

Toward Sustainable Tourism

~Cultural heritage/Tourism resource~

2024.10.2

Mr. Atsuya KAWADA

Director for Strategy Planning Division

Japan Tourism Agency



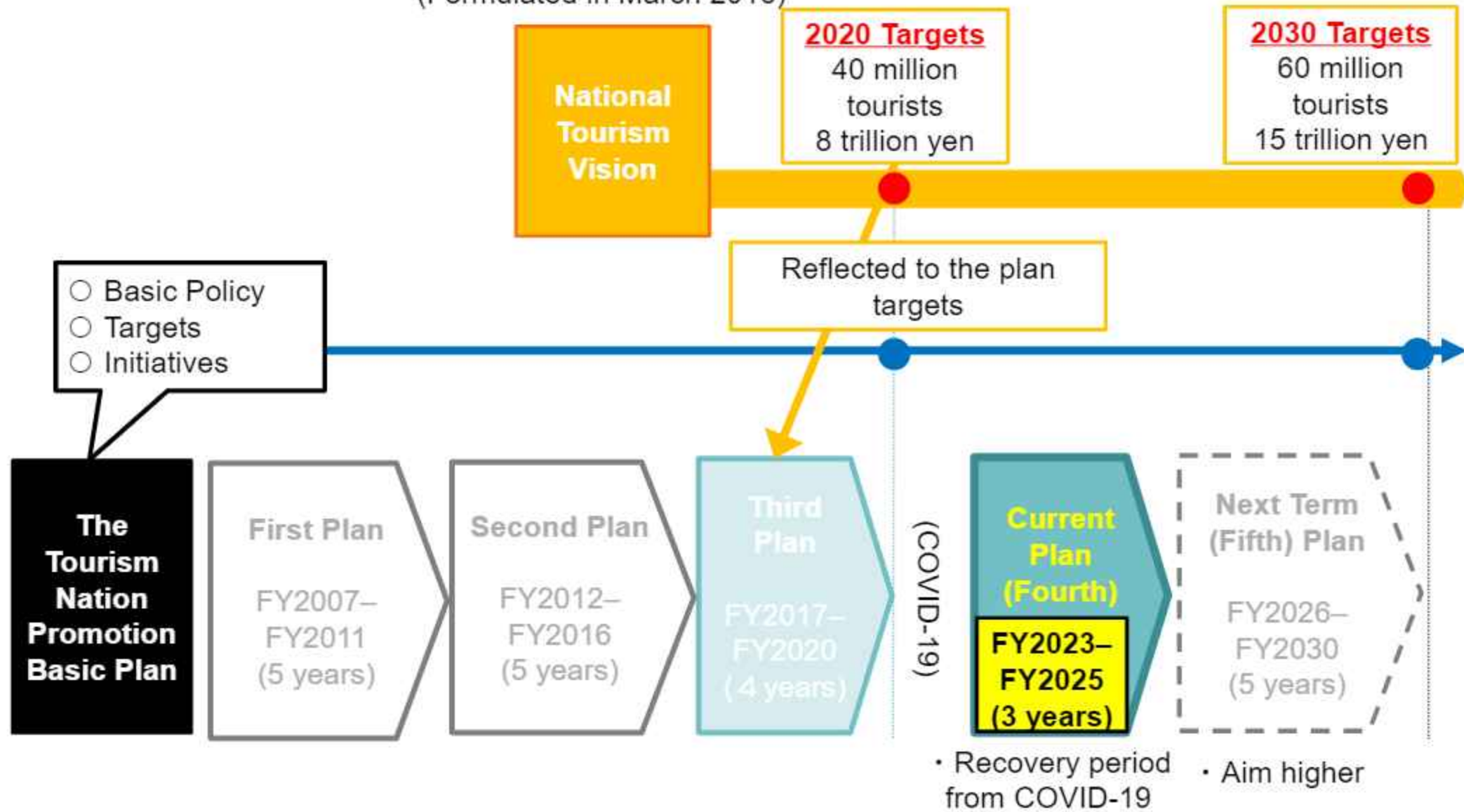
Mr. Atsuya KAWADA
Director
Strategy Planning Division
Japan Tourism Agency(JTA)
Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism(MLIT)

1998 :Join MLIT
2009-2011 :International Tourism Promotion Division, JTA
2017-2020 :Regional Tourism Development Division , JTA
2023-present :Strategy Planning Division, JTA

Throughout professional career at MLIT, other than tourism sector, Mr. Kawada has been in charge of regional transport policy, and aviation policy (especially, airport management and international aviation).

