

Part II

Major Policies Related to Immigration Control and Residency Management Administration

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Chapter 1 Response to Evacuees from Ukraine

Section 1 Acceptance of Evacuees from Ukraine

In February 2022, following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, many Ukrainian citizens were forced to flee to neighboring countries. In these circumstances, the Prime Minister of Japan announced on March 2 that Japan would accept Ukrainian citizens who had evacuated from Ukraine to third countries.

On March 16, the “Ukrainian Evacuees Countermeasures Liaison and Coordination Panel” chaired by the Chief Cabinet Secretary was established in order to provide timely and appropriate assistance to evacuees coming to Japan from Ukraine. In addition, with this panel as the control tower, the Task Force for Supporting Ukrainian Evacuees was established to discuss how support should be operated, such as matching evacuees from Ukraine with recipients in cooperation with relevant ministries and agencies, so that evacuees can stay in Japan with peace of mind. To implement this support, on March 25, the Cabinet decided to use a contingency of 520 million yen and on June 28, 1.94 billion yen for expenses related to the project to support the acceptance of evacuees from Ukraine.

Furthermore, in order to accurately grasp the local needs in Poland, which had received approximately 2.6 million evacuees from Ukraine at the time and actively provided assistance, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Deputy Minister of Justice visited Poland for five days from April 1, held meetings with dignitaries of the Polish government, and inspected the status of the acceptance of evacuees in Poland, returning to Japan on a government plane with 20 Ukrainian evacuees on board.

Since then, from a humanitarian perspective, the ISA has secured a certain number of seats on commercial flights for evacuees from Ukraine who desperately want to evacuate to Japan but find it difficult to secure means of travel on their own, providing travel support for them to come to Japan.



Deputy Minister of Justice on a business trip to Poland (visiting a facility for evacuees)

Section 2 Support for Evacuees from Ukraine

1 Expansion of consultation services and placement of support staff for accepting evacuees from Ukraine at Immigration Services Agency (ISA) offices

The Foreign Residents Support Center's "FRESC Help Desk" is responding to telephone consultations regarding evacuees from Ukraine in response to the current situation in Ukraine. On June 1, the ISA set up the "evacuees from Ukraine Help Desk" (open daily from 9:00 am to 8:00 pm) exclusively for such consultations. The help desk offers services in Ukrainian, Russian, English, and Japanese.

In addition, the Regional Immigration Services Bureaus, District Immigration Services Office, and branch offices have also assigned "Ukrainian Evacuees Reception Support Staff" to respond to consultations from evacuees from Ukraine and local governments.

2 Prompt change of status of residence to receive administrative services, etc.

Regarding permission for change in the status of residence application when Ukrainians residing in Japan wishes to stay in Japan due to the situation in Ukraine, or when evacuees from Ukraine who have entered Japan with the status of residence of "Temporary Visitor" for the purpose of evacuation want to stay in Japan, it is now possible for evacuees from Ukraine to promptly receive residence cards and register as residents by promptly permitting to change their status of residence to "Designated Activities", then receive administrative services from local governments.

3 Issuance of certificates of Evacuees from Ukraine

The ISA has issued certificates to evacuees from Ukraine to facilitate procedures, so that evacuees from Ukraine can present these certificates together with identification documents such as residence cards to receive support from local governments, perform administrative procedures, or open accounts at financial institutions.



Certificates of Evacuees from Ukraine
(in Japanese)

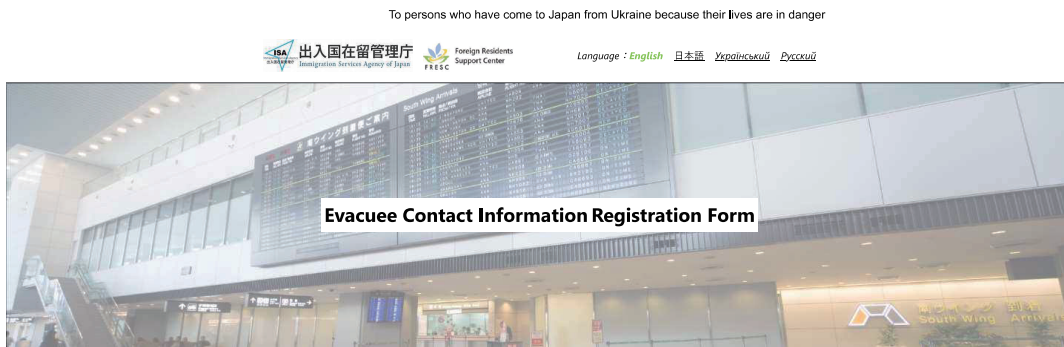
4 Establishment of Ukrainian Evacuees support website

On May 9, the ISA opened the “Ukrainian Evacuees Support Site”, in order for evacuees from Ukraine to receive the goods (clothes, furniture, food, communication equipment, etc.) and services (interpretation, transportation, administrative procedure assistance, mental care, etc.) that Japanese companies and other organizations have offered to support them.

5 Providing information to evacuees from Ukraine and local governments

The ISA has repeatedly sent guidebooks translated into Ukrainian to evacuees from Ukraine, provided information about the FRESC Help Desk, various administrative procedures, Japanese language education, employment support, and informed local governments of the details of support and information provided to evacuees from Ukraine.

On May 14, the “Ukrainian Evacuees Information Registration Site” was opened to promptly provide support information from national and local governments.



To persons who have come to Japan from Ukraine because their lives are in danger

The ISA sends helpful information to everyone via email. Therefore, please tell us your email address.

Please enter your email address for verification purposes.
 An application link will be sent to the entered email address, so please access the link to finish providing information.
 * Please separately register any additional email addresses.

* Please use the above form for email address verification.
 * The link expires after one hour.
 * If you have set up domain-specific reception, please ensure that emails can be received from the following domain: @fresc.com

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Ukrainian Evacuees Information Registration Site

6 Support for evacuees without a guarantor

For evacuees from Ukraine who have no guarantors in Japan, the ISA provided temporary accommodation facilities rented by the national government for temporary residence, and supported their living expenses, medical expenses, etc.

Furthermore, Japanese language classes were held, crime prevention seminars were held by the police, and employment support briefings were held by the Labor Bureau.

Also, based on the individual needs of evacuees, the ISA conducted matching with local governments and private organizations that had offered support.

Chapter 2 Measures to Deal with COVID-19 in the ISA

Section 1 Countermeasures at the border

Regarding COVID-19 that has spread globally since December 2019, border measures need to be enhanced in order to prevent infected persons from entering Japan and the virus from spreading in Japan.

Based on the multiple Cabinet approvals and announcements by the Novel Coronavirus Response Headquarters since January 31, 2020, the ISA has implemented appropriate border measures such as refusing, landing of foreign nationals who have stayed in the regions where numerous cases of COVID-19 have been confirmed within 14 days before landing or who have boarded passenger ships in which cases of COVID-19 may have occurred, pursuant to Article 5, paragraph (1), item (xiv) of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act unless in exceptional circumstances for the time being.

The ISA has cooperated in quarantine procedures since before the pandemic by encouraging travelers arriving in Japan to go back to the quarantine procedures if such travelers claim that they do not feel well at the immigration examination booth regardless of nationality. In addition to this cooperation, the ISA has enhanced its cooperative relationship with quarantine stations to develop a system in which the Quarantine Information Office, Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare, and the ISA double-check whether travelers have traveled to regions from which entry is denied and works in close cooperation with the relevant organizations in order to implement appropriate border measures.

Moreover, the ISA installs acrylic plates and other equipment to prevent droplet infection in the examination spaces, etc., and provides disinfectant near devices used to obtain personal identification information (including Bio Carts and Automated Gates) and guides travelers to disinfect their hands after using the devices. In addition, staff members are required to wear personal protective equipment such as face masks, gloves and goggles at all times and taught how to wear and remove personal protective equipment and instructed to take measures for installing disposal boxes for used personal protective equipment in an effort to prevent infection.



Countermeasures against COVID-19

Section 2 Procedures for Residence

1 Foreign Nationals staying in Japan

For foreign nationals who had difficulty returning to their home countries due to the spread of COVID-19 reducing the number of flights to and from Japan, the ISA allowed their change of status of residence to “Designated Activities” which allowed them to work. The ISA also took measures such as giving permission to engage in activity other than that permitted under status of residence to the foreign national who had a status of residence such as “Temporary Visitor” that normally did not allow to work, but found it difficult to return to their home country, and had difficulty maintaining their livelihood in Japan. Also, since April 20, 2020, in order to maintain employment in Japan of technical intern trainees, specified skilled workers, etc. who were no longer able to continue technical intern trainings or dismissed due to COVID-19, the ISA has supported re-employment in specified industrial fields while granting the status of residence of “Designated Activities” under certain requirements for providing support for foreign nationals to maintain employment in Japan. Since September 7, 2020, the ISA has extended eligibility for these measures to those technical intern trainees who have completed their scheduled technical intern training but have difficulty getting a return flight to their home country or returning to their residence in their home country due to closure of airports and restrictions on movement caused by COVID-19. Currently, the COVID-19 pandemic is causing continued suspension of regular flights and drastic reduction of flights. In light of this situation, since March 26, 2021, it was decided that when a foreign national whose period of stay on the status of residence of “Designated Activities” has reached 1 year applies to extend their period of stay, their continued residence will be allowed, only when it is deemed difficult for them to return to their home country due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In light of the status of COVID-19 infections in Japan and overseas, and the increasing number of foreigners leaving Japan, the ISA has reviewed these measures as of May 31, 2022 and are encouraging them to return to their home countries.

2 Foreign Nationals Planning to Enter Japan

With the COVID-19 pandemic, in consideration of foreign nationals whose timing to enter Japan has been delayed due to the decreased number of flights to Japan, we are taking measures to extend the valid period for certificate of eligibility required for entry procedures.

For former permanent resident foreign nationals who could not re-enter Japan within the valid period of their re-entry permits (including special re-entry permits), with consideration for the circumstances they are in, their status of residence of “Permanent Resident” will be acknowledged when they re-enter Japan in order to enable prompt immigration procedures.

In the future, former permanent residents who have returned to Japan will be able to stay in Japan as permanent residents from their re-entry.

Section 3 Support for foreign residents

1 Providing information through “A Daily Life Support Portal for Foreign Nationals”

The ISA has created webpages in 14 languages(*) on “A Daily Life Support Portal for Foreign Nationals” on the ISA website, in order to provide information on daily life support offered by various ministries and agencies to foreign residents, as well as important warnings to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Information is aggregated and posted on these webpages, to better provide information to foreign residents.

2 Extraordinary measures when making a special response to provide information on COVID-19 at one-stop consulting counters

When making a special response to provide information and offer consultation about COVID-19 at one-stop consulting counters established and operated by local governments, extraordinary measures have been taken to allow the maximum amount of subsidies for preparations for an environment for the acceptance of foreign nationals to be set twice as much as the subsidy limit along with operating costs (see Chapter 8 Section 3 for details on the one-stop consulting counters and subsidies for preparations for an environment for the acceptance of foreign nationals).

3 Consultation at the FRESC Help Desk

In September 2020, the FRESC Help Desk set up to the Foreign Residents Support Center (FRESC) started a free multi-lingual telephone consultation service for foreign nationals who are facing difficulties with daily life due to COVID-19, such as losing their jobs.

It offers consultations to foreign nationals by cooperating with organizations at FRESC, as necessary.

4 Multilingual COVID-19 Vaccination Support

In October 2021, the ISA established the FRESC Vaccination Reservation Help Line at FRESC, in order to offer multilingual consultation and provide information on documents necessary for making vaccination reservations and issuing vaccination voucher at cooperating medical institutions (in Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka). The ISA also provided multilingual interpreter support at vaccination centers of cooperating medical institution.

(*) Japanese (including plain Japanese), English, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Portuguese, Indonesian, Vietnamese, Filipino, Thai, Nepali, Khmer (Cambodia), Burmese (Myanmar language), and Mongolian



Guidance on vaccination at cooperating medical institutions

Section 4 COVID-19 Countermeasures at Immigration Facilities

1 Immigration Facilities Task Force for COVID-19 Countermeasures

Using the expertise of the MOJ Crisis Management Expert Meeting, the ISA has taken measures regarding crisis management in the ISA, which faces concerns about outbreaks of infectious diseases. On April 17, 2020, the ISA also established the Immigration Facilities for COVID-19 Countermeasures (hereinafter, “TF”) under the direction of said Committee, in order to prepare new guidelines for COVID-19 countermeasures accounting for the characteristics of the ISA.

TF consists of four experts and six staff members (associate commissioner level, director level), and it is chaired by the Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Justice, with four meetings held between April 24, 2020 and June 24, 2021. Most recently, the 5th meeting of the TF was held (conduct the approval of the document by turns) on February 10, 2022.

2 Manual for measures against COVID-19 infection at Immigration Facilities

ISA facilities include detention facilities, which are closed spaces, as well as immigration offices and residence application counters, where applicants and staff come into direct contact. Once there is a case of COVID-19, it can have a serious impact on the health of not only the infected person, but many other people as well, and even the performance of immigration services administration work.

In order for staff working at immigration facilities to share these goals...

- Prevent infection of staff, as well as infection of all people involved in facilities, including detainees and applicants.
- Minimize the spread of COVID-19 in the unlikely event there is a case.

...and work together to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the ISA prepared a manual for measures against COVID-19 infection at immigration facilities (hereinafter referred to as “the Manual”). The first edition of the Manual was published on May 1, 2020, and the second edition of the manual was published on July 16, 2020.

As mentioned above, the ISA has worked to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 according to the Manual. However, there were cases of COVID-19 at some agency offices, and there were also outbreaks in November 2020 and February 2021. Based on the lessons learned from these outbreaks, the third edition of the Manual was published on February 24, 2021.

Later, it was widely reported that variant strains are replacing the alpha strain. The ISA recognized the urgent need to establish more effective countermeasures, and so published the 4th edition of the Manual on July 20, 2021.

In addition, the ISA issued the 5th edition of this manual on February 10, 2022, in order to respond flexibly to successive revisions to government policy, such as the handling of close contact with new strains of COVID-19.

Chapter 3 Response to the Case of the Death of a Detainee at the Nagoya Regional Immigration Services Bureau

Section 1 Establishment of project team

In response to the case of the death of a detainee that occurred at the Nagoya Regional Immigration Services Bureau in March 2021, the ISA released the “Investigation Report on the Case of the Death of a Detainee at the Nagoya Regional Immigration Services Bureau on March 6, 2021” on August 10, 2021. The report presents 12 improvement measures to prevent such incidents from recurring, and a project team was established at the ISA on the same day to steadily implement these improvement measures.

Led by this project team, the ISA formulated the “Mission and Principles of ISA Staff”, compiled proposals by an Advisory panel for strengthening the ISA’s medical system, and formulated new operating guidelines related to judgment of provisional release of sick detainees, as part of efforts made to reform the awareness and organization of immigration control and residency management administration based on the above improvement measures.

Section 2 Staff Awareness Reform

1 Formulation of the “Mission and Principles of the Officials at the ISA of Japan”

The “Mission and Principles of ISA Staff” was formulated on January 14, 2022, by compiling the opinions of all Regional Immigration Services Bureaus staff and collecting opinions from external experts in order to change the awareness of the ISA’s staff and to develop it by themselves. At opinion exchange meeting held with ISA staff and on-site staff, young staff and senior staff alike participated in frank discussions and the staff’s opinions were widely adopted.

2 Outline of the “Mission and Principles of the Officials at the ISA of Japan”

This shows the mission and principles that the ISA staff should fulfill, to ensure that all staff involved in immigration control and residency management administration do not lose sight of the mission entrusted to them by the people of Japan and carry out their duties with confidence and pride, and to ensure that immigration control and residency management administration are carried out properly and we respond to the trust and expectations of the people ([reference 74](#)).

Reference 74 Mission and Principles of the Officials at the ISA of Japan

Mission and Principles of the Officials at the Immigration Services Agency of Japan

The "Mission and Principles of the Officials at the Immigration Services Agency of Japan" outlined here are to be observed by all officials at the Immigration Services Agency of Japan engaged in immigration control and residency management, so that they may perform their duties with confidence and pride without losing sight of the mission entrusted to them by the people of Japan, and so that immigration control and residency management may be conducted properly and meet the trust and expectations of the people of Japan.

【Mission of the Officials at the Immigration Services Agency of Japan】

In the current global society, immigration control and residency management, which is the right of sovereign nations, is becoming increasingly important. In this respect, the basic function of immigration control and residency management is, while respecting the human rights of all people, to ensure the just management of the arrival and departure of all persons entering or leaving Japan as well as the residence of all foreign nationals residing in Japan, and, Japan being a signatory to the Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, to protect refugees, and furthermore, to provide general coordination relating to improving the circumstances for the acceptance of foreign nationals. In Japan, the Immigration Services Agency, which is responsible for the aforementioned roles, is committed to ensuring smooth, strict, and appropriate immigration and residency management by actively welcoming foreign nationals who abide by the rules, while preventing foreign nationals who threaten the safety and well-being of Japan from entering Japan or staying in Japan, and ensuring that such foreign nationals are removed from Japan. Furthermore, in cooperation with other countries and international organizations, the Immigration Services Agency of Japan aims to provide prompt and reliable protection to those who truly need asylum. Additionally, it works with related organizations to realize a harmonious society of coexistence where all Japanese citizens and foreign nationals accepted into Japanese society can live together as good neighbors. To contribute to the realization of an orderly society and to the sound development of Japan's economy and society by realizing these goals is the mission of Japan's immigration control and residency management, and so it is the mission of the officials at the Immigration Services Agency of Japan, aspiring to an honorable position in the international community.

【Principles of the Officials at the Immigration Services Agency of Japan】

All personnel engaged in immigration control and residency management must always bear in mind that as government officials they are servants of the people as a whole, must be aware that they have a mission to contribute to the realization of an orderly and harmonious society, and that they have to live up to the trust of the people who have placed such an important mission in their hands. To this end, they must maintain high professional ethics, strive for continuous self improvement, always ask themselves whether their own decisions are truly in the best interests of society as a whole, make fair judgments with confidence and pride, and perform their duties with sincerity and integrity, paying particular attention to the following points.

- 1 Taking pride in being a specialist in immigration control and residency management To be aware of oneself as a specialist in immigration control and residency management, to read laws and regulations intensively, to cultivate related knowledge, and to comply with required standards.
- 2 Enhancing the ability to perform duties with a broad perspective To strive to keep abreast of social trends including international affairs on a regular basis, to foster sophistication and common sense through training and diverse social activities, to cultivate a wide-ranging perspective and the ability to think flexibly, and to utilize these skills in the performance of duties.
- 3 Having a sense of fairness and the need for improvement To always be aware of whether duties are being performed impartially and to never hesitate to express opinions on areas that need improvement or to revise matters by oneself.
- 4 Respecting human rights and dignity and retaining politeness
To respect human rights and dignity and, when interacting with other parties in any kind of setting, to be kind and polite while giving due consideration to the other party's position, culture, and customs.
- 5 Understanding the feelings of others while maintaining composure
To understand the feelings of others while always responding resolutely without losing one's calm and without letting one's emotions interfere.
- 6 Cultivating the capability of communication
To listen to a variety of opinions from both domestic and foreign sources, to strive to make judgments that are not bound by precedent and that reflect the common sense of the public at large, to provide all explanations necessary to gain the understanding of concerned parties and all of society, and to proactively communicate information.
- 7 Building good rapport with a variety of related parties and organizations
Being aware that proper immigration control and residency management cannot be realized without the understanding and cooperation of related parties and organizations, to work to build good relationships with them, both domestic and foreign as well as public and private.
- 8 Creating an open organizational culture
To strive to develop an open organizational culture in which all officials respect each other, freely express their opinions, and promptly consult with and report to their colleagues and superiors on matters that are difficult for them to judge for themselves and where matters are addressed in a unified manner without bureaucratic sectionalism.

Section 3 Strengthening the ISA's medical system

1 Outline of the "Advisory Panel on Enhancing the Medical System at ISA Detention Facilities"

Among the improvement measures pointed out in the Investigation Report, for "deliberate and steady strengthening of the medical system based on the nature of detention facilities", in October 2021, the ISA held the "Advisory Panel on Enhancing the Medical System at ISA Detention Facilities", consisting of medical professionals, academic experts, and legal professionals.

After that, in the Advisory Panel, hearings were conducted with relevant parties and on-site inspections, and efforts were made to understand the actual situation at the site, such as by conducting questionnaires for medical professionals working at detention facilities, and discussions were held on measures to strengthen the medical system in detention facilities.

The results of the review were compiled in a report titled "Recommendations for Enhancing the Medical System at Immigration Detention Facilities," which was submitted to the Commissioner of the ISA on February 28, 2022 and reported to the Minister of Justice.

2 Contents of "Recommendations for Enhancing the Medical System at Immigration Detention Facilities"

Recommendations include,

- Strengthening the internal medical system, such as building a working system with multiple doctors, mainly full-time doctors
- Construction and strengthening of a cooperation system with external medical institutions, such as holding conferences with regional medical institutions
- Maintenance and renewal of necessary medical equipment
- Holding medical conferences, cooperation between clinics of each agency office, and taking other measures to improve medical care provision

These are some of the multi-layered measures indicated to strengthen the medical system in detention facilities.

Going forward, the ISA will steadily implement the recommendations of the Advisory Panel and build a follow-up system for that purpose.

Section 4 Efforts for other improvement measures

As part of organizational and operational reforms at the Nagoya Regional Immigration Services Bureau, the ISA increased the number of part-time doctors and built an information sharing system for the health conditions of detainees. Also, in order to more accurately grasp the physical conditions of detainees, translation equipment was installed in all agency offices with detention facilities, and instructions were given to interpreters and the use of translation equipment, and an emergency response manual was formulated for when an emergency response incident occurs.

In addition, operational reforms were made based on the improvement measures indicated in the above report, such as the formulation of new operating guidelines related to the judgment of provisional release of sick detainees, as well as the thorough dissemination of measures for appropriate responses to domestic violence cases ([reference 75](#)).

The ISA will continue to follow up on all improvement measures.

