J-StarX JETRO

AI GTM Support Course

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Objective

To formulate a go-to-market strategy based on an understanding of the market and customers necessary for global market expansion.

1	Clarifying the ICP based on AI-driven narratives and strengthening value proposition design
2	Validation of scalable products based on customer needs
3	Formulation of a Go-To-Market Strategy for Overseas Expansion

Assignment Location

Silicon Valley

Main Target Audience

Target Companies	Japanese startups aiming for global expansion
Stage	Seed to Series A
Milestone Classification	Validator *See page 18
Field	AI
Important Notes	Founders capable of making decisions regarding global expansion must be able to participate in the program

*For details on eligibility criteria, such as who is eligible to travel, please refer to “04|Eligibility and Application Requirements.”

02 PROGRAM STRUCTURE ｜ プログラム構成 – 全体像

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*Please note that the program content and format are subject to change.
*The program will be conducted entirely in English

1 Domestic Bootcamp (Tokyo)

September 28 – October 1 2026

The program will feature introductions to mentors (AI investors, AI experts, etc.), various workshops on AI business growth, product innovation, business expansion, fundraising, and analysis of participating companies' business models and teams, as well as mentor matching sessions.

2 1 on 1 Mentoring Online Program

October 2026 – February 2027 (approximately 8 weeks)

The 1-on-1 online sessions provide startups with expert guidance to strengthen their Go-To-Market (GTM) strategies and support global expansion. Each company receives 6–8 tailored mentoring sessions, focusing on areas such as market entry, business development, and investor relations. Additional group discussions and feedback sessions may also be offered to address specific challenges and accelerate growth.

3 Domestic Demo Day (Tokyo)

Late January – Early February 2027 (2 days)

Prepare pitches based on analyses of business models and go-to-market strategies. Host a domestic demo day featuring AI-focused venture capital firms from North America and Japan. At the demo day, narrow the field down to the top three companies and select the participants for the overseas program.

4 Immersion Program (Silicon Valley)

February – Early March 2027 (approximately 2 weeks)

Travel to Silicon Valley to participate in various AI conferences and closed meetings with AI investors. Aim to secure overseas funding and expand business operations by conducting customer interviews to refine go-to-market strategies and participating in networking events with AI investors organized by mentors and others.

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1 Domestic Bootcamp (Tokyo)

We will invite several prominent AI investors and experts from North America to conduct various workshops and help participants develop KPIs, ICPs, and goals for overseas fundraising and market entry.

Capacity	Up to 15 companies
Dates	September 28 – October 1, 2026 (Tokyo)

Overview

- **AI Narrative and Product Innovation**

— Drafting narratives optimized for the U.S. market and ICPs (Ideal Customer Profiles), and evaluating pitches
— Iterative Product Development: User Experience Design, Prioritizing AI Features, and Roadmap Development

- **AI Go-To-Market (GTM) and Global Expansion**

— Identifying lead customers, creating a GTM roadmap, and developing an AI partnership strategy

- **Investor Engagement**

— Workshops on investor narratives and pitch refinement

*The curriculum will be finalized based on the participating companies' stage, industry, and needs
*Language of instruction: English

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2 1 on 1 Mentoring Online Program

With the goal of building Go-To-Market (GTM) strategies and strengthening execution capabilities for startups aiming to expand into global markets, we are offering an online program and mentoring. Under the guidance of experts, we provide practical and systematic support covering everything from strategy design to sales activities and investor relations.

Capacity	Up to 15 companies
Schedule	October 2026 – February 2027 (Program duration: approximately 8 weeks) *Includes extended holidays during the program period
Overview	• **Online GTM Program** — Group Sessions (6 sessions total): Held over 8–9 weeks, with each session lasting 60–90 minutes — Individual 1 on 1 Coaching (6-8 sessions per company): 45 minutes per session, held every other week • **1 on 1 Mentoring (6-8 sessions per company)** — 1 on 1 Mentoring (up to 8 sessions per company): 45 minutes per session; sessions held weekly — Virtual Group Sessions & Pods: Additionally, we will conduct curated group sessions, panels feedback sessions tailored to specific objectives and program phases

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3 Domestic Demo Day (Tokyo)

As the final phase of the domestic program, a Demo Day will be held in Tokyo in late January – early February 2027.

