

Recommendations for the Introduction of “Digital Vaccine Passports”

Recommendation 1)

Hasten the introduction and effective use of “Digital Vaccine Passports” (DVPs)*.

DVPs: A certificate of vaccination and test results that uses ICT such as apps instead of paper.

Recommendation 2)

DVPs should first be used for outbound travel (e.g., Japanese nationals leaving Japan).

Recommendation 3)

The Government of Japan will promote standardization and interoperability of DVPs and will be appropriately involved in the content and use of testing and vaccination data.

Recommendation 4)

Harmonization of quarantine requirements, such as entry permits and isolation, with those of major countries, to the extent that requirements for disease-control are not compromised.

Current Status of Vaccine Passports

The procedures for international passenger movement increased after a pandemic outbreak

- Japan and other countries have already requested, as common quarantine procedures, for submission of negative test results such as PCR for entering people.
- In the future, it can be seen that movement toward request for proof of vaccination and related tests (antibodies, etc.). Some countries and regions have already introduced this.

The longer time for procedures may be an obstacle to the revival of international passenger movement

- The processing time per passenger at airports has increased sharply due to the more demand for various proofs. The current paper certification system is estimated to take 8 hrs to process a passenger if the total number is the same as before (at that time, 1.5 hrs).
- It is expected to take 4 to 5 yrs for international passenger traffic to recover, but the rapid increase in processing time is likely to drag it down even further.

Status of Countries

U.S.A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widespread use of vaccination has greatly decreased new infections and deaths, and states have removed restrictions on economic activities, leading to increased human traffic. • Some states issue their own digital certificates, and have preferential policies such as an exemption from pre-departure testing and voluntary quarantine, for those who have been vaccinated.
Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The EU Digital COVID Certificate has introduced in July, mainly in the EU.
Japan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition to local vaccination, mass vaccination (May) and workplace vaccination (June) started, and the vaccination rate is increasing, but much lower than those in the US, Europe, etc. (25.6% as of 7/5). • The government plans to introduce paper vaccine passports for overseas travel in late July, and is considering implementing digital vaccination certificates by the end of the year.

Japan is clearly lagging behind other major countries in terms of vaccination and the use of certificates.

Issues and Measures Concerned with the Introduction of “Vaccine Passports” in Japan

Issue

1)

Early Digitization of “Vaccine Passports” (related to recommendation 1)

- Paper certificates take time to examine. In addition, when re-entering of Japanese nationals, there are frequent problems with the certificates (questionable authenticity, insufficient items, etc.).

Measure: Early digitization of “Vaccine Passports” (certificate of vaccination and test results)

Issue

2)

Outbound introduction of “Digital Vaccine Passports” (DVPs: related to recommendation 2)

- There is a lot of lumping together of domestic use and inbound use (e.g., entry of foreign nationals), and there is a delay in the introduction of outbound use (e.g., departure of Japanese nationals), which is essential for business, etc. (digitization will be completed by the end of this year at the earliest).

Measure: Early introduction of “Digital Vaccine Passports” for outbound use.

Issue

3)

Development and Introduction Process of DVPs (related to recommendation 3)

- Government-led development and introduction of DVPs (apps, etc.) and their platforms would be difficult, while there is a proliferation of them with no guarantee of mutual use, raising concerns about convenience.
- Authenticity and protection of personal data related to negative test results and proof of vaccination are under improvement.

Measure: Development and introduction be left to the private sector (CommonPass, IATA Travel Pass, etc.), while the government support the creation of standards, standardization, and ensuring compatibility.

Measure: Personal data management be a public entity, and the use of companies and related organizations during transportation be kept to a minimum.

Issue

4)

Quarantine measures at the time of entry into Japan, etc. (related to recommendation 4)

- The requirements of quarantine for entry permits and isolation, the procedures (including test methods) and formats for examining these requirements are different from those of the US, Europe, and neighbors.

Measure: Harmonization of systems with major countries (for the time being, the U.S. and Europe, which have a high degree of uniformity) as much as possible