GSAP
Global Startup Acceleration Program

ManufacturingTech & HardTech

ManufacturingTech & HardTech Course

Application Guidelines

＜Deadline＞ ~~Phase1 : 2026/5/24 (Sun) 23:59 (JST)~~

Phase2 : 2026/7/23 (Thu) 23:59 (JST)

*Applications for Phase 1 are closed.

CENTREPOLIS Accelerator at Lawrence Technological University

JETRO Japan External Trade Organization

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1 OUTLINE

Objective

This program is designed to support market entry into North America by facilitating engagement with customers and investors through events and demo days, while promoting customer acquisition, proof-of-concept (PoC) trials, and commercialization in the U.S.

Course

1	Accelerator with deep knowledge and wide network in manufacturing industry
2	Acquire knowledge of North American manufacturing markets and industrial technology areas
3	Develop potential customers, sales offices, sales channels and investors in the U.S. Midwest

Location

Detroit (U.S.)　*Phase2 only

Target Applicants

Eligible Companies	Startups based in Japan
Stage	~~【Phase1】:Pre-seed to Series A~~ 【Phase2】:Series A to Later
Sector	HardTech, advanced manufacturing, mobility,electrification, automated systems, advanced materials, IoT, AI hardware

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2 PROGRAM STRUCTURE | Program Overview

The course consists of two independent programs (Phase 1 and Phase 2).

1 【Phase1 / Phase2】 In-person Bootcamp @Tokyo *1

U.S. Manufacturing Overview, Needs Identification & Strategy Development

Understand cohort needs through 1-1 mentoring and group discussions with accelerators, while deepening insights into the U.S. manufacturing market and shaping U.S.-ready business models.

2 【Phase1 / Phase2】 Online Sessions *1

Lectures, mentoring, and business meeting opportunities *2

Learn about business development and expansion strategies necessary for startup growth through lectures and mentoring, to deepen your understanding of your customers.

3 【Phase2】On-Site Program @Detroit / Long-term stay support *1

Local events, business meetings, demo day

Support customer and investor development through Midwest U.S. events, business matching, and local product adaptation, creating initial U.S. traction (PoCs, pilots, LOIs). Startups will stay on-site for at least five business days, with local bases available for longer-term activities. Demo Day is also planned alongside local events.

4 【Phase1 / Phase2】 Online Follow-up Sessions *1

Mentoring, follow-up

Achieve results based on the takeaways from the on-site program by meeting with mentors and following up on the connections formed in the field.

*1: The program content, structure, and format are subject to change.
*2: Business meeting opportunities will be provided only to companies participating in Phase 2.

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1 【Phase1 / Phase2】In-person Bootcamp @Tokyo | U.S. Manufacturing Overview, Needs Identification & Strategy Development

Understand cohort needs through 1-1 mentoring and group discussions with accelerators, while deepening insights into the U.S. manufacturing market and shaping U.S.-ready business models.

Dates / Venue	【Phase1】August 24 (Mon) – August 26 (Wed), Tokyo, Japan 【Phase2】August 27 (Thu) – August 28 (Fri), Tokyo, Japan
Number of Companies	【Phase1】 8 – 10 【Phase2】 3 – 5
Contents	- Face-to-face meetings between Centrepolis Accelerator mentors and participating companies - 1-1 mentoring to deepen understanding of each startup's product, stage, and value proposition - Group discussions between mentors and participating companies, etc.

2 【Phase1 / Phase2】Online Sessions | Lectures, mentoring, and business MTG opportunity *1

Learn about business development and expansion strategies necessary for startup growth through lectures and mentoring, and deepen your understanding of customers. In addition, tailored online business meeting opportunities will be provided based on the needs of each company to prepare for on-site programs.

Dates / Venue	【Phase1/Phase2】 Late August – Late September | Online
Number of Companies	【Phase1】 8 – 10 【Phase2】 3 – 5
Contents	Online Lecture Examples - Value Proposition Refinement - Customer Identification & Acquisition - Go-To-Market Strategies - Business Development & Pipeline Development - Enterprise Tech Growth Strategies - Fundraising Strategies Providing opportunities for one-on-one business meetings with companies

*1: Business meeting opportunities will be provided only to companies participating in Phase 2.