We will invite experts in the AI field and investors to provide participants with opportunities to present their ideas in an event setting.

Capacity	Up to 15 companies
Schedule	Late January – Early February 2027 (2-day event)
Overview	• **Demo Day Overview** — The event will take place over two days, with the first day dedicated to rehearsals and mentoring, and the second day featuring the main pitch event — In addition to representatives from JETRO and Startup Grind, two external investors specializing in AI will be invited to serve as judges, who will select 3–5 companies to participate in the immersion program • **Improving Communication Skills and Networking** — Individual feedback on pitches will be provided to help participants improve their communication skills — On the day of the event, networking opportunities with investors and experts in the AI field will be provided

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4 Immersion Program (Silicon Valley)

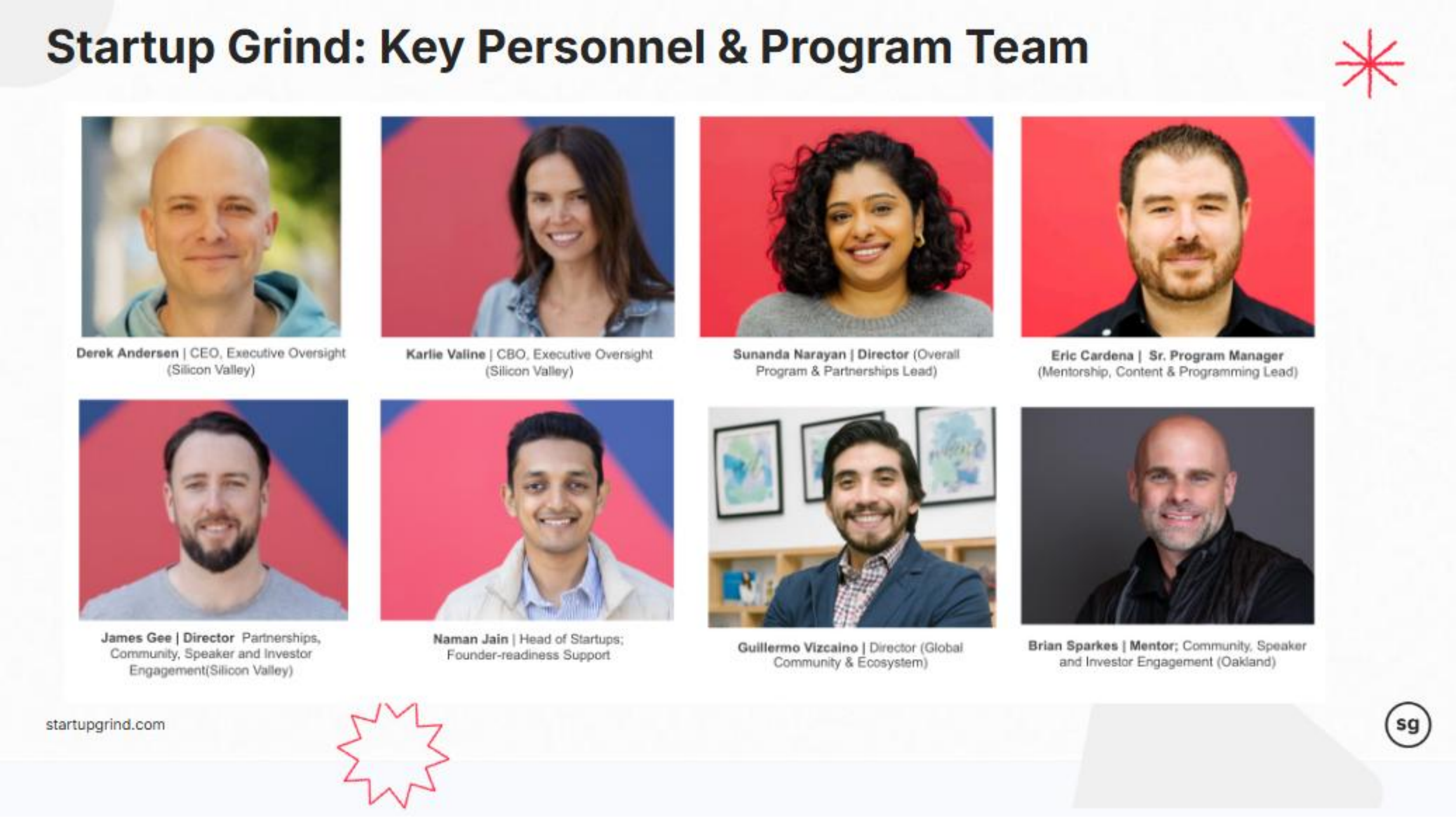
This online program and mentoring initiative aims to help startups develop and strengthen their Go-To-Market (GTM) strategies for expansion into the U.S. market. Under the guidance of experts, the program provides practical and systematic support covering everything from strategic planning to sales activities and investor relations.