In Current position, Mr. Kawada is responsible for undertaking comprehensive tourism policy measures under “Tourism Nation Promotion Basic Plan” stipulated in 2023.

(Formulated in March 2016)



Japan developed The Tourism Nation Promotion Basic Plan in March 2023

Key strategies

1. Create Sustainable Tourism Destinations

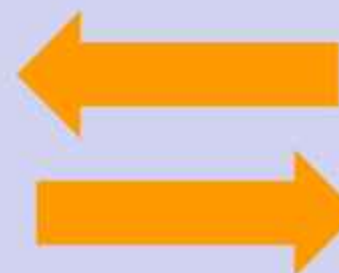


2. Recover Inbound Tourism

(Including outbound recovery that generates synergies with inbound)



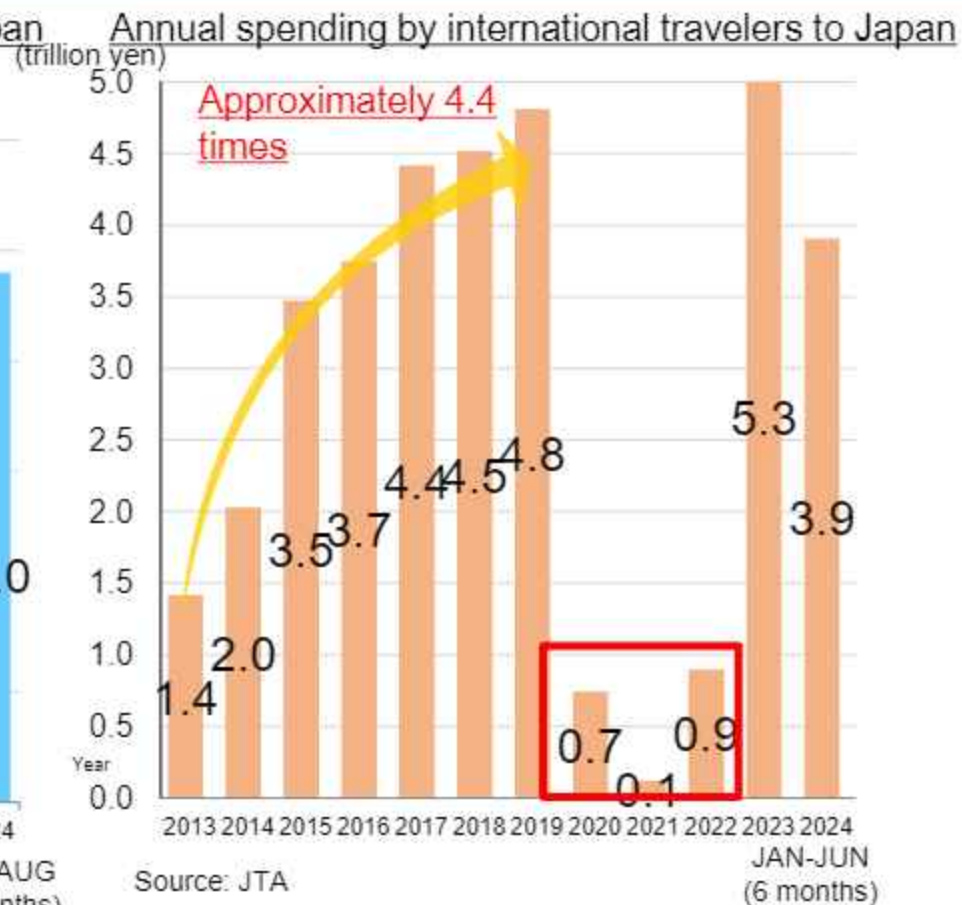
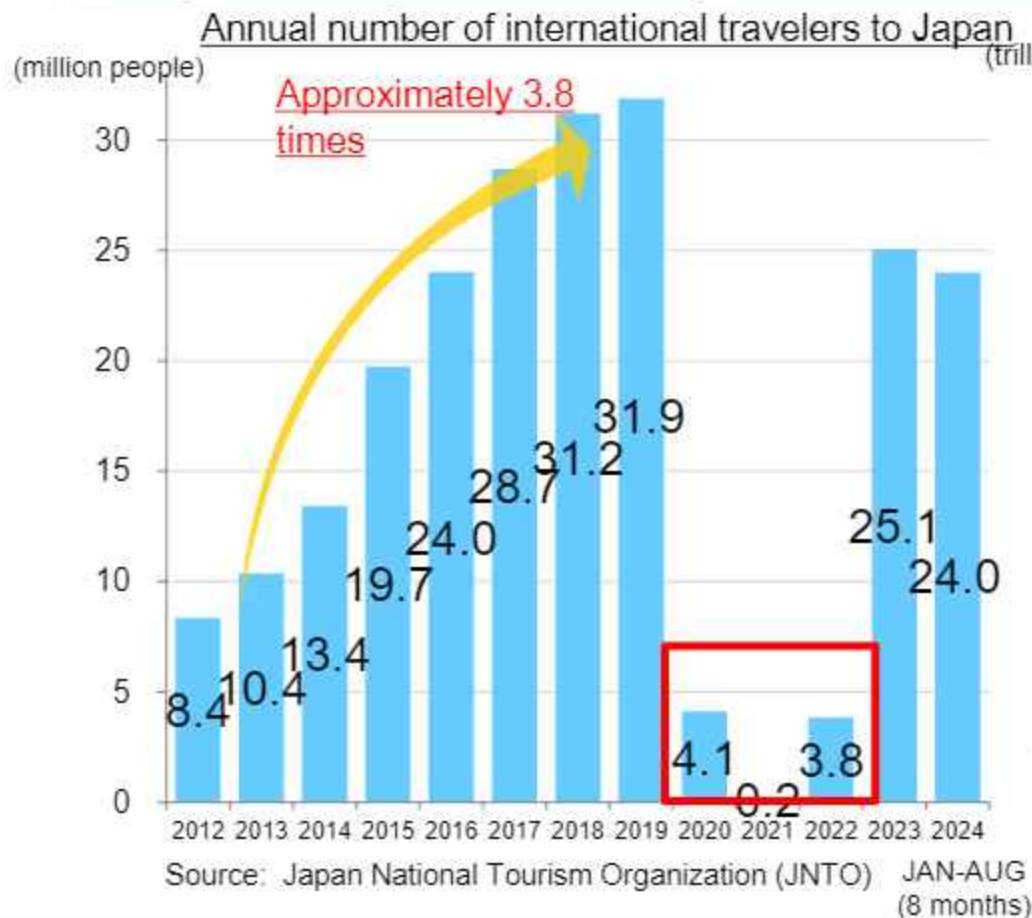
3. Expand Domestic Exchanges