Reference 75 Implementation Situation of improvement measure

Implementation Status of Improvement Measures

	Improvement measures in the investigation report	Implementation Status
1	Planning the “Mission and Principles of Immigration Control and Residency Management” (tentative name)	Gathering opinions from all staff and outside experts to plan “Mission and Principles of Immigration Services Agency (ISA) Staff”
2	Organizational and operational reforms at the Nagoya Bureau	Increasing the number of part-time doctors, enhancing the guard duty system, reviewing and enforcing information sharing regarding the health status of detainees.
3	Use of interpreters, etc. to more accurately understand the physical condition of detainees	Giving instructions to use an interpreter or translation equipment when giving medical care, as a rule (Translation equipment has been deployed in all ISA offices (17 offices) with detention facilities)
4	Deliberate and steady enhancement of medical systems based on the nature of detention facilities	Compiling proposals at advisory panels of external experts consisting of doctors, academic experts, and lawyers
5	Development of emergency response manuals and enhancement of training	Collecting opinions of on-site staff and medical staff at each ISA office and creating an emergency response manual for detainees
6	Inspection, review, and enforcement of the implementation status of past recurrence prevention measures	After inspecting the implementation status at each ISA office, instructing the renew review and enforcement
7	Planning new operational guidelines for provisional release judgments for detainees who are in poor health	Creating specific operational guidelines for provisional release judgments based on the opinions of medical professionals, etc.
8	Mechanisms for the ISA to check whether it is necessary to continue holding detainees who are in poor health	
9	Cooperation with private organizations related to detainees on provisional release	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collecting information on private organizations suitable for collaboration • Holding discussions with multiple private organizations for collaboration
10	Establishment of an information provision window and an inspection guidance department at the headquarters	Establishing “Immigration and Residency Audit Guidance Office”
11	Appropriate response to domestic violence cases, including thorough dissemination of internal rules	Renewing instructions to disseminate appropriate responses to DV cases
12	Appropriate response to supporters	Issuing notices to unify the operation of each ISA office, such as unifying contact points

Chapter 4 Smooth and Strict Implementation of Immigration Examination at the Port of Entry

In order to contribute to the realization of a tourism-oriented country, it is important on the one hand to strive to implement smooth landing examinations for the majority of foreign nationals, who come to Japan without causing any problems, but in order to realize a society where Japanese nationals and foreign nationals can live together harmoniously, it is also necessary to implement strict landing examinations and reliably prevent the entry of foreign nationals whose objective is terrorism, illegal work or other illegal activities.

The number of foreign visitors to Japan in 2019 reached approximately 31.88 million, which was a record high number. However, the number of foreign visitors to Japan significantly decreased due to the impact of COVID-19. Since 2020, the number of foreign nationals visiting Japan as travelers dropped sharply.

Section 1 Efforts to Promote a Tourism-Oriented Country

1 Introduction of Bio Carts

In order to simplify procedures at landing examination booths and enable foreign visitors to enter Japan more speedily, devices for obtaining personal identification information (fingerprints and a facial photograph) beforehand by utilizing the landing examination waiting time, commonly known as “Bio Carts”, were introduced at Kansai Airport, Takamatsu Airport, and Naha Airport, places where these devices were expected to lead to significant reduction in examination waiting time, in October 2016. Subsequently, the devices were introduced at 14 airports, including Narita Airport, from April 2017 to May 2018, at Haneda Airport in December 2019 and at Hakata Port and Hitakatsu Port in January 2020, for further promoting smooth examinations.

In the “Tourism Vision Realization Program 2020” (Action Program for Realization of Tourism Vision 2020) (adopted by the Ministerial Council on the Promotion of Japan as a Tourism-Oriented Country of July 2020), Bio Carts are being utilized to reduce examination waiting time, with the aim of reaching waiting time 20 minutes or less, as a measure to keep working toward promotion of inbound travel in adaptation to the circumstances of COVID-19.



Use of Bio Carts

2 Automated Gates

(1) Promotion of Use of the Automated Gates

Japanese nationals and foreign nationals satisfying certain requirements (in possession of re-entry permission, etc.), who have registered in advance as users of the Automated Gates, are able to undergo the immigration procedures using the Automated Gates and do not have to undergo the usual examination by an immigration inspector at an immigration examination booth, and in this way, smooth and strict examinations are being further promoted. Following the installation of the Automated Gates at Narita Airport in November 2007, Automated Gates were installed at Chubu Airport and Kansai Airport in September 2009 and were additionally installed at Haneda Airport in October 2010.

User registration of Automated Gates was started at the Tokyo Regional Immigration Services Bureau and the Narita Airport District Immigration Services Office in November 2007, followed by the Nagoya Regional Immigration Services Bureau, the Chubu Airport District Immigration Services Office, the Osaka Regional Immigration Services Bureau and the Kansai Airport District Immigration Services Office in September 2009 and the Haneda Airport District Immigration Services Office in October 2010.

Moreover, in order to promote user registration of the Automated Gates in 2013, as well as increasing the number of devices for user registration and posting information in airport facilities and in-flight magazines through the cooperation of the airport operating companies and airline companies, the ISA has been working to improve its administrative services with regard to those wishing to register for use of the Automated Gates through such means as sending immigration officers to the prefectural passport offices in order to enable mobile on-the-spot user registration.



Automated Gates

(2) Trusted Traveler Program

The Trusted Traveler Program (TTP) is the system to issue “Registered User Card” that enable the use of the Automated Gates to those people who intend to carry out activities in the status of residence of “Temporary Visitor”, who meet certain requirements as “trusted travelers” such as businessmen. Operation of this program began on November 1, 2016.

On March 16, 2020, the registration requirements for TTP were relaxed, and the scope of applicants for registrations of this program was extended to tourists who possess sufficient funds and credit and family members of TTP registrants (spouse and unmarried minors).

In addition, based on the Japan-U.S. Bilateral Cooperation on Travel Facilitation, assuming registration with the Global Entry Program (GEP) of the United States, some of the requirements will be waived for US citizens applying for TTP registration.



Front of Registered User Card



Back of Registered User Card

(3) Introduction of Facial Recognition Automated Gates in the Departure and Return Procedures for Japanese Nationals

Due to the demand for further acceleration of immigration examinations in order to promote tourism in Japan, the ISA intends to further expedite the examination procedures, while maintaining strictness of the examination, by streamlining the departure and return for Japanese nationals through the use of facial recognition technology and assigning more immigration inspectors to the examination of foreign nationals.

The ISA conducted a trial test of examinations utilizing facial recognition technology in 2014, and the evaluation of the “Committee for Evaluation of Facial Recognition Technology in the Immigration Examinations” composed of outside experts was that from the perspective of technology “there is sufficient possibility of utilizing facial recognition technology in the departure and return examinations of Japanese nationals”. After necessary reviews facial recognition Automated Gates were developed in the two years of FY 2016 and FY 2017, and advance operations of the facial recognition Automated Gates in the return confirmation procedures for Japanese nationals commenced at Haneda Airport on October 18, 2017. In addition, from FY 2018 to FY 2020, the facial recognition Automated Gates were introduced in the landing and departure examination areas of New Chitose Airport, Narita Airport, Chubu Airport, Kansai Airport, Fukuoka Airport and Naha Airport, and are being operated in the departure and return procedures for Japanese nationals.



Using the facial recognition automated gates

(4) Expanded Use of the Automated Gates in the Departure Procedures for Foreign Nationals

The “Tourism Vision Realization Program, 2016” (Action Program for Realization of Tourism Vision 2016) (decision of the Ministerial Council on the Promotion of Japan as a Tourism-Oriented Country of May 2016) outlined a plan to expand the use of the Automated Gates in the departure procedures for foreign nationals in order to reduce the time required for the departure procedures at airports in Japan. Based on this, surveys were conducted related to expanding use of the Automated Gates in the departure procedures for foreign nationals in FY 2016, and a study was also conducted on the scope of foreign nationals who should be eligible to use the Automated Gates in the departure procedures, necessary matters for system renovation, and methods of arranging the Automated Gates in the departure

examination areas. Based on the results of the surveys and study, a decision was made that the facial recognition Automated Gates that have been used in the departure and return procedures for Japanese nationals would be used in the departure procedures for foreign nationals who had entered Japan for such purposes as sightseeing, and on July 24, 2019, its operation commenced in Haneda Airport, followed by the other seven airports listed in (3).

3 Response to Cruise Ship Passengers

In recent years, there have been a remarkable increase in the number and size of cruise ships calling at ports in Japan, and since requests have been received from the local governments inviting cruise ships for accelerated procedures after the arrival so that passengers can fully enjoy sightseeing within the limited time they have at the port of call, the ISA has been striving to implement smooth examinations through such means as implementing an examination method using permission for landing at a port of call, the use of examination equipment with the upgraded system, and support from other examination staffs from all over the country.

Also, from January 1, 2015, operation of the system of landing permission for cruise ship tourists that allows foreign passengers on cruise ships designated by the Commissioner of the ISA to undergo simplified procedures commenced and guidance for cruise ship companies has been strengthened, and in addition, strict yet smooth examinations are being conducted through implementing on-board examinations on cruise ships on the open seas with the consent of the country of registration. In 2017, the number of applications for landing permission for cruise ship tourists was approximately 2.45 million. The number has trended downward at approximately 2.34 million in 2018 and approximately 2.03 million in 2019.

Furthermore, in 2020, due to the decrease in the number of cruise ships calling in Japan due to the spread of COVID-19, the number of landing permission for cruise ship tourists in the same year was only about 120,000. Since March of the same year, international cruise ships operations have been suspended, so no one has received a landing permission for cruise ship tourists in 2021.

4 Other Measures to Reduce the Waiting Time for Examinations

As another initiative to shorten the waiting time for immigration examination, measures are being implemented such as simplifying (including omitting some of the items to be entered, enforced on April 1, 2016) and digitizing (implemented from December 20, 2021) a disembarkation card for foreign nationals which is submitted to the immigration inspector at the time of immigration examination, and adding more booths by introducing vertical examination booths.



Vertical examination booth

5 Revision of the method of measuring the time spent waiting in line for an examination, and announcement of the waiting times for the examination

Considering the fact that the amount of time spent waiting in line for an immigration examination is a matter of great concern for foreign travelers visiting Japan as it affects the time they spend in Japan, a decision was made to revise the method of measurement from January 2017 so as to utilize the electronic data held by the ISA. As a result, it became possible to measure the “rate of achievement of the goal of an immigration examination waiting time of 20 minutes” and the “longest immigration examination waiting time / time of occurrence” for each airport (terminal and examination areas), and this data is now compiled on a monthly basis and published once a month on the ISA website.

(http://www.moj.go.jp/isa/publications/materials/nyuukokukanri07_00117.html)

(*) Due to COVID-19, the number of people monitored to measure immigration inspection waiting time has decreased so measurement of immigration inspection waiting time has been on hold since April 2020.

We will consider when to restart measurement and publication based on the recovery situation of the number of foreign nationals entering Japan.

Section 2 Strengthened Countermeasures at the Port of Entry

1 Immigration Examinations Utilizing Information

(1) Implementation of Immigration Examinations Utilizing Biometric Information

Since November 2007, foreign nationals who intend to enter Japan have been required to submit their Biometric information (fingerprints and a facial photograph). This enables the ISA to accurately and promptly confirm that the applicant for the verification for landing is the same as the passport holder, and to check the applicant against the blacklist maintained by the ISA. In addition, it has become possible to stringently detect those who have previously been deported and again try to enter Japan illegally using a forged passport or another person's passport by checking their information against the data on fingerprints and facial photographs of those who were deported in the past retained by the ISA. In addition, since October 2016, in order to rigorously detect terrorists, etc. at the time of the landing examination, the ISA has been cross-checking the facial photographs provided by foreign nationals at the time of the landing examination against the facial images of terrorists and other suspect persons. The total number of foreign nationals ordered to depart through a departure order and deported through a deportation order based on the utilization of Biometric information was 11,465 from the start of utilization of this information in the immigration examinations by the end of December, 2020.

On the other hand, there have been an increasing number of cases where in order to avoid their past history of deportation being discovered, foreign nationals have attempted to disguise their fingerprints by scarring their fingers or undergoing surgery and have illegally entered Japan using a forged or altered passport obtained through such means. In order to respond more appropriately to cases of disguised fingerprints, the ISA has been striving to uncover these disguised fingerprints by modifying the fingerprint acquisition devices, and in addition to executing the deportation procedures, the ISA has been strictly enforcing criminal dispositions through accusations and notifications to the police and other law enforcement agencies.

In addition, since March 26, 2021, facial images of people who receive departure confirmation when departing Japan have been collated with facial images of people who are subject to departure confirmation deferment, which are held by the ISA.



Immigration examination through the use of Biometric information

(2) Utilizing of ICPO's Database of Stolen and Lost Travel Documents

The introduction and operation of a system to enable the utilization of ICPO's database of stolen and lost travel documents at the time of the landing examinations as a measure to prevent terrorism was decided in the "Action Plan for the Prevention of Terrorism" (decision of the Headquarters for the Promotion of Measures against Transnational Organized Crime and Other Relative Issues and International Terrorism on December 10, 2004), and examinations have been conducted since August 2009 utilizing ICPO's stolen and lost travel documents database search system.

The ISA strives to detect and prevent cases of illegal entry by terrorists and individuals who plan to commit illegal acts in Japan using lost or stolen passports by utilizing the database, and moreover, through passport forensics using high-performance forged and altered document forensics equipment deployed at the major airports and seaports throughout the country.

(3) Immigration Examinations Utilizing API and PNR

From February 2007, the ISA has made it mandatory for the captain of all vessels and aircraft entering Japan to submit advance passenger information (API), and from February 2010, the advance passenger inspection system (APIS) is being operated making it possible for the API of aircraft arriving at the airports to be received electronically via the Nippon Automated Cargo and Port Consolidated System (NACCS) operated by Nippon Automated Cargo and Port Consolidated System, Inc. As a result, it has become possible to grasp in advance information related to the arrival of people requiring special attention for immigration control, and to implement more effective and efficient countermeasures at the port of entry. From June 2017, the reporting time of the information, which, in principle, used to be set at "90 minutes before arrival" was revised to, in principle, "30 minutes from the time of departing the area outside of Japan", making it possible to detect the arrival of suspect persons much

sooner. Furthermore, the APIS started operation in July 2020 for the API of vessels entering the ports, leading to the realization of stricter immigration examinations.

In addition, as the number of foreign nationals entering Japan has increased significantly, in order to stringently prevent the entry of suspect persons through immigration control at the border, the airline companies have been requested since January 2015 to provide passenger name records (PNR), and from January 2016, the ISA has commenced electronic receipt of PNRs via NACCS and have been using them in the immigration examinations.

With regard to API and PNR reports, it has been made obligatory to submit electronic reports via NACCS since June 2021, in order to promote efficient analysis and utilization of information by promoting digitization.

2 Reinforcement of Information Collection and Analysis

In recent years, terrorist attacks have occurred all over the world, and the ISA must take even stricter countermeasures at the port of entry in order to reliably prevent terrorists from entering Japan.

Meanwhile, it is necessary to achieve the intricate balance of strict immigration control, including measures to prevent terrorism, and also smooth entry examinations to realize Japan as a tourism-oriented country.

Therefore, in October 2015, as the core organization for information gathering and analysis in immigration control, the Center of Collection and Analysis of Intelligence was established in the ISA, and this Center promotes information sharing with domestic and overseas related organizations. Specifically, the ISA collects various types of information, such as information on international terrorists, and do advanced analysis using artificial intelligence (AI) and information held by the ISA, including APIs and PNRs. The results are then used by the Regional Immigration Services Bureaus at airports in order to implement smooth and strict countermeasures at the port of entry.

3 Patrol Activities at Airports and Seaports

In fact, there have been some cases of illegal entry into a third country misusing the transit areas (special areas made available in international airports, consisting of areas through which those who enter the country by airplane move until they reach the landing examination site, and places where those who are making airplane connections can stay before they go onboard) in Japanese major airports.

Accordingly, the immigration control officers monitor and detect suspicious individuals by reinforced organizational patrols, in the transit areas of Narita Airport and other major airports.

In addition, there is a concern that illegal entry cases using vessels to smuggle those who have been deported from Japan in order to avoid landing examination utilizing Biometric information, would increase.

Owing to the possibility that terrorists or other related persons, etc. may be hidden among the foreign nationals who have illegally entered Japan, in order to deal appropriately with these cases, mobile teams composed of immigration control officers (mobile teams for Kita-Nihon (northern Japan), Tokyo Bay Chiba, Tokyo Bay Yokohama, Naka-Nihon (central Japan), Kobe and Nishi-Nihon (West Japan)) have been assigned to the regional immigration

services bureaus in Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka and Fukuoka, and the border measures have been strengthened. These mobile teams gather, analyze and share information on illegal foreign nationals entering and departing from Japan and conduct various joint drills, while reinforcing their cooperation with the related ministries and agencies. These mobile teams conduct patrols at the seaports and coastal areas under their jurisdictions and search onboard ships in port, as well as conducting investigations and detection of suspects, related suspects and brokers in connection with illegal immigration issues.



Patrol Activity

Chapter 5

Acceptance of Foreign Nationals and Immigration Control and Residency Management Administration

Section 1**Promotion of the Acceptance of Highly-Skilled Foreign Professionals****1 Outline of Points-Based Preferential Treatment for Highly-Skilled Foreign Professionals**

Japan introduced preferential immigration control and residency management treatment based on the points-based system for highly-skilled foreign professionals (hereinafter referred to as “points-based system for highly-skilled professionals”) in May 2012, and has since been promoting the acceptance of highly-skilled foreign professionals. The points-based system for highly-skilled professionals aims at foreign nationals who have advanced capabilities and qualities and are expected to contribute to Japan’s economic growth and divides the contents of the activities of the highly-skilled foreign professionals into the three categories of “advanced academic research activities”, “advanced specialized/technical activities” and “advanced business management activities”. According to the characteristic features of each category, points are awarded for each item such as “academic background”, “professional career” and “annual salary”, and if the total number reaches 70 points, such a foreign national is recognized as a “highly-skilled foreign professional” and becomes eligible for preferential immigration control and residency management treatment.

Following the introduction of the system, a recommendation was made by the 6th Immigration Policy Discussions Panel to the Minister of Justice to revise the points-based system for highly-skilled professionals in May 2013. In the “Japan Revitalization Strategy” approved by the Cabinet on June 14 of the same year, a goal was set out to revise the system and to start the new system within the same year. Based on these, the Immigration Bureau (at that time) amended the MOJ public notice on December 17 of the same year with the aim of revising the criteria for recognition pertaining to highly-skilled foreign professionals and revising the preferential treatment.

In order to further promote the acceptance of foreign human resources who possess a high degree of professional competence, the statuses of residence of “Highly-Skilled Professional (i)” and “Highly-Skilled Professional (ii)” were newly established by an amendment of the Immigration Control Act in 2014 for highly-skilled foreign professionals who had previously been granted the status of residence of “Designated Activities”.

2. “Highly-Skilled Professional (i)” and “Highly-Skilled Professional (ii)”

The new statuses of residence of “Highly-Skilled Professional (i)” and “Highly-Skilled

Professional (ii)” established by the 2014 Amendment Act are both limited to foreign nationals who meet the criteria prescribed in the Ordinance of the MOJ and in response, the Ordinance to Provide for the Criteria in the Right-Hand Column Corresponding to “Highly-Skilled Professionals as Specified in the Appended Table I (2) of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act” (Ministerial Ordinance No. 37 of 2014) was enacted and the criteria were set. With regard to “Highly-Skilled Professional (i)”, the criteria for the points-based system for highly-skilled professionals followed those previously the status of residence of “Designated Activities”. And the total number of points set for each of the categories of “academic background”, “professional career” and “annual salary” etc. needs to reach 70 points or more. In addition, with regard to “Highly-Skilled Professional (ii)”, the total number of points needs to be 70 points or more as with “Highly-Skilled Professional (i)”, and moreover, foreign nationals are required to reside in Japan for three years or more with the status of residence of “Highly-Skilled Professional (i)”, to engage in the activities for the status, to demonstrate good behavior and to be deemed to suit Japan’s interests.

(1) Preferential Treatment for “Highly-Skilled Professional (i)”

- A. Grant of period of stay for five years
- B. Permission to engage in activities covering multiple statuses of residence
- C. Permission for the spouse of the highly-skilled foreign professional to work ^(*1)
- D. Permission for the parent(s) to accompany the highly-skilled foreign professional to Japan under certain conditions ^(*2)
- E. Relaxation of requirements for permanent residence
- F. Permission for a domestic worker to accompany the highly-skilled foreign professional to Japan under certain conditions ^(*3)
- G. Preferential processing of entry and residence procedures

(2) Preferential Treatment for “Highly-Skilled Professional (ii)”

- A. Engaging in almost all of the statuses of residence based on employment, in conjunction with the activities is permitted.
- B. An indefinite period of stay is granted.
- C. The preferential treatment of the abovementioned from C to F of (1) is provided.

Although the status of residence of “Highly-Skilled Professional (ii)” has no restrictions on the period of stay and cannot be granted at the time of landing similar to the status of residence of “Permanent Resident”, it differs from the status of residence of “Permanent Resident”, which has no restrictions on activities, because the status of residence of “Highly-Skilled Professional (ii)” requires engaging in activities as a highly-skilled foreign professional. As a result, if a foreign national with the status of residence of “Highly-Skilled Professional (ii)” does not engage in the activities as a highly-skilled foreign professional for an ongoing period

(*1) In cases of activities coming under the statuses of residence of “Instructor”, “Engineer/Specialist in Humanities/International Services”, etc. it is possible to work with the status of residence of a spouse of a highly-skilled foreign professional even without meeting certain criteria relating to academic background or professional career.

(*2) In cases where there is a child under seven years old or where the highly-skilled foreign professionals or his spouse is pregnant.

