

Chapter 4 Promoting Regional Revitalization

Section 1 Approaches to Regional Revitalization

In order to properly respond to the declining birth rate/aging population to put a brake on population declines, while correcting the excessive concentration in Tokyo Area and maintaining vitality of Japanese society in the future by securing a comfortable living environment in each region, the Basic Policy for Overcoming Population Decline and Vitalizing Local Economy in Japan 2016 was formulated in 2017 and the Overcoming Population Decline and Vitalizing Local Economies: Comprehensive Strategy was revised, in accordance with the Act for Overcoming the Population Decline and Vitalizing Local Economy in Japan passed by the government in November 2014. Also, with the aim of deepening the regional revitalization, ideas such as using vacant stores and revising and establishing laws aimed at promoting local universities, etc., were examined, and information, human and financial support to promote specific initiatives based on regional comprehensive strategy was provided to local governments.

Efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) contribute to the realization of regional revitalization, and from February to March 2018 the Japanese government solicited proposals from local governments (prefectures and municipalities) for the achievement of SDGs, before selecting 29 cities in June of that year from the best proposed approaches as SDG Cities of the Future, with ten of these leading projects further selected as Model Local Government SDG Projects. Given the need for collaboration between various stakeholders in the promotion of SDGs, the Public-Private SDG Partnership Platform for Regional Revitalization was established in August 2018, for the purpose of promoting public-private partnerships and implementing initiatives for matching support and launch study groups, etc. Also, in February 2019, the 1st International Forum on SDGs for Regional Revitalization was held, for the purpose of promoting the sharing of initiatives from SDG Cities of the Future throughout Japan and around the world. Further, the construction of a Financial Scheme for SDGs for Regional Revitalization was examined with the aim of forming an autonomous virtuous cycle to create cash flows for the solution of regional issues.

In March 2019, the Cabinet decided and submitted to the Diet a Bill for Partial Revision of Local Revitalization Act, with the purpose of establishing projects to promote migration to existing housing in rural areas by providing fuller information for migrants and establishing regional housing complex revitalization projects and public facility infrastructure projects utilizing private funds, in order to make a shift from “high-growth period town planning” to the revitalization of towns for a society in population decline.

In order to realize regional revitalization through regulatory reform, the National Strategic Special Districts system has successfully reformed regulations that had been difficult to change due to stiff opposition in a wide range of fields, including medical care, nursery care, employment, education, agriculture, urban reconstruction and community-building. In addition, a total of 315 specific projects have been implemented in a visible way in the 10 designated districts to capitalize on these regulatory reforms. A round-table conference of experts was also held toward the realization of cutting-edge “super cities” embodying the fourth industrial revolution, and this was compiled into a final report in February, with work being carried out to examine the development of necessary systems and technical foundations.

The MLIT is pushing forward the development of tourism regions, with the Destination Marketing/Management Organization (DMO) as its core, creating various regional content and establishing an environment allowing Japan to become a world-class tourist destination and to create jobs by promoting the securing and development of human resources engaged in the construction, shipbuilding, transportation and other industries that underpin regional economies.

Furthermore, with the aim of reviving regional communities, we are pushing forward efforts to make regional cities compact and create transportation networks, form small stations in hilly and mountainous areas, and develop houses and towns for multi-generation residents in coordination with the comprehensive regional care system in suburban metropolitan areas. We are also promoting multi-habitation in earnest and establishing an environment for making relocation easier by facilitating the distribution of existing homes in order to create new flows of people into rural areas.

The MLIT has also been driving nationwide urban renaissance, through the development of public and public-benefit

facilities in a public-private partnership, as well as urban renaissance aimed at the enhancement of international competitiveness of cities by mainly private developers.

Section 2 Promoting Measures Supporting Regional Revitalization

1 Efforts Directed at Augmenting Regional and Private Self-reliance and Discretion

(1) Supporting Local Regional Revitalization Efforts

Regional revitalization is not an effort to be taken uniformly throughout Japan; it involves individual regions capitalizing on their distinct resources and characteristics to tackle their own distinct challenges to overcome depopulation. As local governments continue to devise plans for measures, promote projects and verify effects in line with their own individual strategies, the national government has continued to play the supporting role of providing assistance on information, personnel and financial aspects.

To provide assistance on information aspects, the government provides the Regional Economy and Society Analyzing System (RESAS), which takes big data from the public and private sectors regarding regional economies and makes it visible and intuitive. The system is used to fully understand the current state and challenges of each region; analyze strengths, weaknesses and future visions; set basic targets and KPIs, and establish PDCA cycles, thereby supporting the regional revitalization efforts of local governments, private companies, residents, NPOs and others.

To provide assistance on personnel aspects, regional revitalization colleges train and secure the human resources required for regional revitalization, while the government provides support through the regional revitalization concierge, which sets up a consultation desk at each ministry and the regional revitalization personnel support system in which government, private company and other organizations' personnel are dispatched to small local governments.

To provide assistance on financial aspects, we are providing support through such efforts as a regional revitalization promotion subsidy that consistently and continuously supports multi-year, forward-thinking projects undertaken by local governments, and a regional revitalization support tax system that provides preferential treatment in the form of tax credits for corporate donations to regional revitalization efforts undertaken by local governments (a corporate version of *furusato nozei*, which is a system of remitting local taxes to regional municipalities of the remitters' choice), thereby enabling regions to make consistent efforts toward regional revitalization from medium- and long-term perspectives.

To promote further approaches to individualistic and charming regional planning across Japan, the MLIT has awarded the Handmade Hometown Prize (awarded by the Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism) since FY1986, commending initiatives for regional revitalization related to social infrastructure. At the 33rd Handmade Hometown Prize Grand Prix 2018, presentations were given by the 23 recipient organizations from that year (3 for the grand prize division and 20 for the general division), and a winning organization was chosen for the Grand Prix and Best Presentation awards for each of the general and grand prize divisions. Winner information was also shared broadly online, etc., as good examples of uses for regional development^{Note 1}.

Since FY1984, Community Development Awards (awarded by the Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism) have been given to ingenious, independent and broad regional development activities for the purpose of encouraging regional development through regional collaboration and exchange. In FY2018, 51 organizations from 29 prefectures were nominated, and 7 groups received various awards, along with the Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism Award going to the Okunoto area of Ishikawa for its efforts at regional promotion utilizing local materials in local traditional crafts. Information on the content of best practices from awards are widely disseminated through the MLIT website^{Note 2}.

(2) Promoting Use of Know-how and Funds Originating from Private Sectors

In order to enhance the growth and competitiveness of local cities, MINTO provided support in the forms of investment, joint operation, and so forth in private urban redevelopment projects, such as those linked with an urban renaissance and development project undertaken by a local public entity and accredited by the minister of the MLIT. Accordingly, MINTO has established a fund with regional financial institutions, to support the improvement of value

Note 1 Handmade Hometown Prize website: <http://www.mlit.go.jp/sogoseisaku/region/tedukuri/>

Note 2 MLIT Regional Promotion website: http://www.mlit.go.jp/kokudoseisaku/chisei/kokudoseisaku_chisei_mn_000016.html

in certain areas linked in private urban redevelopment projects through investment, bond acquisition and subsidies, etc., through the fund.

In its bid to realize and maintain the concept of sustainable community development with community participation through maintenance and betterment of community charms and vitalities, the MLIT supports projects related to the diffusion and promotion of know-how, etc., that is possessed by private associations with experience in the practice of community development activities and that leads to continuing sources of certain profitability in the course of such activities, so that such knowledge can be horizontally extended to other associations about to embark on similar activities, and also supports experimental efforts for advanced private urban development activities, including facility maintenance based on agreements to promote convenience for cities under the Act on Special Measures Concerning Urban Renaissance.

In addition, consideration is in progress toward the realization of measures aimed at combating aging expressways in conjunction with urban redevelopment, using the Tsukiji River and sections of the Metropolitan Expressways as model cases, on the basis of the Road Act amended in FY2014 that allows for usage of upper open spaces on roads. Regarding the project to bury the Nihombashi section of the Metropolitan Expressway, this is being developed not only as a measure against aging but as a specific private renewal project. Going forward, the national government, Tokyo city and Chuo-ku will continue to cooperate on Metropolitan Expressway projects.

