

JAPANESE INDUSTRY AND POLICY NEWS

September 2017

LEGISLATION AND POLICY NEWS

METI to Establish Study Group for Enhancing Human Resource Capability

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) announced on 5 September that it would establish two new working groups on human resource development and a Study Group for Enhancing Human Resource Capability in Japanese Industries to integrally discuss the results reported by the working groups. Two working groups will focus on the following themes, collect case examples and other information and hold discussions concerning obstacles and future directions to be taken.

(1) Working Group for Necessary Human Resources and Career Building Assistance (Necessary Human Resources WG)

This working group will study (a) re-examination of basic competencies necessary for employees (desirable human resources that companies need) , addressing changes in the business environments, (b) roles that companies should play in assisting individuals in advancing their careers, and (c) ideal approaches to employment systems that facilitate career ownership.

(2) Working Group for Promoting Securing and Utilization of Core Human Resources in SMEs, Micro Businesses, Start-ups, etc. (Core Human Resources Securing WG)

This working group will hold discussions concerning three issues focusing on professional core human resources that are particularly critical for SMEs and start-ups: (a) directions along which SMEs and other entities should make efforts, (b) ideal labor markets, and (c) schemes and systems for creating specific case examples.

The study group and the working groups start holding occasional meetings from September, and compile a report at the end of FY2017.

http://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2017/0905_001.html

Successful Projects Selected under the BrandLand JAPAN Program

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) started a program titled “BrandLand JAPAN” in August 2017. This program aims to support business activities, teaming SMEs with experts on foreign markets (“producers”), who are

committed to advancing the business process through the steps of product development, branding, and marketing and distribution of products to win overseas demand.

METI announced on 14 September that it had selected the following 12 projects out of 60 applicants for this program through screening by an external examination committee. Official website was opened on the same day. Debriefing on the final result is scheduled in February 2018.



Overseas marketing of top-quality food and processed goods, mainly focusing on fresh, live scallops



Project that provides regional-experience-based high-end programs targeting tourists from European countries, the United States and Australia: *Yoamabushido* program



Developing new approaches to *Shirakawa Daruma* dolls and exploring new sales channels in Taiwanese markets



Marketing *Makanai Cosmetics*, a Japanese-style cosmetic brand originating in Kanazawa and gaining reputation in Kagurazaka, to women all over the world



KAKIMORI PROJECT



Project exploring demand in European countries for *Kumiko* or traditional Japanese woodworking



Marketing *Kaya* (mosquito nets for beds) produced in Nara to European countries



Developing business for Shimizu's white peach jelly in Thailand



Project dynamically promoting a brush brand called "SHAQUDA"



Developing overseas business for boxes and products made of paulownia



Developing new overseas markets for *Kojika Umeshu*, a brand of liqueur made of plums and authentic, sweet-potato-based distilled spirits



Full-scale start of developing new markets in Hong Kong for naturally-derived cosmetics manufactured in Okinawa

http://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2017/0914_001.html

<https://brandlandjapan.com/> (Japanese language only)

METI begins Accepting Applications for Certification of Fourth Industrial Revolution Skills Courses

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) established a program whereby the METI certifies practical educational training courses mainly in the fields of IT and data-related fields as Fourth Industrial Revolution Skills Courses ("Re-Skills Courses"), and began accepting applications on 15 September.

The "Certification Program for Fourth Industrial Revolution Skills Courses" is a program whereby the METI certifies practical educational courses targeting workers mainly in the IT and data fields in which future growth is highly anticipated and the creation of new employment is forecasted.

The first certification will be given to educational courses for workers in the following fields that are to be launched in and after April 2018.

(1) AI, IoT, data science and cloud computing, including courses incorporating new development methods, e.g., design thinking and agile development, (2) Advanced security and networking, (3) IT utilization, e.g., model-based development in the field of automobiles.

Organizations running the training courses should (a)Stably continue to hold such courses based on certain conditions, e.g. financial considerations and past performance review; (b)Ensure sufficient organizational systems, facilities, lecturers and other necessary resources; and (c)Maintain eligibility and not fall below any disqualifying criteria; etc.

