

Japan aims to quadruple overseas market for anime, games

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A pandemic-fueled streaming boom helped boost the global profile of anime.

Pop-culture powerhouse Japan wants to expand its overseas market for video games, manga and anime fourfold to \$130 billion in about a decade, the government has said.

Japan, the birthplace of comic and cartoon epics such as "Dragon Ball" and game franchises from "Super Mario" to "Final Fantasy", sees the [creative industries](#) as a driver for growth on par with steel and semiconductors.

In its revised "Cool Japan" strategy released Tuesday, the government said it aims to boost exports of these cultural assets to 20 trillion yen (nearly \$130 billion) by 2033.

In 2022, Japan's gaming, anime and manga sectors raked in 4.7 trillion yen (\$30 billion) from abroad—close to microchips exports at 5.7 trillion yen, government data shows.

"In recent years, content like anime and manga has played an extremely important role in attracting bigger and bigger young audiences abroad, serving as their 'gateway' to Japan," the strategy document said.

A pandemic-fueled streaming boom helped boost the global profile of anime, including franchises like "Demon Slayer" which has had global box office hits.

The burgeoning phenomenon of "Vtubers"—virtual animated YouTubers—playing video games is also helping to boost Japan's international soft power, the strategy said.

Combining these sectors' growth with related industries including fashion, cosmetics and inbound tourism, Japan is targeting an economic benefit of 50 trillion yen by 2033.

The strategy also includes plans to stiffen a crackdown on piracy websites that illegally distribute anime and manga for free in languages including English and Vietnamese.

"Strengthening measures against piracy websites is essential to expanding the global market," it said, warning that some of their [advertising revenue](#) can go to criminal syndicates.

"Swift intergovernmental action is needed" to tackle this piracy "crisis", it said.

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