

# Taking action on the SDGs in Japanese cities

—The “FutureCity” Initiative and its achievement on the SDGs—

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## Key Messages

- The “FutureCity” initiative promoted an integrated approach and also developed “top runner” municipalities as the best practices on specific common urban issues that can be rolled out across Japan. Major issues were “Energy” (Goal 7) and “Cities” (Goal 11), but not “Poverty” (Goal 1), “Gender equality” (Goal 5), or “Reduced inequalities” (Goal 10).
- Since the SDGs can provide a platform on which different fields can cooperate, it would contribute to simultaneously resolving multiple issues by facilitating a cross-sectional/integrated approach.
- Some advanced cities have already started to incorporate the SDGs in their plans, and they would further examine specific issues that they addressed under the “FutureCity” initiative.
- If actions by local governments in Japan are disseminated not only domestically but also abroad using the worldwide common language of SDGs, it could attract the interest of stakeholders and lead to diverse collaboration that has never been seen before.

## Table of Contents

Taking action on the SDGs in Japanese cities .....	1
1. Trend of the SDGs .....	3
1.1. Global trend .....	3
1.2. Situation in Japan .....	4
2. Japan’s municipalities’ actions on the SDGs.....	5
2.1. “FutureCity” Initiative.....	5
2.1.1. Background .....	5
2.1.2. Outline .....	6
2.2. The concept of “FutureCity” initiative and the SDGs .....	8
2.3. Actions by the “FutureCity” initiative on the SDGs.....	9
2.4. Awareness on SDG among Japan’s local governments .....	13
2.5. “FutureCity” actions on the SDGs.....	14
2.5.1. Incorporate the SDGs as goals in Comprehensive Plan (Shimokawa).....	15
2.5.2. Incorporate the SDGs as goals in Basic Environment Plan (Kitakyushu).....	16
2.5.3. Incorporate the SDGs as goals in Resilient Strategy (Kamaishi).....	17
3. Way forward –Implications for post-“FutureCity” – .....	18
Reference .....	19
Authors.....	20

# 1. Trend of the SDGs

## 1.1. Global trend

In September 2000, momentum for the establishment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was created by the United Nations (UN) Millennium Summit held in New York. Representatives from 189 countries, including 147 heads of state and government, attended the Summit and adopted the UN Millennium Declaration as a Goal of the international community in the 21st century. The UN Millennium Declaration set out challenges such as "peace and security", "development and poverty eradication", "environment", "human rights and good governance", and "special needs of Africa", and presented a vision of the role the UN should play in the 21st century. The MDGs are one of the axes of evaluation to Official Development Assistance (ODA) activities as they indicate the direction taken by developed countries in their approach on ODA. It became a requirement to respond to the changing situations of development issues, for example, those that were diversified into climate change, and involved stakeholders that also included the private sector and NGOs.

In September 2015, the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit took place at the United Nations headquarters in New York. As an outcome document, "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" was adopted at the summit, spelling out the Sustainable Development Goals, known as the SDGs. The agenda sets 17 Goals for 2030 for the international community including developed countries, as shown in Figure 1. Seeking to realise a society where "no one will be left behind," the agenda calls for integrating initiatives to address a wide range of challenges involving economic, social and environmental dimensions. Various stakeholders have already taken action to shift these agreements to implementation for achieving the SDGs around the world (IGES·GCNJ 2017).

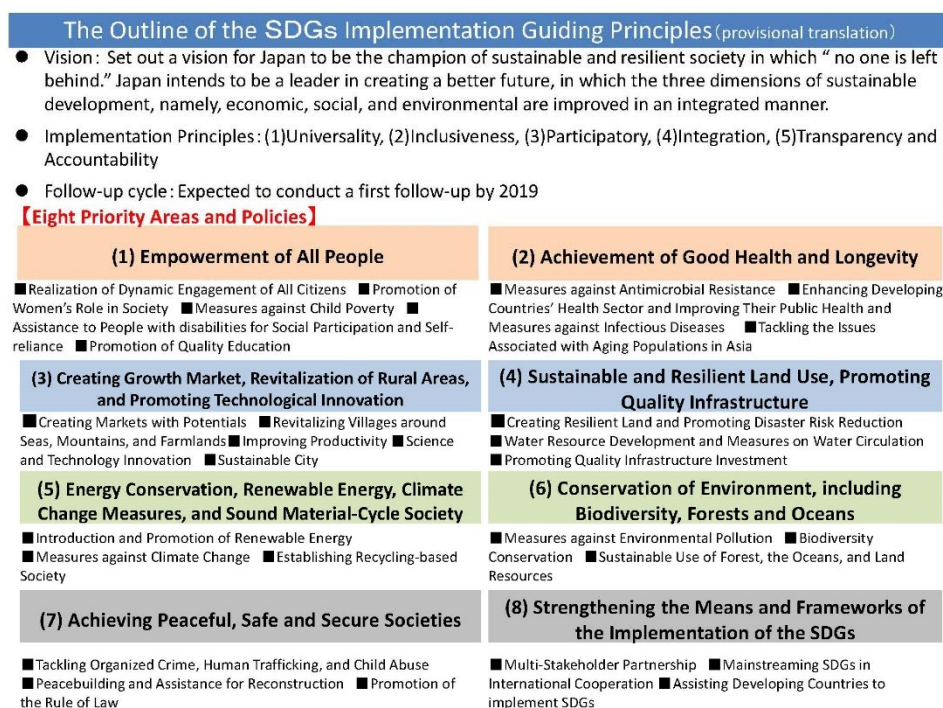


**Figure 1: 17 Sustainable Development Goals: SDGs<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Source: United Nations Information Centre (2017)

## 1.2. Situation in Japan

Since the SDGs cover more comprehensive issues and general Goals for developing and developed countries, the government of Japan made a Cabinet decision to establish the SDGs Promotion Headquarters that comprises all Cabinet ministers in order to secure close cooperation between relevant administrative agencies in implementing measures for the SDGs and integrally and effectively promote the SDGs measures, on 20 May, 2016, six days before the G7 Japan 2016 Ise-Shima Summit. On 22 December, 2016, the Headquarters decided on the “SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles” that set out eight priority areas and 140 measures covering areas of the economy, society and the environment, as shown in Figure 2. (MOFA 2017)



