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Midokura is planning to expand in Lausanne

Midokura is an IT specialized company that develops virtual networking software. Based in Japan, Midokura has a presence at the EPFL Scientific Park in Lausanne.

"Virtual Networking enables the sharing of a physical infrastructure by multiple tenants. Each tenant has the illusion that they are the only users of it", explained Dan Mihai Dumitriu, Midokura CTO and co-founder.

Dan Mihai Dumitriu studied computer science in the United States at the Cornell University, New York State. He also did graduate work at the EPFL. He worked in the US and in Japan for several IT companies, including Sony Electronics, NetAge, and Amazon.com, spending a total of twenty years in the US and three years in Japan.

Virtual Networking Software

"When I was doing my Ph.D. research, I had some ideas that led to Midokura", Mr. Mihai Dumitriu said. The original idea was to build an "Infrastructure As A Service" (IAAS), a type of delivery of compute capacity to users.

He met his partner Tatsuya Kato



Dan Mihai Dumitriu,
Midokura CTO and co-founder

in Japan. Together they founded Midokura in early 2010.

The technology of Midokura is to develop Layer 2 to Layer 7 virtual networking services. "This technology provides all features of an entire network, a more familiar environment", he explained.

Midokura means "green cloud" in Japanese. "With this technology users can share the infrastructure and potentially save energy", he said.

All Midokura's clients are so far located in Japan, but the company recently hired an executive in San Francisco, to drive expansion in the US. It is aiming to become profitable in three years.

会見

INTERVIEW

Expansion at EPFL Scientific Park

Midokura has a total of ten engineers in Tokyo, San Francisco, and Barcelona. They collaborate by Internet, heavily making use of Web Services for collaboration. "We are also planning to hire some people in our Lausanne's office, at EPFL Scientific Park. EPFL graduates are very good, and also because we have a good relationship with LABOS, the Operating Systems lab at EPFL, and we would like to encourage further collaboration with them", he further said. "DEV [Economic Development Office of Vaud's Canton] offers us a lot of support. We also have some tax-related support", Dan Mihai Dumitriu said.

As the CTO, he leads all engineering developments and also presents Midokura's technical vision externally. The main objectives of technological researches are to further develop the performance, stability and features of Midokura's virtual networking software. "With regard to features, we already have a long list of ideas", he claimed.

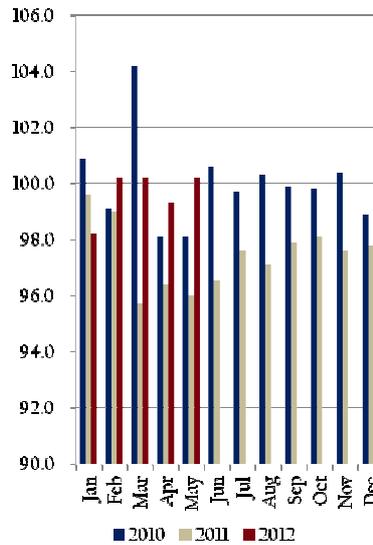
動向

SITUATION

Japan's current economic situation

"Japan's economic activity has started picking up moderately as domestic demand remains firm mainly supported by reconstruction-related demand", said the Bank of Japan (BoJ) in July 2012 Monthly Report of Recent Economic and Financial Developments. BoJ further stated that "Japan's economy is expected to return to a moderate recovery path as domestic demand remains firm and overseas economies emerge from the deceleration phase".

Main indicators of Japan's economic situation shows a recovery trend over the year. The index of industrial production increased by 6.0% from the previous year to 92.2 in May (2005=100). Furthermore, the coincident index of business conditions (used to identify the current state of the economy) rose by 6.4% from a year earlier to 95.8 (2005=100).



Index of consumption expenditures
Seasonally Adjusted Series—Two-or-more
person households (2010=100)

Source: Ministry of Internal Affairs and
Communications

As mentioned by the BoJ, Japan's economy is stimulated by a strong domestic demand. The index of consumption expenditures was 100.2 in May, up 4.4% from the

same month in the preceding year (see graph). The consumer confidence index increased 13.8% from 35.5 in June 2011 to 40.4 in June 2012.

Moreover, the unemployment rate was of 4.4% in May (2.97 million people), marking a decline by 5.4% from the previous year.

Japan's economy is also boosted by foreign demand, especially in the United States. Japanese exports rose 10.0% in May 2012 to ¥ 5,233 billion from a year earlier. Exports to North America soared 37.8% (+38.1% for the U.S.) and rose 4.5% to Asia (+3.0% for China). However, exports to Western Europe declined 4.8%.

The increase of Japan's exports results mainly from the rise by 50.6% of exports of transport equipment (motor vehicles, parts, etc.), which account for 23.3% of the total value of exports.

Economic improvements in four regions

動向

SITUATION

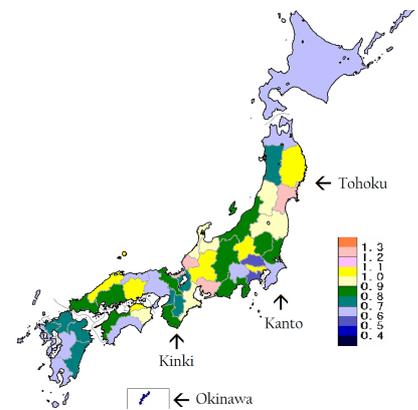
The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) has released on July 11, 2012 the results of a regional economic and industrial research.