Capacity	3-5 companies
Schedule	Late February to early March 2027 (approximately 2 weeks)
Overview	• **Details of the Immersion Program** — Participation in local events and conferences — 10 to 20 business meetings per company — Networking opportunities with venture capitalists and mentoring from emerging AI experts — Business meetings with pre-arranged prospective clients — Refining and strengthening pitches *Content may vary depending on the participating companies’ stage, field, and needs • **Final Demo Day** — Attended by Silicon Valley entrepreneurs, mentors, ecosystem stakeholders, and investors

Startup Grind URL: https://www.startupgrind.com/

Startup Grind is a global startup community originating in Silicon Valley, founded on the principle of “building a community where entrepreneurs learn from and support one another.”

As one of the world’s largest startup support platforms, with chapters in over 100 countries and a network of more than 5 million entrepreneurs, its strength lies in an ecosystem where entrepreneurs, investors, and technology leaders continuously interact and collaborate.It has a proven track record in organizing international conferences, attracting anywhere from several thousand to tens of thousands of participants each year. Leveraging these networks and communities, it offers a comprehensive range of services for startups—from the early stages through growth—including mentoring, fundraising opportunities, specialized programs, and networking opportunities with investors and established companies.


Startup Grind: Key Personnel & Program Team
Derek Andersen | CEO, Executive Oversight (Silicon Valley)
Karlie Valine | CBO, Executive Oversight (Silicon Valley)
Sunanda Narayan | Director (Overall Program & Partnerships Lead)
Eric Cardena | Sr. Program Manager (Mentorship, Content & Programming Lead)
James Gee | Director Partnerships, Community, Speaker and Investor Engagement(Silicon Valley)
Naman Jain | Head of Startups; Founder-readiness Support
Guillermo Vizcaino | Director (Global Community & Ecosystem)
Brian Sparkes | Mentor; Community, Speaker and Investor Engagement (Oakland)
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Program Mentors & Advisors


Kenan Rappuchi | GTM Expert; 1:1 Founder Sales Coach


Darshan Dave | AI Strategist | Product & GTM Expert


Lolita Taub | GP at Ganas Ventures; Fundraising & Investment Expert


Tiffine Wang | Cross-border VC, AI investor and founder


Marzena Fuller | CISO at Cognite; AI, High-Growth Technology Companies & Enterprise Scale


Samir Patel | Founder, Juliet AI; B2B & B2C Growth Expert


Alex Loiko | Enterprise AI Expert @ Google X


Michal Kucharz | AI & Architecture Leader; Product Strategy & Customer Experience Expert


