

Japan's National Land Planning — Introduction to the National Spatial Strategy (National Plan and Greater Regional Plans) —

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Director-General,

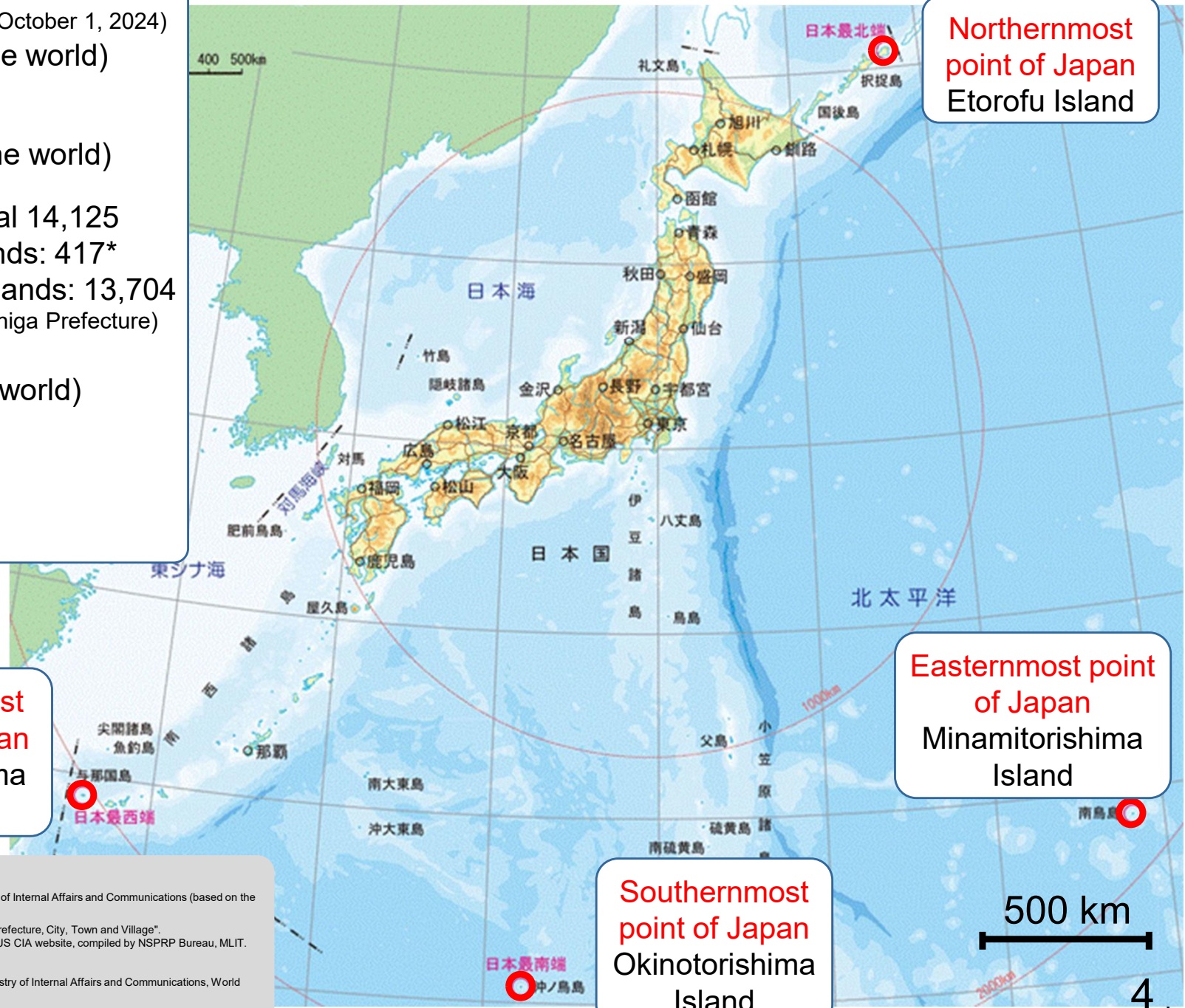
National Spatial Planning and Regional Policy Bureau,
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Government of Japan

1. Overview of Japan's National Land Situation
2. Japan's National Land Planning Framework
3. Greater Regional Plans

1. Overview of Japan's National Land Situation

National Land of Japan

- Population (estimate as of October 1, 2024)
123,802,000 (12th in the world)
- Area (as of October 1, 2024)
377,975 km² (63rd in the world)
- Number of islands: Total 14,125
Remote inhabited islands: 417*
Remote uninhabited islands: 13,704
*Includes inland remote islands (Shiga Prefecture)
- Nominal GDP
\$4.2 Trillion (3rd in the world)
 - (1) US: \$25.7 Trillion
 - (2) China : \$17.9 Trillion
 - (4) Germany: \$4.0 Trillion
 - (5) India: \$3.4 Trillion



Sources:

