

Overview of the City of Sapporo Basic Policy for Intercultural Cohesion and International Exchange—Sapporo, a City Thriving with Global Diversity

Chapter 1: Formulation of the Basic Policy

Purpose of formulation

In line with the Sapporo International Strategic Plan (2013–2022), we have pursued strategic initiatives to harness international vitality to revitalize our city.

This period saw a marked increase in the number of foreign residents, a trend that is expected to continue. Formulated in 2022, the Second Sapporo City Development Strategic Vision (The Vision Outline) charts a course toward a **“peaceful and inclusive society” that recognizes and respects differences in nationality and culture.** A key to realizing this vision lies in the creation of an environment in which foreign residents can live without experiencing inconveniences or concerns, just as Japanese residents do.

To this end, the **City of Sapporo Basic Policy for Intercultural Cohesion and International Exchange** lays out basic ideas for various stakeholders to share the aims of initiatives and act together over the next decade.

Position of the policy

This policy aligns with the fundamental direction outlined in “Basic Goal 6: A City of Mutual Recognition and Support,” which is part of the Second Sapporo City Development Strategic Vision, the city’s highest-level plan.

Target period

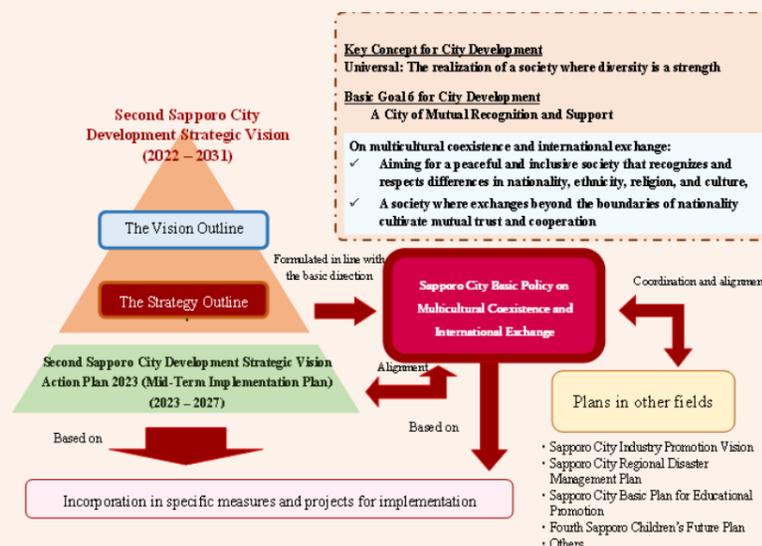
10 years from FY 2023 to FY 2032

Initiatives will be divided into the “short term” and “long term” based on their urgency, priority, and required duration, and will be implemented in stages.

Depending on their nature, long-term initiatives may begin during the short-term phase and their long-term vision will be pursued through continuous efforts.

Short term: initiatives to be realized within 5 years

Long term: initiatives to be realized within 10 years



Chapter 2: Recent Social and International Situations Surrounding Sapporo

Population decline and improvement of environments for accepting global talent

○ Japan’s total population is projected to decrease to nearly 70% of the current level (87 million) in 50 years. (National Institute of Population and Social Security Research)

○ To tackle worsening labor shortages, Japan is accepting more work-ready foreign nationals and has introduced various measures, including the Specified Skilled Worker System of 2019, to improve their environments. The rise in specified skilled workers is anticipated to boost the number of foreign residents in the medium to long term.

The Specified Skilled Worker (ii) status, requiring proficient skills, removes the period of stay limit present in the Technical Intern Training and Specified Skilled Worker (i) statuses and allows family accompaniment, facilitating medium- to long-term residency.

○ Japan’s Green Transformation (GX) policy and initiatives like those by Rapidus Corporation are expected to attract global talent with advanced knowledge and skills, driving new value creation through innovation and more.

○ The number of foreign residents in Sapporo has nearly doubled in the past decade.
9,334 people in October 2013 → **17,877** people in December 2023 (92% increase)

Impacts of infectious disease outbreaks and disasters on foreign nationals

○ The COVID-19 pandemic and the 2018 Hokkaido Eastern Iburi Earthquake highlighted challenges including provision of information and evacuation site support to foreign nationals.

