

THE JAPANESE LAW TRANSLATION PROJECT

December, 2019

The Ministry of Justice



※This is a provisional English translation

Japanese Law Translation Project Mascot: Yaku

Relevance

1. Facilitating International Transactions (Strengthening International Competitiveness)

2. Promoting the Investment in Japan

3. Promoting International Understanding of Japan

4. Promoting legislation maintenance

5. Facilitating daily life for foreign nationals living in Japan

Background

June 2004



The Cabinet's **Justice System Reform Promotion Headquarters**/Council for Internationalization begins to look into preparing foreign-language translations of Japanese Laws

○ It is decided that, as a government, Japan will explicitly work to promote the translation of Japanese laws into foreign languages.

January 2005



The **Liaison Conference of the Relevant Ministries and Agencies** for Developing a Foundation for Promoting the Translation of Japanese Laws and Regulations into Foreign Languages is established

○ The Conference is originally established under the Cabinet Secretariat, with the Assistant Chief Cabinet Secretary as the appointed Chair.

April 2009



The **Japanese Law Translation Database System** is launched

○ A dedicated website maintained by the Ministry of Justice begins operation.

○ The site launches with the release of existing translations for approximately 200 laws and regulations.

March 2019



The **Council on the Vision for Publicizing Japanese Laws Internationally**, an advisory council, compiles its opinion statement (*The 2019 Vision for Publicizing Japanese Laws Internationally*)

April 2019

The Japanese Law Translation Project reaches its **10th year after formalization**

Current Status

The MOJ operates a dedicated website, the *Japanese Law Translation Database System (JLT)*

- **Approximately 750** laws are available on the site.
- The site is accessed **100,000 times** a day, on average.
- People access the site from **over 86 countries and regions**.



The MOJ has published the policies that the ministries and agencies uniformly use as the rules of translation

- *Japanese to English Standard Legal Terms Dictionary* (containing about **3800 terms**)
- The *Legal Terms Translation Guidelines* (Written guidelines comprising key aspects to consider when translating Japanese laws and regulations)

法令用語日英標準対訳辞書
(平成31年3月改訂版)
Standard Legal Terms Dictionary
(March 2019 Edition)

Japanese Law Translation Database System Screenshots

1. Top page

The screenshot shows the top page of the Japanese Law Translation Database System. At the top, there are navigation tabs: TOP, Law Search, Dictionary Search, Keyword in Context Search, Outline, Updated Translations, What's New, Other Information, and Links. Below these are three main search options: Law Search (circled in red with a 'Click!' label), Dictionary Search, and Keyword in Context Search. A 'NOTICE TO USERS' section is also present, containing information about the translations and their legal status.

The *Dictionary Search* feature also lets users search the dictionary using the English translation of the Japanese legal term.

3. The translated law view

The screenshot shows the translated law view for the Trademark Act (商標法). The page title is '商標法' and the law number is 'Act No. 121 of 1959'. The 'Table of Contents' sidebar is visible on the left, and the 'File format' dropdown menu is circled in red with a 'Click!' label. The main content area shows the 'Chapter I General Provisions' and 'Article 1'.

Four viewing modes are available, including “Alternating Japanese-English” mode.

2. “Law Search” page

The screenshot shows the Law Search page. At the top, there are navigation tabs: TOP, Law Search, Dictionary Search, Keyword in Context Search, Outline, Updated Translations, What's New, Other Information, and Links. Below these are search options: Search by Keyword, Search by Title, Search by Number, Search by Category, and Search by Org. A search input field is present, and a Japanese syllabary keyboard is visible below it, with a 'Click!' label pointing to it.

Users can search for translations of laws and regulations on the site using the Japanese syllabary or the field of law (such as “industry” or “Civil affairs and Business affairs”).

4. A sample of a downloaded Act

The screenshot shows a sample of a downloaded Act, specifically Chapter I General Provisions. The text is in both Japanese and English. Article 1 states: 'The purpose of this Act is, through the protection of trademarks, to ensure upholding the reputation of businesses of persons who use trademarks, thereby contributing to the development of the industry and the protection of the interests of consumers.'

Users can download translations in PDF, Word, and other formats.