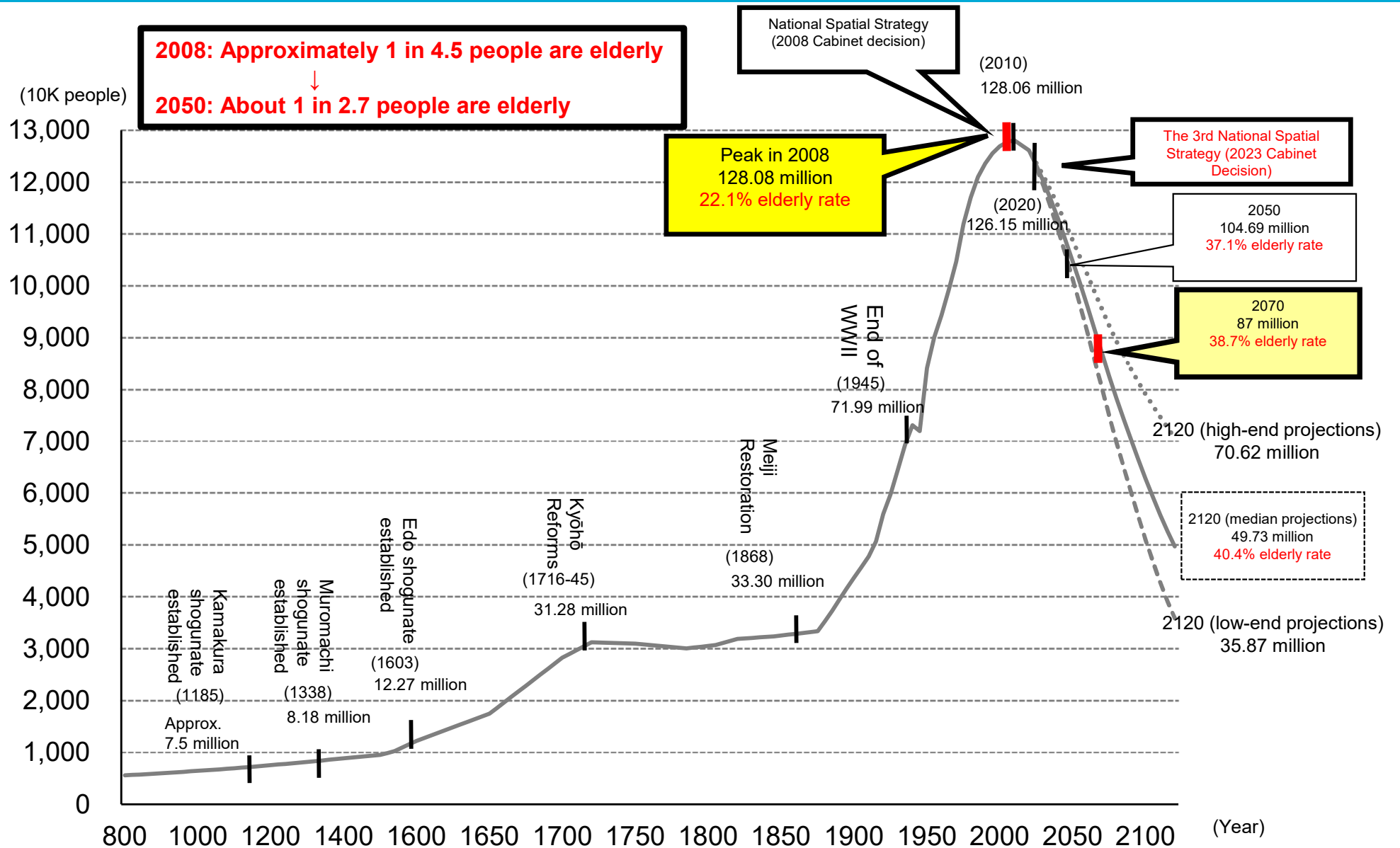
Population: Population estimates by the Statistics Bureau of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (based on the census population as of October 1)

Area: GSI Press Release, 2024.12.20, "2024 National Area Survey by Prefecture, City, Town and Village".
World ranking based on the "CIA - The World Factbook" from the US CIA website, compiled by NSPRP Bureau, MLIT.

Number of islands: Survey by GSI

Nominal GDP: Compiled by NSPRP Bureau from Statistics Bureau, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, World Statistics 2025