In response to the Act on the Partial Revision of the Act on Special Measures Concerning Urban Renaissance, which came into effect in July 2018 and has expanded the application of the three-dimensional road system to general roads, the MLIT is now actively promoting the use of the three-dimensional road system.

Moreover, public-private partnership efforts leveraging road spaces are being pushed forward in order to create forums for regional activity/exchanges and maintain/improve road quality.

In FY2015, the Act to Partially Amend the Act on Special Districts for Structural Reform, which enables private-sector operators to operate toll roads managed by public corporations, was passed and enacted, and since October 2016, toll roads in Aichi Prefecture have been operated by the Aichi Road Concession Corporation, established by the Maeda Group (Representative corporation: Maeda Corporation).

Figure II-4-2-1

Kyoto Minamiza Kabuki Theater (Shijo, Kyoto City, Kyoto Prefecture), an Example of Joint Implementation and Other Forms of Support for Excellent Private Urban Redevelopment Projects



Source) MLIT

2 General Endeavors to Build an Intensive Urban Structure

Compact cities and development of surrounding city transportation networks such as by rebuilding public transportation networks should be worked on continuously with the mid- to long-term perspectives as they are effective policy means to realize specific administrative purposes such as maintaining and improving convenience of lives of residents, revitalizing regional economies by enhanced productivity in the service industry, and reducing administrative costs by improved efficiency in administrative services.

With the aim of pushing forward initiatives of municipalities toward the realization of compact cities, the Act on Special Measures concerning Urban Regeneration was amended in 2014 to create the appropriate location plan system for encouraging establishment of residential and urban functions with economic incentives. As of the end of FY2017, 468 municipalities made specific efforts on creating appropriate location plans, of which 231 cities prepared and published the appropriate location plan. 644 local governments has tackled with local public transportation networking plans and 500 of them has published the plans.

In addition, we are working to improve support measures in line with actual needs, formulate and horizontally develop model cities, and make the outcomes of efforts visible through the Compact City Formation Support Team (secretariat: MLIT), which comprises relevant ministries and agencies, so that these initiatives of municipalities will be promoted as comprehensive efforts in coordination with various relevant measures concerning healthcare/welfare, housing, realignment of public facilities and the optimum use of government owned facilities.

In FY2018, we worked to improve important support measures based on the actual issues and needs of municipalities, and provided them with an overall collection of support measures in list form. In addition, a second version of the model city is being developed and efforts are being made to demonstrate the effectiveness of a Compact Plus Network that clearly indicates target values and the ideal state of cities. Furthermore, regarding smart planning, which is a method of planning in which optimal facility locations and other factors are examined from users' viewpoints, we conducted observations in multiple cities to further improve advanced systems, and made efforts to provide a wider array of quantifiable measures and evaluation indices.

Also, with the amendment of the Act on Special Measures Concerning Urban Renaissance, in response to the “sponification” of cities, where vacant land and vacant houses in cities (low unused land) randomly occur, a system was introduced to promote the aggregation and reorganization and use of low unused land (Unused Land Rights Establishment Promotion Plan, Facility Location Guidance Promotion Agreements etc.).

3 Urban Planning and Infrastructures Development Taking Advantage of Regional Characteristics

(1) Emergency Development of Urban Planning Roads Instrumental in Encouraging Private Investment

The development of urban planning roads is instrumental in facilitating urban reconstruction because it encourages the reconstruction, etc., of roadside buildings. For those routes under construction whose completion is bottlenecked because of small plots of land yet to be purchased, the local governments (project-implementing entities) have announced their pledges to complete the construction within a certain period of time (completion time declaration routes; as of April 2018, 239 routes were declared by 97 project-implementing entities) to speed up the development of the project benefits.

(2) Developing Transport Nodes

Transport nodes, such as railway stations and bus terminals, are very convenient and have great potential as the core of urban reconstruction, because they attract numerous people to use the various kinds of transport facilities that converge upon them.

The MLIT leveraged the implementation of transport node improvement projects, urban and regional transport strategy promotion projects, integrated railway station improvement projects, and other projects at the transport nodes, such as the Shinjuku St. South Exit District, and in the surrounding areas, in order to improve the ease with which passengers transition from one means of transportation to another, to consolidate the urban areas disrupted by railways, to improve station functions, and to streamline urban traffic and augment the functions of these transport nodes.

(3) Strengthening Connections between Modes of Transportation (Modal Connections)

Regarding concentrated transportation terminals, including the Shinjuku Expressway Bus Terminal, the MLIT developed strategic implementation via road projects while strengthening public-private partnerships, and is promoting the strengthening of bus service and other modal connections to accelerate the flow of people, goods and accelerate regional revitalization by creating a place in which people can choose a transportation mode from a wide variety of options, all of which are easy to use.

As for the user environment for buses in Japan, from the users' point of view, bus services are of much lower quality than railway and airway services in Japan and bus services in foreign countries. As user-oriented road measures that boost stock effects are promoted in the future, it is important that the road measures also include efforts to accelerate the improvement of the convenience of public transportation, including buses, while taking into account the state of the network between expressways, railways, Shinkansen and other modes of transportation in regional areas.

Under these circumstances, as an effort focused on buses, we will implement the Basuta (Bus Terminal) Project to improve the convenience of bus hubs while making full use of ITS and PPP, thereby strengthening modal connections, re-

alizing the revitalization of regions, and improving productivity in the strengthening of disaster responses.

Improvements at the Shinjuku Expressway Bus Terminal, which opened in April 2016, includes installation of souvenir shop locations and realignment of National Highway 20 for a better waiting space and less congestion. Further efforts are being made on an ongoing basis to improve convenience and to strengthen measures against congestion. Future plans include Shinagawa Station and Kobe Sannomiya Station, where strategic integrated transportation terminals will be developed as road projects through enhanced cooperation between the public and private sectors.

We are also promoting the effective use of transfers between expressway buses at expressway service areas and parking areas, junction transportation, and expressway bus stops, as well as the improvement of environments for using local buses.

As for the new modes of transportation of car-sharing and bicycle-sharing, we are promoting efforts that strengthen connections with other modes of public transportation while making effective use of roadway spaces.

We built Japan's first on-road car-sharing station adjacent to the Otemachi subway station complex in Chiyoda City, Tokyo, and are implementing a pilot program to verify the possibilities of encouraging the use of public transportation. In addition, in March 2018, we added a car-sharing station near Shimbashi Station, which is in a different type of location. We are also implementing a separate pilot program to verify the effects of locating a bicycle-sharing port, which would be the first in the metropolis, on the national route near this car-sharing station. We will take into account the results of these pilot programs while continuing discussions toward improving convenience for road users through the effective use of roadway spaces.

(4) Wide-area Development of Infrastructures to Induce Firm Location

Competition, collaboration, and regional buoyancy in East Asia should benefit greatly by inviting and accumulating internationally competitive growing industries in the individual regions. Motivated by this recognition, measures have been promoted to support expanding regional employment and more buoyant economy by concentrating investment on the development of those infrastructures that are truly needed to carry out unique regional approaches, such as developing airports, ports and harbors, railroads and wide-area expressway networks.

(i) Airport development

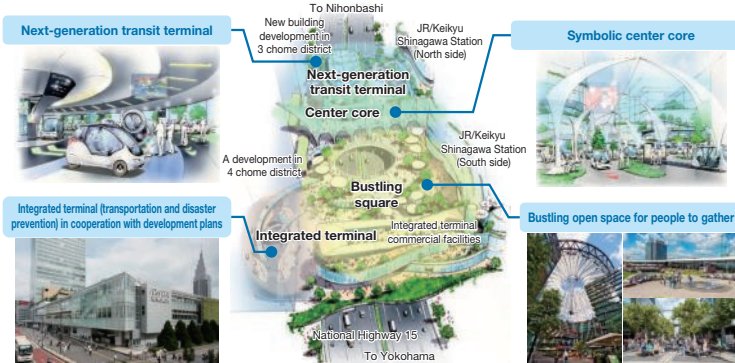
Aviation network connecting distant cities at home and abroad are greatly instrumental in revitalizing regional communities, boosting the tourism industry and corporate economic activities. It is expected that the aviation sector will play a key role to boost Japanese economy taking advantage of global economic growth, in particular booming economy in Asia. In an effort to enhance Japan's international competitiveness and regional competitiveness in the hinterlands of the airports, MLIT has been making efforts to enhance airport capacities and relocate or change the internal layout of airport terminal area in order to improve user-friendliness.