System

Liaison Conference of the Relevant Ministries and Agencies for Developing a Foundation for Promoting the Translation of Japanese Laws and Regulations into Foreign Languages

CHAIRPERSON: Department Head of the Ministry of Justice Judicial System Department

MEMBERS: 19 Ministry Officials of the Deputy Vice-Minister Class

AGENDA:

- Formulates the government's annual *Translation Development Plan*
- Upgrades the *Standard Legal Terms Dictionary*

Executive Board

CHAIRPERSON: Department Head of the Ministry of Justice Judicial System Department

MEMBERS: 19 Ministry Officials of the Division-Director Class

AGENDA:

- Follows up on the *Translation Development Plan*.
- Reviews other matters related to promotion, undertakes other tasks.

Japanese Law Translation Council

CHAIR: Abe Hiroto, Professor at the Hitotsubashi University Graduate School of Law

MEMBERS: 9 Members of Academia, 9 Japanese Attorneys, and 2 Registered Foreign Lawyers

AGENDA:

- Individual quality and uniformity checks of translated laws.
- Examining the *Standard Legal Terms Dictionary* and the *Legal Terms Translation Guidelines*.

Workflow

Each Ministry and Agency

- (1) Establishes a translation development plan
- (2) Works to translate each individual law

Submit Translated Laws

Ministry of Justice

- (3) Undertakes an Initial Review
 - * Checks for conformity with the translation rules
- (5) Has the translation proofread by a Native English-Speaker
- (6) Undertakes a Second Review
 - *The translation is examined by an expert from the Japanese Law Translation Council.
 - *Quality checks are conducted by scholars and Japanese attorneys.

Japanese Law Translation Database System

(4) Releases a tentative translation

(7) Releases the finalized translation

Positioning of the Project as a Vitally Important Government Policy 1

✓ June 2019 Cabinet Decision

○ Basic Policy on Economic and Fiscal Management and Reform 2019 (**The Basic Policies**)

“While promoting the utilization of ICT and AI in the security and legal fields to enhance convenience of users and efficiency of operation, the government **will consider measures for further promotion of legal translation.**”

✓ May 2016 **Decision by the Council for Promotion of Foreign Direct Investment in Japan** **Policy Package for Promoting Foreign Direct Investment into Japan to Make Japan a Global Hub**

In order to encourage foreign direct investment in Japan, the decision:

- (1) establishes a system of review to maintain a high-level of quality.
- (2) **sets a goal for an additional 500 laws and regulations at minimum to be translated into foreign languages and released by fiscal 2020.**

✓ April 2019 **Decision by the Council for Promotion of Foreign Direct Investment in Japan** **Program to Intensively Attract Foreign Direct Investment into Various Regions of Japan**

“The government will consider **measures to fundamentally accelerate the translation of laws and regulations** into foreign languages, such as using artificial intelligence, as well as considering a **system for releasing translations that are more geared toward users.**”

Positioning of the Project as a Vitally Important Government Policy 2

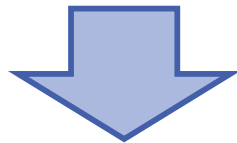
- ✓ June 2019 Decision by the Economic Cooperation Infrastructure Strategy Committee
 - ***Infrastructure and Systems Export Strategy*** (Revised Version of FY2019)
 - “Preparing high quality English translations of Japanese laws and regulations that are related to business[...] and publicizing this kind of English translation overseas[...] will establish an informational infrastructure to serve as the basis for Japanese enterprises to strengthen their international competitiveness.”

- ✓ June 2019 Decision by the Intellectual Property Strategy Advancement Headquarters
 - ***Strategy for Promoting Intellectual Property 2019***
 - “To expand the release of high-quality English translations of Japanese laws and regulations and related information (such as information about amendments to the law and information on the legal system) in fields where there is high demand, such as intellectual property, the government will promote the development of a system for prompt translation (this includes looking into the use of machine translation) and the development of a highly user-friendly environment that is capable of publicizing information internationally more effectively and proactively.”

Background of the Vision Council

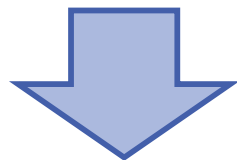
December 2018

The Chair of the *Liaison Conference of the Related Ministries and Agencies for Developing a Foundation for Promoting the Translation of Japanese Laws and Regulations into Foreign Languages* establishes the Council on the Vision for the Future of Publicizing Japanese Laws Internationally.



March 2019

The Council on the Vision for Publicizing Japanese Laws Internationally compiles its *opinion statement*.



