

TSURUOKA UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy

Membership Monitoring Report 2018-2022



Table of Contents

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
2. GENERAL INFORMATION	2
3. CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROGRAMME'S GLOBAL MANAGEMENT	2
4. MAJOR INITIATIVES IMPLEMENTED AT THE LOCAL AND CITY LEVEL TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE UCCN	3
4.1 INITIATIVES AIMS AT PROMOTING INDUSTRIES THAT SERVE ALONGSIDE THE CREATION AND TRANSMISSION OF GASTRONOMY	4
4.2 INITIATIVES AIMED AT EXPANDING THE POPULATION OF NON-RESIDENTS AND RELATED PERSONS THROUGH GASTRONOMY AIMED	6
4.3 PROMOTION OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH GASTRONOMY	7
5. MAJOR INITIATIVES IMPLEMENTED THROUGH INTER-CITY AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE UCCN	11
5.1 INITIATIVES IMPLEMENTED IN CREATIVE CITIES OVERSEAS	11
5.2 INITIATIVES IMPLEMENTED BETWEEN CREATIVE CITIES IN JAPAN	13
6. PROPOSED ACTION PLAN FOR THE FORTHCOMING MID-TERM PERIOD OF FOUR YEARS	15
6.1 INITIATIVES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL	15
6.2 INITIATIVES AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL	16
6.3 ESTIMATED ANNUAL BUDGET FOR IMPLEMENTING PROPOSED ACTION PLAN	17
6.4 PLAN FOR COMMUNICATION AND AWARENESS	17
7. INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN IN RESPONSE TO AND FOR THE RECOVERY FROM COVID-19	18



Shonai Clan School, Chidokan

1. Executive Summary

Tsuruoka City, which has a massive city area of 1,311.61km² and a current population of over 120,000, was formed in 2005 by the merger of one city, four towns and one village. The city is blessed with a vast diversity of delicacies thanks to its seasonal nature, varied geography of mountains, plains, rivers, and the sea, cultivated a complex gastronomy that includes local and traditional festive foods.

The 'Tsuruoka Creative City of Gastronomy Promotion Council' was founded in July 2011 with the goal of joining the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (hereafter UCCN) in order to use this food culture as a driving force for business, tourism, and community development in the newly merged city of Tsuruoka.

The city designated UCCN in the field of gastronomy in December 2014 thanks to the many efforts of collaboration between business, academia, government, and the private sector.

Since then, the city has continued to support and promote a number of initiatives aimed at realising sustainable city development through gastronomy and food culture by maximising the benefits of its designation, creating synergies between the various industrial and cultural fields involved, and making a contribution to the UCCN mission and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Following the Cabinet Office's selection of Tsuruoka as a 'SDGs Future City' in July 2020, the city established the Tsuruoka SDGs Future City Plan in September that same year in accordance with the SDGs' guiding principles and with the intention of realising sustainable development, particularly in the economic, social, and environmental aspects. The city is promoting initiatives that contribute to the SDGs in many other areas, not simply in gastronomy.



Shonai Plains - one of Japan's top grain-producing regions



Shonai Beach – 130 kinds of seasonal local fish species caught



Considered as living cultural assets, 60 species of heirloom crops have been identified



Spiritual traditions – Customary cuisine of Kurokawa Noh, a traditional Noh performance of over 500 years of history



Sake culture - seven breweries in operation. Sake produced with premium rice and water.



Shojin Ryori of Dewa Sanzan, spiritual culture and food dating back more than 1,400 years



Regular household seasonal ingredients for traditional local cuisine and festive foods



Confectionery culture – *hinagashi* developed uniquely in Tsuruoka, use of lye water in the making of *sasamaki* and *tochimochi*



Origin of school lunches



Collaborations with higher education institutions – including partnerships between farmers, chefs, and restaurants

2. GENERAL INFORMATION

- 2.1 **Name of the City:** Tsuruoka City
- 2.2 **Country:** Japan
- 2.3 **Creative Field:** Gastronomy
- 2.4 **Date of designation:** 01 December 2014
- 2.5 **Date of submission of current report:** 31 December 2022
- 2.6 **Entity responsible for the report:** Mayor of Tsuruoka City, Minakawa Osamu
- 2.7 **Previous reports submitted:** 30 November 2018
- 2.8 **Focal point:** Tsuruoka City, Creative City of Gastronomy Promotion Division, Planning Department, Okawa Hiroko
- 2.9 **Communication officer:** Tsuruoka City, Creative City of Gastronomy Promotion Division, Planning Department

3. CONTRIBUTION TO THE PROGRAMME'S GLOBAL MANAGEMENT

3.1 Number of UCCN Annual Conference attended in the last four years

- 2019: Fabriano Meeting – in person
- 2020: Annual conference cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic
- 2021: Participated in UCCN Online conference
- 2022: UCCN conference in Santos – Online participation

3.2 Hosting of a previous or future UCCN Annual Conference

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3.3 Hosting of working or coordination meeting(s) addressed to one or more UCCN creative field representatives

- Participated in Sub Network conference in 2019 (Shunde, China)
Participated in all Creative Cities of Gastronomy online meeting
- 2020: November, December
- 2021: March, May, October, December
- 2022: August, October, December
- Participated in following meetings within UNESCO Creative Cities of Japan
- 2019: November – Kobe
- 2020: October – Kanazawa, Online participation
- 2021: September – Sapporo, Online participation
- 2022: September – Hamamatsu, Online participation

3.4 Hosting of International conference(s) or meeting(s) on specific issues salient to the Creative Cities with a large participation of members of the Network.

- October 2021: Co-hosted the Yamagata Creative Cities International Conference with Yamagata City.
Participating cities: Yamagata City; Valladolid, Spain (Film)
- November 2022: Local development through gastronomy conference
Participating cities: 11 cities including Kobe (Design), Hamamatsu (Music), Usuki (Gastronomy).
- * Organised with the assistance national organisations.
Supported by: Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries,
In cooperation with: Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan

3.5 Financial and/or in-kind support provided to UNESCO

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3.6 Serving as cluster coordinator or deputy coordinator and period

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3.7 Participation in the evaluation of previous applications

Participated in all evaluations of applications and monitoring reports

- Evaluation of applications: 2019 – 3 cities, 2021 – 4 cities.
- Evaluation of monitoring reports: 2020 – 3 cities, 2021 – 1 city, 2022 – 2 cities.



[Shonai Plain in Autumn] The 3rd Creative Photo Contest Winning Entry, ©Miura Kazuki

4. MAJOR INITIATIVES IMPLEMENTED AT THE LOCAL AND CITY LEVEL TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE UCCN

There are concerns that the vitality of the region might decline due to declining population, decreasing birth-rate, and ageing population. In order to achieve the SDG Goal 11 'Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable', a number of stakeholders are collaborating to make the most of local resources such as food culture, to achieve UCCN's objectives and the SDGs, and to create sustainable cities.