(ii) Port and harbor development

In Japan, which is surrounded by the sea, the majority of international trades are conducted by marine transportation, and domestic marine transportation serves important roles in logistics and interactions between regions. Ports and harbors are the gateway for international trades and support Japanese industries as places of corporate activities. In order to enhance international competitiveness of Japanese industries by improving logistics efficiency and to maintain and create employment and income, international logistics terminals are being developed at ports and harbors that underpin regional key industries.

Figure II-4-2-2 Illustration of Future Shinagawa Station West Exit Square

Aim to develop a "future style station square where all the people of the world can gather", promoting an urban infrastructure where roads, station and town become one.



(iii) Railway development

The nationwide network of trunk railways is the lifeblood of passenger and freight transport, accelerating interaction between blocks and between regions, encouraging industrial location, and activating regional economies to energize regional living, and rail freight transportation plays a significant role in the transportation of industrial goods that support regional economies.

(iv) Road development

The MLIT is strengthening Japan's international competitiveness by accelerating and facilitating logistics, and from the perspective of regional revitalization, is forming a new network of trunk highways, such as high-standard arterial highways.

(5) Promoting Community-conscious Projects and Programs

(i) Michi-no-eki (Roadside Station)

Located roadside, a Michi-no-eki is a facility that provides 3 main functions, including “resting space” such as parking spaces and restrooms, “information provision” for road traffic and local events, and “hub for local integration” that encourages interaction between the local residents and road users and between regions. As of March 2019, there were 1,154 registered Michi-no-ekis.

In recent years, local specialties and tourism resources have been utilized to welcome many people to Michi-no-ekis as hubs of regional revitalization nationwide, thereby creating regional employment, reactivating economies, and helping improve resident services. As a framework to provide focused support to these efforts in coordination with relevant organizations, the priority Michi-no-eki system was created in FY 2014. In addition to six national model Michi-no-ekis selected at the time of establishment of the system and 35 priority Michi-no-ekis, a further 38 priority Michi-no-ekis were selected in FY2015 and a further 15 in FY2018.

Further, beginning in FY2016, an initiative was started to establish advanced models on certain specific themes, with six Michi-no-ekis certified under the theme of “resident services” in FY2016 and seven Michi-no-ekis certified as “regional transportation hubs” in FY2017.

(ii) Creation of hubs through the use of expressway rest areas

Expressway rest areas were typically thought of as only available to users of expressways, but the development of “welcome gates,” “highway oases,” and the like in recent years has opened the facilities to regions along the expressways to promote regional revitalization, and to encourage those efforts, we are collaborating with relevant organizations to provide support in line with the progress of those efforts.

To this end, since July 2018, development has been in progress to consolidate the Highway service facilities at Kawan-nan-cho with the Higashi Kyushu Kawaminami Parking Area.

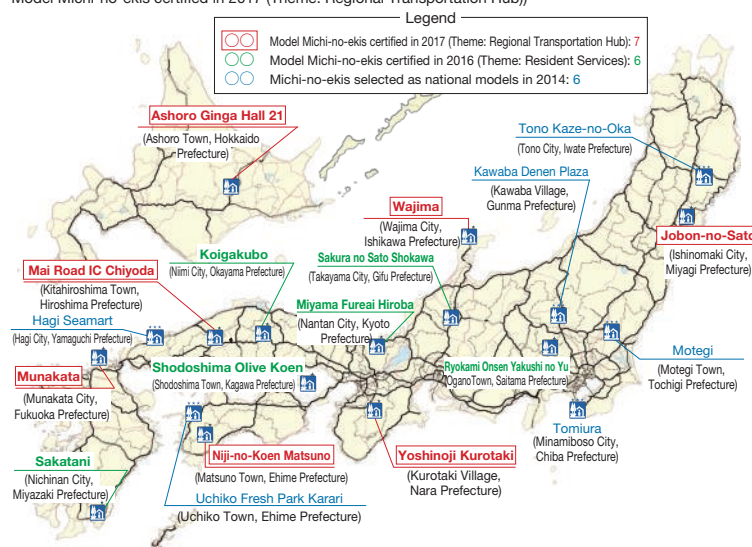
Figure II-4-2-3 Locations of Model Michi-no-ekis

Locations of Model Michi-no-ekis selected

(Michi-no-ekis selected as national models in 2014;

Model Michi-no-ekis certified in 2016 (Theme: Resident Services);

Model Michi-no-ekis certified in 2017 (Theme: Regional Transportation Hub))



(iii) Improvement of road management through public-private partnerships

Past efforts to work together with regions in the course of road management include cooperation with private groups and others through the Volunteer Support Program (VSP) and the like. In April 2016, the Road Act was amended and a road cooperation organization system was created in an effort to further improve road management through cooperation with private groups and others who resolve common road-related problems, take targeted action to address the needs of road users, and voluntarily implement other activities. As of the end of FY2018, we had designated 32 groups for national highways under government control.

Road cooperation organizations implement activities in roadway spaces to improve the appeal of roads, and the benefits reaped from those activities make it possible to improve road management activities. In addition, road cooperation organizations are undertaking measures to streamline and facilitate administrative procedures regarding the construction and maintenance of roads and their exclusive use of roads.

(iv) Support system for river-town planning

In order to revitalize rivers that show various shapes from the mouth to the source and communities connected to them, we are promoting the formation of favorable spaces where rivers and towns integrate by formulating plans for river-town planning that utilizes rivers with practical use of resources; such as landscape, history, culture and foundation for tourism; and inventive wisdom of the district, under coordination among municipalities, private businesses, local residents, and river administrators. By FY2018, 213 locations had been registered in the support system for river-town planning.

(v) Managing rivers with resident participation to suit regional characteristics

Those individuals who possess an expert knowledge of river environments and who are zealous for the good river development are appointed as river environment preservation monitors to help create and preserve river environments and carry out meticulous activities aimed at ensuring and promoting orderly river usage. Love river monitors are also at work in order to gather information about river management, such as illegal garbage dumping in to river or defects in river facilities, to report that information to river administrators and to promote the philosophy of river protection.

Furthermore, the MLIT designates private organizations, etc., that pursue voluntary activities relevant to the maintenance of rivers, the preservation of river environments, or other types of river management as river cooperation organizations, and legally accredits them as organizations working in conjunction with river administrators, with a view to promoting organized voluntary activities and driving diverse modes of river management tailored to specific regional conditions.

(vi) Supporting efforts to take advantage of the regional features of the seaside

With the aim of stimulating the use of the seaside and enhancing its charm as a tourist resource, we support seaside environment development projects in which seaside preservation facilities are developed according to active seaside usage plans.

The MLIT designates those corporations and associations that are accredited to be capable of voluntarily conducting various activities, such as cleaning and planting seashores for preservation, protecting rare species of animals and plants along the seaside, getting prepared for natural disasters and hosting sessions of environmental education, as seaside cooperation organizations to reinforce the ties of collaboration with localities and thus to enhance coastal management to suit regional characteristics. Through FY 2018, the MLIT has designated 18 organizations.

(vii) Regional promotion built around ports

Those facilities at which continual approaches to regional development are carried on have been accredited as Minato (Port) Oases by Ports and Harbours Bureau Director-General to promote community development around the core of ports to help revitalize localities by promoting exchanges of local residents and tourism (126 ports as of the end of March 2019).

Minato Oases help generate excitement in communities through various activities such as the “All Japan Sea-Class Gourmet Competition” hosted by the National Council on Minato Oases. These facilities are also expected to serve new needs, such as accepting the rapidly increasing number of inbound tourists who arrive by cruise ship in recent years, and providing support during and after disasters.

