

Japanese local authorities supporting industry and employment - three case studies

Case study 1: Fukuoka New Deal

Fukuoka prefecture is located in the northern part of the island of Kyūshū, and with over 5 million people, it is the most populated prefecture on Kyūshū. The prefectural capital, and largest city is Fukuoka city, the heart of Kyūshū's economy, culture and transport. Fukuoka city and Kitakyūshū city are both designated cities, meaning they are delegated many of the functions normally performed by prefectural governments in fields such as public education, social welfare, sanitation, business licensing and urban planning, similar to unitary local authorities in the UK.

The major South Korean city of Busan lies 200km directly across the Korea Strait from Fukuoka city. The Chinese city of Shanghai is 850km across the sea from Fukuoka city, closer than even Tokyo. Many air and sea routes have been established between Fukuoka and other major sea and air ports throughout East Asia, and there is also an increasing number of tourists, particularly from South Korea.

Fukuoka New Deal

Fukuoka prefecture is known for its technological sophistication and numerous research achievements which have been developed through the promotion of emerging industries such as fuel cell powered vehicle, hydrogen energy, and biomass industries. Making use of the region's latent strengths, since February 2009 Fukuoka has been aiming to develop new products, open up new markets, and create employment through 16 specific projects known collectively as the "Fukuoka New Deal". Two of these projects include the development of hydrogen fuel cells for home use and fuel cell powered vehicles; and a rare metal recycling project.

Hydrogen fuel cells for home use and fuel cell powered vehicles

This project aims to develop and encourage the use of hydrogen fuel cells for home use and fuel cell powered vehicles, and works to create a low carbon society. A number of initiatives are underway as part of the project including two "hydrogen towns". The first is the Fukuoka Hydrogen Town, a model community of 150 households in which fuel cell systems have been installed. These systems can supply about 60% of the power consumption and about 80% of the hot water needs of typical households. In addition, they reduce energy consumption by about 30% over conventional systems, and cut carbon dioxide emissions by up to 30%. The other hydrogen town is being developed in Kitakyūshū which will use by-product hydrogen to provide electricity to homes.

Another initiative that is underway is a "hydrogen highway" which connects Fukuoka city and Kitakyūshū city. Hydrogen stations will be placed along the 80km highway to supply hydrogen to fuel cell powered vehicles.

Finally, the Hydrogen Energy Test and Research Center, scheduled to open in 2010, will carry out research into hydrogen products and promote the hydrogen energy industry. The centre's primary aim will be to create employment and a low-carbon society.

Rare metal recovery project

Another Fukuoka New Deal project is the rare metal recovery project which uses the various recycling operations of Ōmuta and Kitakyūshū cities to recover rare metals from discarded electrical appliances.

Fukuoka prefecture profile

Capital: Fukuoka city

Population: 5,061,952

Area: 4977km²

Density: 1,017/km²

Location and terrain: mountainous area located in the northern part of the island of Kyūshū and also includes a number of islands.

Major industries: automobiles, semiconductors, steel, agriculture, fisheries, forestry



Above: a new Fukuoka prefecture endorsed fuel cell powered vehicle



Above: a woman dismantles a photocopier to recover rare metals

Fukuoka prefecture and Ōmuta city began working together on a used consumer electronics collection project in January 2009, setting up 30 collection boxes at supermarkets and various public facilities around Ōmuta city where residents can drop off unwanted items like video game machines, digital cameras, and mobile phones

Rare metals such as platinum, nickel, and titanium are a necessity in the production of cars, IT products and electrical appliances, so there is a large amount of it stored in discarded appliances. And considering the surge in prices of rare metals in recent years, rare metal recovery projects have potential to become very important.

Other Fukuoka New Deal Projects

The hydrogen fuel cells for home use and fuel cell powered vehicles project, and the rare metal

recovery project are just two of the 16 Fukuoka New Deal projects being put in place to help drive industry and create jobs. Other projects deal in areas as wide ranging as agriculture, social welfare, efficient coal power, new software development, and new medicine.

Case study 2: Increasing employment by utilising and protecting marine resources in Nagasaki prefecture

Nagasaki has a much diversified economy – with some high-tech industry in semiconductor and aviation-related business with roots in former heavy industry such as shipbuilding, a large tourism sector as well as agriculture and fisheries. Due to its long coastline with thousands of inlets and bays, marine life is abundant and this resource is being carefully exploited, with increasing emphasis on fish farming replacing off-shore fishing. The prefecture works in tandem with the private sector and its municipalities to support those efforts.