UCCN Objectives

The UNESCO Creative Cities Network aims to:

- I. strengthen international cooperation between cities that have recognised creativity as a strategic factor of their sustainable development;
- II. stimulate and enhance initiatives led by member cities to make creativity an essential component of urban development, notably through partnerships involving the public and private sectors and civil society.
- III. strengthen the creation, production, distribution and dissemination of cultural activities, goods and services;
- IV. develop hubs of creativity and innovation and broaden opportunities for creators and professionals in the cultural sector;
- V. improve access to and participation in cultural life as well as the enjoyment of cultural goods and services, notably for marginalised or vulnerable groups and individuals;
- VI. fully integrate culture and creativity into local development strategies and plans.

Development of the Tsuruoka Creative City of Gastronomy Promotion Plan

Corresponding to UCCN Objectives **II · III · IV & VI**

The 2nd Tsuruoka City Comprehensive Plan, the city's master plan, was formulated in March 2019 which includes the promotion of Creative City of Gastronomy (Planning period: April 2019 – March 2028). The **Tsuruoka Creative City of Gastronomy Promotion Plan** was created in September 2019 as an Action Plan, and a five-year plan was developed to summarise the direction of measures and specifics of initiatives. The Plan identifies 88 distinct activities and encourages each one to contribute to achieving the SDGs.

The Plan outlines four visions of the future, and sets out three basic objectives to achieve them.

- **Future vision of Creative City of Tsuruoka**

- A city where the creation of gastronomy fosters local industries
- A city where people interact through a rich food culture
- A city where citizens actively engage in gastronomy activities
- A city where gastronomy of the past and present are intertwined

- **Three basic objectives**

1. Initiatives aims at promoting industries that serve alongside the creation and transmission of gastronomy
2. Initiatives aimed at expanding the population of non-residents and related persons through gastronomy
3. Promotion of community development through gastronomy

Enhancing the structure for promoting Creative City of Gastronomy

II · VI

In July 2011, business, academia, the local government, and the private sector came together to form the **Tsuruoka Creative City of Gastronomy Promotion Council**. The organisation has expanded from 22 to 34 member organisations since 2019 and is now promoting Tsuruoka as a Creative City of Gastronomy while incorporating the ideas and opinions of many other disciplines and sectors in a variety of projects and initiatives.

Organisations in agriculture, fishing, commerce and industry, tourism, etc.: 9

Institutes of higher education and research i.e., Universities: 6

Food and beverage organisations i.e., Food hygiene, sake, sushi, confectionery: 10

Experts i.e., chefs, press: 5

Financial institutions: 1

Community associations: 1

Administration: Yamagata Prefecture Shonai General Branch Office, Tsuruoka City

Chairman: Mayor of Tsuruoka City

Executive Office: Five Divisions in Tsuruoka City Office

- Creative City of Gastronomy Promotion Division,
- Agricultural Administration Division,
- Rural Village Revitalisation Division,
- Commerce and Industry Division,
- Tourism and Local Products Division

This report focuses on the initiatives implemented by Tsuruoka City and the 'Tsuruoka Creative City of Gastronomy Promotion Council' (hereafter referred to as the Council).

4.1 Initiatives aims at promoting industries that serve alongside the creation and transmission of gastronomy

Tsuruoka City focuses on training chefs with a high awareness of sustainability, and developing leaders in gastronomy while passing down the city's diverse and distinctive gastronomy and tradition. The city also promotes industries related to gastronomy such as agriculture, forestry and fisheries, food manufacturing, tourism, and food and beverage.

It is involved in numerous initiatives that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs and take into account sustainable production and consumption.

4.1.1 Development of human resources - Nurturing of persons involved in gastronomy II · III · IV



Chefs are human resources who, by utilising local ingredients and culinary traditions to create delectable cuisine, can influence the revitalisation of other industries, such as agriculture, forestry and fisheries. In addition, the visitors of Tsuruoka such as tourists are highly interested in the unique cuisine of Tsuruoka, which utilises local ingredients and gastronomy. As a result, efforts are being made to foster an environment where people may sharpen their culinary and academic talents, as well as to develop human resources with strong communication skills who can highlight the culinary diversity of the region.

Organising body: Tsuruoka City, the Council

• Organising chef training programmes

Since 2017, the **Creative Gastronomy Training Programmes for Chefs** was organised by Tsuruoka City and the Council by inviting specialists and other professionals from across the nation to teach chefs. The training programme seeks promote a broad range of knowledge and skills in local gastronomy, ingredients, culinary science, and agriculture in addition to improving cooking techniques. The training programme develops awareness of ethical consumption, local production for local consumption, reduction of food loss in addition to raising the calibre of food services offered throughout the region. It also encourages the development of chefs who can contribute to the achievement of the SDGs.

Year	2019	2020	2021	Total
Sessions /	9 sessions	5 sessions	5 sessions	19 sessions
Participants	/162 pax	/79 pax	/86 pax	/327 pax

< Other implemented chef training initiatives by Tsuruoka City and the Council >

- Tsuruoka City supports self-improvement by subsidising part of the costs for training courses and certifications that voluntarily attended by chefs and others working in the food and beverage industry.
- In November 2021, the Council organised a symposium for producers and chefs to discuss the current situation and issues surrounding the food industry, and to promote understanding and awareness of sustainable food.
- To showcase the outcomes of the chef training initiatives and to provide chefs an opportunity to further develop their skills, a chef competition was arranged for young chefs in 2019 and 2021.



Winners of the 1st young chef competition



Learn from top chefs how they incorporate local agriculture, forestry, and fisheries into their menus

4.1.2 Promoting cooperation between producers

and chefs – Field studies for chefs II · III · IV



Chefs participate in field studies where they learn about and engage with agricultural and fishery production sites. The chefs gain a deeper grasp of the ingredients and its background, as well as the origins of food culture, and how sustainable food may be produced and consumed in this way. Additionally, the producers can learn how to use the ingredients and what the chefs want from them. The project encourages a sustainable food culture, improves the appeal of Tsuruoka's gastronomy, and advances the food industry, including the food and beverage and primary industry, by having both producers and chef collaborate and learn from one another. We also host programs geared towards younger chefs.

Organising body: Tsuruoka city, the Council



Chefs learning about ingredients at production sites

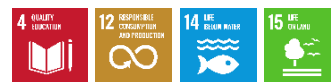
Theme: Marine resources and cultivated fisheries, recycling-oriented agriculture and pig farming, environmentally friendly agriculture, etc.

Year	2019	2020	2021	Total
Sessions / Participants	2 sessions /33pax	4 sessions /32pax	3 sessions /24pax	9 sessions /89 pax

As a result of these initiatives, the private voluntary association of **Sustaina Tsuruoka** was founded in February 2021 as a collaboration between chefs, farmers, fishermen, and food industry companies for the strengthening of cooperation between producers and chefs. (95 members as of 2022).

