

JETRO Dubai Topics

NEWSLETTER

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❖ High Quality & Tasty Japanese Foods promoted at GULFOOD 2021



Once again, JETRO organized the Japan Pavilion at Gulfood 2021, promoting 38 Japanese companies for this year. Gulfood, the largest Food & Beverages related exhibition in the Middle East, was held from **21st to 25th of February**, at the **Dubai World Trade Centre**. About 59,000 visitors from 162 countries attended the event, in which, 2,531 exhibitors from 85 countries showcased their products.

The Japan Pavilion was located at the Trade Centre Arena and Za'abeel Plaza Hall, where tasty, healthy foods and ingredients from all over Japan were displayed and promoted. Some of the products on display were Japanese special rice, teas, seasonings, ramen noodles, sweets, seafood, and a variety of Japanese foods and ingredients.



Due to COVID-19 pandemic, only four companies from Japan participated in person. However, thanks to the participants who physically exhibited during the event, the atmosphere at the Japan Pavilion was lively and active business talks took place. On the other hand, for those companies who were not able to come, aside from product display of their items, an online business meetings between the exhibitors and visitors were arranged during the exhibition. By

doing this, JETRO have responded to the needs of various visitors.

This year, the Gulfood Secretariat imposed a strict safety and hygiene protocols. The participants as well as the visitors adhered the social distancing rules inside the Pavilion and tasting facility. No violations were pointed out.

The Gulfood 2021 was the only live, in-person food & beverage sourcing event of the year held under the COVID-19 pandemic. Though the number of exhibitors who participated in-person from Japan were few, and the number of visitors were about 60% compared last year, the event was a great success. Active business talks took place during the event.

❖ JETRO Dubai organized Online Business Meetings in Various Sectors

Due to ongoing pandemic, many face-to-face business meeting opportunities have been eliminated. However, JETRO Dubai continuous its effort in supporting the Japanese businesses in the region by organizing series of online business meetings in various fields such as cosmetics, healthcare, and kitchenware.

From 13th to 15th of January, JETRO conducted an online business matching in the field of cosmetics, wherein a total of 22 online sessions were held between UAE and Japanese companies. For the month of February, from 15th to 22nd, another online business meetings were held between Japanese healthcare-related companies and buyers from the UAE and Middle East region. A total of 19 business meetings were arranged by JETRO Dubai. And from 8th to 18th of March, 19 online business sessions were arranged between Japanese companies and UAE buyers for cosmetics and general merchandise.

In the age of the new normal, it is essential to develop business through online means. JETRO Dubai will continue to utilize online methods to facilitate business opportunities between Japanese and UAE companies.

❖ JETRO organized a webinar on “Venture Capital Investment in the Middle East”

Identifying the potential and opportunities for Japanese startups seeking investment and partnerships in the Middle East, JETRO organized a webinar focusing on the Venture Capital Investment ecosystem in the region.

JETRO invited 3 prominent speakers in the ecosystem to present an outlook on the investment interests in the Middle East from 3 different perspectives. The first speaker was Mr. Philip Bahoshy, the founder & CEO of MAGNITT, the first venture data platform serving founders and investors across emerging markets showed the statistics on the interest in investment in Emerging Markets – like MENA region, and the trends and sizes of investments across various time periods.

The poster features a cityscape background with the Burj Khalifa. Text includes: '2/24 ONLINE SEMINAR 2/24, 2021 3 PM - 4:30 PM (JST)'. The main title is '中東における現地VC投資動向と連携可能性'. A 'タイムテーブル' (Timeline) lists: 15:00~ Introduction by JETRO; 15:10~ '中東におけるスタートアップ投資動向' by Mr. Philip Bahoshy (CEO and Founder, MAGNITT); 15:30~ '現地VCによる事業紹介と日本企業との連携への期待' by Mr. Basil Mofteh (General Partner, Global Ventures, UAE) and Mr. Yousef AlBabtain (Senior Investment Professional, Shorooq, UAE); 16:10~ Q&A session.

JETRO has also invited Mr. Basil Mofteh, General Partner at Global Ventures, a Dubai-based, growth-stage venture capital firm; who explained the region’s market profiles, needs, and opportunities to be fulfilled by foreign start-ups who can provide innovative solutions to solve challenges in the regions. He also explained their scope of investment

interest as one of the noticeable VC companies in the region.

Mr. Yousef AlBabtain, Senior Investment Professional at Shorooq Partners, Abu Dhabi-based seed-stage venture capital fund was the third speaker at the webinar who highlighted the opportunities of MENA and GCC regions. He also showed examples of Shorooq Partners portfolio and sectors across the region.