**Figure 2: The 8 priority areas and policies of SDGs implementation<sup>2</sup>**

“SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles” assumes “Local government” as one of the major actors, including NGOs/NPOs and private sector, under section 3, “Cooperation with stakeholders”, of Chapter 5, “Implementation Framework”, and encourages proactive action by local governments, stating that “The national government will therefore encourage local governments to incorporate the SDGs into their strategies and policies as much as possible. Government ministries will support the actions”

In addition, the interim report of Basic Environment Plan established by the Comprehensive Policy Office of Central Environmental Council according to a request from Minister of the Environment Japan, stating that “the plan introduces the concept of the SDGs to materialize integrated improvement of environment, economy and society”.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Source: MOFA (2017)

<sup>3</sup> The Fourth meeting of the SDGs stakeholders 2017, handout

## 2. Japan's municipalities' actions on the SDGs

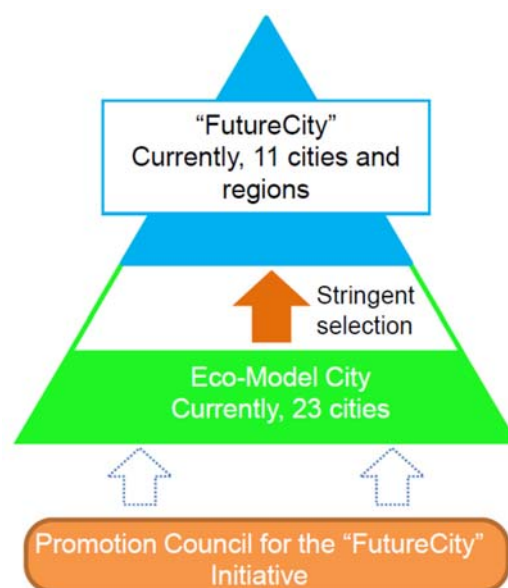
### 2.1. "FutureCity" Initiative

#### 2.1.1. Background

The population living in urban areas was 30% of the world's population in 1950, rising to 54% in 2014 and predicted to be 66% by 2050 (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2014). Because such rapid urbanisation has caused various problems for society and the economy, as well as the environment, a common issue for human beings is how to solve such urban problems and how to achieve an affluent lifestyle.

In Japan, an ageing society with a low birthrate is progressing at a speed unprecedented in the world, and it is expected that in 2060 the population over 65 years old will reach about 40% (Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare 2016). Japan as a front runner of global challenges, including the ageing society, is in a position to convey models to the world on what sort of society should be aimed at, and what cities can do to address these major issues.

Under these circumstances, the Government of Japan set out to try and solve these common global issues on the environment and ageing society in the 21st century and launched the "FutureCity" initiative, to create unprecedented success stories around the world and promote them within Japan as well as beyond its borders (see Figure 3). This would serve to expand demand, create employment and strengthen international problem-solving power. Japan also made the "FutureCity" initiative one of 21 national strategic projects for the "New Growth Strategy" (approved by the Cabinet on 18 June 2010).



**Figure 3: "FutureCity" and Eco-Model City under "FutureCity" Initiative<sup>4</sup>**

<sup>4</sup> Promotion Council for the "FutureCity" Initiative (2017)

## 2.1.2. Outline

The "FutureCity" initiative supports local governments to establish various types of spontaneous development models of city/region with respect to their identity and diversity in their jurisdiction, by providing selective and intensive support. The initiative selects cities/regions with advanced policies on the environment as an Eco-model City, and on super-ageing society with respect to the three aspects of environment, society, economy as a "FutureCity" (see Figures 4 and 5).