With the aim of nurturing children's future through food, Sustaina Tsuruoka offers production opportunities such as rice planting, rice harvesting, and fishing, as well as cooking experiences using seasonal ingredients. Children can learn principles for making sustainable food choices as well as having increased environmental awareness, by having first-hand experience in the production process.

II · III · V



4.1.3 Development of human resources - Becoming a leader in the local food industry, nurturing the next generation II · III · IV

Tsuruoka City has high schools specialising in agriculture and fisheries. By supporting learning initiatives such as local gastronomy and the development of processed foods using local ingredients, the city is promoting the development of specialised human resources for future generations.

<Examples of initiatives supported by Tsuruoka City>

- Support for the development of 'Shonou udon', a dish made with wheat cultivated in Tsuruoka, and its provision at restaurants. In 2021, approximately 2,000 were served.
- Support for initiatives such as the development of processed products using locally caught seafood.



4.1.4 Promotion of local production for local consumption through organisation of events II · III



The **Tsuruoka Grand Industrial Festival** is organised to expand local consumption and publicise local agricultural products in order to promote local production for local consumption.

The event was cancelled in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID-19, however approximately 30,000 people attended the festival in 2019 and 2022.

Organised by: Tsuruoka Grand Industrial Festival Executive Committee
(Secretariat: Tsuruoka City)



4.1.5 Efforts to build a recycling-oriented society II · VI



• Recycling wastewater to create a recycling-oriented society

Tsuruoka City is developing initiatives to utilise wastewater as a resource for food production. Since treated sewage water contains a wealth of nutrients and sewage sludge is an excellent fertiliser, efforts are made to recycle and utilise it in the cultivation of feed crops and the rearing of sweetfish. The city is also promoting renewable energy by utilising the biogas generated during sewage treatment process to generate electricity. Tsuruoka City is working to build a recycling-oriented society that emphasises recycling in order to lessen the environmental impact from various fields.

Implementing organisation: Tsuruoka City

Partner organisation: Universities, agricultural and fisheries organisations

• Construction of Shonai Smart Terroir (Shonai Self Sufficiency zone)

Smart terroir refers to a system in which the entire process of production to consumption takes place in one area. The Shonai Smart Terroir Construction Council, comprising of Tsuruoka City, food manufacturers, retailers, and farmers, was established in April 2019 under the direction of the Faculty of Agriculture at Yamagata University. The council is working to create a 'circular economic zone

and self-sufficiency zone' where everything can be produced and consumed locally.

Implementing organisation: Shonai Smart Terroir Construction Council

4.1.6 Support for businesses working to solve global concerns through food III · IV



The **Tsuruoka Science Park** was formed through a collaboration between Tsuruoka City, Yamagata Prefecture, and Keio University, making Tsuruoka one of the top bioscience research hubs in the world, and the birthplace of numerous start-up businesses. One of these is a company developing *Bacillus natto* flour, a novel type of cereal made from the fermenting of *Bacillus natto* microorganism. Due to its ability to efficiently produce high-quality protein, the company hopes to contribute to solving food shortages around the globe in the future.

Tsuruoka City encourages the initiatives of forward-thinking businesses like these that can aid in resolving global food issues.

4.2 Initiatives aimed at expanding the population of non-residents and related persons through gastronomy

In an effort to boost the region's vitality, Tsuruoka City strives to raise the number of tourists and short-term visitors from outside the region who come for the food and gastronomy, as well as to increase the number of people engaged and connected to the region. Creative tourism, which allows visitors to engage with the local gastronomy and nature, is promoted, as well as a variety of exchanges not only for tourism but also for food-related education, research, and experience.

4.2.1 Developing leaders in Creative Gastronomy Tourism III · V



Tsuruoka City and the Council are training **Tsuruoka FŪDO (Food x Culture) Guides**, who lead tourists on sightseeing and inspection tours to Tsuruoka's unique culinary attractions. As a result of improving planning skills and undertaking guide training, the gastronomy tours organised by FŪDO Guides have been commercialised by travel agencies. The tours led by FŪDO Guides are notable for connecting tourists with the locations of the food, fishing, and other industries, giving them unique local experiences. The Tsuruoka FŪDO Guides are the impetus behind innovative gastronomy tourism in Tsuruoka because they act as ambassadors for food and gastronomy, and serve as a connection between tourists and the locals.

They broaden their efforts by organising food courses and events in addition to providing guidance.

- Experiential tours organised by FŪDO Guides
2019 – 2022: 42 tours, 781 participants
- Events and gastronomy courses organised, planned, collaborated by FŪDO Guides
2019 – 2022: 82 events, approximately 1,200 participants



FŪDO Guides giving tour of turnip field



Gastronomy workshop led by FŪDO Guides

4.2.2 Food exchange programmes – Shonai Sake Festival III



The **Shonai Sake Festival** was established in 2014 with the intention of attracting tourists and enhancing the appeal of Shonai's sake culture. It has become a major summer event where visitors can sample more than 100 different kinds of regional sake from all 18 breweries in Shonai, including Tsuruoka.

Organised by: Shonai Sake Festival Executive Committee (Secretariat: Tsuruoka City).

- A portion of the proceeds was donated to sake breweries that sustained significant damage from the earthquake that hit the city in 2019.
- In 2019, about 5,000 participants attended the festival. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the event was cancelled in 2020, and held online in 2021 and 2022. In 2022, the festival was organised in collaboration with Usuki City (gastronomy) to showcase each city's unique gastronomy and sake brewing cultures.



A large crowd visits Shonai Sake Festival



Dissemination of information online due to COVID-19 pandemic

4.2.3 Promote exchanges by organising the food festival 'Tsuruoka Food Festa' II · III · V



2022 was designated as a year for strengthening the promotion of food and gastronomy, and numerous initiatives were implemented to attract tourists and promote exchanges. These initiatives included promotions in the Tokyo metropolitan area, hosting symposium on gastronomy, and enhancing events organised by local businesses in the city.

Particularly in October, the public and private sectors worked together to plan the city-wide **Tsuruoka Food Festa**, which featured activities and lectures spread out around the city to celebrate food and gastronomy.

<Example of Food Festa event>

- To commemorate the 400th anniversary of the Sakai clan's entry into this region, there was a food event involving SDGs. (Organised by: the Junior Chamber of Commerce of Tsuruoka, 9 October, 4,200 participants)
- **Domestic Cured Ham Festival in Tsuruoka** (Organised by: Domestic Cured Ham Festival Executive Committee, 9 October, 500 visitors)
- Gastronomy experience tours and lectures by Tsuruoka FŪDO Guides (18 events, 263 participants)
- In addition to the above, many other events such as a festival for new soba noodles festival, marche events, and cooking classes etc. were held.