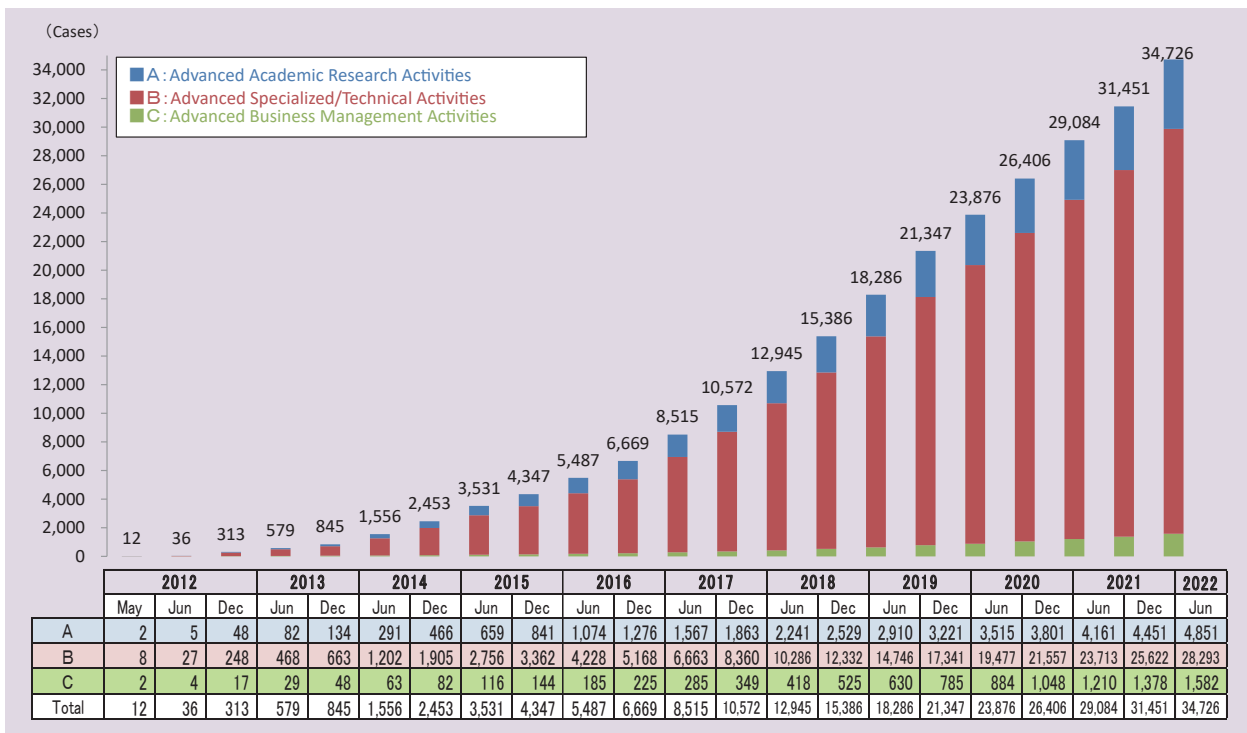
(*3) In cases where there is a child under 13 years old or where spouse is unable to engage in the day-to-day household chores owing to an illness or other reasons. However, for highly-skilled foreign professionals (financial professionals) engaged in Type 2 Financial Instruments Business, Investment Advisory and Agency business, or Investment Management Business stipulated in the Financial Instruments and Exchange Act (Law No. 25 of 1948), there are no requirements such as having a child under 13 years old, it is possible to employ up to two domestic workers as long as their annual household income is 30 million yen or higher.

of six months or more, this may become grounds for revocation of the status of residence, and there are certain requirements which are not imposed on the status of residence of “Permanent Resident” such as the requirement to notice the organization of affiliation (workplace, etc.) to the Minister of Justice. On the other hand, foreign nationals with the status of residence of “Highly-Skilled Professional (ii)” are given preferential immigration control and residency management treatment which is not accorded to “Permanent Resident” such as allowing parents or a domestic worker to accompany the highly-skilled foreign professional.

3 Situation of Acceptance

After the start of the system in May 2012, the cumulative number of cases of recognition up until the end of 2013 was a low number of 845, but the number of new cases of recognition has significantly increased following the policy reform made in December of the same year, from the inception of the system to June 30, 2022, 34,726 foreign nationals have been recognized as high-skilled professionals.

Reference 76 Changes in the number of cases of recognition (cumulative) through the points-based system for high-skilled professionals



4 Situation of operations following review of the period of stay required for the applications for permanent residence

The “Japan Revitalization Strategy 2016” (approved by the Cabinet decision of June 2, 2016) proposed the establishment of the world’s fastest “Japanese Green Card for Highly-Skilled Foreign Professionals” greatly reducing the current five-year period of stay required for the application for permanent residence for highly-skilled foreign professionals as one of the “considering immigration and residence control systems that further attract highly skilled foreign professionals”, and the requirements were also reviewed and further promo-

tion of publicity for the system conducted from the perspective of making the points-based system for highly-skilled foreign professionals more accessible.

Based on this, the residence period required in the applications for permanent residence of highly-skilled foreign professionals was reduced from the previous five years to three years (to one year for professionals with particularly high skills (where the total number of points is 80 points or more)), additional points categories were added, and the operations for these commenced in April 2017. The number of cases of permission for permanent residence through the operations granted up until end of March 2022 was 12,605.

Section 2 Acceptance of Foreign Nationals in the National Strategic Special Zones

1 Entrepreneurs

The “Project for Facilitation of Acceptance of Foreign Entrepreneurs in National Strategic Special Zones” was stipulated in the “Act for Partial Amendment of the Act on National Strategic Special Zones and the Act on Special Zones for Structural Reform” (Act No. 56 of 2015) as a special measure in order to strengthen the international competitiveness of industries and to form an international economic activities hub in such zones by promoting the acceptance of foreign entrepreneurs in national strategic special zones.

In this project, the Council on National Strategic Special Zones specifies the project in the special zone plan, and once the plan has been approved by the Prime Minister, the local government pertaining to national strategic special zone examines the feasibility of the business start-up plan for foreign nationals who intend to enter Japan with the status of residence of “Business Manager”, and if it confirms that the requirements pertaining to the stability and sustainability of the business have been fulfilled, the entry is permitted on condition that the requirements pertaining to the status of residence of “Business Manager” which are normally required at the time of landing examination are to be met within six months of landing, and the activities to start up a business in national strategic special zone are specially permitted.

In March 2020, guidelines for a change of the status of residence and an extension of the period of stay pertaining to the Project for Facilitation of Acceptance of Foreign Entrepreneurs in National Strategic Special Zones were created, and it was decided that foreign nationals residing in Japan with the status of residence of “Student” will be allowed to change their status of residence to “Business Manager” in cases where the foreign national plans to engage in the activities to start up a business utilizing the project and where certain requirements are met. Under these guidelines, foreign nationals engaging in the activities to start up a business utilizing the project who apply for the extension of their period of stay to continue the activities will be granted the extension of up to one year even if they use a co-working space, shared office, or a similar facility as their business office, since the facility will be considered their business office if certain requirements are met.

As of July 2022, operations for the project have commenced in the Tokyo Area National Strategic Special Zone (project implementation area: all of Tokyo metropolitan area and all of Kanagawa prefecture), the Fukuoka-Kitakyushu National Strategic Special Zone (all of Fukuoka city and all of Kitakyushu city), the Niigata National Strategic Special Zone (all of Niigata city), the Hiroshima Prefecture-Imabari City National Strategic Special Zone (all

of Hiroshima prefecture and all of Imabari city), the Sendai City National Strategic Special Zone (all of Sendai city), the Aichi Prefecture National Strategic Special Zone (all of Aichi prefecture) and the Kansai Area National Strategic Special Zone (all of Kyoto prefecture).

2 Foreign nationals Conducting Housekeeping Services

The “Project to Accept Foreigners Conducting Housekeeping Services in National Strategic Special Zones” that the activities of domestic workers in national strategic special zones are deemed to come under the public notice on the status of residence of “Designated Activities” was stipulated as a special measure in the “Act for Partial Amendment of the Act on National Strategic Special Zones and the Act on Special Zones for Structural Reform” (Act No. 56 of 2015).

This project is a special measure where the Council on National Strategic Special Zones establishes the project as a special zone plan, and the special zone plan is approved by the Prime Minister, domestic workers (foreign nationals conducting housekeeping services) who have entered into an employment contract with a specified organization are able to engage in the activities of conducting housekeeping services (cooking, washing, cleaning and shopping) in the household using the domestic services, under a framework where a third party management council composed of the local government of the zone implementing the project and the relevant ministries (Cabinet Office, MOJ, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, and Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry) is involved in ensuring appropriate acceptance (confirmation that the specified organizations are complying with the criteria, implementation of audits, etc.).

The period in which foreign nationals were permitted to conduct housekeeping services under the project used to be three years in total. However, in March 2020, the period was extended to five years in total, following a change in the guidelines based on the Act on National Strategic Special Zones (Act No. 107 of 2013).

As of July 2022, operations for the project have commenced in the Tokyo Area National Strategic Special Zone (project implementation area: all of Tokyo metropolitan area and all of Kanagawa prefecture and all of Chiba city), the Kansai Area National Strategic Special Zone (all of Osaka city, all of Toyonaka city, all of Ikeda city, all of Minoh city, all of Moriguchi city, all of Hirakata city, all of Neyagawa city, all of Kadoma city and all of Hyogo prefecture) and the Aichi Prefecture National Strategic Special Zone (all of Aichi prefecture).

3 Foreign nationals Conducting Agricultural Works

In order to realize “strong agriculture” through promoting the production of various kinds of crops in the production areas and expanding the scale of the business by utilizing foreign workers in the field of agriculture, the “Project to Accept Foreigners Conducting Agricultural Works in National Strategic Special Zones” that the activities of agricultural support workers in national strategic special zones are deemed to come under the public notice on the status of residence of “Designated Activities” was stipulated as a special measure in the “Act for Partial Amendment of the Act on National Strategic Special Zones and the Act on Special Zones for Structural Reform” (Act No. 71 of 2017) (effective from September 22, 2017).

This project is a special measure where the Council on National Strategic Special Zones

establishes the project as a special zone plan, and the special zone plan is approved by the Prime Minister, foreign agricultural support workers who have entered into an employment contract with a specified organization are able to engage in agricultural support works (production, manufacturing, processing, etc.) in the agricultural management body, etc., which is the agency that has entered into a worker dispatch contract with a specified organization, under a framework where an appropriate acceptance management council composed of the local government of the zone implementing the project and the relevant ministries (Cabinet Office, MOJ, Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries) is involved in ensuring appropriate acceptance (confirmation that the specified organizations are complying with the criteria, implementation of audits/patrol guidance, etc.).

As of July 2022, operations for the project have commenced in the Kansai Area National Strategic Special Zone (project implementation area: all of Kyoto prefecture), the Niigata National Strategic Special Zone (all of Niigata city), the Aichi Prefecture National Strategic Special Zone (all of Aichi prefecture), and the Okinawa National Strategic Special Zone (all of Okinawa prefecture).

In addition, a decision was made at the Advisory Council on National Strategic Special Zones on June 11, 2019 that the project would be transferred to the system of specified skilled workers in stages in light of the fact that agriculture was positioned as a designated industrial field, and in cases of new acceptance of foreign nationals supporting agriculture, efforts would be made to have such foreign workers enter Japan by March 31, 2020.

4 Foreign nationals Supporting Overseas Demand Development

In order to flexibly respond to the needs for acceptance of foreign nationals who have expertise related to “cool Japan and inbound responses” and to maximize use of the specialized knowledge and skills acquired by foreign nationals in companies and other enterprises, the “Project to Promote Activities Supporting Foreigners Overseas Demand Development in National Strategic Special Zones” was stipulated as a special measure in the “Act for Partial Amendment of the Act on National Strategic Special Zones and the Act on Special Zones for Structural Reform” (Act No. 71 of 2017) (effective from September 22, 2017).

The project enables a foreign national to enter Japan with the status of residence of “Engineer/Specialist in Humanities/International Services” or “Skilled Worker” in cases where: the intended activities supporting foreign nationals overseas demand development is applicable to the status of residence of “Engineer/Specialist in Humanities/International Services” or “Skilled Worker”; it is recognized that a level of knowledge and skills equivalent to the academic history and practical experience required under the current landing permission criteria can be substituted by domestic or foreign qualifications or examinations, awards received, or the like; the Council on National Strategic Special Zones specifies the project in the special zone plan, and the plan has been approved by the Prime Minister; and the foreign national meets the landing examination criteria for foreign nationals pertaining to activities supporting foreign nationals overseas demand development, the criteria being provided as a special government ordinance of the Landing Criteria Ministerial Ordinance and being considered criteria provided pursuant to the Landing Criteria Ministerial Ordinance.

5 Special Additions Pertaining to the Points-based System for Highly-skilled Professionals

In order to promote the acceptance of highly-skilled foreign nationals and thereby enhance industrial international competitiveness and develop a hub for international economic activity, the “Project to Promote the Acceptance of Highly-skilled Foreign Nationals in National Strategic Special Zones” was adopted as a special measure (taking effect on March 15, 2019), in response to the Order to Partially Revise the Order on Measures Related to the Special Provisions of MOJ Related Ministerial Ordinances Pertaining to Projects Regulated by Government Ordinances, etc. Specified in Article 26 of the Act on National Strategic Special Zones (Cabinet Office, Ministerial Ordinance No. 1, 2019).

This project adds ten points when applying for the status of residence “Highly-Skilled Professional” for foreign nationals working in public and private organizations in Japan supported by subsidies from local governments to which the project implementation area belongs.

As of July 2022, operations for the project have commenced in the Tokyo Area National Strategic Special Zone (project implementation area: all of Tokyo metropolitan area), the Hiroshima Prefecture - Imabari City National Strategic Special Zone (all of Hiroshima prefecture), the Kansai Area National Strategic Special Zone (all of Kyoto prefecture), the Fukuoka City - Kitakyushu City National Strategic Special Zone (all of Fukuoka city and all of Kitakyushu city), the Sendai City National Strategic Special Zone (all of Sendai city), and the Aichi Prefecture National Strategic Special Zone (all of Aichi prefecture).

6 Foreign Beauticians

The Japanese government is seeking to promote Cool Japan, including strengthening industrial competitiveness and brand improvement by exporting Japanese beauty products, as well as to respond to inbound demand by promoting the overseas activities of human resources who have practical experience in beauty in Japan. To that end, The National Strategic Special Zone Foreign Beautician Training Project was established as a special measure to train foreign workers with Japanese beautician licenses, according to the National Strategic Special Zone Foreign Beautician Training Project Implementation Guidelines (decided on July 30, 2021).

This project is a special measure where the Council on National Strategic Special Zones establishes the project as a special zone plan, and the special zone plan is approved by the Prime Minister. Based on training plans certified by local governments of project implementation areas, foreign beauticians who have graduated from a Japanese beautician training facility and have obtained a beautician license and meet certain requirements are able to engage in specified beautician activities that require practical knowledge and skills related to beauty under the direction and supervision of a training institution with which an employment contract has been concluded. As of July 2022, the operation is scheduled to start in the Tokyo Area National Strategic Special Zone (project implementation area: all of Tokyo metropolitan area) by the end of 2022.

Section 3 Other Measures

1 Promotion of the acceptance of foreign nationals related to Cool Japan

(1) Work from a fashion design educational institution

In order to promote the acceptance of foreign nationals related to Cool Japan, it was decided that from March 2018, foreign students, who have graduated from a specialized course of a fashion design educational institution which is permitted to accept foreign students where it is deemed possible for the foreign student to acquire specialized knowledge and skills would be eligible for permission to change the status of residence for the purpose of finding employment with a Japanese company or other enterprise.

(2) Acceptance of Foreign Licensed Cooks · Confectionery Hygiene Masters

Since February 2014, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, in cooperation with the ISA, has implemented the “Program to Train Foreign Nationals in Japanese Cuisine”. Under the program, foreign students who have graduated from a licensed cook training facility and obtained a cook license are allowed to engage in activities relating to cooking Japanese cuisine for up to five years with the status of residence of “Designated Activities”. In November 2019, the name of the project was changed to the “Program for Training Foreign Nationals in Japanese Food Culture”, foreign students who have majored in confectionery production and completed a specialized program at a special training school were made eligible to the project, and restaurants including those serving non-Japanese cuisine, confectionery stores including bakeries, and hotels and Japanese inns, among other facilities, were added to the list of accepting organizations, which led to the extension of the project to non-Japanese cuisine cooking and confectionery production and the further promotion of acceptance of foreign nationals related to Cool Japan.

2 Further acceptance of fourth-generation foreign nationals of Japanese descent

With regard to the fourth-generation foreign nationals of Japanese descent, only unmarried minors who are natural children supported by a third-generation foreign national of Japanese descent residing in Japan with the status of residence of “Long-Term Resident” were used to be permitted to enter Japan, but a system was established and became effective from July 2018 for the purpose of promoting understanding of and interest in Japan through the acceptance of young fourth-generation foreign nationals of Japanese descent and activities to have them learn about Japanese culture, and thereby, to develop human resources acting as a bridge to strengthen the connections between Japan and Japanese societies abroad.

Under this system, basically the same entry requirements as for the working holiday system are required, but as a unique requirement of this system, a certain level of Japanese language proficiency is required at the time of entry into Japan or at the time of renewing the period of stay, as well as the guarantee of a “supporter to accept the fourth-generation foreign national of Japanese descent” to provide support pertaining to the entry and residence of the fourth-generation foreign national of Japanese descent being required. Fourth-generation foreign nationals of Japanese descent who are accepted under this system are able to engage in activities to understand Japanese culture, including the Japanese language,

for a total of a maximum of five years, and to engage in activities to receive remuneration within the necessary limit to supplement necessary funds in order to engage in the activities (except for activities to engage in amusement-business work).

With regard to this system, in order to further promote acceptance of fourth-generation foreign nationals of Japanese descent, some Japanese language requirements imposed at the time of entry to Japan and during residence were relaxed in March 2021.

3 Online residence procedures

The “Future Investment Strategy 2018” decided by the Cabinet in June 2018 set out that in order to facilitate and expedite the status of residence procedures, online applications for the status of residence would commence from FY 2018, which would allow organizations of affiliation that properly employ foreign nationals and submit notifications on the situation of employment of foreign nationals to carry out the procedures on behalf of the foreign national.

In response to this, starting in July 2019, staff of organizations of affiliation that meet certain requirements, as well as attorneys and administrative scriveners hired by affiliated institutions, can make applications to extend period of stay, and simultaneously make applications for re-entry permits and applications for permission to engage in activity other than that permitted under the status of residence previously granted, based on requests from applicants. In March 2020, measures were taken such as expanding procedures and statuses of residence that are eligible for online applications, in order to further improve convenience.

In April 2020, we made it possible for foreign nationals affiliated with small and medium sized enterprises (Category 3 organizations) for some work statuses of residence, and in July 2020, we made it possible for foreign students enrolled in vocational schools and Japanese language schools to apply online as well.

Furthermore, in March 2022, revisions were made to enable online applications by foreign nationals themselves and others using the electronic certificate and personal authentication function of the Individual Number Card, and to add the status of residence in the Appended Table II of the Immigration Control Act, such as “Spouse or Child of Japanese National”, to the scope of online application.

4 Promotion of the acceptance of foreign entrepreneurs

The “Growth Strategy 2018” decided by the Cabinet in June 2018 outlined a program to support entrepreneurial activities to commence within fiscal year 2018 such as measures to further expand the acceptance of entrepreneurs, and implementation of management and support measures by checking the situation of implementation of entrepreneurial activities and building a consultation system.

In response to this, as a system permitting entry and residence for the purpose of entrepreneurial activities for up to one year under the proper management and support of the national and local governments, the “Public Notice Relating to the Project to Promote Foreign National Entrepreneurial Activities”, which is a public notice of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, stipulated the procedures for local governments to promote foreign national entrepreneurship activities and specific contents such as the scope of the foreign national entrepreneurs who are eligible for acceptance, and based on this, amendments were made to the public notice of the MOJ, which were promulgated and enforced on December

28, 2018.

In accordance with the revised public notice of the MOJ, foreign residents who receive support for entrepreneurship from local governments in accordance with the public notice of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry will be allowed to enter and reside in Japan with the status of residence of “Designated Activities” for a period not exceeding one year in terms of the immigration and residence management procedures.

The “Follow-up on Growth Strategy” and “City, People, Work Creation Basic Policy 2020” decided by the Cabinet in July 2020 set forth measures for entrepreneurial activities in Japan by the end of fiscal year 2020, for foreign nationals who have graduated from Japanese universities and meet certain requirements.

In response to this, it was decided to allow a maximum of two years of residence with the status of “Designated Activities” for foreign students who have been engaged in entrepreneurial activities since they were enrolled in Japanese universities considered to be enthusiastic about accepting outstanding foreign students, and who wish to continue their entrepreneurial activities even after graduation.

It was also decided to allow the transition to new measures after using this project, and to allow residence for up to two years following residence based on this project, for foreign nationals who have stayed in Japan after graduating from a Japanese university and used the Project to Promote Foreign National Entrepreneurial Activities or the Project for Facilitation of Acceptance of Foreign Entrepreneurs in National Strategic Special Zones, but did not start a business within the allotted period.

5 Promotion of the appropriate acceptance of Foreign Students

(1) Employment Support for Foreign Students

According to the “Japan Revitalization Strategy 2016” approved by the Cabinet in June 2016, the aim is to increase the share of foreign students who find employment within Japan from the current 30% to 50%, and in addition, to expand the range of fields in which foreign students are able to find employment has been decided in the “Comprehensive Measures” decided at the relevant ministerial meeting in December 2018.

Therefore, in order to promote the settlement of excellent foreign human resources and expand opportunities for employment in Japan for the foreign students who are expected to contribute to revitalize the Japanese economy and society, the public notice on the status of residence of “Designated Activities” was amended, promulgated and enforced on May 30, 2019.

Accordingly, foreign students who have graduated from a Japanese university or graduate school are permitted to work in a wide range when they engage in the work that anticipated to make use of the knowledge and applied skills that they acquired at a Japanese university or graduate school, and Japanese language skills under certain conditions such as requiring a high level of Japanese language skill such as the Japanese Language Proficiency Test N1 level, being a full-time employee, and receiving remuneration equivalent to or more than that a Japanese national would receive for the same work. At the end of December 2021, the number of the foreign nationals granted their status of residence by this system was 576.

In order to promote further utilization, we are announcing this system on the ISA website and consultation counters.

(2) Optimization of the Japanese Language Institutions

Since Japanese language institutions that accept foreign students need to be optimized as educational institutions which steadily provide an appropriate learning settings. Related to this point, the guideline on the public notice for the Japanese language institutions were partially amended in 2019, introducing stricter criteria such as for the attendance rate of all residents of Student status or for the proportion of them staying illegally beyond their authorized period of stay pursuant to the deletion procedures from the public notice, as well as making it obligatory to report the results of periodic self-inspections on the guideline and pertaining to Japanese language proficiency such as the results of the valid proficiency tests. We are properly following the guidelines, and are continuing to optimize Japanese language institutions, improve the quality of them, and carefully manage the residence of foreign students.

6 Online notifications regarding Specified Skilled Workers

Notifications regarding the status of residence “Specified Skilled Worker”, which was newly established in April 2019, are submitted by the Specified Skilled Worker’s affiliate organization and registered support organization (hereinafter, “Specified Skilled Worker affiliate organization, etc.”) to the Commission of the ISA. They include quarterly notifications about the implementation status for Specified Skilled Worker and activities of Specified Skilled Worker Revision of the (regular notifications), as well as notifications made each time there is a change related to the employment contracts or support plans of Specified Skilled Workers (irregular notifications). In the Digital Government Execution Plan (Cabinet decision made on December 25, 2020), it was decided that online notifications would be made possible by the end of March 2021.