Long-Term Population Trends in Japan

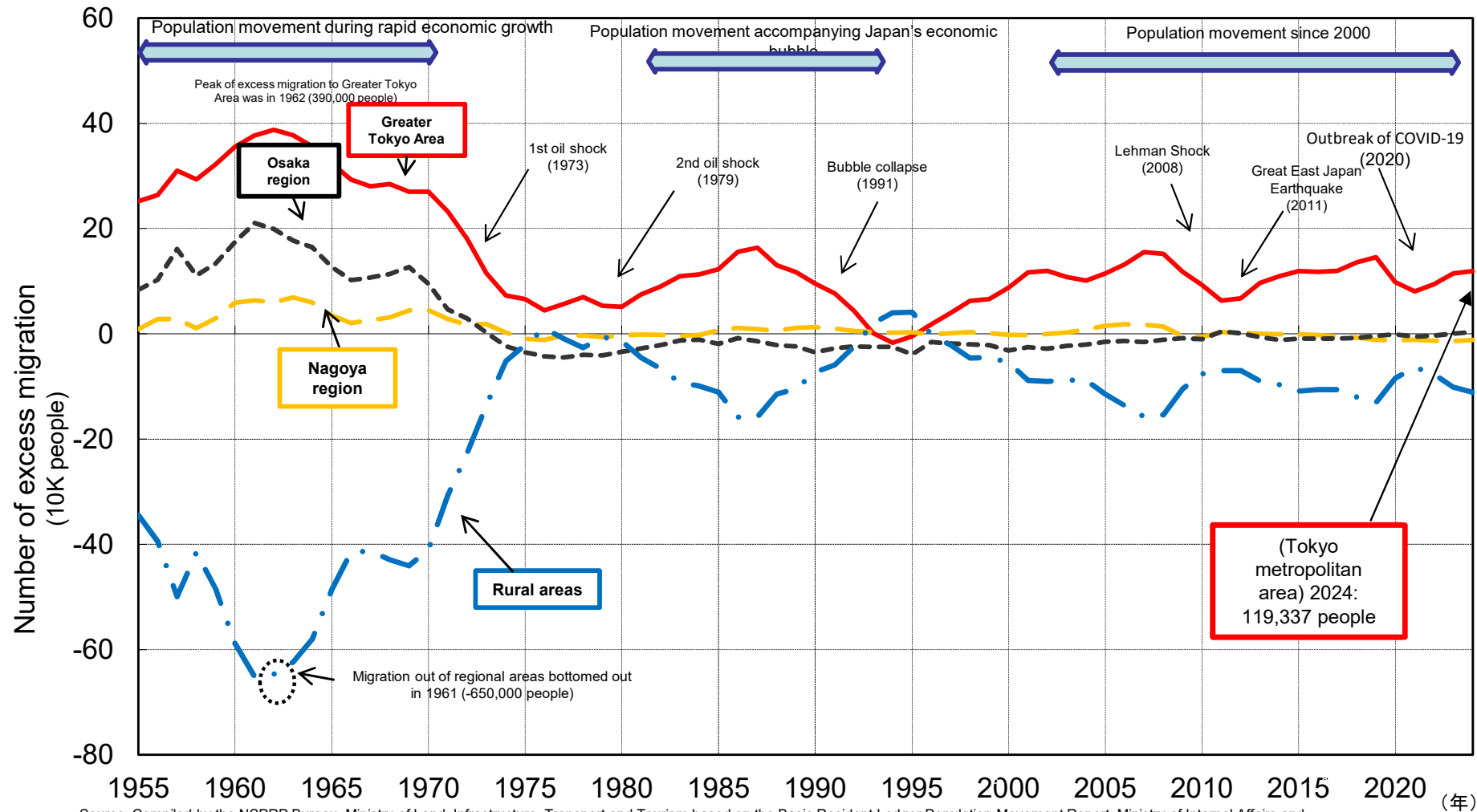


Source: National Land Agency, "Long-Term Time Series Analysis of Population Distribution in the Japanese Islands" (1974).

Note: Figures from 1920 and beyond are added from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications "Population Census," "Annual Population Estimates," and "Interpolated Corrected Population Based on the Results of the 2005 and 2010 Censuses," and "Population Projections for Japan (2023 Projections)" by the National Institute of Population and Social Security Research. Values are for the total population of Japan (including foreigners).

Changes in Excess In-migration to the Greater Tokyo Area (Vs. Osaka region, Nagoya region, and Regional Areas)

- The trend of excess in-migration into the Greater Tokyo Area continues, with no correction in the population concentration in this region.
- While the in-migration to the Tokyo metropolitan area was somewhat mitigated during the COVID-19 pandemic starting in 2020, it expanded again in the post-pandemic era.



Source: Compiled by the NSPRP Bureau, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism based on the Basic Resident Ledger Population Movement Report, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications. Values are the number of Japanese migrants.

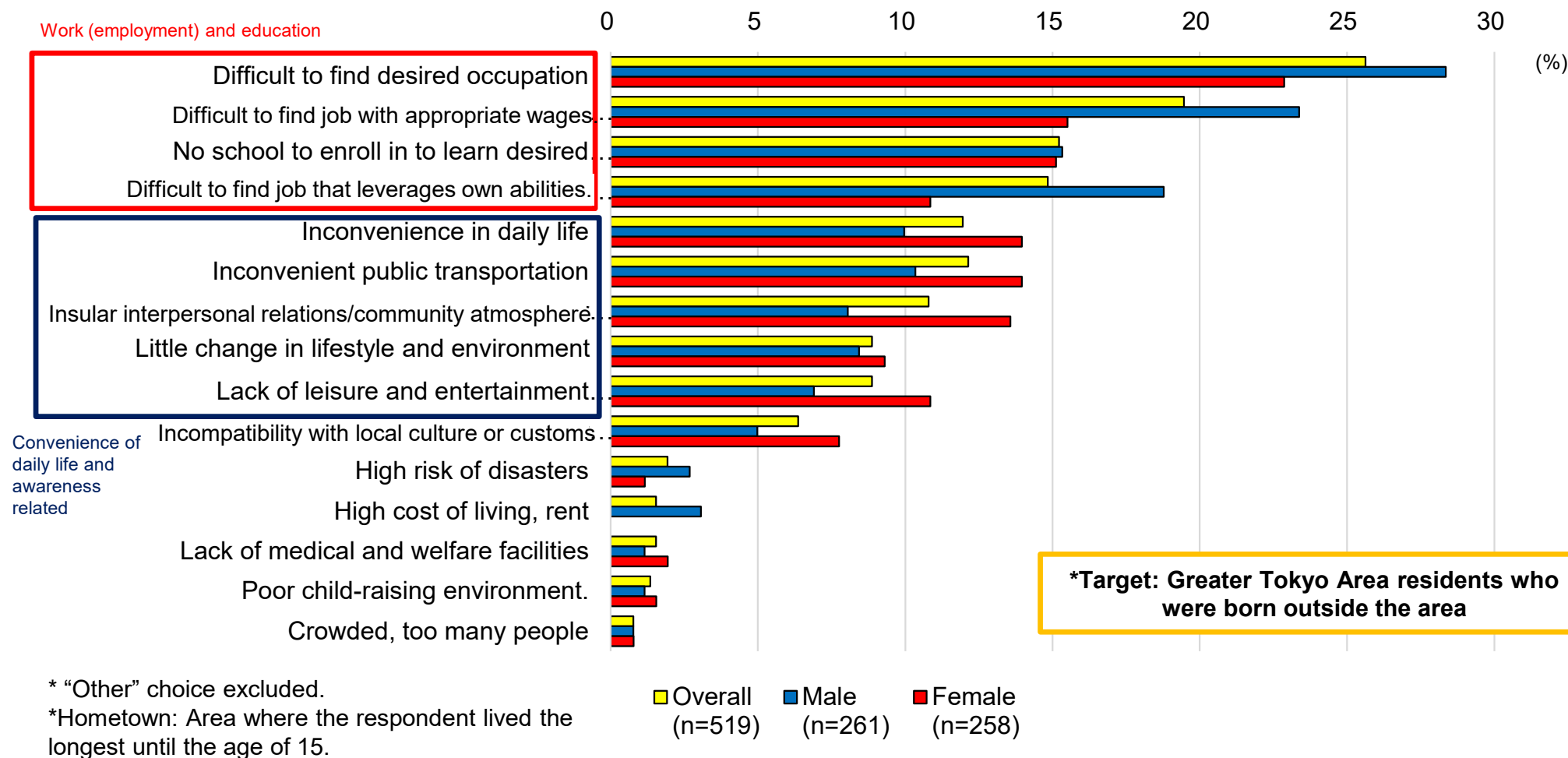
Note: The above regional classifications are as follows.

Greater Tokyo Area: Saitama, Chiba, Tokyo, Kanagawa prefectures. Nagoya region: Gifu, Aichi, Mie prefectures. Osaka region: Kyoto, Osaka, Hyogo, Nara prefectures.

Three major metropolitan areas: Greater Tokyo Area, Nagoya region, Osaka region. Regional areas: Areas outside the three major metropolitan areas.