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) plans to include a portion of the educational courses certified by METI that satisfy the requirements specified by MHLW as courses eligible for its Training and Education Benefits System.

http://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2017/0915_002.html

Nationwide Network of Aircraft Clusters to be Established

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) announced on 25 September that it would establish a Nationwide Network of Aircraft Clusters in order to strengthen the collaboration of the existing clusters in the industry across Japan. Through this effort, METI will support the industry in establishing an comprehensive information center targeting overseas manufacturers,

domestic companies in downstream sectors and other entities, and in achieving the establishment of an integral production system based on collaboration among the clusters, for e.g., through supplementary support for businesses engaging in special processes, beyond the framework of existing clusters in the industry. According to the METI, Japan is home to over 40 clusters of aircraft component manufactures, including groups that both receive package orders of aircraft components and produce them, as well as study groups intending to enter the industry. METI announced the following schedule on tentative basis for the creation of national network.

By the end of 2017: Establish a secretariat inside the Society of Japanese Aerospace Companies (SJAC). After the establishment of the secretariat system, start the conveyance of information from the secretariat to businesses on how to conjoin the exiting clusters in the aircraft industry.

By the end of the FY2017: Open an exclusive portal website to convey information to both overseas manufacturers and domestic companies in the downstream sectors, and also to provide information to help the promotion of collaboration among clusters.

http://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2017/0925_002.html

SURVEY AND BUSINESS DATA

Number of Births Decreased While Number of Deaths Increased in 2016

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (MHLW) published “2016 Summary Report of Vital Statistics (final data)” on 15 September. The Vital Statistics covers statistical data on population, live births, deaths, marriages and divorces. According to the report, the number of births in 2016 was 976,978 persons, a decrease of 28,699 from the previous year while the number of deaths increased by 17,304 to reach 1,307,748 persons. Total fertility rate in 2016 was 1.44, down from 1.45 of the year earlier. In 2016, the number of marriage was 620,531 and the number of divorce was 216,798, both of which recorded decreases from 2015.

<http://www.mhlw.go.jp/toukei/saikin/hw/jinkou/kakutei16/index.html> (Japanese language only)

Summary Report on the 2016 Economic Census of the Manufacturing Industry Compiled

On June 1, 2016, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) conducted the 2016 Economic Census for Business Activity as a statistical survey designed to ascertain accounting items, e.g. sales (income) and expenses, relating to all industries in Japan. METI announced on 25 September that the ministries compiled the survey results of the manufacturing industry into a summary report. The results of this census uncover the current state of the Japanese manufacturing industry, taking into consideration the recovery from the damage caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 2011, by comparing current data with the results of the 2012 Economic Census for Business Activity. The results of the census are expected to be utilized as basic data in a variety of fields to ascertain the current state of the manufacturing industry in Japan. Outline of the summary report is as follows:

(1) Nationwide status (for establishments with four or more employees in the manufacturing industry)

As of June 1, 2016, the number of such establishments was 217,601 (down by 6.7% from the 2012 Census), while the number of employees was 7,497,792 (up by 0.3% from the 2012 Census). In 2016, the product shipment value of the establishments was 313.1286 trillion yen (up by 9.9% from the 2012 Census), while the added value was 98.028 trillion yen (up by 7.1% from the 2012 Census).

As for the breakdown of the product shipment value by sector, manufacture of transportation equipment accounts for 20.6%, representing the largest share in the manufacturing industry, followed by chemical products at 9.1% and food processing at 9.0%. In addition, compared to the results in the 2012 Census, transportation equipment improved by 27.8%, chemical products by 8.6%, and food processing by 16.4%.

(2) Current state of three prefectures affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake (Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima Prefectures)

