



CHAPTER 2: LEVERAGING SYNERGIES AND PLACE-BASED APPROACHES FOR A GREEN TRANSFORMATION

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Tadashi MATSUMOTO

Head of Unit – National Urban Policy and Climate Resilience,
Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities

 @OECD_local

 www.linkedin.com/company/oecd-local

 www.oecd.org/cfe

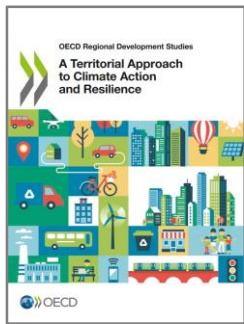


A focus: Japan's **synergistic approach** to environmental action

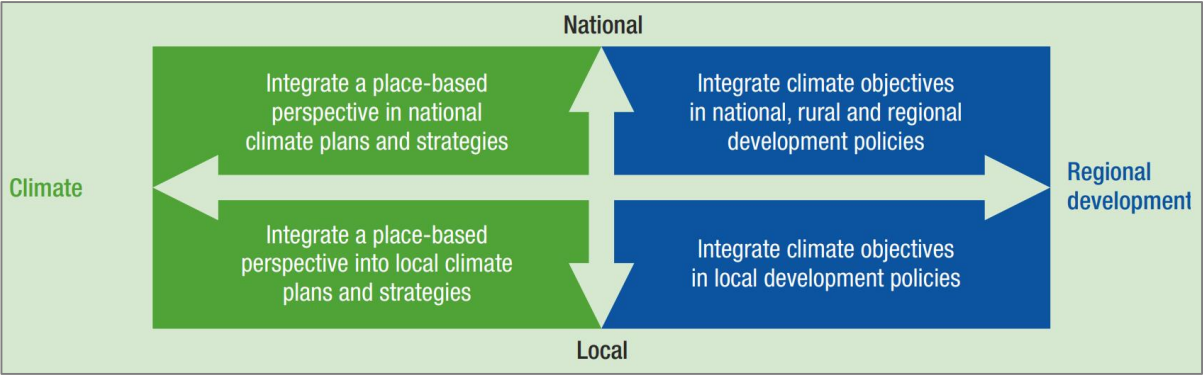
- Japan is facing multi-faceted and interconnected environmental challenges, in particular the triple crises of **climate change**, **biodiversity loss**, and **pollution**.
- Japan recognises the importance of a **place-based** or **territorial approach** and the role of subnational governments in addressing environmental challenges.
- Japan has been promoting, both domestically and internationally, the importance of a “**synergistic approach**” to environmental action (e.g., 2024 UNEA resolution).



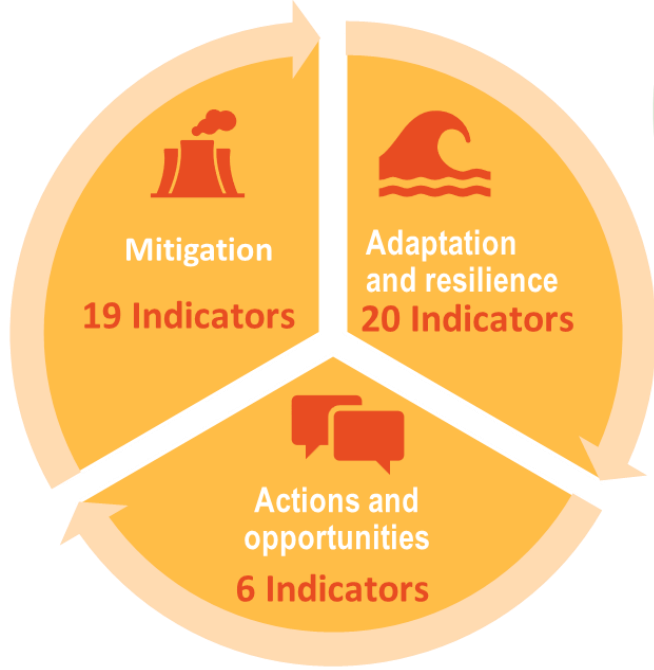
The methodology: A Territorial Approach to Climate Action and resilience (TACAR)



