

Outline of “Employment for Skill Development” Program



世界をつなぐ。未来をつくる。
出入国在留管理庁
Immigration Services Agency



ひと、くらし、みらいのために
厚生労働省
Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

On June 21, 2024, the “Act on Partial Revision of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act and the Act on Proper Technical Intern Training and Protection of Technical Intern Trainees” was promulgated.

The Technical Intern Training Program (TITP), which aims at international cooperation through skills transfer, is fundamentally reviewed and **“Employment for Skill Development (ESD)” program is established to develop and secure human resources** in industrial fields with labor shortages (ESD program will come into effect on a date to be specified by Cabinet Order within three years from June 21, 2024).

Purpose of ESD Program

Develop human resources with skills at the level of Specified Skilled Worker (SSW) (i) through employment for three years in Japan in the **ESD industrial fields*** (fields that accept foreign nationals under ESD program)”, and **secure human resources** in these fields.

*Those should be fields which enables employees to acquire skills appropriately through employment among the specified industrial fields of the SSW system.

Basic policy · field-specific operation policies

Establish a basic policy for ESD program and **field-specific operation policies** for each ESD industrial field (with hearing opinions from advisory panel comprised of experts and representatives of labor and management in formulating the policies).

In the field-specific operation policies, **set the expected number of acceptance for each field** based on the shortage of human resources despite improving productivity and securing domestic human resources, and use the number as **the upper limit of acceptance**.

Accreditation system for ESD Plan

Establish an accreditation system by Employment-for-Skill-Development Organization (ESDO) for the **ESD Plan** prepared for each foreign national (ESD Plan includes the term of skill development (within 3 years), job category, goals (skill level, Japanese language proficiency, etc.), and details, etc.

License system for Supervising and Support Organization

Establish a license system for supervising and support organization that are responsible for such roles as supervising whether the plan is being properly implemented (and also mediating employment relationship between foreign nationals and implementing organizations) (Criteria for license will be tightened. Supervising organizations in TITP are not allowed to provide supervising and support services without obtaining a license of supervising and support organization.).

Efforts to improve the sending mechanism and develop the accepting environment

- Ensure improvement of sending mechanism through **Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC)** with sending countries and **introduction of mechanisms to ensure that fees paid to sending organizations are not unduly high**.

- Appropriately protect the rights of foreign nationals by **allowing them to change employer at their will with certain requirements, etc.**

- Promote the development of the local accepting environment by organizing **regional councils**, etc.

Overview of Employment for Skill Development Program and Specified Skilled Worker System

Skill Level

High

- (Before starting to work)
- **Passing A1 or higher level of Japanese language proficiency test** (e.g., JLPT N5)
or
 - **Taking Japanese language classes** equivalent to the language proficiency certified by above tests

- **Basic grade of Trade Skill Test**
+
- **Japanese language proficiency test** (set for each field within the range from A1 to the level required at transition to Specified Skilled Worker(SSW)(i))

⇒ Passing the above exams is one of the **conditions for voluntary change of employers**

- **Grade 3 of the Trade Skill Test or SSW(i) Evaluation Test**
+
- **A2 or higher level of Japanese language proficiency test** (e.g., JLPT N4)

* It is also possible to take the test abroad without undergoing ESD program and enter Japan as SSW(i).

- **SSW(ii) Evaluation Test**
+
- **B1 or higher level of Japanese language proficiency test** (e.g., JLPT N3)

**ESD
(3 years)**(Note 1)

Scope of acceptance: ESD industrial fields (Note 2)