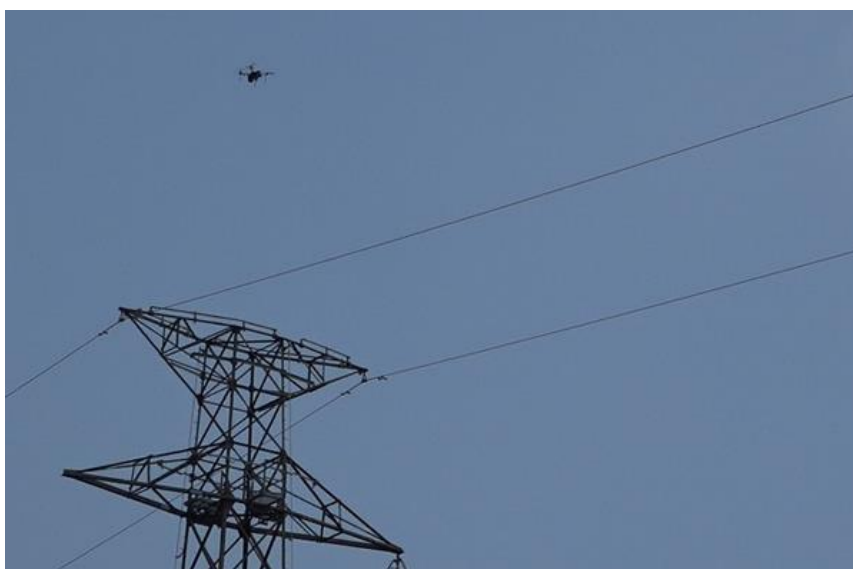
Compared to the results of the 2012 Census, the number of establishments (with four or more employees) shows an increase in Iwate Prefecture by 3.2% and Miyagi Prefecture by 9.7%, while a decrease is seen in Fukushima Prefecture by 0.4%. Meanwhile, the number of employees (for the establishments with four or more employees) shows an increase in Iwate by

4.2% and Miyagi by 8.6%, while Fukushima remains the same at 0.0%. Compared to the results of the 2012 Census, the product shipment value of the establishments (with ten or more employees) shows an increase in all these prefectures: 24.1% in Iwate, 45.5% in Miyagi, and 13.8% in Fukushima, with an increase mainly seen in transportation equipment in Iwate, manufacture of petroleum and coal products in Miyagi, and chemical products in Fukushima.
http://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2017/0925_001.html

COMPANY NEWS

Autonomous Drone Surveillance of Power-transmission Lines Successful

Toshiba Digital Solutions Corporations and Alpine Electronics, Inc. announced on 5 September that they had successfully completed proving test for autonomous surveillance of power-transmission lines, at the training facilities of the Kansai Electric Power Company. Drones using autonomous surveillance are expected to save time and money, especially in distant areas such as in the mountains. The drone used, flies autonomously, while automatically filming, with installed sensors measuring its distance from the transmission lines for inspection. Toshiba and Alpine will engage in developing automatic sensing systems to find defects of power lines.



(photo: Toshiba/Alpine)

<http://www.toshiba-sol.co.jp/news/detail/20170905.htm#zu01> (Japanese language only)

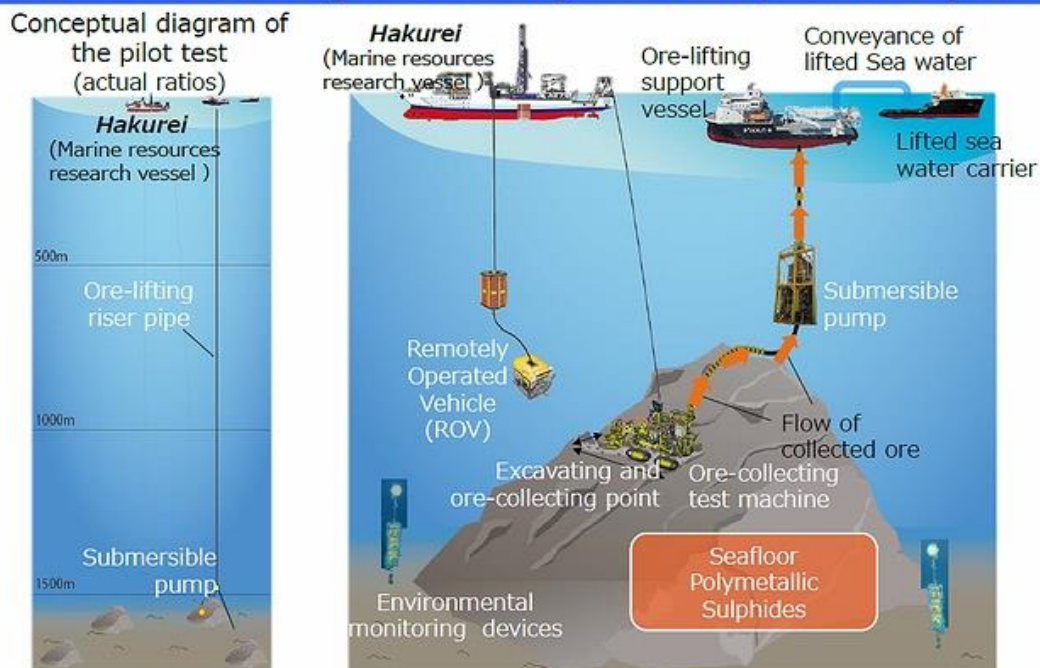
ADDITIONAL TOPICS

World's First Success in Continuous Ore Lifting Test for Seafloor Polymetallic Sulphides