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3 【Phase2】On-Site Program @Detroit / Long-term stay support | Attend local event business MTG and demo day

Support customer and investor development through Midwest U.S. events, business matching, and local product adaptation, creating initial U.S. traction (PoCs, pilots, LOIs). Startups will stay on-site for at least five business days, with local bases available for longer-term activities. Demo Day is also planned alongside local events.

Dates / Venue	Mid-September – October, Detroit, U.S.
Number of Companies	3 – 5
Contents	- U.S. based business matching and meetings - Local product and technology adaptation support (Michigan landing pad) - Trade shows and industry events - Investor & corporate Demo Day *Participation is optional

4 【Phase2】Online Follow-up Sessions | Mentoring, Follow-up

Achieve results based on the takeaways from the on-site program
by meeting with mentors and following up on the connections formed in the field.

Dates / Venue	From November onward | Online
Contents	**Lead Follow-up** - Meetings with mentors based on on-site program - Identification of future issues - Ongoing follow-up support for connections

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5 Testimonials

The accelerator mentors came from manufacturing backgrounds and were closely connected with industry customers and partners, providing strong, practical support from an industry perspective.
Building connections with other participating startups was also a valuable outcome.
(Cohort in FY2024)

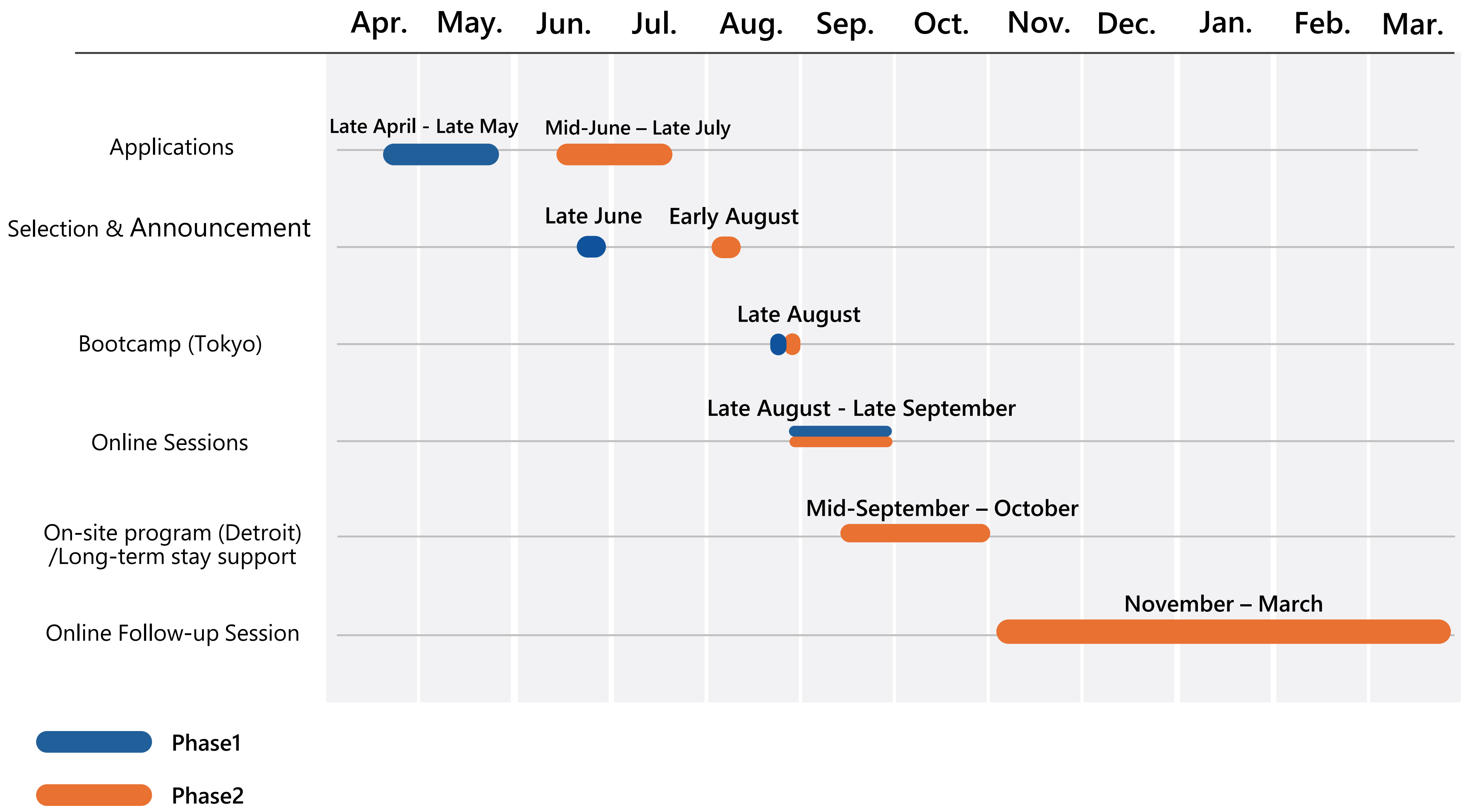
NewLab Detroit, which we visited on site, was a unique and impressive hub specializing in support for hardware startups.
Its demo spaces, in-house engineering and fabrication resources, and strong connections among industry, academia, and government.
(Cohort in FY2025)

