

Sector Review 1

The Profile of Newly Authorised Public Interest Corporations

— What the public notices of April 2025 – September 2026 reveal —

September 11, 2026

1. Introduction

This review compiles, in a single table, the public notices on public interest corporations issued by the competent authorities—the Cabinet Office and the forty-seven prefectures—over the eighteen months from April 1, 2025 to September 30, 2026, and analyses the legal form, field of activity and founding body of the corporations newly granted public interest authorisation, together with the characteristics of those leaving the sector.

The material covers 229 public notices: 125 grants of public interest authorisation, 77 notifications of dissolution and revocations of authorisation, and 20 mergers, together with 7 authorisations or transitional authorisations of charitable trusts under the new charitable trust regime that took effect in April 2026.

For scale, the sector currently comprises 4,124 public interest incorporated associations and 5,686 public interest incorporated foundations, 9,810 in all (National Tax Agency corporate number publication site, as at October 1, 2026). The 125 new authorisations examined here therefore represent about 1.3% of that population.

The analysis takes the authorities' published lists as its base material and cross-checks them against the articles of incorporation and descriptions of activity published on each corporation's own website before classifying founding body and business type. Where neither the notice nor the website made the activity clear, the field and founding body were inferred from the name and from press material. What follows is a cross-section of this particular period and should not be read as a definitive statement of long-term trends.

2. The overall picture

Figure 1 sets out the notices for the period by type and by month. Against 125 entries to the sector (grants of authorisation) there were 77 exits (dissolutions and revocations, 77 corporations), so entries ran at roughly 1.6 times the pace of exits throughout.

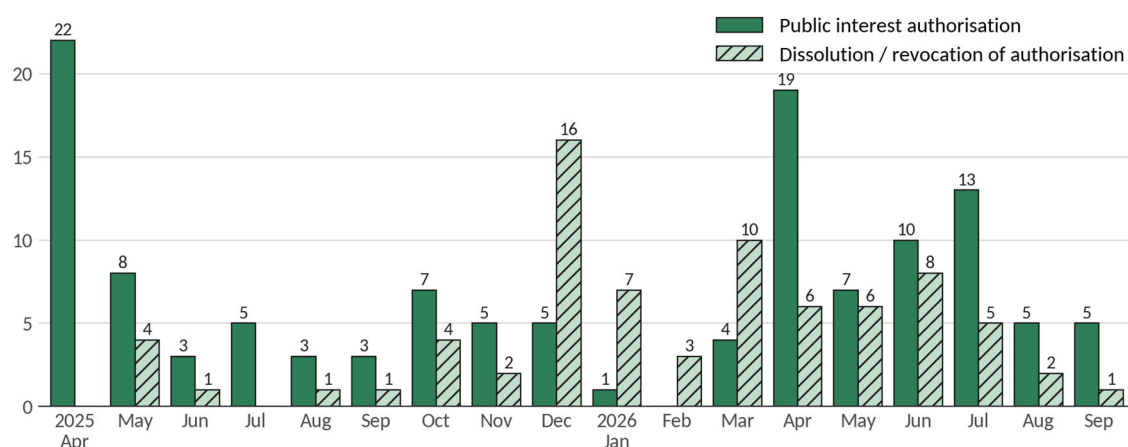


Figure 1 Public notices by month (April 2025 – September 2026)

Month by month, authorisations cluster at the start of the fiscal year—22 in April 2025 and 19 in April 2026. April 2025 was the month the amended Public Interest Authorisation Act came into force, and April 2026 again saw many authorisations timed to the start of a new business year. Exits, by contrast, peak in December 2025 (16) and March 2026 (10). The December peak is accounted for by the revocations affecting junior chambers discussed below (made at their own request, 10 cases); March reflects dissolutions and revocations coinciding with the fiscal year-end. In the latest month, September 2026, there were five authorisations and one exit (the dissolution of the Ginowan Junior Chamber).

