

# Exchange Event with Ski Enthusiasts from Ski Clubs and Circles in Beijing, China

Nagano Prefecture



## Background

Taking advantage of the fact that Nagano Prefecture hosted the Winter Olympics in 1998, we have been promoting the attractions of our snow resorts to inbound tourists.

In 2022, the Winter Olympic Games were held in Beijing, China. With the decision to make Beijing the host city in 2015, we anticipated a rapid increase in the popularity of winter sports in China. In response, Nagano Prefecture implemented various promotional and information-dissemination initiatives across China to attract visitors to its snow resorts, including holding exchange events targeting people interested in winter sports.

However, with the spread of COVID-19 from 2020, international travel became difficult, and it was impossible to carry out local promotions in China for an extended period.

In light of the easing of COVID-related restrictions in 2023, this exchange event was held to help revive the number of inbound travellers from China, which had dropped due to the pandemic.

## Objectives

1. Raise awareness of Nagano Prefecture as a snow resort near Tokyo
2. Attract even more visitors to Nagano Prefecture going forward

## Project Outline

1. Date

31 July, 2023

### 2. Venue

Beijing XinQiao Hotel

### 3. Participants

Around 80 ski enthusiasts belonging to ski clubs and circles in Beijing

### 4. Event Description

#### (1) Seminar

- Screening of a Nagano Prefecture tourism promotion video
- Screening of tourism promotion videos for ski resorts in the prefecture (Hakuba, Yamanouchi)
- Presentation on the attractions of 'Snow Resort Nagano' from the perspective of Chinese tourists

#### (2) Exchange event

Tourism operators from Nagano Prefecture set up booths and held free business discussions and an exchange event with participants

## Features and Innovations

- Events related to this project have been held numerous times, with adjustments to the content and venue, even before the decision was made to host the Winter Olympics in Beijing. In response to the growing demand for skiing in China, we reached out directly to representatives of ski clubs and skiing enthusiasts, inviting them to participate. As a result, we have successfully attracted more than 150 visitors.

- Using the local network of a tourism coordinator stationed by the prefecture in Beijing until last year, participants were exclusively recruited from ski clubs in major cities, targeting wealthy members who are interested in skiing in Japan.
- Ski enthusiasts in China had direct interactions with tourism operators from the prefecture.

### **Results of the Project**

- As a result of promoting the attractions of snow resorts in our prefecture for many years, many tourists from China now visit us, mainly during the winter season.
- On the day of the exchange event, extremely heavy rain in Beijing made it difficult to go out, creating uncertainty about whether the event could take place. However, more than 80 of the 160 people who had registered in advance attended, confirming the high expectations they had for the event.
- A participant survey revealed that the majority spent an average of more than ¥100,000 per season skiing overseas, and that they either planned to visit Japan to ski during that winter season or expressed a strong desire to do so. Additionally, the survey showed that Hakuba and Shiga Kogen were more widely recognised than ski resorts in other Japanese prefectures, confirming the popularity of our prefecture's snow resorts.
- The survey found that many participants were also interested in enjoying the typical winter scenery and experiencing hot springs, in addition to skiing. This insight will serve as a valuable reference for future promotional efforts.

### **Issues, Problems and Responses**

- While we are able to attract many skiers and snowboarders from China during the winter season, there is a lack of promotional efforts for tourism during the off-season. Therefore, we need to focus on measures to attract inbound tourists in other seasons, particularly during the green season.
- Since the number of participants from the Chinese

side was larger than the number of businesses participating from the prefecture, we will try to find ways to ensure greater participation by operators from the prefecture if the programme continues in the future.

- Given that the number of participants in exchange events such as this one is limited by the format of the event, promotional measures which can approach potential customers directly are also needed in addition to exchange events.

### **Future Developments (expected effects and project vision and issues)**

- Since snow resorts in the prefecture are very popular, we will continue to work to promote the winter season, with a focus on skiing.
- To address the current situation, where promotional efforts are skewed towards the winter season, we will implement measures to attract visitors during the green season. This includes expanding and developing adventure tourism, allowing visitors to enjoy the prefecture's strengths in nature, culture and activities.

### **Contact**

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Seminar (explanation by Governor Abe)



Exchange event