In addition, to respond to diversifying needs of ports and harbors, such as providing Japanese-style hospitality when cruise ships dock at Japanese ports and harbors, and for purposes such as promoting management of ports and harbors through public-private partnerships, the Ports and Harbors Cooperation Association system through which port and harbor administrators designate appropriate private groups and the like is used to make further efforts to revitalize communities centered around ports (40 associations as of March 31, 2019).

(viii) Building centers of marine leisure

The development of Umi-no-ekis have also been promoted as a means of improving the appeal of marine leisure and better utilizing existing port and marina facilities, etc., and as of the end of March 2019, 168 Umi-no-ekis had been registered nationwide. The selection of “Marine-tic Routes” has been developed for model routes to local sightseeing spots and gourmet spots, with Umi-no-ekis serving as way stations, and to encourage the enjoyment of cruising by tourists in addition to traditional pleasure boat users. A further 11 model routes were selected in March 2019, with the aim of expanding these “Marine-tic Routes” into more regions.

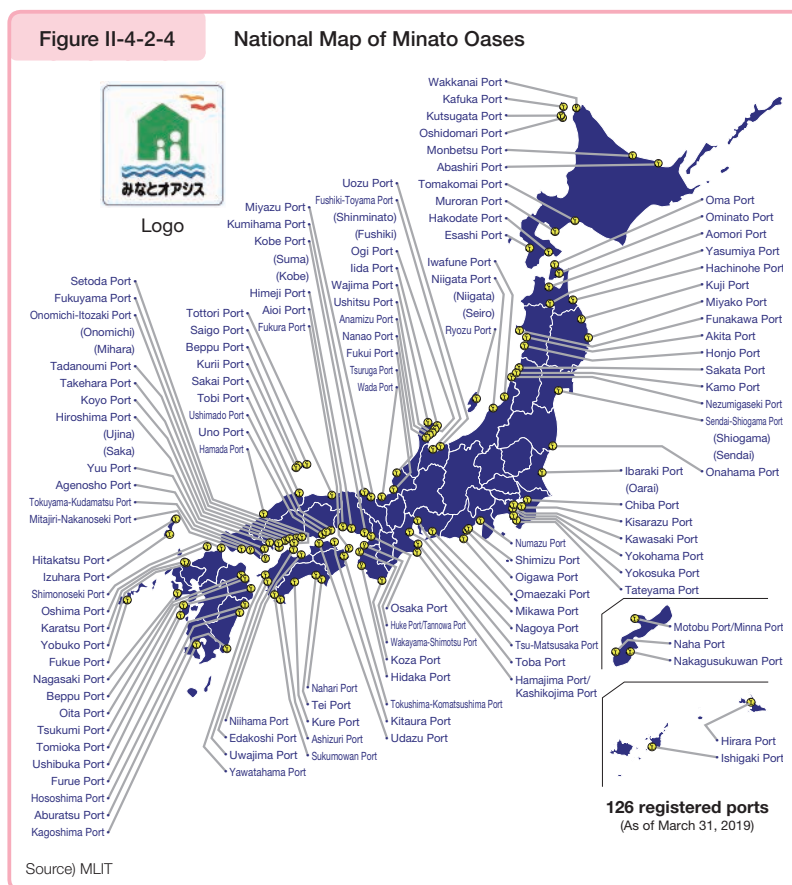
(6) Promoting the Active Maintenance of Cadastral Maps

To further promote cadastral surveys, which contributes to rapid recovery and reconstruction after disasters and smooth infrastructure development and private urban development, the national government has prepared basic boundary information for urban areas and mountain villages where cadastral surveys have been delayed, and has promoted the use of results from other non-cadastral surveys, in addition to providing financial support to municipalities for cadastral surveys.

We are also promoting improvements in the efficiency of cadastral surveys with the creation and dissemination of manuals on cadastral survey methods using remote sensing technologies.

(7) Deep underground utilization

Regarding deep underground utilization, in addition to proceeding with appropriate processing in accordance with the provisions of the law for cases in which applications have been made, we are also conducting technical examinations for the facilitation of these surveys and for the proper and rational use of areas deep underground through a Deep Underground Usage Council.



4 Self-Reliance and Revitalization of Wide-Area Blocks, and Formation of National Land

(1) National Land and Regional Development for Creation of Convection Promoting National Land

To achieve regional revitalization and sustainable growth, it is important to deploy measures in an integrated manner while drawing out regional wisdom and devices. Therefore, with the aim of forming convection promoting land that encourages innovations by dynamically inducing convection across Japan under the National Spatial Strategies and Regional Plans, measures are being taken according to the characteristics of regions while working to form multi-layered national land and regional structures. The MLIT also works on strategies for regional revitalization through public-private partnerships and government support in developing foundations that underpin private sector activity and measures to drive forward autonomous and sustainable regional development with cooperation among various entities.

(i) Promotion of infrastructure development for revitalization of wide-area regions

To form self-reliant wide-area blocks, in FY2018, 35 prefectural governments established 35 common goals to work on together in groups of two to three and each government created a total of 77 wide-area regional revitalization infrastructures development plans to revitalize the regions through buoyant human and material traffic. The MLIT granted subsidies to implement structural and non-structural projects based on these plans.

(ii) Promoting the development of infrastructures for regional revitalization with partnership between the public and private sectors

In order to implement smooth and speedy transition from the planning stage to the implementation stage, at the time of private sector decision-making without missing opportunities for infrastructure development projects that have been worked out in a partnership between the public and private sectors to contribute to wide-area regional strategies, subsidies were provided to local governments in FY2018 for 24 feasibility studies including outline designs and implementation of PPP/PFI.

(iii) Promoting regional planning with diverse entities interworking

In its bid to further self-supporting, sustainable community development through the interworking of local diverse entities, the MLIT promotes efforts to build a support system with various entities interworking with one another to craft project-type community development activities (regional businesses).

(iv) Formation of vibrant economic and living zones through allied core metropolitan areas

In metropolitan areas that have a certain size of population and economy, the formation of allied core metropolitan areas that aim to lead economic growth, consolidate and strengthen high-level city functions and enhance services related to people's daily lives is promoted.

Originally metropolitan areas in scope were mainly regional ordinance-designated cities and core cities (population of 200,000 or more). However, the Overcoming Population Decline and Vitalizing Local Economies: Comprehensive Strategy (revised in 2015) added metropolitan areas centering on adjacent two neighboring cities with population of more than 100,000 each to the scope under certain conditions. As of the end of March 2019, the scope included 31 areas.

(2) Promotion, etc., of regional foundation formation

(i) Developing foundations for self-reliant growth in diverse wide-area blocks

In core cities^{Note} based on the Multi-Polar Patterns National Land Formation Promotion Act, we have continued to provide necessary cooperation to ensure smooth development for the location of business facilities and accumulation of various functions as the core of these cities. Furthermore, as the pace of urban development accelerates along the Tsukuba Express railroad line, environmentally friendly cities are being built along the Tsukuba Express railroad line by leveraging the characteristics of Tsukuba Science City. In addition, to form a new hub for the deployment of cultural, academic and research activity based on the Kansai Science City Construction Act, the construction of Kansai Science City is under way with a partnership among affiliated ministries, local governments, economic circles and so on according the Basic

Note Cities other than the Tokyo Metropolis which serve as core cities equivalent to the wider region around them (14 locations)

Policy on the Construction of Kansai Science City.

(ii) Promoting Small Station development within a village area

In some hilly and mountainous areas and other regions with declining and aging population, it is increasingly difficult to maintain life service functions, including shopping and healthcare, and community functions. Therefore, in regions that have multiple villages, including elementary school districts, we are promoting the formation of small stations in which required functions and bases of regional activities are concentrated within walking distance, and transportation networks with nearby villages are secured.

Specifically, we support the realignment and consolidation of life service functions leveraging unused facilities, and are working on penetration and boosting awareness in coordination with relevant ministries.

(iii) Reviews of the relocation of the Diet and other organizations

The MLIT aids the Diet in its reviews of the relocation of the Diet and other organizations based on the Act for Relocation of the Diet and Other Organizations by conducting surveys on the relocation of the Diet, disseminating information to the nation and so on.

