JETRO Invest Japan Report 2018

Message from the Chairman

With the goal of creating employment and innovation by attracting excellent human resources and technology to Japan, the government announced its target of increasing inward foreign direct investment (FDI) stock to 35 trillion yen by 2020. Steady progress is being made toward achieving this policy goal, with FDI stock achieving a historical high for the fourth consecutive year by the end of 2017, at 28.6 trillion yen.

Meanwhile, the trend in drawing inward FDI has been shifting from quantitative expansion to more qualitative contributions. In particular, there has been an increased focus on innovation and startups globally, the former being capable of changing existing industries and society through technologies related to the Fourth Industrial Revolution—such as IoT and AI—and the latter rapidly growing as an active player in that field. With "innovation" and "startup" as keywords in drawing investment, overseas companies are beginning to contribute to the emergence of innovation in Japan through promotion of open innovation and participation in an environment conducive to the creation of startups.

In order for Japan to be chosen as an investment destination by international companies in the midst of global locational competition, "ease of doing business" is key. In June 2018, the Japanese government established a project-based "Regulatory Sandbox system" and prepared an environment which enables the demonstration of innovative technologies and business models free from existing regulations. In addition to that, under "Growth Strategy 2018" (decided by the Cabinet on June 15, 2018), it is pushing forward with reforms from the perspective of business operators, including plans to finalize a system that allows online corporate establishment procedures to be processed within 24 hours in FY2019.

JETRO, as Japan's central organization for attracting inward FDI, has provided support for foreign companies entering the Japanese market and expanding their business in Japan. Since the start of the "Invest Japan" campaign in 2003, JETRO has supported for more than 18,000 projects and helped in the successful establishment of over 1,800 companies. Experienced staff members who serve as "Personal Advisors" work closely with foreign companies to address the challenges they face starting up in Japan—including those related to language, business practices, rules and regulations—in order to realize more projects. Furthermore, under the "Support Program for Regional Foreign Direct Investment in Japan" started this fiscal year, our organization has placed the vitalization of local regions through FDI as an important pillar and is working with the government as one to assist municipalities proactive in drawing investment.

This report is a compilation of information on the activities of foreign-affiliates and their perception of the Japanese business environment, related policies of the central and local governments, statistics on Japan's inward FDI and JETRO's own activities. It is constructed with the aim of giving readers a broad view of the topic of investment into Japan. We hope it will be a useful resource for anyone considering starting business in Japan or supporting foreign investment into the country.

Hiroyuki Ishige

Chairman and CEO

Japan External Trade Organization

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1 Recent Situation of Inward FDI in Japan

Inward foreign direct investment (FDI) in Japan in 2017 saw a sixth successive year of excess inflow and the record high of the stock for the fourth consecutive year. Asia was the fastest-growing direct investor, contributing a stock of 5.3 trillion yen in 2017 (an increase of 10.3 times since 2000), well ahead of Europe and North America. In "qualitative" terms, there are companies entering japan in new sectors of the economy such as sharing services, startup accelerators and FinTech.

1. Inward FDI stock marked a record high for four consecutive years

(1) General outlook: Inward FDI stock tops 28 trillion yen

As at the end of 2017, inward FDI stock in Japan was 28.55 trillion yen, an increase of 322.7 billion yen (1.1%) in annual terms, seeing the fourth successive year of record high (Chart 1-1). Inward FDI stock as a proportion to nominal gross domestic product (GDP) remains 5.2%, the same as the previous year.

According to the Ministry of Finance, the increase can be attributed to: (1) overall transaction during 2017, commensurate with inward FDI in the international balance of payments (2.12 trillion yen increase); (2) exchange rate fluctuations (11 billion yen reduction); and (3) adjustments to accommodate movements such as fluctuations in share and debenture prices and discrepancies between balance of payment figures and foreign asset and liability balance figures (1.79 trillion yen reduction).

