

THE JAPANESE LAW TRANSLATION PROJECT

April 2022

The Ministry of Justice



Japanese Law Translation Project Mascot : YAKU

Positioning of the Project as a Vitally Important Government Policy(1)

✓ **Basic Policy on Economic and Fiscal Management and Reform 2021 (The Basic Policies) (June 2021 Cabinet Decision)**

“Through public-private partnerships, the government will [...] accelerate its arrangement of the business environment by facilitating the translation of laws, regulations, and related materials into foreign languages; and promote investment by taking advantage of regional strengths such as [...]; in a steady and integrated matter.”

✓ **Growth Strategy Follow-Up (June 2021 Cabinet Decision)**

“The government will accelerate the release of translated laws and regulations and work to enhance their content by arranging a framework for their translation, including the use of machine translation.”

✓ **Strategy for Promoting Foreign Direct Investment in Japan (June 2021 Decision by the Council for the Promotion of Foreign Direct Investment in Japan)**

“The government will advance the Japanese Law Translation Project under the banner of setting new law translation goals, prioritizing the needs of foreign investors, and accelerating operations through the use of machine translation.”

*The Project will release at least 600 new English –language translations of laws, regulations, and other materials by FY2025. Adding to this, **we aim to release an additional 400 translations (for a total of 1000), in keeping with the progress of translation technology and other factors.***

Positioning of the Project as a Vitally Important Government Policy(2)

✓ **Overseas Development Strategy for Infrastructure Systems 2025**

(December 2020 Decision by the Economic Cooperation Infrastructure Strategy Committee)

“Preparing high-quality English translations of business-relevant Japanese laws and regulations [...] and publicizing these kinds of English translations overseas[...] will establish an informational infrastructure to serve as the basis for Japanese enterprises to strengthen their international competitiveness.”

✓ **Strategy for Promoting Intellectual Property 2021**

(July 2021 Decision by the Intellectual Property Strategy Advancement Headquarters)

"To expand the release of high-quality English translations of Japanese laws, regulations, and related information, the government will facilitate arrangements for a framework aimed at rapid translation and environmental arrangements for their use, and will actively publicize them overseas."

Measures to Address Private-Sector Council Members' Special Requests/Remarks (1)

(1) To address the goal of *releasing at least 600 new English-language translations of laws, regulations, and other materials by FY2025.*

■ 81 translations were **released** in FY2021
(73 laws/regulations, 8 outlines)

→ **519 more translations need to be released to reach the goal.**

■ 129 translations were **submitted** in FY2021

→ We have reported to the Liaison Conference of Relevant Ministries and Agencies for Developing a Foundation for Promoting the Translation of Japanese Laws and Regulations into Foreign Languages, and requested that the relevant ministries and agencies cooperate through the preparation and early submission of draft translations based on the Translation Development Plan.

Measures to Address Private-Sector Council Members' Special Requests/Remarks (2)

(2) To address requests concerning *legal fields in which translation should be prioritized*

* Figures are as of the end of March, 2022

■ Proposed legislation outlines have been submitted to us for 13 of the bills submitted to the Diet, and we have had these translated.

■ Outlines Submitted Include:

- The Act Partially Amending the **Insurance Business Act**
- The Act Partially Amending the **Certified Public Accountants Act and the Financial Instruments and Exchange Act**
- The Act Partially Amending the **Payment Services Act and Related Legislation**
- An Outline of the FY2022 **Tax System Revisions**

<Fields of Law That Private-Sector Council Members Have Requested Be Prioritized>

- Fields of law connected with inward direct investment (financial laws, fields connected with the digital world, etc.)
- Intellectual property law
- Fundamental laws in the field of civil affairs (the Code of Civil Procedure, the Bankruptcy Act, etc.)
- Fields of law that are of concern to foreign nationals residing in Japan (taxes, pensions, consumer laws, labor laws, etc.)