- Reasons why people move from cities in rural areas include **limited school enrollment and job opportunities** and **limited attractiveness of the local community**.

Q: Please select all of the choices that describe your hometown as reasons that you decide to move away rather than remain.



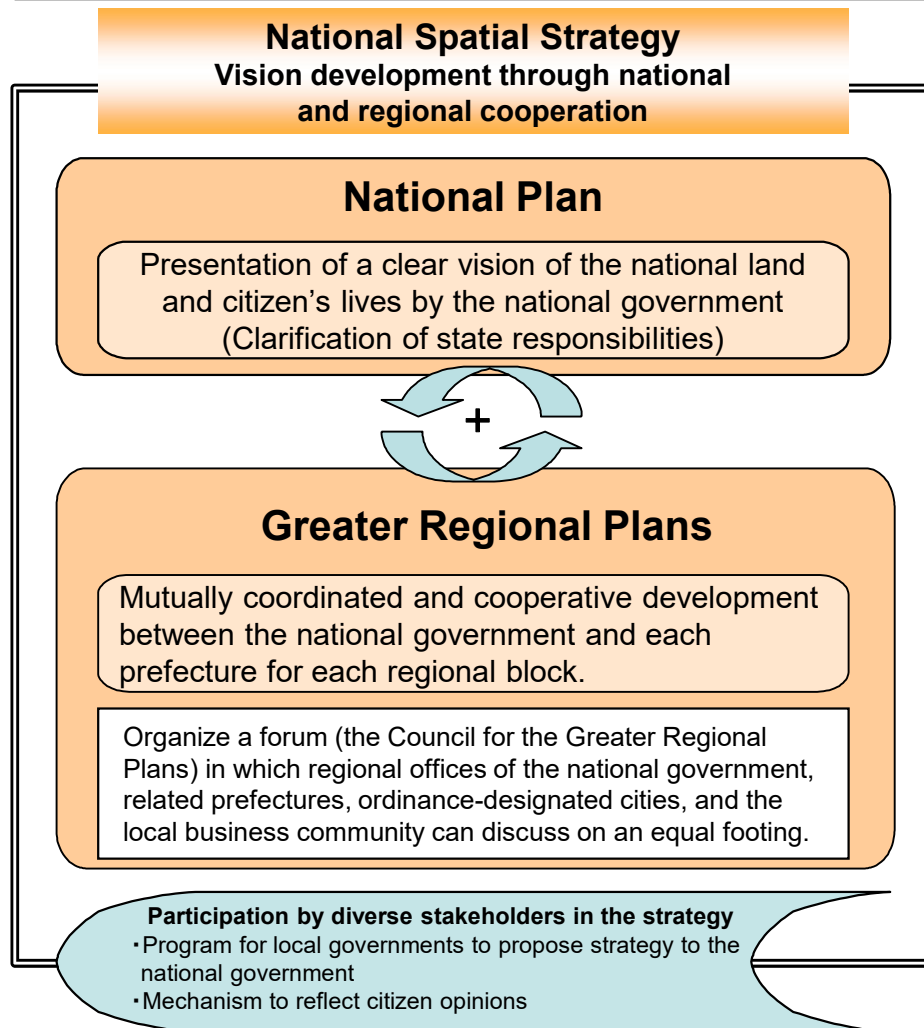
2. Japan's National Land Planning Framework