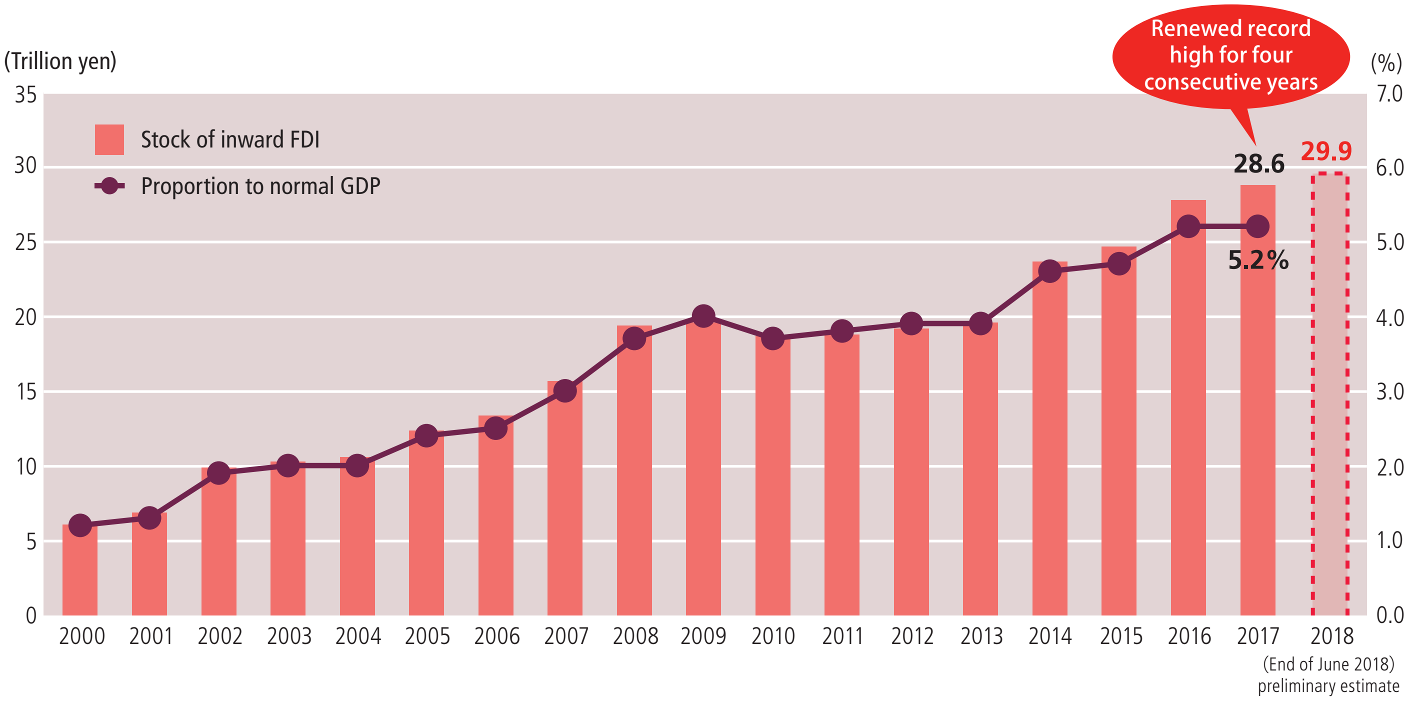
By investment type, the single largest component of inward FDI stock was "equity capital" (share purchases or capital expenditure by a foreign company with a value of at least 10% of voting rights); this accounted for 16.31 trillion yen, equivalent to about 60% of the total. Next was "reinvestment of earnings" (proportion of undistributed earnings from a Japanese business or local subsidiary with foreign ownership corresponding to the level of foreign investment) at 6.52 trillion yen, followed by "debt instruments" (cash loans exchanged between parent and subsidiary and acquisition/disposal of bonds) at 5.73 trillion yen.

(2) By industry and region: Ten-fold increase in FDI from Asia since 2000

Europe accounted for roughly half of inward FDI stock in Japan in 2017 (Chart 1-2), contributing 14.92 trillion yen (up 3.1% in annual terms). The bulk of the investment came from the manufacturing sector (Chart 1-3). Within Europe, the largest single investor country was the Netherlands, where around 80% of investment was in electrical machinery, followed by France, where over 70% of investment was in transportation equipment.