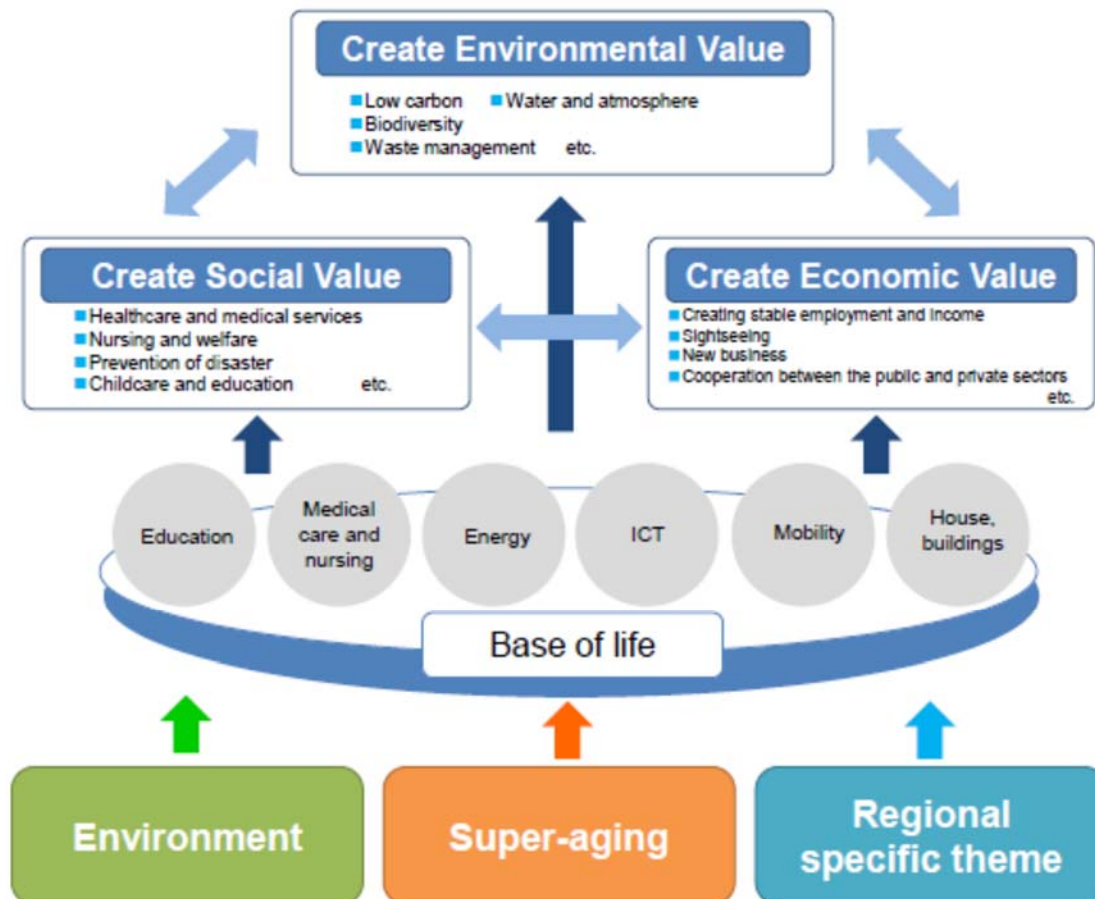
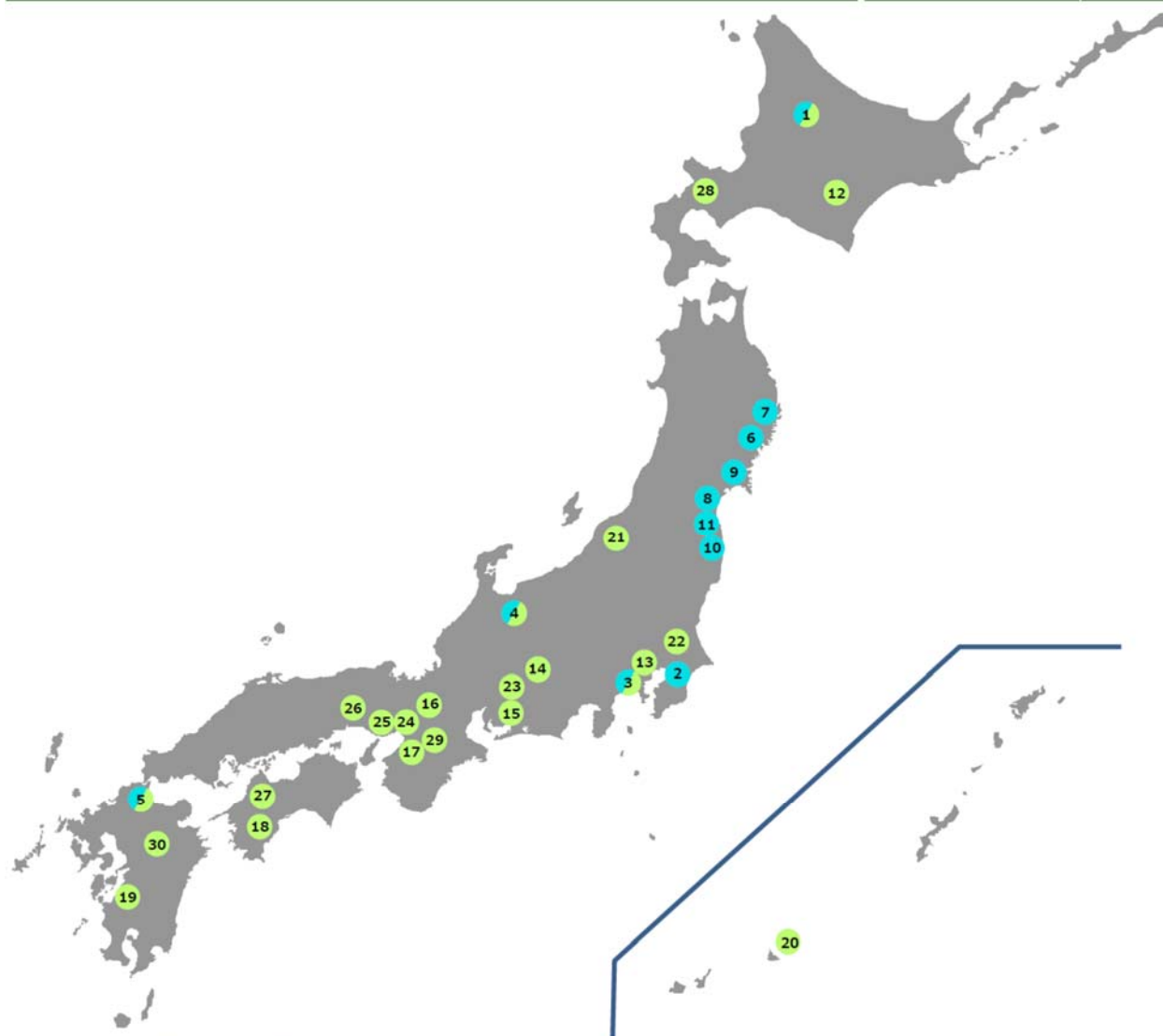


Figure 4: Outline of "FutureCity" Initiative<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Source: Promotion Council for the "FutureCity" initiative (2017)



**["FutureCity"]**

1	Shimokawa Town (Hokkaido)
2	Kashiwa City (Chiba Prefecture)
3	City of Yokohama (Kanagawa Prefecture)
4	Toyama City (Toyama Prefecture)
5	City of Kitakyushu (Fukuoka Prefecture)
6	Kesen Regional FutureCity (Iwate Prefecture)
7	Kamaishi City (Iwate Prefecture)
8	Iwanuma City (Miyagi Prefecture)
9	Higashimatsushima City (Miyagi Prefecture)
10	Minamisoma City (Fukushima Prefecture)
11	Shinchi Town (Fukushima Prefecture)

**[Eco-Model City]**

[Selected Cities in fiscal 2008]

