Research Project Report

Program for Asia-Japan Research Development, Asia-Japan Research Institute

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Creating A Tolerant Society in the Age of International Migration

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Background and Significance of this Research

Globalization has accelerated processes of economic transformation worldwide, enabling many countries to achieve rapid economic growth. As a result, the proportion of people living below the absolute poverty line, which stood at nearly 50 percent in the mid-1960s, had fallen to below 10 percent by 2017. On average, material prosperity has been gradually realized on a global scale. Yet alongside this progress, demographic and age structures are undergoing profound shifts, and socioeconomic inequalities, both within and across countries, are widening. These structural changes suggest that international migration is likely to continue and intensify in the years ahead.

Migration plays a dual role in this evolving context. On the one hand, it helps address labor shortages and contributes to the formation of more diverse societies. On the other hand, it has intensified tensions rooted in differences of race, ethnicity, religion, and culture. Moreover, the uneven distribution of globalization's benefits has generated feelings of exclusion among certain segments of society, fueling xenophobia and facilitating the rise of populist, "my-country-first" political agendas. The COVID-19 pandemic further amplified these dynamics by reinforcing anti-immigrant sentiments and legitimizing exclusionary policies.

Within this global landscape, Asia is projected to emerge by 2050 as one of the world's two major migration regions, alongside Europe. The region already hosts the largest number of megacities, and rapid demographic aging is expected to intensify competition for migrant labor. These dynamics suggest that accelerating international migration in Asia will not only reshape regional socioeconomic orders but also exert transformative effects on the global system.

In fact, in many countries, migrants are politicized and targeted for exclusion. The use of social media to mobilize and amplify such discontent has further deepened social fragmentation. Addressing the challenge of mitigating these divisions has therefore become an urgent priority for Asia and the wider international community.

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Importantly, the impacts of international migration are not confined to population movements alone. They intersect with broader social, environmental, and political processes in complex ways. Migration influences social cohesion, shapes political legitimacy, and has environmental implications, both positive and negative. Understanding these multidimensional effects and identifying strategies to enhance positive outcomes while mitigating negative ones is, therefore, essential.

Minimizing the adverse impacts of international migration is not merely a policy concern but a foundational requirement for addressing broader twenty-first-century challenges, including demographic transformation, environmental sustainability, and social stability. As migration flows intensify, several key questions arise: What problems are likely to emerge? How can they be addressed? And how can the benefits of migration be maximized? For East Asian countries in particular, where population decline and rapid aging are especially pronounced, engaging with these questions is indispensable for achieving effective economic strategies and industrial policies.

Objectives

This research project was designed to address the key gaps in the study of international migration by focusing on Asia. While migration research has been extensive, studies of exclusion, tolerance, and migration have tended to privilege the perspectives of migrant-receiving countries. This project sought to correct that imbalance by examining Asia as a region in which countries simultaneously function as migrant-sending, migrant-receiving, and transit states, thereby forming a complex and interconnected web of international migration. This regional focus on Asia—an area that remains underexplored in migration scholarship—constitutes the project's first distinctive feature. It enables not only original scholarly contributions but also the generation of practical insights relevant to Japan's policy debates in an era of intensified migration.

A second distinctive feature of the project was its engagement with the "new politics of migration." Although a substantial body of research examines migration and politics, relatively little work has situated migration within the broader political dynamics of populism and democratic backsliding. This project analyzed how migrant workers have become central discursive instruments in elite political struggles, thereby reshaping political alignments and contestation. By addressing this dimension directly, the project distinguishes itself from dominant approaches to migration that focus primarily on labor flows and the perspectives of migrant-receiving countries.

Building on these two contributions, the project set out to analyze the positive and negative effects of international migration on society, the environment, and politics in Asia, with the aim of identifying ways to amplify migration's benefits while mitigating its adverse consequences.