In response to this, the ISA has made it possible for the staff of Specified Skilled Workers affiliated organizations, etc. that have registered in advance as users of the ISA’s Electronic Notification System to submit all notifications related to the specified skilled work system online, and the system began accepting notifications in April 2021.

Article: At the Front Line of Immigration Control Administration

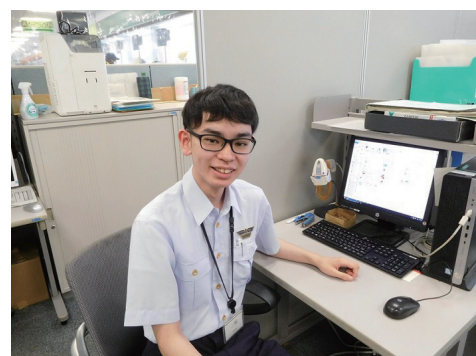
**(Voice of the immigration inspector in charge of online inspections)
(Student and Trainee Inspection Department, the Osaka Regional Immigration Services Bureau: Miwa Hiroto)**

I work at Osaka Regional Immigration Services Bureau, Student and Trainee Inspection Department, and I am mainly in charge of examining online applications for status of residence “Technical Intern Training”. Online applications were started in July 2019 with the purpose of “reducing the burden of appearing at the counter of the regional immigration office, greatly facilitating and speeding up the residence examination procedure, and enhancing the convenience of the status of residency procedure.”

Prior to the start of online applications, foreign nationals, in principle, had to appear in person at Regional Immigration Services Bureaus in order to apply for status of residence. Also, in the case of the Osaka Regional Immigration Services Bureau, there are a lot of people who come in to our office, so they may have to wait for a long time when applying or receiving a residence card. However, if they use the online application, they do not need to go to the counter, and they can apply for status of residence from their home or office. Also, when applying online, they can choose to receive their residence card at the counter or by mail. If they choose mail, it is more convenient and less burdensome for users than if they go directly to the counter.

At the beginning of the online application, online application was possible only in limited cases, with only the staff of organizations of affiliation who met certain requirements and the attorney or administrative scrivener requested by the organizations of affiliation being able to apply for extension of period of stay. However, since then, the procedures in which online application was possible have been expanded repeatedly, and it has become possible to apply online for permission for change of status of residence and for certificate of eligibility. From March 2022, the ISA has added statuses of residence such as “Long-Term Resident” and “Spouse or Child of Japanese National”.

Online applications are also helping to prevent transmission of COVID-19 during the pandemic. I hope that more people will understand the merits of online applications, and that the number of people using online applications will increase, because it will improve the convenience of procedures related to examination of status of residence.



The immigration inspector in charge of online inspections

Chapter 6 The System of Specified Skilled Worker

The statuses of residence of “Specified Skilled Worker (i)” and “Specified Skilled Worker (ii)” were established following the promulgation of Act for Partial Amendment of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act and the Act for Establishment of the MOJ on December 8, 2018, in the 197th Diet, and operation started on April 1, 2019.

Below is an overview of the Specified Skilled Worker system.

Section 1 Outline of The System

The system of Specified Skilled Workers is a system that was established for the acceptance of work-ready foreign nationals who have a certain degree of expertise and skills in the industrial fields where it is still difficult to secure human resources even if efforts have been made to improve productivity and secure domestic human resources in order to cope with the worsening labor shortages being experienced by small to medium-size business enterprises.

Section 2 Operation Policy of the Specified Skilled Worker System

1 The Government’s Basic Policy

Based on the “Basic Policy for Economic and Fiscal Management and Reform 2018” (Cabinet decision of June 15, 2018), Basic Policy for the Operation of the System of Specified Skilled Worker Status of Residence (hereinafter referred to as “the government’s basic policy”) was established pursuant to Article 2-3, paragraph (1) of the Amended Immigration Control Act, which entered into force on April 1, 2019 in order to ensure proper operation of the system pertaining to the status of residence of “Specified Skilled Worker”.

As well as matters relating to the significance of the system pertaining to the status of residence of “Specified Skilled Worker”, the government’s basic policy stipulates the basic matters relating to the industrial fields where labor shortages need to be supplemented by foreign nationals since it is difficult to secure human resources (hereinafter referred to as “specified industrial field”), the basic matters relating to human resources required in a specified industrial field, the basic matters relating to coordination of the clerical affairs of the relevant administrative agencies concerning operation of the system pertaining to the status of residence of Specified Skilled Worker, and other important matters related to operation of the system related to the status of residence of Specified Skilled Worker (**Reference 77**).

Reference 77 Outline of the Basic Policy on Operation of the System of Specified Skilled Worker (Status of Residence)

Basic Policy on Operation of the System of Residence of “Specified Skilled Worker” Established to Ensure Proper Operation of the System of the Status of Residence of “Specified Skilled Worker” (Article 2-3 of the newly amended Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act)

1. Matters concerning the significance of the system
 To build a framework for the acceptance of work-ready foreign nationals, who possess certain expertise and skills in industrial fields where it is difficult to secure workforce even after efforts to improve productivity and secure domestic human resources have been made so as to respond to the serious shortage in labor of small and medium-sized enterprises and other businesses.

2. Matters concerning the industrial fields where labor shortage needs to be supplemented by foreign workers
 > Fields where specified skilled workers will be accepted
 Industrial fields where foreign workers are needed to supplement the labor shortage, which is still difficult to secure human resources even after efforts have been made to improve productivity and secure domestic human resources (hereinafter referred to as “specified industrial fields”).
 > Consideration to regions facing labor shortage
 Efforts to take necessary measures will be made so as not to have an excessive concentration of specified skilled workers in metropolitan areas or other particular areas
 > Expected number of acceptance
 The number of specified skilled workers to be accepted over the next five years will be stated in the operation policy of each field

3. Matters concerning necessary human resources

	Specified Skilled Worker (i)	Specified Skilled Worker (ii)
Skill level	Skills that require considerable knowledge or experience *	Proficient skills *
Japanese proficiency level	The workers should be basically able to deal with daily conversation to a certain extent, which is enough to survive daily life, as well as to have Japanese language proficiency required for their work *	—
Period of stay	Upper limit of a total of 5 years	Extension of the period of stay is possible
Accompanying family members	In principle, not permitted	Permitted

* Confirmed through the exams or other methods specified by the ministries in charge of each field

4. Basic matters concerning adjustment of the administrative affairs of the relevant administrative organizations
 > Measures taken in Japan: Malicious intermediary organizations (brokers), etc. will be eliminated completely through enhancing collaboration between the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare and other related organizations.
 > Measures taken outside Japan: In order to prevent the intervention by malicious intermediary organizations such as those that collect deposits, intergovernmental documents such as bilateral arrangements will be made as well as necessary measures will be taken.
 > Responses to changes in the situation of labor shortages
 The head of the administrative organizations which are in charge of the specified industrial fields will continuously monitor the situation of labor shortage in the fields. When a change was observed in the situation, the relevant administrative organizations of the system and those which are in charge of the specified industrial fields will discuss future policies of acceptance. If necessary, revision of operation policy of each specified industrial field, suspension of the issuance of certificate of eligibility or deletion of fields from the ministerial ordinance stipulating the specified industrial fields will be discussed at the relevant ministerial meetings.

The expected number of foreign workers to be accepted over the next five years will be considered as the upper limit of acceptance under this system, unless there is a major change in the economic situation.
 > Responses in the event of public security problems
 The relevant administrative organizations of the system and those which are in charge of the specified industrial fields will make efforts to cooperate by sharing and monitoring the related information, and to take necessary measures so as to ensure such problems as foreign workers got missing and other public security problems will not occur through the acceptance of specified skilled workers.

5. Important matters concerning operation of the system
 > Supports for “Specified Skilled Worker (i)”
 Orientation of daily life, support to learn daily Japanese language, consultations and complaints handling for foreign workers, promotion of exchanges between foreign workers and Japanese are included in the supports.
 When foreign workers use Hello Work(public employment agency) to change their jobs, it will make efforts to understand the work conditions foreign workers desire, their skill level, and Japanese language proficiency level, and provide proper services for employment counseling and job placement.
 > Employment type: Full-time and, in principle, direct hire. Under special circumstances, specified skilled workers may, as an exception, be dispatched by staffing services agencies, but this will be clearly stated in the operation policy of each field.
 > Review of the Basic Policy: The system will be reviewed 2 years after enforcement of the amended Act, and modified if necessary.

2 Field-Specific Operation Policy

The field-specific operational policy is a policy on the operation of the system related to the status of residence of Specified Skilled Worker in a specified industrial field. In accordance with the government's basic policy, it is specified by the Minister of Justice together with the head of the administrative agency with jurisdiction over the field, the National Public Safety Commission, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare in order to ensure proper operation of the system pertaining to the status of residence of Specified Skilled Worker in the specified industrial fields.

In response to the enactment and promulgation of the Amended Act, the government's basic policy and the field-specific operational policies for each of the 14 specified industrial fields^(*) were approved on December 25, 2018 by the Ministerial Conference on Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Human Resources.

The field-specific operational policies stipulated the matters related to the situation of the shortage of human resources in the specified industrial fields as well as matters relating to the criteria for the human resources required in the specified industrial fields and other important matters related to operation of the system pertaining to the status of residence of Specified Skilled Worker (**Reference 78**).

(*) In the partial revision of the government's basic policy (Cabinet decision of April 26, 2022), the fields of Machine parts and tooling industry, Industrial machinery industry, and Electric, electronics and information industry were integrated to form "Machine parts and tooling / Industrial machinery / Electric, electronics and information industries". From May 25, 2022, there will be 12 fields.

Reference 78 Field-Specific Operation Policy (12 fields)

	Field	Labor shortage Prospective no. of foreign nationals to be accepted (maximum no. over 5 years)	Human resource criteria		Other important matters	
			Skills test	Japanese language exam	Type of work	Employment form
M H L W	Nursing care	60,000	Nursing care skills evaluation test	Japan Foundation Test for Basic Japanese or Japanese Language Proficiency Test N4 or higher (In addition to the above) Nursing care Japanese language evaluation test	As well as physical care (such as bathing, meals, assistance for excretion, etc., adjusted to the mental and physical state of the user), supplemental support services (recreation, assistance with functional exercise, etc.) (Note) Home visit services are excluded [1 test category]	Direct
	Building cleaning management	37,000	Building cleaning field specified skills (i) evaluation test	Japan Foundation Test for Basic Japanese or Japanese Language Proficiency Test N4 or higher	Interior building cleaning [1 test category]	Direct
M E T I	Machine parts & tooling / Industrial Machinery / Electric, electronics and information industries	31,450	Manufacturing field specified skills (i) evaluation test	Japan Foundation Test for Basic Japanese or Japanese Language Proficiency Test N4 or higher	- Casting - Forging - Die casting - Machining - Metal press - Iron work - Factory sheet metal work - Electroplating - Aluminium anodizing - Finishing - Machine inspection - Machine maintenance - Electric equipment assembling - Electronics equipment assembling - Print wiring board manufacturing - Plastic molding - Painting - Welding - Industrial packaging [19 test categories]	Direct
M L I T	Construction industry	40,000	Construction field specified skills (i) evaluation test, etc.	Japan Foundation Test for Basic Japanese or Japanese Language Proficiency Test N4 or higher	- Framework construction - Plastering - Concrete pumping - Tunnel and propulsion - Construction machinery and construction - Earthwork - Roofing - Telecommunications - Reinforcement construction - Reinforcing bar joints - Interior finishing - Wall covering - Scaffolding - Carpentry - Plumbing - Building sheet metal - Heat-retention and cool-retention - Spray urethane thermal insulation - Marine civil engineering [19 test categories]	Direct
	Shipbuilding & ship machinery industry	13,000	Shipbuilding/ship machinery field specified skills (i) evaluation test, etc.	Japanese-Language Proficiency Test (provisional) etc.	- Welding - Painting - Iron Work - Finishing - Machining - Electrical equipment [6 test categories]	Direct
	Automobile repair & maintenance	7,000	Automobile repair and maintenance field specified skills evaluation test, etc.	Japan Foundation Test for Basic Japanese or Japanese Language Proficiency Test N4 or higher	Automobile daily checks and maintenance, periodical checks and maintenance, disassembly repair [1 test category]	Direct
	Aviation industry	2,200	Aviation field specified skills evaluation test (airport ground handling or aircraft maintenance)	Japan Foundation Test for Basic Japanese or Japanese Language Proficiency Test N4 or higher	- Airport ground handling (handling of an aircraft on the ground, handling of baggage / cargo, etc.) - Aircraft maintenance (maintenance work, etc. for an aircraft, equipment, etc.) [2 test categories]	Direct
	Accommodation industry	22,000	Accommodation industry skills proficiency test	Japan Foundation Test for Basic Japanese or Japanese Language Proficiency Test N4 or higher	Providing accommodation services such as working at the front desk, planning / public relations, hospitality and restaurant services [1 test category]	Direct
M A F F	Agriculture	36,500	Agriculture skills proficiency test (cultivation agriculture or livestock agriculture)	Japan Foundation Test for Basic Japanese or Japanese Language Proficiency Test N4 or higher	- Cultivation agriculture (cultivation management, harvesting and shipping / sorting of agricultural products, etc.) - Livestock agriculture (management of rising, harvesting and shipping / sorting of livestock products, etc.) [2 test categories]	Direct <u>Dispatch</u>
	Fishery & aquaculture	9,000	Fishing industry skills proficiency test (fishery or aquaculture industry)	Japan Foundation Test for Basic Japanese or Japanese Language Proficiency Test N4 or higher	- Fishery (Production and repair of fishing gear, aquatic animals and plant exploration, operation of fishing gear and fishing machinery, aquatic animal and plant harvesting, treatment and storage of Fishery products, securing of safety and health, etc.) - Aquaculture industry (Production, repair and management of aquacultural materials, cultivation and management of aquatic animal and plant farming, harvesting and processing, securing of safety and health, etc.) [2 test categories]	Direct <u>Dispatch</u>
	Manufacture of food and beverages	34,000	Food and beverage manufacturing industry skills proficiency test	Japan Foundation Test for Basic Japanese or Japanese Language Proficiency Test N4 or higher	General food and beverage manufacturing (manufacture and processing of food and beverages (excluding alcoholic beverages), health and safety) [1 test category]	Direct
	Food service industry	53,000	Restaurant industry skills proficiency test	Japan Foundation Test for Basic Japanese or Japanese Language Proficiency Test N4 or higher	General restaurant work (food preparation, customer service, restaurant management) [1 test category]	Direct

3 Memorandum of Cooperation

In accordance with the government's basic policy, efforts are being made to enter into Memorandums of Cooperation such as for construction of an information sharing framework between the Japanese government and the governments of sending countries for Specified Skilled Workers, in order to eliminate malicious intermediary organizations (brokers) such as those collecting a deposit from foreign nationals who wish to work in Japan or their families.

Section 3 Situation of Operation of The "Specified Skilled Worker" System

1 Acceptance of foreign Specified Skilled Workers

According to the preliminary figures as of the end of June, 2022, the number of foreign nationals with the status of residence of Specified Skilled Worker was 87,472. As for the top five fields, the Manufacture of food and beverages accounted for the largest number at 29,617, followed by Machine parts and tooling / Industrial machinery / Electric, electronics and information industries at 17,865, Agriculture at 11,469, Nursing care at 10,411 and Construction industry at 8,493.

After the start of the system until the end of June 2022, there were 20,404 cases of issuance of Certificates of Eligibility pertaining to Specified Skilled Worker, 87,265 cases of permission granted for change of status of residence, and 7,129 cases of registration to registered support organizations.

The number of foreign nationals with the status of residence of Specified Skilled Worker increased by 76.1% from the end of December 2021 (49,666) to the end of June 2022 (87,472), and is likely to continue increasing in the future.

2 Situation of Implementation of Specified Skilled Worker Exams

The ISA, in cooperation with the relevant ministries and agencies, has promoted the implementation of exams in Japan and abroad. As of the end of June 2022, exams in all the 12 fields (Nursing care, Building cleaning management, Machine parts and tooling / Industrial machinery / Electric, electronics and information industries, Construction industry, Shipbuilding and ship machinery industry, Automobile repair and maintenance, Aviation industry, Accommodation industry, Agriculture, Fishery and aquaculture, Manufacture of food and beverages, Food service industry) have been implemented in Japan and 11 foreign countries (the Philippines, Cambodia, Indonesia, Nepal, Mongolia, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam, Sri Lanka, India and Uzbekistan).

The number of foreign nationals who have passed the skill exam has increased favorably, totaling 98,305 (preliminary figure) as of the end of June, 2022.

In the future, while this depends on the containment of COVID-19, we will promote the expansion of test sites and number of tests conducted both in Japan and overseas, the implementation of efforts to improve sending procedures, and matching support based on the actual situation in various fields, in order to encourage the smooth acceptance of foreign

nationals with the status of residence of Specified Skilled Worker.

3 Status of Memorandum of Cooperation

As of the end of June, 2022, Memorandums of Cooperation have been entered into with 14 countries; the Philippines, Cambodia, Nepal, Myanmar, Mongolia, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Viet Nam, Bangladesh, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Thailand, India and Malaysia.

In accordance with these Memorandums of Cooperation, we share information and exchange opinions with the respective governments as necessary, and strive to address any issues that are considered to require action in order to achieve the appropriate operation of the Specified Skilled Worker system.

Section 4

Efforts for the Smooth Operation of the Specified Skilled Worker System

1 Revision of the Government's Basic Policy

Based on the actual situation of system operation, some changes were made to the government's basic policy (Cabinet decision of April 26, 2022), which integrated the three manufacturing fields (Machine parts and tooling industry, Industrial machinery industry, and Electric, electronics and information industry) into Machine parts and tooling / Industrial machinery / Electric, electronics and information industries. The new integrated field started operation from May 25, 2022, following the revision of relevant ministerial ordinances by the MOJ and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry.

2 Revision of the Field-Specific Operation Policy

The Field-Specific Operation Policy was partially revised (Cabinet decision of February 28, 2020), including addition of the seven work categories of "Scaffolding", "Carpentry", "Plumbing", "Building Sheet Metal Work", "Heat-Retention and Cool-Retention", "Spray Urethane Heat Insulation", and "Offshore Civil Engineering" to the Construction industry field.

3 Revision of the Field-Specific Operation Manual

The Field-Specific Operation Manual was revised regarding the nursing care field (May 10, 2019). Under the new provisions, EPA certified care worker candidates who have appropriately engaged in work and training for four years are deemed to have attained the skill level and Japanese language proficiency level required for switching to a Specified Skilled Worker (i), and are thus exempt from taking exams.

The Field-Specific Operation Manual was revised regarding persons who have completed technical intern training (ii) with favorable results (November 29, 2019). Under the new provisions, such persons are, as a rule, considered to not require certification of their Japanese language proficiency level by exams or any other evaluation method, regardless of the occupation type or work type of the technical intern training they completed.

4 Revision of the Exam Policy

The “Policy regarding Exams for Specified Skilled Workers” (February 2019, ISA of Japan, MOJ) (hereinafter referred to as the “Exam Policy”) was adopted for exams pertaining to the status of residence of Specified Skilled Worker. In accordance to this policy, exams are held by the ministry, agency, or organization responsible for each field.

The Comprehensive Measures for Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals was revised on December 20, 2019. The scope of persons eligible to take the exams was revised, in response to the decision in the Comprehensive Measures to extend the scope in order to promote the seamless and appropriate acceptance of foreign nationals as Specified Skilled Workers.

Previously, those eligible to take the exams in Japan were limited to “mid to long-term residents and persons who have lived in Japan as a mid to long-term resident in the past”, for example. Eligibility to take the domestic exams was revised to include “persons with a status of residence”, thereby granting all persons with a status of residence the eligibility to take the exams. The exam policy was revised on January 30, 2020, taking effect on April 1.

5 Specified Skilled Worker System Promotion Projects

In order to promote the utilization of the Specified Skilled Worker system, from October 2020 to March 2021, we held job matching events for foreign nationals who want to work as specified skilled workers, and companies who want to hire foreign nationals as specified skilled workers, as well as information seminars about the Specified Skilled Workers system in general, in all 47 prefectures of Japan.

In FY 2021, in addition to continuing to hold online matching events in Japan, the ISA also held online system and company seminars for foreign nationals living overseas. In FY 2022, we plan to hold similar matching events in Japan and company seminars overseas.

Starting in September 2020, we opened the “Support Website for the Specified Skilled Worker” to transmit information to business operators and foreign nationals, including an outline of the Specified Skilled Worker system and exam information in each field. In addition to plain Japanese, this site provides information in 12 foreign languages (English, Chinese, Vietnamese, Philipino, Thai, Indonesian, Myanmarese, Nepali, Mongolian, Khmer, Sinhala, and Urdu).

Chapter 7 The Status of Operation of the Technical Intern Training Program

Technical Intern Training Act was established at the 192nd session of the Diet on November 18, 2016, promulgated on the 28th of the same month, and entered into force on November 1, 2017.

The status of operation of the technical intern training program pursuant to the enforcement of the Technical Intern Training Act is as follows.

Section 1 Status of Expansion of the Program

1 Extension of the technical intern training period for excellent supervising organizations and implementing organizations

Under the technical intern training program, technical intern trainees are able to proceed to technical intern training (iii), the third stage of training (two years), following on from technical intern training (i) (one year) and technical intern training (ii) (two years) provided they engage in technical intern training under an excellent supervising organization and implementing organization, and ever since the start of this program, the program has been utilized in such manner as having former technical intern trainees first return to their home country after completion of technical intern training (ii) and then newly enter Japan once again as a technical intern trainee (iii) (see [Reference 4](#)).

2 Expansion of the job categories

Under the program, a number of job categories subject to transfer such as the category of care worker (Operation : care worker) have been added when needed (85 job categories, 156 operations as of March 17, 2022). In addition, airport ground handling (Operation : aircraft ground support work, etc.) was added to the job categories and operations subject to transfer as an enterprise-specific job category utilizing internal testing in the individual-enterprise-type technical intern training in July, 2017.