1	Shimokawa Town (Hokkaido)
12	Obihiro City (Hokkaido)
13	Chiyoda City (Tokyo)
3	City of Yokohama (Kanagawa Prefecture)
14	Iida City (Nagano Prefecture)
4	Toyama City (Toyama Prefecture)
15	Toyota City (Aichi Prefecture)
16	Kyoto City (Kyoto Prefecture)
17	Sakai City (Osaka Prefecture)
18	Yusuhara Town (Kochi Prefecture)
5	City of Kitakyushu (Fukuoka Prefecture)

19	Minamata City (Kumamoto Prefecture)
20	Miyakojima City (Okinawa Prefecture)

[Selected Cities in fiscal 2012]

21	Niigata City (Niigata Prefecture)
22	Tsukuba City (Ibaraki Prefecture)
23	Mitake Town (Gifu Prefecture)
24	Amagasaki City (Hyogo Prefecture)
25	Kobe City (Hyogo Prefecture)
26	Nishiawakura Village (Okayama Prefecture)
27	Matsuyama City (Ehime Prefecture)

[Selected Cities in fiscal 2013]

28	Niseko Town (Hokkaido)
29	Ikoma City (Nara Prefecture)
30	Oguni Town (Kumamoto Prefecture)

**Figure 5: 30 cities and region selected as a "FutureCity" and/or "Eco-model City"<sup>6</sup>**

<sup>6</sup> Source: Promotion Council for the "FutureCity" initiative (2017)

## 2.2. The concept of “FutureCity” initiative and the SDGs

As mentioned above, the “FutureCity” initiative emphasises “Three Values of Environment, Society, and Economy” (Regional Revitalization Integration Secretariat under Cabinet Secretariat 2013) in order to respond to urban issues in Japan, a country at the forefront of these global challenges, taking a cross-sectoral approach to the various issues common to cities.

Looking at the cross-sectional approach, the SDGs consist of 17 Goals across various fields, so there are many examples of introducing an integrated function to facilitate cross-sectional communication practices in advanced cases of the SDGs policy implementation (Kanie 2017). Thus, both the “FutureCity” initiative and the SDGs aim to facilitate cross-sectional and integrated approaches.

On the other hand, since the “FutureCity” initiative aims to create success stories and disseminate them domestically and overseas as the intended Goal, it focuses on “top runner” municipalities to develop advanced cases of the best practices on specific common urban issues that can be rolled out across Japan. This is known as the “top-down approach”. However, SDGs aim for a balanced development to achieve specific Goals through ensuring all issues are covered, under the concept of “no one will be left behind”, known as a “bottom-up approach”.



## 2.3. Actions by the “FutureCity” initiative on the SDGs

Actions implemented by local governments and regions selected under the "FutureCity" initiative cover a wide range of fields, including not only "environment" but also "society" and "economy" in order to address ongoing urban issues ongoing currently under discussion. Three major representative actions by each of the selected cities and regions environmental future cities are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

**Table 1: Major actions by local governments and regions selected as “FutureCity”**

"FutureCity"	Shimokawa Town (Hokkaido)	Toward the Comprehensive Forestry Business and Being Completely Self-Sufficient in Energy
		International Expansion by Cooperating with a University
		Building of a Self-Sustained Community through Collective Living
	Kashiwa City (Chiba Prefecture)	Local Health Institute "A-SHI-TA" (Efforts for the Super Aging Population and Citizen Participation)
		Building KOIL that Creates Business Chances (Efforts for the Creation of New Industries)
		Building an Emergency Smart Energy System (Environmental Efforts)
	City of Yokohama (Kanagawa Prefecture)	Yokohama Smart City Project
		Minato Mirai 2050 Project
		Cooperation with Other Cities in Japan and Abroad and International Organizations
	Minamisoma City (Fukushima Prefecture)	A City with a Renewable Energy Circulation System
		Generation-Circulating City where Everyone can Easily Live
		Creation of Cyclical Local Industries with EDEN Plan as a Core
	Toyama City (Toyama Prefecture)	Formation of LRT Network
		Perilla producers' diversification into processing and distribution to promote various businesses
		Packaging environmental measures and inter-city cooperation
	City of Kitakyushu (Fukuoka Prefecture)	Regional Energy Hubs Promotion Project
		Creating and Advanced "Zero-Carbon" Jono Town Area
		International water business in collaboration with the public and private-sectors
	Shinchi Town (Fukushima Prefecture)	Building of a Smart Hybrid Network of Various Decentralized and Self-sufficient Energy Supplies
		City Development around the Shinchi Station and Regional Energy Project
Shinchi Town City Restoration and Development to Achieve Environmental Preservation and Industrial Development Simultaneously		
Kesen Regional FutureCity (Iwate Prefecture)	Efforts on Environment	
	Response to Super Aging	
	Industrial Promotion	
Kamaishi City (Iwate Prefecture)	Efforts of a Smart Community	
	Efforts aimed at Building a Regional Comprehensive Care System	
	World Heritage Registration and the Holding of the Rugby World Cup in Kamaishi	
Iwanuma City (Miyagi Prefecture)	Formation of an Eco Compact City	
	Creation of Sennen Kibou No Oka	
	Building an Energy Management System of Natural Energy	
Higashimatsushima City (Miyagi Prefecture)	[Environment] Japan's First Local Production Local Consumption Model: Higashi-matsushima City Smart Disaster Prevention Eco-friendly Town	
	[Education] Miyanomori Elementary School taking advantage of natural forests	
	[Disaster Prevention] Disaster Prevention and Recovery Efforts through International Exchange	

Remark: Cities selected both as “FutureCity” and Eco-model cities are categorized as “FutureCity” only.

