

Annual Report on the Status of the
Approval of Overseas Transfers of
Defense Equipment and Technology

April 2026

Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry

Implementation Guidelines for the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology (National Security Council [NSC] Decision 2014) (hereinafter referred to as the Implementation Guidelines) require the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry to prepare an annual report on the status of the approval of overseas transfers of defense equipment and technology. This report summarizes the status of the approval of overseas transfers of defense equipment and technology based on the Foreign Exchange and Foreign Trade Act (FEFTA) for fiscal year 2024 (April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025).

1. Security export control system

In order to prevent weapons and goods/technology that can be potentially diverted to military use from falling into the hands of nations or terrorists who might conduct activities of concern that could threaten the peace and security of their own countries and the international community including Japan, major nations have set up international frameworks (international export control regimes) and are implementing export controls in cooperation with other countries. Japan implements these security-based export control measures in accordance with the FEFTA.

2. Overseas transfers of defense equipment and technology

As defense equipment and technology are subject to the security export control mentioned above, anyone who wishes to transfer defense equipment and technology overseas must obtain an export license from the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry under the FEFTA.

On April 1, 2014, the government formulated the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology (Cabinet Decision) (hereinafter referred to as the Three Principles) and its Implementation Guidelines as the operational standards for the FEFTA regarding the overseas transfer of defense equipment and technology. The Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry is required to appropriately implement the FEFTA in accordance with the Three Principles and the Implementation Guidelines.

3. The Three Principles and the Implementation Guidelines

Please refer to the documents published by the government.

- Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology (*Cabinet Decision of April 2014, as amended in December 2023*)
https://www.cas.go.jp/jp/gaiyou/jimu/pdf/r51222_bouei2.pdf
- Implementation Guidelines for the Three Principles on Transfer of Defense Equipment and Technology (*NSC Decision of April 2014, as amended in March 2024*)
https://www.cas.go.jp/jp/gaiyou/jimu/pdf/r60326_bouei4.pdf

4. Status of individual export licenses for overseas transfers of defense equipment and technology

In FY 2024, the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry issued 1,211 individual export licenses for the overseas transfers of defense equipment and technology.

These are classified based on the relevant types of the Implementation Guidelines as follows:

- 1) Overseas transfers that contribute to active promotion of peace contribution and international cooperation: 38 cases
- 2) Overseas transfers that contribute to Japan's security: 1,103 cases
- 3) Overseas transfers of defense equipment and technology (excluding arms under the Self-Defense Forces Law and technical information thereto) to a country that is subject to aggression in violation of international law, use of force, or threat of force: 2 cases
- 4) Overseas transfers whose impact from the viewpoint of Japan's security is judged to be very small such as return of misdelivered items, export of samples to be returned later and re-export of equipment that was brought into Japan by police officers of a foreign governmental agency: 67 cases

These details are given in the following table:

Types classified based on the Implementation Guidelines		Number of cases
1) Overseas transfers that contribute to active promotion of peace contribution and international cooperation		
A. The recipient is a foreign government		38
<i>Destination: China (38)</i>		
B. The recipient is the United Nations (UN) System, an organization conducting activities based on a UN resolution, an organization conducting activities at the request of an international organization, or an organization conducting activities at the request of a country which is located in the area of the activity and supported by any of the principal organs of the UN		0
2) Overseas transfers that contribute to Japan's security		
A. Related to international joint development and production with countries cooperating with Japan in security areas including the U.S.		74
<i>Destination: United States (51), France (5), Australia (4), Indonesia (2), United Kingdom (1), Italy, United Kingdom (9), Italy, United Kingdom, United States (1), Italy, Indonesia, United Kingdom, Germany (1)</i>		
B. Contributes to enhancing security and defense cooperation with countries cooperating with Japan in security areas including the U.S.		26
(a) Overseas transfer of defense equipment and technology included in the provision of supplies and services conducted by the Self-Defense Forces (SDF) in accordance with Japanese laws		0
(b) Provision of military technology as a part of mutual exchange of technology with the U.S.		0
(c) Provision of defense equipment and technology pertaining to products licensed from countries cooperating with Japan in security areas at the request of the license provider country		8
<i>Destination: United States (8)</i>		
(d) Provision of repair and other services to countries cooperating with Japan in security areas		3
<i>Destination: United States (2), United Kingdom, United States (1)</i>		
(e) Overseas transfer of defense equipment and technology related to the following to countries cooperating with Japan in security areas. (i) Parts (ii) Finished products related to cooperation pertaining to rescue, transport, warning, surveillance, and minesweeping		15
<i>Destination: Philippines (8), United Kingdom (2), Thailand (1), Germany (1), France (1), Viet Nam (1), Singapore, Philippines (1)</i>		
C. Necessary for supporting activities of the governmental agencies including the SDF (hereinafter referred to as the SDF, etc.), which include the activities of foreign governments or private entities, etc., related to the activities of the SDF, etc., or for ensuring the safety of Japanese nationals		1,003
(a) Temporary export of equipment, return of purchased equipment or provision of technical information related to the activities of the SDF, etc.		1,003
<i>Destination: United States (760), France (43), United Kingdom (42), Germany (42), Israel (18), Canada (17), Australia (9), Switzerland (6), Italy (4), Austria (4), Djibouti (4), India (3), Malaysia (3), Netherlands (2), Sweden (2), New Zealand (2), Norway (2), Greece (1), Spain (1), Finland (3), South Africa (1), other countries (36)¹</i>		
(b) Export of equipment for the protection or self-protection of public officials		0
(c) Export of equipment for the self-protection of Japanese nationals operating in danger areas		0