July 2019

The Vision Council's *Opinion Statement* is reported at the *Liaison Conference of the Related Ministries and Agencies for Developing a Foundation for Promoting the Translation of Japanese Laws and Regulations into Foreign Languages*. The Liaison Conference confirms the guidelines for appropriate responses based on this *opinion statement*.

Main Points of the Vision Council's Opinion Statement

- ✓ Among the issues that need to be dealt with, efforts should be made to prioritize **the speed** at which the translations are provided and **to improve the services** that are offered from the perspective of the user.
- ✓ **A council with joint participation from the public sector and the private sector** (including advisors), which will **lead this project as the playmaker**, should be formed within the year; the project should move forward with an emphasis on the user's perspective.
- ✓ Future efforts need to be **concrete and reflect a sense of urgency**. A strategic plan including the following must be formulated quickly:
 - As new services, starting to release **translations of the *outlines of laws and regulations and basic information on fields of law*** within one year's time.
 - Dealing with translation maintenance issues for major laws and regulations, as well as making the **needed updates** to bring translations up to date with current statute and translation rules, within 3 years' time.
 - Beginning surveys and consultations within one year's time, **moving toward the use of machine/AI translation and industry/academia/government collaboration**.

Efforts Following the Vision Council 1

(1) As a government initiative, a new **council with joint participation from the public sector and private sector** that will be the **playmaker** has been established

▪ December 2019 The first meeting of the *Council on the Joint Public and Private-Sector Strategy to Advance the Publicizing of Japanese Laws Internationally* is scheduled to be held

CHAIR: Noboru Kashiwagi, Professor Emeritus, Tokyo University

Public-Sector Members

- Director of the Keidanren Planning Subcommittee of the Economic Law and Corporate Management Committee
- Vice-Chairman of the European Business Council in Japan
- Chairman of the Academy for International Business Transactions
- Vice President of the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan
- Councilor of the Japanese American Society for Legal Studies
- Special Advisor, The Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- President of the Japan Federation of Bar Associations

Government Members

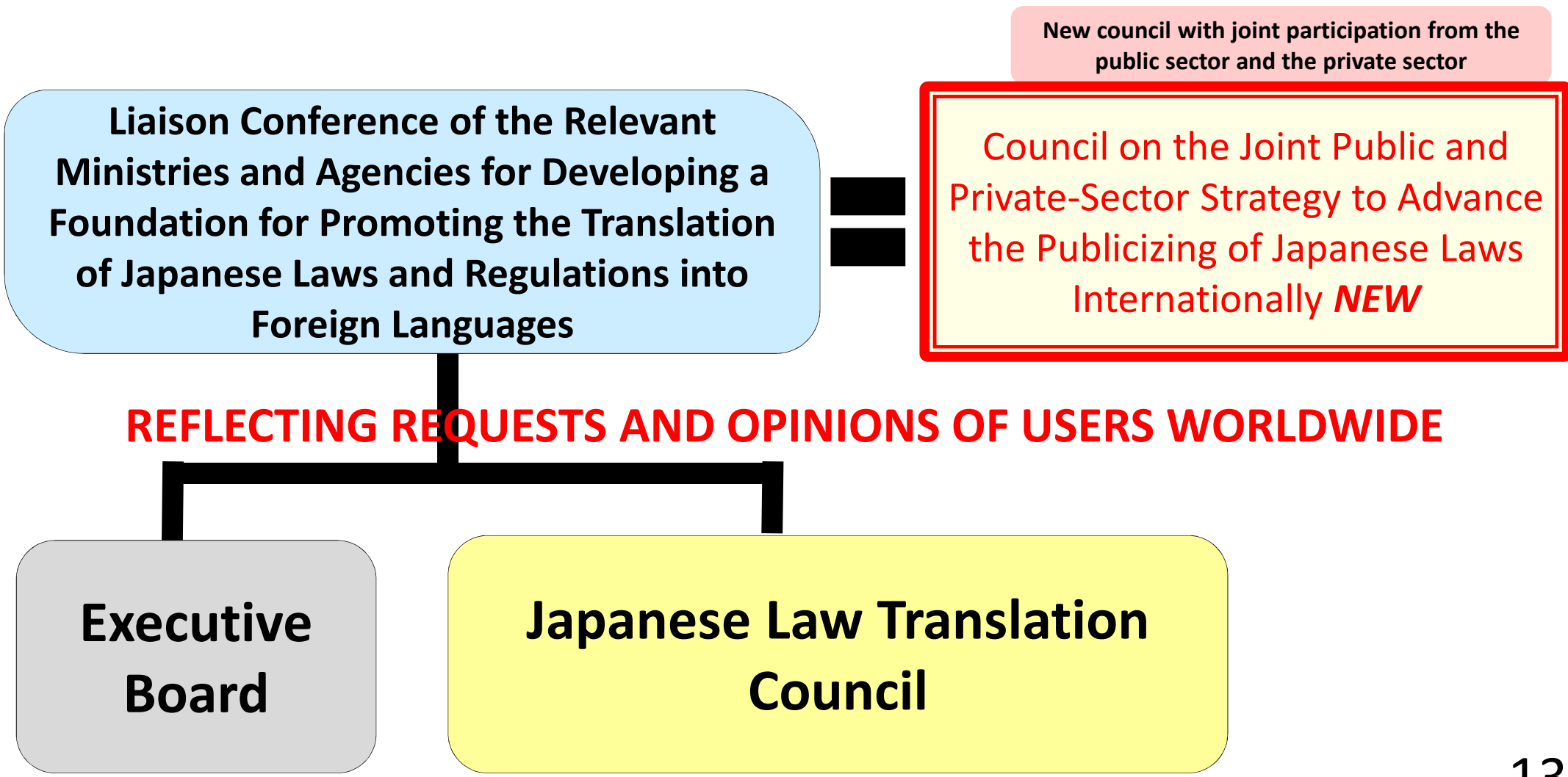
- Councillor, Cabinet Secretariat (Councillor to the Assistant Chief Cabinet Secretary)
- Chief of the Office of Foreign Direct Investment Promotion, Cabinet Secretariat
- Vice Secretary-General, Intellectual Property Strategy Headquarters, Cabinet Secretariat
- Director-General, Judicial Systems Department, Ministry of Justice
- Director-General, International Legal Affairs Bureau, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Observers