Measures to Address Private-Sector Council Members' Special Requests/Remarks (3)

(3) To address the request to *help improve the framework for translating laws and regulations into foreign languages*

- In FY2022, we added one person to the team of native English-speaking advisors, arranging a human framework in order to maintain high translation quality and accuracy.
 - Beginning in FY2022, quality checks are being conducted by:
 - four native English-speaking advisors, and
 - four coordinators (as in previous years).
- We are running validation tests on the use and introduction of machine translation (AI translation) to speed up the release of translations.
 - The costs of exploring and reviewing machine translation (see details beginning on page 8) was approved in the FY2021 supplemental budget.

The Japanese Law Translation Database System Website Has Been Replaced

(1) Enhanced Search Functions

- Supports **searches using romaji**

For example, users can search for the Civil Code by entering “*minpo*”

- Supports searches for related terms
- Search results are displayed in a new order



→ The search function has been modified so that laws and regulations that users have accessed most using the keyword being searched for are displayed first.

(2) Enhanced User Interface

- The top page has been revamped.

→ The new top page has a search box on it (for law title searches).

- The display has been **optimized** for use on smartphones and tablets.
- The screen design has been redone.

Use of AI Translation

【Results of the FY2019 Validation Tests】

- There are generally no grammatical errors, but when the structure of the Japanese language is complex, the translation is sometimes inaccurate.

【Results of the FY2021 Validation Tests】

- There are fewer grammatical errors and inaccurate translations than in FY2019, [the performance of the AI translation engine has improved, and the translation quality has dramatically improved.](#)
- However, there are issues such as: (1) the use of the wrong words to fill in grammatical subjects, which occurs due to the difference in Japanese and English sentence structures, and (2) inconsistency in the use of translated terms and problems of compliance with the Standard Legal Terms Dictionary and the Legal Translation Guide.

Issue (1) The way the wrong words are used to fill in grammatical subjects

- In Japanese, when the grammatical subject is the same in the main clause and the associated conditional clause, the subject in one of those clauses is sometimes omitted. In contrast, English requires that the subject be present in both clauses in order to form a complete sentence. When the subject has been omitted in the Japanese text, a word connected with the surrounding context is sometimes used to fill in for it in the translation, incorrectly.

→ **We are looking into how to address this by strengthening AI learning**

Issue (2) Inconsistency in the use of translated terms and problems of compliance with the Standard Legal Terms Dictionary and the Legal Translation Guide.

- Different translations are sometimes used for the same word when it appears multiple times in the same law or regulation.
- It is difficult to achieve complete consistency with the Standard Legal Terms Dictionary and the Legal Translation Guide through AI learning alone.

→ **We are looking into using an application to uniformly substitute in the appropriate translations.**

- * However, uniform substitution is not so readily applicable to some types of words (e.g., verbs, auxiliaries), so human verification is essential.

Use of AI Translation

【Details of the FY2022 Exploration and Review】

- A machine translation environment will be built that addresses the issues mentioned in (1) and (2) above, and machine translation tests will be run for multiple laws and regulations.



The issue of (1) the use of the wrong words to fill in grammatical subjects that occurs due to the difference in Japanese and English sentence structures will be addressed through enhanced AI learning.