To pursue this objective, the project examined three interrelated dimensions:

1. Migrant Perspectives: The project analyzed how international migration affects both sending and receiving societies from the standpoint of the migrants themselves, with particular attention to precarious legal protections, unstable economic foundations, and fragile social networks, dimensions often overlooked in Euro-American scholarship.
2. Rural and Environmental Impacts: The project investigated how international migration reshapes rural communities and natural environments in migrant-sending as well as migrant-receiving countries, especially in sectors experiencing acute labor shortages such as agriculture, forestry, livestock, and fisheries. It explored strategies for maximizing positive outcomes while mitigating negative effects on food production, rural livelihoods, and resource use.

3. Politicization of Migration: The project examined the processes through which migration becomes politicized and assessed the consequences of this politicization, highlighting how migrants are frequently targeted for exclusion in domestic political competition.

By integrating these three dimensions, the project established a foundation for proposing strategies to foster more tolerant societies in an era of accelerating migration. Its findings carry implications not only for Japan but also for other Asian countries and the broader international community, reflecting the reality that international migration has become an increasingly central global challenge.

Actual Activities

2023

During the 2023 academic year, we organized 15 research meetings, two international symposia, six young scholars' research meetings, and one proposed panel at an academic conference. We also conducted field research in Vietnam from January 24 to 27, 2024. The details of the international symposia and the proposed panel are as follows:

Seminar on Indonesia-Japan Cooperation in Promoting Peace and Security in the Framework of Indonesia-Japan 65th Anniversary of their Diplomatic Relations

Date: June 15, 2023. 13:00–14:30

Venue: Hirai Kaichiro Memorial Library Conference Room, Ritsumeikan University

Moderator: Kenki Adachi (Professor at Ritsumeikan University)

Panelist: Diana ES Sutikno (Consul General of the Republic of Indonesia in Osaka)

Panelist: Jun Honna (Professor at Ritsumeikan University)

Panelist: Lina A. Alexandra (Center for Strategic and International Studies)

Symposium: Perspectives for Cooperation of Japan and South Korea to Stabilize the Volatile Security Situation, Bilateral and Multilateral Aspects (Co-sponsored)

Date: November 16, 17

Venue: Hirai Kaichiro Memorial Library Conference Room, Ritsumeikan University

Panel at The 13th Annual Conference of the Japan Association for Human Security Studies

Date: December 3, 2023

Venue: Kobe University

Panel title: Human Security of Migrants in Japan

Chair: David Green (Nagoya University)

Discussant: Polina Ivanova (Ritsumeikan University)

Panelist: Yingjiao Zhu (Kyoto University)

Panelist: Yusy Widarahesty (Ritsumeikan University)

Panelist: Eriko Tomita (independent researcher)

Panelist: Sohrab Ahmadian (Tsukuba University)

2024

During the 2024 academic year, we organized 11 research meetings, 2 international symposia, 2

workshops, and 2 young scholars' research meetings. We also conducted field research in Indonesia from March 9 to 15, 2025. The details of the international symposia and the workshops are as follows:

Frontiers of Research on Norm Contestation in International Relations

Date: May 30, 2024, 13:00–14:30

Venue: KS306, Koshinkan Build., Ritsumeikan University

Chair: Kenki Adachi (Ritsumeikan University)

Panelist: Adam Bower (University of St. Andrews)

Panelist: Hiro Katsumata (Tohoku University)

Panelist: Kazushige Kobayashi (Ritsumeikan University)

Jokowi's Decade: How He Impacted Indonesia and the World

Date: November 23, 2024, 10:00–17:00

Venue: Hirai Kaichiro Memorial Library Conference Room, Ritsumeikan University

Session 1: Political Update:

Presentation: Sana Jaffrey (Australian National University)

Discussant: Masaaki Okamoto (Kyoto University)

Session 2: Jokowi's Presidency:

Presentation: Marcus Mietzner (Australian National University)

Presentation: Jun Honna (Ritsumeikan University)

Discussant: Liam Gammon (Australian National University/ Ritsumeikan University)

Session 3: Civil Society and Islamism:

Presentation: Ed Aspinall (Australian National University)

Presentation: Nava Nuraniyah (Australian National University)

Discussant: Yuji Mizuno (Institute of Developing Economies)

Session 4: Foreign Policy and Political Economy:

Presentation: Rizal Sukma (Centre for Strategic and International Studies)