- The Director of Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO)
- The Chair of the Japanese Law Translation Council

Efforts Following the Vision Council 2

SCHEMATIC FOR THE NEW SYSTEM OF JAPANESE LAW TRANSLATION

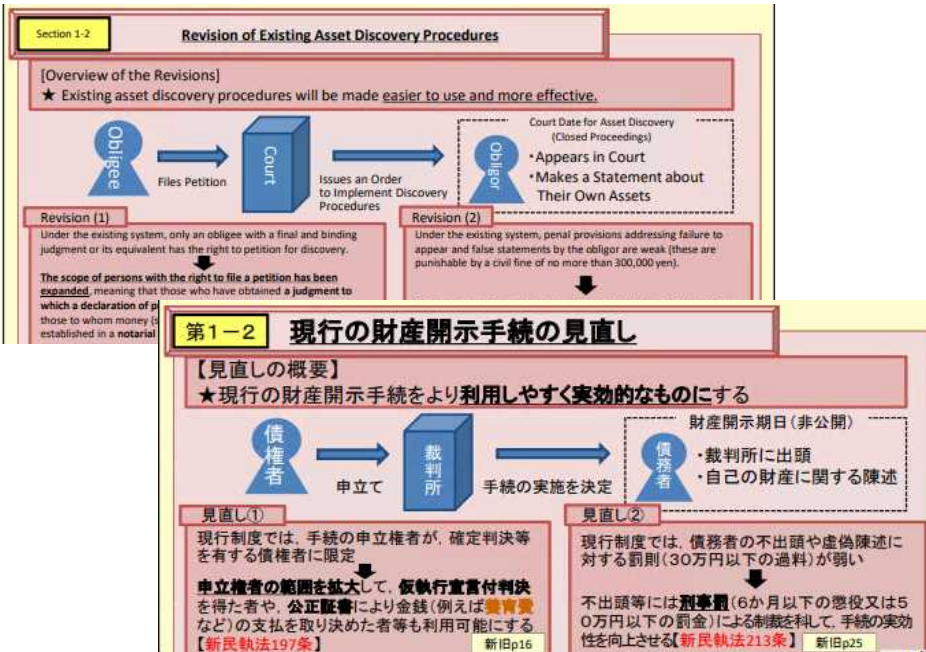


Efforts Following the Vision Council 3

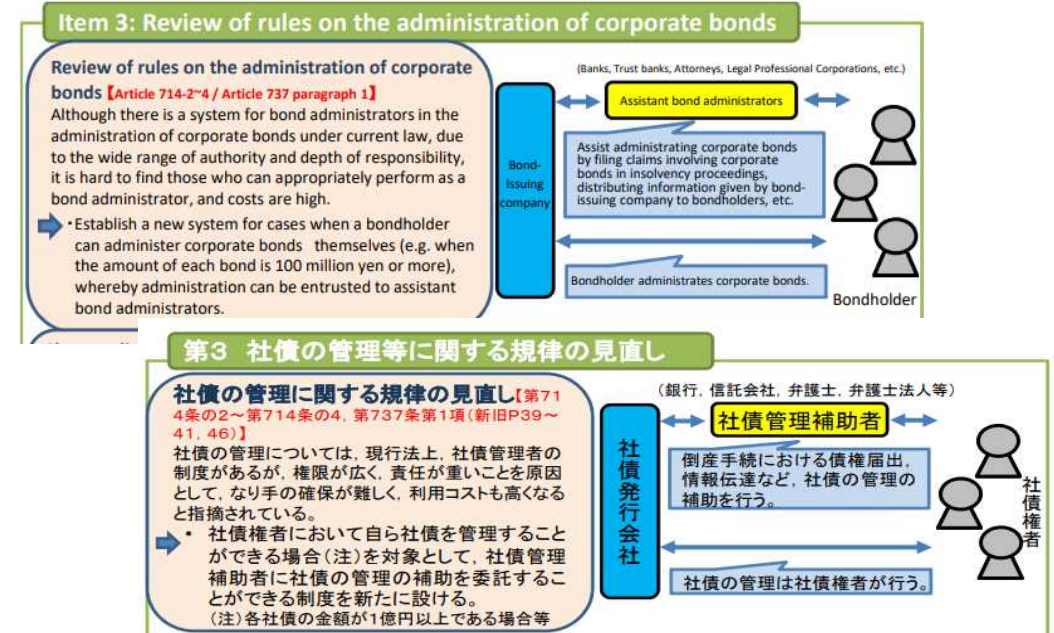
(2) As one of the first initiatives, translations of *Outlines of Laws and Regulations* are being made available

- September 2019 The Ministry of Justice starts publishing English translations of *outlines of amending Acts*
- October 2019 The Ministry of Justice starts publishing English translations of *outlines of bills submitted to the Diet*

An example of an outline of an amending Act (example): the Act Partially Amending the Civil Execution Act (Promulgated in May of 2019)



An example of an *outline of a bills submitted to the Diet*: a Bill to Amend Part of the Companies Act (200th session of the Diet)



