

ifa ECP Monitor Country Report

Japan

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1. External cultural policy objectives in geopolitical context

Japan is the world's 3rd largest economy and 11th largest by population. Japan quickly repaired its international reputation after WWII through branding and exporting high-quality products. However, due to Japan's militarist history, its public diplomacy revolves around correcting misconceptions perceived abroad, including permeating cultural soft power through exchange and branding the "Cool Japan" image. By positioning itself as a peace-loving and democratic country, Japan creates a more favorable environment for its diplomacy and foreign policy. According to the advisory panel to the Prime Minister, Japan's public diplomacy for the 21st century is to "promote understanding of Japan and improve its image, foster mutual understanding and trust between different cultures and civilizations to avoid conflict, and contribute to fostering common values of humanity."¹

Table 1: Japan's geopolitical and geo-economic position

	2019	2015	
Hard power rank	6 th	9 th	↑
World trade rank (\$ million)	4 th / 1,426,535	4 th / 1,250,442	-
Soft power rank	8 th / 75.71	8 th / 66.86	-
Diplomacy rank	4 th	6 th (2016)	↑

Unlike European cultural superpowers such as France, Japan's public relations and cultural activities are integrated. The general goal of public relations is to familiarize the intended audience with Japanese culture, society, and way of life. This also includes education, arts, and awareness-raising activities. As a result, educational and cultural exchanges are positioned as one aspect of public relations. The inseparability of cultural diplomacy from public diplomacy also stems from the traditional view in Japan that culture had little independence from diplomacy (Watanabe, 2012).

Table 2: Economy of Japan

	2019	2015
Population (millions) / ranking	126.27 / 11 th	127.14 / 11 th
GDP ranking	3 rd	3 rd
GDP per capita (\$)	42,939	40,909
Cultural economy (%GDP)	0.11	0.11
Education economy (%GDP)	3.96 ^{(2018) 2}	n/a
R&D economy (%GDP)	3.56	3.50
Media economy (%GDP)	1.25	1.24

Sources: OECD Stat, World Bank, Statistics Bureau of Japan

¹ 文化外交報告書表紙 CYMK.ai (kantei.go.jp). <https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/bunka/kettei/050711houkoku.pdf>.

² Refer to Figure C2.1 Total expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP (2018).

Table 3: Government spending on ECP fields as a % of total outlays

	2019	2015
Culture	0.34 ⁽²⁰¹⁸⁾	0.32
Education	11.8 ⁽²⁰¹⁸⁾	11.7
R & D	11.6 ⁽²⁰¹⁸⁾	11.3
Media	3.9 ⁽²⁰¹⁸⁾	3.7

Japan is constantly admired in the Nation Brands Index (3rd in 2020). It has comparatively poorer performance in the Good Country Index (26th), positioning the 49th in Culture and the 59th in Science and Technology. Indeed, Japan's major public body for culture, the Agency for Cultural Affairs (ACA), has been receiving a stable yet small budget of ¥100 billion (about €80 million) annually, less than 0.1% of Japan's GDP. It should be noted that about 40% of the ACA budget goes to the preservation of national heritage, followed by the maintenance of national institutions of culture (30%). The budget related to international cultural exchange and promotion is about 5-15% every year.

The percentage of the Japanese government's public spending on education relative to Japan's economic scale is small compared with other developed countries. As indicated in OECD Education at Glance from 2012 to 2021, Japan's education spending is among the lowest developed countries. While this problem may stem from Japan's declining birth rate and subsequent less workforce and taxes collected, more investment in education, if not in all other major areas of the ECP, will require the Japanese government to address the issue of financial sources (Nakazawa, 2016).

2. External cultural policy: an overview

In general, Japan's concept of soft power and nation-building is conservative despite its claims to promote universal values. Japan's engagement in ECP remains stagnant both in its financial investment and scale of activities and programs. Relying on Japan Foundation as the only official channel for cultural diplomacy, Japan steadily operates in three major areas – Arts and Cultural exchanges, Japanese-Language Education Overseas, and Japanese Studies and Intellectual Exchanges, with an annual budget of about €200 million. Compared to other major economies like China and the U.S., Japan's investment in cultural diplomacy is significantly lower, reflecting a lesser priority of ECP for Japan.