Changes in the environment surrounding international exchange and cooperation

○ Despite challenges in face-to-face interactions and travel due to the pandemic, the use of online tools, among other resources, has diversified the means of communication.



Chapter 3: The Vision of the Basic Policy

Challenges to be addressed to realize an intercultural cohesion society

○ Tackling issues caused by language and other differences

○ Responding to diversifying life challenges due to the increase of foreign residents and their mid- to long-term residency

○ Enhancing awareness and establishing mechanisms to promote intercultural cohesion

○ Bolstering international networks and cooperative relationships

○ Promoting intercultural cohesion through broad stakeholder engagement

Vision

Sapporo, A City Thriving with Global Diversity

○ This policy envisions a city where the coexistence of diverse values generates new worth, allowing both Japanese and foreign residents to lead vibrant, fulfilling lives. It seeks to attract people from various countries and regions, bringing together individuals of different nationalities, ethnicities, languages, and cultural backgrounds.

Goal 1 A city where everyone can connect and communicate: Communication support

Goal 2 A city where everyone can live with a sense of security: Living support

Goal 3 A city where everyone recognizes and supports each other: Awareness raising & social participation

Goal 4 A city living together with the world: International exchange & cooperation

Goal 5 A city where everyone walks together: Promotional framework

Goal 1. A city where everyone can connect and communicate: Communication support

- Foreign residents often face inconveniences and concerns in everyday life due to differences in nationality, ethnicity, language, and cultural background.
- Surveys of foreign residents have revealed that Japanese language communication tops their list of concerns and challenges in everyday life.

Language and other communication support to address inconveniences and concerns faced by foreign residents in everyday life

Direction of measures 1: Improvement of consultation systems and enhancement of multilingual support for administrative and everyday life information

■ Desired outcomes:

Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Foreign residents can seek advice on issues without being hindered by language differences. ● Information on administrative services is provided intelligibly to residents whose mother tongue is not Japanese.
Long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Sapporo Help Desk for Foreign Residents becomes widely known and is easily accessible for foreign residents experiencing inconveniences and concerns. It collaborates with specialized institutions to respond to various consultation needs. ● All foreign residents can smoothly navigate procedures and receive consultation at administrative counters, with access to necessary information in a timely and appropriate manner. They can thus enjoy all administrative services as Japanese residents do.

Direction of measures 2: Promotion of Japanese language education

■ Desired outcomes:

Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Many foreign residents know where they can learn Japanese.
Long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Opportunities for foreign residents to learn Japanese are provided continuously through collaboration with companies and educational institutions offering Japanese language education and with civic groups, such as volunteer organizations, and foreign communities. ● Sapporo has an effective Japanese language education system, enabling foreign residents to acquire Japanese language skills through courses tailored to their individual desires, situations, and abilities.

Outcome indicators: The percentage of foreign residents experiencing difficulties or concerns related to Japanese language communication: 2022: 36.0% → 2027: 30.0% → 2032: 20.0%

Examples of initiatives: Initiatives aimed at operating the Sapporo Help Desk for Foreign Residents, dispatching Sapporo Community Interpreters, establishing Japanese language learning support centers, enhancing the Japanese language learning environment, and implementing Japanese language courses ranging from beginner to advanced levels

Goal 2. A city where everyone can live with a sense of security: Living support

- Foreign residents may face difficulties in various fields due to differences in legal systems, administrative service practices, and customs associated with cultural backgrounds among others.
- The establishment and expansion of the “Specified Skilled Worker” status of residence, the accumulation of GX industries, and the development of manufacturing bases by Rapidus Corporation are expected to increase the number of foreign residents in Sapporo, including their families, from the medium to long term.

Promotion of living support in areas closely related to everyday life, such as healthcare, child-rearing, welfare, and disaster response

Direction of measures 1: Multifaceted living support

■ Desired outcomes:

Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Foreign residents know how to access knowledge and information essential for everyday life, and this knowledge and information have proven beneficial to them.
Long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Foreign residents are well-informed about various aspects of life, including healthcare and child-rearing, and are connected with peers and supporters. This enables them to lead safe and secure lives. ● The city’s understanding of securing housing for foreign residents has deepened, enabling them to secure residences as smoothly as Japanese residents. ● Foreign residents are making the best use of their abilities and playing active roles in various areas within society.