Section 2 New Initiatives for Proper Technical Intern Training and Protection of the Technical Intern Trainees

1 Business councils

The minister with jurisdiction over the business may form a business council consisting of the related organizations for each industry for the purpose of connecting to optimization of the technical intern training in the relevant business field through sharing information

on problematic cases and reviewing the voluntary standards. Therefore the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries established and convened the Fisheries Technical Intern Training Business Council on December 13, 2017 and the Agricultural Training Intern Training Business Council on June 5, 2018, and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism established and convened the Automobile Maintenance Business Council for the Foreign National Technical Intern Training Program on February 19 of the same year, the Business Council on Construction Field Technical Intern Training on March 26 of the same year, and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry established and convened the Textile Industry Technical Intern Training Business Council on March 23 of the same year, and since then, the councils have been meeting from time to time to share information and create voluntary guidelines for optimization of the technical intern training in each business field.

2 Regional councils

The issues and concerns of the technical intern training program differ depending on the region where technical intern trainees are being accepted, and the organizations of the national government and prefectural governments, and the Organization for Technical Intern Training collaborate with each other and hold regional councils divided into eight blocks (Hokkaido, Tohoku, Kanto, Chubu, Kansai, Chugoku, Shikoku, and Kyushu) in order to promote information-sharing at a regional level of the measures aimed at securing proper technical intern training, and during June and July, 2018, the regional council was established and the inaugural meeting was held in each block. Since then, councils in each region have convened every year to share information and discuss their efforts to optimize technical intern training.



Scene of a regional council

3 Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC)

Memorandum of Cooperation with the government of the sending country have been entered into with 14 countries (Viet Nam, Cambodia, India, the Philippines, Laos, Mongolia, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Bhutan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Thailand and Indonesia) at the end of 2021 with the aim of securing proper sending organizations. In addition, the MOJ,

based on the agreements, has been striving to give out thorough information on the purpose of the Technical Intern Training Program and to foster understanding, and has made requests for the securing of proper sending organizations by holding opinion exchanges with the government of the sending countries and has also been attending seminars on explanations on the program in the partner country together with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the Organization for Technical Intern Training.



Scene of opinion exchange based on MOC

4 Protection of the technical intern trainees

In order to protect the technical intern trainees, the MOJ, along with the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare which has joint jurisdiction over the technical intern training program, give instructions on the protection measures for technical intern trainees to be implemented by the Organization for Technical Intern Training.

The Organization for Technical Intern Training now has a consultation and reporting desk (telephone, emails and correspondence) in Chinese, Vietnamese, Indonesian, Tagalog, English, Thai, Khmer (Cambodian) and Myanmar, which are the principal mother tongues of the technical intern trainees, and as well as providing counseling and support for the technical intern trainees, on April 21, 2021, a dedicated contact counter was opened to offer consultations on human rights violations such as assault and intimidation. They also strive to protect the technical intern trainees by accepting reports from the technical intern trainees pursuant to Article 49, paragraph (1) of the Technical Intern Training Act.

In addition, in cases where it has become difficult to continue with the technical intern training at the training site due to the business problems of the accepting enterprise or various circumstances such as acts of violation of human rights, but where the technical intern

trainee wishes to continue with the technical intern training, it is possible for the technical intern trainee to change the training site, and in relation to this, the Organization for Technical Intern Training provides various kinds of support such as giving advice and counseling in response to consultations from the technical intern trainees, introducing training sites to which the trainee will be able to transfer through the establishment of a website to provide support to change the training site for supervising organizations, and also providing temporary housing facilities for those technical intern trainees for whom it has become difficult to stay in the housing facilities secured by the supervising organization, etc.

Immigration inspectors distribute Technical Intern Trainee Handbook, compilations of the above consultation and support counters and other useful information for living in Japan, to technical intern trainees newly entering Japan. In July 2021, this Technical Intern Trainee Handbook was also released as a smartphone app (both physical and digital versions are available in 9 languages, including Vietnamese and Chinese).

5 Measures to Reduce Cases of Disappearance of Technical Intern Trainees

Ministerial ordinances were amended in line with the measures for improvement compiled by the “Project Team on Operation of the Technical Intern Training Program”, and measures such as suspending the acceptance of new technical intern trainees for a certain period when supervising organizations, etc. have been responsible for causing disappearances, and requiring remuneration payments to be made to technical intern trainees by wire transfer to a bank account, for example, were introduced in April 2020.

In addition to the above, in November 2019, measures to further enhance the measures for improvement were compiled in order to reduce cases of disappearance of technical intern trainees. Below is an overview of the main measures.

- Suspension of acceptance of new technical intern trainees by sending organizations, supervising organizations, and implementing organizations which have caused disappearances, in consideration of factors such as the degree of responsibility.

On the basis of disappearance rates and investigation results, measures such as the following will be taken: issuance of orders for suspension of projects involving the acceptance of new technical intern trainees, revocation of license of supervising organizations, revocation of accreditation of training plans, and withholding of accreditation of plans pertaining to the acceptance of new technical intern trainees.

- Criminal charging and disclosure of companies that hired technical intern trainees who disappeared.

Through the uncovering of illegal foreign workers, etc., companies that hired technical intern trainees who disappeared will be subject to criminal charges, and the factual content of the charges will be disclosed.

- Provision of information to supervising organizations and the like.

On December 24, 2019, a notice regarding the tightening of measures was sent directly to supervising organizations and supervising-organization-type implementing organizations, along with a request to inform technical intern trainees of the consulting counter. In addition, information was provided to technical intern trainees regarding the consulting counter at the Organization for Technical Intern Training.

- Promoting the support system for technical intern trainees

In March 2021, with the purpose of contributing to proper implementation of technical

intern training such as preventing trainee disappearances and protecting the safety of technical intern trainees, the ISA has created public relations videos giving an outline of the system and places to seek consultation for technical intern trainees, in ten languages including Japanese, and published these on the ISA website.

Chapter 8 Efforts for Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals

Section 1 Decision of the Roadmap for a Society of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals

1 Background

As described in Section 2-1 below, at the “Ministerial Conference on Acceptance and Coexistence with Foreign Nationals” (hereinafter referred to as “Ministerial Conference”) held on December 25, 2018, “Comprehensive Measures for the Acceptance and Coexistence with Foreign Nationals” (hereinafter referred to as “Comprehensive Measures”) were decided. Since then, the Comprehensive Measures have been revised and enhanced every year, and are established in Japan as a direction for the realization of a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals, but are limited to dealing with short-term issues. It is necessary to promote measures to realize a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals more than ever, considering the impact of the spread of the new coronavirus infection, so as not to isolate foreign nationals who are legally residing in Japan, but accept them as members of society.

Therefore, on January 29, 2021, with the purpose of not only responding to the short-term issue of revising the Comprehensive Measures, but investigating the ideal state of a society of harmonious coexistence and medium- to long-term challenges that should be addressed in order to realize the society, as well as reporting opinions to the Ministerial Conference, “Advisory Panel of Experts for the Realization of Society of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals” was decided to be convened and the opinion compiled by the Advisory Panel was submitted to the Minister of Justice, co-chair of the Ministerial Conference, on November 29 of the same year.

On June 14, 2022, based on the opinion, the Ministerial Conference decided the “Roadmap for Society of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals” (hereinafter referred to as “Roadmap”), which show the visions of a society of coexistence to aim for, and the medium- to long-term issues that should be addressed. The government decided to work together to further promote establishing an environment aimed to realize a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals.

2 Outline

The Roadmap indicates the four key points and specific measures for the four key points as medium- to long-term issues to be addressed to realize three visions of a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals, as well as a work schedule for each measure.

The planning period of this Roadmap is for 5 years until FY 2026, and in order to ensure the steady implementation of measures, the implementation status of the Roadmap is to be

assessed annually to confirm progress, and to review the measures as needed, while listening to the opinions of experts.

[Visions on the society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals we aim for and medium- to long-term issues to be addressed]

[Three Visions]

- ① A society where foreign nationals are included as members of Japanese future society, and where all people can live safely and comfortably
- ② A diverse and vibrant society where all people, including foreign nationals, from various backgrounds can participate and demonstrate their abilities to the fullest
- ③ A society where all people, including foreign nationals, respect each other's individual dignity and human rights and can live without discrimination or prejudice

[Four Key Points]

- ① Initiatives such as Japanese language education for smooth communication and participation in society
- ② Disseminating information to foreign nationals / strengthening consultation system for foreign nationals
- ③ Support for each life stage and life cycle
- ④ Initiatives to establish the foundation of a society of harmonious coexistence

Reference 79 Outline of the Roadmap for Realizing a Society of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals

2 Ideal Society of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals (Three visions)

<p style="text-align: center;">Safe and Comfortable Society</p> <p>A society where foreign nationals are included as members of Japanese society of the future, and where all people can live safely and comfortably.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Diverse and Vibrant Society</p> <p>A diverse and vibrant society where all people, including foreign nationals, from various backgrounds can participate and demonstrate their abilities to their fullest.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Society that Respects Individual Dignity and Human Rights</p> <p>A society where all people, including foreign nationals, respect each other's individual dignity and human rights and can live without discrimination or prejudice.</p>
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3 Medium- to Long-term Issues to be Addressed (Four Key Points)

1 Initiatives such as Japanese language education for smooth communication and participation in society
2 Disseminating information to foreign nationals/Strengthening consultation systems for foreign nationals
3 Support for each life stage and life cycle
4 Initiatives to establish the foundation of a society of harmonious coexistence

4 Major Initiatives Related to the Key Points

★1 Initiatives such as Japanese language education for smooth communication and participation in society

- Steadfastly promote initiatives to the creation of a comprehensive system for enhancement of Japanese language education provided by prefectures and other entities and provide support for Japanese language educational programs run jointly by municipalities and prefectures [MEXT] (1)
- Development of educational models by discipline in accordance with the curriculum and proficiency criteria specified in the Framework of Reference for the Japanese Language Education [MEXT] (3)
- Establishment of an environment for learning knowledge about Japanese social systems and other knowledge (open to those who are planning to come to Japan in the future) by creating and utilizing daily life orientation videos (provide basic information necessary for living in Japan, basic Japanese language education), etc. [MOJ] (6)
- Development and provision of ICT lesson materials for Japanese language for different daily occasions, etc. [MEXT] (8)
- Promote the environment of Japanese language education abroad for foreign nationals to learn smooth communication in Japanese before coming to Japan [MOFA] (9)
- Establishment of certification system for Japanese language institutions and Japanese language teacher qualification system [MEXT] (11)

★2 Disseminating information to foreign nationals/strengthening consultation systems for foreign nationals

- Formulation and publication of posting guidelines for the "Guidebook on Living and Working" and "A Daily Life Support Portal for Foreign Nationals" [MOJ] (17)
- Dissemination of information using Mynaportal, etc. [MOJ] (18)
- Promoting the establishment of one-stop consulting counters by reviewing the subsidies for preparations for an environment for the acceptance of foreign nationals [MOJ] (20)
- Initiatives for multi-language translation/interpretation technologies focused on developing practical simultaneous interpretation technologies and expanding the priority languages to include 15 languages [MIC] (23)
- Joint consultation sessions by relevant organizations providing support to foreign nationals in local communities [MOJ] (27)
- Conducting training programs to promote plain Japanese, etc. [MOJ] [MEXT] (31) (32)

★3 Support for each life stage and life cycle

- Launch community-based programs that provide opportunities for parents and their children to meet up and consult about their concerns and problems encountered in parenting [MHLW] (33)
- Promote integrated management and identification of the school enrollment status of foreign children by collaborating the Basic Resident Registration system and the school-age children registration system [MEXT] (36)
- Promote efforts to set special admission quotas for foreign students for public high school entrance examinations and make necessary adjustments for foreign examinees [MEXT] (47)
- Introduce Japanese language tutoring system to the high school curriculum [MEXT] (49)
- Dispatch expert consultants and interpreters to the career service sections for foreign nationals at the Hello Work to provide consultation services and provide support for international students at career service centers for foreign nationals, etc. [MHLW] (57)
- Provide job training for foreign residents based on their Japanese proficiency levels [MHLW] (61)
- Continue and enhance of publicizing and public relations concerning the pension system [MHLW] (63)
- Grasp of actual condition by "Basic Survey on Foreign Residents," etc. [MOJ] (66)

★4 Initiatives to establish the foundation of a society of harmonious coexistence

- Establishment of "Month for Raising Public Awareness of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals" (tentative name), and implement of various events to raise public awareness, etc. [MOJ] (67) (68)
- Further promote and enhance education based on cross-cultural understanding and multicultural coexistence through school programs [MEXT] (71)
- Creation and publication of new statistical tables to analyze the living situations of foreign residents by nationality, status of residence, industry, etc., by utilizing the statistics on foreign residents in Japan, etc. [MOJ] (74)
- Prepare statistics used to manage labor conditions and other labor aspects for foreign nationals and keep track of the labor transition to and from Japan, etc. [MHLW] (75)
- Trial project to support the efforts of private support groups to provide outreach support to foreign residents [MOJ] (80)
- Consideration of efforts towards construction of a centralized information management system required for residency management at the Immigration Services Agency [MOJ] (82)
- Integrate Individual Number Cards(My Number Card) and residence cards to improve convenience [MOJ] (85)
- Consideration of training support staff for foreign nationals and a certification system for highly specialized support staff, etc. [MOJ] (86)

5 Promotional Framework

- The planning period is until FY2026.
- Track the progress through annual assessment while interviewing experts and update the measures as needed
- Clearly indicate initiatives, in the Comprehensive Measures, which are to be implemented within the applicable fiscal year

Section 2

Revision of Comprehensive Measures of Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals

1 Background

The “Basic Policy on Economic and Fiscal Management and Reform 2018” (approved in the Cabinet on June 15, 2018) stipulated the establishment of a new status of residence in order to expand the acceptance of foreign human resources with a certain degree of expertise and skills, and at the same time, the MOJ came to serve as the command center with general coordination functions in order to develop the environment for acceptance of foreign nationals, and strengthen cooperation with the related ministries and agencies and local governments.

Based on this, it was decided at the Cabinet meeting held on July 24, 2018 that the MOJ would be authorized to carry out the general coordination functions to develop the environment for acceptance of foreign nationals, and moreover, the “Ministerial Conference on Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals” (hereinafter referred to as “Ministerial Conference”) was established in order to conduct a government-wide comprehensive study with regard to the acceptance of new foreign nationals and preparation of the environment for acceptance with the close collaboration of the relevant administrative agencies.

At the 3rd Ministerial Conference held on December 25, 2018, the Comprehensive Measures were decided, and since then it has been revised four times.

Most recently, on June 14, 2022, along with the decision of the Roadmap, we revised the Comprehensive Measures (FY 2022 revised) based on the Roadmap, with the perspective of further enhancing the environment for accepting foreign nationals.

2 Outline

The Comprehensive Measures indicate the direction to be aimed for in relation to the acceptance and harmonious coexistence of foreign nationals, in order to achieve the purpose of contributing to the realization of a society where Japanese nationals and foreign nationals are able to live safely and comfortably together through the proper acceptance of foreign nationals and to realize a society of harmonious coexistence.

The Comprehensive Measures (FY 2022 revised) includes a total of 218 measures (Reference 80).

In the FY 2022 revision, the Comprehensive Measures indicate the measures that should be implemented in FY 2022 in the Roadmap and the measures that are not included in the Roadmap itself because they are not necessary measures that should be implemented over the medium- to long-term, but should be addressed by the government to realize a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals.

Also, the government will make across-the-board efforts to realize a society of harmonious coexistence by working together to continue to annually assess the situation of implementation of the Roadmap and periodically following up on the Comprehensive Measures.

Reference 80

Outline of Comprehensive Measures for Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals (FY 2022 revised)

June 14, 2022
Ministerial Conference on Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals

As of the end of 2021, the number of foreign nationals residing in Japan was 2.76 million. The number of foreign workers as of the end of October 2021 was 1.73 million (a record high).
 Formulated from the point of view of further enhancing the environment for the acceptance of foreign nationals and based on the Roadmap for the Realization of a Society of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals (218 policies).
 The government will make across-the-board efforts to realize a society of harmonious coexistence by working together to continue to steadily implement relevant measures and periodically following up on the Comprehensive Measures.

Initiatives such as Japanese language education for smooth communication and participation in society

- Establishment of an environment that enables foreign nationals to acquire the Japanese language skills necessary for daily life
- Creation of a comprehensive system for enhancement of Japanese language education promoted by prefectural governments, etc., Japanese language education support jointly provided by local governments, and improvement of the level of Japanese language education in local communities utilizing the Framework of Reference for the Japanese Language Education* <Policy 1>
- Development of educational models by discipline in accordance with the curriculum and proficiency criteria specified in the Framework of Reference for the Japanese Language Education* <Policy 3>
- Consideration and provision of ICT lesson materials for Japanese language for different daily occasions, etc. <Policy 4>
- Acceleration of establishment of an environment for learning knowledge about Japanese social systems, etc. by creating and utilizing daily life orientation <Policy 5>
- Supporting foreign nationals smoothly settle into Japanese society by spreading information about local financial measures for regional life orientation <Policy 6>
- Consideration of the necessity of further improvement of the Japanese language education environment and related matters <Policy 14>
- Improvement of the quality of Japanese language education, etc.
- Establishment of certification system for Japanese language education institutions and Japanese language teacher qualification system <Policy 5 (repeated)>

Disseminating information to foreign nationals/strengthening consultation systems for foreign nationals

- Enhancement of information dissemination from the perspective of foreign nationals
- Formulation and publication of posting guidelines for the "Guidebook on Living and Working" and "A Daily Life Support Portal for Foreign Nationals" <Policy 23>
- Consideration of prompt collection of information and dissemination of tailor-made and push information through Myportal, etc. <Policy 24>
- Strengthening the consultation system to help foreign nationals with their problems
- Consideration of measures that facilitate the establishment of one-stop consulting counters by the local governments, for example enhancing the subsidies for preparations for an environment for the acceptance of foreign nationals <Policy 35>
- Taking effective and efficient supporting measures for creating an environment for the acceptance of foreign nationals to Japanese society by FRESC, implementing joint consultation sessions by relevant organizations providing support to foreign nationals in local communities, and so on <Policy 38>
- Efforts towards realizing practical-level simultaneous interpretation utilizing multilingual translation technology and expanding the priority languages to 15 languages <Policy 40>
- Consideration of the development and improvement of counseling services that reflect the needs of foreign nationals identified through consultation offices and implementation of development and improvement actions based on the results of the consideration <Policy 44>
- Further promote the use of plain Japanese in information dissemination and consultation services
- Summarizing points to consider when speaking in plain Japanese, etc. and supporting local governments in their initiatives <Policy 48>

Support for each life stage and life cycle

- Support, etc. for foreign nationals, especially those in infancy and school ages
- Launch of community-based programs that provide opportunities for parents and their children to meet up and consult about their concerns and problems encountered in parenting [MHLW] <Policy 51>
- Promotion of integrated management and identification of the school enrollment status of foreign children by collaborating between the Basic Resident Registration system and the school-age children registration system <Policy 54>
- Provision of information and consulting services regarding health and hygiene in schools for foreign students through professional platform and implementation of surveys and research concerning the support from local governments <Policy 56>
- Support, etc. for foreign nationals, especially those in the early stage of adolescence and adulthood
- Promotion of efforts to set special admission quotas for foreign students for public high school entrance examinations and make necessary adjustments for foreign examinees, and encouraging introduction of a system that allows Japanese language tutoring to be included in high school curriculums <Policy 59>
- Implementing career development support measures for foreign children on a trial basis to help them design appropriate career paths and considering specific measures toward this objective <Policy 61>
- Support, etc. for foreign nationals, especially those in adolescence and adulthood
- Support for employment for international students, etc.
- Formation of employment and successful work life of international students through the formation of regional consortiums for supporting highly skilled foreign workers <Policy 67>
- Support at work
- Dissemination and promotion of utilization of bi-directional educational video training materials and guidebooks in workplaces for Japanese employees and foreign national employees <Policy 88>
- Providing career counseling through expert consultants and interpreters at employment counters for foreign nationals at Hello Work <Policy 90>
- Providing vocational training for settled foreign residents with special considerations to their Japanese proficiency levels and promoting assignment of vocational training coordinators for foreign residents <Policy 93>
- Ensuring an appropriate work environment, etc.
- Promoting the Collection of Points and Example Sentences That Can Be Used in Labor Management at Workplaces with Foreign Employees and other useful materials <Policy 95>
- Support, etc. for foreign nationals, especially those in old age
- Continued publicizing and public relations concerning the pension system and consideration of enhancement of it <Policy 107>
- Support common to all life stages
- Grasp of actual situation by "Basic Survey on Foreign Residents", etc. <Policy 21 (repeated)>

Smooth and appropriate acceptance of foreign nationals

- Employment support, etc. for specified skilled workers and other measures
- Provision of information through field-specific councils, etc. and improvement of the working environment for foreign human resources <Policy 127>
- Smooth implementation of skill exams and Japanese language tests for Specified Skilled Workers, and dissemination and smooth utilization of the Specified Skilled Worker System, etc.
- Consideration of the addition of fields covered in the Specified Skilled Worker (II), reorganization of business categories and revision of the expected numbers of Specified Skilled Workers to be accepted, and discussion of reviewing the Specified Skilled Worker System and Technical Intern Training Program <Policy 138>
- Elimination of malicious intermediary organizations, etc.
- Consideration of measures for reinforcing partnerships with relevant organizations in developing countries through ODA programs <Policy 153>
- Efforts to improve the working environment for foreign residents utilizing the statistics on foreign residents in Japan, etc. <Policy 161>
- Promotion of efforts to reinforce the foundation for Japanese language education through the Japan Foundation and to disseminate attractiveness of Japanese culture and society, etc. <Policy 13 (repeated)>

Initiatives to establish the foundation of a society of harmonious coexistence

- Raising awareness to realize a society of harmonious coexistence
- Consideration of establishment of "Month for Raising Public Awareness of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals" (tentative name), and implementation of various events to raise public awareness, etc. <Policy 55>
- Consideration of publication of a white paper summarizing the status of implementation of governmental measures for harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals <Policy 156>
- Implementation of practical research concerning different instructions in areas with high and low concentration of foreigners <Policy 55 (repeated)>
- Improvement of government statistics to investigate the actual living conditions of foreign nationals, etc.
- Revision and publication of new statistics to analyze the living situations of foreign residents utilizing the statistics on foreign residents in Japan, etc. <Policy 161>
- Preparation of statistics used to manage labor conditions and other labor aspects for foreign nationals and keep track of the migration of workforce to and from Japan, etc. [MHLW] <Policy 162>
- Enhancement of information collections and strengthening of cooperation, etc. among relevant organizations for the development of infrastructure for realizing a society of harmonious coexistence
- Promotion of support for foreign nationals and improvement of the environment for acceptance of them through development of highly professional Accepting and Supporting Centers for Foreign Nationals <Policy 64>
- Enhancement and strengthening of information dissemination, etc. through implementation of trial project to support the efforts of private support groups to provide outreach support to foreign nationals <Policy 65>
- Consideration of enhancement of cooperation between related organizations in the consultation offices and the counseling function of the Immigration Information Centers <Policy 168>
- Consideration of efforts towards construction of a centralized information management system required for residency management at the Immigration Services Agency <Policy 169>
- Consideration of expansion of procedures to be made online and of construction of a system that enables users to use their own information on Myportal <Policy 168>
- Consideration of improvement of the environment for acquisition of Individual Number Cards (My Number Card) and efforts towards the integration of residence cards and Individual Number Cards <Policy 169>
- Consideration of provision of support to foreign nationals with life problems, such as development of specialist supporters <Policy 6 (repeated)>
- Consideration of how data should be provided to contribute to planning and establishing measures for harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals <Policy 170>
- Implementation of publication for promoting appropriate use of Basic Resident Registration information through communication of information to local governments <Policy 171>
- Creating a system where foreign nationals also play an active role in a society of harmonious coexistence
- Provision of support to international students aiming to qualify as certified care workers, including allocation of scholarships <Policy 184>
- Promotion of efforts to multicultural coexistence by related organizations in Japan and enhancement of their networking through ODA programs <Policy 185>
- Provision of support to leading efforts by local governments through the Subsidy Program for Promotion of Regional Revitalization <Policy 186>
- Provision of support to leading efforts by local governments through the Subsidy Program for Promotion of Regional Revitalization <Policy 186>
- Construction of the residency management system as a foundation for a society of harmonious coexistence
- Strengthening the foundation of residency management
- Consideration of revisions concerning the "permanent resident" status, such as revision of the requirements for acquisition of the status and responses to situation changes after acquisition <Policy 189>
- Further optimizing the operations of the refugee recognition system through clarifying normative elements on the eligibility for refugee status, etc. <Policy 190>
- Standardization concerning the acceptance of students, researchers and other people from outside Japan that contributes to preventing leakage of sensitive technology through cooperation with related organizations <Policy 195>
- Strict management of international student enrollment
- Strengthening management of international student enrollment to permit the acceptance of international students, for institutes like universities that do not appropriately manage international student enrollment <Policy 200>
- Further optimization of the Technical Intern Training Program
- Establishment of a system that integrates the counseling and instruction functions in the Technical Intern Training Program and consideration of on-site system of application and other procedures <Policy 97 (repeated)>
- Strengthening of on-site inspections as measures against disappearance of technical intern trainees, terminating acceptance of new technical intern trainees and strengthening of on-site inspections to prevent illegal employment of technical intern trainees, and strengthening of measures to prevent technical intern trainees from running away, such as publication of a leaflet on prevention of running technical intern trainees <Policy 206>
- Strengthening of measures against illegal foreign residents
- Improvement of the system towards further promotion of repatriation of deportation evaders and early establishment of a legal framework that enables further optimization of the deportation procedures <Policy 215>

*1. Underlines indicate policies that are not related to the Roadmap for the Realization of a Society of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals. *2. Policy Nos. in red indicate new policies.