<Activities held in the Greater Tokyo area >

- Promoting tourism and travel services in the Tokyo Metropolitan area and selling Tsuruoka's specialties (Organised by: Tsuruoka City and Council, 6,500 participants over three days)
- Conduct hands-on classes on local cuisine in the Tokyo Metropolitan area (Organised by Tsuruoka and the Council, 9 sessions / 104 participants)



Shonai Taisai held in the centre of the city to commemorate the 400th anniversary of the Sakai clan's entry



Domestic Cured Ham Festival

4.2.4 Utilisation of Tsuruoka Gastronomy Market FOODEVER, a hub for dissemination of gastronomy knowledge III · IV



Tsuruoka Gastronomy Market FOODEVER, a centre for the dissemination of information about food culture, was established by Tsuruoka City, which provides a multifaceted experience of Tsuruoka's cuisine and gastronomy. A variety of food-related events are hosted here, in addition to eating seasonal local food, there is a corner where visitors can learn about Tsuruoka City's abundant food ingredients and the people who promote food and gastronomy. In 2021, the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan recognised FOODEVER as a 'Gastronomy Museum'.



Corner introducing Tsuruoka's gastronomy through images and films



Holding cooking classes and food events

4.3 Promotion of community development through gastronomy

Tsuruoka City implemented projects to pass down the unique local gastronomy that serves as the foundation for this to the next generation.

Furthermore, we are implementing Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and emphasising on the nurturing of leaders in sustainable regional development. Through these initiatives, citizens are exposed to culture, which also improves their quality of life and encourages sustainable urban development.

4.3.1 Developing leaders to achieve SDGs through ESD practices II · III · V



Tsuruoka City is dedicated to Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). With the UN resolution stating 'ESD is essential in achieving all SDGs', Japan is striving to promote ESD. Capitalising on the qualities of a Creative City of Gastronomy, Tsuruoka City conducts and supports a variety of educational activities (ESD) that nurture advocates in the achievement of the SDGs while incorporating elements of gastronomy.

The city aims to reduce food loss, promote environmental protection awareness, and develop forerunners in the creation of sustainable communities by integrating gastronomy into educational activities, such as initiatives to promote food education

and understanding of gastronomy, exchanges with producers and other people involved in food, and cooking classes. Moreover, the project aims to spread the local gastronomy and cultivate pride for the city by teaching others about the importance of local cuisine.

- **ESD initiatives in kindergarten, primary and secondary schools that emphasise on gastronomy**
 - Tsuruoka City supports nutrition education and agricultural experiences at child-care facilities, primary and secondary schools.
 - The project provides books and educational materials on food culture to schools to encourage a deeper understanding of food culture.
 - Classes related to gastronomy are offered in primary and secondary schools.
 - To pique the interest of primary school students in the local gastronomy, lectures on topics such as Tsuruoka's gastronomy, food and the SDGs, and recycling-oriented agriculture were held.

Achievements: 2019 – 2022, a total of 112 participants



Production hands-on experience for kindergarten facilities



Distribution of materials about gastronomy to schools

- **ESD initiatives in school lunches**

Tsuruoka City is the birthplace of Japan's school lunches. It is said to have started in 1889, when children who could not pack their own meals were given lunches at primary schools in Tsuruoka City. Once a year, school lunches are still provided in the same manner as they were back then to honour the kindness of the people of Tsuruoka at the time and to express their gratitude for the meals. Children can grow in their appreciation for the ingredients, the producers, and the individuals who prepare them. Furthermore, as the birthplace of school lunches, school lunches are a great way to learn more about the local gastronomy.

< Projects undertaken by Tsuruoka City >

- The city is promoting local production for local consumption by using more vegetables and seafood from Tsuruoka in school lunches.

- To foster a deeper understanding of the local gastronomy, the school provides special menus that feature local foods and foods that are served during festive occasions.
- To promote understanding of local foods, talks and conversations were organised with farmers who supply the ingredients for school lunches.
- During class and at lunchtime, nutrition teachers and nutritionists provide guidance on eating habits, gastronomy, and nutrition education while also promoting health and wellbeing.
- The school lunch bulletin is distributed to all children and students every month, introducing food and nutrition, food and health, as well as local foods and festive events in Tsuruoka City, to expand their knowledge of food.



Interaction with local producers



School lunches served in 1889

4.3.2 Initiatives to introduce gastronomy to future generations II · III · V



- **Recording and preserving gastronomy by publishing recipe collections**

Many residents are familiar with **Tsuruoka Ouchi Gozen**, a collection of recipes for local and traditional festive meals that has been handed down in every household in Tsuruoka since it was published in 2010. It has been distributed to people who have registered their marriages since 2015, so that the younger generation might inherit the culinary traditions.

After being in print for more than ten years, the Council released a revised edition with the theme 'Textbook of Tsuruoka's Gastronomy' in June 2022. In addition to recipes for local and traditional festive meals, the revised edition includes a column on food culture, the history and traditions of traditional festive meals, and an introduction to food ingredients, providing a comprehensive overview of Tsuruoka's gastronomy in a single book. A website has also been created to archive information about local and traditional festive foods, and films showing how to prepare them are also used to spread the word to people of different ages.

URL: <http://www.creative-tsuruoka.jp/ouchigozen/>

Gastronomy × Craft In the revised edition, dishes are served on pieces of ceramic art created by Tsuruoka-based ceramic artisans. As the saying goes, ‘The vessel is the clothes of the dish’, complementing the food and adding colour to the dining table. In addition, silk from Tsuruoka and *shinaori* (fabric made from weaving linden tree bark), one of Japan’s three oldest textiles, were used to create the placemats, combining gastronomy and craft in one photograph. The symbiotic relationship between gastronomy and craft enhanced the appeal of Tsuruoka’s gastronomy and contributed in the growth of both gastronomy and craft culture.



• Activities for the handing down of the food culture

Local and traditional festive meals were traditionally passed down from parent to child. However, as the number of nuclear families increased, opportunities to do teach the next generation have diminished and became less common. Thus, cooking courses on local foods were organised with the intention of preserving and passing on local gastronomy. Additionally, the city offers subsidies for self-organised culinary workshops and food-related activities such as harvesting experiences. The Council has created opportunities for citizens to enjoy and learn about the local gastronomy, and preserving it.

- Cooking classes organised by the Council:
 - In 2019, 168 participants attended 8 cooking classes.
 - In 2022, 126 participants attended 8 cooking classes
- Cooking classes / culinary experiences / food education workshops organised by citizens
 - 2019 – 2022 : 58 events, 2,018 participants



Tsuruoka Homemade Food Cooking workshop



Workshop to learn about Tsuruoka fruits organised by citizens

• Projects to hand down Tsuruoka’s traditional confectionery

In 2021 and 2022, **Tsuruoka Traditional Confectionery Tradition Project** was chosen as a project to receive funding from the Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan and efforts are being made to have it registered as a national intangible folk cultural property. Four researchers – two men and two women – were commissioned to conduct research and studies in order to better understand the origins and present-day situation of traditional confectionery (*Tsuruoka hinagashi*, *sasamaki*, and *tochimochi*) in Tsuruoka. By combining their respective areas of expertise, they were able to produce comprehensive results. This research study provided an opportunity to examine the significance of traditional confectionery from the viewpoint of sustainable gastronomy.