Lara McKeithan | Marketing for Seed-Series A Stage B2B Founders Expert


Jayesh Sahasi | Exec VP Product & CTO at @ON24B, Mentor & Angel Investor

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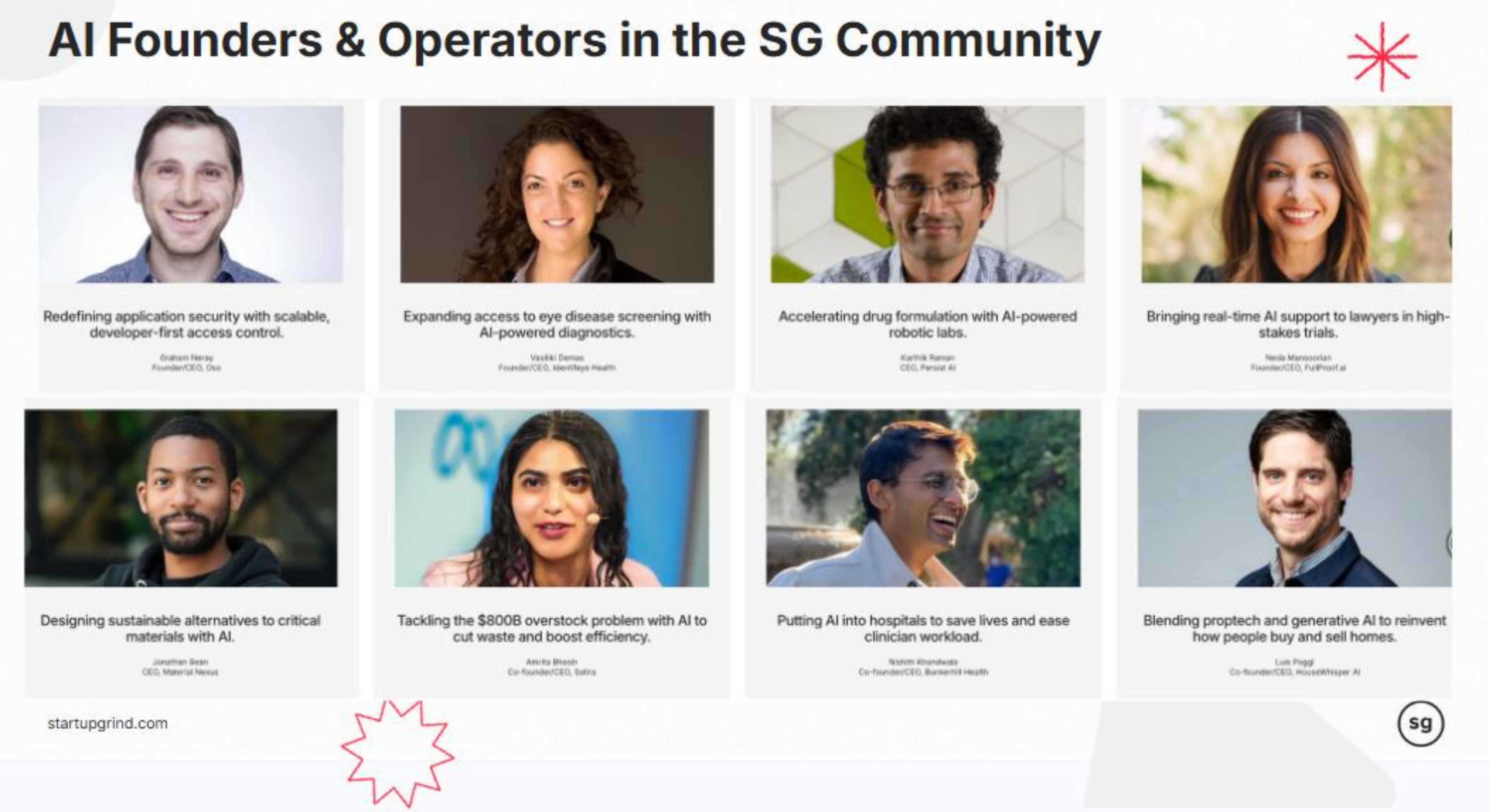
AI Founders & Operators in the SG Community
Redefining application security with scalable, developer-first access control.
Expanding access to eye disease screening with AI-powered diagnostics.
Accelerating drug formulation with AI-powered robotic labs.
Bringing real-time AI support to lawyers in high-stakes trials.
Designing sustainable alternatives to critical materials with AI.
Tackling the $800B overstock problem with AI to cut waste and boost efficiency.
Putting AI into hospitals to save lives and ease clinician workload.