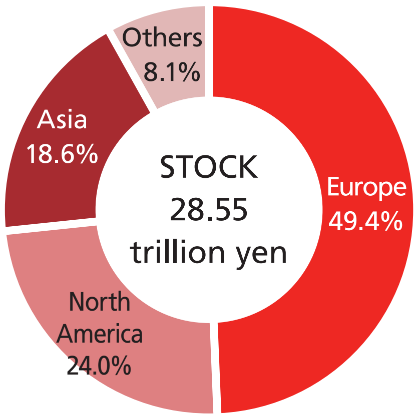
North America contributed 6.85 trillion yen in inward FDI stock (down 6.1% from the previous year). Around 80% of the stock was from the non-manufacturing sector, with the majority coming from finance and insurance industry. Despite the contraction in investment, attributable mainly to the decision by a leading US insurance provider to pull out of the Japanese life insurance market in 2017, North America remains the largest source of FDI (Chart 1-4).

Chart 1-1 Inward FDI stock and its proportion to nominal GDP (based on Sixth Edition of the IMF's Balance of Payments and International Investment Position Manual (BPM6))



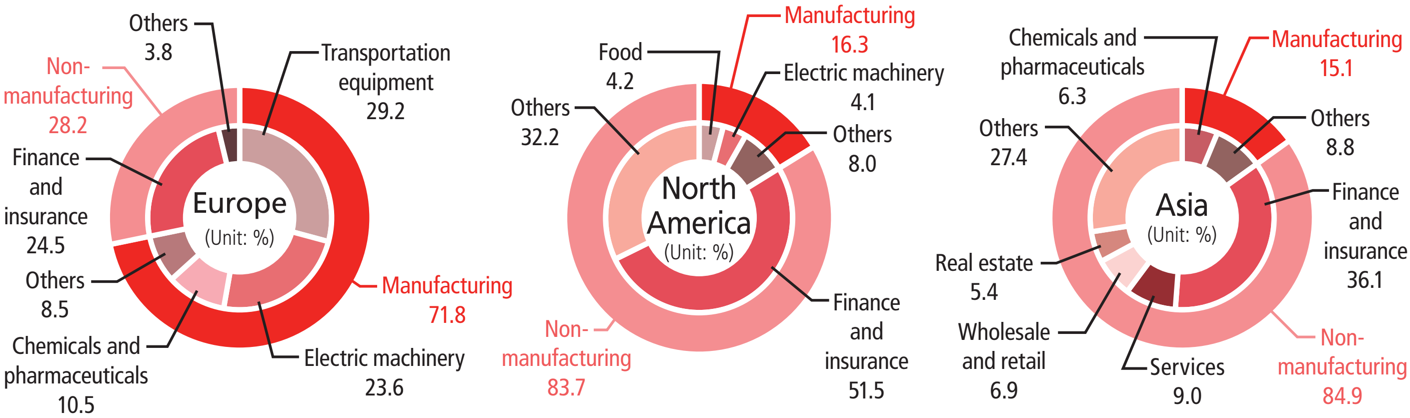
[Source] "International Investment Position of Japan" (Ministry of Finance and Bank of Japan), "National Accounts of Japan" (Japan Cabinet Office)

Chart 1-2 Share of inward FDI stock in Japan by region (as of end of 2017)



[Source] "International Investment Position of Japan" (Ministry of Finance and Bank of Japan)

Chart 1-3 Share of inward FDI stock in Japan by region and industry (as of end of 2017)



[Note] In the statistics of the inward FDI stock by industry, the investment made by a subsidiary to the parent company is counted as the withdrawal of investment by the parent company. The calculation method differs from that of the statistics for inward FDI stock by region and investment type.
[Source] "International Investment Position of Japan" (Ministry of Finance and Bank of Japan)

Chart 1-4 Inward FDI stock in Japan by country/region and by industry Top 10 (as of end of 2017)

<By country/region>

Rank	Country/region	Stock (billion yen)	Ratio (%)
1	US	6,670	23.4
2	Netherlands	4,595	16.1
3	France	3,500	12.3
4	Singapore	2,542	8.9
5	UK	1,721	6.0
6	Cayman Islands	1,414	5.0
7	Switzerland	1,259	4.4
8	Hong Kong	960	3.4
9	Germany	894	3.1
10	Luxenbourg	857	3.0

<By industry>

Rank	Industry	Stock (billion yen)	Ratio (%)
1	Finance and insurance	7,504	33.2
2	Electric machinery	3,329	14.7
3	Transportation equipment	3,281	14.5
4	Chemicals and pharmaceuticals	1,562	6.9
5	Services	1,276	5.6
6	Communications	700	3.1
7	General machinery	672	3.0
8	Wholesale and retail	582	2.6
9	Real estate	434	1.9
10	Transportation	402	1.8