In 2010, Japan initiated a long-term branding strategy named Cool Japan, as a joint effort of the public and private sectors. The initiative aimed to expand the domestic market for creative industries as well as harness the soft power potential as cultural exports. The total budget for Cool Japan project in fiscal year 2020 is about €446.5 million.³ However, the attempt to capitalize on Japanese culture has received much criticism in effectively delivering Japan's message and producing enough economic benefits (Kawashima, 2018). In 2021, Japan was the host of the Olympics Games, but the high cost of holding such an event and the uncertainty of its

³ Refer to Budget related to Cool Japan (Government Budget for FY 2020. Calculated with an average exchange rate of JPY to EUR 1:0.008088 from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 (ECB).

influence on Japan's national image have left Japanese taxpayers with mixed feelings (Borpujari, 2021).

Table 4: Key ECP Statistics for Japan

	2019
Number of countries with ECP activities	>50
Total number of institutions abroad ⁴	>342
Total number of FTE staff engaged in ECP activities	n/a
Government financial support (€ million) ⁵	Japan Foundation: 136.34
Total expenditure of all ECP operators (€ million)	Japan Foundation: 197.71
Comparative ECP ranking	global

Japan's public diplomacy has stayed with traditional channels, such as two-way exchange and dissemination. However, since the rise of China and South Korea, it also faces the challenge of rediscovering and rebranding its national image. In the 1980s and early 1990s, when Japan was still perceived as a threat by American and European societies mainly because of its growing economic impact, Japan's institutions like the Japan Centre for International Exchange (JCIE) played a crucial role in promoting peaceful intellectual dialogues across the globe.

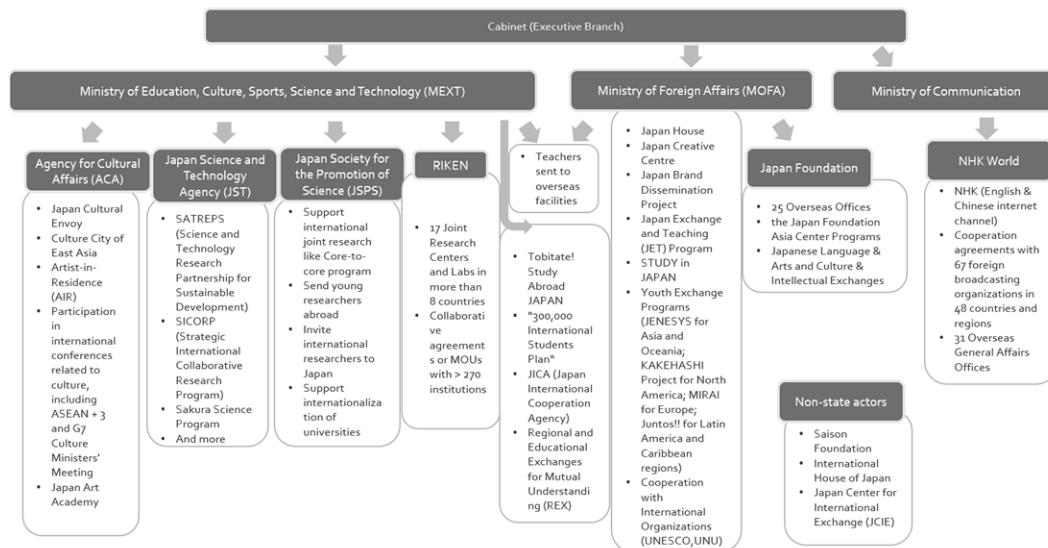
In 2015, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) received a major US\$500 million injection to increase the nation's influence on the global stage by "strongly communicating Japan's views" (Stanislaus, 2019). A generation of cultural institutions has emerged, including Japan Houses, as Japan enters the new phase of its cultural diplomacy, which is to advance network-based public diplomacy that promptly meets the demands of growing globalization and digitalization. Public statements reveal that Japan Houses will be a cross-sector, cross-platform, and multi-stakeholder "hub" that facilitates the interactions and activities of producers (Stanislaus, 2017).⁶

⁴ The number consists of 1) a total of 247 official posts abroad, according to Lowy Institute Global Diplomacy Index (2019); 2) 25 overseas offices of the Japan Foundation; 3) 31 overseas general affairs offices of NHK (Japan Broadcasting Corporation), according to NHK Report (2019); 4) 19 RIKEN Joint Research Centres and Laboratories <https://www.riken.jp/en/collab/research/>; 5) 3 Japan Houses; 6) 1 Japan Creative Centre; 7) 11 JSPS (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science) liaison offices; 8) 5 JST (Japan Science and Technology Agency) overseas branch offices. The actual figure will be bigger when more external cultural institutions are included and counted.