Goal 2. A city where everyone can live with a sense of security: Living support

Direction of measures 2: Provision of educational opportunities

■ Desired outcomes:

Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Efforts are under way to establish a framework necessary for Japanese language instruction for children with foreign roots. ● Children of foreign nationals who aspire to study at schools abroad have the option to choose education in foreign languages.
Long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Children with foreign roots can learn while receiving the support they need, including Japanese language education. ● An environment has been developed where children and youths with foreign roots can plan their career paths and develop into independent adults.

Direction of measures 3: Improvement of disaster response support systems

■ Desired outcomes:

Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Foreign residents are regularly enhancing their understanding of disasters and their preparedness to ensure they can take appropriate evacuation actions when necessary.
Long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In the event of a disaster, information about the disaster is appropriately provided in multiple languages, and a consultation system for affected foreign nationals is established. ● Foreign and Japanese residents collaborate with each other in disaster response efforts, ensuring that appropriate assistance is provided to all affected individuals, regardless of nationality.

Outcome indicators: The percentage of foreign residents who feel that Sapporo is a truly livable city, regardless of nationality and other factors: 2022: 37.9% → 2027: 50.0% → 2032: 70.0%.

Examples of initiatives: Initiatives aimed at providing medical consultation support, offering seamless support tailored to specific life stages, providing daily life orientation programs, operating the Sapporo International Student Center, providing support for schooling, enhancing disaster preparedness awareness and providing information during normal times, and establishing the Multilingual Disaster Support Center

Goal 3. A city where everyone recognizes and supports each other: Awareness raising & social participation

- Foreign residents have their own values formed by factors such as nationality, ethnicity, culture, and religion, and their diverse values should be respected.
- The increase in foreign residents is expected to diversify the nationalities, cultural backgrounds, and values of Sapporo’s population more than ever before.



Need to enhance awareness of intercultural cohesion
Efforts to promote social participation of foreign residents to create a city where diverse values are embraced

Direction of measures 1: Enhancement and cultivation of intercultural cohesion awareness

■ Desired outcomes:

Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Many are aware of the diverse nationalities among community residents and have opportunities to learn about intercultural cohesion.
Long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Japanese and foreign nationals interact in communities, deepening their understanding of each other’s culture. ● The citizens are widely aware that people with diverse cultural backgrounds live in the same community.

Direction of measures 2: Promotion of the social participation of foreign residents

■ Desired outcomes:

Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Foreign residents have opportunities to voice their opinions on municipal administration and city development.
Long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The opinions of foreign residents are widely incorporated into municipal administration, fostering the development of a city rich in diversity. ● Foreign residents actively contribute as members of the local community, creating a city characterized by diversity and inclusiveness.

Outcome indicators: The percentage of citizens who consider intercultural cohesion important (surveyed among both Japanese and foreign residents): 2023: NA → 2027: 50.0% or more → 2032: 80.0% or more

Examples of initiatives: Initiatives aimed at promoting plain Japanese (Yasashii Nihongo), establishing a continuous framework to listen to foreign residents’ opinions, enriching intercultural experiences and opportunities for exchange, enhancing intercultural cohesion awareness among Japanese residents, expanding opportunities for foreign residents to participate in city development, and incorporating foreign residents’ opinions in measures for intercultural cohesion

Goal 4. A city living together with the world: International exchange & cooperation

- Sapporo has sister city affiliations with Portland, USA; Munich, Germany; Shenyang, China; Novosibirsk, Russia; and Daejeon, South Korea.
- Sapporo has promoted the World Winter Cities Association for Mayors (WWCAM) as a network to share and learn winter technologies, experiences, and initiatives, thereby building inter-city networks with cities overseas.



Promotion of friendly relationships through exchanges
Establishment of cooperative relationships to address issues that require a global response

Direction of measures 1: Promotion of international exchange, including sister city affiliations

■ **Desired outcomes:**

Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An increasing number of citizens are aware of the sister cities.
Long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Citizens are engaged in various exchange programs related to sister city affiliations, resulting in a growing interest in international exchange. ● Exchange with sister cities is under way in various fields, with mutual insights being shared and utilized in city development. ● Through international exchange, citizens are afforded opportunities to deepen their understanding of international affairs, fostering the development of individuals with a global perspective and enhancing public awareness of intercultural cohesion.