Changes in the National Spatial Strategy

	Comprehensive National Land Development Plan (Comprehensive Plan)	New Comprehensive National Land Development Plan (New Comprehensive Plan)	Third Comprehensive National Land Development Plan (Third Comprehensive Plan)	Fourth Comprehensive National Land Development Plan (Fourth Comprehensive Plan)	Grand Design for the 21st Century	National Spatial Strategy (National Strategy)	Second National Spatial Strategy (National Strategy)	Third National Spatial Strategy (National Strategy)
Law	Comprehensive National Land Development Act					National Spatial Planning Act		
Cabinet	IKEDA Hayato (2nd)	SATO Eisaku (2nd)	FUKUDA Takeo	NAKASONE Yasuhiro (3rd)	HASHIMOTO Ryutaro (2nd)	FUKUDA Yasuo	ABE Shinzo (3rd)	KISHIDA Fumio (2nd)
Cabinet decision	October 5, 1962	May 30, 1969	November 4, 1977	June 30, 1987	March 31, 1998	July 4, 2008	August 14, 2015	July 28, 2023
Target year	1970	1985	(Approximately 10 years)	Around 2000	2010-2015	(Approximately 10 years)	(Approximately 10 years)	(Approximately 10 years)
Background	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transition to a high-growth economy 2. Overpopulation in cities, widening income disparity 3. Income doubling plan (Pacific Belt Zone Project) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High-growth economy 2. Concentration of population and industry in large cities 3. Advancement of information technology, internationalization, and technological innovation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stable growth economy 2. Signs of decentralization of population and industry 3. Emerging finite nature of land and energy resources. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Concentration of population and various functions in Tokyo 2. Worsening hiring conditions in regional areas due to rapid changes in structure of industry 3. Development of full-scale internationalization 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Global age (Global environmental problems, global competition, exchange with Asian nations) 2. Age of population decline/aging population 3. Age of advanced information technology 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Major socioeconomic changes (population decline/aging, globalization, development of information/communications technology) 2. Changes/diversification of citizen values 3. National land situation (unipolar land structure, etc.) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Current trends and issues related to national land (rapid population decline, birthrate decline, extreme aging, major disasters, aging infrastructure etc.) 2. Changes in citizen values (Diversification of lifestyles, increasing citizen interest in safety and security) 3. National spatial changes (Rise in low use/unused land, empty homes) 	<p>"National land at a critical junction in these times"</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing risks to regional sustainability, safety, and security (unprecedented population decline, birthrate decline, aging, massive disaster risk, climate crisis) 2. Changes in living and working styles after COVID-19 (new movement towards regional/rural areas) 3. Changing position of Japan in a turbulent world
Basic goal	Equilibrium development in national land	Development of an abundant environment	Improvement of human settlement environments (nature, living & production)	Multipolar & decentralized national land	Multi-axis structure national land	Build a national land in which diverse wide-area blocks develop spontaneously / plan a national land that is beautiful and easy to live in	Planning of a national land that promotes mutual enhancement	<p>National land Combining regional potentials in the new era</p> <p>- Development of a new regional management approach to support the archipelago -</p>
Development approach etc.	<p><u>Base areas development method</u></p> <p>Decentralization of industry is needed to achieve the objectives of this plan. Efforts must be made to develop regional hubs by organically relating them to and promoting interaction with the existing production mass in Tokyo and other metropolitan areas, with a new transportation and communication network. Such development shall be performed by maintaining the characteristics of the peripheral areas and achieving a chain reaction that promotes equilibrium development across the national land.</p>	<p><u>Large-scale project development</u></p> <p>Promote large-scale projects by developing transportation networks, such as the Shinkansen (bullet train) and expressways, to mitigate the uneven use of land and solve problems such as overpopulation, depopulation, and regional disparities.</p>	<p><u>Stable settlement concept</u></p> <p>Promote development of non-metropolitan areas while controlling the concentration of population and industry in metropolitan areas. Make efforts to achieve a well-balanced use of the national territory while responding to the issues of overpopulation and depopulation, with the aim of creating a better settlement environment for citizens.</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>National Concept of the Garden City (1979) (Masayoshi Ohira Cabinet)</p> <p>A settlement concept that aims to evolve towards a new coexistence, harmony, and interdependence between cities and rural villages.</p> </div>	<p><u>Networking for exchange</u></p> <p>Establish a multipolar & decentralized national land with the following initiatives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Promote a creative/innovative improvement of each area of national territory by maximizing regional characteristics (2) Develop backbone transportation, information, and communication networks nationwide in accordance with the national program or initiatives led by the national government (3) Establish various interaction opportunities through a joint effort between the national government, each regions, and private institutions. 	<p><u>Participation and cooperation</u></p> <p>~ National land development through participation by diverse stakeholders and regional cooperation ~</p> <p>(Four strategies)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build nature-rich residential areas (small cities, agricultural and fishing areas, hilly and mountainous areas) 2. Renovate major metropolitan areas (renovation, renewal, and effective use of spheres in large cities) 3. Form regional cooperation corridors (regional partnerships taxing an axial form) 4. Form international spheres of interaction on a large scale (which have global interactive functions) 	<p>(Five strategic objectives)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Exchange and cooperation with East Asia 2. Creation of sustainable regions 3. Creation of a disaster-resilient, flexible national land 4. Management and inheritance of a beautiful national land 5. Creation of regional areas based on the "new public" as the central axis 	<p><u>Multi-layered and resilient "Compact and Networked Structure"</u></p>	<p><u>Seamlessness: A hub-connecting nation</u></p> <p>(Priority themes for renewing the national land)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create a "Regional living area" with the combination of the digital and real world 2. Transform to a sustainable industry 3. Build a greener nation 4. Use/Manage land under population decline 5. Advancement of the national land foundation 6. Secure/train personnel to support regions

The National Spatial Strategy is a comprehensive, basic strategy based on the National Spatial Planning Act to promote the use, development, and maintenance (“spatial planning”) of the national land.

The National Spatial Planning Act was established in 2005 to fundamentally revise the previous Comprehensive National Land Development Act in order to shift to a spatial planning strategy that would prepare for the coming society of serious population decline and transition from expanding volume to improving quality of the national land in a way that is appropriate for an age of regional decentralization.



Basic principles of the National Spatial Strategy

- In order to **respond to the changes in social and economic structures** in an appropriate manner including the population and industry of Japan and the world,
 - local communities that develop **as a self-reliant community** depending on their specific characteristics
 - **a vital economy and society** achieved by enhanced international competitiveness and promotion of science and technology, etc.
 - **ensured safety of the lives of citizenry**
 - **a rich natural environment** that also contributes to the preservation of the global environmentThe national spatial Strategy is to prescribe the appropriate measures for the spatial planning to maintain and improve the natural, economic, social and cultural conditions in Japan.
- The national spatial strategy is to be established so that the national government may fulfill its obligation to implement measures for comprehensive spatial planning, while **respecting spontaneous efforts by local governments**, including measures that must be carried out on a nationwide scale or from a nationwide perspective.

Mature society strategy

Improvement of national land quality, including landscape and environment

Use and conservation of finite resources

Utilization of Stock

Ocean utilization and international cooperation

Ensure safety, security, and stability in the daily lives of citizens in addition to improving convenience

Spatial planning that enables regional self-reliant development

*The National Spatial Strategy (National Plan) is mandated to be combined with the National Land Use Plan (National Plan).

- National land vision: “National Land Combining the Potentials of the Regions in the New Era”
- National land structure to achieve: Build a “National Land with a Seamless Connection of Hubs”
 - (1) Aim to correct the population concentration in Tokyo while decentralizing population and associated functions over a wide area.
 - (2) Effectively leverage both sides of Japan facing the Japan Sea and the Pacific Ocean, and formulate a national network of corridors to achieve the connection and ensure the vigorous flow of people and redundancy in the times of disaster.
 - (3) Focus on the formation of regional living areas through by citizen-led public–private partnerships, without being limited to municipal borders.

