

Research on consumer trends and international collaboration

Investigations on trends in consumer activities

White Paper on Consumer Affairs

In order to plan and develop appropriate consumer policies, it is essential to investigate and analyze the environment surrounding consumers as well as changes in their awareness and behavior.

The Consumer Affairs Agency compiles the results of these investigations and analyses, together with the status of consumer policy implementation, and publishes them annually as the White Paper on Consumer Affairs.

The 2025 edition of the White Paper on Consumer Affairs featured a special section titled "Green-Oriented Consumption Behavior: Transforming Our Lifestyles and the Global Environment Through Consumption." The White Paper introduced initiatives by government and businesses to address environmental issues, and, through an analysis of consumer attitudes and behaviors, outlined policy directions for realizing a sustainable society starting from consumer behavior.



Themes of Past Special Features

- 2025 Edition: Green-Oriented Consumption Behavior - Changing our lives and the global environment through conscious consumption -
- 2024 Edition: Changing Transaction Environment and Consumers - Digital society and consumer vulnerability -
- 2023 Edition: Consumption by Elderly People and Efforts toward the Achievement of Society with Consumer Citizenship

White Paper on Consumer Affairs

▶ https://www.caa.go.jp/en/publication/annual_report/

Basic Survey on Consumer Life

The Consumer Affairs Agency conducts the Basic Survey of Consumer Life annually to understand the current state of consumer issues and identify emerging policy needs. The survey targets 10,000 individuals ranging from young adults to older generations, examining their everyday attitudes and behaviors in consumption, as well as their experiences with consumer accidents and troubles.

Basic Survey on Consumer Life

▶ https://www.caa.go.jp/en/policy/consumer_research/

Consumer Awareness Survey

The Consumer Awareness Survey is conducted as needed to capture consumer attitudes and the situation surrounding consumer troubles on timely themes. This survey targets 5,000 individuals ranging from young adults to older generations, and examines consumer awareness and behavior, as well as the level of recognition of consumer policies.

Consumer Awareness Survey

▶ https://www.caa.go.jp/policies/policy/consumer_research/research_report/survey_003/

International cooperation

Promoting international cooperation

Many consumer issues, particularly those related to digitalization, are no longer confined within national or regional boundaries.

Examples include:

- With the increase in cross-border online transactions, consumer disputes are arising that cannot easily be resolved by a single country acting alone.
- "Dark patterns," referring to design techniques in websites and apps that steer, deceive, pressure, or manipulate consumers into making choices that are often not in their best interest, have become a problem both in Japan and overseas.
- When safety problems with foreign products come to light, it is essential that Japanese consumers receive this information quickly.

To promptly identify emerging consumer issues and respond appropriately, as well as to prevent and resolve cross-border consumer problems, cooperation and coordination with foreign authorities are indispensable.

For this reason, the Consumer Affairs Agency participates in international forums such as the OECD Committee on Consumer Policy (OECD CCP) and the International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network (ICPEN) and exchanges views with other foreign authorities.

[OECD Committee on Consumer Policy (OECD CCP)]

Established in 1969 to promote information-sharing and cooperation among member countries on consumer policy, the OECD Committee on Consumer Policy now includes participation from around 40 countries. The Consumer Affairs Agency of Japan participates as a core member and actively contributes to discussions on ongoing international research projects, including those related to the digital transition.

As part of a joint international research initiative, an empirical study on dark patterns was conducted in 2024, and work is currently underway to finalize the report.

[European Union (European Commission)]

Japan and the European Union have engaged in Informal Dialogue at technical level to exchange views on emerging issues of mutual concern, including responses to digitalization. In September last year, former Minister Ito met in Tokyo with Michael McGrath, European Commissioner for Democracy, Justice, the Rule of Law and Consumer Protection. They issued a joint statement confirming their commitment to further strengthening bilateral cooperation.

[International Consumer Protection and Enforcement Network (ICPEN)]

ICPEN was established in 1992 as a network to prevent unfair and deceptive cross-border commercial practices. Approximately 70 consumer-protection authorities from around the world participate.

One of its key initiatives, the econsumer.gov project, operates a multilingual website (available in nine languages) that collects and analyzes information submitted by consumers worldwide regarding cross-border fraud and other unfair practices. The findings are used both to raise consumer awareness and to support enforcement efforts in participating countries.

The OECD Committee on Consumer Policy (CCP)

▶ <https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/policy-issues/consumer-policy.html>

ICPEN

▶ <https://www.icpen.org/>

ICPEN econsumer.gov

▶ <https://www.econsumer.gov/?lang=en-US>