Direction of measures 2: Utilization of the World Winter Cities Association for Mayors (WWCAM)

■ **Desired outcomes:**

Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An increasing number of citizens are aware of the WWCAM, and their interest in the association is on the rise.
Long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The WWCAM becomes well-known, its activities gaining momentum as its network is utilized by academic institutions and corporations. ● Insights gained from the WWCAM are utilized to address challenges in city development, while the value of the association as an international network has been further enhanced, thereby elevating Sapporo's presence in the international community.

Direction of measures 3: Promotion of public understanding of international cooperation

■ **Desired outcomes:**

Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Citizens are aware of the city's initiatives for international cooperation.
Long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Citizens fully understand international cooperation activities and have a growing interest in global issues. ● Citizens recognize global issues as their own and act on what they can do individually.

Outcome indicators: The percentage of people interested in understanding different cultures and in deepening friendships with cities worldwide, through travel to and from overseas cities, including sister cities, and through exchanges with foreign nationals: 2022: 41.6% → 2027: 50.0% → 2032: 70.0%

Examples of initiatives: Initiatives aimed at promoting active government involvement and public understanding of international cooperation, including securing exchange opportunities with sister cities, establishing collaborative and cooperative relationships with overseas cities, boosting and utilizing learning at the WWCAM, enhancing the city's international presence, and implementing training programs by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

Goal 5. A city where everyone walks together: Promotional framework

○ It is essential to implement what has been set forth in the basic goals through collaboration and cooperation across society.

**Response through a cross-departmental framework within the city government
Collaboration with various stakeholders including the Sapporo International Communication Plaza Foundation, civic groups, administrative bodies, corporations, and educational institutions**

Direction of measures 1: Establishment of a cross-departmental collaborative framework within the city government

■ Desired outcomes:

Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Information pertaining to measures for intercultural cohesion is widely shared across various departments of the city government.
Long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● With the integration of perspectives on intercultural cohesion into various initiatives, the city government is advancing measures for intercultural cohesion through a cross-departmental approach, enhancing its responsiveness to the needs of foreign residents. ● Foreign residents can access administrative services just as easily as Japanese residents, without encountering any difficulties.

Direction of measures 2: Establishment of a framework for promoting measures in coordination with the Sapporo International Communication Plaza Foundation

■ Desired outcomes:

Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An increasing number of citizens are aware of the Sapporo International Communication Plaza Foundation and its activities.
Long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Sapporo International Communication Plaza Foundation is increasingly demonstrating its role as a hub for intercultural cohesion by not only offering a wide range of consultation services for foreign residents but also actively disseminating information, supporting civic groups, and creating opportunities for exchange among other activities. ● The initiatives of the Sapporo International Communication Plaza Foundation have become essential in promoting an intercultural cohesion society and are making their presence felt by serving as a vital bridge between the citizens and the administration.

Direction of measures 3: Collaboration with civic groups and other organizations

■ Desired outcomes:

Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cooperative relationships have been established with civic groups, including volunteer organizations, and with foreign communities, among others.
Long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The number of organizations working with the city government to realize an intercultural cohesion society is on the rise. These include civic groups, such as volunteer organizations, and foreign communities. ● These organizations are thriving in an intercultural cohesion society and can sustain their activities over time.

Direction of measures 4: Collaboration with administrative bodies, related institutions, corporations, and universities

■ Desired outcomes:

Short term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Through information exchanges and interactions with administrative bodies, related institutions, corporations, and universities, cooperative relationships aimed at promoting an intercultural cohesion society have been established.
Long term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Through collaboration with administrative bodies, related institutions, corporations, and universities, measures for intercultural cohesion and international exchange are being promoted more effectively. ● Knowledge on intercultural cohesion and international exchange possessed by these organizations generates synergistic effects, leading to the implementation of new initiatives.

Outcome indicators: The number of organizations and corporations working with the city government to realize an intercultural cohesion society: 2022: 20 → 2027: 40 → 2032: 80

Examples of initiatives: Initiatives aimed at establishing a cross-departmental promotional framework within the city government, raising public awareness of the Sapporo International Communication Plaza Foundation and establishing a sustainable framework for its project implementation, supporting the ongoing activities of organizations committed to intercultural cohesion and international exchange, and promoting effective measures through collaboration with administrative bodies, related institutions, corporations, and universities