(3) Actions on Land with Unknown Owners

(i) Actions for the facilitation of use of land with unknown owners

The amount of land with unknown owners is increasing nationwide, and this is causing an obstacle for the smooth implementation of projects such as the promotion of public works, etc., and in June 2018, the Act on Special Measures Concerning Use Facilitation of Land with Unknown Owners was enacted, establishing a system whereby land with unknown owners can be used for a certain period of time for projects for the benefit of local residents and where owner searches can be further rationalized, etc. With the enactment of this law, a Guide to Applying for Approval of Undertakings^{Note 1} was also published to facilitate approval of undertakings for public works, and Cooperative Councils on Land with Unknown Owners were also put in place in regional development bureaus to provide support for municipalities.

(ii) Efforts to solve or prevent the problem of land with unknown owners

Based on the Basic Policy for the Promotion of Measures for Land with Unknown Owners^{Note 2} determined in June 2018 by the relevant Ministerial Committee for the promotion of measures for land with unknown owners, the decision was made to promote the close cooperation of relevant government agencies to solve or prevent the problem of land with unknown owners. At the MLIT, the Special Committee of the National Land Development Council Land Policy Subcommittee has examined the system for dealing with land in a depopulating society, and in February 2019, the committee announced^{Note 3} a summary of measures to support land use and management and to resolve legal obstacles, clarifying that the first responsibility for land use and management belongs to the owner, that land use and management by local community is of public interest in the case that there is difficulty to fulfill the responsibility, and that the public interest can make ownership restricted. In addition, the Review Subcommittee published an interim report in February of this same year^{Note 4} on the best way for this Subcommittee's Planning Division to carry out national land surveys, considering measures for proceeding smoothly and quickly with cadastral surveys even in cases where some owners are unknown, and measures to advance investigations such as through the issuing of public notices when the whereabouts of the owner is unknown etc.

Note 1 http://www.mlit.go.jp/sogoseisaku/land_expropriation/sosei_land_fr_000476.html

Note 2 <http://www.cas.go.jp/jp/seisaku/shoyushafumei/dai2/policy.pdf>

Note 3 http://www.mlit.go.jp/policy/shingikai/totikensangyo02_sg_000137.html

Note 4 http://www.mlit.go.jp/policy/shingikai/totikensangyo06_sg_000047.html

5 Promoting Regional Partnerships and Interactions

(1) Forming a Trunk-line Network to Support Regions

To achieve safe, comfortable travel to the central part of an area that has urban functions, such as medical care and education, the MLIT supports the elimination of bottlenecks by widening existing roads and developing road networks. Furthermore, in order to promote the integration of merged municipalities, the development of roads that connect the central area of a municipality to each of its centers, such as public facilities, bridges, and so on, is being promoted by implementing municipal merger support road development projects in collaboration with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications.

(2) Promoting Human Interaction between Cities and Rural Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Communities

The MLIT forms axes for human wide-area interaction and partnership through the development of trunk road networks, supplies housing and housing land to help realize country life, develops ports and harbors to serve as centers of human interaction, and more.

(3) Promoting Regional Settlement, etc.

In order to support information dissemination by municipalities that work on expanded interactions and relocation to rural areas through hands-on exchange programs for young people in rural areas, such information is put together in the MLIT website. Information about dual habitation is also being disseminated^{Note}.

The MLIT also supports the utilization of vacant houses and buildings by local governments through the appropriation of General Social Infrastructures Development Subsidies to address a wide range of regional issues.

(4) Introduction of Local Design License Plate

To promote regions and tourism and to foment a sense of unity in regions, and based on proposals from municipal governments, we decided to allow 41 areas nationwide to issue license plates with designs that feature regional characteristics, starting around October 2018, and from FY2020, license plates with designs featuring the names of a further 17 new regions nationwide will be issued.

6 Securing Means of Regional Transport

(1) Securing, Maintaining and Improving Means of Regional Transport

Maintaining day-to-day means of regional transport is of vital importance to the revitalization of regional communities. Out of this recognition, the MLIT supports efforts directed at forming comfortable and safe public transport, as by securing and maintaining community transport, such as regional bus routes and sea and air routes to remote islands, in collaboration with diverse stakeholders, developing facilities that help add to the safety of local railways, and implementing barrier-free measures. In FY 2018, we continued to facilitate the realization of efficient and sustainable local public transportation through such efforts as supporting the realignment of local public transportation, leveraging the framework of the Act on Revitalization and Rehabilitation of Local Public Transportation Systems.

Also, to assist local governments in planning transportation measures, we issued a report entitled “Pearls of Wisdom for Ensuring Regional Mobility 2018”, which considers methods of establishing transportation hubs based on an analysis of human retention and mobility and on forming networks centered around these transportation hubs.

Note MLIT Regional Promotion website: http://www.mlit.go.jp/kokudoseisaku/chisei/kokudoseisaku_chisei_mn_000016.html

Figure II-4-2-5 Local Public Transport Securing, Management and Improvement Projects

Support for efforts toward the realization of sustainable local public transportation networks based on the Act on Revitalization and Rehabilitation of Local Public Transportation Systems, etc.

FY2019 Budget: 22 billion yen

**Projects for securing and maintaining local public transportation
(securing and maintaining transportation for daily life based on regional characteristics)**

<Support breakdown>

- Mainline bus services
Support for vehicle purchasing and operation for mainline bus services that form interregional transportation networks
- Intraregional transportation services
Support for vehicle purchasing and intraregional transportation services such as community buses and on-demand taxis in underpopulated areas, etc.
- Sea and air route services to and from remote islands
Support for sea and air route services to and from remote islands, which residents rely on daily as their mode of transportation.



**Projects promoting the elimination of barriers in local public transportation
(Building comfortable and safe public transportation services)**

<Support breakdown>

- Introduction of low-floor buses and welfare taxis, installation of tactile tiles with lines for delineating railway station platform edges, installation of home doors, etc.
- Renovation of facilities to improve the safety of local railways, etc.



**Local public transportation survey projects, etc.
(Support planning for the formation of local public transportation networks)**

<Support breakdown>

- Surveys related to the formulation of plans for the formation of local public transportation networks
- Surveys related to the formulation of policies to facilitate mobility and to promote local barrier-free facilities
- Promotion of use and evaluation of projects based on plans for the formulation of local public transportation networks

*Prompted by special measures for the formulation of local public transportation network formation plans and support for bus services, etc., in relation to cooperative measures led by Councils of prefecture and municipal members towards the realization of sustainable regional public transportation networks, with a view to overall traffic conditions. (Trial regional public transportation collaboration promotion project)

*Special measures support in cooperation with urban development support for projects based on railway business reconstruction plans or local public transportation reorganization plans certified by the national government (separation of in/out bound local rail, improvement of local bus route convenience, reorganization of bus routes for operational efficiency and introduction of various demand-type services, etc.)

**Projects to secure and maintain disaster area interregional trunk line systems/Specified disaster area public transportation survey projects
(Great East Japan Earthquake Response: Flexible support for bus transportation, etc., in the disaster area)**

FY2019 Budget: 900 million yen

(Great East Japan Earthquake Reconstruction Special Account: Reconstruction Agency lump sum)

<Support breakdown>

- Trunk line bus services in affected areas
- Local bus services for temporary housing

Source) MLIT

(2) Activating Regional Railroads and Supporting Safety Assurance, etc.

Regional railroads not only support the livelihood of the local residents living along the railroads as a means of their daily transport but also play an important role in providing them with public transport of critical importance in supporting regional interaction between tourist resorts. However, their management is in an extremely tough situation. For this reason, the MLIT supports not only the maintenance of safety facilities by implementing local public transport securing, management and improvement projects or offering tax exemptions, but also the construction, etc., of new stations on local routes that have high potential needs for railway use by implementing projects designed to activate trunk railways, etc.

