JAPAN

Overview

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| Population *(specify date)* and territory | 125 308 652 (January 1, 2022), 377,973.26km2 |
| Administrative structure *(unitary/federal)* | Unitary country |
| Regional or state-level governments *(number)* | 1 Metropolis, 1 Province, 45 Prefectures |
| Intermediate-level governments *(number)* | ― |
| Municipal-level governments *(number)* | 1 724 Municipalities |
| Share of subnational government in total expenditure/revenues (2021) | 41.9% of total expenditure  50.3% of total revenues  [Source: [Subnational governments in OECD countries: key data, 2023 edition](https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=SNGF)] |
| Key regional development challenges | Population decline, declining birthrate and aging population, and hollowing out of regional industries, etc. |
| Objectives of regional policy | “The Vision for a Digital Garden City Nation” aims to solve rural issues and improve rural attractiveness while utilizing strength of each region through digital technologies, and to realize a society where everyone can live conveniently and comfortably wherever they live in Japan. |
| Legal/institutional framework for regional policy | National Spatial Planning Act (1950, largely amended in 2005) |
| Budget allocated to regional development (i.e., amount) and fiscal equalisation mechanisms between jurisdictions (if any) |  |
| National regional development policy framework |  |
| Urban policy framework | City Planning Act (1968), Urban Renaissance Special Measures Law (2014) |
| Rural policy framework | The Basic Law on Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas (1999)  The Basic Plan for Food, Agriculture and Rural Areas (2020) |
| Major regional policy tools (e.g., funds, plans, policy initiatives, institutional agreements, etc.) | National Spatial Strategy(Regional Plan) |
| Policy co-ordination tools at national level |  |
| Multi-level governance mechanisms between national and subnational levels (e.g., institutional agreements, Committees, etc.) |  |
| Policy co-ordination tools at regional level |  |
| Evaluation and monitoring tools |  |
| Future orientations of regional policy |  |

Recent policy developments

November 2021, Japanese PM Kishida set forth ”The Vision for a Digital Garden City Nation”, which aims to solve rural issues and improve rural attractiveness while utilizing strength of each region through digital technologies, and to realize a society where everyone can live conveniently and comfortably wherever they live in Japan. Under this vision, it is expected that the use of digital technology solves rural issues such as population decline, declining birth-rate and aging population, and hollowing out of regional industries for example by promoting remote work and relocation to rural areas, establishing satellite offices and implementing remote medicine, distance education, automated driving and drones. December 2022, the Japanese Government formulated the comprehensive strategy to realize this vision and will make a concerted effort to support the local governments in implementing measures to achieve their respective regional visions.