⁵ Japan Foundation Annual Report 2019–2020. Calculated with an average exchange rate of Japanese Yen (JPY) to Euro (EUR) 1:0.008283 from April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020. All figures from Japan's fiscal year 2019 is calculated with the same exchange rate. Please also note that the government's financial year is from 1 April to 31 March in Japan.

⁶ <https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/story/showcasing-best-japan>

Figure 1: Institutional map of Japan's ECP



3. Fields of ECP

In Japan, public diplomacy is a separate and complete sector under the MOFA, and it is divided into mainly six areas: public relations abroad; cultural exchange; people-to-people exchange; cooperation with international organizations; cultural grant assistance; local partnership cooperation. MOFA's annual budget for public diplomacy in 2018 was ¥19.1 billion (about €148 million), which is 4 percent of MOFA's total budget. However, because most of its budget goes to subsidize the Japan Foundation, its own disposable budget for public diplomacy is limited to ¥4.7 billion (about €36 million), which also covers financial support for overseas Japan Houses (Ogawa, 2020).

In 2019, MOFA extended its public diplomacy through 226 embassies and consular offices all over the world. These diplomatic institutions have their own budgets for cultural programs. They hold various cultural events such as concerts, seminars, exhibitions, and films as well as provide assistance to Japanese-language educational institutions and related organizations.

The Japan Foundation, an agency that directly deals with cultural diplomacy, sits at arm's length from the government. Unlike Japan Houses, whose budget is more subject to MOFA's influence, the Japan Foundation enjoys more financial flexibility. It also plays an intermediary role between the government and the private and civil society sectors.

3.1. Culture and the arts

Table 5: Key statistics on culture and the art

<i>Japan Foundation</i>	2019	2015
Number of countries present	24	23
Number of institutes	25	24
Number of cultural agreements ⁷	25 ⁽²⁰²¹⁾	n/a
Budget (€ million) ⁹	Japan Foundation: 27.90 Agency for Cultural Affairs: 143.10 ⁹	Japan Foundation: 31.17 Agency for Cultural Affairs: 43.17 ¹⁰

Every year a steady amount of the budget of the Agency for Cultural Affairs, ACA, goes to dissemination and international communication, and sometimes there will be some new undertaken projects. For example, different from 2015, an additional amount of €76.6 million specifically went into promoting tourism through cultural resources and international dissemination in 2019. However, the overall budget of the ACA stays more or less the same. The overall program scale of the ACA in cultural and artistic exchanges also remains moderate and does not vary over the years, with regular annual exchange programs like Japan Cultural Envoy, Artists in Residence, and overseas training programs for new artists.

27% of the annual expenditure of the Japan Foundation is spent on Japanese-language education, 13% on Arts and Cultural Exchanges, 7% on Language Education. In the area of Arts and Cultural Exchanges alone, Japan Foundation has hosted a total of 8 official programs and 138 associated programs in 2019. From 2014 to 2019, the Japan Foundation has organized and supported 2,330 cultural events and attracted 5,408,946 participants.

⁷ ministry of foreign affairs, | data (mofa.go.jp)

⁸ Refer to Japan Foundation Annual Report 2019-2020.

⁹ Outline of the FY 2019 Budget for the Agency for Cultural Affairs Budget (2019年度文化庁予算の概要). The number is the sum of six items – 1) Enhancing the Creativity of Japan's Culture and Arts and Disseminating Them Internationally (我が国の文化芸術の創造力向上と国際的発信) 2) Forming A Base for Tourism Inbound Utilizing Cultural Resources and Disseminating Internationally (文化資源を活用した観光インバウンドのための拠点形成と国際的発信) 3) International Centre for Arts and Culture Formation Project (国際文化芸術発信拠点形成事業) 4) Dissemination of Japanese culture & Promotion of exchange (日本文化の発信・交流の推進) 5) Nomination of World Heritage and Intangible Cultural Heritage (世界遺産・無形文化遺産の推薦等事業) 6) Promotion of international cooperation for the protection of cultural heritage (文化遺産保護等国際協力の推進).