3. What kind of corporations are being established?

3.1 Legal form

Of the 125 new authorisations, 111 (89%) were public interest incorporated foundations and 14 (11%) were public interest incorporated associations—foundations outnumbering associations by nearly eight to one. Because a foundation operates on the basis of property contributed to it, this imbalance shows that entry into the public interest sector now takes place mainly by endowing a fund with a block of capital rather than by gathering members into an association.

3.2 Field of activity

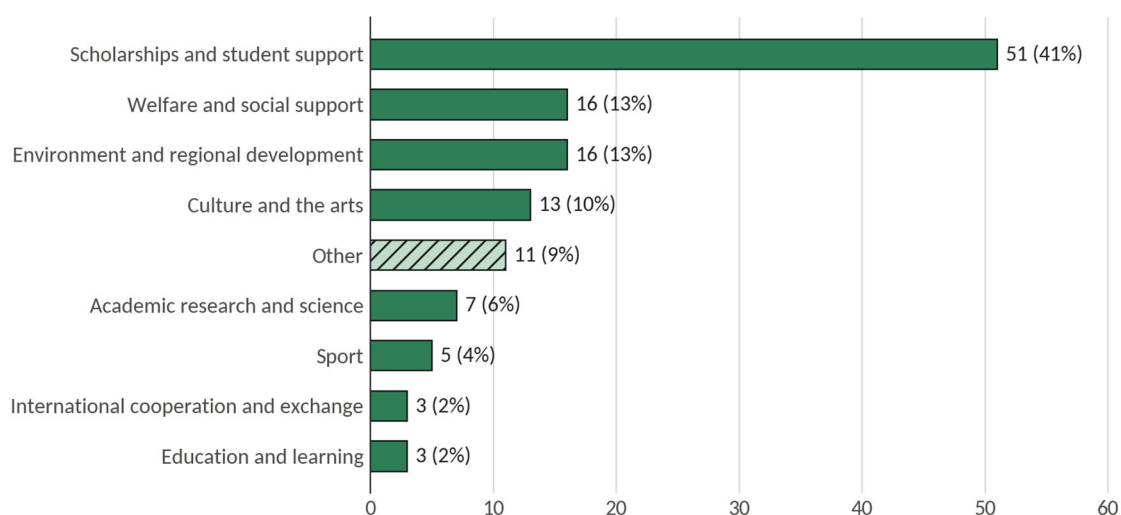


Figure 2 Principal field of activity of the 125 newly authorised corporations

The most striking feature is the prominence of scholarships and student support. Fifty-one corporations (41%) have grant-type scholarships or student support as their principal purpose, and thirteen of them carry the words “scholarship” or “student support” in their own name. In fiscal 2025 (April 2025 – March 2026) scholarships accounted for 25 of the 66 new authorisations (38%); in fiscal 2026 (April – September) the share rose to 26 of 59 (44%). Many schemes also target narrowly defined groups—students in medicine, pharmacy or engineering, young people from single-parent households or from children’s homes, students on professional graduate programmes. Rising public interest in non-repayable grant scholarships, and the ease with which a scholarship serves as an entry point for companies and individuals stepping into public interest activity, are both visible here.

A second group comprises welfare and social support (16) and environment and regional development (16). The former includes support for children and children’s homes, food banks, family associations for people with disabilities and disaster relief; the latter includes community foundations such as those in Tokushima, Tottori, Kochi (HATA) and the Chikugo River basin, together with disaster preparedness, resource circulation and town-building. In culture and the arts (13) the emphasis falls on traditional crafts and the transmission of local festivals, while in academic research and science (7) new foundations address themes high on the policy agenda, such as the international promotion of AI and quantum technology and research grants in agronomy and chemistry. In September 2026 Kyushinkai, a foundation

for the promotion of baseball headed by Sadaharu Oh, was also authorised.

3.3 Founding body

When the founding body is estimated from each organisation's website, companies and corporate groups account for 50 cases (40%) and individuals such as company founders for 39 (31%)—89 cases, or 71%, between them. What is distinctive is that 73 of those 89 (82%) are grant-making: rather than running programmes themselves, they contribute funds to support the activities of others. Among the 51 scholarship bodies, 27 were founded by companies and 23 by individuals, so almost all of them have a corporate or individual founder.