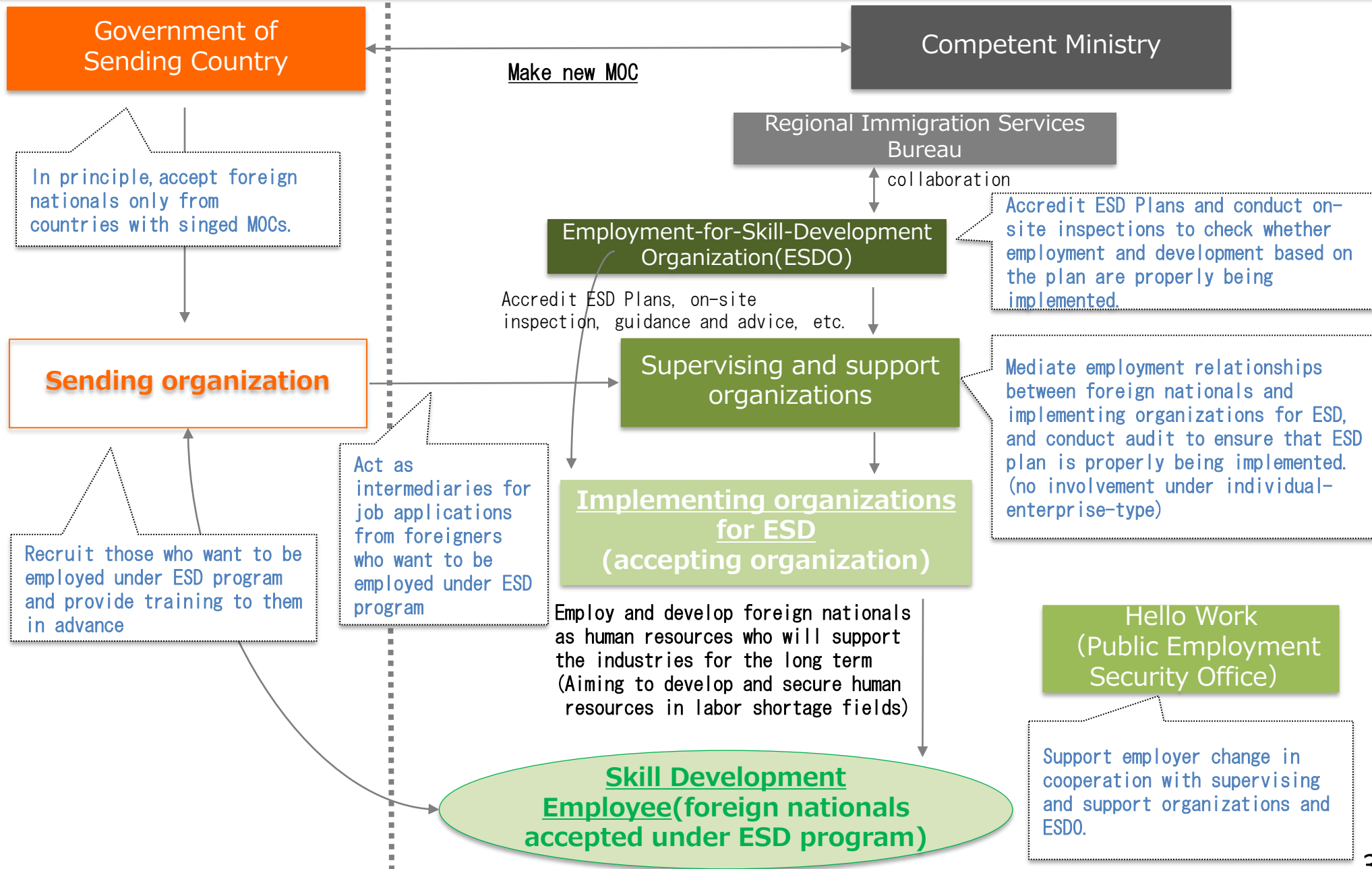
**SSW(i)
(5 years)**

**SSW(ii)
(No upper limit on the times of extension)**

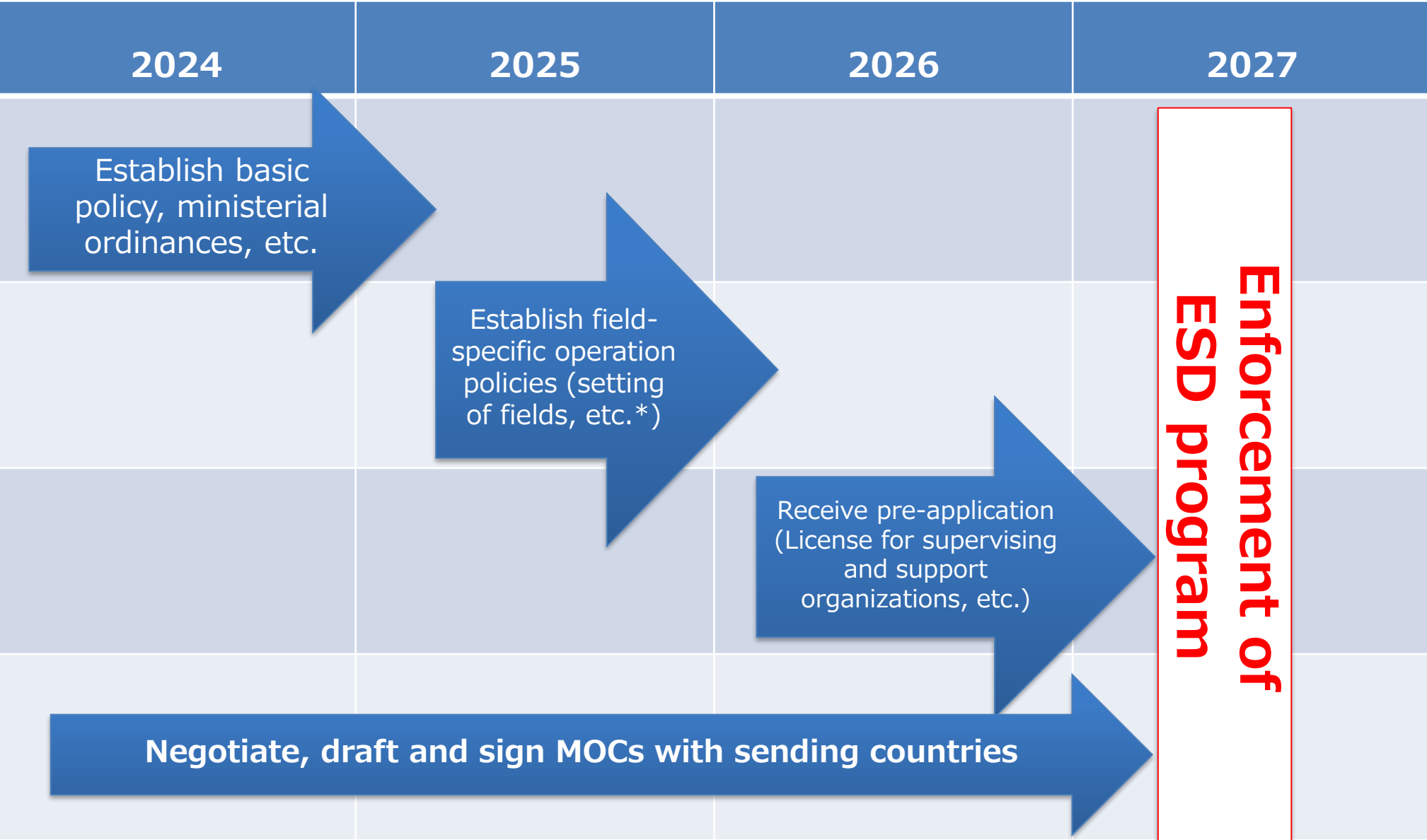
(Note 1) Those who fail the tests required for transition to SSW(i) will be allowed to stay for up to one year additionally in order to retake the tests.

(Note 2) In principle, ESD industrial fields are the same as the fields of the SSW system. However, some fields of the SSW system will be excluded because it is not suitable for skill development in those fields in Japan.

Outflow of the organizations involved in Employment for Skill Development Program



Schedule for enforcement (planned)



* ESD industrial fields and specified industrial fields can be additionally set if necessary even after establishment of fields at this point.

4

Concept of transitional measures for Technical Intern Training

In the case where you fall under either ① or ② below, **you will be able to continue your technical intern training even after the enforcement date of the revised act.** Besides, if you meet the requirements, **you will also be able to continue your technical intern training to the next stage**(Note 1). In this case, **the rules of the Technical Intern Training program will be applied but you will not be allowed to transit from Technical Intern Training to Employment for Skill Development.**

(Note 1) With the accreditation of the plan, the transition to “Technical Intern Training (ii)” will be available for those residing with the status of residence “Technical Intern Training (i) ” as of the enforcement date of the act. On the other hand, the transition to “Technical Intern Training (iii)” is limited to a certain scope for those residing with the status of residence “Technical Intern Training (ii) ” as of the enforcement date of the revised act.