Implementing organisation: Tsuruoka City, the Council

< Projects undertaken by Tsuruoka City >

- A symposium was held to present the results of the research study and educate the public on the importance of traditional confectionery.
- A video about traditional confectioneries was produced and used for information sharing and archiving.
URL: <https://www.tsuruokagastronomy.com/traditional-confections>
- Hands-on workshops on traditional confectionery were offered for locals and foreigners living in Tsuruoka, to pass on and popularise traditional confectionery.
- In 2022, the Japan Tourism Agency adopted the idea as a subsidised project, and efforts are being made to relate traditional confectionery to attracting visitors.

※What is Tsuruoka’s traditional confectionery?

Tsuruoka *hinagashi* are sweets for the Doll Festival in March or April. This distinctive Tsuruoka culture combines Kyoto and Edo cultures. *Sasamaki* and *tochimochi* share the use of lye. *Sasamaki* is made by soaking glutinous rice in lye water, wrapping it with bamboo grass and boiling it. It has a unique flavour and texture because of the lye, it can also be preserved. *Tochi* nuts (horse chestnuts), which are used to make *tochimochi*, are inedible as-is but are palatable after being treated with lye. The culture of using wood ash is being re-evaluated in terms of sustainable gastronomy.



Hinagashi



Sasamaki



Tochimochi



Hinagashi making workshop

- In addition to the aforementioned projects, there are other initiatives implemented to preserve and spread gastronomy
 - Compilation and dissemination of journalistic content that highlights on 'people' who are involved in gastronomy
 - Organisation of Creative Photo Contest, 2021 & 2022

4.3.3 Promoting and increasing public awareness 'Sustainable Gastronomy Day' through panel exhibition III · VI



In conjunction with **Sustainable Gastronomy Day** (18 June) established by the United Nations, **Panel Exhibition on Global Issues and Tsuruoka's Gastronomy** focusing on UCCN activities and the SDGs is held every June at FOODEVER. The exhibition highlights how Tsuruoka's gastronomy and the daily lives of its citizens can offer insights into resolving these problems and contribute to the SDGs at a time when food-related issues, such as food safety, nutrition, and sustainable food production, are emerging globally. It provides an opportunity for citizens to consider the SDGs and Tsuruoka's unique gastronomy from a new perspective, while also raising awareness of the importance of preserving this tradition for future generations.



Implementing organisation: Tsuruoka City, the Council

4.3.4 Establishment of measures to decrease food waste, and promoting education and increase awareness III



Workshops for citizens were organised to raise awareness on environmentally friendly eating habits in order to develop understanding of the food cycle from production to consumption and the reduction of food loss. Furthermore, in order to reduce food loss, the city created the opportunity for chefs and farmers to collaborate together to utilise produce that have low marketability such as damaged fruits and seafood that were seldom used.

Implementing organisation: Tsuruoka City, the Council

- Fruits and seafood that have been effectively utilised in 2021:
 - Fruits: Apple, Asian pear, Pear – 1,692kg, utilised in 23 shops
 - Seafood: Fish, shellfish - 368kg, utilised in 90 shops

4.3.5 Promoting multiculturalism and international understanding through gastronomy III · V



Every June, the **World Bazaar** was held at the Dewa Shonai International Forum, a hub for promoting international exchange and multicultural coexistence in Tsuruoka City. The event features stage performances of music and other performances as well as stalls where participants can enjoy food from around the world prepared by foreigners living in Tsuruoka. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, there were approximately 5,500 participants. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, a visitor cap of 1,100 participants was put in place.

In addition, cooking classes are offered six times a year in the facility's cooking classroom where participants can learn about the cuisines of other countries with people from other countries as lecturers.

Participants increase their understanding of one another's languages and cultures through cultural activities such as food culture and music, and they promote multiculturalism and international understanding.

Organised by: Tsuruoka City, Dewa Shonai International Exchange Foundation



Participants enjoying cuisines from various countries at the World Bazaar

5. MAJOR INITIATIVES IMPLEMENTED THROUGH INTER-CITY AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE UCCN

As the city's population continues to decline, efforts are being made to boost its vitality by attracting more tourists and short-term residents from outside the area, as well as by encouraging more locals to interact with one another. The promotion of diverse exchanges in education, research, experience, and tourism as well as creative tourism allows visitors to enjoy the local gastronomy and experience the natural surroundings of Tsuruoka. In addition, inter-city cooperation adds value by promoting awareness, sparking innovation, and forging enduring bonds of cooperation with a diverse range of individuals.

5.1 Initiatives implemented in Creative Cities overseas

5.1.1 Training chefs through exchange programmes with other countries I · II



As mentioned in section 4.1.1, Tsuruoka City places a strong emphasis on the development of chefs, who are the keepers of gastronomy. The city actively participates in chef exchange events hosted in other creative cities overseas in order to introduce Tsuruoka's cuisine and gastronomy, and to develop its talents through interactions with foreign chefs.

In addition to learning new skills, chefs are also stimulated by exposure to diverse cultures, which encourage creative thinking and the generation of fresh concepts, as well as increased awareness and motivation.

They continue to showcase their accomplishments and give back to the local community after coming home by serving the foods they had demonstrated abroad and developing menus for their own restaurants based on what they had learned abroad.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, travel overseas became restricted thus online exchanges were utilised instead.

Events participated by chefs from Tsuruoka City

2019:

- January – International Gastronomy Forum, Macao (Macao, China)
- May – Chengdu Panda International Food Festival (Chengdu, China)

2020

- January – The 2nd International Gastronomy Symposium (Phuket, Thailand)
- September – World Paella Day (Denia, Spain) * Held online

2021

- October – International Alba White Truffle Fair (Alba, Italy) *Held online

5.1.2 Interaction on knowledge and technology with operators in developed regions I · II · IV



By having exchanges with overseas Creative Cities, knowledge and technology sharing among businesses is promoted

- In February 2020, Mr. Luciano Tona a famous chef and the Director of the Bocus Academy Italy was invited from Alba to give a lecture on the subject of sustainable gastronomy to chefs in Tsuruoka. A discussion followed the presentation to encourage technical exchange and raise awareness of the SDGs.
- In October 2021, the **Domestic Cured Ham Festival** in Tsuruoka City was held in collaboration with Alba and Parma, Italy.
 - A cooking competition using white truffles, an Alba specialty, was organised in collaboration with Alba City.
 - Authentic prosciutto (cured ham) producers were connected online in collaboration with Parma City, and seminars were held for cured ham producers across Japan to advance their skills and knowledge.



