Summary of key findings

Official statistical definition of homelessness (Table 1.JPN)

In Japan, homelessness is defined as: those who use city parks, riverbanks, roads, train stations and other facilities as their place of stay in order to live their daily lives.

Latest national estimates of homelessness (Table 2.JPN)

- 3 065 individuals, representing 0.002% of the total population (2023)
- 6% are women, 94% are men
- Point-in-time count, based on the National Survey on the Actual Conditions of Homelessness (approximate survey)
- ETHOS Light groups included:
    - ☒ ETHOS 1: Living on the streets, in public spaces
    - ☐ ETHOS 2: Emergency accommodation (e.g., shelters)
    - ☐ ETHOS 3: Accommodation for the homeless (e.g., hostels and women's refuges)
    - ☐ ETHOS 4: People in institutions
    - ☐ ETHOS 5: People in non-conventional dwellings (e.g., caravans, cars or tents)
    - ☐ ETHOS 6: Living temporarily with others in conventional housing (e.g., sofa-surfing)

Legal framework to collect data on homelessness (Table 3.JPN)

According to the Act on Special Measures concerning Assistance in Self-Support of Homeless, the State, with the cooperation of local governments, must conduct a nationwide survey on the actual situation of homelessness.

National homelessness strategy (Table 4.JPN)

Measures to Support Homeless Self-Reliance

Approaches to collect data on homelessness (Table 5.JPN)

- National Survey on the Actual Conditions of Homelessness (approximate survey): Annual street count performed in January in collaboration with municipal governments (Table 5.1.JPN).
- National Survey on the Actual Conditions of Homelessness (fact-finding survey on living conditions): People experiencing homelessness are interviewed about their living conditions (Table 5.2.JPN).

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Table 1.JPN. Official statistical definition of homelessness

Homelessness	According to The Act on Special Measures concerning Assistance in Self-Support of Homeless homelessness is defined as "those who utilise city parks, riverbanks, roads, train stations and other facilities as their place of stay in order to live their daily lives."

Table 2.JPN. Data on people experiencing homelessness

Headline estimate of homelessness (Individuals)	% of total population	ETHOS 1 People living rough	ETHOS 2 People in emergency accommodation	ETHOS 3 People in accommodation for the homeless	ETHOS 4 People living in institutions	ETHOS 5 People living in unconventional dwellings	ETHOS 6 People staying with family/friends
3 065 94% men 6% women	0.002%	3 065	Not included	Not included	Not included	Not included	Not included

Type of count: Point-in-time ☒ Flow ☐
Included in headline estimate: Children ☐?
Temporary accommodation for: Asylum seekers ☐   Refugees ☐   Victims/survivors of domestic violence ☐

Year: 2023

Note: It is unclear whether the headline estimate includes children, as the age of respondents is not measured.
Source: OECD Questionnaire on Affordable and Social Housing (QuASH), 2023; Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (2023), National Survey on the Actual Conditions of Homelessness (approximate survey).

Table 3.JPN. Legal framework to collect data on homelessness

Law that governs data collection on homelessness	The Act on Special Measures concerning Assistance in Self-Support of Homeless
Legal obligations	The Act requires that the State, with the cooperation of local governments, conduct a nationwide survey on the actual situation of homelessness.

Table 4.JPN. National homelessness strategy

National homelessness strategy in place	☒ Yes: Measures to Support Homeless Self-Reliance ☐ No, but regional and/or local strategies exist ☐ No

Table 5.JPN. Approaches to collect data on homelessness

5.1.JPN. National Survey on the Actual Conditions of Homelessness (approximate survey)

Description

The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare collaborate with local governments to perform street counts. The street count takes place in January of every year. The number of people experiencing homelessness are classified by the following five locations: urban parks, rivers, roads, station buildings and other facilities.

Type of count generated	Methods
☒ Point-in-time ☐ Flow (period)	• Street count

Lead authority(ies)	Source(s) of information
• Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare	• Local governments collect information through municipality control. The information is shared with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

Scope	Depth of data
• National level	• Disaggregated by gender and location

Frequency	
• Every year	

ETHOS Light groups included

☒ ETHOS 1: Living on the streets, in public spaces
☐ ETHOS 2: Emergency accommodation (e.g., shelters)
☐ ETHOS 3: Accommodation for the homeless (e.g., hostels and women's refuges)
☐ ETHOS 4: People in institutions
☐ ETHOS 5: People in non-conventional dwellings (e.g., caravans, cars or tents)
☐ ETHOS 6: Living temporarily with others in conventional housing (e.g., sofa-surfing)

Note: Each ETHOS Light group includes one or more sub-categories of living situations. ETHOS Light groups are considered as "included" in the data collection approach if at least one of the sub-categories is counted

Notes

[Results of a Nationwide Survey on the Actual Conditions of Homelessness (Approximate Survey) - Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (mhlw.go.jp)](mhlw.go.jp)

5.2.JPN. National Survey on the Actual Conditions of Homelessness (fact-finding survey on living conditions)

Description

A sample of people experiencing homelessness are interviewed about their living conditions. Interviews take place every five years in January. As much as possible, survey respondents selected are equally representative of age, gender, distribution of homeless living places, and whether the person is fixed or mobile. People experiencing homelessness are informed prior to the survey that they will be interviewed.

Type of count generated	**Methods**
☒ Point-in-time ☐ Flow (period)	• Street count (with a survey)

Lead authority(ies)	**Source(s) of information**
• Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare	• Local governments collect information through investigators. The information is shared with the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare.

Scope	**Depth of data**
• Tokyo's 23 wards and cities where the number of people experiencing homelessness is reported to be above 50.	• Key demographic characteristics, living conditions, time spent experiencing homelessness

Frequency	
• Every 5 years	

ETHOS Light groups included

☒ ETHOS 1: Living on the streets, in public spaces
☐ ETHOS 2: Emergency accommodation (e.g., shelters)
☐ ETHOS 3: Accommodation for the homeless (e.g., hostels and women's refuges)
☐ ETHOS 4: People in institutions
☐ ETHOS 5: People in non-conventional dwellings (e.g., caravans, cars or tents)
☐ ETHOS 6: Living temporarily with others in conventional housing (e.g., sofa-surfing)

Note: Each ETHOS Light group includes one or more sub-categories of living situations. ETHOS Light groups are considered as "included" in the data collection approach if at least one of the sub-categories is counted

Notes

Summary of results| Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (mhlw.go.jp)