Source: Promotion Council for the “FutureCity” initiative (2017)

**Table 2: Major actions by local governments and regions selected as Eco-model city**

Eco-model City	Obihiro City (Hokkaido)	Cultivation and Utilization of Obihiro no Mori
		Use of Abundant Biomass
		Model Project to Reuse Waste Edible Oil from Homes
	Chiyoda City (Tokyo)	Prior Environmental Consultation System –Reducing Carbon Emissions from New Buildings–
		Cooperation with Rural Regions in Forest Development – Reducing CO2 Emissions in central Tokyo and Revitalizing Rural Regions–
		Global Warming-conscious Action Plan System –Promotion of Global Warming Countermeasure Actions by Daytime Residents–
	Iida City (Nagano Prefecture)	Sustainable Community Development Starting from Energy Autonomy based on “Community Environmental Rights”
		Implementing Public Utilization of Regional Renewable Energy
		Environmental Improvement and Local Culture Promotion Activities by the Regional Environmental ISO Standard Study Group
	Toyota City (Aichi Prefecture)	Triple Set of Subsidy, Eco Point and Tax Breaks (People's Livelihoods)
		Building of a Low-Carbon Transportation System (Transportation)
		Upgrading of Toyota Ecoful Town, a Model Zone of the Low-Carbon Society (City Center)
	Kyoto City (Kyoto Prefecture)	Anniversary of the Kyoto Protocol ; Kyoto Conference on the Global Environment 2017 “Kyoto+20”
		“Pedestrian-Friendly City” by putting priority on pedestrians and public transportation
		Environmental Education Using Various Tools
	Sakai City (Osaka Prefecture)	A Project to Create Harumidai Eco-Model Town
		Project for the Compound Use of Recycled Sewage Water
		Management of a Community Cycle System
	Yusuhara Town (Kochi Prefecture)	Developing a Low-carbon Town (CO2 absorption and emissions reduction)
		A Project to Educate People and Create a Structure
		Various Initiatives to Reproduce Energy
	Minamata City (Kumamoto Prefecture)	Promoting Environmental Education
		To Achieve a Sustainable Regional Society
		Development of an Environmentally-Sound City that Coexists with Nature
	Miyakojima City (Okinawa Prefecture)	Development of a City of Environmental Education
		Miyakojima Bio-ethanol Project
		Island-wide EMS Demonstration Project in Miyakojima City
	Niigata City (Niigata Prefecture)	Creation of Eco Island Miyakojima Brand
Development of the 12 industry concept in Niigata City		
Reconstruction of Public Transportation Network		
Tsukuba City (Ibaraki Prefecture)	Niigata Future Point System	
	Tsukuba Environmental Style “SMILE” - Combine Wisdom and Technology to Create a Town of Smiles	
	Community Eco-life & Mobility Traffic	
Mitake Town (Gifu Prefecture)	Leading Edge Technology & Environmental Education	
	Promotion of Sustainable Forest Management Model based on the Entrusted Forest Management System	
	Introduction of Renewable Energy System at Public Facilities	
Amagasaki City (Hyogo Prefecture)	Promotion of Human Resources Development and Interaction with Other Environmental Model Cities	
	Amagasaki version Green New Deal Project	
	Promotion of the Amagasaki Smart Community	
Kobe City (Hyogo Prefecture)	Amagasaki Open College of the Environment	
	Promotion of a Project on the Development of Advanced Technologies for Hydrogen Energy Utilization	
	Promotion of the Introduction of Renewable Energy and Distributed Energy	
Nishiwakura Village (Okayama Prefecture)	Promotion of the Use of Woody Biomass	
	Build a Low-carbon Model Community Based on Renewable Energy 1	
	Build a Low-carbon Model Community Based on Renewable Energy 2	
Matsuyama City (Ehime Prefecture)	Exchange with Cities and Support for Start-ups with the Theme “High-quality Countryside”	
	Promotion of the Matsuyama Sunshine Project	
	Promoting Smart Community	
Niseko Town (Hokkaido)	Industry-academia-private-public Cooperation	
	Energy Saving and Renewable Energy in the Tourism Sector	
	Grass-roots Efforts at Households	
Ikoma City (Nara Prefecture)	Energy Conversion	
	Establishment of the New Power and Regional Energy Company	
	Enhancement of Resilience through the Introduction of Distributed Energy Sources	
Oguni Town (Kumamoto Prefecture)	Resources Recycling & Energy Self-sufficiency	
	Development of Regional Energy Generation Model	
	Development of Low Carbon Agriculture and Forestry Reactivation Model	
	Development of Emissions Reduction by the Community Model	

Source: Promotion Council for the “FutureCity” initiative (2017)

Table 3 shows the relevance of the actions taken by local governments selected as Eco-model city and/or “FutureCity” and Figure 6 shows the number of the SDGs addressed by Eco-model City and “FutureCity”. Both of them show the cities and regions selected under the initiative have expanded their actions on wide-ranging SDGs and about 70% of the cities and regions address more than 6 Goals at the same time.

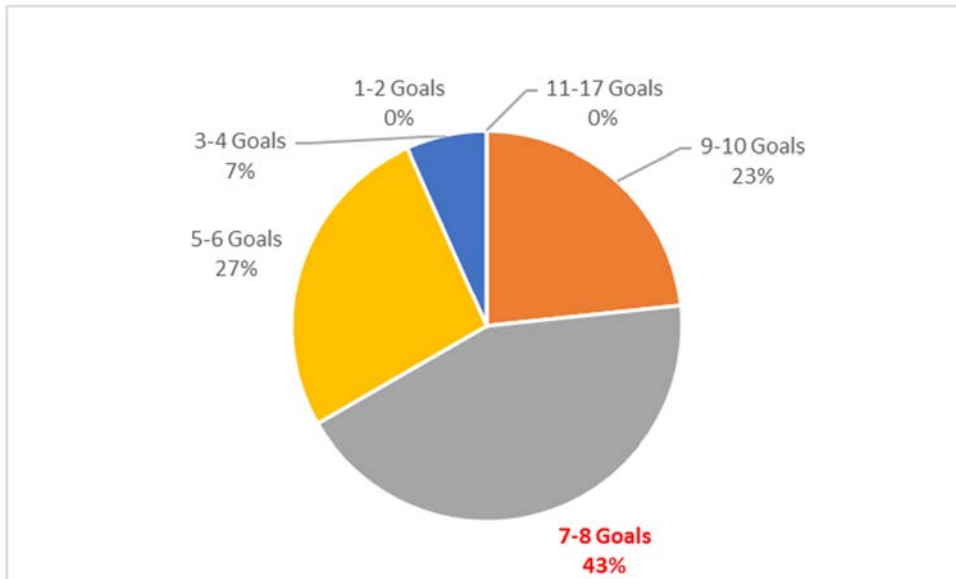
Figure 7 shows distribution of the SDGs that the selected cities/regions addressed under “FutureCity” initiative. Most actions are related to “Energy” (Goal 7) and “Cities” (Goal 11), followed by “Climate Action” (Goal 13), “Production and Consumption” (Goal 12), “Life on land”(Goal 15), on the aspect of environment, “Innovation” (Goal 9) on the aspect of economy, “Decent work and Economic growth”(Goal 8), “Education”(Goal 4) on the aspect of society in the concept of “FutureCity” initiative.