Nagasaki prefecture profile

Population: 1,440,727

Density: 351/km²

Area: 4,104.48 km²

Location and terrain: the westernmost prefecture on the southern island of Kyushu, with a meandering coastline and many large and small islands

Project to support fish farming and improve processing and logistics

In 2007, Nagasaki prefecture started a programme of co-operation between the public and private sectors to improve the infrastructure for fish farming, the processing of fish products and their transportation in- and outside of the prefecture.

1) Establish a brand image for farmed tiger blowfish and improve the processing infrastructure

Tiger blowfish farming achieves the highest output in all Japan in the Matsuura district. In order to stabilise the product price, widen its distribution network and maintain local employment, the prefecture is aiming to develop a recognisable brand. A central processing facility in the area will be built.

The private sector and public sector will have distinctive roles to play within this project.

Private sector tasks include construction of the processing plant; improving the techniques for processing fugu - tiger blowfish - (as it is a poisonous fish, certified skills are a requirement for workers); the development of new products; establishing a distinctive brand of 'Nagasaki fuku' (fugu is often pronounced 'fuku' in western Japan which at the same time means 'luck' in standard Japanese); and establishing a quality-control system for the certification of 'good and safe Nagasaki fuku', also by working together with a number of restaurants.

Public sector tasks, in this case the prefecture, include supporting the construction of the processing plant with the necessary planning and construction permits in close co-operation with the private sector; Supporting the establishment of the fugu processing facility by: training for slicing and processing, compiling a manual regarding the processing techniques and the quality assurance process, managing the process of involving all stakeholders, developing new products, conducting PR and



supporting the development of sale expansion; supporting the development of new sale routes by improving the road network through construction of 150km of motorway extension (which connects to the general construction programme of the prefecture and is not necessarily only based on this project and also necessitates negotiation with central government) and the building of two new bypasses.

2) Sale strategy for developing the marine products in the northern part of the prefecture

Through the long coastline with many bays and inlets in the northern areas of the prefecture, a variety of marine products can be exploited. By branding of products and drawing attention to the variety, the aim is to achieve better prices for products, promote the link between local production and local consumption and re-invigorate the local economy.

Private sector tasks include the local fishing co-operatives working to achieve a stable supply; holding a variety of food-based events (a general fish festival in one location, an oyster festival in another etc.); establishing a brand identity for products such as small dried fish (iriko; a staple in Japanese cuisine); promote the uptake of membership in fishery co-operatives and work towards improving the quality of products; increase the value of farmed fugu and yellowtail by processing locally.

Public sector tasks are based on the prefectural plan to increase the farming of tuna and develop brands and include support for the development of new products, establishing of sale routes and brands (for example by supporting stakeholders and public officials attending events); through using local marine produce in school meals, support the local food economy ('local production, local consumption'); support the further development of local food processing; support the development of export (including support for a prospective ferry route between Sasebo and Pusan/South Korea); promote the organisation of fish farmers in fishery co-operatives and increase the quality of their products, as well as aiming for stable supplies; establish a structure for the release of flounder spawn (after hatching eggs in specialist facilities).



Above: fish farming off Sasebo city, Nagasaki prefecture

Case study 3: Using tuna to revitalise Ōma town

Ōma town profile

Location: Aomori prefecture.