¹⁰ Outline of the FY 2015 Budget for the Agency for Cultural Affairs Budget (2015年度文化庁予算の概要). The number of is the sum of three items – 1) Dissemination of Japanese culture & Promotion of exchange (日本文化の発信・交流の推進) 2) Promotion of International Cooperation for the Protection of Cultural Heritage (文化遺産保護等国際協力の推進) 3) Regional Revitalization and International Communication Through Culture and Arts (文化芸術による地域活性化・国際発信). Calculated with an average exchange rate of JPY to EUR 1: 0.007550 from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016; 1: 0.008283 from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

3.2. Language

Table 6: Key figures on language promotion

<i>Japan Foundation</i>	2019	2015
Number of countries where courses are offered	92 ⁽²⁰²⁰⁾ 11	91 ¹²
Number of Language Institutions	18,661	n/a
Number of students enrolled	JF Language Courses: ~15,000 JF in total: 3,851,774	JF Language Courses: 19,542
Number of candidates for Japanese language qualifications ¹³	6 1,168,535	659,519
Number of language teachers	77,323	n/a
Budget (€ million)	62.22	42.40
Government financial support (€ million) ¹⁴	49.72	33.88

Language is another focus of Japan's foreign education policies. Worldwide, more than 3.66 million people in 137 countries and regions study Japanese, not only for the practical purpose of studying and working in Japan, but also because of their interest in Japanese pop-culture. This figure is significantly smaller than that of people learning French (120 million) and Chinese (25 million). The Japanese-Language Proficiency Test is held in 249 cities within 85 countries and regions worldwide, and approximately 1.01 million people took the test in Japan and overseas in 2018.

Through the Japan Foundation, the Japanese government develops the "JF Nihongo Network" (also known as the "Sakura Network") that links language institutions and teacher associations and dispatches language specialists and teachers overseas. As of 2020 July, the Nihongo Network has 292 member institutions in 92 countries across the world. A total of 145 specialists and 340 overseas teachers were dispatched in 2019. In addition, Japanese citizens are dispatched to educational institutions mainly in Southeast Asia as "Nihongo Partners." In 2018, 1,860 Japanese were sent abroad, and the number continued to expand over 3,000 in total by 2020.

¹¹ The JF Nihongo Network. 292 member institutions in 92 countries as of July 2020. <https://www.jpj.go.jp/e/project/japanese/education/network>

¹² The JF Nihongo Network. 284 organizations in 91 countries/regions.

¹³ For the Japanese-Language Proficiency Tests (JLPT).

¹⁴ Refer to The Japan Foundation Annual Report 2015-2016 & 2019-2020.

3.3. Primary and secondary education

Table 7: Key figures on primary and secondary education

	2019	2015
Number of countries	50	n/a
Number of schools ¹⁵	Japanese schools (Nihonjin gakkō): 95 Supplementary Japanese schools (Hoshū jugyō kō): 228	Japanese schools (Nihonjin gakkō): ~90 Supplementary Japanese schools (Hoshū jugyō kō): ~200
Number of students ¹⁶	Japanese schools (Nihonjin gakkō): 19,703 Supplementary Japanese schools (Hoshū jugyō kō): 21,717	Japanese schools (Nihonjin gakkō): >20,500 Supplementary Japanese schools (Hoshū jugyō kō): ~20,000
Number of staff / teachers ¹⁷	1,299	1,084
Budget (€ million)	150.63 ¹⁸	134.33 ¹⁹
Government financial support (€ million)	n/a	n/a

To this day, Japan still has large groups of overseas Japanese descendants worldwide, especially in South America.²⁰ To ensure and strengthen overseas exposure to Japanese education, MOFA, in cooperation with MEXT, works to provide assistance to Japanese schools and supplementary schools. Japan also invests heavily in promoting high school exchanges as MOFA and MEXT work together to dispatch teachers to overseas educational facilities and raise awareness of youth exchange programs in designated regions. For example, Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths (JENESYS) is for Asia and Oceania, KAKEHASHI (Bridge in English) Project for North America, MIRAI for Europe, and Juntos!! for Latin America and Caribbean regions. Japan's diplomatic missions and embassies also play a crucial role in advertising and coordinating these exchanges and scholarships.