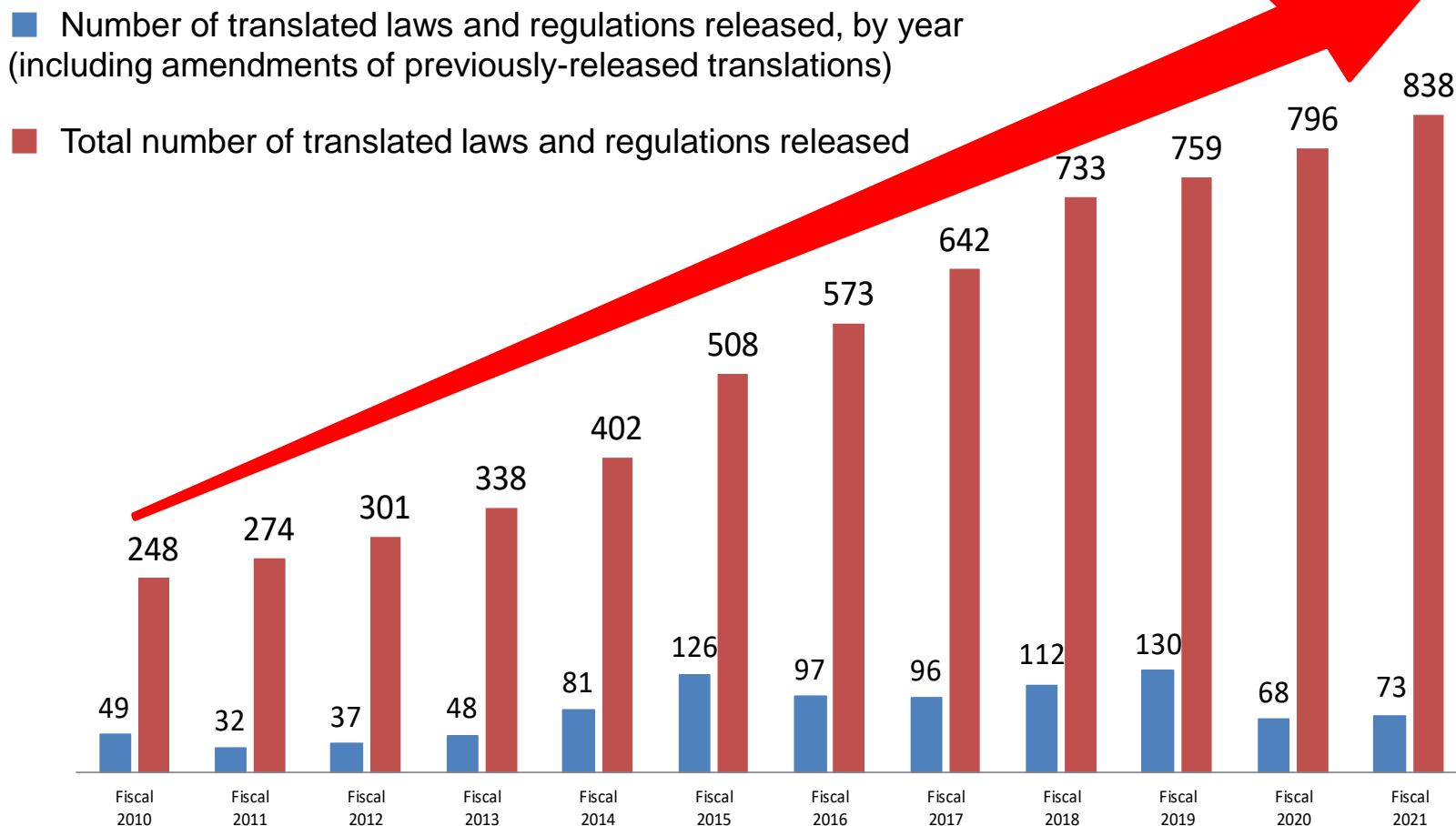
The issue of (2) inconsistency in the use of translated terms and problems of compliance with the Standard Legal Terms Dictionary and the Legal Translation Guide will be addressed using an application to uniformly substitute in the appropriate translations.

- We will explore and consider more efficient and effective ways to enhance AI learning and the development of more accurate applications.

→ Based on this exploration and review, **we will work towards introducing AI translation** during FY2023.