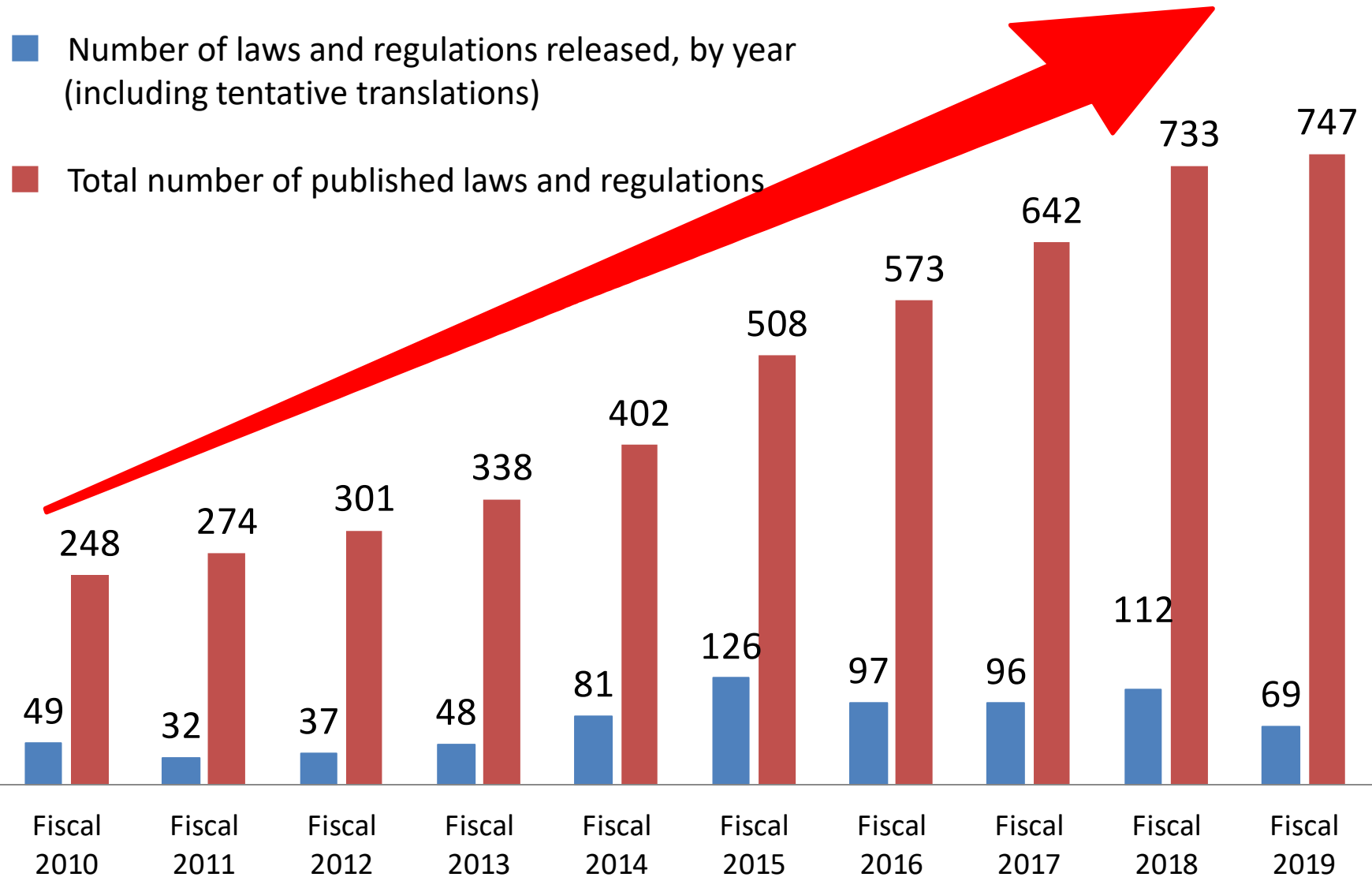
(3) Each individual ministry has been working to review how to **increase the speed** at which translations are completed (i.e. the Ministry of Justice has established an internal task force).

(4) A full-scale survey has begun to **look into incorporating AI translations** in the translation process.

