

Column 2 “Recommendations on Information and Communication Administration from Young Administrators—a Roadmap to MIC 2.0”

In September 3, 2021, MIC published “Recommendations on Information and Communication Administration by Young Administrators—a Roadmap to MIC 2.0” that is a recommendation by a team formed to propose innovations.²

The team was set up in July 2021 and 45 mostly young officials became members through public recruitment in MIC. They held intensive discussions on challenges of information and communication administration and

necessary reform toward the desirable state, and compiled the result in the recommendation. Prior to its release, the team handed the recommendation to Minister Takeda for Internal Affairs and Communications (at the time) and they exchanged opinions.

The recommendation made proposals in six fields, some of which have been reflected in budgetary requests and discussions at expert committees. Below is a summary of the recommendations.

1. Information distribution/cross-cutting field

MIC has been returning the ICT development results to society and promoting advancement of social life and economic activities. However, with the rapid progress of digitalization under the COVID-19 pandemic and other factors, new challenges of “post COVID-19 age” have come to the surface. In order to ensure prompt and appropriate response to the challenges, it is necessary for the entire organization to strengthen its system so that

limited resources will be concentrated on the right policy issues through true “selection and concentration.” Specifically, MIC should work on the four issues: (1) strengthening of information collection and analysis functions; (2) promotion of selection of external human resources for higher positions; (3) full focus on hands-on approach; and (4) organizational reform of MIC departments.

2. Technology/international affairs

In order to respond to an increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous society, it is necessary to frame policies free from the traditional approaches. In addition to the current initiatives, the following new initiatives should be promoted.

- Strengthen linkage of technology development, social implementation and international deployment to establish systems/environment and policy schemes for streamlined promotion.

- In order to promote problem solving through ICT, make broad and flexible efforts including development of peripheral technologies and uncharted territories without excessive consideration of jurisdiction.
- In order to build person-to-person relationships in international affairs, make special personnel consideration including higher titles to staff members who work on international negotiations.

3. Communications/radio waves

Communications/radio waves is a core industry that is expected to exceed 100 trillion yen in the future and a strategically important industry that will have a decisive influence on the future of Japan depending on the current policy. In future policy making, the three perspectives of (1) national level, (2) local level, and (3) global level, and approaches of “attack” and “defense” will be useful. There are a variety of issues to tackle, which in-

clude economic growth/regional revitalization; safe, secure and low-cost ICT use environment; and security of outer/cyber spaces and electromagnetic waves. In addition to considerations of bold funding for promotion of local and enterprise digital transformation through construction of even more resilient infrastructure and local 5G, we should reform systems toward more competitive and transparent spectrum allocation.

4. Broadcasting

“Broadcasting” has led media content in Japan and played a public role, but its environment is rapidly and irreversibly changing due to the spread of smartphones and rapid progress of video distribution platforms. It has become natural to view “what one likes” “at any time” and “anywhere” without being aware whether it is through “broadcasting” or “communication.” In this context, it is clear that we will not be able to meet the needs

of the public/viewers if we stick to the past “broadcasting” forms/business model.

MIC needs to study “past,” “present” and “future” of “broadcasting” and advance specific reforms to contribute to (1) ensuring of “reliable” service, (2) contents that meet “viewers’ demand” and (3) challenge to “go beyond” television.

² https://www.soumu.go.jp/menu_news/s-news/01tsushin01_02000321.html

5. Postal Affairs

Post offices have fulfilled their role as important infrastructure of communities since their establishment, but their presence is gradually weakening and they are now regarded as “a symbol of analog technology” amid the rapid digitalization of society. In order to continue to be necessary for people throughout the ages, post offices should specify a roadmap for “data utilization” and show their presence again as a source of “regional revitalization” in addition to maintaining the existing services.

6. Organizational culture/ways to proceed with work

MIC has been working on workstyle reform and review of operations, which include the activities of the team. However, the team makes the following recommendations on operational environment and personnel system reform from the perspective unique to administrative affairs of information and communications.

Regarding operation environment, MIC should put its operations completely online on the premise of telework. In order to support this process, it is necessary to further improve ministry LAN and efficiency of routine

Japan Post Group and MIC need to take the following actions:

- Entry into community infrastructure business: Stadt Werke Post Office Style
- Exchange of people leading regional revitalization project: “Dispatch of digital human resources by using post offices”
- Creation of new dialog opportunities: “Post administration dialog”

tasks. For personnel system reform, it is necessary to take measures to proactively support active career development of each official. Training of experts who can play active roles in the frontline of security, privacy, international relationships and other fields is a pressing issue. In order to prevent concentration of tasks on specific officials, it is necessary to reduce gaps in work experience/knowledge and to study the desirable state of information exchange network with private enterprises.