Section 3 Major Efforts in which the ISA is involved

1 Support for the establishment and operation of a one-stop consulting counters through subsidies for preparations for an environment for the acceptance of foreign nationals

Financial assistance through the “subsidies for preparations for an environment for the acceptance of foreign nationals” (referred to below as “subsidies”) is provided for the measures for establishment and operation of the one-stop consulting counters through which the local governments provide information and advices so that when a foreign national has some questions or concerns about various matters related to life such as the residence procedures, employment, medical care, welfare, childbirth, child care or child education, he or she will be able to receive appropriate information or will be able to quickly reach a place that offers advices and consultations. The subsidies were granted to 218 local governments in FY 2021, and to 228 local governments in FY 2022 as of April 1, 2022. It is expected that the one-stop consulting counters that have received a subsidy will provide appropriate information to the persons seeking advices through consultations offered in numerous languages and through coordination with the relevant organizations.

Extraordinary measures have been taken to allow the maximum amount of subsidies for preparations for an environment for the acceptance of foreign nationals to be set twice as much as the subsidy limit along with operating costs for cases in which special responses were made for the purpose of providing information related to COVID-19 from March 10, 2020 to March 31, 2022.

2 Cooperation with local governments, etc. through Accepting Environmental Coordinators

In April 2019, “Accepting Environmental Coordinators” were assigned to the Regional Immigration Services Bureaus, and officers of the Regional Immigration Services Bureaus (excluding the Airport District Immigration Services Offices and some branch offices) are sent to some one-stop consulting counters based on a request from the local government, while information and trainings are provided to the officers of the local governments engaging in consultation services.

It will lead to the promotion of multicultural coexistence policies in each region that collaboration and cooperation with local governments, enhancing and strengthening information gathering in regional areas and so on by improving the system for Accepting Environmental Coordinators. In addition, useful information, such as good practices obtained through efforts by Accepting Environmental Coordinators is given to the local governments.



Efforts made by Accepting Environmental Coordinators
(view of lecture)



Efforts made by Accepting Environmental Coordinators
(view of counselor dispatch)

3 Support at the Foreign Residents Support Center (FRESC)

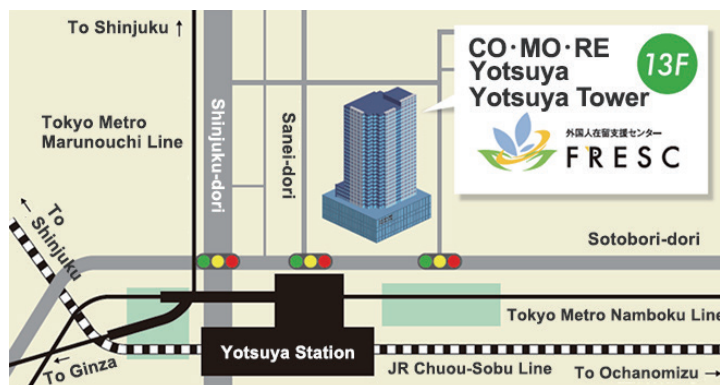
Following the decision in “the Basic Policy on Operations for the Development of an Environment for Acceptance of Foreign Nationals (Cabinet decision of July 24, 2018)” to strengthen cooperation between the relevant ministries and agencies, cooperate with local governments, and develop an environment for the acceptance of foreign nationals in an effective and efficient manner, the Foreign Residents Support Center was opened on July 2020. FRESC has one floor with representatives from four ministries and agencies, as well as eight other organizations involved in residence support for foreign nationals (Tokyo Regional Immigration Services Bureau; Tokyo Legal Affairs Bureau, Human Rights Department; Japan Legal Support Center (Houterasu)).

At FRESC, the organizations collaborate to provide consultation on extending and changing status of residence, as well as legal troubles. They also answer inquiries from one-stop consulting counters established by local governments. They support holding training sessions and giving information to local government staff. In addition, the Tokyo Employment Service Center for Foreigners (Hello Work) and Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) hold informational seminars for foreign students and small to medium enterprises, in order to promote the employment of highly skilled foreign professionals.

By establishing a hub for supporting foreign residents, the development of an environment for the acceptance of foreign nationals will be promoted in a much more comprehensive and effective manner.



Scene of consultation at the Foreign Residents Support Center (FRESC)



<https://www.moj.go.jp/isa/support/fresc/fresc01.html>

4 Support at the Immigration Information Center

The ISA has set up Immigration Information Centers at each Regional Immigration Services Bureau and District Immigration Services Offices (except Airport District Immigration Services Offices, including consultation counters of Regional Immigration Services Bureau and District Immigration Services Offices, which are implemented as general consultation services for foreign residents, hereinafter referred to as “Centers”), as consultation counters that mainly provide guidance on immigration procedures related to status of residence.

In recent years, with the impact of COVID-19, there is a growing need to deal with the problems faced by foreign residents in their daily lives. Therefore, in addition to conventional guidance on immigration procedures, the Centers will also provide consultations on general life issues, and serve as a gateway to support for staying in Japan.



Scene of the Immigration Information Center

5 Providing information to foreign residents through the “Guidebook on Living and Working”, etc.

The ISA, with cooperation from a wide range of sections of the government, has compiled a “Guidebook on Living and Working” that covers basic information (residency procedures, labor-related laws and regulations, social insurance, crime prevention, traffic safety, etc.) necessary for foreign residents to lead their lives and take up employment in Japan safely and securely, and has published this guidebook in 16 languages ^(*) on “A Daily Life Support Portal for Foreign Nationals” website.

(*) Japanese (Including Plain Japanese), English, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Portuguese, Vietnamese, Nepali, Thai, Indonesian, Burmese (Myanmar language), Khmer (Cambodian), Filipino, Mongolian, Turkish and Ukrainian.



Guidebook on Living and Working



https://www.moj.go.jp/isa/guidebook_all.html

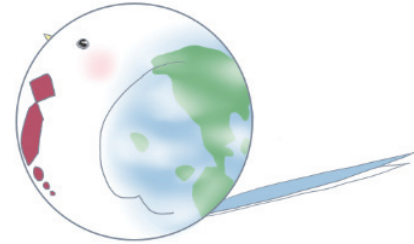
6 Plain Japanese Guidelines for Foreign Residents Support

In order to promote the use of plain Japanese by the national government, local governments, and other entities, an expert committee on the “Plain Japanese Guidelines for Foreign Residents Support” was convened in February 2020, and the “Plain Japanese Guidelines for Foreign Residents Support” were created in August 2020.

These guidelines are available on “A Daily Life Support Portal for Foreign Nationals” on the ISA website. In addition, based on the results of the report by the “Review Meeting for the Promotion of Information Provision through the Use of Plain Japanese” held in FY 2021, we are promoting the dissemination and the use of plain Japanese by informing local governments and relevant ministries and agencies and providing training for local government officials.



Plain Japanese Guidelines for
Foreign Residents Support



Plain Japanese image character
“Kotorin”



https://www.moj.go.jp/isa/support/portal/plainjapanese_guideline.html

Article: At the Front Line of Immigration Control Administration

**(Voice of the immigration officer in charge of residency support)
(Residence Support Department, Tokyo Regional Immigration Services
Bureau: Kai Saori)**

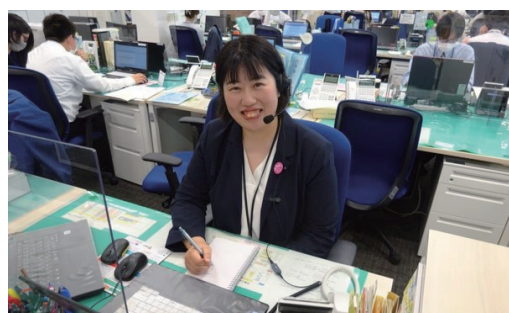
I belong to the Tokyo Regional Immigration Services Bureau Foreign Residents Support Department, which is a new department established in April 2021. I work at FRESC in Shinjuku City, where we cooperate with related organizations that are also residents of FRESC, and implement various support measures related to the resident of foreign nationals.

Specifically, the ISA operates the FRESC Help Desk, which handles individual consultations by appointment only and telephone consultations for foreign nationals residing in Japan who are experiencing financial difficulties due to the impact of COVID-19, and also support local governments working to support foreign nationals. We are also taking on the challenge of new initiatives that have never been done before at the Immigration Bureau, such as support for one-stop consulting counters, the popularization of plain Japanese, and the creation of videos to help foreign junior and senior high school students understand the system.

I am involved in the consultation work of the “FRESC Help Desk”, and I handle a wide range of consultations other than immigration control and residency management administration, so I support problem solving in cooperation with problem solving in cooperation with Japan Legal Support Center (Houterasu) , the Tokyo Labor Bureau, who have offices in FRESC. This is difficult work because in order to fulfill this role, I must have a high degree of expertise, such as understanding of the background of foreign nationals, specialized knowledge of the Japanese system, and consideration for the privacy of people seeking consulters.

When providing consultation to refugees in Japan, I found that the evacuees were relieved that their safety was secured, but as they are living in a foreign country, they are worried about the “language barrier” and “cultural differences”, and they “worry what will happen in the future.” In those circumstances, I remembered the time when I started living alone, and when I had problems, I often consulted with my mother. When someone is in trouble, confiding their worries to someone else is the first step that leads to peace of mind. Therefore, I approach my daily work with the hope that I made the people I consulted with feel a little better afterwards.

Although there is a limit to what administrative agencies can do, I will study various laws, regulations, systems, etc. related to the content of consultations, and discuss the content of responses with other counselors, and continue working so that foreign nationals living in Japan can receive appropriate support and reduce their anxiety as much as possible.



The immigration officer in charge of residency support

Chapter 9**Measures against Illegal and Imposter Foreign Residents, etc.****Section 1****Implementation of Measures against Illegal Foreign Residents****1 Past Efforts to Reduce the Number of Illegal Foreign Residents**

Based on the “Five-Year Plan to Halve the Number of Illegal Foreign Residents” launched in 2004, each Regional Immigration Bureau (at that time) has actively promoted various measures, including strict implementation of landing/residence examinations, proactive public relations activities regarding illegal employment, strengthened detection by the Special Detection Officer Units (see subsection 2 (1) below), etc. wider application of custody transfer in accordance with Article 65 of the Immigration Control Act and the encouragement of the appearances of illegal foreign residents under the departure order system. As a result, the number of illegal foreign residents, which was approximately 250,000 at the start of the plan, decreased to approximately 130,000 as of January 2009, and its goal was almost accomplished.

Based on the “Action Plan 2008 for the Realization of a Society Resistant to Crime” aiming to “create a society that generates no illegal foreign residents under the new residency management system”, as the Immigration Bureau (at that time) has continued efforts to further reduce the number of foreign nationals illegally staying, consequently the number of foreign nationals overstaying their authorized period of stay was decreased to approximately 59,000 as of January 1, 2014.

However, after the number of foreign nationals overstaying their authorized period of stay increased for the first time in 22 years to reach approximately 60,000 as of the time of January 1, 2015, the number as of January 1 of each previous year had increased for six consecutive years, but as of January 1, 2021, this number has decreased slightly from the previous year to about 83,000 and as of January 1, 2022, it has dropped significantly to about 67,000.

2 Efforts to Further Reduce the Number of Illegal Foreign Residents

As a result of the above efforts, the number of illegal foreign residents has seen a steady decline, but due to the rapid increase in the number of foreign nationals entering Japan through the various measures being taken by the government aimed at making Japan a tourism-oriented country, in recent years, there was an increasing trend, and while the number of new foreign nationals entering Japan decreased significantly since 2020 due to COVID-19, the number illegally overstaying may increase, and therefore efforts will be made to maintain a corresponding structure to crack down on these illegal foreign residents, and moreover, to strengthen the following measures and further reduce the number of illegal foreign residents.

(1) Strengthened Detection

The ISA has established the “Special Detection Officer Units” that are to engage full-time in detecting offenders in violation of the Immigration Act and locate the unit in large city areas where there are many illegal foreign residents, by which the Regional Immigration Services Bureau has reinforced the ability to detect illegal foreign residents, has strengthened cooperation with the local police authorities and has promoted joint detection.

In addition, since it has come to the ISA’s attention that illegal foreign residents tend to be concentrated in smaller groups and are scattered throughout the country, these days the ISA is making efforts to improve collection and analysis of various kinds of information pertaining to illegal foreign residents and to promote efficient and effective exposure through assembling immigration control officers who engage in detection tailored to the target of the detection.

(2) Preparation of an Environment Facilitating Voluntary Appearance

The ISA has introduced the departure order system as a measure to encourage illegal foreign residents existing in various parts of the country to voluntarily appear at the immigration office, and also took other measures, including a revision of the “Guidelines on Special Permission to Stay in Japan”^(*) and publication of such cases, as well as public relations activities to encourage voluntary appearance at an immigration office.

The departure order system is a system where, unlike with the deportation procedures, foreign nationals staying illegally beyond their authorized period of stay, who meet certain criteria such as appearing in person to make a declaration in order to depart from Japan, are able to depart through simple procedures without being detained (see Part 1, Section 5, Subsection 5 below). 4,410 foreign nationals were issued with a departure order based on this system in 2021.

Meanwhile, the “Guidelines on Special Permission to Stay in Japan”, which was approved and announced in 2006 was revised in July 2009 in order to increase the transparency of the operations. The revised guideline shows that if an illegal foreign resident voluntarily appears at the immigration office, this is considered a positive factor in the judgment on adjustment of their legal status.

The ISA is also taking measures to further publicize the departure order system and the revised guideline on special permission to stay in Japan by conducting active public relations activities, improving the environment for voluntary appearances and aiming to encourage illegal foreign residents to voluntarily appear at the immigration office^(**).

(*) In order to ensure further improvement of the transparency and equity of the special permission to stay, the ISA formulated and published the “Guidelines on Special Permission to Stay in Japan”. The guideline articulates what elements are considered positive elements and what are considered negative elements in determining whether special permission to stay should be granted or not and presents what points are considered in determining whether special permission to stay should be granted or not (https://www.moj.go.jp/isa/publications/materials/nyuukokukanri01_00008.html).

(**) Examples of public relations activities:

- (i) We hold the “Month to Promote Appropriate Employment of Foreign Nationals to Realize a Harmonious Society” and conduct publicity related to preventing illegal employment.
- (ii) A page for “Procedures for Voluntary Appearance at the Immigration Office” was created on the websites of the MOJ and the ISA in order to give clear explanations of the benefits of a voluntary appearance at the immigration office and the procedures after the appearance both to those wishing to return to their home country and to those wishing to continue staying in Japan. (https://www.moj.go.jp/isa/publications/materials/nyukan_nyukan87.html)

Section 2 Implementation of Measures against Imposter Foreign Residents

1 Countermeasures against Imposter Foreign Residents, etc.

“Imposter residents” are foreign nationals residing in Japan having illegally received entry or landing permission as though they came under one of the statuses of residence having disguised their identity or activities such as by using forged or altered documents or false documents under the cover of a fake marriage, fake studies or fake employment, etc., or they may not necessarily have concealed the purpose of their activities from the onset but are currently engaged in illegal work which is far removed from their actual status of residence, and therefore, taking measures against imposter residents is also an important task in terms of immigration control and residency management administration along with measures against illegal residents. “Imposter residents” appear on the surface to be legal residents, which makes it difficult to accurately ascertain their situation, but their increase in number is a cause for concern since they substantively orchestrate illegal entry and residence in Japan.

Since the existence of imposter residents abusing the system of status of residence is related to the foundation of immigration control and residency management in Japan, it cannot be overlooked, and therefore the ISA has been striving to respond strictly to clarify the realities of these kinds of cases through detailed investigations and has been enforcing deportation procedures against persons coming under the grounds for deportation and enforcing the procedures for revocation of the status of residence of persons coming under the grounds for revocation of the status of residence.

In addition, in recent years, there has been a significant number of cases where foreign nationals use forged or altered residence cards or abuse the refugee recognition system. Since these methods are becoming more malicious and sophisticated, the ISA closely collaborate with the police and other related organizations, and in malicious cases, the ISA proactively seeks criminal punishment and deal strictly with such persons, and also strives to work on measures to uncover the situation of these cases.

2 Crackdown on Imposter Foreign Residents, etc.

(1) Reinforcement of the Collection and Analysis of Information

In order to promote measures against imposter foreign residents, it is very important to carry out further effective crackdowns by uncovering such residents based on the collection and analysis of information.

For this reason, the ISA accurately grasps the residence status and work status of foreign nationals by conducting advanced analysis of various kinds of information such as a wide range of information provided by the public, information provided by the organizations to which foreign nationals belong, information on the employment status of foreign nationals provided by the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare and information shared from the relevant organizations. Regional Immigration Services Bureau utilize the analysis results to effectively uncover and crack down on imposter foreign residents and deal strictly with such persons.

(2) Handling Through Reinforced Exposure and Proactive Application of Law

In order to work on proactive exposure of imposter residents, when as a result of an investigation, a foreign national who resides in Japan with a status of residence which has restrictions on the contents of the activities is discovered engaging solely in a work activity which is not permitted with his/her status of residence previously granted, deportation procedures will be executed against such a foreign national as a violator engaging in an unauthorized activity.

In addition, even if a foreign national does not fall under the grounds for deportation, the ISA has been making efforts to reinforce crackdowns through such means as having immigration control officers and immigration inspectors coordinate to uncover the actual situation of the foreign national, and if a foreign national is found to fall under the grounds for revocation of the status of residence, the procedure for revocation of the status of residence will be instituted.

3 Strict Handling of Brokers Involved in Aiding Illegal Residence and Imposter Residence

Article 24 of the Immigration Control Act provides that anyone coming under any of the following grounds for deportation will be deported: a person who has prepared or otherwise provided forged or false documents for the purpose of having another foreign national illegally acquire permission; a person who has had another foreign national engage in illegal work; a person who possesses forged residence cards for the purpose of using them; and a person who has forged or otherwise provided residence cards. In close cooperation with the police and other agencies, the ISA proactively exposes brokers and other offenders involved in aiding foreign nationals overstaying their authorized period of stay and imposter foreign residents pursuant to the provisions of this Article, and moreover, takes stringent actions against those unlawful employers who are involved in the crime of aiding with illegal employment.

4 Countermeasures against the Forging of Residence Cards

Under the new residency management system launched in July 2012, mid to long-term residents are issued with residence cards, and special permanent residents are issued with special permanent resident certificates. Since these serve as certificates, and it is necessary to protect their social credibility, various forgery prevention measures are provided on the faces of them. However, forgery techniques have become more elaborate and the cases have occurred where forged residence cards were created by illegally taking advantage of inquiries on expiration information in recent year; therefore it is urgent to enhance countermeasures against forgery.

An IC chip data reading application providing a function for reading the content of the IC chip such as residence cards by smartphone or the like and confirming that the information has not been forged or altered was introduced and is distributed free of charge on the ISA website from December 2020.

Article: At the Front Line of Immigration Control Administration

(Voice of the immigration control officer in charge of immigration security in general)
(Enforcement Department, Sendai Regional Immigration Services Bureau: Kato Satoshi)

I am an immigration control officer belonging to the Sendai Regional Immigration Services Bureau Enforcement Department. Among the violation investigation work, treatment work, enforcement work, and notification / cancellation investigation work handled by this department, I am mainly in charge of violation investigation work and treatment work.