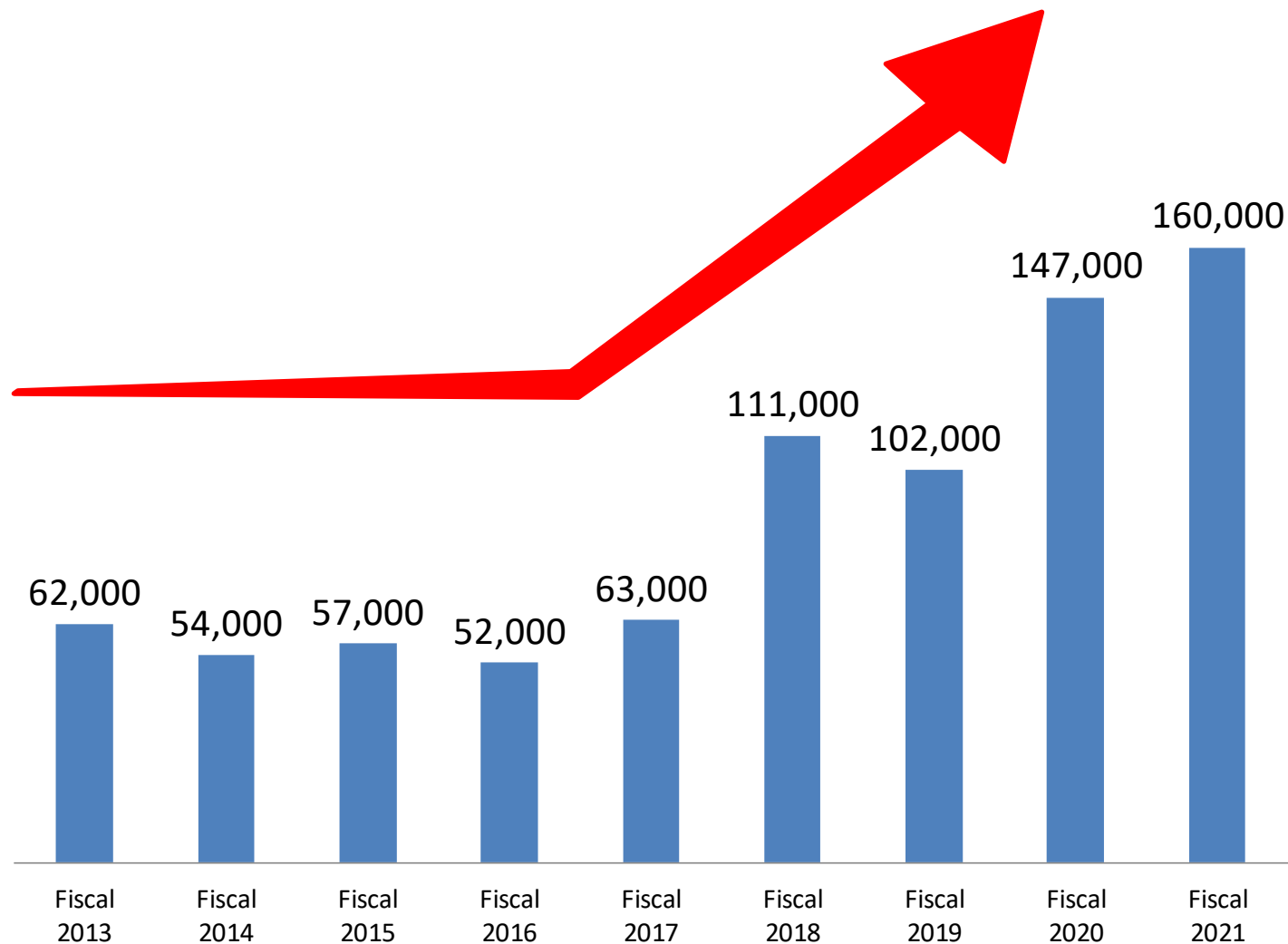
COMPILATION OF DATA

Japan Law Translation Database System Number of Translated Laws and Regulations Released



* The numbers for Fiscal 2021 are the figures as of the end of March.