(3) Subsidizing Local Bus Routes

To address the pressing issue of securing and maintaining service buses and other regional transport services that are vital to local residents (such as interregional bus transport networks^{Note} or bus, demand-responsive and other forms of regional transport closely related to trunk transport networks), the MLIT is providing support for the operation of regional transport services, updating of buses, and other needs to help secure and maintain optimal networks of regional transport tailored to specific regional characteristics and conditions. In addition, the MLIT is also working closely with key people in local areas to improve productivity with full attention paid to regional characteristics in order to secure and maintain these regional transport networks amidst projections of further depopulation.

Note Wide-area, integral bus routes that satisfy standards set out by the Japanese government (routes that connect multiple municipalities with service at least three times per day, etc.) and are deemed by the Council as requiring maintenance and securement

(4) Maintaining and Revitalizing Regional Air Routes

There are many challenges facing regional aviation, including weak management foundations for regional airlines, high cost structures with a small number of aircraft and limited opportunities to expand business in cooperation with specified major airlines, and there are also limits to internal support available for major airlines as competition intensifies on high-demand routes.

It can also be difficult to secure personnel such as pilots, etc., and there are concerns that these various challenges will continue going forward.

In light of these issues, the final report of the Committee on Sustainable Regional Air Transport (March 2018) noted the need for regional airlines to review their own organizations, and in a December report in the same year, an Industry Council made up of relevant airlines noted the continuing challenge of management integration, while in Kyushu, agreement has been made to begin estimating management improvements and developing management rules toward the establishment of a limited liability partnership (LLP) in FY2019.

(5) Supporting Transport to and from Remote Islands

Residents of remote islands rely daily on sea routes to remote islands as their mode of transportation. In FY2017, passenger transport demand for the nation's 296 sea routes fell to 43 million (an 12% decrease over the preceding decade), and most of these routes face extremely severe business conditions because they serve areas that are dealing with more pronounced depopulation and aging than mainland Japan. Therefore, projects to secure, maintain and improve regional public transportation are implemented to subsidize running costs, fare discounts for residents of remote islands, and the construction of better ships for operational efficiency on sea routes that are projected to run a deficit or are the only option in their areas (126 sea routes eligible for subsidies as of the end of March 2019).

Furthermore, the operation of bus transportation with land and sea connection that enables the elderly and those who have walking problems to use a ferry while riding on a bus started from April 2015, and 23 business operators are providing the service as of the end of FY 2018.

Air routes to remote islands are an integral mode of transportation that supports life on the islands, namely through securing medical care for the regions. Therefore, to ensure consistent air transportation to remote islands, air carriers extending their air routes to remote islands are granted comprehensive support (budget: airframe purchase grants, operational cost grants, tax and public dues: landing fee alleviation, aviation fuel tax alleviation and so on).

In FY2018, 61 remote island air routes were in service, and the national treasury subsidizes 13 routes of them.

Section 3

Promoting the Private Urban Development

1 Promoting Urban Development by Private Sectors

(1) Promoting Urban Development by Private Sectors Based on the Specific Urban Renaissance Emergency Development Area Program

Fifty-five regions nationwide (as of the end of March 2019) had been designated by government ordinance as Urban Renaissance Emergency Development Areas to promote urgent and focused urban development through urban development projects that revitalize urban centers, and various urban development projects are steadily progressing in each region. Also, while rapidly growing Asian nations have resulted in a proportionate decline in Japan's international competitiveness, it has become an essential task to provide a powerful boost to the development of the urban areas in the nation's major cities, a source of impetus to the national growth, in a partnership between the public and private sectors to turn them into attractive urban centers that lure businesses, human resources and more from overseas. In light of this, 13 regions (as of the end of March 2019) have been designated by government ordinance as Specific Urban Renaissance Emergency Development Areas, regions in which there is a particular need to strengthen the international competitiveness of certain cities, and development plans have been formulated by councils formed in partnership between the public and private sectors in all of these regions. The International Competition Base City Development Project has also been launched to provide prioritized, concentrated support to the development of urban center infrastructures in accordance with development plans.

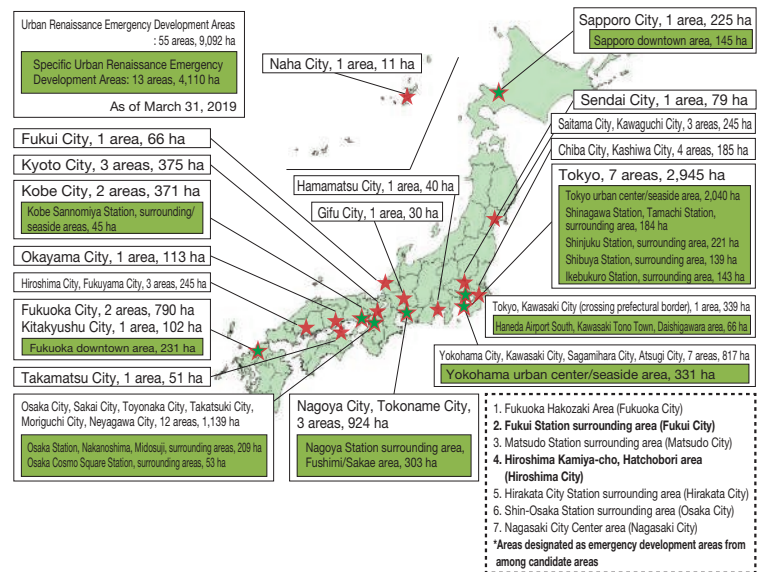
In order to support the formation of international business and living environments, we are providing comprehensive

support for the improvement of urban functions that contribute to improving these environments, both non-structural and structural measures regarding city sales, and the development of foreign language-capable medical facilities and other facilities that improve international competition through the Project Supporting the Improvement of International Competition and City Sales. Mezzanine support services^{Note} supporting the procurement of middle-risk funds are carried out by MINTO.

Furthermore, the Act to Partially Amend the Urban Renaissance Special Measures Act was enacted in July 2018, including provisions to suggest measures to create programs for arranging parking facilities for urban revitalization and adding entities for determining urban plans, etc.

Figure II-4-3-1

Status of Designation of Specific Urban Renaissance Emergency Development Areas and Urban Renaissance Emergency Development Areas (as of the End of March 2019)



Source) Cabinet Office, MLIT

(2) Status of Application of the Measures to Support Urban Reconstruction Projects

(i) Zoning for Special Districts for Urban Renaissance

A Special District for Urban Renaissance is a new concept of an urban district with greater latitude for zoning (exempt from existing zoning restrictions). A total of 91 Special Districts for Urban Renaissance were zoned as of the end of March 2019, 65 of which had been proposed by private entrepreneurs, etc.

(ii) Accreditation of private urban reconstruction project plans

Private urban reconstruction project plans accredited by the Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (123 plans as of the end of March 2019) are financially supported by the Organization for Promoting Urban Development or by tax incentives.

(3) Promoting the Formation of Larger Blocks

Since many of the central areas of Japan's major cities have been organized into blocks through the land readjustment projects for war reconstruction, etc., the scales of these blocks, with the structure of the local streets, are not fully responsive to the prevailing needs for land use, transport infrastructure and disaster prevention functions. To enhance the international competitiveness of large cities, revitalize regional cities, and seek advanced and effective land use to fill present-day needs, the MLIT promotes the aggregation of land that has been segmented into multiple blocks, the consolidated usage of sites, and the restructuring of public facilities.

Note Mezzanine support activities refer to successful private urban development projects for public facilities that are certified by the MLIT and have middle risk capital (positioned between senior loans provided by financial institutions and the private business which contributes the equity for funding that is generally considered difficult to procure) provided by private organizations

2 Approaching National Strategic Special Districts

In addition to the special exemptions from the Building Standards Act, the Road Act, the City Planning Act and the like introduced as regulatory reforms in the Act on National Strategic Special Zones passed in December 2013, the amendment to the Act on National Strategic Special Zones passed in July 2015 included special exemptions concerning the establishment of nursery schools in city parks to address the increase in the number of children on waiting lists for admission to nursery schools in recent years, and an amendment to the Urban Park Act in 2017 nationalized the exemptions. The MLIT intends to promote specific projects and proceed with visible progress on the reform of regulations that have been difficult to change due to stiff opposition.

