

The 2019 Vision for Publicizing Japanese Laws Internationally (Opinion Statement Overview)

~ *The things we must do now to correctly convey information about Japan's legal system* ~

- ✓ A council of **seven advisors from various fields** (chaired by Noboru Kashiwagi, Emeritus Professor, The University of Tokyo) held discussions on the vision for the Japanese Law Translation Project.
- ✓ Starting in January 2019, the council heard from members of the business and research communities; the findings of its wide-ranging investigations have been summarized in an opinion statement.

The Aim of the Japanese Law Translation Project and the Fundamental Vision Towards Which It Should Be Oriented

- Publicizing the law of Japan to the international community and to foreign nationals in Japan constitutes a **national effort towards fundamental infrastructural streamlining**.
- The project should work to allocate resources effectively, remaining mindful of the wide scope of people who stand to benefit, and working from perspectives such as **business support and the protection of foreign nationals**.
- The past 10 years of efforts in the project have been valuable, but there are issues to address, including **major laws and regulations that remain untranslated and lengthening lead times on the release of translations**.
- The project is positioned as a government translation effort, and it should work to achieve **increased speed and prioritization** while **ensuring that the voices of the users are reflected**.

1) Content Enhancements and 2) Improvement of User-Facing Services to Be Prioritized

- Improvements should be made to the **speed at which translations are released**. Translations that reflect amendments to major laws and regulations should be released in a timely fashion.
- **A service** should be launched **to release translations of Overviews of Laws and Regulations**, giving brief explanations of new and amended laws.
- **A service** should be launched **to provide Basic Information on Fields of Law** that explains the legal systems in the different legal fields in which translations are released.
- The release of information on the dedicated website should be enhanced through **interactive functions such as a FAQ, information about scheduled updates, and other means**.

Issues Needing Further Consideration; Collaboration with the Public Sector and with International Organizations

- Improving and expanding the dedicated website's English-language content should be the first priority; multilingual support is a mid-term issue.
- The use of artificial intelligence in translation should be investigated and discussed promptly, in light of things such as machine translation efforts.
- We need to look into building a framework to ensure sufficient human resources to translate Japan's laws and regulations, by looking into things such as the improvement of working conditions for personnel in this field and the creation of professional credentialing.
- It is anticipated that in future, we will need to work proactively, including by coordinating our efforts with those of the courts, to translate court decisions.
- In addition to seeking industry/academia/government collaboration and international collaboration in the project, we should make the data of translated laws open to the private sector and encourage efforts based on private-sector ingenuity.
- Additionally, we also expect to see Japanese laws becoming easier to understand, and anticipate that infrastructural streamlining will be undertaken to facilitate international public relations initiatives, human resources training, and international exchange.

Systems to Facilitate the Implementation of the Vision for the Future and Strategic Efforts to This End

- The government as a whole, centered on the Ministry of Justice, should formulate a concrete strategy based the council's opinion statement and establish the process for implementing it.
- A council with joint participation from the public sector and the private sector that will lead the project as a playmaker should be formed within one year's time; 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. We should move quickly to formulate a strategy that includes:
 - As new services, starting to release translations of overviews 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 the texts of these laws and regulations to bring them in line with current statute, within three years' time.
 - Beginning surveys and consultations within one year's time, moving toward the use of machine/AI translation and industry/academia/government collaboration.