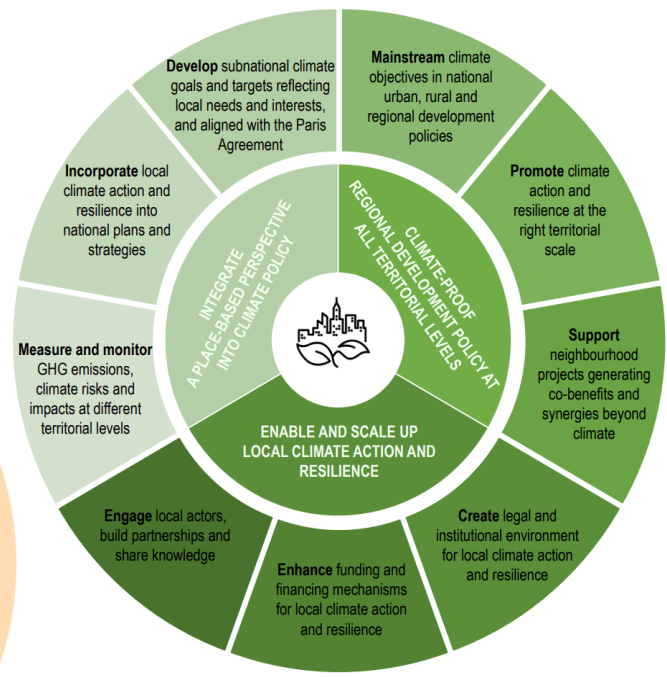
➤ TACAR framework



➤ TACAR indicators



➤ TACAR policy recommendations





Chapter outline

1. The need for a place-based approach to environmental action
2. Integrating local environmental action into national plans and strategies
3. Enabling and scaling up place-based environmental action
4. Leveraging synergies through urban and rural development



1. The need for a **place-based** approach to environmental action

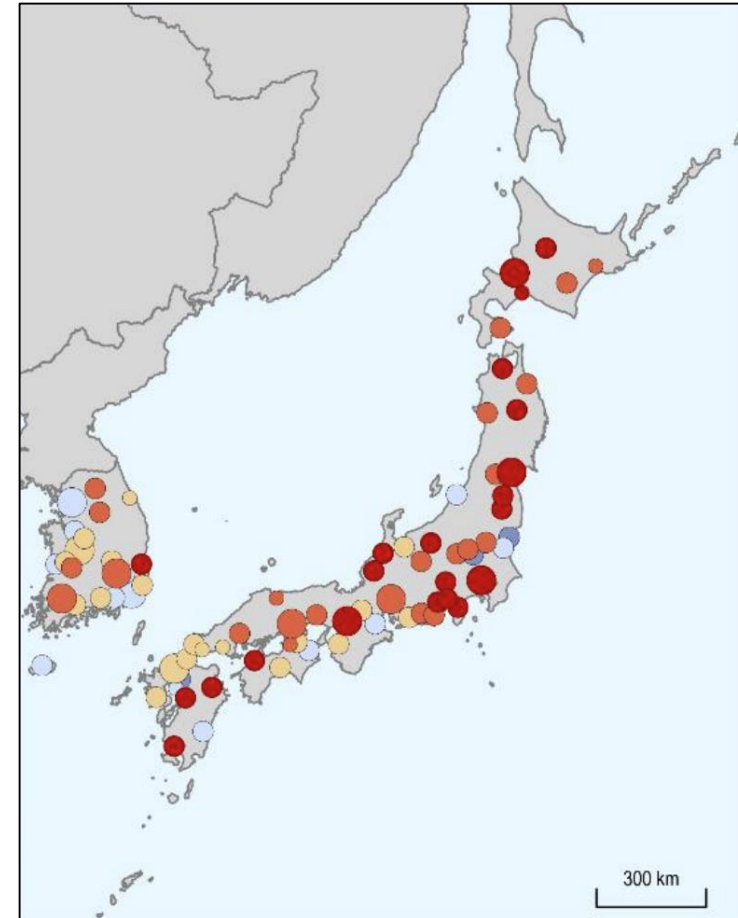
Key findings 🔍

- Japan's climate mitigation potential varies across regions.
- The sectoral profile of emissions varies between regions.
- Exposure to climate risks and impacts (e.g., **heat stress**, **flooding**) varies across cities and regions in Japan.
- Urban residents have limited access to green areas.

