

## The Activities of Hokkaido Bank in the Russian Far East

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Hokkaido, where we base our operations, is the region within Japan closest to the Russian Far East. Making best use of this geographical advantage, we opened representative offices in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk in March 2009, and in Vladivostok in March 2014, and we are currently active in two hubs. We are positively active with a focus on business matching, including in the areas of agriculture, cold region technology for construction, public works, and the like, and marine produce processing and salmon- and trout-farming technology.

As a recent example, a large-scale greenhouse vegetable cultivation facility was built and operated by a Japan–Russia joint venture company in Khabarovsk Krai in the Far East of Russia. In addition, we took on the challenge of an experimental greenhouse facility even in the frigid Sakha Republic, and realized smooth production and sales, and we will move on to the second stage of construction.

On the other hand, while the scene of sufficient active participation by Japanese firms is the Far East of Russia, the reality is that there are obstacles. One of those major issues is distribution. The actual situation is that the development of distribution infrastructure on the Russian side is still lacking, it is difficult to use, and the costs are also high. In addition, there are still many users complaining that customs clearance procedures are cumbersome.

In order to resolve a variety of issues which have become obstacles to the expansion of Japan–Russia trade to date, and to support the export overseas of Hokkaido goods, we cooperated with firms in Hokkaido and established a community-based trading company in October 2015. In coordination with the regional trading company, we have been supporting the expansion of exports of Hokkaido products.

In the future also we will continue our activities to best utilize Hokkaido's technology and quality in the Russian Far East into which we have poured the most effort, in a form contributing to the eight-point cooperation plan in which the Japanese government is involved.

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