

# Sustainable creation of tourism areas open to the world: Tanabe City Kumano Tourism Bureau —a pioneer in drawing inbound tourists that thoroughly pursues foreign visitors’ perspectives

Tanabe City,  
Wakayama Prefecture



Kumano Kodo



Foreign travellers walking the Kumano Kodo

## Background/Aims

- Kumano Kodo was designated as a World Cultural Heritage in 2004.
- Following Kumano Kodo’s World Heritage designation, the Tanabe City Kumano Tourism Bureau, a collaborative public-private tourism promotion organisation centered on the “World Heritage Kumano Kodo”, is launched.

## Project Outline

- The Bureau promotes regional development through tourism as a collaborative public-private tourism promotion organisation
- Simultaneously develops travel industries targeting FIT

## Features

- The Bureau performs the role of sharing tourism-related visions for the region with business operators and local residents.
- In addition, the Bureau achieves dramatic increases in attracting inbound tourists by narrowing down inbound tourism targets to Westerners and approaching hospitality from their perspective.
- Bureau constructs inbound strategies from the entry point of “pilgrimage culture” with which Westerners are familiar.

## Results

- The Bureau has become a frontrunner in community-based tourism by being quick to identify the potential of independent travelers from the West and generate travel demand.
- The Bureau has achieved a 13-fold increase in sales over the 8 years since 2011, generating sales of 521 million yen in the travel industry sector in 2019.
- Because there are several Kumano Kodo pilgrimage routes that are still unknown to Westerners, the Bureau intends to increase repeater visitors and visitors’ length of stay in the region by generating demand for these routes.