[Note] In the statistics of the inward FDI stock by industry, the investment made by a subsidiary to the parent company is counted as the withdrawal of investment by the parent company. The calculation method differs from that of the statistics for inward FDI stock by region and investment type.
[Source] "International Investment Position of Japan" (Ministry of Finance and Bank of Japan)

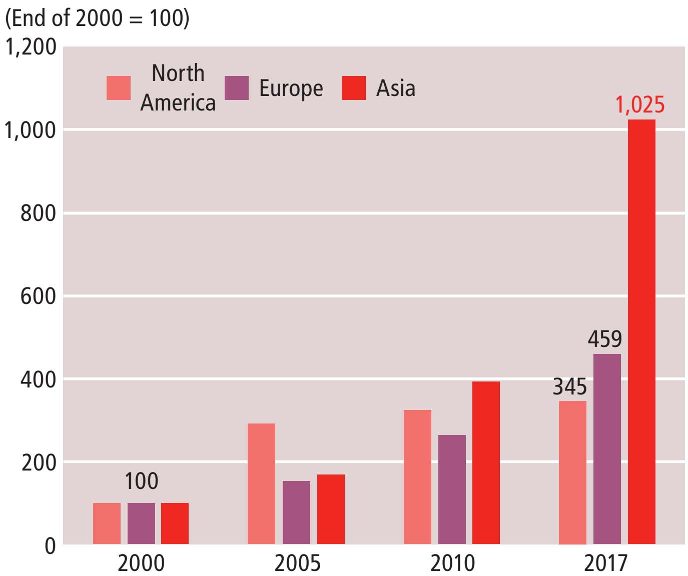
The stock of Asia rose 2.1% in annual terms to 5.3 trillion yen. Singapore was the single largest contributor from Asia, at 2.54 trillion yen (up 7.4%), followed by Hong Kong (960.2 billion yen, down 13.9%), Taiwan (674.3 billion yen, down 11.8%), South Korea (458.2 billion yen, up 14.1%) and China (286.6 billion yen, up 51.4%). By industry, the bulk of FDI came from the non-manufacturing sector, with finance and insurance, services and real estate particularly prominent.

The stock of Asia has risen by a factor of 10.3 times compared to 2000 levels (Chart 1-5), with the contribution from Asia relative to the total inward FDI stock rising from 8.5% to 18.6%. Asia is increasingly becoming a major provider of global investment source country. According to the UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development) figures, combined outward FDI stock from the 11 main countries and regions of Asia [Note] grew by a factor of 9.2 times between 2000 and 2017, while Asia's proportion to the total global FDI stock also rose from 7.8% to 17.3%.

Outward FDI from Asia, the world's growth center, is expected to grow further. As seen in Europe and North America, FDI tends to be more prevalent between countries/regions that have shared geographical or historical characteristics. Thus it may be anticipated that future growth in outward FDI from Asia will likewise be concentrated within Asia. In this context, there is scope for further growth in inward FDI from Asia into Japan.

[Note] The 11 countries and regions in Asia whose figures are individually reported in balance of payments statistics of the Ministry of Finance and Bank of Japan: China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam and India.

Chart 1-5 Changes in inward FDI stock in Japan by region (indexed to end of 2000 level = 100)



[Note] Based on BPM6 (figures before 2014 have been converted by JETRO from BPM5-based to BPM6-based)

[Source] "International Investment Position of Japan" (Ministry of Finance and Bank of Japan)