Presentation: Trissia Wijaya (Ritsumeikan University)

Discussant: Miwa Hirono (Ritsumeikan University)

Workshop: Indonesia Post-2024 Elections: Political-Security Prospects and Challenges

Date: November 7, 2024, 13:00–13:40

Venue: KS306 Koshinkan Build., Ritsumeikan University

Chair: Chaula Rininta Anindiyahula (Ritsumeikan University)

Presentation: Muhammad Haripin (National Research and Innovation Agency of Indonesia)

Presentation: Adhi Priamarizki (S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore)

Workshop: Compellence and Nuclear Weapons and Defence Industrial Strategy

Venue: KS306 Koshinkan Build., Ritsumeikan University

Chair: Kenki Adachi (Ritsumeikan University)

Presentation: Ken Ohnishi (National Institute for Defense Studies)

Presentation: Katsuyoshi Kiyooka (National Institute for Defense Studies)

2025

During the 2025 academic year, we organized 13 research meetings, 3 workshops, and 4 young scholars' research meetings. The details of the workshops are as follows:

International Relationships for the Control of Disease

Date: December 4, 2025, 13:10-14:45

Venue: KS306 Koshinkan Build., Ritsumeikan University

Chair: Kenki Adachi (Ritsumeikan University)

Presenter: Mark Harrison (Oxford University)

Presenter: Jeong-Ran Kim (Oxford University)

International workshop: From PhD to Publication

Date: December 22, 2025, 11:10–12:45

Venue: Research Room, Koshinkan Build., Ritsumeikan University

Moderator: Charlotte Grech-Madin (Australian National University)

Panelist: Charlotte Grech-Madin (Australian National University)

Panelist: Kenki Adachi (Ritsumeikan University)

Panelist: Yusy Widarahesty (Ritsumeikan University)

International Workshop: Political Culture, Domestic and International Politics, and Public Attitudes Toward Immigration

Date: March 13, 2026, 14:00-16:15

Venue: KO103, Ritsumeikan University

Speaker: Baowen Liang (Université du Québec à Montréal)

Speaker: Go Murakami (Ritsumeikan University)

Result and Perspectives

In light of the objectives of this research project, over the past three years, the project has achieved three major outcomes, which can be summarized as follows.

First, through research focusing on migrants themselves, the project clarified that migrants are frequently placed in legally, economically, and socially precarious situations in their destination countries and regions. This pattern was observed consistently across all countries studied in both Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia. In many cases, migrants are excluded from the effective scope of legal regulation and protection, rendering their problems largely invisible.

The project demonstrated not only that migrants' limited familiarity with the laws and regulations of destination countries makes their difficulties less likely to be recognized as social or political issues, but also that migrants often remain silent, or are compelled to remain silent, even when they are aware of these problems, due to power asymmetries between sending and receiving countries, as well as pressures exerted by actors who benefit from the sending or receiving of migrants. This latter finding, in particular, represents a significant contribution, as it has received relatively little attention in existing migration research.

Second, the project revealed that migrants play a crucial role in sustaining sectors such as agriculture, forestry, and fisheries in receiving countries, particularly those facing acute labor shortages

in primary industries. At the same time, the project did not, at this stage, find strong evidence that such population movements have had major impacts on local communities or the natural environment in either receiving or sending countries.

That said, the research confirmed that in local communities with large concentrations of migrants, concerns about deteriorating public security and heightened exclusionary sentiments toward migrants can, in some cases, be observed. As international migration continues to increase, it is entirely possible that such issues will become more pronounced. In this context, it will be increasingly important to consider how to amplify the positive contributions of migrants while minimizing potential negative effects.

Precisely to address this issue, the project also examined the politicization and securitization of migration. In doing so, it confirmed that across the Asian region, many political actors seek to gain advantage by manipulating representations of migrants and framing migration as a political or security problem, even in cases where migrants generate few concrete social or economic problems. This constitutes the project's third major outcome.

Although counter-movements that resist such politicization and securitization do exist, public opinion in many countries remains broadly susceptible to political and security-oriented framings of migration, making it relatively easy for negative sentiments toward migrants to be mobilized. The project, therefore, reaffirms the importance of accurately assessing both the benefits and the drawbacks of population movements and of providing a solid empirical foundation for informed and balanced public debate on migration issues.