COMPILATION OF DATA

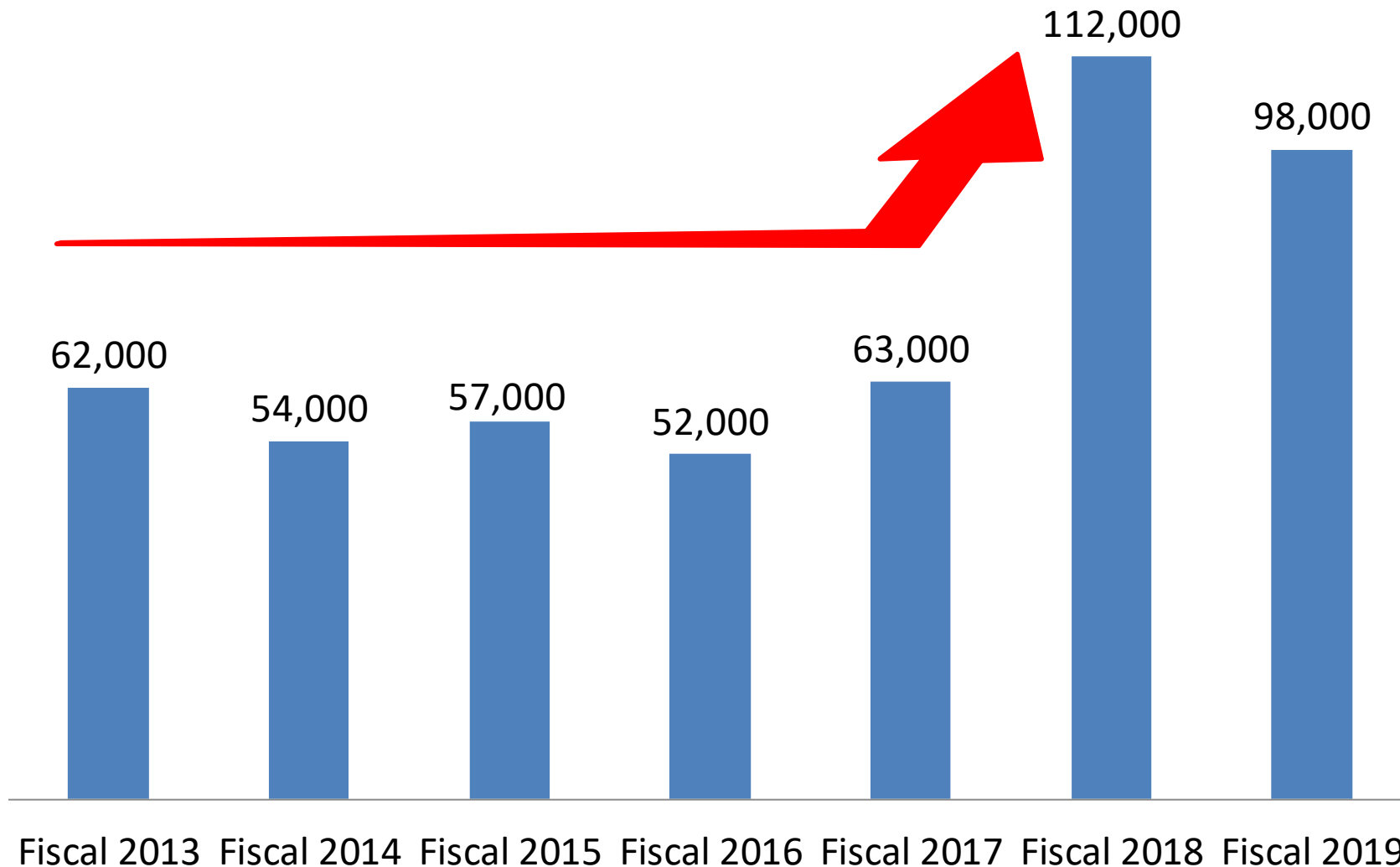
Japan Law Translation Database System

Number of Translated Laws and Regulations Released