Section 4 Promoting Localized Promotion Measures

1 Measures Directed at Heavy-snowfall Areas

The MLIT promotes the availability of transportation, the development of facilities related to living environments and conservation of national land, and the availability of people responsible for snow disposal and other measures for heavy-snowfall areas based on the Act on Special Measures concerning Countermeasures for Heavy-snowfall Areas in an effort to contribute to the economic development and improvement of residents' lives in regions where the inevitable, annual accumulation of snow inhibits improvement of residents' standards of living and industrial development. Note that 532 municipalities have been designated as heavy-snowfall areas (201 of which have been designated as special heavy-snowfall areas), and that these municipalities account for the vast area of 51% of Japan's land area (the special heavy-snowfall areas account for 20%).

2 Promoting Remote Islands Development

The MLIT is supporting remote islands development pursuant to the remote islands development plans formulated by the prefectures in accordance with the Remote Islands Development Act, not only by appropriating lump-sum budgets for the implementation of public works projects, but also by extending Remote Islands Rejuvenation Grants to encourage settlement in remote islands by fostering industries and increasing employment; accelerating the scope of exchanges by promoting tourism; improving and consolidating safe and secure settlement conditions and so on. We have also organized "Shimatching", an opportunity for remote islands and companies to be matched together, and "Islander", an exchange program for remote islands and cities.

3 Promoting and Developing the Amami Islands and Ogasawara Islands

In addition to implementing the development of social infrastructures through promotion and development projects, etc., based on the Act on Special Measures for Promotion and Development of the Amami Islands and Act on Special Measures for Promotion and Development of the Ogasawara Islands, the MLIT leverages grants, etc., to assist with regional efforts directed at boosting employment and encouraging settlement by promoting tourism, agricultural and other industries suited to regional characteristics in pursuit of more self-supporting, more sustainable growth.

4 Promoting Peninsulas

To support peninsula promotion measures through peninsula promotion plans developed by prefectural governments based on the Peninsular Areas Development Act, the MLIT implements projects to encourage wide-area cooperation on peninsular development in peninsula promotion measure implementation areas (as of April 2018, 23 areas (194 municipalities in 22 prefectures)), assists efforts to contribute to the facilitation of exchanges that leverage resources and characteristics of peninsular areas, promotes industry and regional settlement, and promotes industry with a Peninsular Tax System and developing roads that encircle peninsulas.

Section 5 Promoting Comprehensive Development of Hokkaido

1 Promotion of the Hokkaido Comprehensive Development Plan

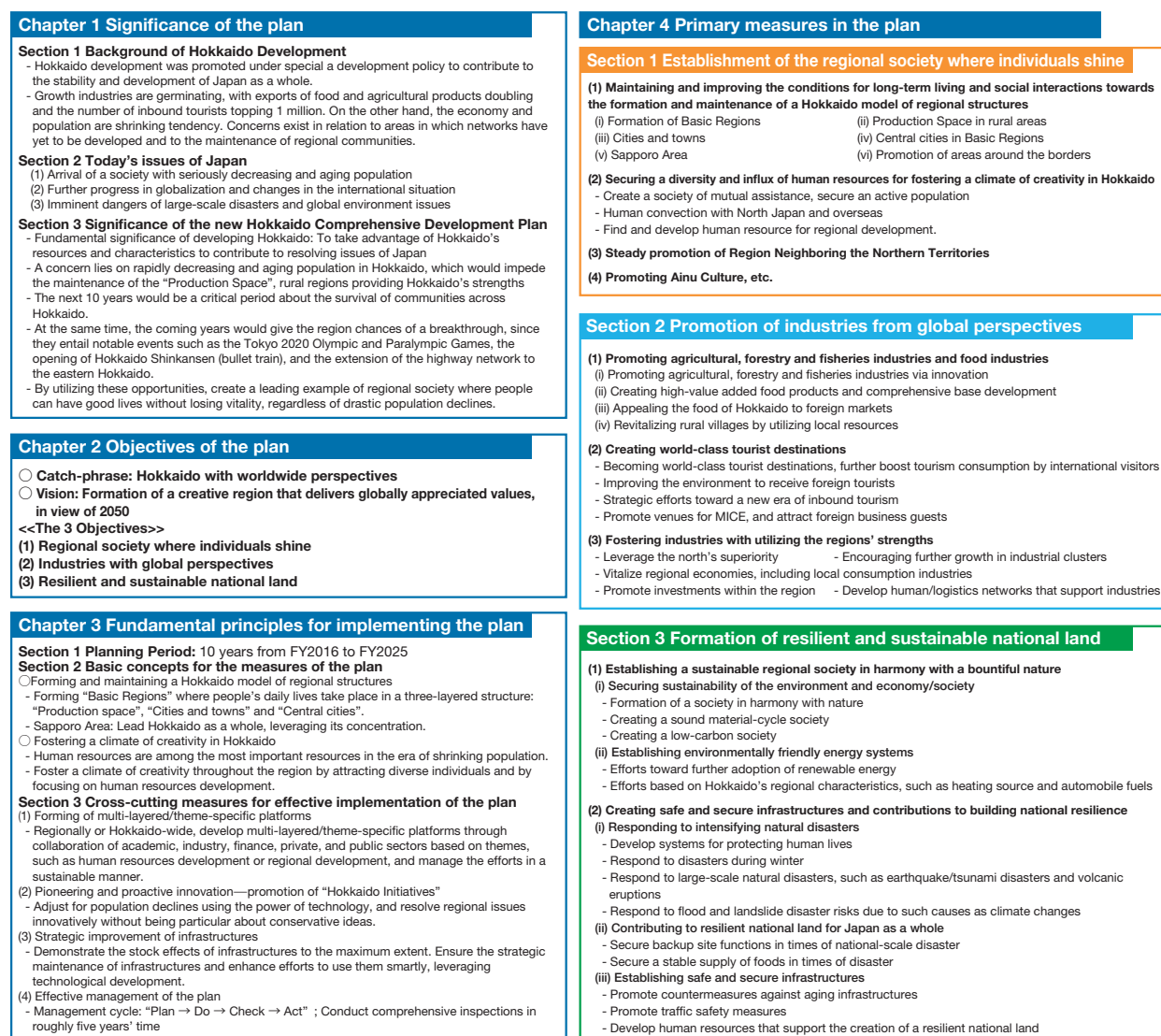
(1) Promotion of the Hokkaido Comprehensive Development Plan

Japan has pursued an active policy of developing Hokkaido to contribute to resolving issues facing the nation and to achieve powerful regional growth by taking advantage of the excellent resources and characteristics of Hokkaido.

The 8th term Hokkaido Comprehensive Development Plan covers the period from FY2016 to roughly FY2025 and was adopted by Cabinet decision in March 2016. Under the plan, the government is promoting various measures that form “Hokkaido with worldwide perspectives”, with the objectives of creating “Regional society where individuals shine”, “Industries with global perspectives”, and “resilient and sustainable national land”.

Based on this plan, we are working to steadily develop Hokkaido, specifically by focusing “creating world-class tourist destinations that lead realizing advanced tourism nations of Japan” and “the sustainable development of food supply bases”, and by establishing numerical targets to serve as guidelines for ideals and action while sharing and following up with relevant stakeholders.

Figure II-4-5-1 Overview of the Hokkaido Comprehensive Development Plan



Source) MLIT

(2) Promoting Measures that Support Plan Realization

The new plan was formulated to respond to various impending issues facing Japan, namely arrival of a society with seriously decreasing and aging population, further progress in globalization and changes in the international situation, and imminent dangers of large-scale disasters and global environment issues. We are promoting the following types of measures.

(i) Regional society where individuals shine

The “Production Space”^{Note} of Hokkaido forms a dispersed society over wide areas on a scale different from other regions, leading to the development of its strategic industries of “food” and “tourism”.

At the same time, it is experiencing rapid progress in population decline and aging, leading the rest of the country, which may make it difficult to maintain these industries, thus making it important to actively promote revitalization by attracting people from diverse backgrounds and to establish community structures in both production spaces and urban areas in which people can continue to live.