Entry Enforcement date (scheduled in 2027)

① If you enter Japan before the enforcement date and are engaged in technical intern training as of that date, you will be able to continue your technical intern training.

Application

Entry

② As long as you apply for accreditation of your technical intern training plan (Note 2) before the enforcement date, you may be able to enter Japan as a technical intern trainee after that date.

(Note 2) Accreditation is made only for technical intern training plans that start the training within 3 months from the enforcement date. Technical intern training plans may be accredited after the enforcement date.

Entry

Departure



If you complete your technical intern training and leave Japan before the enforcement date, you will not be allowed to enter Japan as a technical intern trainee (Note 3).

(Note 3) Depending on the period of technical intern training and job categories, you may be allowed to enter Japan under ESD program.

Reference Materials

Level Scale for “Framework of Reference for Japanese Language Education”

(6 Levels of Japanese Language Proficiency)

- This framework is presented as a common basis for foreigners to receive appropriate Japanese language education on an ongoing basis, and a framework for Japanese language learning, teaching, and assessment that can be referenced by everyone involved in Japanese language education. Based on the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment), it clarifies the content and methods of Japanese language education required according to the level of Japanese language learning.
- This shows an overall scale of Japanese language level that is necessary when considering the learning, teaching, and assessment of Japanese language. That also shows what the learner can do in real life by using Japanese, breaking into the language activities: Listening, Reading, Speaking (Spoken Interaction and Spoken Presentation), and Writing.

Overall Scale of the “Framework of Reference for Japanese Language Education” (Excerpt)			<Reference> Japanese- Language Proficiency Test (JLPT)	<Reference> Japan Foundation Test for Basic Japanese (JFT- Basic)	<Reference> List of things one can do at work [MHLW Project for Promoting Stable Employment of Foreign Residents]	<Reference> Corresponding the EIKEN grades (from the EIKEN website)
6 Levels of Japanese Language Proficiency						
Proficient User	C2	Can understand almost everything heard or read easily. Can express themselves fluently and precisely, differentiating finer shades of meaning even in the more complex situations.	—	—	—	—
	C1	Can understand a wide range of demanding, longer texts and recognize implicit meaning. Can express him/herself fluently and spontaneously without much obvious searching for expressions. Can use language flexibly and effectively for social, academic and professional purposes.		—	—	Grade 1
Independent User	B2	Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in him/herself field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with proficient speakers of Japanese quite possible without strain for either party.	N1		—	Grade 1 – Pre-1
	B1	Can understand the main points of clear standard input on familiar matters regularly encountered in work, school, leisure, etc. Can produce simple connected text on topics which are familiar or of personal interest.	N2	—	—	Grade Pre-1 – 2
			N3			
Basic User	A2	Can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g. very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment). Can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters.	N4	Pass	Interaction with customers Tasks that can be performed if a superior helps clarify matters	Customer service such as cashiering, delivery, caregiving, cooking, etc.
					Interaction with customers Tasks that can be performed with limited and routine interaction	Machine operation, displaying products in places with few customers, cooking in a kitchen, etc.
	A1	Can understand and use familiar everyday expressions and very basic phrases aimed at the satisfaction of needs of a concrete type. Can interact in a simple way provided the other person talks slowly and clearly, and is prepared to help.	N5	—	No interaction with customers Independent tasks performed under simple instructions from superiors or colleagues	Inspection, bagging, sorting, crop harvesting, cleaning, laundry, etc.

The explanation for each level is based on the CEFR Japanese version (supplement), with some revisions made with reference to the CEFR Companion Volume.

*Correspondence between levels N5 to N1 of the Japanese-Language Proficiency Test (JLPT) and levels of the “Frame of Reference for Japanese Language Education” is a rough image, and the correspondence was published in February 2025 (Scheduled to be introduced from the second JLPT (December) of 2025).