

# Addressing advanced consumer policy

## Basic Plan on Consumer Policy

The Basic Plan on Consumer Policy is established by the government for promoting consumer policy, which includes a broad outline for consumer policy that will be pursued on a long-term basis and roadmap. This is decided by the Cabinet. It is established every 5 years, and current plan is effective until March 2020.

Outline of the Policy to be addressed in Five Years		
1. Ensure consumer safety	2. Establish trusted labelling and ensure reliability	3. Establish proper transactions
<p>(1) Prevent accidents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide information on, and regulate the sale of, hazardous substances and goods</li> </ul> <p>.....</p> <p>(2) Collect accident information and prevent occurrence/aggravation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collect more information from business operators regarding accidents of children/the elderly and call for appropriate attention</li> </ul> <p>.....</p> <p>(3) Conduct accident investigations and prevent recurrence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen the framework of the Consumer Safety Investigation Commission</li> </ul> <p>.....</p> <p>(4) Ensure food safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Properly operate manufacturing process management and expand initiatives</li> <li>Provide accurate information on food and radioactive substances</li> </ul>	<p>(1) Disseminate and strictly apply the Act against Unjustifiable Premiums and Misleading Representations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make business operators to strictly comply with laws and regulations through dissemination activities</li> <li>Use the administrative monetary penalty system for strict execution</li> </ul> <p>.....</p> <p>(2) Disseminate and improve labelling based on goods/services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve and apply labelling rules for things such as household goods, housing, cosmetic medicine</li> </ul> <p>.....</p> <p>(3) Provide appropriate information through food labelling and strictly apply relevant laws and regulations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unify food labelling steadily</li> <li>Promote understanding of newly enforced labelling system for functions of foods and conduct further review</li> </ul>	<p>(1) Strictly execute and review cross-sectional laws and regulations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the Specified Commercial Transactions Law and the Consumer Contract Act</li> <li>Use the adult guardianship program to protect the rights of the elderly and handicapped people</li> </ul> <p>.....</p> <p>(2) Optimize transactions based on goods/services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Revise the Telecommunications Business Act</li> <li>Consider revising the Installment Sales Act</li> <li>Conduct strict measures to prevent detriment by uninvited solicitation of commodity futures</li> <li>Encourage notifications of housing for the elderly and consider advance payment</li> </ul> <p>.....</p> <p>(3) Optimize transactions in response to information and telecommunications technology progress</p> <p>.....</p> <p>(4) Prevent and crack down on crimes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen regulations on special frauds</li> </ul> <p>.....</p> <p>(5) Optimize standards and measuring</p>
4. Aim to create a society where consumers play a key role in making choices and taking actions	5. Establish a framework for consumer redress for damage and profit protection	6. Improve the system for consumer policy
<p>(1) Ensure policy transparency and reflect consumer opinions</p> <p>.....</p> <p>(2) Promote consumer education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer systematic consumer education based on life stages</li> <li>Consider revising the teaching guidelines</li> <li>Support establishing regional committees</li> </ul> <p>.....</p> <p>(3) Support and promote initiatives of consumer groups, business operators and business organizations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support consumer group activities</li> <li>Promote consumer-oriented management</li> </ul> <p>.....</p> <p>(4) Promote fair and free competition and ensure proper public utility pricing</p> <p>.....</p> <p>(5) Promote eco-friendly consumer behaviours</p>	<p>(1) Promote redress for damage, complaint handling, and conflict resolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider supporting Qualified Consumer Organizations financially and other means</li> <li>Consider building a system to deprive illicit proceeds and redress victims</li> <li>Encourage the use of the alternative dispute resolution (ADR) based on goods/services</li> </ul> <p>.....</p> <p>(2) Address progress in advanced information and telecommunications society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review the system to protect personal data</li> </ul> <p>.....</p> <p>(3) Respond to globalization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance the consultation system for cross-border transaction problems</li> <li>Strengthen consultation services for foreign consumers</li> </ul>	<p>(1) Enhance and strengthen the organizational structure of the government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enhance the systems of the Consumer Affairs Agency, the Consumer Commission, and relevant ministries and agencies, as well as share information and strengthen cooperation among the organizations</li> <li>Strengthen the National Consumer Affairs Center consultation support function</li> </ul> <p>.....</p> <p>(2) Improve regional systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve the system to provide quality consultation services for everyone regardless of place of residence</li> <li>Promote networks to "watch over" demented elderly people</li> <li>Secure human resources for consumer affairs consultants and their better treatment</li> <li>Promote public awareness on the Consumer Hotline number (188)</li> </ul>

\* Key Performance Indicator (KPI) is set to each item (1), (2), ... KPI is set based on (1) status on laws, regulations and guidelines establishment and review, (2) status on public awareness, (3) status on progress of each policy and (4) the number and contents of consumer consultation cases.