2025

Revitalize tourist destinations and the tourism industry in a sustainable manner

- The number of international travelers to Japan (approximately 32 million travelers) and their consumption amount (approximately 4.8 trillion yen) drastically increased until 2019.
- However, due to the impact of COVID-19, those numbers have been significantly lower during 2020 and 2022.



“Tourism resources” are local materials that lie in the history, nature, culture, industry that have been nurtured in Japan as a whole and in the region.



...etc.

After the Pandemic, global travelers are increasingly concerned about sustainability and demand for nature and activities.

76% of travelers said they would like to try to travel more sustainably



Cruise tour to collect plastic waste (Netherlands)



Ecolodge, which works to reduce environmental impact and create local jobs (Finland)



Local residents entertain tourists (Canada)

(Source: Booking.com "Sustainable Travel Report 2022" (February 2022))

Growing demand for nature and activities (increase of "keyword" internet search)



Adventure Tourism



Glamping



Activities

(Source: TripAdvisor, Beyond COVID-19: The Road to Recovery for the Travel Industry (May 2020))

- ✓ Environmental, cultural, social and economic sustainability is necessary for the region to continue to grow while refining its own value as a tourist destination and to be passed on to future generations.
- ✓ Based on the “Japanese Sustainable Standard for Destinations(JSTS-D)”, the Japan Tourism Agency is providing various support to local governments, DMOs, and other organizations in order to increase the number of regions throughout Japan with a view to creating sustainable tourism regions up to 100.