* The numbers for Fiscal 2019 are the figures as of the end of September.

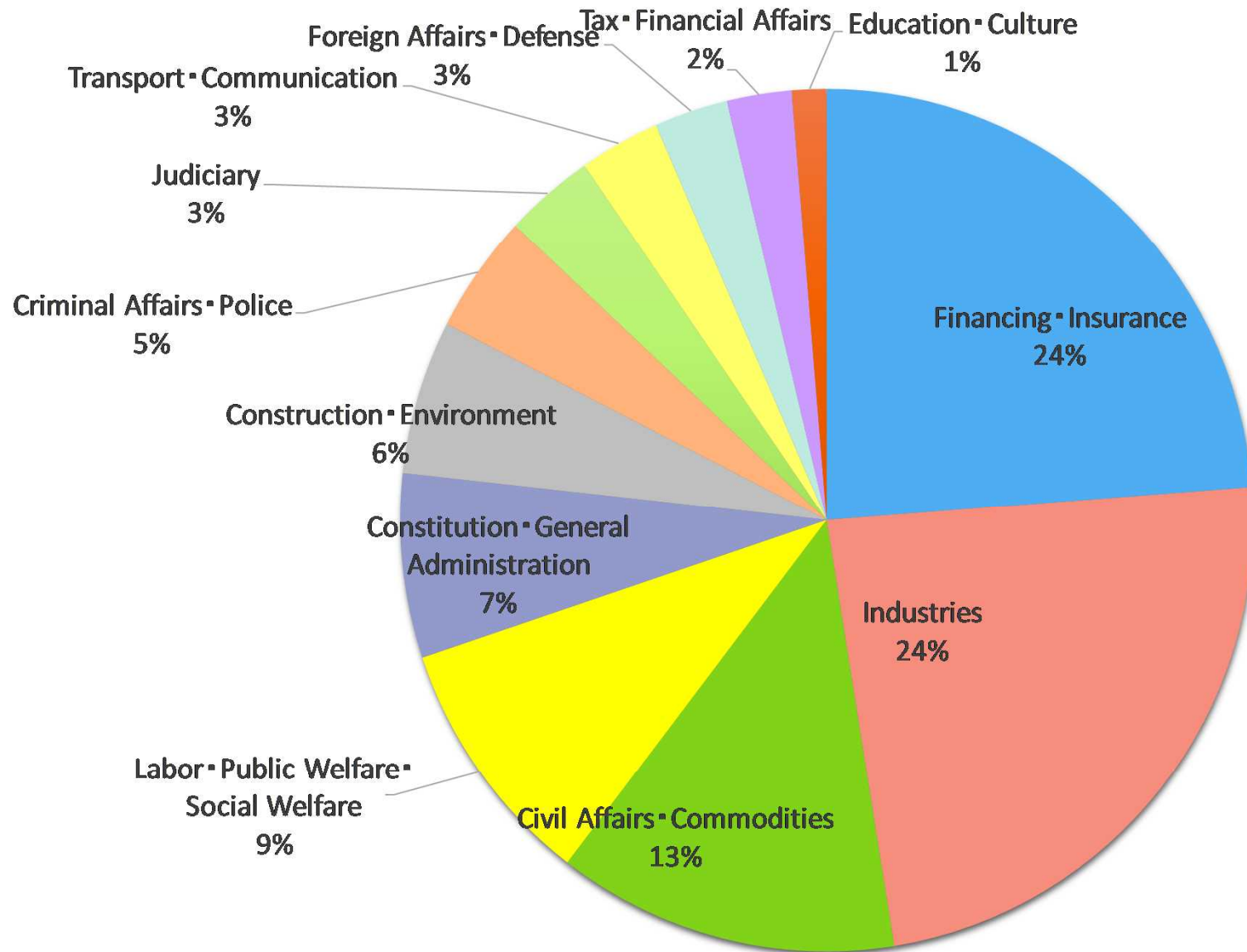
Average Number of Site Visits Per Day to the Japanese Law Translation Database System