Corporate founders span a wide range of industries—electronics, chemicals, staffing, real estate, cram schools, finance—and memorial foundations combining a founder's personal name with the company name are also conspicuous. There are also cases, such as the foundations associated with the SMBC Group and Sumitomo Mitsui Trust Bank, of financial institutions establishing public interest foundations as vehicles for bequests and corporate philanthropy. Individual founders are typically people of means contributing private assets, a move best read as a choice of a permanent institutional vehicle over a one-off gift. Corporations founded by citizens or professionals number 27 (22%) and include community foundations, international cooperation NGOs and self-help organisations.

3.4 Patterns by competent authority

By competent authority, 92 cases (74%) fall under the Cabinet Office and 33 (26%) under the prefectures (Table 1). The 33 prefectural cases are spread across 25 prefectures, with no particular regional concentration.

Table 1 The character of new corporations by competent authority

	Cabinet Office (92 cases)	Prefectures (33 cases)
Main founding body	Companies 41, individuals 27 (74%)	Individuals 12, companies 9, citizens/professionals 8, local-government related 4
Grant-making / operating	Grant-making 64 (70%)	Grant-making 18 (55%), operating 15 (45%)
Main fields	Scholarships and student support 40 (43%)	Scholarships and student support 11, environment and regional development 7, culture and the arts 6, welfare and social support 6
Typical profile	Company- or founder-named foundations distributing funds nationwide	Locally rooted corporations that also run activities on the ground themselves

"Citizens / professionals" denotes corporations founded by volunteers, professionals, NGOs and the like, without a particular company, individual or local authority behind them.

Cabinet Office cases are dominated by nationally operating named foundations that make grants across several prefectures. Among prefectural cases, by contrast, alongside scholarship foundations set up by local companies and individuals, close to half are operating bodies that tackle local problems hands-on: community foundations, childcare and intergenerational centres, food banks, and bodies preserving local traditional events. All four new local-government-related corporations (the cultural promotion foundations of Bizen and Himi, Setagaya Trust Machizukuri and the Akita City Silver Human Resources Centre) fell under prefectural jurisdiction.

The practical implication is that an applicant aiming for Cabinet Office jurisdiction is likely to find the national reach of its grant programme and the fairness of its selection process at the centre of the review, whereas for a prefectural applicant the focus is likely to be its capacity to deliver locally and the breadth of its beneficiaries.

4. Corporations leaving the sector, and mergers

4.1 Exiting corporations

The 77 corporations covered by notifications of dissolution or revocation of authorisation present the mirror image of the new entrants. Fifty-five of them (71%) were under prefectural jurisdiction—the reverse of the pattern among new authorisations, 74% of which were Cabinet Office cases.

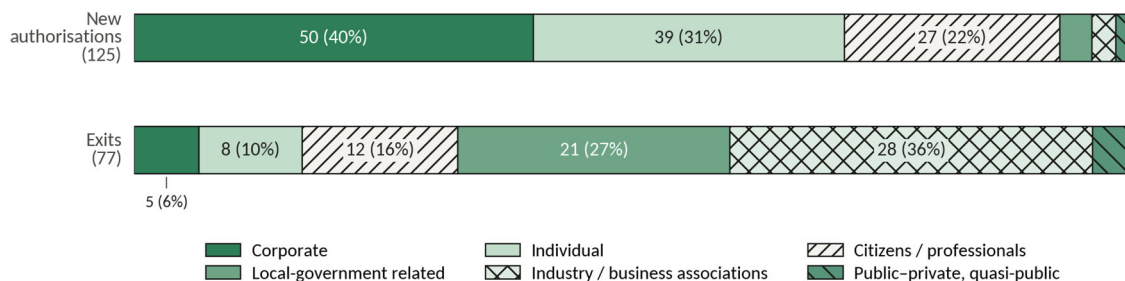


Figure 3 Founding body of entering and exiting corporations

“Local-government related” covers public corporations, promotion foundations and silver human resources centres funded by local authorities; “industry / business associations” covers trade bodies, corporate taxpayers’ associations and junior chambers.