Blending proptech and generative AI to reinvent how people buy and sell homes.
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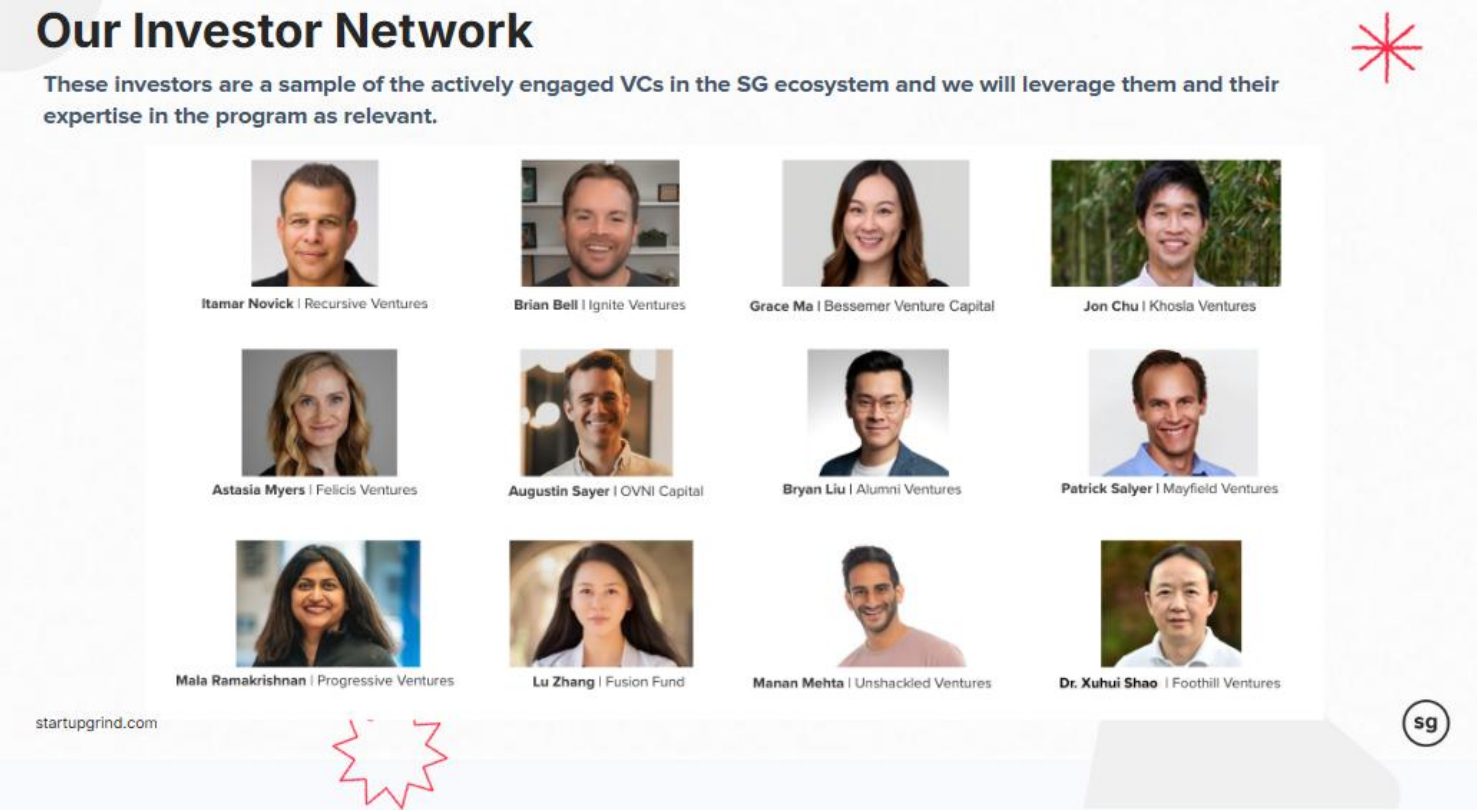
Our Investor Network
These investors are a sample of the actively engaged VCs in the SG ecosystem and we will leverage them and their expertise in the program as relevant.
Itamar Novick I Recursive Ventures
Brian Bell I Ignite Ventures
Grace Ma I Bessemer Venture Capital
Jon Chu I Khosla Ventures
Astasia Myers I Felicis Ventures
Augustin Sayer I OVNI Capital
Bryan Liu I Alumni Ventures
Patrick Salyer I Mayfield Ventures
Mala Ramakrishnan I Progressive Ventures
Lu Zhang I Fusion Fund
Manan Mehta I Unshackled Ventures
Dr. Xuhui Shao I Foothill Ventures
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03 SCHEDULE | スケジュール