¹⁵ Refer to the "List of accredited overseas educational institutions." There are also 8 overseas private schools that are not included: https://warp.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/8965508/www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shotou/clarinet/002/006/001/003.htm.

¹⁶ Refer to "Overview of overseas educational facilities." Also refer to "Overseas Education Facilities Future Strategy 2030."

¹⁷ https://warp.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/11402417/www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/activity/detail/2017/20170825_2.htm

¹⁸ FY2019 Draft Budget for Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (2019年度文部科学関係予算(案)主要事). The budget mainly includes 1) Dispatch of teachers to overseas educational facilities and promotion of overseas children's education (在外教育施設教員派遣事業等及び海外子女教育の推進) 2) Promotion of international exchange for high school students (高校生の国際交流の促進).

¹⁹ FY2015 Draft Budget for Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (2015年度文部科学関係予算(案)主要事). Pp. 14 under the subcategory of Expansion of dispatched teachers to overseas educational facilities (在外教育施設への派遣教員の拡充).

²⁰ Refer to pp.108 of Diplomatic Bluebook 2020 for more history of the Nikkei people.

In addition, foreigners are welcomed to work as language teachers in Japanese primary and secondary schools through the Japan Exchange and Teaching (JET) program. In 2019, 5,234 people have participated in the program as Assistant Language Teachers (ALT) and 514 as Coordinators for International Relations (CIR) from 57 countries.

3.4. Tertiary education and science

Table 8: Key figures on tertiary education and science

	2019	2015
Number of countries ²¹	75 ⁽²⁰¹⁸⁾	67
Number of universities / colleges abroad	Overseas Centres of Excellence Established by Japanese Universities: 690 ⁽²⁰¹⁸⁾	Overseas Centres of Excellence Established by Japanese Universities: 587
Number of domestic universities / colleges ²²	786	779
Number of Inter-university exchange agreements	44,814 ⁽²⁰¹⁸⁾	31,929
Number of students	n/a	n/a
Number of foreign students	Inbound: 302,166 ²³ Outbound: 107,346 ²⁴	Inbound: 231,841 Outbound: 54,455 ²⁵
Number of government scholarships awarded ²⁶	11,276	11,263
Number of staff / teachers ²⁷	1,589 ⁽²⁰¹⁸⁾	1,399
Budget (€ million)	284.73 ²⁸	255.28 ²⁹
Government financial support (€ million)	n/a	n/a

²¹ Refer to the "Results of a survey on inter-university exchange agreements with overseas universities and their bases of operations overseas."

²² Refer to the "2020 School Basic Survey (Finalized)."

²³ Refer to pp. 626 of the Japan Statistical Yearbook 2021 under the section 25. Education.

²⁴ Refer to the "Survey Results of Japanese Students Studying Abroad in 2019."

²⁵ Refer to the "Results of Survey on Study Abroad Status of Japanese Students Based on Agreements."

²⁶ Refer to pp.23 under the subcategory of Government-sponsored Foreign Student System (国費外国人留学生制度) with a budget of 18,545 billion yen of the FY2019 Draft Budget for Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

²⁷ The number is the sum of dispatched staff and locally hired staff.

²⁸ Refer to pp. 23 under the category of Enhancing Exchanges with International Students at Universities (大学等の留学生交流の充実) of the FY2019 Draft Budget for Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

²⁹ Refer to pp. 15 under the category of Enhancing Exchanges with International Students at Universities (大学等の留学生交流の充実) of the FY2015 Draft Budget for Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

To encourage the inflow of international students from Asia and other parts of the world, the Japanese government initiated the “300,000 Foreign Students Plan by 2020” in 2008. The plan aims to increase the presence of international students in Japanese universities and offer them further career opportunities to stay in Japan. Seven ministries are involved in this initiative, with the JASSO (Japan Student Services Organization) administering scholarships and loan programs. For the past decade, under the main category of Enhancing Exchanges with International Students at Universities (大学等の留学生交流の充実), an average amount of €250 million is channeled to support the initiative annually. However, notably, MEXT’s budget for government-sponsored scholarships has decreased significantly from 22.2 billion JPY in 2008 to 18.5 billion in 2020, and its budget for the International Student Acceptance Promotion Program from 8.08 billion in 2008 to 3.55 billion.³⁰