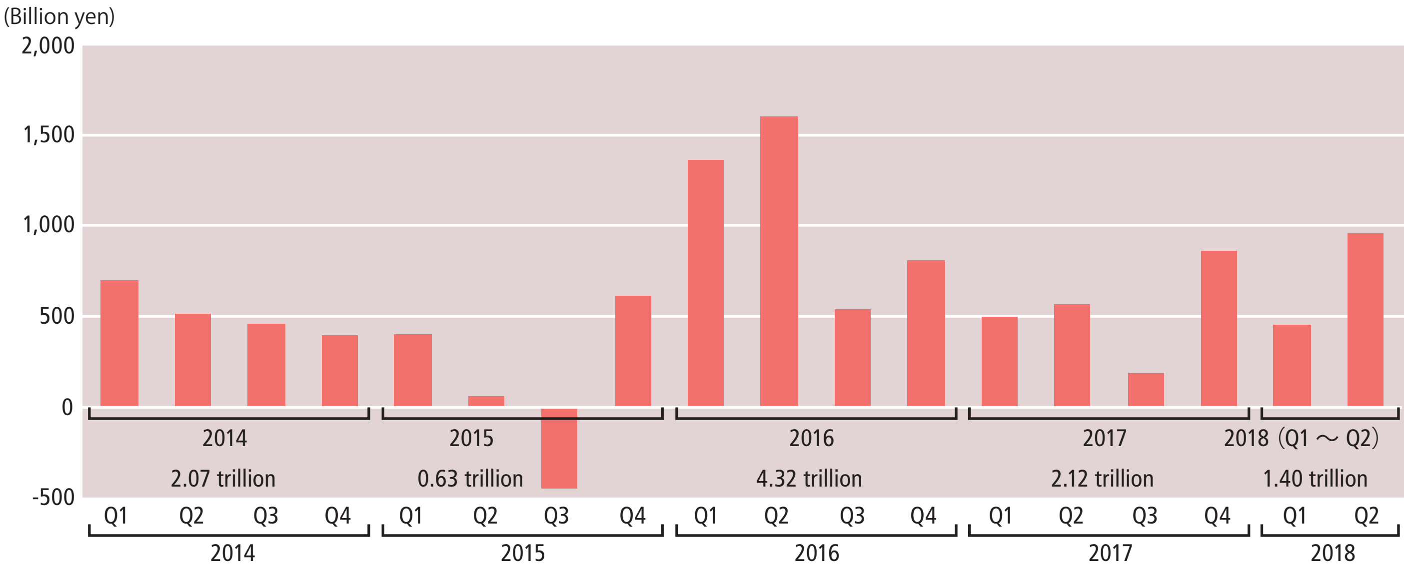
2. Inward FDI saw a sixth successive year of excess inflow

(1) General outlook: Marks fourth highest record at 2 trillion yen

2017 saw net flow of inward FDI in Japan (based on balance of payments, referred to as "inward FDI in Japan" hereafter) of 2.12 trillion yen, the sixth successive year of surplus. Although the figure halved compared to 2016, due mainly to a reactionary fall from the previous year, it still represents the fourth highest surplus since comparable 1996. By investment type, reinvestment of earnings (1.64 trillion yen) accounted for nearly 80% of the total, followed by debt instruments (242.5 billion yen) and equity capital (237.1 billion yen).

Inward FDI in Japan from January to June 2018 shows at 1.40 trillion yen, up around 30% in annual terms (Chart 1-6). This is thought to be partly attributable to the June finalization of the Toshiba Memory sale to the Japan-US-South Korea corpotate consortium, as explained later.

Chart 1-6 Changes in quarterly net flow of inward FDI into Japan



[Note] Q1 = Jan-Mar, Q2 = Apr-Jun, Q3 = Jul-Sep, Q4 = Oct-Dec

[Source] "Balance of Payments" (Ministry of Finance and Bank of Japan)

(2) By country/region and industry: The advent of new fields of investment such as the sharing economy

By region, Asia recorded inward FDI in Japan at 632 billion yen, North America 646.5 billion yen and Europe 505.3 billion yen in 2017 (Chart 1-7). As in 2016, the top industries were from the manufacturing sector, with electric machinery (614.2 billion yen) the largest, followed by transportation equipment (433.1 billion yen) and general machinery (250.8 billion yen). The summary of inward FDI in Japan from 2017 to the first half of 2018 by region, including specific investment projects, is as follows.

2017 saw a drop in inward FDI in Japan from Asia as a reactionary fall to the acquisition of Sharp by Taiwan's Hon Hai Precision Industry in the previous year. Despite this, the value of investment remains equivalent to 2014 and 2015 levels. Singapore alone accounted for around half of the inflow surplus (384.7 billion yen). China recorded an outflow surplus in 2016 but an inflow surplus of 108 billion yen in 2017.