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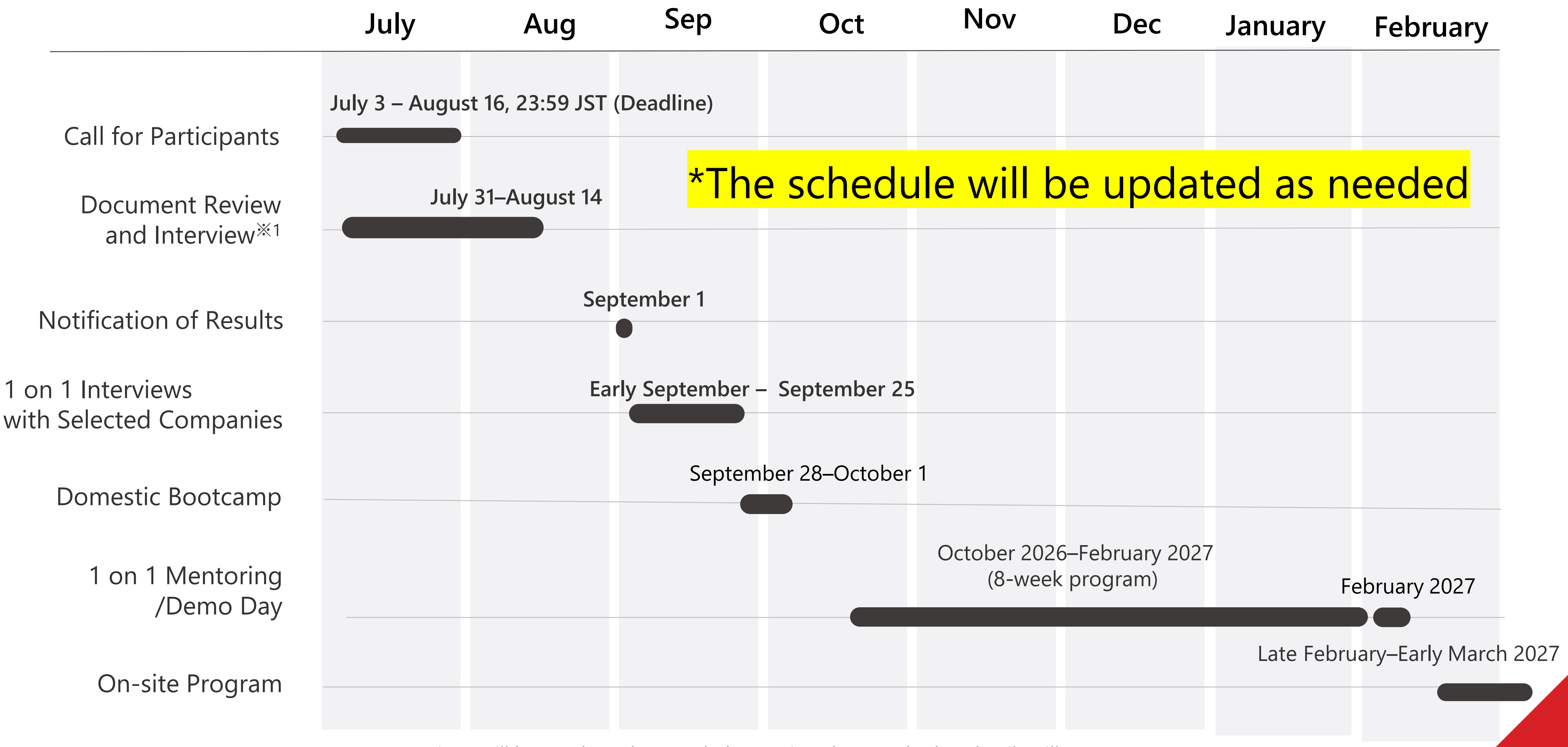