Thus, in addition to studying model areas for forming and maintaining production spaces and promoting these measures throughout Hokkaido, the MLIT is promoting a system for maintaining and improving settlement and exchange environments and forming wide-area transport networks including national high-grade trunk highways and the improvement of “Michi-no-Ekis” and “Minato Oases” functions. We are promoting efforts such as the development of “Hokkaido Value Creation Partnership Activities” which aim to loosely connect the diverse population and expand opportunities for communication.

(ii) Industries with global perspectives

Hokkaido has competitive advantages in the agricultural, forestry, and fisheries industries; the food and tourism related industries; and other industries for export to other regions in the country and other countries; and it is important to strategically develop these industries.

For this reason, we are working to strengthen the productivity and competitiveness of agriculture, forestry and fisheries by the larger division of farmland and advanced sanitation management measures at fishing ports, expand Hokkaido food overseas through the expansion of SME export support systems, promote foreign tourists driving around Hokkaido by car and the “Scenic Byway Hokkaido”, which encourages the development of scenery, communities and tourist attractions, hold international conferences (MICE) in Hokkaido, improve receiving environments for cruise ships, enhance the functions of New Chitose Airport, and develop export promotion infrastructure for agriculture and fisheries products at ports etc.

(iii) Resilient and sustainable national land

Hokkaido, which has beautiful and magnificent natural environments and abundant renewable energy sources, is expected to take a leading role in forming a sustainable regional society. Ensuring safety and security is the foundation of economic social activities, and it is important for the region to minimize damages in the event of a disaster and contribute to resilient Japan as a whole.

Therefore, we are promoting the preservation and regeneration of lakes and wetlands, public awareness relating to the formation of a hydrogen society through the “Hokkaido Hydrogen Community Development Platform”, initiatives for disaster prevention and mitigation through the comprehensive mobilization of hard/soft measures by flood control measures based on damage from series of typhoons in August 2016, and the Heavy Rain Event of July 2018 and by efforts of the “Hokkaido Bureau Reconstruction and Resilience Promotion Headquarters”, which was established to promote restoration, reconstruction and building national resilience after the 2018 Hokkaido Eastern Iburi Earthquake in September 2018, the strategic management and renewal of infrastructures to deal with aging, etc., and the improvement of safety and reliability of transportation in winter.

Note Refers to areas with a Hokkaido-model of regional structures, which has vast farmland and abundant fisheries and forest resources as its strengths, providing a rich natural environment and unique landscape and contributing as a food supply base for Japan

2 Promoting Distinctive Regions and Cultures

(1) Promoting the Regions Neighboring the Northern Territories

Targeting the Northern Territory's neighboring regions^{Note}, where desirable development of regional society is inhibited because of unresolved territorial issues, we are promoting necessary measures in a comprehensive manner under the Eighth Northern Territory Neighboring Regions Revitalization Plan (FY2018 to FY2022), which is based on the Act on Special Measures concerning Advancement of Resolution of Northern Territories Issues.

More specifically, the MLIT pursues measures to build appealing regional communities and initiatives to increase visitors in these neighboring regions, including the promotion of agricultural and fishery industries, implementation of public-works projects for development of transportation systems, supporting the implementation of non-structural measures by providing subsidies for project implementation expenditures.

(2) Promoting Ainu Culture, etc.

Based on the Basic Policy on the Development, Management, and Administration of Spaces Symbolic of Ethnic Harmony for Promoting the Restoration of Ainu Culture (adopted by a Cabinet decision on June 13, 2014, partially amended on June 27, 2017) and the like, preparations for the public opening of the National Ainu Museum and Park (also known as Upopoy) are being accelerated ahead of its opening on April 24, 2020, in advance of the Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the National Park for Ethnic Harmony and a memorial facility will be established, and development preparation will be promoted in pursuit of realizing the target of 1 million visitors.

In addition, we are working on public awareness activities such as the hosting of music festivals, implementation of onboard guidance in the Ainu language on buses, and other efforts as part of the “i ran karap te” (an Ainu greeting meaning “how are you”) campaign developed through industry-academia-government collaboration in accordance with the Act on the Promotion of Ainu Culture, and Dissemination and Enlightenment of Knowledge about Ainu Tradition.

Figure II-4-5-2

Upopoy logo



Source) MLIT

Note Nemuro City, Betsukai-cho, Nakashibetsu-cho, Shibetsu-cho, Rausu-cho (1 city and 4 towns)

Column

“Upopoy” to Open April 2020 !

Column

The National Ainu Museum and Park, a base for the reconstruction and creation of the Ainu culture, will open on April 24, 2020, on the shore of Lake Poroto in Shiraoi-cho, Hokkaido.

The National Ainu Museum and Park consists of the National Ainu museum, the first national museum in northern Japan, the National Ainu Park to experience Ainu culture, and a Memorial to pay respect to the Ainu people. Visitors will be able to experience various aspects of Ainu culture, including clothing, food, and housing, as well as dance and crafts, with a variety of exhibitions and programs planned to provide opportunities for exchange between people. We are also working on an “experiential” field museum that doesn’t just stop at watching and learning.

The official nickname of the National Ainu Museum and Park was decided in December 2018 to be Upopoy, which means to sing together. This was decided through a national online poll (held between October and November 2018), which received 10,641 total votes from all 47 prefectures.

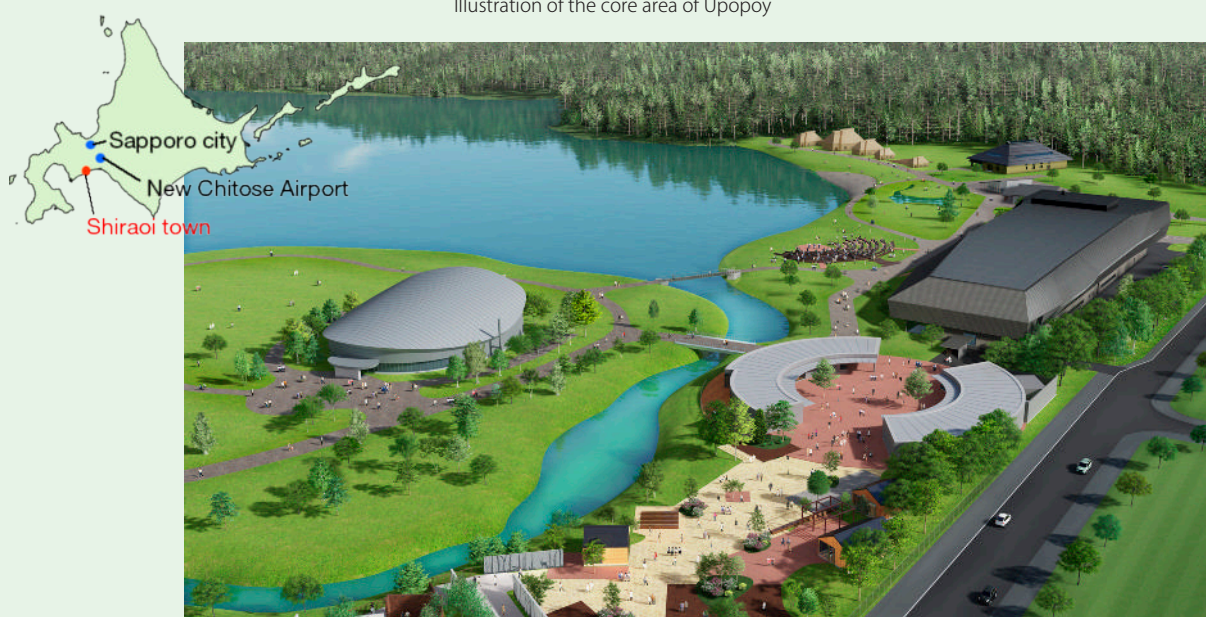
In addition to these facilities, the MLIT is promoting the preparation of an Ainu traditional performing arts program and experience exchange programs, and various PR activities for Japan and overseas to raise awareness of Upopoy ahead of its opening, to meet the government goal of achieving 1 million visitors annually.

Announcement of nickname and logo
(Ceremony 500 days before opening Upopoy)



Picture) MLIT

Illustration of the core area of Upopoy



Source) Created by MLIT from materials from the Foundation for Ainu Culture