

A series of Wasabi terraces extending into mountainous areas

Wasabi is an endemic species of the Japanese islands that evolved uniquely. Worldwide wasabi cultivation began in this region approximately 400 years ago and a large number of varieties of wasabi and cultivation techniques that are suitable to the region have been developed. The ridges along the slope of the mountain were cleared to make terraces for wasabi fields and fertilizers were used

as little as possible, using nutrients contained in abundance in the spring water instead. These efforts led to the development of techniques for high-quality wasabi production. Together with the East Asian Alder (*Alnus hirsuta*) trees that are planted in and around the wasabi fields to protect them from the strong sun, the wasabi fields provide a unique landscape to the region and a habitat for endangered species.



The Japanese clawed salamander inhabiting around the Wasabi fields



Performing "Tsuchiage", moving the soil washed down during heavy rain back to the field with traditional farming tools (Sadamitsu, Tsurugi-cho)

In places, the steepness of slopes is as much as 40 degrees and agriculture is carried out leaving the mountain slopes intact, without creating flat areas such as rice terraces. Kaya (grass used for thatching) gathered from grasslands are plowed into the fields to prevent the soil from eroding as much as possible. The use of a multiple cropping technique where various types of grains such as soba and vegetables unique to the region

are cultivated in small quantities also allowed the residents to adapt to the mountainous environment. Thanks to this agriculture system which has continued for over 400 years, the diversity of flora and fauna and rural mountain villages that represent the original and nostalgic landscape of Japan continue to be protected and handed down by the residents.

Designated
in 2018

Shizuoka Wasabi Cultivating Region
in Shizuoka Prefecture

Traditional Wasabi Cultivation in Shizuoka

Designated
in 2018

Nishi-Awa Area
In Tokushima prefecture

Nishi-Awa Steep Slope Land Agriculture
System



Sobagome Zosui (buckwheat porridge): A local dish originating from the site

GIAHS sites in the world



Chiloé Agriculture
Chile

The Archipelago of Chiloé is considered one of the original homes of potatoes and 200 or more varieties of native potatoes have been produced, following ancestral practices transmitted orally by generations of farmers, mostly women.



Qanat Irrigated Agricultural Heritage Systems

Iran

Qanat Irrigated Systems have developed since about 800 BC. Underground tunnels minimize evaporation loss and ensure stable water resources, which enables the agricultural production in dry areas. Farmers select diverse crops that complement each other in terms of water requirements for best water use efficiency.



Rice-fish Culture
China

Fish farming in wet rice fields has a long history in this region. The record dating back 2000 years shows a fish swimming from its pond into a rice field. Rice provides shade and food for fish, and fish provide fertilizer for the rice, and eat larvae and weeds in the flooded fields. The swimming action of a fish causes oxygen to be added to the water, and softens the soil.



Shimbwe Juu Kihamba Agro-forestry Heritage Site

Tanzania

In this region, rich agriculture and forests have been coexisting. A typical home garden is composed of four vegetation layers. The uppermost layer is formed by sparsely spaced trees which provide shade. Bananas are grown under this layer. Coffee and vegetables follow under these layers. This multilayer system maximizes the use of limited land.

GIAHS Q & A

Q1

What is the difference from UNESCO World Heritage?

The UNESCO World Heritage System focuses on protection and preservation of the tangible cultural heritages and natural heritages of the world. FAO's GIAHS intends not only for the conservation of the site but also balancing between conservation and agricultural/social economic development of the site.

Q2

What responsibilities are indicated by the designation?

The site designated as a GIAHS must be given a specific action plan for the conservation of the site. On the basis of this, traditional agriculture and farming methods, and rich biodiversity, etc., are needed to inherit to the future.