Asia is increasingly investing in B to C sectors including new service industries such as sharing services. For example, from Singapore, whose investment has traditionally focused on acquiring real estate and developing logistics networks through via real estate investment trusts and investment funds, **honestbee**, a company providing personal shopping services, established an office in Tokyo in February 2017 and is expanding its service coverage to other regions. The Chinese bike-sharing behemoth **Mobike** launched bicycle sharing service in Sapporo City, Hokkaido Prefecture, in July 2017, having set up a Japanese subsidiary a month earlier, and is currently rolling out into other prefectures starting with Kanagawa Prefecture. In June 2018, major ride-hailing operator **Didi Chuxing** teamed up with Softbank to establish a joint venture to launch a new AI (artificial intelligence)-driven taxi service.

In addition to investment in the sharing economy, foreign-affiliates showed brick activities in the fields related to inbound tourism with demand from Asian visitation numbers steadily rising. August 2017 saw **Tujia**, a Chinese major vacation rental site, announce a business collaboration with Rakuten Group's equivalent business entity for expansion into Japan. Low-cost carriers (LCC) are steadily adding new routes including regular flights to Japanese regional cities. In November 2017, Singapore-based **JetStar Asia** introduced the first ever direct service between Singapore and Naha, Okinawa Prefecture, and in 2018 Korean-based **Air Busan** launched the first LCC service between Busan and Chubu, Aichi Prefecture. This level of interest from foreign tourism operators seeking to cash in on the inbound tourism boom is expected to generate significant momentum that will translate into higher visitation numbers in regional areas of Japan.

Elsewhere, **Ruten (PChome Online)**, Taiwan's largest e-commerce operator, has opened a second office in Osaka City following the Tokyo facility, while **NextDrive**, a supplier of IoT-driven smart energy management solutions, has recently set up a Japanese subsidiary. These are the examples of the startups entering Japan in the field of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Chart 1-7 Changes in net flow of inward FDI into Japan by country/region

(Unit: Billion yen)

		2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 Jan-Jun	Year-on-year growth (%)
Asia		678	677	933	632	328	△ 26.7
	China	80	77	△ 11	108	23	327.8
	Hong Kong	228	119	159	△ 27	49	361.7
	Taiwan	126	85	256	84	24	△ 37.4
	Korea	70	113	65	109	66	29.3
	ASEAN	174	281	465	357	167	△ 51.2
	Singapore	144	229	394	385	58	△ 84.7
North America		759	524	689	647	24	△ 92.6
	US	758	527	688	657	20	△ 94.0
Latin America		73	△ 240	181	298	553	240.8
Oceania		62	△ 77	88	28	236	-
Europe		441	△ 284	2,406	505	120	△ 4.0
	EU	376	△ 263	2,300	348	104	2.6
World		2,075	627	4,317	2,118	1,403	31.6

[Note] △ indicates negative figure.

[Source] "Balance of Payments" (Ministry of Finance and Bank of Japan)

Inward FDI in Japan from North America was characterized by US investment funds' active deals (Chart 1-8). **Kohlberg Kravis Roberts (KKR)** acquired Calsonic Kansei, the largest auto parts manufacturer in the Nissan group, for around 500 billion yen in May 2017, while **Bain Capital** played a leading role in facilitating the acquisition of Toshiba Memory, a company affiliated with Toshiba, which is in the midst of a major restructure, by a Japan-US-Korea corporate consortium for 2 trillion yen in 2018.

Japan is also starting to attract so-called IT platformers and startup incubators in the US. **Amazon Japan** has been particularly active, setting up the first ever dedicated fashion distribution facility in western Japan in October 2017 in Osaka Prefecture, while its cloud services arm **Amazon Web Services (AWS)** opened a second data center in February 2018, also in Osaka. **Plug and Play**, one of the US largest startup accelerator, set up a Japanese subsidiary in July 2017, while **WeWork**, a leading provider of coworking spaces with approximately 300 sites (as of June 2018) around the world, launched in Tokyo in February 2018, with plans to expand to Yokohama, Osaka and Fukuoka City.