Specific example in sustainable destination (Ozu city, Ehime Prefecture)

- Guided tours created to allow tourists to interact with residents and businesses, and to tour the revitalized historical buildings and townscape.
- A virtuous circle created in the region by donating 5% of the tour fee to local organizations and tourism businesses that carry out local conservation activities and allocating surplus profits to human resource development for tour guides.



Guided tours in Ozu city

In 2019, the Japan Tourism Agency developed
Japan Sustainable Tourism Standard for Destinations (JSTS-D)



<The case of Shirakawa Village>



- ✓ Compilation of a residents' charter for gassho-zukuri houses preservation
- ✓ Establishing Self-Funding Sources
- ✓ Developing walkable neighborhoods

- The Guidelines consist of four areas: A. Management, B. Socio-economical sustainability, C. Cultural sustainability, and D. Environmental sustainability, with a total of 47 major items and 113 sub-items.

A. Management

Major items: 16

Sub-items: 41

(Example)

A4 Financial resources for moderate negative impact on local community by tourism activity

- ① Secure and manage financial resources with clearly defined objectives.



B. Socio-economical sustainability

Major items: 8

sub-items: 24

(Example)

B3 Supporting local businesses and working to achieve fair trade

- ① Promoting the use of local products and services.
- ② Supporting local tourism-related SMEs to become more accessible to the market.



C. Cultural sustainability

Major Items: 8

Sub-items: 19

(Example)

C3 Plans, regulations for the protection of intangible cultural heritage.

- ① A list of Intangible Cultural Heritage
- ② Preservation of local events (festivals, etc.)
- ③ Initiatives to support the transmission of traditional culture to the next generation.



D. Environmental sustainability

Major items: 15

Sub-items: 29

(Example)

D7 Reduce energy consumption and improve efficiency in tourist areas

- ① Regular monitoring of energy consumption and efforts to reduce it.
- ② Policies and initiatives that reduce dependence on fossil fuels and promote the use of renewable energy sources.



- ✓ The Japan Tourism Agency launched a project in 2022 to promote the use of regional resources such as nature, culture, history, and industry that are rooted in the regions of Japan for tourism, and to create a virtuous circle to return profits from such tourism use to the conservation of regional resources.
- ✓ Supporting a cumulative total of 46 regions from 2022 to 2024 (total amount of funding: approx. 960 million yen).
- ✓ Expected to contribute not only to monetization of local resources, but also to solving issues facing the region, such as conservation of local resources and lack of successors.

Logic models

Provision of sustainable tourism products

Travelers participate in tourism products with understanding and consideration for local resources offered by the region

Virtuous Circle Mechanism

Preservation of local resources, reinvestment of tourism revenues in local resources, incorporation of activities that directly protect the local environment, reduction of global environmental impact through tourism, and contribution to the local economy

