

ment program in Japan with the support of the Canadian federal and provincial governments and industry. Such efforts, combined with the cooperation of the Japanese government, which was seeking to increase housing options for its citizens, led to the formal approval in 1974 of lumber grading standards and a building code for wooden prefabricated two-by-four structures, the construction of which was not previously possible in Japan. In May 2004, Canada-Japan collaboration led to Japan's recognition and acceptance of large-scale four-storey two-by-four wooden structures in previously restricted zones or urban areas. Subsequently, in October 2006, post-and-beam structures also received Japanese ministerial approval, now on par with two-by-four and other fire-resistant structures. In conjunction with the September 2006 Japanese certification of the strength properties of Canada's new kiln-dried hemlock grade (E120-F330), these technical achievements mark an important step in regaining ground in the Japanese lumber market.

More broadly, the Canadian and Japanese governments have established close relations at the officials' level through the formation of a number of regular bilateral mechanisms (or trilateral with the United States), which are intended to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and address issues of mutual concern. These mechanisms include the Building Experts Committee/Japan Agricultural Standards Technical Committee (BEC/JASTC) Meeting, Canada-Japan Housing Committee (CJHC) and Canada-Japan Housing Research and Development Workshop. The BEC/JASTC is a process launched by Japan with the objective of exchanging views and information, as well as promoting mutual understanding, and involves annual meetings between the Japanese, Canadian and U.S. governments and industry. The CJHC is a biannual policy conference between the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport. The Housing R&D Workshop is a science and technology bilateral