

HOKKAIDO PREFECTURE

Latest update: August 2013



Prefecture's flag

Main City: Sapporo

Population: 5,437,000 people, ranking 8/47 prefecture (2013) [1]

Area: 83,456 km² [2]



Geographical / Landscape description

The island of Hokkaido is located at the north end of Japan, near Russia, and has coastlines on the Sea of Japan, the Sea of Okhotsk, and the Pacific Ocean. The centre of the island has a number of mountains and volcanic plateaus and there are coastal plains in all directions. Major cities include Sapporo and Asahikawa in the central region and the port of Hakodate facing Honshu. Moreover, the islands count six active volcanoes. [2]

Climate

Hokkaido is known for its relatively cool summers and icy winters. In winter, the heavy snowfall makes the region one of the most attractive for skiing, luring tourists from all of Asia and Oceania. [2]

Time zone

GMT +7 in summer (+8 in winter)

International dialling code: 0081

Recent history, culture

Hokkaido culture is strongly linked with the rich natural environment of the prefecture. It is home of the Ainu, the indigenous people of Japan, who value harmony with nature and have a very traditional culture quite different from that of the Japanese. [3]

Economic overview

The prefecture recorded a steady increase in the number of information and communications-related companies with their sights set on the global market, as represented by the growth of "Sapporo Valley." Furthermore, measures to reduce energy consumption for cooling purposes at data centres, a sector expected to experience significant market expansion in the future are resulting in moves for promotion of Hokkaido as a cluster region for super low power consumption data centres that take advantage of the island's snowy and cold climate. Such developments are garnering domestic and international attention. Hokkaido is also becoming the site of one of Japan's leading biotechnology clusters, due to such factors as the numerous biotech venture companies springing from the region's universities. [4]

Economic Indicators

	Hokkaido Prefecture	All Japan
Population (2013) [1]	5,437,000	127,350,000
Unemployment rate (2012) [5]	5.2%	4.3%
GDP (2010) [6]	3.7% of Japan's	495 trillion Yen

Infrastructure

Road/railways

2015 will see the finalisation of the Shinkansen (bullet train) route between Shin-Aomori Station and Shin-Hakodate Station which will reduce the travel time between Sapporo and Tokyo to less than four hours. [7]

Shipping

Hokkaido has 35 sea ports and maintains 9 cargo ship routes with destinations outside of Hokkaido. In addition, the Ishikari Bay New Port, Tomakomai Port and others maintain 11 outgoing cargo ship routes. [7]

Civil Aviation

The route between New Chitose Airport, Hokkaido's main airport and Tokyo International Airport is one of the 10 busiest air routes in world. This offers international flights to China, Korea, Russia, USA, Hong-Kong, Taiwan and Thailand. [8]

Living Environment

Hokkaido is located at the same latitudes between London and Rome and offers Japan's grandest, most beautiful natural environment. With a high number of leisure facilities especially for winter sports, Hokkaido is named as the most attractive prefectures in Japan. [9]

Major types of economic activities

Agriculture, natural resources

Hokkaido plays the role of the supply base of food for Japan.

Blessed by a natural environment and abundant resources, Hokkaido boasts the country's highest levels of production in agriculture and fisheries, and food processing is a long-established, active industry in the prefecture. [10]

The acreage of cultivated land accounts for 25% of the whole acreage of farmland in Japan. Many agricultural stock products such as wheat, soy beans, potatoes, sugar beets, milk, etc. are produced. The acreage of the forests in Hokkaido accounts for approximately 71% of the land area of Hokkaido and also approximately 22% of acreage of the forests in the whole of Japan. Hokkaido is surrounded by the sea. The assistance brought by currents makes Hokkaido a good fishery and farming ground. [11]

Manufacturing

Hokkaido continues to attract attention as a cluster region for the manufacturing industry. In particular, the recent large-scale capital investment by leading automotive-related companies has motivated related companies to expand into the Hokkaido region, spurring a dramatic expansion in the local concentration of automotive and electronic parts companies. [4]

In 2011, the manufacturing industry's shipment value was principally composed of food and related products (30.3%), petroleum and coal (20%), fabricated metal products (9.9%). [12]

R&D, Innovation, Scientific research

Hokkaido University is home to a number of key R&D institutes established to pioneer state-of-the-art technology development in fields such as IT, biotech and nanotech for example the Frontier Research Center for Post-Genomic Science and Technology or the Creative Research Initiative "Sousei".

Also located in the prefecture is a branch of the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST Hokkaido) specialised in the biotechnology research and development. [10]

Opportunities for EU Investors / Exporters / Importers

Promising sectors for cooperation

Long-established industries: agriculture and fisheries (highest production in Japan), food processing, textile, wood and wooden products, ceramic and pottery materials, pulp, paper and paper products, chemical industry, oil and coal products, metal processing, transportation machinery.

Growing industries: biotechnology, IT, automobile-related industries. [4][10]

Financial/ Logistic support

*Subsidy programs for buildings, machinery and equipment, etc... (The subsidy limits depend on the type of business)

*Several tax benefits, such as tax exemptions or taxation on a differential basis

*Low-interest loans for business establishment for small and medium-sized enterprises

*Universities and testing/research institutes providing strong support to companies locating in Hokkaido

*Incubation facilities for companies developing software and systems

More information : http://www.pref.hokkaido.lg.jp/kz/ssg/sgr/grp/02/location_guidbook_english.pdf

Setting up a business in Hokkaido

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Other contacts:

Hokkaido Prefecture

<http://www.pref.hokkaido.lg.jp/foreign/english.htm>

Creative Research Initiative "Sousei"

<http://www.cris.hokudai.ac.jp/cris/en>

Frontier Research Center for Post-Genomic Science and Technology

<http://www.lfsci.hokudai.ac.jp/frontier-pst>

Hokkaido Bio Technology Industrial Cluster Forum

<http://www.noastec.jp/biocluster/english/index.html>

Hokkaido Bureau of Economy, Trade and Industry

http://www.hkd.meti.go.jp/index_e.htm

National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology

http://unit.aist.go.jp/hokkaido/index_en.html

Visit HOKKAIDO

<http://en.visit-hokkaido.jp/>

Sources and footnotes

- [1] <http://www.stat.go.jp/data/jinsui/2.htm>
- [2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hokkaid%C5%8D_Prefecture
- [3] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ainu_people
- [4] <http://www.jetro.go.jp/en/invest/region/hokkaido/>
- [5] <http://www.stat.go.jp/data/roudou/pref/index.htm>
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- [12] <http://www.stat.go.jp/data/e-census/2012/sokuho/gaiyo.htm>

Kottaro wetland in Shibecha



Former Hokkaido Government Office in Sapporo



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