Types classified based on the Implementation Guidelines	Number of cases
3) Overseas transfer of defense equipment and technology (excluding arms under the Self-Defense Forces Law and technical information thereto) to a country that is subject to aggression in violation of international law, use of force, or threat of force <i>Destination: Ukraine (2)</i>	2
4) Overseas transfers whose impact from the viewpoint of Japan's security is judged to be very small, such as return of misdelivered items, export of samples to be returned later and re-export of equipment that was brought into Japan by police officers of a foreign governmental agency	
A. Return of misdelivered items <i>Destination: Canada (1), France (1)</i>	2
B. Others	65
Return of borrowed items <i>Destination: United States (13), Germany (11), Israel (6), Canada (4), Australia (2), Italy (1)</i>	37
Return of equipment brought into the country <i>Destination: Malaysia (1)</i>	1
Others <i>Destination: United Kingdom (4), Canada (4), Australia (3), Germany (3), Italy (2), Thailand (2), United States (2), India (1), Netherlands (1), Singapore (1), French New Caledonia (1), Philippines (1), France (1), Poland (1)</i>	27
5) Overseas transfers that do not fall under the above types but for which export licenses for overseas transfer were obtained based on the Implementation Guidelines 6.2) <i>Destination: Germany (1)</i>	1
Total	1,211

Note 1.

Israel, United States (8), United Kingdom, United States (3), Israel, Germany, United States (3), Italy, United Kingdom (2), Australia, United States (2), Canada, United States (2), Republic of Korea, United States (2), Egypt, Turkey, United States (2), Ireland, Israel, Italy, United Kingdom, Canada, Singapore, Switzerland, United States (2), United Kingdom, Norway (1), United Kingdom, Finland (1), United Kingdom, France (1), Italy, United States (1), Austria, Germany (1), Sweden, Denmark (1), Italy, Australia, United States (1), India, United Kingdom, Australia, Republic of Korea (1), Israel, Australia, Canada, Germany, United Arab Emirates (1), Ireland, Israel, Italy, United Kingdom, Canada, Singapore, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Germany, Norway, United States (1)

In addition, the government has previously taken exceptional measures regarding the overseas transfer of defense equipment and technology, not based on the Three Principles on Arms Exports. Since the setting out of the Three Principles, the government has published outlines of cases in which transfer was approved through deliberation at the NSC without taking such exceptional measures.

The relationship between the exceptional measures and overseas transfers is as shown in the table below.

Overview of the exceptional measures	Number of cases	Types	Destination
Transfer related to the abandoned chemical weapons projects in China – Statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary, April 18, 2000	38	1)A.	China
	1	6.2)	Germany
Transfer for joint development of improved interceptor missile for BMD – Statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary, December 24, 2005	38	2)A.	United States
Transfer associated with participation of Japanese industry in the production of the F-35 – Statement by the Chief Cabinet Secretary, March 1, 2013	2	2)A.	United States
Transfer associated with participation of Japanese industry in the production of the Aegis System – NSC deliberation, July 23, 2015	7	2)A.	United States
Transfer of the F100 engine parts produced under license in Japan to the licensor – NSC deliberation, December 18, 2017	3	2)B. (c)	United States
Transfer of the Patriot missile to United States – NSC deliberation, December 22, 2024	2	2)B. (c)	United States
Transfer for joint development of Australia's new general purpose frigate – NSC deliberation, November 28, 2025	4	2)A.	Australia

5. Status of general export licenses for overseas transfers of defense equipment and technology

In principle, an individual export license is required for overseas transfers of defense equipment and technology, but there are exceptions where general export licenses are granted for all items at once if certain conditions are met. The types of general licenses and the number of permissions granted in FY 2024 are as follows:

Type of general license	Number of cases
General license for SDF activities (Validity: 1 year)	2
General license for SDF exercises (Validity: 1 year)	51
Special general license for Ministry of Defense (Validity: 1 year)	2
General license for repair or replacement (Validity: 3 years)	7