Exits fall into two types according to the procedure used, but, as shown below, in both types the great majority are voluntary exits decided by the corporations themselves, and exits resulting from a disposition by the authority are quite exceptional. The first type is the winding-up of local-authority affiliates by notification of dissolution (49 corporations). Twenty of the 49 (41%) were local-government related: industrial and regional promotion bodies such as local industry promotion centres (Nansatsu, Hita-Kusu, southern Tochigi, Himeji–Nishiharima, Yokosuka, Omuta); bodies carrying out municipal functions such as water service corporations, cemetery corporations and housing centres; welfare bodies such as silver service promotion associations, silver human resources centres and women’s centres; and cultural and sporting bodies such as art promotion associations and foundations for the arts and for sport. These look like tidying-up exercises following the completion of a body’s role, or the transfer of its work back to the authority itself or to the private sector. The grounds for dissolution stated in the notices published during the period show that the expiry of the period of existence fixed in the articles of incorporation accounted for the majority, the remainder comprising resolutions of the general meeting of members and the impossibility of accomplishing the purpose of its business owing to the loss of basic property or other causes. None resulted from a decision to commence bankruptcy proceedings or from a court order for dissolution; all were dissolutions arising from the corporations’ own circumstances.

The second type is the conversion of membership organisations into general corporations through revocation of authorisation (28 corporations). Twenty-one of the 28 (75%) were industry or business associations, junior chambers alone accounting for twelve, with ten of those revocations concentrated in December 2025. Pharmacists’ associations, dental associations, an association of real estate appraisers and corporate taxpayers’ associations also appear. Contrary to the impression the word “revocation” may give, in substance almost all of these cases were corporations surrendering their own authorisation. When the legal basis is checked in the notices posted on the government’s Public Interest Corporation Information website for the revocations notified by each authority during the period, all except the one case discussed below were based on Article 29(1)(iv) of the Public Interest Authorisation Act (an application by a public interest corporation for revocation of its authorisation). These corporations thus applied for revocation themselves, surrendered their authorisation and chose to continue as general incorporated associations or foundations. The notices do not reveal what led them to apply, but the boundary between member benefit and public interest programmes, and the administrative burden of maintaining authorisation, are presumably part of the background. One general incorporated association, a research body on solutions for ready-mixed and leftover concrete, was authorised in April 2025 and had

its authorisation revoked at its own request in December of the same year.

The only case in which an authority revoked authorisation as a supervisory disposition during the period was the Nihon Seishinkai, a public interest incorporated association under the Cabinet Office. Having failed, among other things, to notify changes of officers or to submit its inventory of property and related documents, it received a recommendation in December 2025 and an order in February 2026, and its authorisation was revoked in June 2026 on grounds including its failure to comply with the order (Article 29(1)(iii) and Article 29(2)(i) of the Public Interest Authorisation Act). In another case, the Japan Cycling Association, a public interest incorporated foundation, applied for revocation itself after receiving a recommendation to restore its financial basis.

In addition, there are “purpose fulfilled” exits. The dissolution of the Tokyo 2025 World Athletics Championships Foundation (May 2026) is a textbook completion of a life cycle on the close of an event; within the same period the Japan Organising Committee for the 2028 WorldSkills Competition was newly authorised (August 2026). The notices thus capture the cycle by which a corporation is created for each major event and dissolved once it is over.

