

OKINAWA

Okinawa Prefecture is a subtropical archipelago of 160 islands that showcase stunning natural beauty. Many animals and plants in Okinawa are found nowhere else in the world. Trade with neighboring lands shaped a strong local identity during the centuries when these islands were ruled by the Kingdom of Ryukyu. Visitors can still engage with and enjoy Okinawa's distinct culture in many ways, including natural and cultural World Heritage Sites.



Okinawa Pref.
1.47 million people



Prefecture GRP
4.6 trillion yen

*GRP: Gross Regional Product



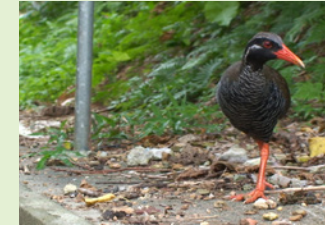
STRENGTHS

Advantages and Characteristics



Beautiful nature and diverse biological communities

- Okinawa is a subtropical region with a welcoming climate throughout the year.
- Its blue ocean is home to coral reefs and a kaleidoscopic variety of colorful fish. The northern part of Okinawa's main island and some of its remote islands are inhabited by animals, plants, and insects that are rare both within Japan and globally. The Biodiversity Strategy of Okinawa aims to conserve these diverse ecosystems.



Okinawa rail, an endemic species

Many endemic species are found in Okinawa's rich natural environment, and this ecosystem is being looked after for future generations.

©OCVB



Ryukyu culture passed down through many generations

- Various cultural traditions have been passed down from the time of the Ryukyu Kingdom to the present day. These include performing arts such as dance, kumiodori, classical music, and folk songs. Crafts include banana fabric, kasuri resist-dyed textiles, bingata fabric, lacquerware, pottery, and glass. Karate, "the martial art of peace," also originated in Okinawa.



Major Events

- The 20th International Conference on Systems Biology (ICSB), 2019 (440 participants)
- The 13th Pacific Rim Conference on Ceramic and Glass Technology (PACRIM13), 2019 (1,600 participants)
- Strings 2018 (400 participants)
- The 4th World Congress of Reproductive Biology (WCRB), 2017 (1,200 participants)

STRATEGIES

Sustainability Strategies and Plans

SDGs Strategy

Okinawa Prefecture's SDGs Future City Plan

- Here is the prefecture's core philosophy: "Seek peace, begin a new era, interact with the world, support others, leave no one behind, and realize a sustainable Okinawa."
- This approach includes both preservation and transformation with a clear sense of Okinawan identity.
- Specific goals are presented in three areas: the economy, society, and the environment.

Clean Energy Initiative

- This initiative was formulated in 2021 and the aim is to decarbonize energy by 2050.

Core Philosophy

Seek peace, begin a new era, interact with the world, support others, leave no one behind, and realize a sustainable Okinawa.

Vision for 2030

Economy

- Build a strong, independent economy and establish the Okinawa tourism brand
- Improve productivity by fostering high-value industries
 - Prioritize the SDGs in economic activities
 - Develop Okinawan tourism into a world-class brand

Society

- Pass down Okinawa's spiritual culture and foster community pride
- Make it easier to raise children and protect children from poverty
 - Diversify working styles and improve working environments
 - Promote long, healthy lives

Environment

- Protect the environment and ecosystems
- Introduce and expand renewable energy
 - Create a society that coexists with nature
 - Reduce environmental impact through measures such as food waste reduction

Okinawa MICE Sustainability Guidelines

Okinawa Prefecture and Okinawa Convention & Visitors Bureau have formulated the Okinawa MICE Sustainability Guidelines to support the sustainable initiatives of both MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions) suppliers and organizers.

The guidelines introduce many examples of sustainability initiatives, encouraging MICE suppliers to act. This makes it possible for organizers to hold more sustainable business events while also helping organizations and businesses to develop.