Meanwhile, the major actions were not involving “Poverty” (Goal 1), “Gender equality” (Goal 5) or “Reduced inequalities” (Goal 10) as the main object, and only two cases were engaged in “Water/Sanitation” (Goal 6) and three cases were engaged in “Peace and Justice” (Goal 16).

**Table 3: Relevance of Major actions under the “FutureCity” initiative to the SDGs**

		SD Goal No.																
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
"FutureCity"	Shimokawa Town (Hokkaido)		●		●			●	●	●					●	●		
	Kashiwa City (Chiba Prefecture)	●		●			●	●	●		●		●					
	City of Yokohama (Kanagawa Prefecture)			●				●	●	●		●	●		●	●		
	Minamisoma City (Fukushima Prefecture)			●				●	●	●		●	●	●		●		
	Toyama City (Toyama Prefecture)						●	●		●		●		●	●		●	
	City of Kitakyushu (Fukuoka Prefecture)		●	●				●		●		●	●	●	●	●		
	Shinchi Town (Fukushima Prefecture)			●				●	●	●		●		●		●		
	Kesen Regional FutureCity (Iwate Prefecture)				●			●				●		●	●			
	Kamaishi City (Iwate Prefecture)			●	●			●	●			●	●	●		●		
	Iwanuma City (Miyagi Prefecture)		●	●	●			●	●			●				●		
Higashimatsushima City (Miyagi Prefecture)		●					●	●	●			●						
Eco-model City	Obihiro City (Hokkaido)		●		●			●	●	●			●			●		
	Chiyoda City (Tokyo)				●			●				●	●	●		●		
	Iida City (Nagano Prefecture)							●		●		●	●	●				
	Toyota City (Aichi Prefecture)							●		●		●	●	●		●		
	Kyoto City (Kyoto Prefecture)				●			●		●		●	●	●				
	Sakai City (Osaka Prefecture)						●	●				●		●				
	Yusuhara Town (Kochi Prefecture)				●			●		●		●		●		●		
	Minamata City (Kumamoto Prefecture)				●			●		●		●	●	●	●	●		
	Miyakojima City (Okinawa Prefecture)							●	●				●			●		
	Niigata City (Niigata Prefecture)		●	●						●		●	●					
	Tsukuba City (Ibaraki Prefecture)				●			●		●		●	●	●				
	Mitake Town (Gifu Prefecture)				●			●		●		●	●	●	●	●		
	Amagasaki City (Hyogo Prefecture)				●			●	●	●		●	●					
	Kobe City (Hyogo Prefecture)						●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●		
	Nishiwakura Village (Okayama Prefecture)							●	●			●	●	●		●	●	
	Matsuyama City (Ehime Prefecture)				●			●		●		●	●	●		●		
	Niseko Town (Hokkaido)				●			●	●	●		●		●	●			
	Ikoma City (Nara Prefecture)				●			●	●	●		●		●				
	Oguni Town (Kumamoto Prefecture)							●				●				●		

Source: IGES categorized major actions quoted in Promotion Council for the “FutureCity” into 17 SDGs



**Figure 6: Number of the SDGs addressed by Eco-model City and "FutureCity" (n=30)**



**Figure 7: Distribution of the SDGs to which the actions of selected cities/regions under "FutureCity" initiative are relevant (n=30)**

According to the above-mentioned analysis, most of the major actions taken by local governments under the "FutureCity" initiative were closely related to "Energy" (Goal 7) and "Cities" (Goal 11), and many of them were related to several SDGs because they took an integrated approach to simultaneously resolving issues related to the environment, society and economy.

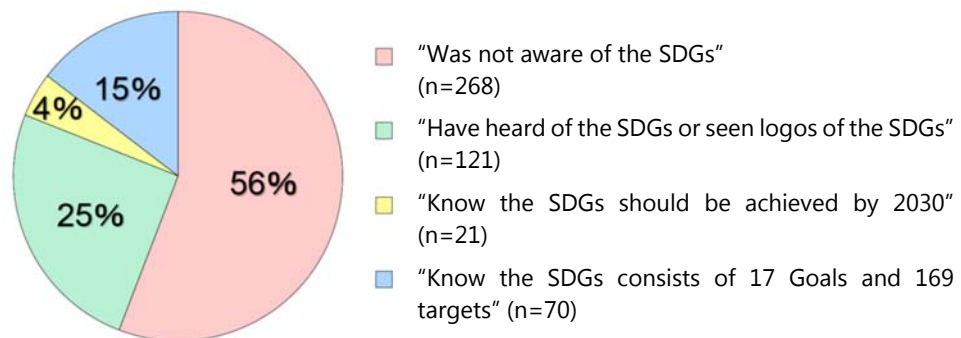
However, they did not cover all 17 goals. There were not many particular efforts made in relation to "Poverty" (Goal 1), "Gender equality" (Goal 5) or "Reduced inequalities" (Goal 10). These are issues that are not generally considered relevant to the environment, society and economy in Japan. In addition, there were few actions closely related to "Water/Sanitation" (Goal 6) and "Peace/Justice" (Goal 16).