Table 2 Exits by field

Field	Corporations	Principal examples
Industry and business associations	21	Junior chambers (14), pharmacists’ associations, dental associations, association of real estate appraisers, corporate taxpayers’ associations
Scholarships and student support	11	Student support foundations, scholarship societies, corporate scholarship foundations, alumni scholarship foundations, student halls of residence
Welfare and social support	11	Silver human resources centres, silver service promotion associations, mutual aid societies, women’s centres
Culture and the arts	9	Corporate collection foundations, prefectural art promotion associations, municipal foundations for the arts
Industry and regional development	8	Local industry promotion centres, municipal industrial promotion foundations, regional revitalisation centres
Sport	4	Event-organising foundations, prefectural and municipal sports promotion bodies, competition federations
International cooperation and exchange	3	Recruitment and training support for foreign workers, support for international students
Academic research and science	3	Private university information education associations, research grant funds
Other	7	Water service corporations, cemetery corporations, housing centres, public health associations and others

What deserves attention is that scholarships and student support, the largest field among new authorisations (51 cases), is also near the top of the exit list with 11 corporations. Those leaving include halls of residence for students from rural areas (the Chikuma and Yuri student halls) and long-established scholarship societies, whereas those entering are predominantly grant-type scholarships funded by companies and individuals. The field is not simply growing in net numbers; it is more accurately seen as one whose providers are being replaced and whose support is shifting from halls of residence and loans to outright grants.

4.2 Mergers as a way of strengthening the base

Twenty mergers were notified during the period (nine Cabinet Office, eleven prefectural). The founding bodies involved were local-government related in nine cases, corporate in six, citizens or professionals in

three and industry associations in two. Four patterns can be distinguished: (i) consolidation of several foundations within one group (the Kose Kobayashi Foundation with the Kose Kobayashi Sports Foundation; the Sango Monozukuri Foundation with the Sango Shizen Kyosei Foundation); (ii) consolidation of local-authority affiliates (two foundations in Kurume; the cultural promotion foundation and the international exchange association in Toyota; the Koka City Sports Association; the Mutsu City Tourism Association; the Kure Industrial Promotion Centre; the Hyogo Science and Technology Association and the Hyogo Prefecture Science and Technology Promotion Foundation); (iii) consolidation of industry associations (two bodies for private kindergartens in Shizuoka Prefecture); and (iv) a corporate foundation handing its programme to a private foundation in the same field (Rakuten Mirai no Tsubasa absorbed by the Japan Children's Homes Foundation). These are moves to keep alive, through consolidation, work that had become hard to sustain alone, and they may well increase as an alternative to dissolution.

4.3 The new charitable trust regime gets under way

Under the new charitable trust regime that began in April 2026, three authorisations of charitable trusts were notified from June onwards (the regional co-creation “Children’s Future and Education Support” charitable trust, the Co-Creation Experience Mobility Support Fund, and the whole-of-community “Support for Children” charitable trust), together with four transitional authorisations from the old regime (the Asian Community Trust, the Narishige Animal Science Promotion Fund, the Narishige Neuroscience Research Grant Fund and the Hinode Scholarship Fund for Traffic Accident Orphans). All three new authorisations are devoted to children and education. As a means of dedicating property to a public interest purpose without establishing a corporation, the charitable trust deserves attention as a new option for companies and individuals entering the sector, alongside named foundations devoted to scholarships or grant-making.

5. Conclusion

The notices for April 2025 – September 2026 show entries (125) outnumbering exits (77 corporations) by roughly 1.6 to one—evidence of brisk turnover within the public interest sector.

Close to nine in ten new authorisations are foundations, and seven in ten of all new corporations are “named foundations” established by companies or their founders, most of them grant-making. Scholarships and student support account for four in ten cases, a share that has risen further in fiscal 2026. The review also brings out a division of roles by competent authority, between Cabinet Office corporations making grants nationwide and prefectural corporations, many of which tackle local problems directly.

By contrast, on the exit side there are two clear currents: the winding-up of local-authority affiliates by dissolution, and the conversion of junior chambers and industry associations into general corporations by revocation. In both cases, however, almost all exits were voluntary, decided by the corporations themselves, and only one authorisation was revoked by an authority as a supervisory disposition during the period. There are also movements that changes in numbers alone cannot capture—the trend in scholarships, strong on both the entry and the exit side; the mergers that keep programmes alive; and the launch of the new charitable trust regime. Whether these remain temporary movements or become lasting trends will need to be confirmed by continuing to follow the notices.

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