

# Guideline for Japan's Pre-Entry Tuberculosis Screening

Immigration Services Agency

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare

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## **1. Background**

In Japan, both the incidence rate of tuberculosis (TB), the number of newly notified TB cases per 100,000 population, and the total cases of TB are decreasing per year. However, around 10,000 new cases are confirmed nationwide annually, approximately 1,500 deaths reported due to TB. In recent years, the number of foreign-born TB cases has been increasing in Japan; in 2023, 1,619 of the 10,096 newly notified TB cases were foreign-born. In particular, cases where foreigners born in countries with a high incidence rate developed TB during their stay in Japan, have been identified.

In view of the situation of TB cases in Japan, Pre-Entry TB screening will be introduced to nationals of countries with a particularly large number of TB cases in Japan, and who intend to enter Japan and stay for a medium- to long-term, to ensure that they do not have active TB before traveling to Japan. Potential visitors who cannot prove that they do not have active TB shall not be permitted entry.

## **2. Legal Grounds**

Tuberculosis is defined as a Class II infectious disease under Article 6, paragraph (3), item (ii) of the Act on the Prevention of Infectious Diseases and Medical Care for Patients with Infectious Diseases (Act No. 114 of 1998).

Article 5, paragraph (1), item (i) of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act (Cabinet Order No. 319 of 1951; hereinafter, "Immigration Control Act") stipulates that suffering from a Class II infectious disease constitutes grounds for being denied entry into Japan. In principle, foreign nationals who have active TB do not meet the conditions for landing in Japan set forth under Article 7, paragraph (1), item (i) of the Immigration Control Act and will thus not be admitted entry into Japan.

In addition, based on the provisions of Article 7-2 of the Immigration Control Act, the examination process of the Application for the Certificate of Eligibility requires verification that

the individual has conformed to the entry conditions set forth under Article 7, paragraph (1), item (ii) of the same Act. Moreover, based on the provisions of Article 6-2, paragraph (5) of the Regulation for Enforcement of the Immigration Control Act, authorities may refuse to issue the Certificate of Eligibility when the applicant evidently does not conform to the conditions set forth in Article 7, paragraph (1), items (i), (iii) or (iv) of the Immigration Control Act.

Thus, since the Immigration Services Agency may have doubts on the ability of individuals who have active TB to perform the activities corresponding to their status of residence in a stable and continuous manner, the Agency shall require the TB Clearance Certificate as “supplementary reference material” pursuant to Article 6-2, paragraph (2) of the Regulation for Enforcement of the Immigration Control Act from applicants of the Certificate of Eligibility for a medium- to long-term period of stay, as a means of confirming that he/she satisfies the entry conditions set forth under Article 7, paragraph (1), item (ii) of the Immigration Control Act.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (and its diplomatic missions abroad), based upon the Criteria of Visa Issuance, shall require the TB Clearance Certificate from the applicant to confirm that the applicant does not fall under any of the items of Article 5, paragraph (1) of the Immigration Control Act.

### **3. Who Needs to be Screened**

Based on the decision of the ninth sub-committee on TB of the Health Science Council on February 26, 2018, TB screening will apply to nationals of countries (the Philippines, Viet Nam, Indonesia, Nepal, Myanmar, and China (hereafter collectively referred to as the “target country”)) with a large proportion of foreign-born cases diagnosed with TB during their stay in Japan who intend to enter and stay in Japan as “mid- to long-term residents” (\*) (excluding re-entry permits holder) or under the provisions of Notifications No. 53 (Digital Nomad) or No. 54 (Spouse or Child of Digital Nomad) on Designated Activities.

However, if the residence permit or other documentation issued by the government of the applicant’s place of residence confirms that their current place of residence is outside the target countries or region, the applicant will be exempted from the TB screening,

JET Programme participants, JICA trainees (both long-term and short-term), international students of JICA’s Project for Human Resource Development Scholarship (JDS), Japanese Government Scholarship students with an embassy recommendation, foreign students who enter Japan under commissioned education and training programs, nurses and care workers accepted under Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with applicable countries, specified skilled workers, and foreign nationals who enter Japan under the Project to Accept Foreigners Conducting Housekeeping Services in National Strategic Special Zones (pursuant to the Act on National Strategic Special Zones, Article 16-4) will be temporarily exempted from screening.

(\*) “Mid- to long-term residents” refers to individuals specified in Article 19-3 of the Immigration Control and Refugee Recognition Act (foreign nationals who are residing in Japan with a status of residence, excluding those who fall into one of the following categories: (1) a person who has been granted a period of stay of not exceeding three months; (2) a person who has been granted the status of residence of “Temporary Visitor”; (3) a person who has been granted the status of residence of “Diplomat” or “Official”; and (4) a person prescribed by Ministry of Justice Order as being equivalent to a person mentioned in (1) through (3)).

[Number of TB cases born in designated countries (2023)]

|                                  | Philippines | Viet Nam | Indonesia | Nepal | Myanmar | China |
|----------------------------------|-------------|----------|-----------|-------|---------|-------|
| Number of cases in Japan         | 317         | 272      | 231       | 229   | 155     | 148   |
| Percentage of the home countries | 19.6%       | 16.8%    | 14.3%     | 14.1% | 9.6%    | 9.1%  |

#### **4. Screening Process**

Applicants who are subject to item 3 above are required to submit the TB Clearance Certificate issued properly at either time of (1), (2) or (3) below;

- (1) When applying for the Certificate of Eligibility at a Regional Immigration Services Bureau.
- (2) For individuals whose Certificate of Eligibility states that they have not submitted the TB Clearance Certificate, when applying for a visa at a diplomatic mission abroad.
- (3) For individuals who apply for a visa at diplomatic missions abroad without obtaining a Certificate of Eligibility or for applicants who apply for a visa for the purpose of staying in Japan for a medium- to long-term period with a status of residence for which a Certificate of Eligibility is not issued (e.g., certain Designated Activities), when applying for a visa at a diplomatic mission abroad.

#### **5. TB Clearance Certificate**

The TB Clearance Certificate in the context of TB screening is a document issued by a medical facility located in the designated country, which the Japanese government has designated as a Panel Clinic.

The Panel Clinic may issue the TB Clearance Certificate only when it is confirmed that the applicant is clear of active TB as a result of the examination in compliance with the "Japan Pre-Entry Tuberculosis Screening - TECHNICAL INSTRUCTIONS."

#### **6. Implementation of Tuberculosis Screening**

The TB screening described in this Guideline will commence gradually starting with target countries for which coordination has been completed. The dates for the start of reception for medical examination at Panel Clinics and introduction of the mandatory requirement for submission of the TB Clearance Certificate when applying for a Certificate of Eligibility or a visa are outlined below.

|                               | Commencing date for TB screening                                  | Commencing date for obligation to submit the TB Clearance Certificate |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The Philippines and Nepal     | Scheduled for March 24, 2025                                      | Scheduled for June 23, 2025                                           |
| Viet Nam                      | Scheduled for May 26, 2025                                        | Scheduled for September 1, 2025                                       |
| Indonesia, Myanmar, and China | To be scheduled<br>(To be announced when start date is confirmed) | Same as on the left                                                   |