*1 Interviews will be conducted as needed. Interview dates and other details will be provided at a later date.

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Capacity

- Up to 15 companies

(Online Program: 15 companies; On-site Program: 3-5 companies)

Primary Target Audience

Eligible Companies	Japanese startups aiming for global expansion
Stage	Seed to Series A
Milestone Classification	Validator *See page 14
Field	AI
Important Notes	Founders capable of making decisions regarding global expansion must be able to participate in the program

Application Requirements

Program participants must meet all of the following conditions

- Founders of Japanese startups based in Japan or the head of overseas operations
  Nationality is not a factor as long as the applicant is affiliated with a Japanese startup
- Must possess English proficiency sufficient to prepare proposal materials and conduct business negotiations
- Must have a prototype to present to potential partners
- <u>You must have responded to interviews and surveys during and after previous program periods, and you must be willing to cooperate in the future.</u>
- You must be able to prepare the necessary facilities and environment to participate in the services provided by this program (such as online mentoring)

※ This program is a joint project between the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and JETRO, and
and we will conduct follow-up surveys and interviews throughout the program as needed

05 COST-BEARING｜費用負担

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Expenses covered by participants

- Domestic Travel Expenses
- Participants’ accommodation expenses during the on-site program period
- Travel Expenses (Airfare)
- Other expenses incurred overseas, such as transportation, meals, communication costs, visa fees, and overseas travel insurance
- All other expenses not covered by the organizer (JETRO)

Expenses Covered by JETRO

- Fees for various programs, such as mentoring, workshops, and events held online or during the on-site stay

※ JETRO will arrange all of the above directly. Participants are not required to pay these fees.

06 SELECTION PROCESS･CRITERIA｜選考プロセス･基準

Call for Participants → Document Screening / Interview Screening ※1 → Domestic Bootcamp (15 companies) → Online Program (15 companies) → Domestic Demo Day (15 companies) → Pre-departure Follow-up (3-5 companies) → Immersion Program (3-5 companies)

*1 Applicants will be notified of the interview (online) schedule at a later date, as needed.

Selection Criteria

- Participation must be deemed meaningful based on the applicant's participation in other JETRO programs, application details, and the objectives and status of their overseas expansion. *See the next page for details
- The mentor and JETRO must be able to provide support
- Participation in this program is expected to lead to scaling up
- The business must be technology-driven, and the product, technology, or service idea must demonstrate novelty and competitive advantage
- The value proposition must be clear
- The business model must be highly profitable and show potential for sustainable growth
- The project has demonstrated traction that proves market demand
- The team composition is suitable for overseas expansion
- The methods and conditions for collaboration and cooperation with partners must be clearly defined

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Selection Criteria: Appropriate Course Selection

■ Approach to Program Selection

For each program, one of the selection criteria is ensuring that participating companies **choose the appropriate course based on their business stage and objectives**, so that they can achieve maximum results.

Since the challenges and needs related to overseas expansion vary from company to company, we recommend selecting a course **by working backward from "what your company wants to achieve right now."**

Examples of Primary Participation Objectives

- Validating Product-Market Fit (PMF) in Overseas Markets
- Refining Go-to-Market Strategies
- Gaining initial traction
- Building an overseas network

Participating in multiple programs without a clear objective can lead to a dispersion of time and resources. To make the most effective use of "time"—the most critical resource for startups—please ensure you understand the purpose of the program before applying.

■ We Recommend Consulting Before Applying

The JETRO Startup Team offers consultations to help you select the optimal course based on your business stage and strategic direction.
to **help you select the most suitable course**.

- If you have been accepted into another acceleration program this fiscal year
- or those unsure about which course to choose

In any of these cases, please feel free to consult with us before applying

Milestone Type	Purpose of Participation	Expected Eligibility
Explorer (Exploration)	Validating direction and understanding the market at the idea stage	Not yet at the MVP stage, but interested in expanding overseas
Validator (Validation)	Market validation and user interviews at the PoC/MVP stage	Product in place; hypothesis validation stage
Scaler (Growth)	Acquiring customers and investors; executing international expansion	Product has reached a certain level of maturity; plans for international expansion
Connector (Specialization)	Focus on collaboration with investors and partners	Purpose-Specific (Fundraising, Partnerships, etc.)

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Application Form

Deadline: Sunday, August 16 2026, 11:59PM (JST)

■Important Notes Regarding Applications

- Applications submitted after the deadline will not be accepted under any circumstances.
- Due to high traffic immediately before the deadline, you may be unable to submit your application, so please apply well in advance
- You cannot make any corrections or replacements to the pitch content after submission.