Widespread decentralization of people and functions

- Aim to create a country where people can continue to live vibrant and secure lives, even in the face of population decline, across the Japanese islands - a long, narrow chain of islands stretching from north to south, surrounded by the sea on all sides and consisting of the five major islands of Hokkaido, Honshu, Shikoku, Kyushu, and Okinawa, along with numerous smaller islands.
- For this reason, strengthen the seamless connection of the overall national land by strengthening transportation networks to reduce time distance and secure diversity and redundancy, and **effectively utilize both the Sea of Japan and Pacific sides of Japan to form a nationwide corridor network to strengthen cooperation including the inland areas.**

Utilize both Sea of Japan side and Pacific side of Japan
Strengthen nationwide collaboration including interior

Promote innovation through the vigorous flow of people and goods

Secure redundancy for disasters

Seamless integrated transportation system by land, marine, and air
+
Thorough use of digital technology

Spontaneous wide-area development centered around core cities

Exchange/cooperation within and between wide areas

Direct exchange with foreign regions such as Asia

Form Japan central corridor
Spread effects of time distance reduction throughout Japan, such as by opening linear central shinkansen

the formation of regional living areas **centered around leading regional cities**
<Solve regional problems and increase regional appeal by combination of the digital and real world>

Generate/expand flow of people to regional areas

Spread Effects Nationwide through Japan Central Corridor (Example)

■ Features of the Japan central corridor

- Approx. 1 hour distance from Tokyo to Osaka (major reduction in east/west travel time in Japanese islands) -> Form a single urban region
- Globally unparalleled and appealing economic concentration zone that connects the three large metropolitan regions and includes regions with diverse nature and culture (Nominal GDP: Approx. 360 trillion Yen, Population: Approx. 73 million people).
- Invigorate exchange throughout Japan through a networking effect that combines the digital and real world, such as 5G networks and high spec roads for self driving vehicles.

Generate innovation through dynamic, wide-area exchange

- Form wider area Shinkansen/high-spec road networks to further expand the flow of people, logistics, and business relations

Ensure redundancy through a double network

- Gradually launch the Linear Central Shinkansen line to form a central artery connecting Tokyo, Nagoya, and eventually Osaka (three large metropolitan regions), alongside the Tokaido Shinkansen line.

Form groundbreaking model for new living and working styles

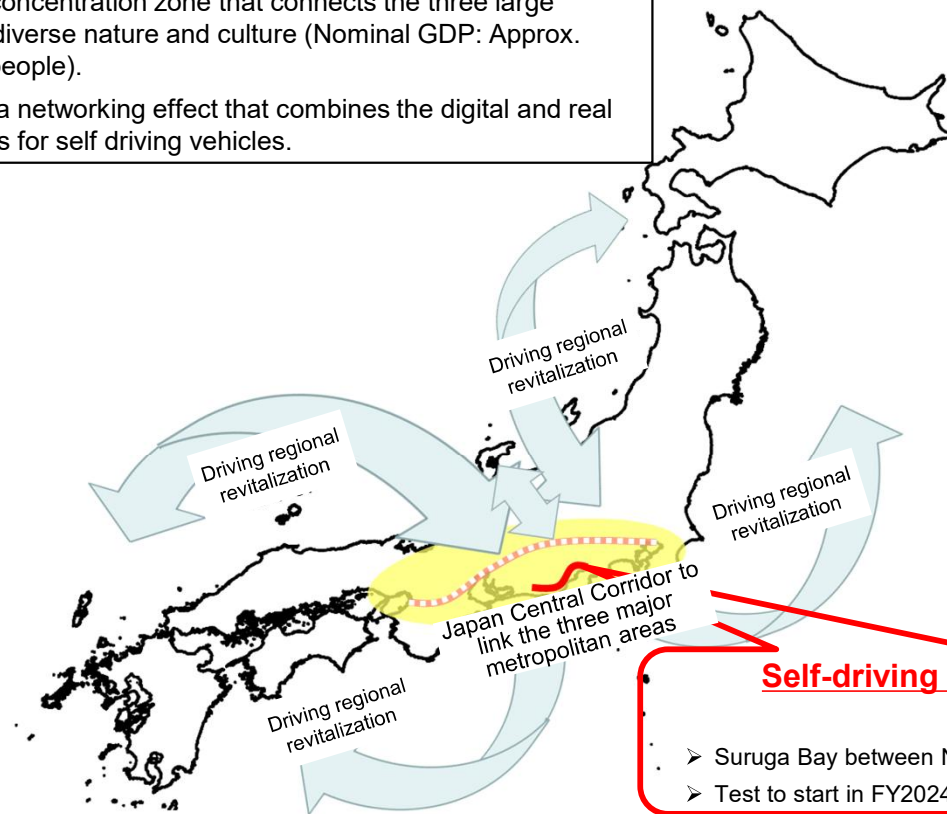
- The combined effect of travel time reduction and digital technology provide diverse living and working style options
- Particularly further promote dual residency through stronger rapid transport networks around hub stations and the spread of working from home (WFH).

Expand business, tourism, exchange, commercial regions, and sales channels by leveraging the time distance reduction effect nationwide

- Further increase the flow of people, such as business and tourism, through time distance reduction to leverage the regional resources throughout Japan and expand business, tourism, exchange, commercial regions, and sales channels in collaboration with the Japan central corridor

Realize new potential in the areas along the Tokaido Shinkansen route

- Invigorate regions in Kanagawa, Shizuoka, Aichi by increasing number of local Hikari and Kodama Shinkansen
- Improve the Chubu Odan Expressway to further improve convenience and inter-regional unity



Self-driving trucks on the Shin Tomei expressway

- Suruga Bay between Numazu and Hamamatsu (approx. 100 km)
- Test to start in FY2024 (separate late-night self-driving lane)



- With the accelerating population decline and the rapid progression of aging and low birthrate, convenience in terms of access to essential daily services is deteriorating, particularly in regional areas, as commercial facilities and public transportation services withdraw. Consequently, residents are finding it increasingly difficult to maintain their daily lives in their traditional living areas. There are limits to relying solely on administrative bodies, whose operations are constrained by local government boundaries segmented by traditional vertical divisions.
- One proposed approach involves **regional living areas** being defined as **zones that ensure the sustainable provision of essential services beyond municipal boundaries, from the perspective of residents, by citizen-led public-private partnerships. Promoting service delivery by private entities that balance the resolution of local challenges with economic viability** and fostering the development of these regional living areas makes it possible to create communities where people can work and live with peace of mind for years to come.