Recommendation 💡

- Improve **subnational environmental data availability** to better understand local impacts, particularly for vulnerable populations.

Urban Heat Island intensity (°C), summer, daytime, 2012-2021



Source: OECD (2022[2]), OECD Regions and Cities at a Glance 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1787/14108660-en>; Wan, Z., S. Hook and G. Hulley (2021[18]), MODIS/MYD11A1 Aqua & MOD11A1 Terra Land Surface Temperature/Emissivity Daily L3 Global 1km SIN Grid V061; Friedl, M. and D. Sulla-Menashe (2019[19]), MCD12Q1 MODIS/Terra+Aqua Land Cover Type Yearly L3 Global 500m SIN Grid V006, NASA EOSDIS Land Processes DAAC



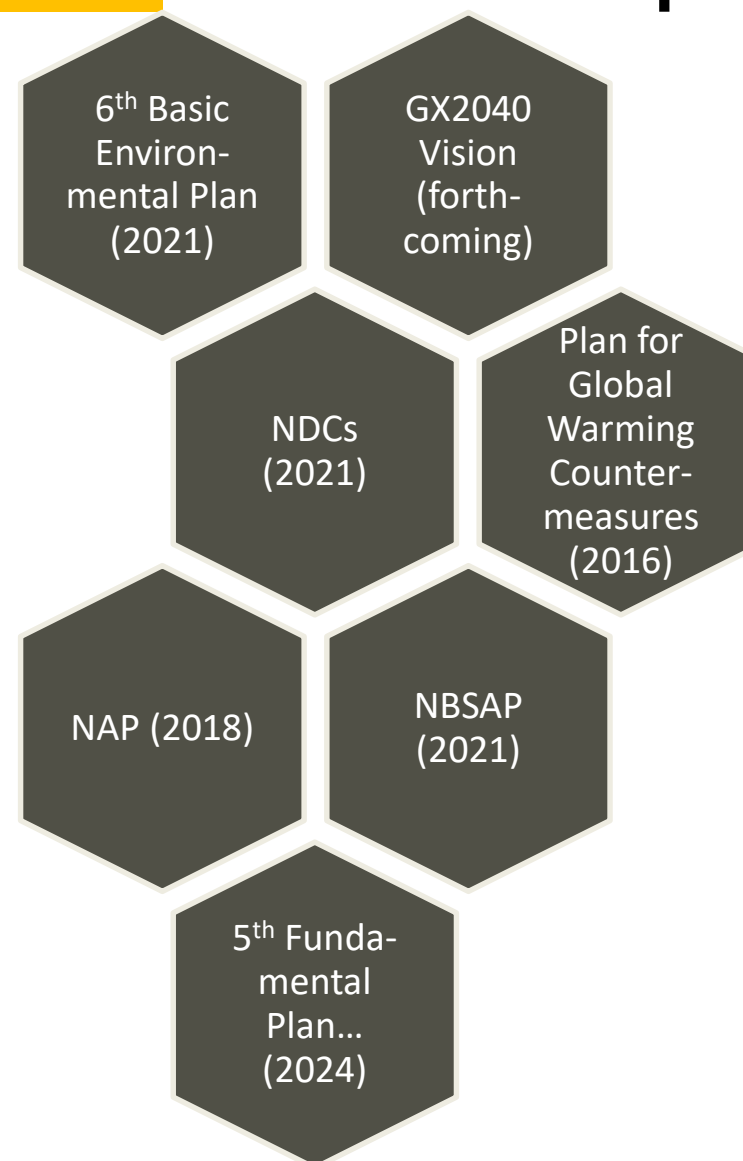
2. Integrating **local environmental action** into national plans and strategies

Key finding 🔍

- Local governments are increasingly recognised in national plans and strategies (e.g., **6th Basic Environment Plan, Plan for Global Warming Counter Measures**) but implementation challenges remain.