Chef exchange: Phuket Gastronomy Symposium (left), Macao Gastronomy Forum (right)

5.1.3 Create opportunities for learning about gastronomy and exchange by strengthening cooperation with food research organisations I · III · IV



The **Italian University of Food Science (UNISG)**, the first school in the world to specialise in 'food science', and Tsuruoka City signed a strategic comprehensive agreement in December 2016. This was an opportunity for the UNISG's students, journalists, chefs and food experts from various countries and Creative Cities, to visit Tsuruoka and participate in a field study programme to experience Tsuruoka's gastronomy. This not only foster exchanges and deeper mutual learning, but also led to the discovery of the allure of Tsuruoka's food and gastronomy through the eyes and professional knowledge of foreigners, and the creation of a unique gastronomy training and hands-on programme for foreigners in Tsuruoka. The Tsuruoka FUDO Guides utilise these programmes for inbound and gastronomy tours (see 4.2.1).

Achievements:

- Number of hands-on programme organised: 107
- Total number of visitors in field studies: more than 200 (from more than 30 countries).

In May 2017, a comprehensive agreement for gastronomy collaboration was concluded with **Tsuji Culinary Institute** in Japan, offering Tsuruoka as a place of learning for the development of chefs who are knowledgeable about producers, ingredients and gastronomy, which the school is promoting.

Implementing organisation: Tsuruoka City, the Council



Implementation of Field Study Programme



Collaboration with Tsuji Culinary Institute

5.1.4 Implementing the Creative Cities Collaboration I · V Macao School Lunch programme through school lunches



In February 2022, Tsuruoka city collaborated with **Macao, China**, to implement intercity exchange between Creative Cities through school lunches. Macao cuisine was served at all 37 of the city's elementary and junior high schools, and lunch mats

showcasing both Macao and Tsuruoka's culinary traditions were distributed. A UNESCO Creative City for Gastronomy offers the experience of exposing children and residents to other culinary traditions at home, giving residents opportunities to eat well every day. Additionally, the recognition of the UCCN and its significance were improved and made known to the public.



5.1.5 Collaboration with other creative fields - International conference on Gastronomy x Film I · II



The **Yamagata Creative Cities International Conference**, which was held online in collaboration with Yamagata City, Creative City of Film, had as its topic "The power of Gastronomy and Film". A discussion about how the power of food and film could be used for sustainable development of the area was invited to chefs and film makers from cities.

Cities taking part including: Yamagata, Valladolid, Spain (film), and Tsuruoka City



5.1.6 Interaction and collaboration among Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games host cities I



Through competitive sports and sports for the disabled, and cultural exchanges, Tsuruoka city welcomed athletes and others from Germany and Moldova during the **Tokyo 2020 Olympic and Paralympic Games**, strengthening convivial societies and mutual understanding. A cooperative relationship and initiatives for world peace, such as donations to Moldova, which is home to many Ukrainian refugees, have been established as a result of this exchange.



Interaction through Moldovan wine



Interaction with Germany's bocce's team

5.1.7 Promotion and recognition from UCCN and UNESCO Creative Cities of Gastronomy I



In 2021 with the cooperation of every member city, panels and brochures were produced to introduce the Creative Cities of Gastronomy. In order to promote the UCCN and its member cities to a broad spectrum of residents and visitors and to raise awareness, the panels were installed at the gastronomy information centre FOODEVER, and the brochures were distributed at tourist information centres etc.



5.1.8 Participation in events and conferences organised by other foreign cities I



In addition to chef and business exchanges, Tsuruoka City actively participated in conferences and events organised in overseas creative cities to share good practices and strengthen exchanges and cooperation between cities.

2019

- March: Tsuruoka recipe books were showcased at the **Gourmand World Summit** held in UNESCO's Headquarters (Paris, France)
- April: Participated in an initiative to serve food with Tsuruoka-themed dishes in a restaurant in Tucson, USA
- May: Participation in **Huai'an International Food Expo**, and advised on Huai'an's application to the UCCN.
- September: Presented the Tsuruoka City's initiatives at the **UCCN Annual Conference** in Fabriano, Italy.
- September: Participated in the **UNESCO World Forum** held in Parma Italy, and showcased Tsuruoka's gastronomy and initiatives.
- November: Participated in **Creative Cities of Gastronomy Sub-Network Meeting** held in Shunde, China.

2020

- November & December: Participated in **Creative Cities of Gastronomy Meeting** online.

2021

- March: Participated in **Creative Cities of Gastronomy Meeting** online.
- April: Participated **Chiang Mai Creative City Network Forum 2021** online organised by Chiang Mai, Thailand, and presented the Tsuruoka City's projects.
- May: Participated in the **UNESCO World Conference of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)** online.
- July: Participated in **UCCN Online Conference**.

2022

- February: Participated in online forum in Phetchaburi, Thailand, to promote and introduce Tsuruoka City's gastronomy and projects.
- May: Participated in **2022 International Gastronomy Forum in Gangneung**, South Korea. Advised on Gangneung's application to UCCN in the field of gastronomy, and to highlight the initiatives of Tsuruoka City.
- August: Participated in the UCCN exhibition at the **Kuching Food Festival**, Kuching, Malaysia.
- November: Participated in **Phetchaburi Gastronomy 2022**, Phetchaburi, Thailand via online (sending videos and recipes)



Presentation at 2019 UNESCO World Forum in Parma



Presentation at 2021 Chiang Mai Online Forum

5.2 Initiatives implemented between Creative Cities in Japan

5.2.1 Strengthening exchanges and partnership with Japan's Creative Cities of Gastronomy II · IV



As Tsuruoka City and Usuki City are the two UNESCO Creative Cities of Gastronomy in Japan, various initiatives were implemented in order to enhance cooperation with the intention of mutual development.

- In September 2022, **UNESCO Creative Cities Meeting**, an exchange programme for chefs and high school students from the two cities was held in the city. In addition, **Tsuruoka Noodle Fest** was organised to taste many different varieties of noodles. Organised by: Tsuruoka Young Entrepreneurs Group, the Council Supported by: Tsuruoka City
- In 2022, the gastronomy and local cuisine of the two cities were introduced to citizens of both cities' public relations paper 4 times.



Highschool student exchange in UNESCO Creative Cities Meeting



Usuki City participating in Tsuruoka noodle fest



Introducing traditional local Usuki cuisine in Tsuruoka city PR paper

5.2.2 Gastronomy x Film : Food learning events - Food film festival

III · IV



Since its start on 2017, the **Food Film Festival** has been organised with the objective of creating opportunities for people to learn about the state of food and other food-related topics through films about food culture. Along with the screening of food-related films, there were also a number of other events held, including tastings and food sampling.

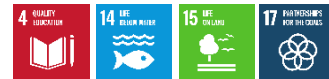
The 6th film festival, which took place online in January 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, was organised in collaboration with Usuki (Gastronomy), and Yamagata City (Film), with the goal of fostering collaboration between creative cities through food and screening films, and hosting talk events centred on the two cities.

Organised by: Tsuruoka Gastronomy Film Festival Executive Committee



5.2.3 Sustainable inter-city partnerships

- Regional development II · III



In October 2022, Tsuruoka City took the initiative in establishing **Study Group on Creation of Communities with Rich Gastronomy** as a nationwide platform for sharing the challenges and solutions faced by regions in Japan, as well as advanced and innovative case studies, and developing sustainable regions with food and gastronomy as a starting point. As of November 2022, 90 municipalities and organisations from all throughout the nation are participating. Tsuruoka City manages the Study Group as the representative organiser.