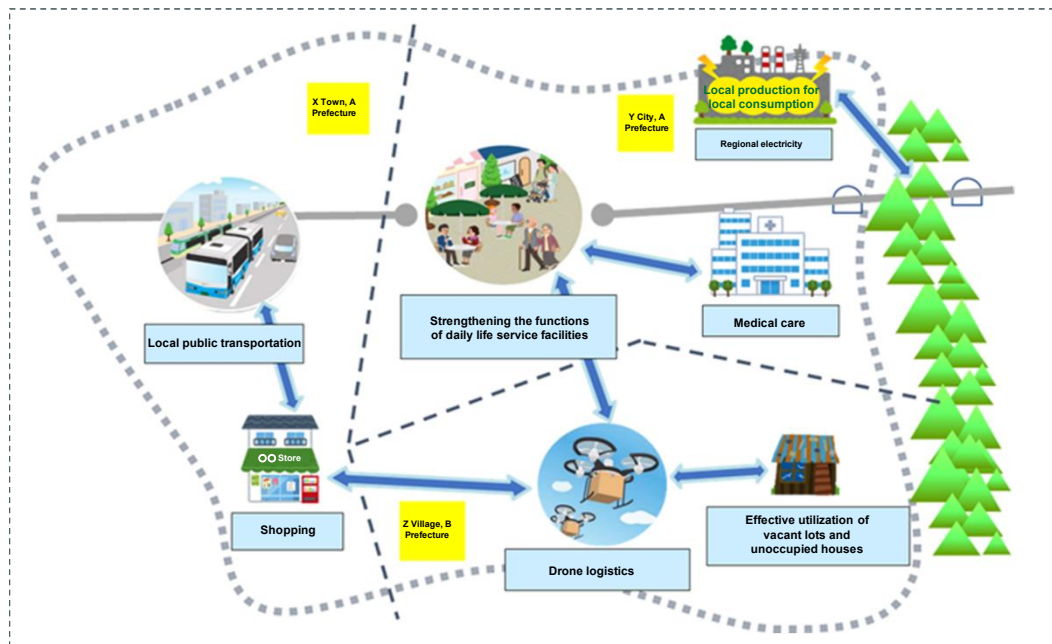


Image of regional living area formation

* Each area is designed by the community based on actual living and economic conditions

Concept for the Formation of Regional Living Areas

Utilizing **thorough use of digital tech** and regional management **from the perspective of 'togetherness'**:

- ☐ **Optimizing** and **combining the convenience** of daily life services
- ☐ Building a mechanism for **regional economic circulation**

⇒ Forming **regional living areas** for continuous service provision

<Key points of **regional management**> = Three elements of regional living areas

- (1) **"Stakeholder collaboration"** based on public/private partnership
- (2) Cross-disciplinary **"Business collaboration"**
- (3) **"Regional collaboration"** unconstrained by administrative regions

○ Excerpt from **National Spacial Strategy (Cabinet decision in July 2023)**

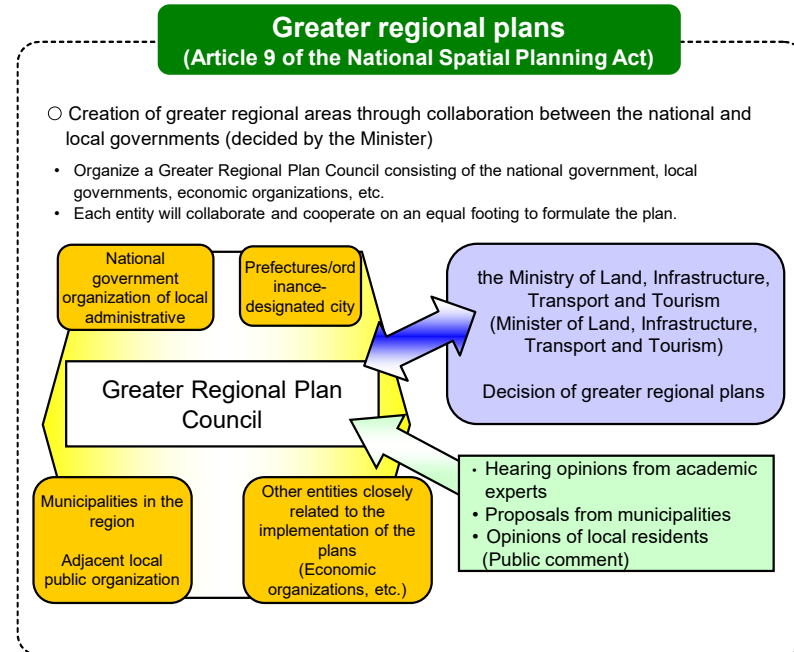
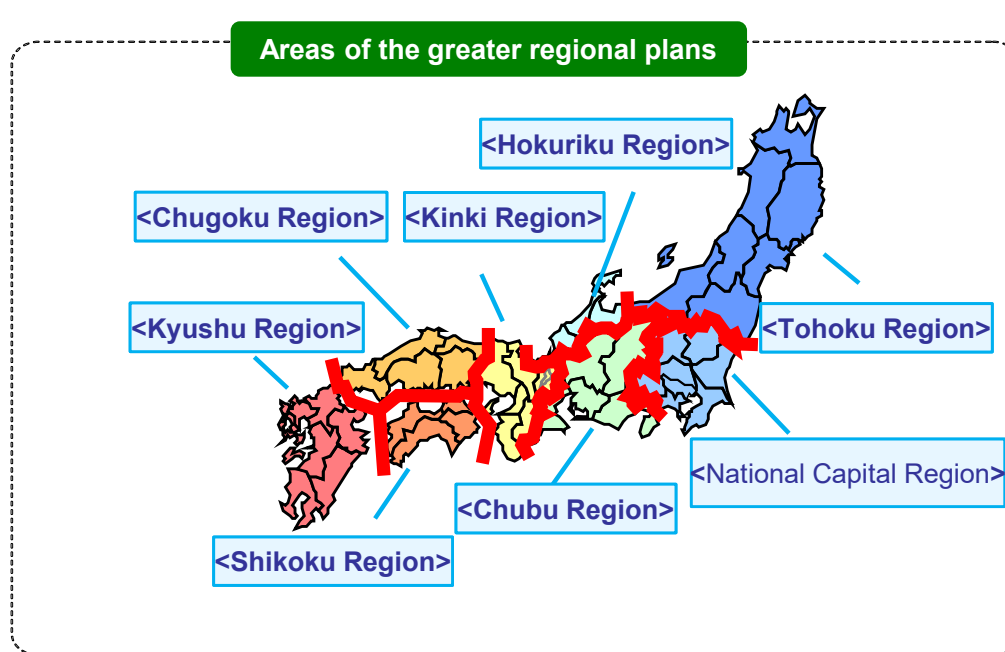
Form regional living areas that ensure the continuous provision of essential daily services, while fully leveraging digital technologies to enhance local appeal and solve regional problems.