Recommendation 💡

- Further strengthen this focus in upcoming revisions (e.g., **NDC** and **GX2040 Vision**)





3. Enabling and **scaling up** place-based environmental action

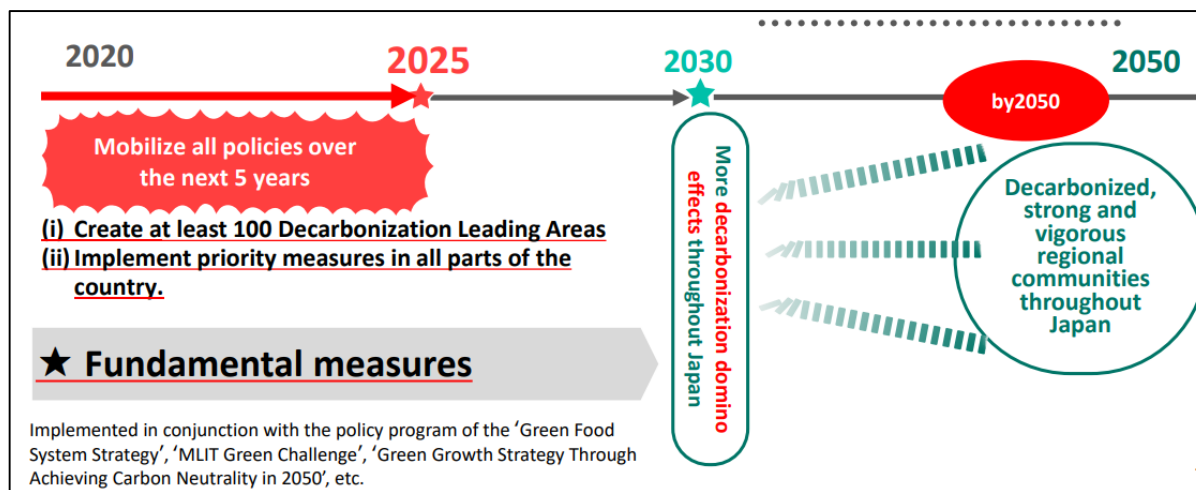
Key finding 🔍

- Pilot initiatives have begun to catalyse place-based environmental action – e.g., **Decarbonisation Leading Areas (DLA)** and **Circular and Ecological Economy (CEE)** but do not reach many municipalities with limited resources and have not adequately developed synergies across all environmental goals (e.g., biodiversity conservation).

Recommendation 💡

- Need to **scale up** these initiatives, perhaps by facilitating knowledge sharing between successful projects (e.g., regional support networks), securing and directing national funding towards lagging regions, and enhancing the support of Regional Environment Offices (REOs).

The Decarbonization Leading Areas (DLA) Initiative



Source: Ministry of the Environment (2024). Decarbonization Leading Areas. https://www.iges.or.jp/sites/default/files/2024-06/1-5_MOEJ_IZUMI_Tomoyuki.pdf



4. Leveraging synergies through urban and rural development

Key findings 🔍

- Cities are integrating climate change considerations into urban plans *but* built-up areas grew faster than the population in all large cities between 2000 and 2020.
- Rural communities are leveraging the shift to renewables in development plans to address depopulation and revitalise local economies e.g. **Sosa 'solar sharing' model**

Recommendations 💡

- Need to enhance focus on compact urban form and transit-oriented development in cities e.g., **Utsunomiya City light rail**
- Need to scale rural energy initiatives, perhaps through community-based cooperative ownership structures.

Utsunomiya City – Light Rail



Source: Wikipedia Commons. (2024). Leading car with pantograph of Utsunomiya light rail HU300 type train (HU311-A).
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:LIGHTLINE_HU311-A.jpg

Solar Sharing – Sosa City



Source: Wikipedia Commons. (2024). Agrivoltaics, Sosa City, Japan.
<https://commons.m.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Agrivoltaics-case-sosa-japan.jpg>



Key recommendations

- Adopt a place-based approach in all environmental plans and strategies with help from improved subnational environmental data.
- Recognise subnational roles and enable tailored actions in the GX2040 Vision.
- Scale up locally-tailored environmental actions (e.g., DLA, CEE).
- Strengthen REOs for better subnational support and policy coordination.
- Use tools like biodiversity offsetting, land value capture, and environmental bonds to boost local revenues.
- Promote compact cities and building decarbonisation to lead climate efforts.
- Tailor strategies for small and medium cities to improve energy, waste, and transport systems.
- Foster urban-rural partnerships for renewable energy, shared transport, and land-use planning.
- Engage communities transparently to foster support for renewable energy projects.