- The Study Group shares information on food and gastronomy related initiatives in each municipality as well as the measures and projects implemented by each municipality mitigate the impact of COVID-19 pandemic.
- Conferences are held on a rotating basis in member cities, to offer a venue for information exchange and sharing. Tsuruoka City hosted the first and fifth conferences. The fifth conference took place in November 2022, with the theme “The Power of Food and Gastronomy – Community Development and Regional Revitalisation through Food and Gastronomy”. A well-known chef gave a special lecture, and producers and chefs participated in a panel discussion.

Organised by: Tsuruoka City, the Council

Supported by: The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries

In cooperation with: Agency for Cultural Affairs, Government of Japan



5.2.4 Through Creative Cities Network Japan

Promotion and development of Creative Cities II · III



The **Creative Cities Network Japan (CCNJ)** is a platform for fostering cooperation and interaction between Creative Cities in Japan and around the world. It is made up of local municipalities and other organisations that promotes Creative City initiatives. Currently, 159 organisations from all throughout Japan are part of the network. Since its establishment in January 2013, Tsuruoka has participated as a secretariat city and is working to promote and develop Creative Cities in Japan.

5.2.5 Participation in projects implemented

by UNESCO Creative Cities in Japan II · III



Tsuruoka City actively participates in projects implemented by UNESCO Creative Cities in Japan to strengthen inter-city cooperation and contribute to raising awareness of the UCCN.

2020

- December: Students from Tsuruoka's high schools participated in the **UNESCO Creative Cities High School Summit** organised by Yamagata City (Film) to discuss about the SDGs and collaboration between Creative Cities in different fields. Participating cities: Nagoya City (Design), Asahikawa City (Design), Yamagata City (Film), Tambasasayama City (Craft), Tsuruoka City (Gastronomy)

2021

- November: At **SDGs Film Festival** organised by Nagoya City, a film about Tsuruoka City's heirloom crops was screened and a director from the city participated in a talk event. Participating cities: Nagoya City (Design), Yamagata City (Film), Tsuruoka City (Gastronomy).
- December: Participated in a panel exhibition at the **Sound Design Festival** in Hamamatsu City (Music) introducing the UCCN member cities in Japan.
- December: Participated in a special book exhibition about UCCN member cities' initiatives in Japan at the Sapporo Library & Information Centre.

2022

- March: Brewers from Tsuruoka City were featured in a **creative café** with the theme 'Sake and Film', organised by Yamagata City (Film). * Held online.
- March: Participated in **Usuki Creative City of Gastronomy Symposium** organised by Usuki City (Gastronomy) and introduced Tsuruoka's best practices.
- June: Participated in a panel exhibition promoting UCCN cities in Japan at the **Asahikawa Design Week 2022** in Asahikawa City (Design).

6. PROPOSED ACTION PLAN FOR THE FORTHCOMING MID-TERM PERIOD OF FOUR YEARS

Based on the 2nd Tsuruoka City Comprehensive Plan, the city's master plan, Tsuruoka City has developed the **Tsuruoka Creative City of Gastronomy Promotion Plan** (planning period: 2019 ~ 2023) and has been working on numerous projects pertaining to food and gastronomy. A five-year plan will be drawn up from 2024 onwards as the current plan period is coming to an end.

Tsuruoka City will continue to support initiatives to use gastronomy, an important local resource, for industrial promotion, expansion of the number of people interacting with the city, and regional development over the course of the next four years in response to the challenges of shrinking industry and economic activities due to the decline in population and the working-age population. The city also aims to create synergies in various industrial and cultural fields related to food, and promote sustainable urban development and contribute to the achievement of UCCN's goals and the SDGs.

6.1 Initiatives at the local level

6.1.1 Promotion of industries using gastronomy

While passing on the region's diverse and distinctive gastronomy, we will continue to work on various projects that contribute to the achievement of the SDGs by developing human resources involved in food with an awareness of sustainable production and consumption, as well as by developing leaders in the food industry. These projects will incorporate creative ideas and promote industries related to gastronomy such as agriculture, forestry, fisheries, food production, tourism, and food and beverages.

In addition, the projects work with chefs and experts to develop, and pass on new values of traditional local food and utilise local food resources.

- In partnership with Japan's leading food and restaurant magazine, **Cuisine Kingdom**, to train chefs that contribute to the SDGs through courses taught by top chefs.
- In collaboration with chefs, the project aims to expand the use of heirloom crops by coming up with new ways of using them and giving them new value, which will pass on the knowledge.



* Heirloom crops are crops that have been cultivated and used for food in a certain region for generations, with the farmers themselves managing the seeds and seedling through home-growing and other methods. They are also referred to as 'living cultural assets' because they represent the uniqueness of the area and gastronomy, including cooking and preservation methods, which has been passed down together with the crops.



- In collaboration with experts from the **Tsuji Culinary Institute** and others with whom we have a comprehensive cooperation agreement, we will promote the use of underutilised local food resources.

6.1.2 Expanding the population of non-residents and related persons through gastronomy

The aim is to increase the vitality of the region by taking steps to attract more tourists and short-term visitors from out the region as well as more people who interact with and are connected to the region. We will promote various exchanges that are not only for tourism but also for education, research, and practical, as well as creative tourism that focuses on experiencing the local gastronomy and nature of Tsuruoka City. In order for the city to be chosen as a place for education and cultural experience, we will continue to develop training programmes and develop the system to accept visitors. Additionally, we will also strengthen cross-sectoral interactions and collaboration, which will spark innovation and teamwork.

- The **Tsuruoka FŪDO Guides**, who are the ambassadors of creative gastronomy tourism, will be trained and put into action as part of the initiative.
- The **National Cultural Festival**, which will take place in Kanazawa in October 2023, will implement cross-sectoral projects in gastronomy and crafts.
Participating cities: Kanazawa City (Craft), Tambasayama City (Craft), Tsuruoka City, Usuki City (Gastronomy)



Photo Credits : Kanazawa City

6.1.3 Regional development through gastronomy

Projects are implemented to continue to work on passing down the distinctive gastronomy of Tsuruoka to future generations the distinctive gastronomy of Tsuruoka, which serves as the foundation for the development of the creative economy, in addition to the aforementioned initiatives, such as the promotion of industries and the expansion of the exchange population through gastronomy. To add on, efforts will be made to create opportunities for lifelong learning about gastronomy and to develop human resources who can contribute to sustainable development in order to build sustainable regions and improve the quality of life of citizens.

- Continue to work on ESD (Education for Sustainable Development) with gastronomy as a keyword, and develop leaders in sustainable regional development.
- Seek to secure bearers through technical innovation in cooperation with educational and research institutions in order to pass on traditional food culture, for which a shortage of successors is an issue.
- Organise courses on local cuisine and traditional festive foods and support the dissemination of cultural customs at home.