## Measures pursuant to the Consumer Safety Act to address financial consumer detriment

In accordance with the Consumer Safety Act, the Consumer Affairs Agency gathers information in a centralized way from administrative organs and local governments to analyze it.

Based on the analyzed information, the Consumer Affairs Agency takes prompt action to raise consumers awareness of improper conducts. In the event of any serious damage on a consumer's property that cannot be addressed by any other law (a so-called niche area case), the Consumer Affairs Agency also ensures that no consumer damage should occur or spread by making recourse to an administrative action including a recommendation against the business operator.

## Addressing harm to consumers in the course of online transactions

**The Consumer Affairs Agency considers measures to solve consumer problems caused by online transactions.**

With the progress of advanced ICT society, the number of online transactions is on an upward trend. Consumers can easily make online deals with business operators both home and abroad, which is beneficial not only to the business side but also to the consumer side; however, consumers are exposed to the increased risk of having problems at the same time. In fact, a number of consumer problems arising out of online transactions are increasing, and the content of each problem is becoming diversified and complicated.

As problems involving online transactions are characterized by rapid changes in technology and service and by a diverse range of stakeholders, it is required to take measures against these problems in such a mutually complementary way as to encourage both business operators and consumers to make voluntary efforts and enhance their own decision making abilities respectively.

Thus, with the aim of sharing issues and encouraging stakeholders to take action, the Consumer Affairs Agency regularly organizes an "Online Consumer Transaction Meeting," attended by relevant administrative organs, business organizations, consumer organizations, and others, to provide a place for exchanges of information and inputs.

## Efforts to reduce food loss and waste

Food loss and waste refers to the food that is good to eat but discarded. The amount of annual food loss and waste in Japan exceeds 6 million tons, about half of which is arising from general households.

An estimated amount of food loss and waste per capita in Japan reaches approx. 50kg per year, meaning that one bowl of food (approx. 140g) is wasted every day.

The main reasons for food loss and waste in households are as follows:

1. Too much to eat
2. Stale
3. Out of date



As part of the promotional activities for food loss and waste reduction aiming to eliminate any food going to be discarded, the Consumer Affairs Agency conducts education campaigns for consumers to help them understand the importance of buying and cooking as much food as is needed for the meals of the day, adding a twist to the daily menu such as leftover recipes, and eating up all served at restaurants while introducing various cases of the initiatives for food loss and waste reduction led by local authorities, private businesses, and students.

**[Food loss and waste reduction initiative] National Campaign "NO-FOODLOSS PROJECT"**  
(Available in Japanese only)

▶ [https://www.caa.go.jp/policies/policy/consumer\\_policy/information/food\\_loss](https://www.caa.go.jp/policies/policy/consumer_policy/information/food_loss)

## International cooperation

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### **The Consumer Affairs Agency strengthens international cooperation to address globalized consumer issues.**

With the rapid progress of digitalization, there are a growing number of globalized consumer issues. Under such circumstances, it is indispensable to strengthen international cooperation and collaboration.

The Consumer Affairs Agency strives to enhance multilateral information sharing and cooperation through the participation in international organizations such as serving as the vice-chairperson at the OECD Committee on Consumer Policy while having policy dialogues with countries that have a strong tie to Japan to strengthen cooperative relationships.

In addition, the Cross-border Consumer center Japan (CCJ) established in the Consumer Affairs Agency in 2011 (relocated to the National Consumer Affairs Center of Japan in 2015) supports Japanese consumers in solving problems arising out of business transactions with overseas business operators, if any, through its overseas counterparts having a cooperative relationship with CCJ. In the same way, CCJ gives support to overseas consumers having problems in their business transactions with Japanese business operators too upon receipt of notification from its overseas counterparts. CCS has 13 overseas partners covering 24 countries/regions as of March 2019.