

JAPANESE INDUSTRY AND POLICY NEWS

December 2015

LEGISLATION AND POLICY NEWS

Government to encourage collaboration in developing "Cool Japan" products

Japanese government launched a "Platform of Public-Private Partnerships for Cool Japan" on December 15 to help various industries collaborate to develop and sell "Cool Japan" products such as animation as part of efforts to promote Japanese popular culture abroad.

In its first meeting in Tokyo, Ms. Aiko Shimajiri, the Minister in charge of Cool Japan strategy said, "I hope to promote Cool Japan overseas, making good use of the big chance for exporting Japanese culture and foods", referring to the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics.

http://www.cas.go.jp/jp/seisaku/cool_japan/pdf/platform.pdf (Japanese language only)

Japanese SMEs Showing Strong Interest in Developing New Customers

The number of Japanese small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) which are registered in a business match-making website of the Organization for Small & Medium Enterprises and Regional Innovation, Japan (SMRJ) surpassed 2,300 after one year from its introduction. It reflects strong interests of Japanese SMEs in developing new customers.

SMRJ launched the "J-GoodTech" service in October 2014. J-GoodTech posts information on Japanese excellent SMEs on its website in order to help bring those companies into contact with major domestic manufacturers and overseas businesses.

J-GoodTech collects information on Japanese *Monozukuri* (manufacturing) craftsmanship SMEs, including niche-top companies and companies with unique technologies.

About half of J-GoodTech registered companies prepare English pages in addition to its original Japanese pages. It is noteworthy that in order to upload English pages, it is required to give not only company information but also explanation on product and technology.

In cooperation with overseas SME promotion organizations, SMRJ is eagerly promoting registration of foreign companies who are looking for business opportunities with Japanese SMEs. As a result, more than 200 companies of Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia are already registered.

<https://jgoodtech.smrj.go.jp/?locale=en>

English Version of SME White Paper Updated

The Small and Medium Enterprise Agency (SMEA) of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) compiled and released reports titled “Trends among Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in FY 2014” and “SME Policies in FY 2015” (“2015 White Paper on Small and Medium Enterprises in Japan”), as well as “Trends among Small Enterprises in FY 2014” and “Small Enterprise Policies in FY 2015” (“2015 White Paper on Small Enterprises in Japan”) in April. SMEA published an updated English version of White Papers on October 29, including introduction to successful cases of Japanese inventive SMEs.

http://www.meti.go.jp/english/press/2015/pdf/0424_01a.pdf

SURVEY AND BUSINESS DATA

More Companies Raise Wages than the Previous Year

According to the Annual Survey on Wage Increase which the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare published on December 3, a total of 85.4% of responding companies either raised or would raise wages during 2015. The ratio is higher than 83.6% of 2014.

Average amounts of wage hike are 5,282 yen which corresponds to a 1.9% increase from the previous year. In 2014, they were 5,254 yen and 1.8% respectively.

The annual survey was conducted in August 2015, covering 1,661 companies which have 100 or more regular employees.

<http://www.mhlw.go.jp/toukei/itiran/roudou/chingin/jittai/15/index.html> (Japanese language only)

Sales of Local Breweries Show an Increasing Trend

According to the annual survey of the National Tax Agency published on November 30, the average sales of beer from local breweries show an increasing trend. It was 98.8 million yen per brewery in fiscal year 2013, up 13.7% from the previous year and up 29.5% as compared to fiscal 2011.

The number of local breweries excluding national level “Big 5” was 166 as of October 2014. The number of respondents to the survey was 150, most of them run different businesses such as restaurants or souvenir shops in addition to breweries. Among the respondents, 61 breweries (40.7%) earn less than 10% of their sales from beer and 116 breweries (77.3%) produce less than 100 kiloliters (kl) per year.

The total quantity of Japan’s beer sales including the “Big 5” was 2,782,918 kl in fiscal 2013, up 1.0% from a year earlier. The combined share of all responding local beer breweries was 0.8%.

<https://www.nta.go.jp/shiraberu/senmonjoho/sake/shiori-gaikyo/seizogaikyo/beer/pdf/h26/01.pdf> (Japanese language only)

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Venus Observing Satellite Put into the Right Orbit Course after 5 Years

The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) confirmed on December 9 that its *Akatsuki*(dawn) probe has successfully entered orbit around Venus and begun observing meteorological phenomena on the planet on a test basis. Full-fledged observations will start next April.

The probe, which was the second attempt to enter orbit around the planet, five years after failing to do so due to its main engine problems. *Akatsuki* had been on an orbit around the sun for the past five years. This time JAXA successfully placed *Akatsuki* on the right course by using 4 smaller engines which were originally designed for controlling positions.

http://global.jaxa.jp/press/2015/12/20151209_akatsuki.html

COMPANY NEWS

HondaJet Receives Type Certification from the FAA

The HondaJet received type certification from the United States Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) on December 8. Honda Aircraft Company and the FAA made the announcement at the Honda Aircraft headquarters in Greensboro, North Carolina. Honda Aircraft Company is a wholly owned subsidiary of American Honda Motor Co., Inc.

According to Honda Aircraft, the HondaJet incorporates many technological innovations in aviation design, including the unique Over-The-Wing Engine Mount (OTWEM) configuration that dramatically improves performance and fuel efficiency by reducing aerodynamic drag.

With the HondaJet achieving FAA type certification, the Honda Aircraft is now ramping up production in Greensboro with 25 aircraft on the final assembly line. The Honda Aircraft workforce is nearing 1,700 people, as the company prepares for deliveries, pilot training and after-sales customer service and support by the end of the year.

<http://world.honda.com/news/2015/c151210eng.html>

Euglena Derived Bio Fuel Production Plan Announced

Euglena Co., Ltd. announced on December 1 that it would promote commercial production of single-celled algae (euglena) derived bio fuel for transportation use in cooperation with several companies including Isuzu Motors and All Nippon Airways (ANA).

As a first step, Euglena, together with Chiyoda Corporation builds a verifying plant in Yokohama with a support from the city of Yokohama. The Yokohama plant is the first in Japan of its kind, which is scheduled to start production in the first half of 2018.

Since euglena absorb CO₂ from the atmosphere during production, it is believed that there is a chance of reducing CO₂ emission by using euglena derived bio fuel for transportation use including airplanes.

<http://www.euglena.jp/en/solution/energy.html>

<http://v4.eir-parts.net/v4Contents/View.aspx?cat=tdnet&sid=1308402> (Japanese language only)

SECOM Starts “Drone Surveillance Services”

SECOM Co. Ltd. introduced a surveillance service using drones from December 11. According to SECOM, this is the world first drone security service for private sector clients.

“SECOM Drones” are equipped with a surveillance camera and LED lights. When a laser sensor detects an intruder in private premise, it sends information on the whereabouts to the SECOM Drone. After receiving the information, the SECOM Drone takes off and flies closer to the intruder autonomously and transmits pictures of the suspect to SECOM’s control center to help them take necessary actions against the illegal intruder.

The introduction of the drone surveillance services became possible after the revision of Japan’s Civil Aeronautics Act took effect on the previous day (December 10), stipulating the conditions for flying drones.

http://www.secom.co.jp/corporate/release/2015/nr_20151210.html (Japanese language only)