

Intern Report Matthaeus Bertram

I did my internship at ISEP from February to September 2023. As a student of economics and Japanese, many things were new to me. I decided to do the internship here because the topic of my bachelor thesis was the economic reconstruction of Fukushima Prefecture after the Tohoku earthquake. After 7 months, I can say that I am very happy to have done the internship here. In the following, I would like to give future interns an insight into what tasks and challenges might await you at ISEP.

An Article about Fukushima

The first task was not long in coming. At the end of February 2023, Mr Yamashita received an assignment to write an article on the occasion of the 12th anniversary of the Fukushima disaster. Because of the topic of my Bachelor's thesis, I was immediately assigned this task. I travelled to the towns of Tomioka and Futaba for 2 days. Mr. Saito and his colleagues welcomed me at the station and showed me the city, the surrounding area and the solar projects that were developed in cooperation with ISEP. Communication was exclusively in Japanese, which was a good opportunity to test and improve my language skills. In just 2 days I was able to discover and learn a lot of new things. I am very grateful to Mr Saito for his hospitality and helpfulness.



Research on wind power in Germany

Back in Tokyo, I did research on wind power in Germany. I investigated the legal regulations regarding the minimum distance of on-shore wind turbines from residential areas and the effects of infrasound and cast shadows from wind turbines on people. Subsequently, I examined the legal regulations on off-shore wind turbines. In particular, I turned to the so-called "floating off-shore plants", as these have gained in importance for the industry in recent years.

Research on the situation of nuclear power in Germany

On 15 April, the last three nuclear power plants in Germany were shut down. Since this date was exactly in the period of my internship, I was commissioned to prepare an analysis of the situation in Germany. The questions examined included whether the nuclear phase-out should be postponed in order to become less dependent on Russia, whether there are concerns about rising electricity prices, whether people are still generally in favour of a nuclear phase-out at the current state of affairs, and also what opinions the political parties hold.

Research on Electromobility

One topic I researched for several months was electromobility. The topic includes not only the switch from combustion engines to electric motors for vehicles, but also the production of the associated batteries, the provision of the corresponding charging infrastructure, the creation of incentives for buyers, the applicable legal standards, the effects on other sectors of the economy and many other aspects. I investigated how e-mobility is being promoted in Germany as well as in other European countries. During my search, I came across promising approaches and methods that could also be applied in Japan.

Field trip to Sosa Solar

In April, I visited the "Sosa Earth Day Party" together with other interns, which took place between the largest solar plant in Japan. The event celebrated the completion of the project. This so-called agri-photovoltaic system symbiotically combines photovoltaic power generation and agriculture on the same land. We were given an exclusive guided tour during which all questions were explained to us down to the smallest detail.



Conclusion

The last 7 months just flew by. The mix of office work and participation in events has made this internship an experience for me that I probably wouldn't have had in a normal Japanese company. I am equally grateful to the staff at ISEP who supported me with the visa application, with open questions about my research, with learning Japanese and even with my bachelor thesis.