It points out a global improvement of the situation in Japanese regions. The assessments of economic conditions in four regions (Tohoku, Kanto, Kinki and Okinawa areas; see locations on the map) were revised upward due to increases in production and con-

sumer spending. The assessments in six regions (Hokkaido, Tokai, Hokuriku, Chugoku, Shikoku and Kyushu areas) remained the same.

It further outlines that the ratio of job vacancies (job vacancies divided by number of unemployed people) has increased in Japan from 0.75 in January - March period to 0.81 in May.

The map on the right shows the ratio of job vacancies prefecture by prefecture.



Ratio of job vacancies in each prefecture
Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

JETRO visited Pilot Corporation of Europe in Annecy

JETRO Paris and JETRO Geneva participated in Japan Business Club Rhône-Alpes, in Allonzier La Caille, near Annecy, France. The business meeting was held on June 28, 2012, at Pilot European headquarters (Pilot Corporation of Europe).

Following the visit of Pilot's factory, Marcel Ringeard, President and CEO of Pilot Corporation of Europe, introduced the company.

Established in 1918 under the name of Namiki Manufacturing Company, Pilot group had in 2011 an annual turnover of about ¥ 69 billion. It employs a total of 3,000 people around the world (Japan, France, United States, Indonesia and Brazil).

Its European factory provides job to 218 people and produces 45 million pens per year.

Mr. Ringeard explained that the success of Pilot is based on the



Marcel Ringeard,
President and CEO,
Pilot Corporation of Europe

quality of its products, but also on its capacity to innovate: "every ten years, we have an innovation leading to our business success", he said.

One of its first innovation was to cover the pen tip to prevent it from rusting. It then made the pen tip in

tungsten (a very solid metal), instead of copper.

Pilot invented pen-board in the early 1960s, liquid-ink in the 1980s and gel-ink in the 1990s. It recently produced recycled pens under the brand "BegreeN". Such pens are made from recycled pet bottles.

Today, it has developed a new successful product: thermo-sensitive ink. It reacts to temperature changes. When rubbing against the paper with the plastic tip, the friction generates sufficient heat to turn the ink invisible.

Mr. Ringeard also outlined that the Japanese founders of Pilot wanted to develop a company that would also contribute to the nation and to society. Pilot pursues efforts of its founders and is committed to the principles of the corporate social responsibility.

活動

ACTIVITY

Japanese women at Zurich's Rietberg museum

Zurich's Rietberg museum holds the exhibition "The Beauty of the Moment - Women in Japanese Woodblock Prints" from July 7 to October 14, 2012.

This exhibition shows a collection of 100 woodblock prints of the 18th and 19th centuries. This art is called "bijinga" in Japanese - literally "pictures of beautiful women". They depict beautiful Japanese women (but also men), dressed as courtesans, geishas, waitresses in tea-houses, saleswomen and townswomen.

Prints originate from Hawaii's Honolulu Museum of Art. They were selected among more than 10,000 sheets. Many of them were initially part of the collection of American author's James A. Michener.

The exhibition also shows photographs of women taken by the end of the 19th century and two video installations of Japanese contemporary artist Tabaimo.

Teahouse Maidens under a Wisteria Trellis
(Fujidana shita no chaya musume)
Kitagawa Utamaro, 1753-1806
ca. 1795
© Honolulu Museum of Art (16516)



文化

CULTURE

革新

INNOVATION

Giant solar power plant projects in Japan

Japanese Diet has approved the “Act on Purchase of Renewable Energy Sourced Electricity by Electric Utilities”. It introduces incentive pricing for renewable sources of energy (solar, wind and geothermal). It has entered into force from July 1, 2012 for a 20-year period.

While Japan already has the third world’s largest installed photovoltaic generation capacity (3,618 mega watts), some new giant solar power plant projects have been unveiled. They will take place on the sea near Kyushu island, in disaster-stricken area of Fukushima prefecture and in Hokkaido island.

On the sea

Kyocera Corporation, Mizuho Corporate Bank and IHI Corporation reached an agreement for the construction of a “mega-solar plant” on the sea coast, in Kagoshima City (south of Kyushu island). The construction is scheduled to start this month. The total project cost is estimated at approximately ¥ 25 billion (CHF 310 million).

Kyocera will be responsible for the supply of solar modules; IHI will



Illustration of solar power plant project in Kyushu island
With the permission of KYOCERA Corporation

lease the land; Mizuho will devise a financing plan for the project.

Solar panels will cover an area of approximately 1.27 km².

The solar plant will have a capacity of 70 megawatts.

In disaster-stricken area

Toshiba Corporation will build giant solar power plants in Minamisoma, in disaster-stricken area of Fukushima prefecture. It will assist its recovery from the March 2011 disasters. The total cost of the project is estimated at ¥30 billion

(CHF 372 million).

The construction will begin by the end of this year. Solar power plants will operate by FY 2014.

It will have a capacity of 100 megawatts of electricity.

In Hokkaido island

The telecommunications and internet provider Softbank announced the construction of solar power plants in the Northern island of Hokkaido.

It will be able to generate a total of 200 megawatts of electricity.

JETRO is a government-related organization that works to promote mutual trade and investment between Japan and the rest of the world. Originally established in 1958 to promote Japanese exports abroad, JETRO's core focus in the 21st century has shifted toward promoting foreign direct investment into Japan and helping small to medium size Japanese firms maximize their global export potential.

The JETRO Switzerland Newsletter can also be viewed and/or downloaded online:
<http://www.jetro.go.jp/switzerland/newsletter>

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