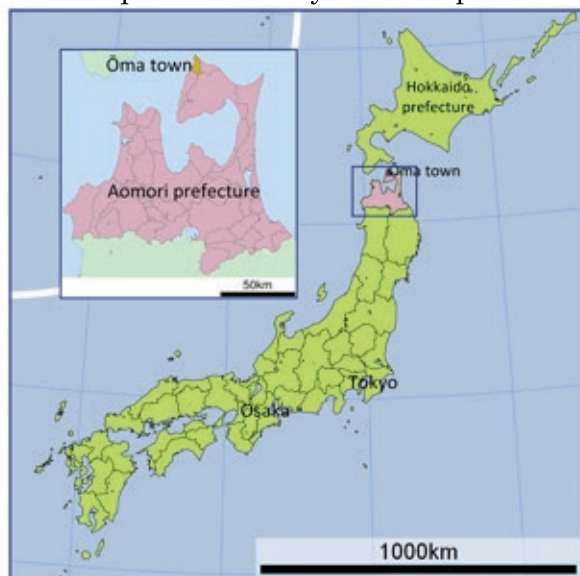
Population: 6058; 116/km²

Density: 114/km²

Area: 52.06km²

Economy: fishing, tourism, site of a nuclear plant currently in development

Ōma is a coastal town located on the northern most tip of the main Japanese island of Honshu. The population of just over 6000, of which one in four are over the age of 65, has decreased by over a thousand since 1990, and is predicted to continue decreasing. Ōma's key industry is fishing and is famous for 'Ōma Tuna' brand. Since 2001 the local authority and the town's residents have been working together to revitalise the town by promoting the famous Ōma Tuna brand with Ōma's beautiful natural scenery.



The story of Ōma Tuna

In the 1960s Ōma town became famous for "single line tuna fishing". Tuna caught off the coast of Ōma was considered an exceptionally high quality product in the high class restaurants and sushi shops of Tokyo, but was relatively unknown outside of these circles.

"Single line fishing" is a method of catching tuna without using a net, and the taste of such tuna is said to be better than that caught in a net as there is considerably less injury and stress to the fish, so tuna caught this way attracts a high price. Tuna caught during the bitterly cold winter months of December and January is extra fatty, and considered a premium quality product. However, single line fishing in the harsh winter environment of the Tsugaru strait is fraught with danger, and in recent years there have been a number of documentaries made about the fishermen of Ōma.



Above: a tuna slicing show



Above: tourists observing a recent catch of Ōma Tuna

At the first Tsukiji fish market auction in Tokyo in 2001, a single 200kg Ōma Tuna was sold for 20.2 million yen (£120,000), the highest transaction ever recorded for the sale of a fish. The story was picked up by the media and the transaction became well known throughout Japan. Following this was a boom in the number of fish merchants and tourists visiting Ōma to experience Ōma Tuna first hand.

Putting Ōma Tuna to practical use

Almost all the tuna caught in Ōma was sent directly to the Tsukiji fish market in Tokyo so tourists who visited Ōma were mostly unable to enjoy it. To give tourists the chance to experience Ōma Tuna, the town held a festival - the Ōma Tuna Festival - at the port of Ōma in October 2001, which has continued every year since. At the festival there are attractions such as tuna slicing shows, product displays, and an educational show on tuna. As the years progressed, newspapers and television networks began covering the festival, and the town began to flourish with restaurants and accommodation facilities for tourists. In recent years, the town's population swells to one and a half times the size over the three days of the festival, with over 10,000 tourists flocking to the region.

Ōma is very proactive in its publicity in metropolitan areas, and in 2007 organised a fair in a major Tokyo food store to showcase the town. The mayor of Ōma was in attendance, and a tuna slicing show and food samples attracted much attention.

Ōma has been displaying and selling products and doing tuna slicing shows in the town's main shopping street every Sunday since 2005. These attractions have proven to be a great success, bringing in many people from outside the town and have also worked to hold back the hollowing out of the main shopping street. Also, every Saturday and Sunday since 2006 the town has held a "sea-side challenge" where they sell all sorts of special Ōma food products, including, of course, tuna.

A number of resident groups have been formed to provide hospitality to tourists and promote the town. Tourists also have the chance to talk directly with Ōma fishermen who explain to them the fine art of single line tuna fishing. This experience has proven popular with tourists as they can witness tuna fishing first hand, which previously they had only seen on television documentaries.

Ōma Tuna and single line fishing are like tourism brands for Ōma town. However there is an abundance of other high quality marine products in the Tsugaru Strait that can be harvested, such as sea urchin, abalone, yellowtail, flounder, and different types of sea weed. The issue for Ōma town from now on is how to promote these and other marine products and expand its markets.

For more information on these case studies or on any other area of local government in Japan please contact the Japan Local Government Centre by the contact details provided.

Japan Local Government Centre
15 Whitehall
London
SW1A 2DD



Ph: 020 7839 8500
Fax: 020 7839 8191
Web: www.jlgc.org.uk
Email: mailbox@jlgc.org.uk