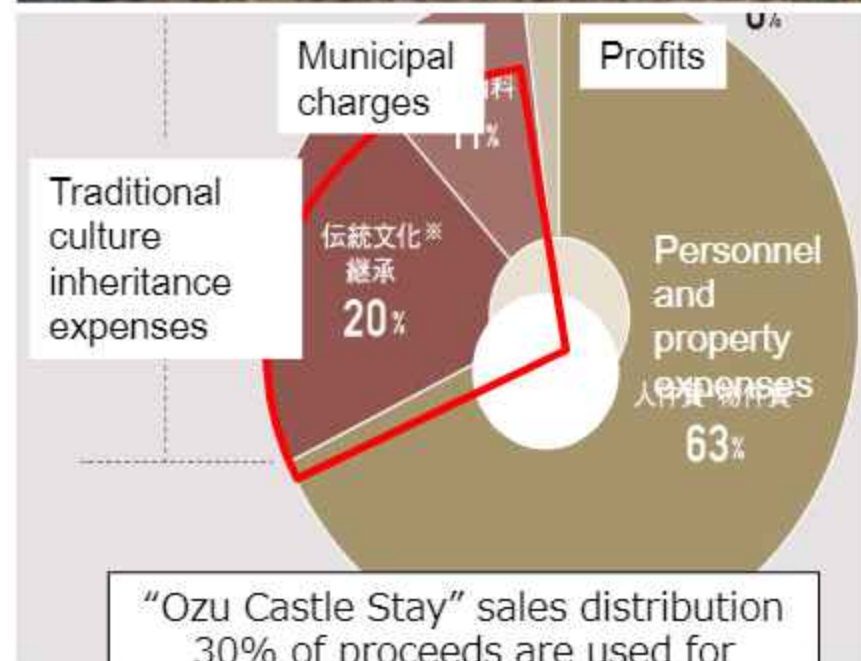
Effects on Sustainability Improvement

The more travelers participate in sustainable travel products, the more environmental, social, and economic sustainability is improved in the region.



Ozu City, which flourished as a castle town centering on “Ozu Castle,” established a regional management system in the castle town area in cooperation with the city, financial institutions, private businesses and promoted new town development from all sides with the aim of attracting tourists.

- ◆ Establishment of a regional management system through public-private partnerships
 - ✓ Formation of a DMO for regional management based on a partnership agreement among local banks, industry, local government. Establishment of a mechanism to lead regional management, including formulation of a basic plan for area redevelopment centered on the DMO, and support for attracting and exhibiting cafes, workshops, stores and development of a decentralized hotel.
- ◆ Passing on traditional culture and preservation of culture through tourism revenue
 - ✓ “Ozu Castle Stay” program offers plans that not only use the castle as a lodging facility, but also include experiences of local traditional performing arts and culture, such as kagura (Shinto music and dance) and gagaku (ancient Japanese court music).
 - ✓ The program aims to pass on culture by providing a venue for traditional performing arts and culture that lack opportunities to be demonstrated, and to return approximately 30% of the proceeds to Ozu City as royalties for the restoration of cultural properties.



“Ozu Castle Stay” sales distribution
30% of proceeds are used for restoration of cultural properties.

Background and Objectives

- Concerns about the impact of excessive crowding and bad manners on the lives of local residents and a decline in tourist satisfaction in some areas and times when tourists are concentrated.
- To realize a sustainable tourism region that both welcomes tourists and ensures the quality of life of residents, it is effective for the region itself to envision what it should be and take specific measures according to the actual conditions of the region.
- JTA provides comprehensive support for such efforts.

Specific measures

- ◆ To prevent and curb overtourism, the program establishes a forum for consultation among local stakeholders, including residents, and provides comprehensive support for the formulation of plans and initiatives based on the consultation.
- JTA provides financial assistance for the following project:
 - model project led by local governments in cooperation with local communities.
 - Area-wide efforts to prevent and curb overtourism through collaboration among local tourism-related parties.

<Plausible initiatives>



Establishment of short-term hand-luggage storage



Installation of trash box



Park and ride promotion



Appropriate signage distribution

- Twenty-six regions were selected as “model regions” to address issues such as excessive congestion and bad manners brought by tourists.
- Each region is to establish a plan for specific measures with a consultation of local stakeholders.

【Selected regions】

Measures against congestion in public transportation

- ① Kyoto
- ② Niseko
- ③ Zao
- ④ Kawagoe
- ⑤ Hakone
- ⑥ Izumo
- ⑦ Shodoshima-Isl.
- ⑧ Ginzan onsen

Manner violation countermeasures

- ⑨ Biei
- ⑩ Kamakura, Fujisawa
- ⑪ Shirakawa-go
- ⑫ Nara
- ⑬ Takayama

Nature Protection

- ⑭ Iriomote Isl.
- ⑮ Oirase
- ⑯ Fuji-yoshida
- ⑰ Fuji-fujinomiya, Gotemba, Subashiri
- ⑱ Aso



Diversify demand and promote excursions

- ⑲ Miyajima
- ⑳ Asakusa
- ㉑ Sado Isl.
- ㉒ Mt. Koya
- ㉓ Niyodo river
- ㉔ Chichibu
- ㉕ Otsuki
- ㉖ Naha

Congestion at Shirakawa-go (Shirakawa Village)





Shirakawa Village was selected as one of the four regions in Japan for “Best Tourism Village” by UN Tourism in 2023.

Shirakawa



Biei



Hakuba



Oku-matsushima