The number of international students in Japan has grown exponentially since 2012, especially that at universities. By May 2020, 312,214 international students are studying in Japan, and 9,220 have received government scholarships. As a result of the “300,000 Foreign Students Plan By 2020,” Japanese universities are increasingly internationalized, with the number of inter-university exchange agreements tripling over the past decade (from 2009 to 2019).³¹

	2019	2015
Number of countries ³²	>50	n/a
Number of institutes	JST: 5 ⁽²⁰²¹⁾ JSPS: 11 ⁽²⁰²¹⁾ RIKEN: 19 ⁽²⁰²¹⁾	n/a
Number of research-related agreements ³³	>578	>532
Number of projects	JST: 705 ^(from 2003 to 2018) ³⁴	n/a
Number scientists in exchange programs ³⁵	Sent abroad: 158,912 Received abroad: 35,228	Sent abroad: 170,654 Received abroad: 39,626

³⁰ Refer to the “Formulation of the outline of the ‘300,000 Foreign Students Plan.’”

³¹ Refer to the “Outline of the ‘300,000 Foreign Students Plan’ for more detailed programs and plants. Retrieved from https://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/koutou/ryugaku/_icsFiles/afieldfile/2019/09/18/1420758_002.pdf

³² https://www.jsps.go.jp/links/link_j.html#list; <https://www.jst.go.jp/EN/about/jstdata.html>

³³ Refer to the “Report on The Survey on Exchange of Researchers International Research Exchange: International Research Exchange Status for FY2019”

³⁴ The number consists of two parts - 570 projects with 39*1countries and regions (2003-2018) under the two programs based on inter-governmental frameworks mainly with leading countries and regions, to contribute solutions to global challenges. *1: Total number (SICP/SICORP) and 135projects with 50countries (2008-2019) under the partnership between counterpart countries of official development assistance (ODA) and Japan, based on the sustainable development needs of developing countries.

³⁵ Refer to the “Overview of International Research Exchange (Status in FY2019).” The exchanges in FY 2019 are significantly affected by the pandemic. Otherwise, the trend is going upwards steadily since 2011.

	2019	2015
Budget (€ million)	MEXT: 116.27 ³⁶ JF (Japanese studies and intellectual exchange programs): 14.15 Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST): 21.67 ^{(2021) 37} Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS): 46.91 ^{(2020) 38}	MEXT: 114.18 ³⁹ JF (Japanese studies and intellectual exchange programs): 15.67
Government financial support (€ million)	JF (Japanese studies and intellectual exchange programs): 8.31	JF (Japanese studies and intellectual exchange programs): 8.97

Under MEXT, there are a number of research institutions and agencies that have overseas offices and conduct direct exchange programs with other counterparts across the world. Major ones include the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST), the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JSPS), and RIKEN. The two major projects under JST are SATREPS (Science and Technology Research Partnership for Sustainable Development) and SICORP (Strategic International Collaborative Research Program), involving 23 countries and the European Union. JSPS has a similar focus on bilateral exchange, but its regional focus is complementary to JST with core-to-core programs conducted in partnership with African countries.

Additionally, RIKEN is a government-supported private research foundation, and it is known for cutting-edge and high-quality research. As of October 1, 2020, the number of foreign research staff in RIKEN's overseas facilities has reached 803, of which 497 are enrolled as researchers. Its budget in 2021 is about €792 million, more than half (54.5%) of which is supported by the government.⁴⁰

³⁶ Refer to pp. 46 under the category of Strategic International Development of Science and Technology Innovation (科学技術イノベーションの戦略的国際展開) of the FY2019 Draft Budget for Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology. The budget is divided into three major parts – 1) SICORP and 2) SATEPS that are under JST, and 3) Fostering Globally Active Young Researchers (グローバルに活躍する若手研究者の育成).

³⁷ Refer to the JST Policy for the Next Fiscal Year. The budget of JSP overlaps with that of MEXT to some extent.

³⁸ International scientific cooperation programs of FY 2020 Budget https://www.jsps.go.jp/english/aboutus/data/brochure20-21_e.pdf; Calculated with an average exchange rate of JPY to EUR 1:0.008088 from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 (ECB).

³⁹ Refer to pp. 40 under the category of Strategic development of international activities that integrate with the world (世界と一体化した国際活動の戦略的展開) of the FY2015 Draft Budget for Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology.