In sum, the project has produced significant outcomes in three key areas. At the same time, it has addressed only part of the complex challenges surrounding population movements. While a major contribution of the project lies in highlighting features of migration that are distinctive to the Asian context, further research is essential to more fully understand how inclusive and tolerant societies can be built in an era of accelerating migration.

In addition, this research project placed strong emphasis on the training and development of early-career researchers. This reflects the urgent need to cultivate a new generation of scholars capable of studying issues of population movement, which are expected to remain salient in the years ahead. Project members provided various forms of research support to early-career researchers involved in the project. As a result, five doctoral students successfully earned their PhDs during the project period.

As a postdoctoral fellow who played a leading role among the early-career members, Polina Ivanova published her doctoral dissertation on the adaptation of international students to Japanese society as a single-authored monograph (No. 2 in the publication list below). She also edited a volume based on the outcomes of a symposium on refugee issues in Asia, conducted together with the project's early-career members (No. 11 in the publication list below).

Yusy Widarahesty, who obtained her PhD during the project period, subsequently joined the project as a postdoctoral fellow and, during that time, published her doctoral dissertation as a single-authored monograph focusing on Indonesian technical intern trainees in Japan (No. 28 in the publication list below). Other early-career members also actively published academic articles and presented their research at international conferences. We hope that these young scholars will go on to play leading roles in international research on population mobility in the years to come.

Project Members and Roles

Kenki Adachi served as the project leader. He was responsible for overall project management as well as for analyzing the political dimensions of migration. Drawing on his expertise in theories of International Politics, he examined how migrants were securitized in Southeast Asian countries.

Sachiko Ishikawa conducted research on the human security of migrants in the contexts of conflict mediation and peacebuilding, drawing on her extensive expertise in peacebuilding practices in Southeast Asia.

Sayaka Sano contributed to the project both as a specialist in development economics and by providing foundational data for understanding migration trends in Asia, particularly through her analysis of changes in migration flows.

Jun Honna conducted research on the political dimensions of migration in Southeast Asia. Drawing on his expertise in comparative politics in the region, he examined how migrants have been politicized and securitized, with a focus on Southeast Asian countries.

Tomoko Odamaki analyzed poverty and inequality in the context of migration, focusing primarily on Japan as a case study to examine social security systems and labor policies related to migrants.

Masahiko Matsuda examined how rural communities have changed as Southeast Asian farmers engage in both internal and international migration, and analyzed the economic and developmental implications of migration in Southeast Asian countries.

Go Murakami conducted a survey experiment in Japan to examine how attitudes toward the acceptance of migrants and refugees, as well as perceptions of ethnic background, influence electoral outcomes. His study provided important foundational insights into the politicization of migration.

Toshiko Tsujimoto, a specialist in Filipino migration, examined the legal and social conditions faced by Filipino migrants in destination countries such as South Korea and Japan, incorporating a gender perspective into her analysis.

Keiichi Shirato analyzed the impact of media on migration. Specifically, he examined how migration-related issues are represented on television, in newspapers, and on social networking services, as well as the effects of these representations on migrants.

In addition, Andrei Yamamoto, Polina Ivanova, Yusy Widarahesty, Chaula Rininta Anindiyahula, Yapeng Li, Dharma Agastia, Munehiro Okamoto, Budipramono Radesa Guntur Khairul Hasni, Daichi Morishige, Taha Acar, and Merve Ozturk conducted research as young scholars under the guidance of project members.

Among them, Andrei Yamamoto, Polina Ivanova, and Yusy Widarahesty played leading roles as senior research fellows. Yusy Widarahesty, Chaula Rininta Anindiyahula, Yapeng Li, Dharma Agastia, and Munehiro Okamoto submitted their doctoral dissertations and were awarded doctoral degrees during

the project period. The project also provided hands-on guidance in research design and methodology by inviting these early-career scholars to participate directly in the project's field research activities.

