

Compendium of Good National Practices for Public-Private Engagement

JAPAN: JMA and the Weather Business Consortium (WXBC)

Background

The purpose of the Meteorological Service Act of Japan is “to ensure the sound development of meteorological services by prescribing basic systems concerning meteorological services, and thereby to contribute to the promotion of public welfare by preventing disasters, securing traffic safety, and promoting the prosperity of industries, and to offer international cooperation concerning meteorological services.”

The Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA), being the principal agency of this Act, actively promotes the sound development of private meteorological services and facilitates advanced use of meteorological data by private-sector operators through a variety of initiatives, including public-private partnerships within a new consortium called the Weather Business Consortium (WXBC).

The Meteorological Service Act clarifies the different roles to be played by the public sector (in this case, JMA) and by the private and academic sectors, by its Article 23, which stipulates that no party other than JMA shall issue meteorological warnings. The provision of forecasting services by entities other than JMA is regulated through a licensing mechanism in which, JMA is responsible for the issuance of such licenses.

WXBC role in increasing socio-economic productivity in Japan

The Weather Business Consortium was established in Tokyo on 7 March 2017 by public, private and academic sector operators including current and potential meteorological data users. JMA functions as the consortium’s secretariat via the newly established Office of Public-Private-Academic Collaboration.

The purpose of WXBC is to drive commerce involving intensive usage of meteorological data in technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) via extensive joint efforts in the public, private and academic sectors, thereby enhancing socio-economic productivity in Japan. The expectation is that the WXBC will boost weather-for-business activities in Japan and

enable the advanced use of weather data and products in the business. This will attract new users and enhance the weather-informed decision making in industry, a needed measure taking account that the utilization rate of meteorological data and products in the industry remained low and that there are needs to increase social productivity in the era of big data and decreasing population.



Fig. 1 Group photo at 1st Weather Biz Forum (13 February 2017, Tokyo, Japan)



Fig. 2 Minister Keiichi ISHII at 2nd Weather Biz Forum (13 February 2018, Tokyo, Japan)



Fig. 3 Training Session for Weather Data Analysis (20 November 2017, Tokyo, Japan)

Here are a few facts about the WXBC:

- The number of members increased to 803 (as of 24 January, 2020, including individual members);
- Major activities:
 - organization of

- weather-for-business fora,
 - seminars for current and potential meteorological data users,
 - training sessions to facilitate related analysis and use in the industry along with other types of big data, including sessions provided online,
 - idea contests, and
 - matching events, as well as
- issuance of best-practice brochures.

WXBC is governed by a Board and holds annual Assembly of its members to discuss future actions. Specific issues are addressed by working groups like WG on Human Resource Development and WG on New Businesses. These activities are underpinned by working rules, tools and mechanisms established by the Assembly and the Governing Board, which have lowered barriers and promoted the dialogue among sectors.

JMA supports WXBC members' commercial activities in general both as the secretariat and via the further provision of meteorological data based on commercial needs, as well as improving data usage environments. Major concrete actions for improving data usage environments so far are the enhanced online provision of past meteorological data and further deregulation on forecasting services by entities other than JMA. For instance, during the last three years, regulations related to the required minimum number of Certified Meteorological Forecasters in a private company have been eased, which allowed more companies to enter into the weather forecasting business. The scope of forecasting services open to the private sector has also been broadened including the possibility to issue up to 16-day public prediction and high-tide forecasts.



Fig. 4 Weather Biz Idea Contest (19 January 2018, Tokyo, Japan)