We received advice from the accelerator that local companies value a genuine, long-term commitment by Japanese firms to the local market.
Based on this guidance, we're pursuing continuous expansion in the U.S. market.
(Cohort in FY2024)

Feedback from the mentors was more valuable than typical support in Japan, offering buyer-focused perspectives, deep industry knowledge, and practical advice.
As a result, we were able to reassess our business positioning and strategy.
(Cohort in FY2025)

Learn more about the FY2025 program here
(Note article / JP)

3 SCHEDULE



Apr. May. Jun. Jul. Aug. Sep. Oct. Nov. Dec. Jan. Feb. Mar.
Applications
Late April - Late May
Mid-June – Late July
Selection & Announcement
Late June
Early August
Bootcamp (Tokyo)
Late August
Online Sessions
Late August - Late September
On-site program (Detroit)
/Long-term stay support
Mid-September – October
Online Follow-up Session
November – March
Phase1
Phase2

Centrepolis Accelerator

https://www.centrepolisaccelerator.com/

A Michigan-based accelerator focused on manufacturing and hard tech. Located within Lawrence Technological University, it leverages strong relationships with OEMs and Tier 1 companies, including Ford, GM, and Stellantis, to support startups from PoC to commercialization. The team brings deep expertise in engineering, prototyping, and product roadmapping, enabling the transition from technical concepts to market-ready solutions.

Industry Expertise and Connections include:
Advanced manufacturing, robotics, industrial AI, automotive, aerospace, mobility, autonomy, drones, electrification, battery and space tech, circular economy, cleantech

- Members with extensive experience and network in hardtech and mfg industry
- More than 600 startups supported and over 80 large corporate partners
- More than 50 experts with hands-on manufacturing industry experience
- Over $5 million in annual funding managed for startup development

Notable Collaborations

Ford, LEAR Corporation, FORVIA Inspiring mobility, momenta, GM, STELLANTIS, SCHEMATIC, Whirlpool

Dan Radomski
Centrepolis Accelerator, CEO

Pedro Guillen
Centrepolis Accelerator, COO

Mike Blicher
Program Director

Noah Rodriguez
Program Manager

Mike Folster
Mentor/EiR

Stacey Weismiller
Mentor/EiR

4 ACCELERATOR | About Centrepolis Accelerator

Kent Helfirch
Mentor/EiR

Amy Garby
Mentor/EiR

Sandy Munro
Mentor/EiR

Danny Ellis
Mentor/EiR

Gary White
Mentor/EiR

Joe Lograsso
Mentor/EiR

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Application Requirements

Must meet all requirements 1.-6. and agree to the precautions.