⁴⁰ <https://www.riken.jp/about/data/>

3.5. Foreign Media

Table 9: Key figures on foreign broadcasting, including social media statistics

	2019	2015
TV		
Number of countries broadcasted to	JF: 84 NHK: ~160 ⁽²⁰¹⁸⁾ ⁴¹	JF: 20
Number of languages	NHK: 20	-
Number of channels/programs	JF: 722 ⁴² NHK: 76 ⁴³	JF: 31 NHK: 40 ⁴⁴
Budget (€ million) ⁴⁵	NHK: 209.49	NHK: 207.86
Radio		
Number of languages ⁴⁶	17	-
Number of channels / programs ⁴⁷	19	25
New Media		
Social networks following	NHK World Japan: 1.4 million (YouTube); 1.9 million (Facebook); Instagram (0.18 million)	-

NHK World is the only public media channel that broadcasts TV and radio programs abroad. Approximately 380 million households subscribe its TV programs in approximately 160 countries and regions. Different regions receive programs under different subchannels. For example, USA and Canada are covered under TV Japan, Europe and parts of Middle East and Africa under JSTV, and Asia, Oceania, Latin America, and the rest of the world under NHK World Premium. Additionally, NHK World-Japan works on building websites that offer safety information, podcasts, and language courses. Other new media forms include Web Japan, which is established by the MOFA to provide general information about Japan.

⁴¹ Refer to the pp. 295 & 667 of the NHK Yearbook 2020. As of the end of FY 2019, there are 67 foreign broadcasting organizations in 48 countries and regions that have concluded these cooperation agreements, memoranda of understanding, and memoranda of understanding for the exchange of news materials.

⁴² Refer to pp.13 of the Japan Foundation Annual Report 2019-20.

⁴³ Refer to the NHK Yearbook 2019.

⁴⁴ Refer to the NHK Yearbook 2015.

⁴⁵ Refer to pp. 282 of the NHK Yearbook 2020, 国際放送費. This budget broadly accounts for international broadcasting via television, radio, and internet. Calculated with an exchange rate of JPY to EUR 1:00791 on Dec 30 2020 (European Central Bank). 2015 Figure is calculated with an average exchange rate of JPY to EUR 1: 0.007450 in 2015 from https://www.nhk.or.jp/corporateinfo/english/publication/pdf/annual_report.pdf.

⁴⁶ Refer to the "Basic Plan for International Broadcast Program Editing for Fiscal Year 2019."

⁴⁷ Refer to pp. 475-477 of the NHK Yearbook 2019.

NHK is in principle as an independent broadcast agency from government. Its autonomy is guaranteed through a funding mechanism obtained from reception fees collected from anyone who owns a television. However, in 2014, an NHK resident, Katsuto Momii, commented that international broadcasting programming should follow the government agenda. This comment stirred up controversy in the National Diet, which reviews NHK annual budget and appoints the NHK's Board of Governors. Since then, NHK's autonomy has been a public debate theme in Japan's Diet and in the media (Ogawa, 2020).

4. Challenges and future outlook

In many ways, Japan's global soft power momentum has improved over the years, but not at a pace that a top economic and cultural power nation should be. There is still a significant untapped cultural capital to be utilized, ranging from anime to the gaming industry. Similar to the U.S., the promotion of national image and Japanese culture are achieved through international marketing campaigns launched by the private sectors. In contrast, the way the Japanese government brands and presents Japan to the world still largely relies on traditional channels. Compared to traditional cultural superpowers like the United Kingdom and France, the Japanese government emphasizes showcasing the richness of its culture instead of welcoming others to make connections. How to make Japan more warmly open is a question for the Japanese government. Cool Japan initiative was a beginning, but there is still much to learn if Japan wants to live up to its claims for cultural diplomacy.

On the other hand, of two primary regional foci for Japan's diplomacy—the United States and East Asian neighbors, the latter proves to be more challenging for Japan because of the so-called “history problem.” Japan can maximize the credibility of its public diplomacy in some aspects by focusing on East Asia and the Pacific basin. Similar efforts are already seen in the Japan Foundation's investment (15% of annual expenses) on its Asia Center programs and NHK's launch of a Chinese version of the news TV channel in 2019. However, if Japan intends to advance its cultural diplomacy in the region, it will eventually deal with the glaring history issue.

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