The guidelines

Specific Content

Participating entities are divided into eight categories: organizers, venues, venue planning operators, accommodation, technical services, tourism facilities, food and drink, and transport. A checklist has been established in six fields: management/education, resources, energy/water, community contribution, diversity, and nature/culture. Each checklist shows specific examples of initiatives, targets, difficulty levels, and the relevant SDGs.

Organizations can determine their current status in each field, conduct reviews after events are held, and measure their contribution to sustainability.

Yambaru, a World Natural Heritage Site

JALJTA Sales offers travel activities in Okinawa that include guided tours of Yambaru Forest, a World Natural Heritage Site. Participants ride Yambaru Kugani, an electric bus.

Guided tours conform to voluntary rules based on GSTC (Global Sustainable Tourism Council) standards. These green measures include using an electric bus and driving slowly to protect wildlife.

The company hired local guides familiar with Yambaru Forest, thereby invigorating the local economy through job creation and environmental conservation.



Guided tour

Learn about Okinawan nature and culture

The world's oldest fishing hook was discovered in the Valley of Gangala. Inside a natural limestone cave is Cave Café, a unique venue available for private use. This is the starting point for daily guided tours that aim to protect the area and share its story with future generations. These tours are a popular pre-party activity.

BAGASSE UPCYCLE supports local, sustainable fashion. It rents out Kariyushi-wear*1 made using fabric derived from sugarcane bagasse. Worn-out garments are turned into charcoal, using a low-carbon processing method, and returned to the sugarcane fields. This eco-friendly recycling initiative is drawing a lot of attention.



©Valley of Gangala



Cave Café

©BAGASSE UPCYCLE

Kariyushi-wear

*1 Local casual wear that first appeared in the 1970s. Comfortable even in the heat of summer, it contributes to Okinawa's friendly and welcoming image.

Okinawa Churashima Carbon Credit

Okinawa Churashima Carbon Credit is a mechanism for recycling J-Credits*1 created in the region. Purchasing these credits supports energy-saving activities by local companies as well as regional circulation and revitalization.

The Okinawa Convention & Visitors Bureau supports the sustainability of local businesses by using the carbon credit scheme to offset carbon emitted during the production of congress bags*2.



Okinawa's logo for offsetting carbon



Congress bag

*1 A system under which the national government certifies, as credits, CO₂ reductions achieved through energy-saving equipment and renewable energy, as well as sequestration achieved through forest management.

*2 604g of CO₂ is saved per bag (including emissions from raw material procurement, processing, and distribution)

OIST conferences welcoming different customs and religions

The Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University (OIST) is a world-class research base. In cooperation with businesses and residents, it actively holds international conferences, workshops, and events to strengthen its ties to other research institutions, universities, communities, and companies.

At past international symposiums, OIST has collaborated with local sushi restaurants to provide sustainable seafood sushi and vegetarian sushi. This helps to conserve marine resources and caters to various religious and personal preferences.



Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University



Vegetarian sushi

SDG initiatives at Okinawa Resort Hotels

In the past, coral reef ecosystems have been damaged by the outflow of soil (red clay) from development sites and agricultural land. In Onna Village, which has a beautiful reef that is popular with tourists, sunflowers and other plants are being grown to prevent red clay runoff. Hyatt Regency Seragaki Island Okinawa, a nearby hotel, supported the initiative at one time by selling sweets and drinks made using local honey.

Loisir Hotel Naha partly covers its energy requirements with water-soluble natural gas, a by-product of pumping hot spring water. This is a source of clean energy that helps to reduce CO₂ emissions.



Sweets made using honey from Onna Village



Local natural gas heats the spa water in this hotel

A special souvenir

As a souvenir for event participants, Okinawa Congrès Inc. offers the first sunscreen in Japan that does not negatively impact coral reefs. A portion of the income from sales is donated to coral transplant operations and ocean conservation efforts. Participants may also receive a bag made of cassava (the plant used to make tapioca). This makes the bag biodegradable.



A cassava bag



Sunscreen that does not negatively affect coral reefs