## 2.4. Awareness on SDG among Japan's local governments

As analysed above, major actions under the "FutureCity" initiative already included elements that contribute to various SDGs, but the initiative was established in February 2011, so initial efforts did not include a specific perspective on the SDGs. Therefore, in order to promote local government actions in line with "SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles", there needs to be better awareness-raising about SDGs among local governments. For that purpose, the Local Government SDGs Study Subcommittee under the Institute for Building Environment and Energy Conservation (IBEC) issued the guideline in March 2017 named "SDGs for our city/town" (IBEC 2017), which explained how local governments in Japan should achieve the SDGs. Also, some local governments in Japan conducted activities to inform residents about SDGs, as stated in the "Japan's Voluntary National Review" (Government of Japan, 2017).

According to Murakami (2017), conducting a questionnaire survey on local governments in Japan regarding awareness on SDGs (number of responses: 480), there were only 212 local governments recognising the existence of SDGs (see Figure 8). There were also about 1240 local governments who did not respond to the survey, and these too are unlikely to be aware of the SDGs, meaning that approximately only 12% of local governments seem to be aware of the SDGs (Murakami 2017).

Therefore, in order to facilitate activities to achieve the SDGs in Japan according to "SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles", there needs to be urgent improvement in the awareness of SDGs among local governments.



**Figure 8: Japan's local government awareness on the SDGs (Murakami 2017)**

## 2.5. “FutureCity” actions on the SDGs

As mentioned above, despite the low awareness of the SDGs among local governments in general, there were a few advanced cases of those local governments selected as a “FutureCity” and Eco-model City. These cities had reflected some SDGs into the formulation and revision of various plans, strategies and policies in accordance with the “SDGs Implementation Guiding Principles”. Some local governments have consciously implemented actions on the SDGs.

According to Murakami (2017), there are three types of local government action for achieving the SDGs according to the contents of “various plans”. Three cases relating to Types 1 and 2 are introduced from section 2.5.1 to 2.5.3.

Type 1. Incorporate the SDGs as goals in comprehensive plan: Ensure that the comprehensive plan, as the highest masterplan of local governments, is related to the SDGs.

Type 2. Incorporate the SDGs as goals in other strategies, plans or programmes: Ensure that individual strategies, plans or programmes of local governments are related to the SDGs.

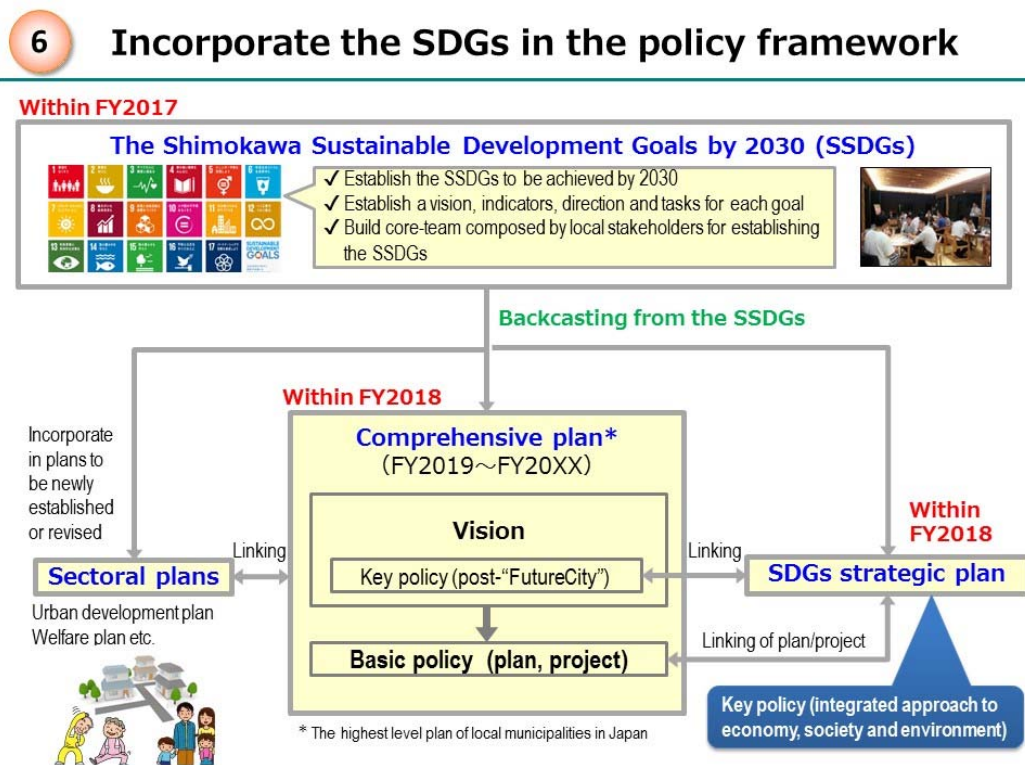
Type 3. Establish an SDG action plan separately: Draw up an SDG action plan independently from their existing plans.

## 2.5.1. Incorporate the SDGs as goals in Comprehensive Plan (Shimokawa)

Shimokawa Town, selected as an Eco-model City and "FutureCity", calls itself a "Forest FutureCity". The town has achieved multifaceted SDGs by promoting the integration of various kind of forest-related industries for the economic aspect, energy self-sufficiency utilising forest biomass for the environmental aspect, and rehabilitation/development of specific districts that reduce the population ageing rate for the social aspect.

Since FY2017, Shimokawa has been incorporating the viewpoint of the SDGs into its policy making, including the forthcoming comprehensive plan to be established within FY2018 and valid from FY2019, as well as the SDGs oriented sectoral plan under SDGs "FutureCity" plan, which focuses on the concept of SDGs (See Figure 9).

Specifically, Shimokawa has formed a "core-team" of Shimokawa citizens and Shimokawa Town office staff as well as external academic experts as facilitators, and this core-team is developing Shimokawa's own SDGs vision for all 17 goals in 2030. In parallel, Shimokawa is designing indicators to manage their progress, and preparing reports to disseminate their progress to the outside in collaboration with IGES.



