



## 2022 TOP 100 GOOD PRACTICE STORY

**Title of the Story:** Creating an Attractive Town Promoted by "Collaboration and Exchange"

**Destination Name:** Obuse

**Country:** Japan

**Submitter name:** Naoaki Shinjo

**Email address:**

**Position:** Sustainability Coordinator

**Submission category:** *(Please check one of the boxes that indicates the focus of your story)*

*Please find detailed information for the categories below in the Top 100 training module 'Good Practice Story'.*

- Governance, Reset & Recovery
- Nature & Scenery
- Environment & Climate
- Culture & Tradition
- Thriving Communities
- Business & Marketing

*Find detailed instructions for submitting good practices in the Top 100 training module "Good Practice Story".*

*Should you have any questions on your submission please refer to our FAQ page or contact [top100@greendestinations.org](mailto:top100@greendestinations.org)*



## DESCRIBE YOUR GOOD PRACTICE STORY

*Address each aspect of your good practice story in the different sections being specific including relevant quantitative and qualitative information.*

### Issues faced

Until recently, mass-oriented bus tours have accounted for a large percentage of the number of visitors to Obuse Town. Obuse's position as a tourist destination, especially for such bus tours, has been that of a stopover point on the way to a place of lodging. Due to this background, many of the visitors to Obuse spend only a short time in the town. This has a negative environmental impact, such as an increase in greenhouse gas emissions from travel. In addition to the short length of stay, the content and system for converting tourism assets into economic value is weak, resulting in a low visitor spend. This creates a vicious cycle, making it difficult for the town to convert from mass tourism.

In addition, seasonal fluctuations in tourist numbers are large, so significant damage can impact the tourism industry if infectious diseases or disasters break out during the peak season of autumn.

### Methods, steps and tools applied

The "Collaboration and Exchange" approach of Obuse to its town development has been pursued through a dual strategy: one in which the town's residents take the initiative and work together with the fans of the town from outside, and the other in which the fans take the initiative and involve the residents.

"Townscape Improvement Projects" in the 1970s and 1980s, and the town development as a "town of flowers" in the 1990s, were implemented to enhance the attractiveness of the town by creating a town where the residents can live in comfort. These were mainly led by the residents.

Since the 2000s, the town has focused chiefly on increasing the number of fans from outside the town and creating a town that is loved by those fans.

With the formulation of the Sixth Obuse Town Comprehensive Plan, the town has begun to focus again on town development in which the townspeople are the main actors. For example, creating a sustainable town centered on environmental policies and developing a "modern day spa resort." As concrete measures for developing an environmentally sustainable town, Obuse has installed EV chargers for tourists in the town parking lot and is using reusable containers at restaurants in the town. In 2022, the town formulated "Obuse Environmental Grand Design," a medium-term plan for environmental measures, including those in the tourism sector. The "Modern Hot Spring Resort" concept aims to make visitors from outside the town feel the quality of life in Obuse, so that the town as a whole can become a hot spring resort that relieves the fatigue of the body and soul. The town is currently considering holding events to promote the existing town development as a "town of flowers" in a new way to people in and outside the town, and creating a place for dialogue through bonfires and other venues.

### Key success factors

Since the 1970s, Obuse has been working through public-private sector collaboration to implement its policies, and the town has a history of collaboration and interaction in town planning. With this background, the town has involved its fans from outside Obuse in its town development as the main actors. Because "Collaboration and Exchange" was clearly stated as an administrative policy





of the town, people who had lived in the town for a long time also flexibly accepted the ideas of people from outside the town, and provided generous financial and human support to make their ideas a reality. As a result, Obuse has become an attractive place for people from outside the town to realize what they want to do, and many people from outside have become involved in the town's development.

#### Lessons learned

Since the 2000s, the town has focused on increasing the number of fans from outside the town and creating a town loved by the fans.

In order to communicate the town's appeal to the fans and have them experience it, the town has frequently held diverse events such as the "Precinct Art Obuse and a Seedling Market" in which food, arts and crafts businesses from the town and neighboring municipalities exhibit their products. Rather than making these events a one-time event, they have built ongoing connections with fans by involving participants in the management of the event and by creating a community among them.

Over the past 10 years, the "Obuse Youth Conference" and the "Obuse Virtual Town Council" have been held as initiatives to involve the fans in the development of Obuse and to have them take the initiative. The reason the town have been able to involve its fans in the town planning is that the members of the managing committees of these events have worked with people who have played important roles in town planning in both the government and the private sectors. They have tackled issues that the town is actually facing and that its townspeople feel the need to resolve, rather than identify hypothetical issues.

In the current resident-centered town planning, Obuse aims to both attract and involve fans from outside the town and enrich the lives of its residents by involving a diverse range of people from the planning stage and by inclusively collaborating with people outside the town with local residents.

#### Results, achievements and recognitions

A total of 640 people participated in the "Obuse Youth Conference" and 40 people in the "Obuse Virtual Town Council", five of whom immigrated to Obuse. These initiatives include the establishment of the "House Hokusai," a co-working space in a renovated unused facility in town, and the "Second Town Citizen System," which recognizes those who visit the town regularly and are continuously involved in community development on a voluntary basis.

#### Additional references

• The Sixth Obuse Town Comprehensive Plan

<https://www.town.obuse.nagano.jp/docs/9289.html>

• Obuse Town Environmental Grand Design

[https://www.town.obuse.nagano.jp/fs/1/2/5/5/6/9/\\_/environment\\_plan.cleaned.pdf](https://www.town.obuse.nagano.jp/fs/1/2/5/5/6/9/_/environment_plan.cleaned.pdf)



