

## JTBGMT Wins the “Japan Tourism Agency Commissioner’s Award” in the Inbound Tourism Division of the Tour Grand Prix 2026

JTB Global Marketing & Travel (hereafter referred to as JTBGMT; Headquarters: Shinagawa, Tokyo; President & CEO: Tsuneo Ishida), a JTB Group company specializing in Japan-bound travel, has received the Japan Tourism Agency Commissioner’s Award in the Inbound Tourism Division of the Tour Grand Prix 2026 (Organizer: Tour Grand Prix 2026 Executive Committee). The Tour Grand Prix aims to improve planning and marketing capabilities in the travel industry and contribute to measures to make Japan a "tourism-oriented nation." The awards are given to outstanding project proposals such as for domestic and overseas planned tours (agent-organized tours/tailor-made tours) and inbound tourism.

At the winner announcement and award ceremony held on July 9, 2026, out of 184 entries, the 13-night, 14-day tour “Japón Colorido,” organized by JTBGMT’s Ibero-America Sales Division for the Spanish and Latin American markets, won the Japan Tourism Agency Director’s Award in the Inbound Tourism Division. This is a tour that incorporates Shikoku and Kyushu—regions brimming with attractions that are outside of the usual tourist hotspots and therefore still unknown to foreign visitors to Japan—and marks JTBGMT’s third consecutive year of winning an award, following on from winning awards in 2024 and 2025.



### Winning Project Details

#### ■Award Category Inbound Tourism Division

Based on a field survey conducted in the Spanish and Latin American markets, “Japón Colorido” was created as a product that enables extended stays in Japan, focusing on the demand for cherry blossom viewing and the fact that many people take long vacations during Easter. Going beyond the standard “Golden Route,” this is a circular tour that incorporates unique and attractive sightseeing experiences available only in those regions in areas such

as Shikoku and Kyushu, which have comparatively few international visitors. By offering this as a seat-in-coach tour accompanied by Spanish-speaking guides, we have ensured profitability and established a business model that supports continuous sales.

## 1. Project Background and Highlights

This project contributes to attracting visitors to regional areas through methods such as incorporating visits to Shikoku and Kyushu, which are destinations that are difficult for foreign tourists to reach on their own, into the conventional “Golden Route” itinerary using public ferries. In selecting these regions, we focused on their unique local values, such as nature, history, and culture, and incorporated numerous attractions in Japan, including stays in traditional townhouses in Ozu, hot spring experiences in Beppu, and Goma (Buddhist rite of cedar-stick burning) prayer ceremonies on the Kunisaki Peninsula. Furthermore, through collaboration with business partners that include lodging facilities, restaurants, and temples in Shikoku and Kyushu, the project has not only generated direct economic benefits for the regions but has also helped develop infrastructure for receiving tourists and build up expertise as tourist destinations.

Additionally, the program stipulates initiatives that comply with international standards for sustainable tourism (GSTC Standards), clearly communicating its commitment to sustainability to both guests and tourism businesses. By utilizing public transportation, offering unique local cultural experiences, and designing relaxed itineraries that avoid crowds, the program minimized the impact on tourism resources while delivering a highly rewarding travel experience. As an initiative that demonstrates the future of sustainable tourism, it is expected to have a ripple effect across the entire tourism industry.

\*JTBGMT obtained GSTC Tour Operator Certification on March 31, 2025.

(<https://www.jtbgmt.com/en/news/detail/98>)



## 2. Future Outlook

In response to guest feedback and in line with current market trends, on June 17 we launched two new 14-night, 15-day tours (departing in March 2027) featuring additional sightseeing and accommodations in Kumamoto centered on the theme of “Samurai.” We will continue to create new tours that visit appealing destinations and strive for further business growth.

## 3. Judge’s Comments

As the inbound tourism market enters a mature phase, this project embodies a qualitative evolution from “travel centered on things” to “travel centered on experiences and human connections.” It successfully integrates inbound tourism demand with Japan’s traditional communities, creating a remarkable platform for international exchange that transcends language barriers.

By leveraging its own website, the project has established a multilingual customer acquisition model and has made a significant contribution to alleviating overtourism and promoting the dispersion of visitors to regional areas. Careful consideration has also been given to preventing friction with local communities through measures such as detailed etiquette guidance provided by tour escorts.

This proposal serves as an exemplary model for the future of inbound tourism and represents a best-practice approach for sustainable and community-oriented travel experiences.

## Message from Award Recipient

■Masato Oba, General Sales Manager, Ibero-America Sales 2, Ibero-America Sales Division

It is a tremendous honor to have received this prestigious award. I believe this recognition is the result of two sales representatives who have ties to the Shikoku and Kyushu regions respectively, where guests had no opportunities to visit with our existing products, planning an itinerary conceived with the cherry blossom season in mind, driven by their desire for visitors to “visit, see, and experience” these areas.

When our guests were able to view the mountain cherry blossoms in full bloom during the tour, they were so delighted that they let out cheers of joy. Encouraged by this success, we intend to continue listening sincerely to our guests’ feedback and accurately identifying market trends as we strive to plan and cultivate tours that will bring even greater joy to our guests.

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