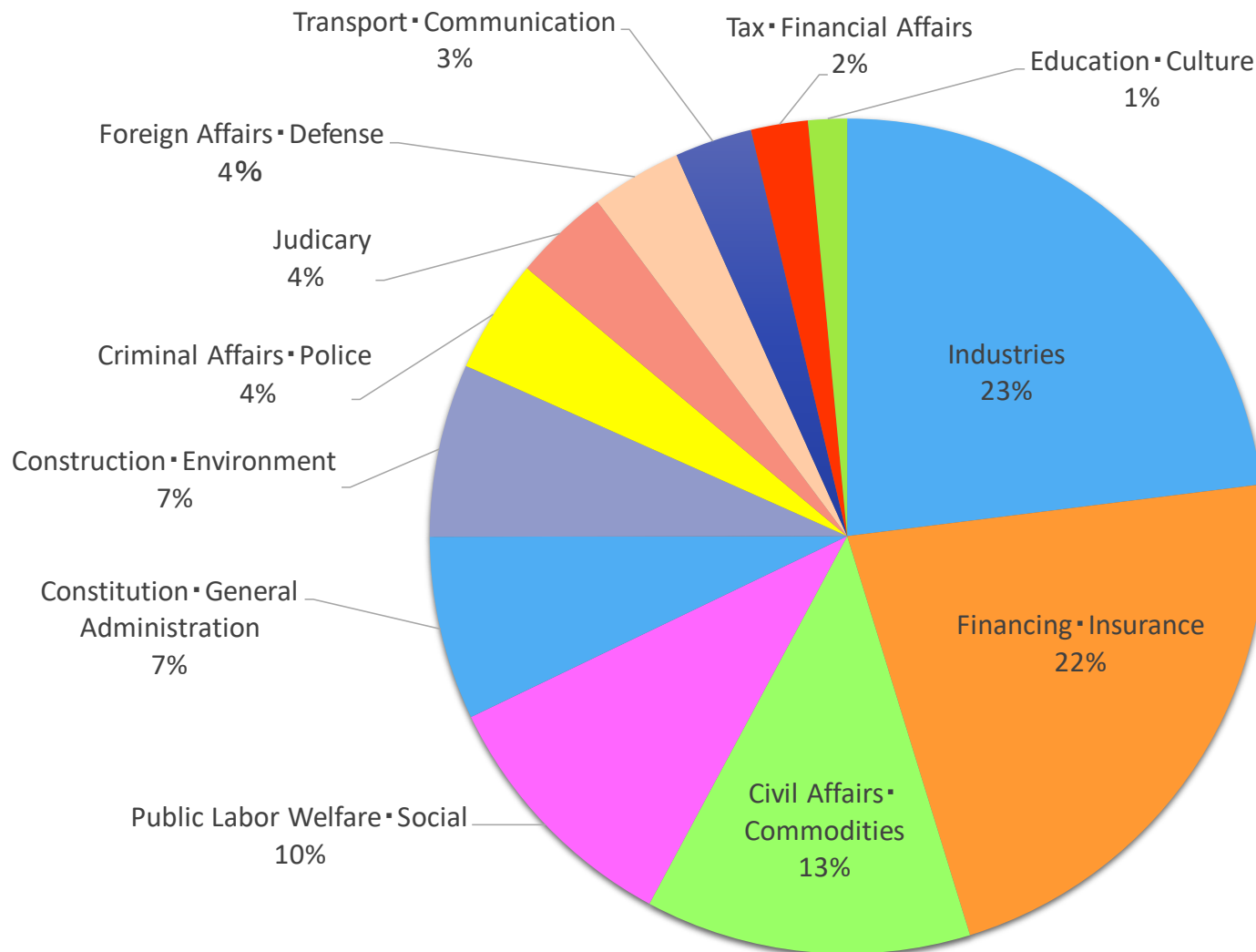
Average Number of Site Visits Per Day to the Japanese Law Translation Database System



* The numbers for Fiscal 2021 are the figures as of the end of March.

Japanese Law Translation Database System

Translated Laws and Regulations Released by Field



One law may fall under multiple fields. Notices and notifications are not included.

* These numbers are the figures as of the end of March 2022.

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 March 2022

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

Top 10 laws and regulations accessed from April 2021 to the end of March 2022

1	Financial Instruments and Exchange Act
2	Cabinet Office Order on Financial Instruments Business
3	Regulation for Enforcement of the Insurance Business Act (Part I through Part II Chapter V)
4	Banking Act
5	Civil Code (Part I, Part II and Part III)
6	Companies Act (Part I, Part II, Part III and Part IV)
7	Regulation for Enforcement of the Insurance Business Act (Part II Chapter VI through Part V)
8	Telecommunications Business Act
9	Insurance Business Act
10	Act on Investment Trusts and Investment Corporations

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	84.5%
2	China	1.7%
3	Germany	1.4%
4	Brazil	1.1%
5	Thailand	1.1%
6	Australia	0.9%
7	Russia	0.8%
8	Italy	0.6%
9	India	0.5%
10	Singapore	0.5%

11	United States	0.5%
12	France	0.5%
13	Poland	0.4%
14	Canada	0.4%
15	Mexico	0.3%
16	United Kingdom	0.3%
17	Indonesia	0.3%
18	Taiwan	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 March 2022.