Traditional local cuisine workshop



Initiatives to teach traditional festive meals



Process of removing the skin from horse chestnuts

6.2 Initiatives at the international level

New ideas and partnerships are produced, developing new values and boosting the city's appeal by encouraging exchange with Creative Cities and diverse people on a global scale.

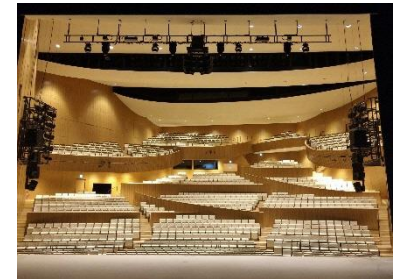
6.2.1 Using gastronomy as a starting point to attract both domestic and international tourists.

In 2024, Tsuruoka City and the Asahi Shimbun will host a special exhibition on the theme of WASHOKU, Japanese cuisine, which was designated as a UNESCO World Intangible Cultural Heritage. The exhibition is titled '**Japanese food – Japan's nature,**

wisdom of people', which introduces Japanese food through food models, historical records, media art, and cutting-edge technology. It will be displayed in the National Museum of Nature and Science, Tokyo, before moving to seven cities across Japan (including Kyoto), starting with Tsuruoka City. As the first regional city to host the exhibition, we aim to draw visitors from Japan and abroad by showcasing Tsuruoka's culinary tradition and the increasingly popular Japanese food culture that is gaining recognition worldwide.

6.2.2 Hosting the International Food Symposium

In 2025, the **International Food Symposium** organised by Tsuruoka city is scheduled to take place, and both Japanese and international Creative Cities are invited. Initiatives such as ESD and sustainable urban development through gastronomy will be presented in addition to Tsuruoka's gastronomy, giving participants and citizens to deepen their understanding. The symposium will also serve as a platform for communication between the Creative Cities and producers, chefs, and citizens. It aims to foster international understanding, facilitate the sharing of fresh ideas through mutual exchange, and raise awareness of the UCCN.



SHOGIN TACT TSURUOKA (Tsuruoka City Cultural Hall) designed by world-renowned architect Sejima Kazuyo.

6.2.3 Exchange and collaboration with overseas Creative Cities and specialised institutions

Citizens and workers in the food industry can learn about another's gastronomy through initiatives held locally and online with other Creative Cities. By collaborating with specialist food institutions such as the Italian University of Food Science and the Tsuji Culinary Institute, the appeal of chefs and restaurants can be improved as well as their management infrastructure.

- Gastronomy exchange with San Antonio, USA
- Collaboration and exchange with Antananarivo, Madagascar



6.3 Estimated annual budget for implementing proposed action plan

As the budget has not yet been approved, it is difficult to provide a precise figure. However, it is anticipated that the budget would be similar to that of 2022.

Fiscal Year 2022 Budget: JPY 44,253,000 (of which JPY 15,276,000 is subsidised by the government) approx. USD 324,000.

The government has adopted a three-year government subsidy scheme for the city's initiatives promoting Creative City of Gastronomy from 2022 to 2024.

6.4 Plan for communication and awareness

- Information will be disseminated via the UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy Tsuruoka website, social media sites (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), YouTube, and the Tsuruoka Ouchi Gozen website.
 - Website – Japanese: <http://www.creative-tsuruoka.jp/>
– English: <https://www.tsuruokagastronomy.com/>
 - Tsuruoka Ouchi Gozen: <http://www.creative-tsuruoka.jp/ouchigozen/>
- As the first **SAVOR JAPAN** recognised by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries, the project's website and social networking services will be used to disseminate information both domestically and internationally.
- Dissemination of information will be done through specialised food and drink magazines.
- Contribute to the development of the network by sharing the significance of the UCCN with local government officials and others who are interested in Creative Cities, and by providing guidance and assistance for membership applications.
- In order to increase awareness of UCCN among local residents and other interested parties, the significance of UCCN will be discussed at events both inside and outside the city.



7. INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN IN RESPONSE TO AND FOR THE RECOVERY FROM COVID-19

Tsuruoka City provided various types of support to food-related industries that supports food culture, which were severely affected by the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. As mentioned above, in order to assure the project's continuation, events and other activities were also carried out online.

7.1 Financial support

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly hurt the sectors of the food industry that promote gastronomy. In a survey of restaurants in 2021 conducted by the city, more than 90% of respondents reported a decline in business revenues compared to the previous year. Various types of financial support were provided to restaurants and other businesses.

- **Provision of financial support**

- May 2020: JPY 200,000 were given to businesses each from the city and the prefecture that were affected by the spread of COVID-19. Actual number of cases: 870 cases.
- December 2020 – February 2021: Support grants provided the restaurants who were affected by their voluntary suspension of their operations in order to help them continue their business. Results: 718 shops benefited, approximate total amount: JPY 150,000,000 (~USD 1,097,100.00)
⇒ More than 90% of the restaurants that employed it said it was effective.
In addition to the above initiatives, a number of other support projects were implemented, such as support for businesses with reduced sales, and cashless transactions.

- **Support for promotion for culture, arts and sports**

In addition to gastronomy, initiatives are implemented to resume or continue activities in the fields of culture, arts and sports. The city reduced or exempted facility usage fees to encourage culture, the arts, and sports. Results: 714 cases.

7.2 Promotion of take-outs

As is customary in Japan, year-end celebrations are held at the end of December and farewell parties are conducted in April when the year changes. Instead of cancelling the events, restaurants were encouraged to provide take-outs to customers instead of dining in.



7.3 Delicious Fish Tsuruoka Campaign

In 2020, restaurants and inns that had been seeing a decline in shipments as a result of new COVID-19 restrictions were given local fish at a discount in an initiative implemented by the city utilising the subsidies provided by the government. Furthermore, innovative methods of utilising low-use fish – which are rarely marketed due to poor catches and difficulty in cooking – were developed in collaborations to make effect use of marine resources.

Participating outlets: Intermediary (fish monger) and fish markets / 148 restaurants, inns, etc.

Total sales: 16,910 kg

⇒ Use of locally caught fish promoted in restaurants, etc. Fish prices improved and recovered to the normal level (JPY 633)

Use of low-use fish: 368kg approx. 90 outlets

7.4 Producers and chefs collaborating together on food loss

In May 2021, the fruit trees in Tsuruoka City suffered extensive damage due to hail followed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to prevent food loss between producers and chefs, the damaged fruits were sold to restaurants to utilise as food and sweets.

- Shipping results: 1,692kg of apples, Asian pears, and western pears. Utilisation: 23 restaurants



7.5 Reducing food loss through inter-city cooperation

To cut down on food loss, Tsuruoka schools started serving yellowtail from Kagoshima, which had become surplus due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Period: 8 Jan ~ 25 Jan 2021





Yamabushi monks on the stone steps on Mt.Haguro ©Ito Kenichi

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