Our department is not subdivided like a large-scale bureau, and the ISA has limited personnel who do all the work related to deportation procedures. The Enforcement Department works together as one big team every day, so I feel that the connections between staff members are strong.

The Sendai Bureau has jurisdiction over six prefectures in the Tohoku region, and one thing I have to be aware of while working at the Sendai Bureau is that after the 2011 Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami, earthquakes thought to be aftershocks still occur quite frequently.

The deterioration of road traffic functions and the impact on transportation facilities caused by the earthquake often affect our work, as foreign nationals who were scheduled to appear may not be able to appear as scheduled, and sometimes it is difficult to move to the airport on the day of departure for foreign nationals who have undergone procedures in our department and are scheduled to return to their country.

The COVID-19 epidemic has not subsided since 2020, and even in 2022 new infections continue to occur, making a significant impact on deportation operations. In my department, we are taking infection prevention measures in order to carry out our duties smoothly. In particular, when detaining foreign nationals who violate the Immigration Control Act, in addition to the usual health checks, we do body temperature measurement and conduct antigen tests without exception. Also, during the period of detention, we take sufficient infection prevention measures, such as checking body temperatures and checking for poor physical condition every morning and evening.

Also, in the event of unforeseen circumstances or unusual cases, not only the immigration control officer belonging to the Enforcement Department, but also immigration inspectors belonging to the Inspection Department, the staff of the General Affairs Section, and the staff of the branch offices under our jurisdiction all cooperate to respond as an entire bureau, and if necessary, cooperate with related organizations to respond to some cases.



The immigration control officer in charge of immigration security in general

Recently, in the midst of international disputes such as Russia's invasion of Ukraine, supporting Ukrainian citizens who have evacuated to Japan is not a role limited to the Sendai Bureau, but a shared role of everyone in the ISA, as we are all involved in building a society of harmonious coexistence with foreign nationals.

I not only carry out deportation procedures for illegal foreign residents as an immigration control officer, but keep my ears perked to the ever-changing international situation as a staff member of the ISA. I will always pay attention to sensitive information and do my daily duties with a sense of urgency, in order to realize a society where Japanese nationals and foreign nationals can coexist with peace of mind.

Section 3 Efforts for Further Appropriate Treatment

1 Efforts for Further Appropriate Treatment of Detainees

In September 2010, the ISA agreed with the Japan Federation of Bar Associations to hold continuous discussions with the Federation in order to realize more desirable measures for various problems related to detention. Regarding the detainees of immigration detention facilities, bar associations are already providing regular telephone consultations and legal consultations through business trips.

In addition, while considering the actual circumstances at each detention facility, we are striving to enhance the daily lives of detainees, such as extending the time for treatment open space and extending the time for outdoor exercise and bathing, within a scope that does not hinder security. We are also making efforts to treat detainees with greater consideration for their human rights, such as ensuring access to medical care, conducting health checkups by doctors, and providing counseling by clinical psychologists.

We are also working to further optimize the treatment of detainees, such as by strengthening the medical system, based on the recommendations made in the “Special Subcommittee on Detention and Deportation” presented in June 2020, improvement measures described in the “Investigation Report on the Case of the Death of a Detainee at the Nagoya Regional Immigration Services Bureau” published in August 2021, and recommendations made in the “Advisory Panel on Enhancing the Medical System at ISA Detention Facilities” presented in February 2022.

2 Activities and Duties of the Immigration Detention Facilities Visiting Committee

The Immigration Detention Facilities Visiting Committee was established for the purpose of securing transparency in security treatment and of improving the management of the immigration detention facilities. There are two committees; one is in the Tokyo Regional Immigration Services Bureau, and the other is in the Osaka Regional Immigration Services Bureau. Each committee takes charge of immigration centers and departure waiting facilities in 24 locations (as at the end of March 2022) spread across Japan according to its districts. Each committee inspects the facilities, meets with and interviews detainees, checks the opinions and proposals posted by detainees in the proposal boxes, and holds meetings. Based

on the result of these activities, the committee expresses opinions to the Director of the Immigration Detention Center or the Director of the Regional Immigration Services Bureau (hereinafter referred to collectively as “Directors”).

Over the course of a year from April 2021 to March 2022, a total of 18 inspections and 38 interviews took place in the facilities throughout Japan, and 62 opinions were given to the directors of the facilities. On receiving the opinions from the committee, the directors promptly review them and endeavor to take measures where possible.

Committee members, who are selected from people who have a reputable character, possess deep insight and are committed to improving the operations of the immigration detention centers, are appointed as part-time government officials by the Minister of Justice. A maximum of no more than ten members may be appointed for each committee from experts from diverse fields, such as academic experts, legal experts, medical experts, NGO workers, the staff of international organizations and local residents.

In addition, a summary of the opinions given by the committees and the measures taken by the Directors based on those opinions are published each year pursuant to the provisions of the Immigration Control Act.

Section 4 Promotion of the Deportation of Deportees

1 Implementation of Safe and Reliable Deportation of Deportation Evaders

Recently, there has been the problem of an increasing number of foreign nationals who have been issued with a deportation order but who attempt to evade deportation (deportation evaders) because of aspiration to work in Japan or other reasons.

The ISA tries to convince these deportation evaders to return to their country of their own volition, but if they still attempt to evade deportation, they will ultimately be deported on a regular flight accompanied by escort officers based on the provisions of law, or mass deportation may be implemented using chartered flights for the purpose of safer and more secure deportation.

In addition, some foreign nationals who attempt to evade deportation are often anxious about their lives after return, and with regard to foreign nationals who are deemed to require humanitarian considerations, we are striving to promote the use of Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration programs, with the cooperation of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Japan.

2 Implementation of Mass Deportation Using Chartered Flights

Although we endeavor to repeatedly convince deportation evaders to return to their country of their own volition, if they still attempt to evade deportation, they will ultimately be deported on a regular flight accompanied by escort officers based on the provisions of law.

However, deportation using a regular flight can cause a disturbance, for example, deportees might start shouting in the cabin, and there are cases where the deportation cannot be implemented owing to the decision of the captain to deny boarding, or alternatively, even if detainees are able to board the aircraft, there remained the fact that this imposes a heavy

burden on private airlines, as it causes anxiety for other passengers.

For this reason, since 2013, the ISA has been implementing the mass deportation using chartered flights, which allows for safe and reliable deportation without boarding being refused by the captain of the aircraft, and by the end of FY 2021, a total of 339 foreign nationals were deported over a total of eight flights (five destinations).

3 Promotion of the Use of IOM Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration Programs

On the other hand, there are some foreign nationals, being issued deportation orders, evade deportation despite wanting to return to their home country because of fears about life after return.

Of these persons, with regard to foreign nationals who are deemed to require humanitarian considerations, Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration (AVRR) programs have been implemented since FY 2013 with the cooperation of the IOM Japan office. This AVRR program aims to dispel the anxiety deportees feel about returning home and to encourage the voluntary return of the deportees through the provision of reintegration support after return such as job placement and medical support.

So far, a number of families and individuals have returned home such as Asia, Africa and South America through this program and are receiving living, employment and enrollment support after returning home from the respective local IOM office.

The ISA intends to continue with implementation of these programs with the cooperation of the IOM and to facilitate the voluntary return of deportees and reintegration in their home country.

Section 5

Efforts for Resolving Deportation Evasion and Long-Term Detention

The problem of deportation evasion and long-term detention that has arisen in the current system is now an urgent issue to in immigration control and residency management administration that must be resolved as soon as possible. In October 2019, the “Special Subcommittee on Detention and Deportation”, set up under the 7th Immigration Control Policy Roundtable, a private roundtable established by the Minister of Justice, discussed and considered measures to prevent the increase of deportation evaders and long-term detention. The results of consideration were compiled in a report titled “Proposals to Solve the Issues of Deportation Evasion and Long-Term Detention”, which was submitted to the Minister of Justice on July 14, 2020.

The report pointed out three major factors that the ISA cannot implement a written deportation order as follows:

- (1) Some countries refusing to cooperate to accept deportees
- (2) Immigration Control Act stipulating that finding application for the recognition of refugee status has suspensive effect against deportation, regardless of the reason and the number of times of their application
- (3) Some people who are refused boarding at the discretion of the captain, due to obstructive behaviour such as shouting in the aircraft during implemeting deportaion

· It also pointed out that the deportation evaders cause the long-term detention issue

because the detention by the written deportation order is available “until the time deportation becomes possible”.

Based on this report, with the purposes of making deportation procedures more appropriate and effective, and resolving the issues such as deportation evasion and long-term detention, the Bill for the Partial Amendment of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act and Special Act on the Immigration Control of, inter alia, those who have lost Japanese Nationality pursuant to the Treaty of Peace with Japan was submitted to the 204th Diet on February 19, 2021. This amendment bill was based on three basic principles:

- (a) Judging quickly and properly whether or not foreign nationals are allowed to stay in Japan (the optimization of the special permission to stay in Japan, the establishment of the recognition system of complementary protection, etc.)
- (b) Deporting promptly from Japan those foreign nationals who are not allowed to stay in Japan (the introduction of an exception to the suspension of deportation and deportation order with penalties, etc.)
- (c) Avoiding long-term detention in ISA facilities as much as possible, and ensure more proper treatment in detention facilities (the introduction of supervision measure and implementation of the improved treatment of detainees, etc.)

While the bill was not enacted, the ISA recognizes that the problem of deportation evasion and long-term detention remains an urgent issue in immigration control and residency management administration that must be resolved as soon as possible. With this recognition, the ISA will diligently proceed with deliberations to resolve these issues and make deportation procedures, appropriate and effective.

Changes in the Number of Deportation Evaders

		at the end of 2020	at the end of 2021			at the end of 2020	at the end of 2021
deportation evaders		3,103	3,224	Period of Detention	less than 1 month	9	15
deportation evaders going under the refugee recognition procedures		1,938	1,629		1 month to less than 2 months	9	6
Criminal Record and Prison Term	deportation evaders with criminal record (total)	994	1,133		2 months to less than 6 months	26	19
	7 year or more imprisonment (prison sentence)	88	98		6 months to less than 1 year	67	11
	5 year to less than 7 year imprisonment (prison sentence)	87	91		1 year to less than 1 year and 6 months	39	5
	3 year to less than 5 year imprisonment (prison sentence)	137	141		1 year and 6 months to less than 2 years	24	5
	more than 1 year to less than 3 year imprisonment (prison sentence)	180	185		2 years to less than 2 years and 6 months	17	7
	violation of the drug related law	630	672		2 years and 6 months to less than 3 years	16	2
Crime Type	violation of the Immigration Control Act	418	504		3 years or more	41	9
	theft, fraud	293	340		Total	248	79
	injury, assault, extortion, etc.	141	161	Period of Provisional Release	less than 1 year	593	480
	breaking into a residence	89	108		1 year to less than 2 years	224	525
	robbery, robbery causing injury	58	59		2 years to less than 3 years	171	176
	sex crime (rape, etc.)	34	38		3 years to less than 5 years	451	319
	murder	7	8		5 years to less than 7 years	274	326
					7 years to less than 10 years	469	403
			10 years or more		258	317	
			Total		2,440	2,546	
				wanted because of escaping during provisional release	415	599	

- (1) 466 out of 994 deportation evaders with criminal record is applying for the recognition of refugee status at the end of 2020.
- (2) 424 out of 1,133 deportation evaders with criminal record is applying for the recognition of refugee status at the end of 2021.
- (3) The number of crime is based on each crime case, not by each individual.
- (4) The period of provisional release is based on the most recent provisional release.

Article: At the Front Line of Immigration Control Administration

(Voice of the immigration control officer in charge of enforcement)

(Detention and Deportation Department, Yokohama District Immigration Services Office, Tokyo Regional Immigration Services Bureau: Kobuna Ayumi)

As an in charge of enforcement at the Tokyo Regional Immigration Services Bureau, Yokohama District Immigration Services Office Treatment and Enforcement Department, I mainly work on the escort and repatriation of deportees.

Currently, COVID-19 is necessitating various procedures that were not necessary until now (preliminary PCR tests, securing accommodation after they return to their country, etc.) in the process of deporting deportees. In addition, depending on the infection status of each country, these procedures may change. Therefore, by keeping in close contact with related organizations such as airlines, embassies and travel agencies on a regular basis, we are trying to collect information so we can avoid situations in which foreign nationals who would normally be able to return to their country cannot be deported due to lack of information.

I am also in charge of coordinating deportation at the expense of the government with an escort officer for deportation evaders. In this work as well COVID-19 has made it more difficult than ever to coordinate with embassies and airlines, so we cannot realize deportation unless we follow procedures at the right timing according to the case of each deportation evader. The procedures are very complicated, there are many difficult tasks involved in the escort and deportation work, and there is a great deal of tension in the time between actually boarding the aircraft and completing the escort to the deportation destination. Because of this, I feel a great sense of accomplishment after a successful deportation, and I find this work to be rewarding.

As stated in the “Mission and Principles of ISA Staff” made on January 14, 2022, we professionals of immigration control and residency management administration must not lose sight of the mission entrusted to us by the people of Japan, as we carry out our duties with confidence and pride, so that we can continue to live up to the trust and expectations of the people.

I will continue to carry out my duties while always keeping aware of the 8 items in the “Mission and Principles of ISA Staff”.



The immigration control officer in charge of enforcement

Chapter 10

Promotion of Appropriate and Prompt Refugee Protection

Section 1 Further optimization of the refugee recognition system operation

1 Background

Japan has properly recognized applicants who should be recognized as refugees, and even when they cannot be recognized as refugees, they have been allowed to stay in Japan as long as they need protection based on humanitarian consideration with the situation in their home country. However, it has been pointed out that the criteria for judging eligibility for refugee status are unclear in Japan's refugee recognition system, and there is a need to improve the transparency of the system. There is also a need to respond to the rapid increase in the number of applicants for refugee recognition and the diversification of complaints in recent years.

2 Outline

The ISA is working in close cooperation with relevant organizations such as UNHCR (the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) to further optimize operation of the refugee recognition system based on three pillars: (1) clarifying normative elements on the eligibility for refugee status, (2) improving the capacity of refugee inquirers, and (3) enriching the content of country of origin information.

Specifically, with regard to (1), from the perspective of improving the transparency of the refugee recognition system, we are considering how to clarify important points when judging eligibility for refugee status, while referring to practical precedents in Japan and other countries and various documents issued by UNHCR when determining eligibility for refugees.

With regard to (2), the ISA has been conducting training for responsible staff in cooperation with UNHCR, and in the future, we will strive to further improve the quality of inspections by creating educational materials for accurate fact-finding. With regard to (3), we plan to further promote the exchange of information with other countries that accept many refugees.

Section 2 Revision of the Operation of the Refugee Recognition System, etc.

1 Revision of the Operation of the Refugee Recognition System

(1) Outline

With regard to the refugee recognition system, the time required for the examination of the cases is becoming more prolonged, and problems have been occurring which hinder

the provision of prompt protection of refugees owing to the proliferation of applications for recognition of refugee status in recent years and applications abusing or misusing the system for the purpose of employment or residence in Japan. Moreover, challenges have also arisen concerning the clarification of the decisions on whether or not an applicant is a refugee.

Therefore, based on the purport of the recommendations in the reports submitted in December 2014 by the “6th Immigration Policy Discussions Panel”, which is the private advisory council of the Minister of Justice, and the “Expert Committee on the Refugee Recognition System”, a study was conducted on reviewing the operation of the refugee recognition system, which was published in the form of the “Summary of the Revision of the Operation of the Refugee Recognition System” on September 15, 2015.

(2) Proper Operation of the System

The contents of the review were (i) clarifying the targets eligible for protection, the decisions on recognition and the procedures, (ii) strengthening the system and infrastructure pertaining to refugee recognition administration, (iii) appropriate handling of applications abusing or misusing the refugee recognition system and the measures implemented so far are as given below.

(i) Clarifying the targets eligible for protection, the decisions on recognition and the procedures

In a press release regarding the number of applicants recognized as refugees, etc. the ISA also publishes cases in which they were recognized as refugees, cases in which they were not, and cases in which residence permissions were granted due to humanitarian considerations since 2016, clearly indicating the points of judgement in each case.

In addition, in March 2017, it has been started to allow having interviews with a doctor, a counselor, or a lawyer, etc. for minors unaccompanied by their parents, individuals with severe physical disabilities, individuals with mental disabilities or individuals with serious illnesses.

(ii) Strengthening the system and infrastructure pertaining to refugee recognition administration

Since 2015, as well as implementing refugee recognition administrative staff training for management-level officers with the cooperation of the UNHCR, the ISA has been working on the development and capacity-building of refugee inquirers through enriching the content of the regular training relating to information on the countries of origin of the applicants for refugee recognition and practical training using case studies.

Furthermore, the ISA actively collects country of origin information, which is necessary for determining refugee status, in cooperation with related organization, such as the MOFA and UNHCR.

(iii) Appropriate handling of applications abusing or misusing the refugee recognition system

Since September 2015, applications abusing or misusing the refugee recognition system, such as cases claiming a situation that clearly does not come under the 1951 Refugee Convention have been pre-sorted before they reach the stage of a full-scale investigation. While ensuring that an opportunity is given to the applicant to make claims sufficiently such as the setting of a hearing into the circumstances by a refugee inquirer, these cases are promptly processed. As measures regarding status of residence, the ISA has started measures to not allow work (hereinafter, “work restrictions”) and measures to not allow residence (hereinafter, “residence restrictions”) for those re-applicants who repeatedly

abuse or misuse the application process.

Moreover, with regard to the sorting of applications, from the perspective of case processing optimization, a verification was conducted by an expert panel for verification of the situation of revisions for operation of the refugee recognition system (hereinafter referred to as “expert panel”) composed of outside experts.

2 Revision of the System by Amendment of the Regulation for Enforcement of the Immigration Control Act

In June 2017, due to the enforcement of a ministerial order to amend part of the Regulation for Enforcement of the Immigration Control Act, the authority to recognize refugees, which was previously only permitted to the Minister of Justice, was delegated to the Director of the Regional Immigration Bureau (at that time). In addition, through the establishment of a new refugee recognition application form for repeat applications, efforts are being made to make efficient decisions regarding the sorting of cases and imposing work or residence restrictions, and to streamline the processing of the cases.

3 Further Revision of the Operations to Optimize the Refugee Recognition System

(1) Background

As described above, since September 2015, applications abusing or misusing the system of refugee recognition are processed promptly, and work restrictions or residence restrictions depending on the content of the application, are imposed on those applicants who repeatedly submit refugee recognition applications for such purposes as working in Japan. These measures are intended for repeat applicants who re-submit applications for recognition of refugee status, and although these measures have had a certain degree of effect in curbing the re-submission of applications, the number of first-time applicants abusing or misusing the system is still increasing rapidly, and the number of refugee recognition applicants, which was 5,000 in 2014, reached a record high of 19,629 in 2017, about four times the number, and this situation is interfering with the provision of prompt protection of refugees.

Therefore, in order to improve such situation, as described in (2), a further revision of the operations of the refugee recognition system (hereinafter referred to as “further revision of the operations”) was carried out, and has been in force since January 2018.

(2) Outline

The contents of the further revision of the operations are as follows.

(i) Setting of a pre-sorting period

Measures have been taken to set a time limit for pre-sorting the contents of the cases following receipt of a first-time application (time limit not exceeding two months), and based on the results of pre-sorting the contents, to promptly take measures on the status of residence (permission to stay, residence restrictions, work permission, and work restrictions).

(ii) Further consideration for applicants whose applicability as a refugee is deemed to be high

Applicants whose applicability as a refugee under the Refugee Convention is deemed to be high or applicants who are considered highly likely to need humanitarian consideration

due to the situation in their home country, were previously granted the status of residence of “Designated Activities” (six months) permitting work after the passing of six months from the time of submission of the application for recognition of refugee status, but these applicants become quickly granted the status of residence of “Designated Activities” (six months) permitting work after the sorting of the application, thereby promoting quicker protection.

(iii) Further strict responses to abuse or misuse of applications

A. First-time applications

(A) Residence restrictions are imposed on applicants claiming circumstances that clearly do not correspond to the requests of the Refugee Convention’s grounds for persecution.

(B) Even in cases where residence restrictions are not imposed, applicants who applied for recognition of refugee status after abandoning to engage in the activities falling under the original status of residence, such as technical intern trainees who have absconded or international students who have left their educational institution, or applicants who filed an application for recognition of refugee status during the departure preparing period are under work restrictions. In addition, the period of stay in this case will be reduced from the previous six months to three months.

B. Re-submission of applications

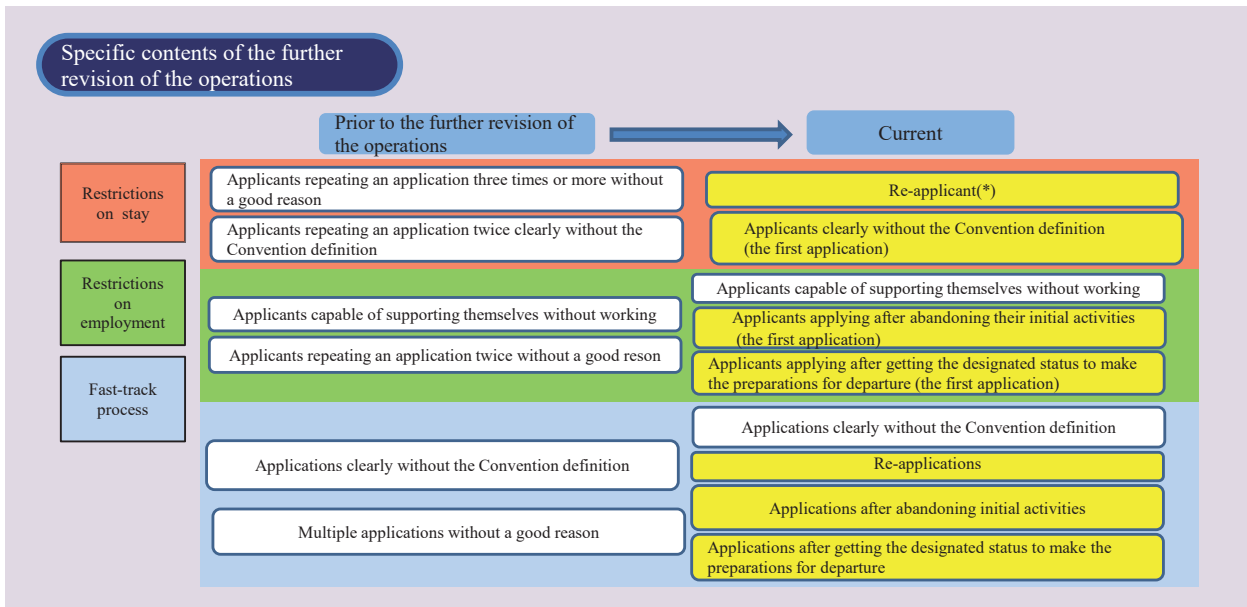
In principle, residence restrictions are imposed.