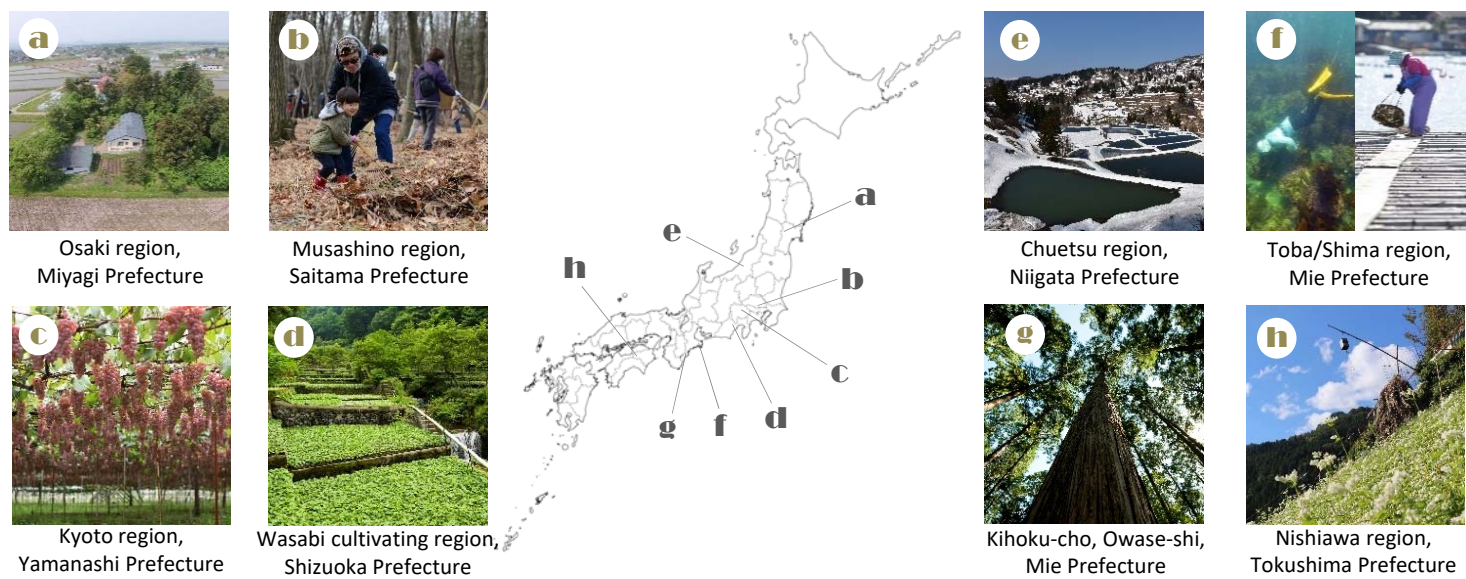
Q3

What are the benefits from the designation?

If the value of the agricultural practice indigenous to the designated site is approved globally, people will pride themselves and gain self-confidence. It is also expected that the economy of the region would be stimulated through branding of the local agricultural products and through the attraction of tourists.

Japanese Nationally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (J-NIAHS)

Japanese Nationally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (J-NIAHS) is an initiative in which important and traditional agriculture, forestry and fisheries sites (agricultural systems) in Japan are designated by the Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries based on the designation criteria of J-NIAHS. In March 2017, eight sites were designated as J-NIAHS for the first time.



Criteria of J-NIAHS designation

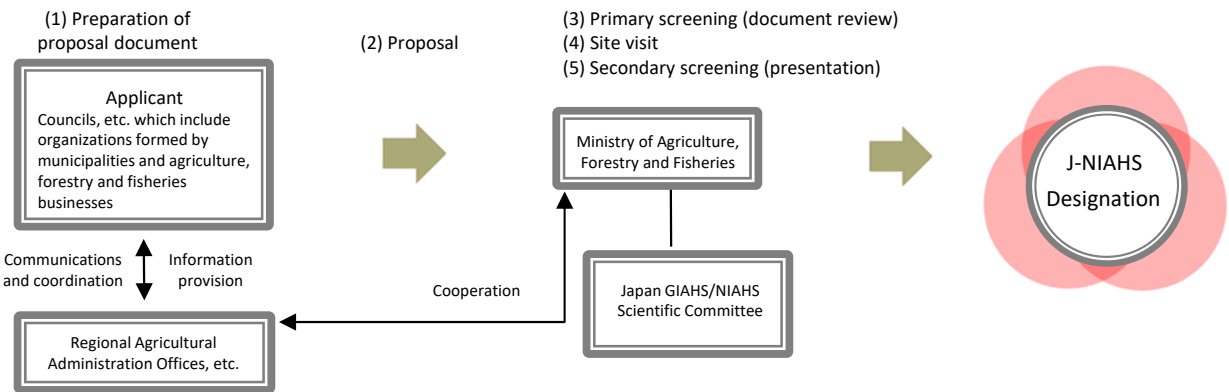
The proposed sites will be assessed based on their importance in Japan, specific features (eight criteria: five criteria of GIAHS and three original criteria of J-NIAHS) and an action plan.

Eight Criteria for the Assessment of Specific Features of the Proposed Sites
(1 to 5 are the five GIAHS criteria and 6 to 8 are the three original criteria of the J-NIAHS)

1. Food and livelihood security	2. Agro-biodiversity	3. Local and traditional knowledge systems	4. Cultures, value systems and social organizations	5. Landscape and seascape features
6. Resilience to change	To ensure that the agricultural system is reliably conserved and inherited, a high resilience to disasters must be present.			
7. Participation of various entities	Agricultural systems are inherited not only by local residents but also new mechanisms involving the participation of various entities.			
8. Promotion of the sixth* industrialization	Regional revitalization and conservation of agricultural systems are pursued by the community-wide promotion of the sixth industrialization.			

(*Sixth industrialization : An initiative to create new added value by integrating primary, secondary and tertiary industries)

Procedure of J-NIAHS designation





Globally
Important
Agricultural
Heritage
Systems

G I A H S
Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems

Information about GIAHS is found on the website of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries of Japan.



【Japanese】http://www.maff.go.jp/j/nousin/kantai/giahs_1.html



【English】http://www.maff.go.jp/e/policies/rural_dev/giahs/index.html

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