Europe continues to provide significant investment in the manufacturing sector, particularly by companies using IT. **MER MEC**, an Italian developer of inspection and diagnostic systems for railway infrastructure, established a Japanese subsidiary in February 2017. The company's system was adopted for testing by JR East Japan, making it the first overseas supplier of a foreign-made inspection system for a Japanese railway company. **Beckhoff Automation**, a major German manufacturer of industrial control equipment, opened its second office in Japan in Nagoya City in September 2017. Toyota Motor selected industrial network protocol invented by the company extensively, and Beckhoff targets to a nationwide roll-out of the product. As in the automobile industry, **Gestamp Automoción**, a Spanish leading supplier of pressed parts for the automobiles, opened a new R&D center in Tokyo in June 2017 and opened the first plant in Mie Prefecture.

There are some examples of European companies entering Japan in the FinTech sector. **Shift Technology**, a French developer of automated insurance fraud detection services, opened a Japanese subsidiary in 2018, as did **ClaimVantage**, an Irish supplier of insurance claim processing software application. Shift Technology is a company to have set up operations in Tokyo through Metropolitan Government's accelerator program "FinTech Business Camp Tokyo," and its products have already been adopted by Mitsui Sumitomo Insurance Group and Aioi Nissay Dowa Insurance.

Chart 1-8 Major inward M&A deals in Japan from 2017 to first half of 2018

Date effective		Target	Industry	Acquirer	Parent country/ region	Industry	Value (billion yen)
2017	May	Calsonic Kansei	Autoparts	Kohlberg Kravis Roberts (KKR)	US	Investment firm	498.2
	Apr	USJ	Leisure	Comcast NBC Universal	US	Media	254.8
	Jul	Hitachi Koki	Machinery	Kohlberg Kravis Roberts (KKR)	US	Investment firm	147.1
	Mar	Accordia Golf	Leisure	MBK Partners	Korea	Investment firm	85.3
	Sep	Coca-Cola Bottlers Japan	Beverage	Coca-Cola Japan	US	Beverage	54.1
	Aug	TASAKI	Retail (Jewel)	MBK Partners	Korea	Investment firm	31.5
	Apr	AIG Fuji Life Insurance	Finance	FWD Group	Hong Kong	Finance	39.2
2018	Jun	Toshiba Memory	Electronics	Bain Capital (US), SK hynix (Korea) and others	-	Investors group	2,000.0
	Apr	Takata	Transportation equipment	Joyson Electronics	China	Transportation equipment	175.0
	Mar	ASATSU-DK	Advertising agency	Bain Capital	US	Investment firm	152.3

[Note] ① As of August 2018. ② Ranked by single transaction value. ③ "Acquirer" is the ultimate acquirer (including corporate group).
[Source] Thomson Reuters

COLUMN

Rate of return on inward FDI into Japan

"Rate of return on inward FDI" is an indicator of how efficiently corporate investors raise profit from their investment in a foreign country. It is defined as direct investment income (debit) (recorded in primary income as part of balance of payments) divided by the value of inward FDI stock.

The rate of return on inward FDI in Japan averaged 9.0% over the period from 2008 to 2017, which compares favorably with the other major FDI recipients (Chart 1-9). By country or region, corporate investors from North America (primarily manufacturing) and Europe (primarily non-manufacturing) enjoy a relatively high rate of return from Japan.

The OECD report "FDI in Figures (April 2016)" ranks Japan third out of 22 countries for rate of return on inward FDI (10%). In services other than finance and insurance activities, Japan is ranked top at 17.8%.

Japan's high rate of return may be to some extent a reflection of the financial health of the foreign companies that choose to invest in Japan. Also, the absolute value of inward FDI in Japan is still fairly small compared to other countries, so this could make the rate of return higher as a calculated result.

Nevertheless, given that the profitability of the target market is a key factor in investment decisions, Japan's high rate of return on inward FDI compared to other countries suggests that it is an attractive destination for corporate investors. In a survey of foreign-affiliated companies conducted by JETRO in FY2018, nearly 70% of respondents, evaluating the Japanese market from the perspective of profitability, answered "Profitability is high" or "Profitability is somewhat high". This result is consistent with the actual data on Japan as a target for inward FDI.

Locations of foreign-affiliated companies in Japan

According to the 51st Survey of Trends in Business Activities of Foreign Affiliates (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, 2017), nearly 70% of foreign-affiliated companies in Japan choose Tokyo Metropolitan as the location for their headquarter offices (Chart 1-10).