<National land vision>

- **Aim to create a society where anyone in Japan can live in convenience and comfort** by seamlessly connecting regional living areas that ensure the continuous provision of essential daily services, covering the entire nation.
- Enabling residents to sustain their daily lives within regional living areas - even in rural regions - can help prevent population outflow to major urban centers while **revitalizing local economic activity** through private-sector service provision.

3. Greater Regional Plans

- Greater Regional Plan is the plan that sets out policies and goals for each regional planning area (decided by the Minister of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism), which stands on the national plan (National Spatial Plan) based on Article 9 of the National Spatial Planning Act (Act No. 205 of 1950).
 - Currently, there are eight Greater Regional Plan Regions: Tohoku, National Capital, Hokuriku, Chubu, Kinki, Chugoku, Shikoku, and Kyushu.
- (*) Hokkaido and Okinawa have their own Comprehensive Development Plan of Hokkaido, Okinawa Basic Policy for Promotion, and Okinawa Promotion Plan, respectively, on different legal basis.
- (*) The National Plan (Tertiary National Spatial Plan) was approved in a Cabinet meeting in July 2023.

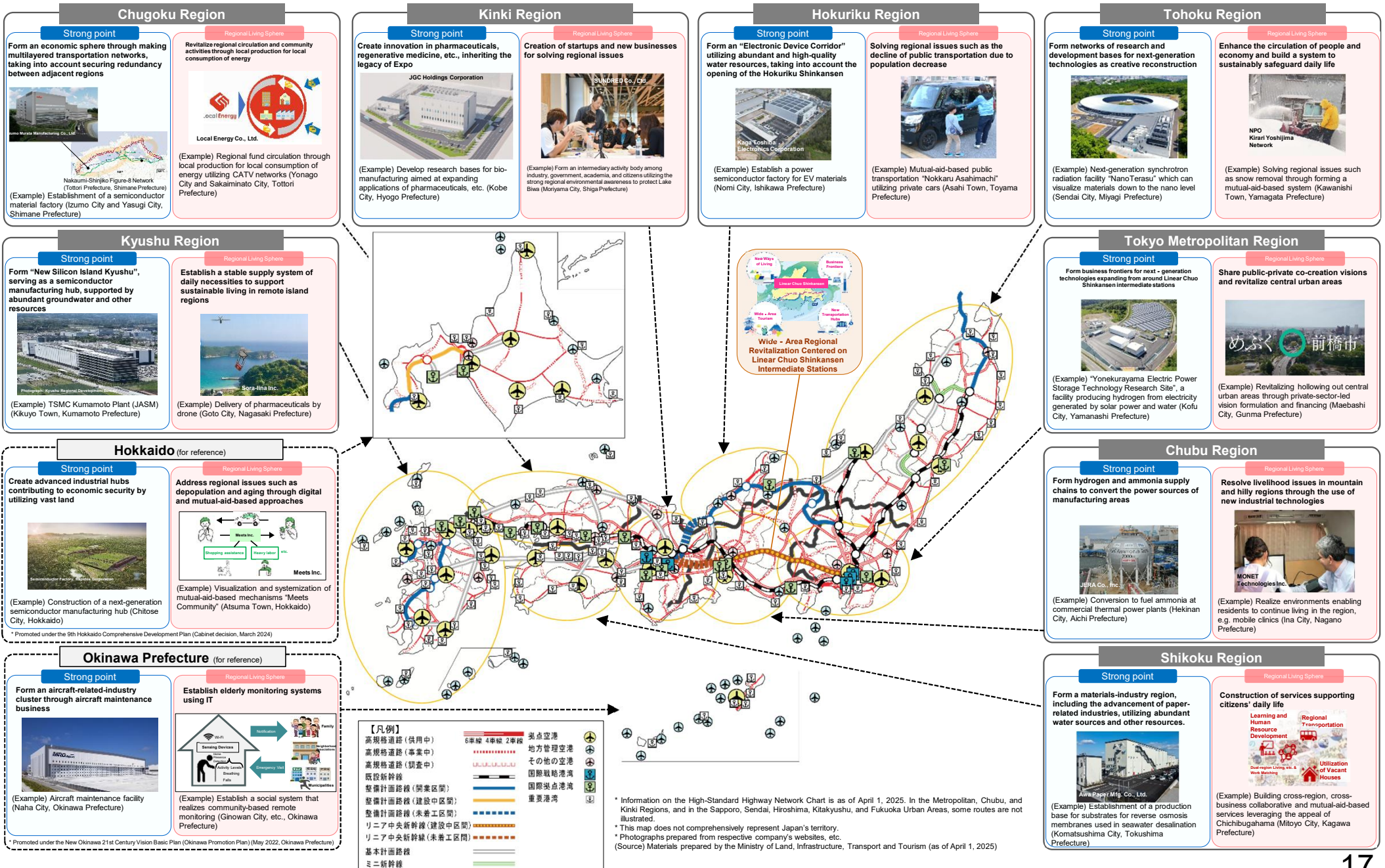


* Promoted in cooperation with the Comprehensive Development Plan of Hokkaido and the Okinawa Promotion Plan

<Formation of a “Seamless Hub-Connected National Land” and “Regional Living Spheres”>

Concerning the next Wide-Area Regional Plan, in order to **maximize the strengths of regional resources** such as culture and industry in each region, and to **form a “Seamless Hub-Connected National Land” through the strengthening of integrated land, sea, and air transportation networks**, and to **form an area-wide network connection between the initiatives of “Regional Living Spheres”**, where services necessary for daily life are sustainably provided, **private entities such as the business community and public administrations in each region will collaborate organically**, so that exchanges and cooperation will be promoted within and beyond wide areas transcending prefectural boundaries.

<Examples of Project Images>



Thank you for your attention.