

Global Immigration alert

June 2025

Japan

New Japan Electronic System for Travel Authorization and enhanced immigration enforcement measures

Executive summary

The Immigration Services Agency of Japan recently announced its *Zero Illegal Residents Plan for the Safety and Security of the People* ("the Plan"). The Plan includes an earlier implementation of the Japan Electronic System for Travel Authorization (JESTA) and introduces enhanced enforcement measures aimed at ensuring the safety and security of citizens and foreign nationals in Japan.

Background

According to the Japanese immigration authorities, the Plan was developed in response to concerns relating to an increasing number of foreign nationals present in Japan in unlawful status. The Plan seeks to enhance immigration controls at international points of entry and within the country and to reduce the number of foreign nationals with confirmed deportations by half by the end of 2030, in part by doubling the number of government-funded deportations within three years.

Key developments

The Plan introduces the following measures:

- **Entry management:** The JESTA, which will allow for pre-screening of travelers seeking to enter Japan and facilitate the denial of admission for individuals who are deemed undesirable, will now be implemented in 2028 (instead of 2030 as originally planned). Japan also intends to strengthen its collaboration with countries that have high numbers of citizens with confirmed deportations from Japan with a view toward reducing these numbers.
- **Residence Management and Refugee Examination:** The Plan seeks to implement processes designed to expedite the review of refugee status applications. The Japanese government will consider digitally transforming its system for immigration controls, through a centralized data

management system that uses digital technologies, including AI, to streamline the immigration process from entry to exit.

- **Departure and Deportation:** The Plan includes support for government-funded deportations, particularly for serious offenders identified under the updated Immigration Control Act of 2023. The plan also encourages voluntary returns and the introduction of new systems to speed up the departure process for individuals under deportation orders. Individuals under supervised release will be monitored to prevent unauthorized employment.

Impact on employers

Foreign nationals traveling for business or work will be required to obtain a JESTA authorization prior to entering Japan once the upgraded JESTA system is implemented in 2028. A greater degree of preparation is anticipated to be required to prevent mistakes in information declaration. Additionally, the stricter examination and enforcement measures outlined in the Plan are likely to result in increased time and resources being allocated by employers to ensure compliance with their obligations.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.



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