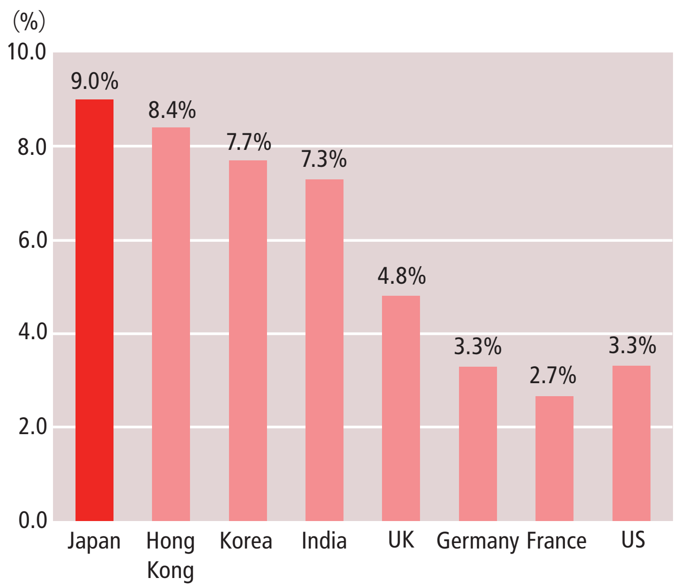
Non-manufacturing businesses in particular tend to gravitate towards Tokyo Metropolitan; over 80% of companies in information and communications, finance and insurance and transport are based there. Manufacturers, by way of contrast, are more likely to set up in prefectures other than Tokyo; this trend is most notable for transportation equipment (87.8%), production machinery (76.9%), electrical machinery (68.3%), and information and communication equipment (63.2%).

By region, foreign-affiliates from Asia are more likely to base themselves outside of Tokyo (37.7%) compared to those from Europe and the US (31.4%). The Kansai area, along with Kyushu and Okinawa area, are popular destinations for Asian companies.

Investment in regional areas of Japan by foreign and foreign-affiliated companies can bring a wealth of benefits such as sales channels, technology, human resources, and know-how of the companies which contribute to the improvement of productivity and creation of employment opportunities. For this reason, local governments around Japan are actively pursuing inward FDI as a means of regenerating the regional economy. The Japanese government adopted "Support Program for Regional Foreign Direct Investment in Japan" in May 2018 in order to strongly advance regional vitalization through inward FDI in Japan.

The JETRO's survey of foreign-affiliated companies found that over 60% of target locations for those companies planning secondary investment in Japan were areas rather than Tokyo. It is important to actively promote investment in local regions by utilizing their strengths such as distinctive industrial clusters, numerous regional resources and outstanding labor forces.

Chart 1-9 International comparison of average rates of return on inward FDI in 2008 – 2017



[Note] Rate of return on inward FDI =
Direct investment income (debit) /Term's inward FDI stock (term final balance)×100 (%)
[Source] "IMF Data Warehouse" (IMF) (as of June 22 2018), "International Investment Position of Japan" (Ministry of Finance and Bank of Japan)

Chart 1-10 Top 10 locations where foreign-affiliated companies are based

Rank	Prefecture	No. of manufacturing companies	No. of non-manufacturing companies	Total no. of companies	Ratio (%)	Region			
						Europe	North America	Asia	Others
1	Tokyo	219	1,948	2,167	67.4	941	584	515	127
2	Kanagawa	96	226	322	10.0	177	78	58	9
3	Osaka	36	136	172	5.3	67	29	70	6
4	Hyogo	18	62	80	2.5	44	16	19	1
5	Aichi	22	48	70	2.2	30	11	25	4
6	Saitama	26	42	68	2.1	36	10	20	2
7	Chiba	14	51	65	2.0	31	9	23	2
8	Shizuoka	16	10	26	0.8	13	4	7	2
9	Fukuoka	5	17	22	0.7	6	4	12	0
10	Ibaraki	14	6	20	0.6	9	6	5	0
	Others	96	109	205	6.4	72	46	73	14
Total		562	2,655	3,217	100.0	1,426	797	827	167

[Source] "The 2017(51st) Survey of Trends in Business Activities of Foreign Affiliates (conducted in connection with business for FY2016)" (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry)