

ISHIKAWA PREFECTURE

Latest update: August 2013



Prefecture's flag

**Main City:** Kanazawa City**Population:** 1,159,000 people, ranking 34/47 prefectures (2013) [1]**Area:** 4,185 km²

Geographical / Landscape description

Ishikawa Prefecture is located approximately in the centre of the Japanese archipelago with a major part of the prefecture, the Noto Peninsula, jutting out into the Sea of Japan. This area is surrounded on three sides by the ocean. Because of its location, Ishikawa Prefecture has been a major gateway to and from the continent of Asia across the Sea of Japan since ancient times. The southern part is wider and consists mostly of mountains with the prefecture's chief city, Kanazawa, located on the coastal plain.

Climate

The average temperature in Kanazawa is 14.3°C, not much different from Tokyo's average of 15.9°C.

Kanazawa gets more sunshine from spring to fall than does Tokyo. Although it is snowy in winter, in recent years the annual amount of snowfall has been decreasing.

The frequency of earthquakes in the region has been the lowest in Japan for the past 30 years.

Time Zone:

GMT +7 in summer (+8 in winter)

International dialling code: 0081

Recent history, culture

In Ishikawa Prefecture, traditional Japanese culture is still very much a part of daily life; it is a defining characteristic of the people who live there. The origin of this strong culture dates back to the Edo Period (1603-1868), when the Maeda Clan, who ruled the area, used their wealth to promote culture and education.

The love of culture has been passed down to this day, and people take classes in cultural activities such as the tea ceremony and flower arranging, as well as traditional performing arts such as Noh plays and Japanese music and dance. Crafts such as lacquerware, ceramics, silk dyeing, and gold leaf also developed as indispensable elements of interior decoration, implements, and clothing.

Economic Overview

Up to the end of the 2007 fiscal year, Ishikawa's economy was on the upswing, driven mainly by the machinery industry. However, after the worldwide recession began in the autumn of 2008, Ishikawa's economy was faced with a sudden slowdown that it had never experienced before. There was a turnaround in the prefecture above the national average of high-level production and level of employment which had thus far been driven by plentiful overseas demand, and prefectural levels drastically fell to below the national average.

As of April 2012, the general economy has been picking up speed based mainly on the electric machinery and construction machinery industries.

Economic Indicators

	Ishikawa Prefecture	Japan
Population (2013) [1]	1,159,000	127,350,000
Unemployment rate (2012) [2]	3.4%	4.3 %
GDP (2011)	0.8% of Japan's	511 trillion Yen
Total Exports (2010)	204.5 billion yen	67 trillion Yen

Infrastructure

Road/railways

The distance between Ishikawa and Tokyo is within the range of a one-day business trip, and a network of expressways and railways enables fast access to the Osaka and Nagoya areas. From Tokyo it takes around 6 hours by car and 4 hours and 30 minutes by train. From Osaka it takes around 3 hours and 30 minutes by car and 2 hours and 30 minutes by train.

2015 will see the completion of the Hokuriku Shinkansen (bullet train), putting Tokyo at only 2 hours and 30 minutes by train.

Shipping

Two main ports: Kanazawa Port which is an international container hub port with regular weekly connections to China and Korea and a monthly connection to North America, and Nanao Port.

Civil Aviation

Two airports: Komatsu and Noto Airports. Ishikawa is only a 1-hour flight from Tokyo. From Komatsu, direct flights to Shanghai (China), Seoul (Korea), and Taipei (Taiwan) are available. There is also a regular freight service to Luxembourg in Europe operated by Cargolux. (A Luxembourgish company)

Living Environment

Ishikawa is blessed with a natural environment of mountains, coastal areas, and rivers. The prefecture has a wide variety of leisure facilities such as ski resorts, golf courses, hot springs, gymnasiums, zoos, and aquariums, as well as art museums, historical museums, libraries, and cultural facilities. Kanazawa's downtown area also attracts people for its shopping opportunities and gourmet restaurants.

At the end of December 2010, there were 11,215 foreign residents from 89 countries living in Ishikawa. Main countries of origin are China (5,197), Korea (1,876), and Brazil (1,385); European residents numbered around 300 people.

Major type of economic activities

Manufacturing

The major industries of Ishikawa are the machinery and metal industry, the textile industry, and the food industry. Delivered manufactured products in the 2011 fiscal year can be broken down as follows: 26% from the machinery equipment industry, 16.9% from the electronic components industry and 7.5% from the textile industry. [3]

Some of the prefecture's machinery manufacturers are leading companies in niche industries that supply high-quality products to the world market. Because of the advantageous humid weather of the Hokuriku region, the textile industry has been leading the Ishikawa economy for a long time. Still today it manufactures a variety of products based on past experience and state-of-the-art technology.

Recently, there has been remarkable development in the electronics and IT-related industries, and the rate of concentration of companies related to the information service industry ranks fourth in the country. More than 100 companies were invited to establish plants or offices in Ishikawa in the past 30 years. In particular, IT-related industries mainly have been invited to Ishikawa in the past 10 years.

R&D, Innovation, Scientific Research

Ishikawa's many higher educational institutions include the Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology, Hokuriku (JAIST), Japan's first national graduate university; Kanazawa University, a national university ranked among the top 10 universities in the country for the number of joint studies with companies; and Kanazawa Institute of Technology, a technical institute that conducts cooperative studies and research with companies.

In addition, the Industrial Research Institute of Ishikawa supports industries through collaborative studies and development of products and technology, and the Hokuriku IT Open Laboratory Support Center offers facilities for research and development. Established European partners will be able to take full advantage of these institutes and facilities to develop and improve their products.

Main economic sectors

Machinery and metal industry

In recent years, the general machinery industry, centred mainly on construction machinery and machinery tools, has grown in response to overseas demand. The growth of information-communication technology and electronic parts has been mainly influenced by invited companies.

Textile industry

In textiles, Ishikawa Prefecture produces 21.5% of the nation's woven fabric and a high rate of 28% of the nation's woven synthetic fabric. The prefecture is also well-known for its production of continuous woven fabrics.

Food industry

The prefecture has a high production rate of sake, seafood products, and Japanese sweets.

Information Technology Service Industry

Ishikawa Prefecture has a high concentration of information technology service industries. This concentration brought about the creation of a network for R&D and infrastructural development among local industries, universities, and the government, which provides a unique support to the IT sector. Thanks to its attractive business environment, large Japanese and world-famous companies such as Panasonic, Murata Manufacturing, Co., and Toshiba have established themselves in the prefecture. This could facilitate EU companies looking for joint-cooperation with Japanese companies in the IT sector.

Promising local manufacturing companies:

- I-O DATA DEVICE, INC. (Specializing in the manufacturing of PC peripherals, this company holds the 2nd largest market share of HDD, USB memory, etc. in Japan)
<http://www.iodata.com/>
- PFU (boasts a 50 % world share of image scanners used for business purposes)
<http://www.pfu.fujitsu.com/en/>
- Nanao (under the branding name of EIZO, this company is popular for its high-definition video display products used for medical purposes, PC displays, etc.)
<http://www.eizo.com/global/>

Tourism Industry

Ishikawa's tourist industry stems from the natural environment of mountains, coastal areas, and rivers. Leisure facilities such as ski resorts, golf courses, hot springs, gymnasiums, zoos, and aquariums, as well as art museums, historical museums, libraries, and cultural facilities offer tourists a wide range of activities.

24,534 tourists from the EU visited Ishikawa in 2010.

Traditional Industries

The traditions passed down from Kaga Hyakumangoku (Ishikawa was known as Kaga Hyakumangoku during feudal times) still live on today.

Ishikawa is one of the major production regions of traditional arts and crafts, second only to Kyoto. Ishikawa ranks 6th in terms of the number of products that have received a special designation from the Japanese government: Ishikawa Prefecture has 10 nationally designated products: Wajima Lacquerware, Yamanaka Lacquerware, Kanazawa Lacquerware, Kanazawa Gold Leaf, Kutani Porcelain, Kaga Yuzen Silk Kimono, Ushikubi Pongee, Kaga Embroidery, Kanazawa Buddhist Altars, Nanao Buddhist Altars.

Ishikawa ranks first in terms of prize-winning entries at the Japan Traditional Handicrafts Exhibition and the Japan Fine Arts Exhibition (ratio of prize-winning entries to the local population)

Opportunities for EU Investors / Exporters / Importers

Promising sectors for cooperation

Long-established industries: machinery and metal-related, textile, food, tourism, traditional crafts.

Growing industries: manufacturing plants, natural science laboratories, software-related business offices, IT, artistic design and machine design, distribution and processing facilities.

Financial/logistic support

Ishikawa's prefecture may provide 3 kind of financial support to establishing companies.

(1) Subsidy for the promotion of creative industries

In establishing a new industrial facility, like an R&D centre, headquarters, or manufacturing plants, the EU company may benefit from a subsidy of 10% to 20% of the invested capital under certain requirement and conditions.

(2) Subsidy to promote location of enterprises that increase employment

In establishing new facilities or expanding already present ones in designated local areas of the prefecture, the EU company may benefit from a subsidy varying between 2.5% and 20% of the invested capital under certain requirement and conditions.

(3) Subsidy for laboratories in Ishikawa Science Park

This specific incentive is aimed to promote R&D investments, and will provide new established or expanded facilities within the Ishikawa Science Park, with subsidies varying between 7.5% and 15% of the invested capital under certain requirement and conditions.

Under certain requirement and conditions, these three financial supports may be cumulative up to a maximum limit of 3.5 billion yen.

More information: <http://www.pref.ishikawa.jp/kigyo/eng/prefer/index.html>

Conclusions

Ishikawa Prefecture proves to be a dynamic and innovative place for EU companies willing to establish themselves in the area. With easy access to other parts of Japan and nearby China and South Korea, it can be used as a base of access to the Asia market.

The following companies are some examples of innovative and efficient cooperation between Ishikawa and the EU:

- Ecolab K.K. (Mostly operating with Germany)
Production of industrial detergents, etc.
- Erhardt+Leimer Japan Ltd. (Mostly operating with Germany)
Production of machinery and machinery programme
<http://www.el-corrugated.de/index.php?l=e>

Setting up a business in Ishikawa

International Business Support Desk

Industrial Policy Division, Commerce, Industry and Labor Department, Ishikawa Prefectural Government

TEL: +81 (0)76-225-1509 FAX: +81 (0)76-225-1514 E-mail: ksupport@pref.ishikawa.lg.jp

Investment Promotion Division

TEL: +81 (0)76-225-1517 FAX: +81 (0)76-225-1518 E-mail: e190100@pref.ishikawa.lg.jp

Other contacts:

Ishikawa Prefecture

<http://www.pref.ishikawa.lg.jp/foreign/en/index.html>

Ishikawa Foundation for International Exchanges

<http://www.ifie.or.jp/index.php>

Industrial Research Institute of Ishikawa

<http://www.irii.jp/index-e.html>

Ishikawa Science Park

<http://www.isico.or.jp/isp/>

Japan Advanced Institute of Science and Technology

<http://www.jaist.ac.jp/index-e.html>

Kanazawa Institute of Technology

<http://www.kanazawa-it.ac.jp/ekit/index.html>

Kanazawa University

<http://www.kanazawa-u.ac.jp/e/index.html>

Prefecture's Tourism Bureau

<http://hot-ishikawa.jp/f-lang/english/index.html>

Sources and footnotes

All data (except [1][2][3]) provided by the Industrial Policy Division and Investment Promotion Division, Commerce, Industry and Labor Department, Ishikawa Prefectural Government

[1] <http://www.stat.go.jp/data/jinsui/2.htm>

[2] <http://www.stat.go.jp/data/roudou/pref/index.htm>

[3] <http://www.stat.go.jp/data/e-census/2012/sokuho/gaiyo.htm>

Views of Ishikawa Prefecture



Kanazawa castle – spring



Kanazawa Station – Tsuzumi-mon

(Tsuzumi is a Traditional Japanese percussion instruments, the pillars looks alike Tsuzumi. Mon means gate)



Kenrokuen Park in Kanazawa



Kaga Yuzen silk painting – traditional craft

Pictures: courtesy of Ishikawa Prefecture's Tourism Bureau

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