**Figure 9: Incorporate the SDGs to Comprehensive Plan for revision (Shimokawa)<sup>7</sup>**

<sup>7</sup> The 4<sup>th</sup> SDGs Stakeholder's meeting (October, 2017), presentation of Shimokawa

## 2.5.2. Incorporate the SDGs as goals in Basic Environment Plan (Kitakyushu)

Kitakyushu City, selected as Eco-model City and “FutureCity”, has achieved multifaceted SDGs by developing a base for renewable energy generation facilities such as solar power, offshore wind power and biomass (Hibikinada district), promoting the use of public transportation, developing residential districts of energy-saving housing, including zero-carbon houses (Jono district) and transferring water and sewage technologies through international technical cooperation or public-private partnerships, etc.

In FY2017, Kitakyushu City is once again revising its “Basic Environment Plan”, which was initially revised in 2012 and expired in FY2016, to formulate the “Basic Environment Plan - Environmental Capital / SDGs Realization Plan”.

According to the draft, which was published for a month from 22 August, 2017 calling for public opinion, it selects 13 goals out of 17 from their environmental viewpoint, allocates them on four policy agendas and reflects them in the content of basic action plans established for each policy agenda (see Figures 10 and 11).



Figure 10: Incorporate the SDGs to Basic Environment Plan for revision (Kitakyushu)<sup>8</sup>

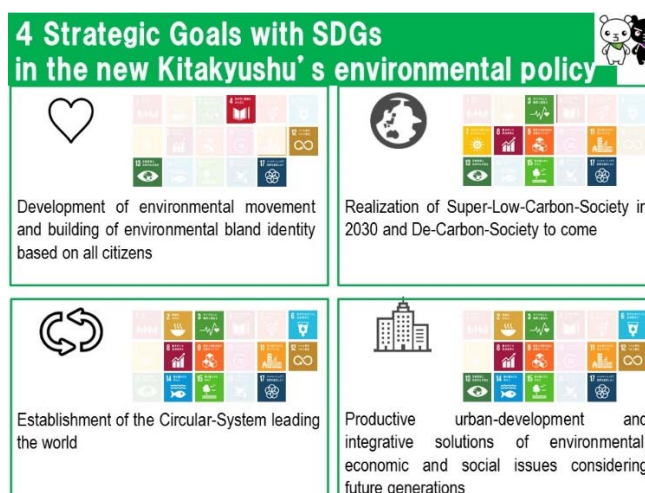


Figure 11: Incorporate the SDGs to Basic Environment Plan for revision (Kitakyushu)<sup>9</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Kitakyushu Basic Environment Plan (Draft revision) (2017)

<sup>9</sup> Kitakyushu Basic Environment Plan (Draft revision) (2017)



### 2.5.3. Incorporate the SDGs as goals in Resilient Strategy (Kamaishi)

Kamaishi City, selected as a "FutureCity", has achieved a wide range of SDGs, especially related to "Energy" (Goal 7) and "Health" (Goal 3), by developing "Kamaishi Smart Community" aimed at self-reliance in energy during a disaster based on the experience of the Great East Japan Earthquake.

From FY2017, SDG elements will be incorporated into the revision work of the "Resilient Strategy" which was formulated as a regional revitalization strategy to address issues such as a declining population and an ageing society with a low birthrate (see Figure 12).



**Figure 12: Incorporate into Resilient Strategy (Kamaishi)<sup>10</sup>**

<sup>10</sup> The 7th International Forum on the "FutureCity" Initiative (4 October 2017), Poster session

### 3. Way forward —Implications for post-“FutureCity” —

As mentioned above, the “FutureCity” initiative promote an integrated approach to address specific regional issues as well as common issues such as the environment and a hyper-ageing society, including not only “environment” but also “society” and “economy” in order to address various on-going urban issues under discussion. Therefore, cities and regions selected under the initiative have implemented diversified actions and have expanded their efforts on a wide range of SDGs as a result. However, the initiative also aimed to develop “top runner” municipalities to show the best practices on specific common urban issues that can be rolled out across Japan. Major issues were “Energy” (Goal 7) and “Cities” (Goal 11), but not “Poverty” (Goal 1), “Gender equality” (Goal 5), or “Reduced inequalities” (Goal 10).

So in order to simultaneously resolve multiple issues under the new framework/concept of the SDGs, it would be necessary to respond to specific SDGs that have not been prioritised in actions carried out under the “FutureCity” initiative. In order to address such issues related to the SDGs to which only limited attention was paid, there should be collaboration among departments of local governments that had not been seen as a priority in the framework of “FutureCity” initiative, as well as cross-sectoral coordination between more departments.

For example, urban issues which have not been prioritised under the “FutureCity” initiative include: child poverty alleviation related to “Poverty” (Goal 1), “Gender equality” under Goal 5, assistance to socially vulnerable people related to “Reduce inequalities” (Goal 10). Most of them are likely to be assigned to the department of welfare/health etc. and several advanced cases of local governments' initiatives without such integration/collaboration are reported separately from the SDGs. However, since the SDGs can provide a platform on which different fields can cooperate, this can contribute to simultaneously resolving multiple issues by facilitating a cross-sectional/integrated approach. In order to accelerate such a new collaboration among departments through the SDGs, one initial and effective method would be to raise awareness of the SDGs among local governments.

Some of the advanced cities, related to “FutureCity”, have already started to incorporate the SDGs into their plans, and they would further examined specific issues that they addressed under the initiative.

Kanie (2017) mentioned that “since the SDGs speak a common language for the world, various countries can express their efforts in the context of the SDGs and their efforts can be evaluated by a common global standard”. The SDGs can also work as the most appropriate language for disseminating Japan’s initiatives including the “FutureCity” initiative throughout the world.

As mentioned at the beginning, since the SDGs are goals that have emerged from the MDGs, it is those developing countries that were achieving the MDGs that often respond more quickly than Japan, especially to some of the global goals derived from the MDGs, such as SDGs 1 to 6. For those SDGs, some developing countries may have more accumulated knowledge that is not seen in Japan.

If actions by local governments in Japan are disseminated not only domestically but also internationally by the SDGs, as a worldwide common language, it could attract the interest of stakeholders and lead to diverse collaborations that have never been seen before.

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