed Created (Miyagawa River, Takayama City, Gifu)



Source) Junior Chamber International Takayama

improving local charm and the living environment and preventing/reducing disasters, in terms of both structural and non-structural issues, such as social 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 greenery that function to prevent the spread of fires.



Chapter 3

Realizing a World-Class Tourist Destination and Building a Beautiful Nation