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and the Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corporation (JOGMEC) conducted and succeeded in the world's first pilot test of excavating and ore lifting for seafloor polymetallic sulphides under the sea area near Okinawa Prefecture. In this test, METI and JOGMEC succeeded in excavating the seafloor polymetallic sulphides lying approximately 1,600m below sea level, continuously collecting and lifting them by a submersible pump up onto the ore-lifting support vessel. The success of the test is deemed as a large step toward the establishment of technologies required for the development of ocean mineral resources.

The successful development of these potential resources in Japan is expected to bring about new domestic supply sources of mineral resources, the majority of which Japan relies on imports from overseas to provide it with.

Pilot test of excavating and ore-lifting Seafloor Polymetallic Sulphides





Ore-collecting test machine working on the seafloor (photo: METI/JOGMEC)

http://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2017/0926_004.html

Establishment and Revision of the JIS for Faucets, Ball Taps and Flush Valves and the General Rules of Primary Batteries Announced

In September 2017, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) newly established 3 standards and revised 15 standards of the Japanese Industrial Standards (JIS). METI believes that the following revisions to the standards are especially important.

(i) Revision of the JIS for Faucets, Ball Taps and Flush Valves



Water-saving tap faucet (sample)

As Japan needs energy saving for houses and structures, the reduction of energy consumption of hot-water supply equipment contributes to a decrease in energy consumption and the enhancement of the energy efficiency performance of a building as a whole. METI revised the JIS to newly add requirements for water-saving faucets, ball taps and flush valves. This revision is expected to further facilitate efforts to reduce energy consumption in houses and structures.

(ii) Revision of the JIS for the general rules of primary batteries



Primary batteries (button batteries and coin batteries) (sample)

In order to further improve the safety of primary batteries, METI revised JIS C8500 (Annex B) to add recommendations on considerations for safety in the designing of battery compartments to prevent accidental ingestion and other new matters.

http://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2017/0920_001.html

New Efforts for Dissemination and Raising Awareness of the “Safety Support Cars”

As new efforts for dissemination and raising awareness of the “Safety Support Car (*Suppocar*)” and “Safety Support Car S (*Suppocar S*),” the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) announced on 22 September that it decided to distribute posters and fliers and open an exclusive portal website for *Suppocar* and *Suppocar S*. METI will convey well-organized information on related events, e.g., trial driving, on the portal website, while proactively distributing posters and fliers taking advantage of related events for the dissemination and awareness-raising efforts of these automobiles. Moreover, METI will encourage companies, associations and other entities to make use of such posters and fliers

As part of the efforts for preventing elderly drivers from causing car accidents, in March 2017, the State Ministers and Other Officials Meeting, consisting of members from the related ministries and agencies, decided to conduct measures for dissemination and raising awareness of “automobiles with safety-driving assist functions,” i.e., automobiles with built-in automatic brake systems and acceleration control systems responding to drivers’ mistaken operation of acceleration pedals. Accordingly, these ministries and agencies determined FY2017 and 2018 as years they will be proactively involved in these measures, pooling efforts from the public and private sectors.



http://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2017/0922_001.html

[METI portal website for Suppocar and Suppocar](#) [↗] (Japanese language only)

JP Provides 30,000 Used Mobile Phones for Manufacturing Olympic Medals

Japan Post Co., Ltd. announced on 13 September that it would donate 30,000 units of used mobile phones to the Tokyo Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (Tokyo 2020 Organising Committee) for contributing to its Tokyo 2020 Medal Project. Tokyo 2020 Medal Project is to manufacture the medals for use at Tokyo 2020 from recovering materials from used consumer electronics such as mobile phones. (See February 2017 issue)

http://www.post.japanpost.jp/notification/pressrelease/2017/00_honsha/0913_01_01.pdf (Japanese language only)

<https://tokyo2020.jp/en/games/medals/project/>