However, even with repeat applicants, applicants whose applicability as a refugee under the Refugee Convention is deemed to be high, or applicants who are considered highly likely to need humanitarian consideration due to the situation in their home country are given the protection in the abovementioned (ii).

C. Fast-track process

Cases of applicants for recognition of refugee status who come under the above-mentioned A and B will be promptly examined, and processed as quickly as possible (**Reference 81**).

Reference 81 Summary of further revision of the operations of the refugee recognition system



(*) Excludes applicants whose applicability as a refugee under the Refugee Convention is deemed to be high, or applicants who are considered likely to require humanitarian consideration due to the situation in their home country.

4 Situation after Revision of the Operations of the Refugee Recognition System

As a result of these efforts, the number of applicants for refugee recognition, which hit a record high of 19,629 in 2017, halved to 10,493 in 2018.

Since 2020, the number of new entrants to Japan decreased drastically due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, the number of applicants for refugee recognition declined to 3,936 in 2020 and 2,413 in 2021.

Meanwhile, the number of applicants recognized as refugees has increased (20 in 2017, 42 in 2018, 44 in 2019, 47 in 2020 and 74 in 2021), and there has been a certain degree of effect in meeting the objective in that applications abusing or misusing the system have been curbed and refugees are being offered prompt protection.

However, since there are still a number of applications abusing or misusing the system, a consideration will be conducted from the aspects of both the legal system and operations with regard to measures to further curb applications abusing or misusing the system while taking into account the effects of previous efforts towards fundamental resolution of the problem.

Section 3 Acceptance of Refugees Through Resettlement

1 Resettlement

Resettlement is intended to transfer and resettle refugees, who have been evacuated from their countries of origins and who are temporarily taking shelter in a refugee camp in a neighboring country or another place, to another country which agrees to accept such refugees from the countries where they were originally offered protection. Resettlement is deemed to be one of the permanent solutions of refugee problems, as well as “voluntary repatriation” and “resettlement in the first countries of asylum”.

The UNHCR encourages each country to accept refugees through the resettlement program from the standpoint of having the international community properly share its duties in relation to refugee problems.

2 Acceptance in FY 2019 or before

In the past, Japan took measures to support the settlement of Indochinese refugees and those recognized as refugees, but in order to deal with the various problems relating to refugees in the Asian region, in December 2008, the Cabinet approval was given to the introduction of a system of resettlement^(*1). The Cabinet approval^(*2) prescribed that the relevant ministries and agencies would accept approximately 30 Myanmarse refugees every year from refugee camps in Thailand, as a pilot project starting from FY 2010 and would support their resettlement through interministry and agency cooperation. It was also stated that the pilot project would, in the future, be reviewed from various angles, and that based on the review, further consideration would be given to a future system of acceptance.

Based on the contents of the report (January 2014) compiled by the Advisory Council on Resettlement held under the auspices of the Liaison and Coordination Council for Refugee Issues^(*3), the future policy was approved by the Cabinet^(*4) in January 2014 and in accordance with the contents of this Cabinet approval^(*5), the acceptance of resettlement refugees came to be fully implemented from 2015 to accept Myanmarse refugees temporarily staying in Malaysia.

The ISA is mainly in charge of the selection process for resettlement refugees to be accepted, and conducts local interviews. From FY 2010 to FY 2014, Myanmarse refugees comprising 18 families composed of 86 family members were accepted from Thailand (in FY 2012 all of the families who had decided to come to Japan declined before coming to Japan). From FY 2015 to FY 2019, Myanmarse refugees comprising 32 families composed of 108

(*1) Cabinet approval on December 16, 2008: “Implementation of a Pilot Project for the Admission of Refugees through Resettlement”.

(*2) Abovementioned Cabinet approval and “Specific Measures for Implementation of a Pilot Project for the Admission of Refugees through Resettlement” decision of the Liaison and Coordination Council for Refugee Issues on December 19, 2008.

(*3) Established in the Cabinet to ensure the close cooperation of the relevant administrative agencies and to consider necessary measures for the government regarding various issues concerning refugees. The chair is the Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary. The Deputy Commissioner of the ISA is a member.

(*4) Cabinet approval on January 24, 2014: “Implementation of the Admission of Refugee through Resettlement”

(*5) Abovementioned Cabinet approval and “Specific Measures for Implementation of the Admission of the Refugee through Resettlement” decision of the Liaison and Coordination Council for Refugee Issues on January 24, 2014.

family members were accepted from Malaysia.

3 Acceptance in FY 2020 and thereafter

Then in October 2018, in order to continue accepting resettlement refugees, a study group consisting of the relevant ministries and agencies and experts was established to examine the necessity of expanding the scope of acceptance and the scope when expanding acceptance^{(*)1}, and based on the results of the review by the study group, Cabinet approval^{(*)2} was given on June 28, 2019 that partially amended the Cabinet approval of January 2014. Due to this change^{(*)3}, it was decided that from FY 2020 onwards the scope of acceptance through resettlement would be expanded to include refugees (regardless of their country or region of origin) temporarily staying in Asia, single refugees would be accepted in addition to refugees in family units, the maximum number of accepted refugees would be increased to about 60 per year (with acceptance being increased from once to twice a year), and refugees accepted through resettlement would be able to bring their relatives with them as family members. In consideration of the government's policy, the ISA will continue to appropriately fulfill its role and strive to accept these refugees in a seamless manner, while working together with the relevant ministries and agencies.

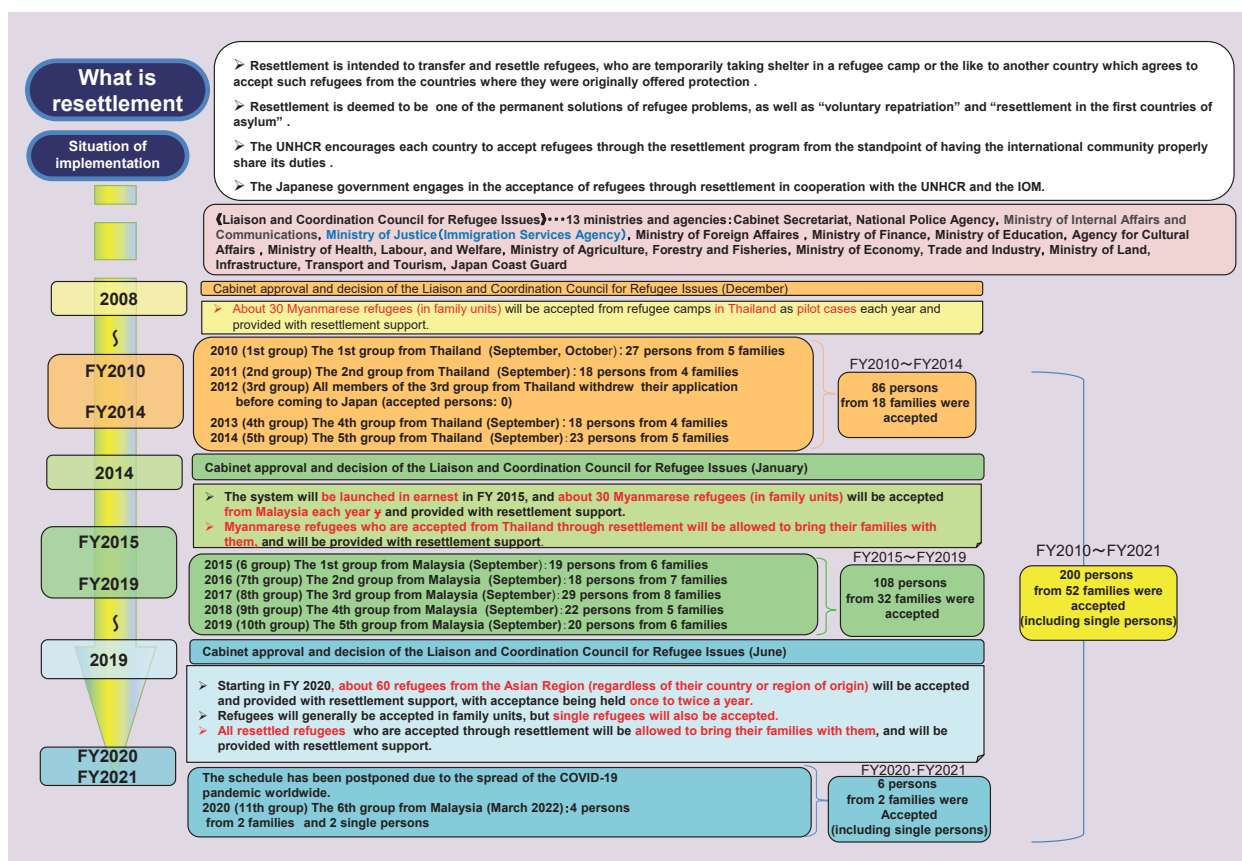
In FY 2020, refugees through resettlement were not accepted due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. However, in FY 2021, we accepted a total of 6 refugees from Myanmar, including 4 people in 2 families and 2 individuals. Japan has so far accepted 200 refugees from 52 families (including 2 individuals) as resettled refugees from Myanmar.

(*1) "Study Group on Expansion of the Project for the Acceptance of Refugees through Resettlement" decided by the Liaison and Coordination Council for Refugee Issues on October 22, 2018.

(*2) "Partial amendment to 'Implementation of the Acceptance of Refugees through Resettlement'" decided by the Cabinet on June 28, 2019.

(*3) In response to the partial amendment of the abovementioned Cabinet approval, partial amendment of the "Specific Measures Relating to the Acceptance of Refugees through Resettlement" decided as abovementioned by the Liaison and Coordination Council for Refugee Issues on June 28, 2019.

Reference 82 Situation of implementation and cases of acceptance through resettlement



Section 4 Promotion of Collaboration with NGOs

With regard to refugee-related administration, it is necessary to identify specific points which need to be improved through discussions with individuals involved in the promotion of refugee protection incorporating the standpoint of the private sector and legal experts and to work to achieve better measures in collaboration with and cooperation from citizens' groups.

Therefore, on February 10, 2012, the Immigration Bureau (at that time) concluded a three-party agreement and exchanged a memorandum on cooperation with the Forum for Refugees Japan, which is a network of NGOs and groups supporting refugees and the JFBA, agreeing to hold discussions to identify the refugee-related administrative matters that the Immigration Bureau is responsible for and that need improving, including procedures for recognizing refugee status, and to exchange information on the provision of housing, with the assistance of refugee support groups, for refugees awaiting the results of their application for recognition of refugee status.

In accordance with the three-party discussions based on this memorandum, during the period of April 2012 and March 2014, the Immigration Bureau implemented a “pilot project”, which the Immigration Bureau requested the Forum for Refugees Japan to secure a residence for foreign nationals claiming asylum at Narita Airport for whom it is difficult to secure a residence, and Landing Permission for Temporary Refuge or Permission for Provisional Stay was granted to foreign nationals who were accepted by the Forum.

Subsequently, following discussions by the three parties, the same measures under this

project are currently being taken at Narita Airport, Haneda Airport, Chubu Airport and Kansai Airport. Since March 2017, foreign nationals from these airport branches have been sent to Higashi-Nihon Immigration Center, Tokyo Regional Immigration Services Bureau, Nagoya Regional Immigration Services Bureau, or Osaka Regional Immigration Services Bureau, and when one of the immigration Services offices to which the person was sent makes a decision on permission for provisional stay or permission for provisional release, the measures apply to such cases as well, and the measures have been applied to 45 foreign nationals (including those eligible for the pilot project and those to whom similar measures were applied before the project's launching) as of 2021.

Section 5 Acceptance Status of Syrian International Students

The Japanese government has started an initiative to accept a maximum of 150 Syrian international students over the course of 5 years, with technical cooperation from JICA. It is intended to provide educational opportunities to Syrian youth who have been deprived of the opportunity to attend school due to the Syrian crisis and develop human resources who will be responsible for the future rebuilding of Syria, as part of comprehensive support for stabilizing the Middle East Region, a goal stated at the 1st "Meeting of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Promotion Headquarters" held on May 20, 2016. A total of 115 Syrian international students were accepted from 2017 to 2021.

Reference 83 Acceptance status of Syrian international students

(People)

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Total
Number of acceptance	28	29	22	16	20	115

(*) The number of Syrian international students accepted is the number of (1) Syrian students accepted as international students in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the "Japanese Initiative for the future of Syrian Refugees" (JISR), a human resources development project for Syrian refugees conducted by JICA, and (2) Students who are accepted as government-sponsored international students under the government-sponsored international student system implemented by MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology). The government-sponsored international student system does not require applicants to be Syrian refugees.

Chapter 11**Responses to International Society and International Situations****Section 1 Treaties and International Conventions****1 Support for Bilateral and Multilateral Frameworks**

In frameworks such as the EPA (Japan-EU Economic Partnership Agreement), which aims to promote liberalization and facilitation of foreign trade between signatory nations, and to coordinate policies, relax regulations, and cooperate in various economic fields, such as trade in services, the ISA is involved in the field of “movement of natural persons”.

The ISA, in light of the deep relationship to the work under its jurisdiction, actively supports frameworks aimed at exchanging information and opinions and improving cooperative relationships among multiple countries, including the OECD.

(Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development), APEC (Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation), and ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organization).

For the purpose of simplifying port procedures, necessary adjustments have been made in order to maintain consistency between Japan’s immigration control and residency management system and the “1965 Convention on Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic” (FAL Convention), which includes the adoption of relevant document formats and simplification of procedures, as well as the “Convention on International Civil Aviation” (Chicago Convention), which aims to simplify immigration, customs, quarantine, and facility management procedures at airports.

2 Reports and Examinations in Accordance with Human Rights Treaties

Japan is a signatory to various treaties, including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT), the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (ICPAPED). With regard to government reports on the status of the implementation of those treaties, the ISA is involved in the drafting of reports, review of the government reports and follow-up thereof from the perspective of immigration control and residency management administration.

Section 2 International Conferences/ International Exchange

1 The 1st Tokyo Immigration Forum

The 1st Tokyo Immigration Forum, organized by the MOJ and the ISA of Japan, was held on March 2 and 3, 2022, with the participation of representatives (senior officials) from immigration authorities of 18 countries and regions (Australia, Cambodia, Canada, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Nepal, New Zealand, Philippines, R.O.Korea, Singapore, Thailand, the U.K., the U.S. and Vietnam). The forum was also attended by observers such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the embassies of participating countries in Japan, and the related ministries and agencies of Japan (The forum was held in a hybrid format of online and in-person participation.).

Minister of Justice Furukawa made opening remarks, followed by a keynote report by Commissioner Sasaki.

In the plenary session, with regard to "Crisis management measures for immigration control", presenters explained about measures for immigration control taken in their countries/regions, including efforts to prevent the influx of COVID-19 infection and reopen the border at the same time, and the technologies using for border control. With regard to "Issues associated with the movement of foreign workers and responses", presenters explained about systems and its current situation concerning acceptance or sending of foreign human resources, as well as its issues and their countermeasures under the pandemic.

Between the plenary sessions, there were also two breakout COVID-19 sessions for "Efforts to streamline the immigration control and residency management procedures and to provide foreign nationals with greater convenience" and "Issues related to deportation", respectively. In the breakout session for the former theme, participants gave presentations and exchanged opinions on the use of technology to automate and simplify immigration procedures. For the latter theme, participants explained and discussed the current status of deportation operations and the challenges they faced in the COVID-19 pandemic.

The participants shared the view that the Tokyo Immigration Forum served as a platform for the sharing of information and exchange of opinions on international immigration control and residency policies, through the frank and active discussion on issues faced by immigration authorities from various countries and regions, and agreed on that the Forum would continue to be held on a regular basis, and that the next Forum would be held in Tokyo in fiscal year 2022.



The 1st Tokyo Immigration Forum

2 Responses to International Conferences

The Migration Experts Sub-Group (MESG) Meeting, one of the sub groups of the G7 Rome-Lyon Group, which is a working experts' group to discuss measures against international terrorism and transnational organized crime, is discussing measures that the G7 members should take cooperatively in the area of illegal immigration and forgery or alteration of documents.

MESG Meeting was held online in November 2021 and in March 2022, and officials from the ISA participated in the meeting to exchange information and opinions with the counterparts of other countries.

In addition to the international meetings mentioned above, the ISA sends delegates to the Government Delegation on Anti-Human Trafficking Measures to exchange information on recent efforts to counter trafficking in persons, as well as to the Consular Consultation etc. to express Japan's position actively and build cooperative relationships with other countries. The ISA also sends officials to participate in multinational meetings, such as the International Air Transport Association (IATA)/ Control Authorities Working multinational Group (CAWG) for the purpose of information sharing and exchanging opinions.

3 International Exchange

The ISA has been striving to strengthen cooperative relations with other countries and regions such as by actively exchanging views with the immigration authorities of other countries at different levels and accepting visits from related organizations.

In FY 2021, the ISA strengthened cooperative relationships while exploring new ways of doing international exchange. This included exchanging opinions online with Australian immigration authorities, and participating in an online exchange of opinions held by the Japan-Taiwan Exchange Association and the Taiwan-Japan Relations Association.

Chapter 12 Public Relations Activities

Section 1 Promotion of Public Relations Activities

Recognizing that public relations and enlightenment activities both in Japan and abroad play a major role in the smooth implementation of immigration control and residency management administration, the ISA has been further promoting more active public relations activities than ever before. As the main public relations activities, we provide information including the current circumstances concerning immigration control and residency management administration, new systems and changes of procedures.

In order to explain the current circumstances of immigration control and residency management administration, statistics such as the number of those entering or departing from Japan, the number of foreign residents, the number of foreign nationals overstaying and the number of applications for refugee recognition are released on the website of the ISA. In addition, the ISA also disclose information on cases of special permission to stay in Japan, examination of statuses of residence, the average processing time for refugee recognition examinations, the immigration examination waiting time at airports and endeavor to widely spread understanding of the current situation of immigration control and residency management administration.

In addition, we proactively explain the immigration control and residency management systems and procedural guidelines, and raise awareness by distributing posters and leaflets, not only by posting information about various systems on the ISA website. Also, the ISA has created and published various public relations videos.

In order to ensure proper employment of foreign nationals and prevent illegal employment, we had previously designated the month of June as the “Campaign Month for Measures against Illegal Employment of Foreign Nationals” in conjunction with the government-wide “Awareness Month for Foreign Workers”, and has been conducted public relations activities. In FY 2022, with the theme of “Month to Promote Proper Employment of Foreign Nationals for the Realization of an Inclusive Society”, we conducted educational activities for the public, companies employing foreign nationals, and related organizations, on points to keep in mind when recruiting foreign nationals and measures to prevent illegal employment.



The video clip “The Organization and Work of the ISA”



The video clip “Initiatives to Accept Foreign Nationals and for a Society of Harmonious coexistence”

Section 2 Information Dissemination

1 ISA Website

Since opening the ISA website (<https://www.moj.go.jp/isa/index.html>) in March 2002, the ISA has offered Q&A on immigration and residence procedures, as well as addresses, contact information, counter open hours, and other information about the regional immigration services bureaus. In October 2020, we renewed the website, centralizing content previously posted on the MOJ website to the ISA website, and striving to enhance content and improve usability and accessibility.

Also, in order to enhance information provision to foreign nationals, we opened a new multilingual website in February 2021. By expanding the number of languages supported on the website from the original five all the way to 14, and gradually enhancing the content provided, we are making consideration to ensure that the website will be especially convenient for foreign nationals.

2 ISA SNS, etc.

(1) ISA Twitter, Facebook

In order to be able to further enhance its public relations activities, the ISA opened Twitter accounts of the ISA and the Regional Immigration Services Bureaus in March 2016, and a Facebook account of the ISA in July 2020.

The ISA uses its Twitter and Facebook accounts to provide information on new systems and useful information for foreign residents.

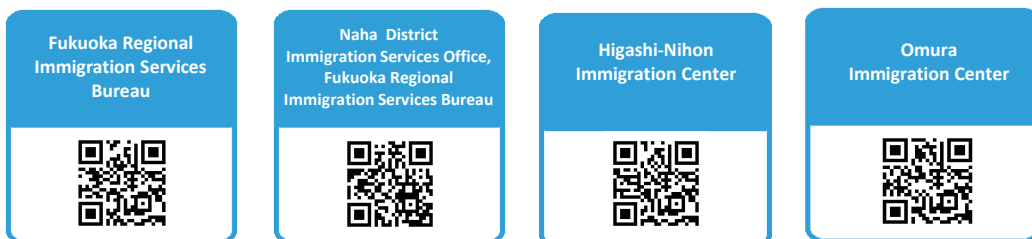
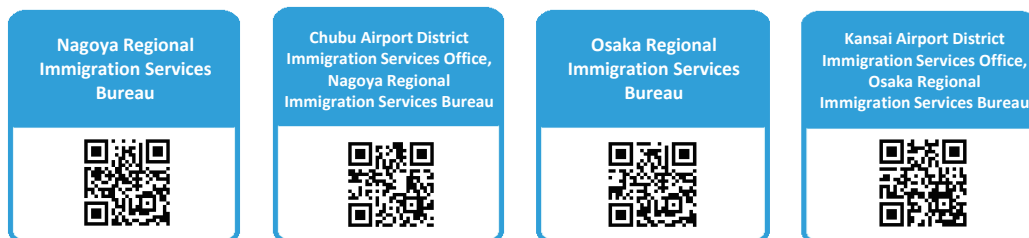
In addition to this, the Twitter accounts of the Regional Immigration Services Offices are used to send out real-time information on waiting time so that visitors coming to the residence examination desks will have an idea of the waiting time, and also to give information out on various events and campaigns to be held at the airports and other places.

(2) ISA Email Distribution Service

In addition to the website and social media accounts mentioned above, the ISA started an email distribution service in March 2021 in order to further strengthen dissemination of information. This service distributes information on immigration, residence procedures, and residence support, etc. in Japanese, plain Japanese, and English.

This email distribution service enables users to select what information they want to receive, and sends information according to the needs of individual users.

○ ISA Twitter accounts



○ ISA Facebook account



2D barcode of ISA Official SNS

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🔗 moj.go.jp/isa/index.html 📅 2015年9月からTwitterを利用しています

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