1. Startup companies located in Japan
2. Considering overseas business development and financing
3. Possess English language skills to conduct business negotiations (directors and persons responsible for overseas expansion)
4. Persons with decision-making authority regarding overseas expansion (Directors and those responsible for overseas expansion) can participate.
5. You agree to the Terms and Conditions and the Online Program Terms and Conditions, and be able to participate in all programs related to this course
6. Participants must be willing to cooperate in the post-participation questionnaires, etc.
   ※This program is a collaborative project between the Cabinet Office and JETRO. Follow-up questionnaires and surveys on the growth process will be conducted as needed.

【In the case of participation in Phase 2】

7. Companies that meet the above criteria 1. through 6., **have a US market development strategy for their products, and are able to invest both resources and funds now.**

Screening Criteria

JETRO and the accelerator will review the applications based on the entry form and pitch deck. An interview with the accelerator may be required during the selection process.
In this case, we will contact you as soon as possible. Please note that we will not respond to any inquiries about the selection process.

1. Expertise and network of team members, language skills
2. Growth potential and marketability of products, technologies, and services
3. Affinity of this course with the product and business plan
4. Eligibility will be determined based on the applicant's participation in other JETRO programs, application details, and the objectives and current status of their overseas expansion, provided that the value of participation is recognized. See the next page for details.

＊Headquarter functions of companies are located in Phase II startup ecosystem cities (13 hub cities) will be given extra points.

PRECAUTIONS

Companies that have participated in the Startup City Acceleration Program and Global Startup Acceleration Program in the past are also eligible to apply.

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Appropriate Program Selection as an Evaluation Criterion

To help participating companies achieve maximum outcomes, we place strong emphasis on selecting the right program and having a clear purpose for participation. Continuously joining multiple accelerator programs without a clear objective does not necessarily lead to business growth and may result in a dispersion of valuable time and resources. Given that time is one of the most critical resources for startups, we encourage you to review the following points carefully before applying.

■ Basic Approach to Program Selection

We strongly recommend selecting programs based on a backward-planning approach from your company's current objectives.

Needs for overseas expansion vary by company, including:

- Validation of Product-Market Fit (PMF) in overseas markets
- Refinement of Go-To-Market strategy
- Acquisition of initial traction abroad
- Building international networks

The most suitable program will differ significantly depending on your specific goals.

■ Pre-Application Consultation Recommended

The JETRO Startup Team will support you in selecting the most appropriate program based on your business stage and strategic direction.

- If you have already been accepted into another acceleration program this fiscal year, please consult with a JETRO Startup team member prior to applying.
- Even if you have not yet been accepted into any program, please feel free to reach out if you are unsure which course is most suitable for you.

5 ENTRY | Entry - Costs

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Cost borne by JETRO

- Program Participation Fee

Cost borne by the company

- Local travel, lodging, transportation in the U.S., communication, food and beverage, etc.
- Expenses related to travel to the U.S., such as ESTA, VISA, overseas insurance, etc.
- Domestic travel and lodging expenses, etc.
- Communication expenses for attending the program
- All other expenses not「cost borne by JETRO」

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Please submit Application Form for entry.

Application Form

[Submit here]

Application Deadline

July 23
23:59 (JST)

◆ English Pitch Deck *Please submit a PPT/PDF document of approximately 10 pages including the following items

- ✓ Product/service (problem to be solved and its solution)
- ✓ Business model/market size/competitive advantage
- ✓ Past achievements and future prospects/business plan
- ✓ Team (please include LinkedIn information of founders/managers)

The information you provide will be provided to the Cabinet Office, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, and the partner accelerators for the purpose of project management. Please understand this beforehand.

CONTACT

Company	JETRO startup support div.
Contact	Sonoda, Ota ,Taguchi
Email	su-support@jetro.go.jp
Location	7th Floor, Ark Mori Building 1-12-32 Akasaka, Minato-ku Tokyo 107-6006, Japan