* The numbers for Fiscal 2019 are the figures as of the end of September.

Japanese Law Translation Database System

Translated Laws and Regulations Released by Field



One law may fall under multiple fields. Notice and notifications are not included
 * These numbers are the figures as of the end of September.

Japanese Law Translation Database System

A Current Picture of the Translation of Laws and Regulations into Foreign Languages 1

Top 10 Accessed Laws and Regulations

Top 10 laws and regulations accessed from the beginning of operation until the end of September 2019

1	Companies Act (Part I, Part II, Part III and Part IV)
2	Commodity Derivatives Act
3	Banking Act
4	Companies Act (Part V, Part VI, Part VII, Part VIII)
5	Civil Code (Part I, Part II, Part III)
6	Civil Rehabilitation Act
7	Small and Medium-Sized Enterprise Cooperatives Act
8	Act on Special Measures Concerning Taxation (Limited to the provisions related to nonresidents and foreign corporations)
9	Act on Prohibition of Private Monopolization and Maintenance of Fair Trade
10	Patent Act

Top 10 laws and regulations accessed from October 2018 to the end of September 2019

1	Companies Act (Part I, Part II, Part III and Part IV)
2	Ordinance for Enforcement of the Banking Act
3	Companies Act (Part V, Part VI, Part VII, Part VIII)
4	Ordinance for Enforcement of the Insurance Business Act (Part I through Part II Chapter V)
5	Financial Instruments and Exchange Act
6	Ordinance for Enforcement of the Companies Act
7	Cabinet Office Ordinance on the Disclosure of Corporate Affairs, etc.
8	Regulation for Enforcement of the Insurance Business Act (Part II Chapter VI through Part V)
9	Ordinance for Enforcement of the Money Lending Business Act
10	Patent Act

Japanese Law Translation Database System

A Current Picture of the Translation of Laws and Regulations into Foreign Languages 2

Access Rankings of the Top 20 Countries and Regions

1	Japan	85.0%
2	Germany	1.3%
3	Brazil	1.3%
4	China	1.2%
5	Thailand	1.1%
6	Australia	1.0%
7	Russia	0.9%
8	United States	0.7%
9	Italy	0.6%
10	India	0.6%

11	France	0.5%
12	Poland	0.4%
13	Singapore	0.4%
14	Canada	0.4%
15	Mexico	0.4%
16	United Kingdom	0.3%
17	Taiwan	0.3%
18	Indonesia	0.3%
19	Netherlands	0.3%
20	Turkey	0.2%

⇒ Accessed from over **from over 86 countries and regions**

* The ratios of countries and regions are calculated by using the domains.

* These figures are as of the end of September 2019.