List of Selected Publications

1. Marcus Mietzner and Jun Honna. 2023. Elite Opposition and Popular Rejection: the Failure of Presidential Term Limit Evasion in Widodo's Indonesia, *South East Asia Research*, 31(2), pp.115–131.
2. Polina Ivanova. 2023. *Civil Society and International Students in Japan: The Making of Social Capital*, Routledge.
3. Sachiko Ishikawa, Yoichi Mine, Mely Caballero-Anthony, and Ako Muto. 2023. *Human Security and Empowerment in Asia: Beyond the Pandemic*, Routledge.
4. Kenki Adachi. 2023. Parasitizing Human Security Norm?: Analysis of the Philippines Government's References to Human Security, *Journal of Human Security Studies*, 12(2), pp.51–69.
5. Girsang, W., M. Matsuda, and S. Yamamoto. 2023. Dusung Agroforestry Systems on Ambon Island, Central Maluku, Indonesia: Sustainable Livelihoods, Land Property Rights, and Poverty Reduction, *Journal of Marine and Island Cultures*, 12(3), pp.160–186.
6. Kenki Adachi. 2024. Under-securitization of COVID-19 in Japan: Voluntary Behavioral Change as Self-defense? *Security Dialogue*, 55(3), pp. 257–273.
7. Takashi Shiraishi, Nobuhiro Aizawa, Jun Honna, Wahyu Prasetyawan, eds. 2024. *Standing Firm for Indonesia's Democracy: An Oral History of President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono*, World Scientific.
8. Keiichi Shirato. 2024. "Japan's Strategic Interests in the Global South (Africa)," Strategic Japan (2024), Japan and the Global South, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). May 21, 2024. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/japans-strategic-interests-global-south-africa>
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10. 小田巻友子（2024）「小さな声の人たちと共に進める優しいまちづくり」『季刊くらしと協同』くらしと協同の研究所, (48), pp. 28–34.
11. Lara Momesso and Polina Ivanova, eds. 2024. *Refugees and Asylum Seekers in East Asia: Perspectives from Japan and Taiwan*, Palgrave Macmillan Studies on Human Rights in Asia, Palgrave Macmillan.
12. Kenki Adachi. 2024. The Resurgence of Human Security in Japan's Foreign Policy, in Tosh Minohara ed., *Handbook of Japan's Foreign and Domestic Policies During the Decade of Abe*, MHM Limited, pp. 245–260.
13. Kenki Adachi. 2024. Securitization, Scapegoat, Identity Politics: Why Did President Duterte Mark Record-high Approval Ratings Despite His Failure to Combat the COVID-19 Pandemic? *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 44(1), pp. 55–71.
14. 松田正彦・富田晋介・広田勲・山本宗立（2024）「東南アジア農村における生業構造の簡易推計に向けた生計多様度指数の標準化」『熱帯農業研究』, 17(2), pp. 51–60.
15. Yapeng Li. 2024. Economic Determinants of Fertility in Contemporary China: A Multilevel Analysis,『統計学』127.