■ Application Process

- You must also submit pitch deck and pitch video(in English) separately (see the following pages for details on format and submission methods).
- We will review the application materials and notify applicants of the selection results
- In addition to the document review, we will conduct an online interview
- Please note that we cannot respond to any inquiries regarding the screening results
- Please have a copy of your letter of commitment and the page of your passport containing your photo ready, as these will be required. Selected applicants will be notified separately with further details

How to Submit Your Pitch Deck and Pitch Video: The Process

Step 1: Prepare Materials

・Pitch Deck
・Pitch Video

Please prepare your pitch deck and pitch video in advance. Once prepared, convert the materials into **a publicly accessible URL** (**e.g.**, via Google Forms, Canva, **or** YouTube) and submit them through **the P19 application form**.

*See the next page for details

Step 2: Application

・Program Registration

・Filling Out Required Information

Please fill out the required information and apply using **the P19 application form**.

■ If you have difficulty generating a URL

- If you are unable to submit via URL, please contact j-starx@jetro.go.jp.
- Please use the subject line "Course **Name_Company Name_Your** Name" and include the program name, company name, and your full name in the body of the email.

(Please enter your own name in the "Name" field)

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Points to Keep in Mind When Creating an English Pitch Deck

Please note that entries that do not comply with the following guidelines may be excluded from consideration

■ Content to Include in the English Pitch Deck

① Problem and Solution
② Customers and Value Proposition
③ Business Model & Growth Strategy
④ About the Team
⑤ What You Seek from this Program

*Please prepare your materials in **English**

*There are no specific requirements regarding slide design or format

■ Key Considerations for Creating an English Pitch Deck

- Please create your materials to include the content listed in the right-hand column
- No cover page is required; please limit the document to a maximum of 10 pages
- Please include your name in the upper-left corner of the first page
- Please name the file "**Course Name_Company Name_Your Name.pdf**" (Please enter your own name in the "Name" section)
- Please convert your file to a viewable URL (e.g., via Google Drive or Canva) and submit it through the application form.

*Please ensure that the URL you create has "View" permissions granted.
*If submitting via URL is difficult, please contact j-starx@jetro.go.jp.

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Points to Keep in Mind When Creating an English Pitch Video

Please note that if the following guidelines are not followed, your submission may be excluded from consideration

■ Content and Submission Guidelines for the English Pitch Video

- Please create a video that includes the following explanation:

—Problem and Solution
— Customers and Value Proposition
— Business Model and Growth Strategy
— About the Team
—What We Look for in an Accelerator Program

- Please submit a video in which the founder or the program itself explains the initiative.
(e.g., a recording made via Zoom or a webcam)

■ Points to Note for the English Pitch Video

- Please keep the video under 3 minutes in length.
- Please create the video in English.
- **Videos generated by AI are not eligible**.
- Please name the file "**Course Name_Company Name_Your Name.pdf**."
- Please convert the file to a URL on video-sharing sites such as YouTube or
, and submit it via the application form.

*Please ensure that the URL grants viewing permissions.
*Videos recorded on a smartphone are acceptable, but please ensure the audio is clear.
*If submitting via URL is difficult, please create a video containing the following instructions: j-starx@jetro.go.jp.

1. As a general rule, financial support for participation in this program is limited to one person per company (there is no issue with additional participants accompanying the group at the company's own expense).

2. If necessary, mentors and JETRO staff may accompany participants to meetings with local business partners. We also ask for your cooperation in providing feedback on the program's outcomes and progress after your return.

3. Please note that if you are selected for this program, JETRO may publicly disclose information regarding the project and its results for promotional purposes. (The content to be disclosed will be reviewed in advance.)

4. As a general rule, participants must not have previously participated in a travel program under another J-StarX program.
   *JETRO will determine whether participation in other programs is permitted.

Disclaimer

Please read the J-StarX Terms of Use and Disclaimer carefully before applying.

Cancellation Policy

Cancellations are not permitted for any reason once the travel schedule has been finalized.

Regarding Accommodation Costs: If JETRO incurs cancellation or change fees, your company will be responsible for covering them

Date on which cancellation fees apply: The exact deadline will be announced to participants at a later date.

09 CONTACT｜お問い合わせ

J-StarX

Cource	J-StarX AI GTM Support Course
Program Period	JETRO Innovation Department／Startup Division
Contact person	Ishiguro, Nishiyama, Maeda
Contact	Contact form