

OLYMPIC JAPAN IN FAVOR OF VACCINE PASSPORTS



As Japan prepares for the Olympics in July, although with only a local audience, the country's public and private sectors take steps to help restart inbound and outbound travel in the long term. Most of the measures are related to COVID-19 vaccines and vaccine passports that will allow travelers to cross borders safely.

Japan has been slower than many other wealthy nations in vaccinating its citizens. The country has been administering jabs to healthcare workers since mid-February, and is not scheduled to finish vaccinations of people 65 and older until the end of June.

To encourage the working-age population to get the vaccine, the government has said it will urge companies to allow staff to take paid leave to get vaccinated and to consider allowing public officials to take vacations with the same purpose.

The country will also issue digital health certificates to those vaccinated. Japan joins several countries that have implemented vaccine passports for their citizens, such as China, Denmark, and Israel.

The digital certificate will be made available through a mobile app and will be in compliance with international standards, allowing the citizen to show proof of vaccination at immigration checkpoints.

In the public sector, All Nippon Airways (ANA) plans to test the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Travel Pass app, which allows passengers to check if they meet the destination's entry requirements, like a negative COVID-19 test, and share the results with airlines and authorities.

"Through our test, we hope to contribute to the development of this digital solution, which aims to make the travel experience smoother, safer and without contact," said Yuji Hirako, President and CEO of ANA and member of the IATA board of governors.

Even with all the efforts made, the Japanese still have doubts about traveling abroad. **74% of Japanese surveyed in December 2020 believe that people should refrain from traveling abroad** until at least July 2021, according to Statista's Research Department. 10% of the 3,948 respondents said that the Japanese would be able to resume overseas travel between April and June 2021.

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