16. Yusy Widarahesty. 2024. Diversity in the Workplace: Indonesian Muslim Migrant Workers' Experiences in Japan, *Global Strategies Journal*, October 10, 2024.
17. 村上剛（2024）「日本における移民･外国人受け入れについて尋ねた世論調査」『立命館法学』, 416号, pp. 77–97.
18. 小田巻友子（2024）「医療福祉生活協同組合のたまり場が地域に醸成し続けるもの」くらしと協同の研究所『季刊 くらしと協同』, (50), pp.33–39.
19. Toshiko Tsujimoto. 2025. Deterring the Right to Justice: Structural Coercion and the Trafficking of Filipino Female Entertainers in South Korea, *Pacific Affairs*, 98(2), pp. 269–291.
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21. 足立研幾（2025）「グローバルな規範の受容と拒絶のはざまで―『人間の安全保障』規範をめぐる剪定､育種､寄生」阿部利洋編『グローバル正義の変容』ナカニシヤ出版, pp. 79–98.
22. Andrei Yamamoto. 2025. AZEC and the Discursive Construction of Japan's Green Identity: A Poststructuralist Inquiry, *Journal of Asian Governance*, 2(2), pp. 67–97.
23. Yusy Widarahesty. 2025. 'Japanese First' Politics Creates Fears for Indonesians, *New Mandal*a, July 18, 2025. <https://www.newmandala.org/japanese-first-politics-creates-fears-for-indonesians/>
24. 本名純（2025）「もう一つの政権交代：インドネシア民主政治と裏社会」『公研』, No.742, 2025年6月8日, pp. 10–11.
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26. 小田巻友子（2025）「多文化化する高齢者ケアの実像―違いを認め合い共に生きるために―」『季刊くらしと協同』, (52), pp. 48–57.
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28. Yusy Widarahesty. 2025. *Dreaming of a Better Life: Journeys of Indonesian Migrant Workers to Japan*, Springer.
29. Kenki Adachi. 2025. The BRI and Its Implications for Global and Domestic Governance, Miwa Hirono ed., *Globalising Chinese Actors and Internalising the Belt and Road: Implications for Global and Domestic Governance*, Australian National University Press, pp. 27–35.
30. 本名純（2025）「プラボウォ政権下のインドネシア：持続的発展か民主主義の空洞化か」国分良成・粕谷裕子・日本経済研究センター編『戦場化するアジア政治：民主主義と権威主義のせめぎ合い』日本経済新聞出版, pp. 161–185.
31. 辻本登志子（2025）「케어 사각지대에 놓인 결혼이주여성의 재생산과 노후문제」성공회대학교 노동사연구소 관점& 이슈, Vol. 3.（原文韓国語。日本語訳：「ケアの死角に置かれた結婚移民女性の再生産と老後の問題」聖公會大学校労働史研究所発行,『観点とイシュー』第3号.
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33. Kenki Adachi. 2025. Order-Building from the Margins: Hideyoshi's Invasions of Korea Reconsidered through Liminality and Competing Systems, *Review of International Studies*, First View on December 3, 2025.
34. 白戸圭一（2025）「TICADプロセスの将来を考える」『アフリカレポート』第63号､アジア経済研究所, pp. 76–82.

35. 本名純（2025）「インドネシア・プラボウォ政権下の国軍と政治」『修親』, 2025年12月号, pp. 6–9.
36. 本名純（2025）「ジョコウィの政治と民主主義の後退」東方孝之・川村晃一編『岐路に立つインドネシア：ジョコウィ政権の評価とプラボウォ政権の課題』アジア経済研究所、2025年, pp. 23–49.
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38. Kenki Adachi. 2026. *Japan and the As-If International Systems: Strategic Performance in a Plural World*, Routledge.
39. Taha Acar. 2026. Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Policy: The Shift in the National Diet Under Abe (2015–2020), *The Ritsumeikan Journal of International Studies: Special Edition for Postgraduate Students*, Vol. 26, February 2026, pp. 1–19.

Selected list of Research Funding/Grant

1. 小田巻友子（代表者）科学研究費補助金（若手研究）「保育サービス生産への親の参加が及ぼす影響と参加を阻む社会経済的要因の検討」（2021～2025年度）
2. 足立研幾（代表者）、科学研究費補助金（基盤C）「過剰／過少安全保障化の理論化に向けて― COVID-19を事例として」（2022～2026年度）
3. 本名純（代表者）、科学研究費補助金（基盤A）「新型コロナ危機の政治的インパクト：東南アジア地域モデル構築による比較政治研究の刷新」（2022～2026年度）
4. 村上剛（代表者）、科学研究費補助金（基盤C）「日本における移民排斥感情の理解と理論的検討」（2023～2025年度）
5. Polina Ivanova（代表者）、科学研究費（研究活動スタート支援）「International students' loneliness in Japan and the UK」（2023～2025年度）
6. 辻本登志子（代表者）、科学研究費（基盤C）「移住家事労働者の権利処遇をめぐるフィリピン・韓国の二国間連携に関する研究」（2024～2028年度）
7. 松田正彦（代表者）、科学研究費（基盤A）「脱農化する東南アジアから導かれる地域発展の論理―気候変動時代の新しいパラダイム―」（2024～2029年度）