The webinar was held on 24th of February, and was attended by more than 75 participants composed of startups, SMEs, and investment companies from Japan.

❖ JETRO held Anime Contents Online Business Matching Program

In continuation of JETRO’s trade promotion amid the COVID-19 pandemic, through programs targeting different segments and industries, JETRO has organized an online business matching invitation program for international buyers from the Anime Contents Industry. The online meetings were conducted from 24th to 26th of March, which provided an opportunity to Japanese contents companies to meet overseas buyers and explore the potential in the overseas market.

JETRO selected a total of 14 buyers from 9 countries (Thailand, USA, Mexico, France, Spain, Russia, KSA, UAE and Nigeria). From UAE, Starzplay, the leading SVOD platform in the MENA region, has been selected. Starzplay is currently distributing Japanese contents such as Attack on Titan, My Hero Academia, Kingdom, Naruto, Boruto, Haikyuu!!, and Fruits Basket; and directly working with Japanese companies such as Pierrot and TV Tokyo.

A total of 10 online business meetings were arranged between Starzplay and Japanese companies. An active and positive business conversations took place; some companies requested and scheduled a second meeting with Starzplay, right before the end of their online session, to further discuss their portfolio and explore potential collaboration.

The Japanese Contents market in the Middle East has slowly but consistently increased; hence, Japanese Contents creators and distributors have an immense opportunities to expand their business in this region. JETRO Dubai has been committed and will continually extend its full support in promoting Japanese contents businesses in the Middle East.

❖ ME-IPG Regular Meeting

On 25th January 2021, thirteen ME-IPG (Middle East Intellectual Property Group) member companies from UAE, JAPAN, UK and INDIA joined the online regular meeting of the ME-IPG. Since there have been a lot of counterfeit products distributed from China to UAE, many Japanese companies are interested to know about the current situation of intellectual property in China.

Thus, the ME-IPG invited Mr. Eiichi Yamamoto, IP Director of JETRO Beijing; and Mr. Yusuke Wakebe, lawyer of IP Forward, to talk on matters concerning this situation. They provided updated information on intellectual property system, counterfeits products in China, and intellectual property activities of Japanese companies in China. The information shared during the meeting was very beneficial for all the member companies of the ME-IPG.

On 2nd March 2021, ME-IPG held a small group meeting regarding the counterfeit products in Africa region. Mr. Chiharu Yamamura, Director of Research in JETRO Dubai, who had previously worked in Nigeria for three years prior to coming in UAE, shared the economic and market conditions and counterfeiting situation in Nigeria.

In addition, four companies from UAE and two companies from Japan joined this online meeting. Each company conducted a presentation on the measures to tackle counterfeit products. Some inquiries have been addressed also during the session, wherein, group members gained new additional information.

❖ Results of JETRO's 2020 Survey on Business Conditions of Japanese Affiliated Companies in the Middle East

In September 2020, the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) conducted its latest survey on the business conditions of Japanese-affiliated companies in the Middle East. The survey was conducted in 10 countries: United Arab Emirates (UAE), Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Jordan, Israel, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman. The survey received valid response from 244 firms.

Key Points:

[Operating Profit Forecast]

Due to the impact of COVID-19 and a fall in oil prices, the proportion of companies expecting profit fell below 50% in 2020. The proportion exceeded 50% in Turkey and UAE, but less than 20% in Saudi Arabia and Iran.

[Future Business Outlook]

In the Middle East as a whole, the pace of business expansion slowed down, and "remain the same" increased by 10 points, the highest at 60%. On the other hand, about 50% of companies in Israel, Turkey and Saudi Arabia are planning to expand business.

[Investment Environment/Promising Business Areas]

Japan's positive image serves as the biggest advantage in the investment environment. On the other hand, the challenge is about its legal system - unnoticed change, undeveloped or unclear system. Promising business areas for the whole region are "new industries," "resources and energy," and "infrastructure."

*For the full details of the survey, please [click here](#).

*Report is also available at the [Survey Reports Section](#) in our global website.

❖ EXPO 2020 Dubai: 6th International Participants Meeting

JETRO, the participating organization for Japan Pavilion at EXPO 2020 Dubai, has attended the 6th International Participants Meeting physically and virtually held in the Dubai Exhibition Centre and Youtube Live on **4th and 5th of May 2021**.



The event gathered around 370 delegates from 173 countries. The organizer provided the latest progress, ongoing preparations, operational and logistical matters, as well as the safety protocols to be implemented during the mega event.

On the following day, H.E Tomiyasu Nakamura, the Commissioner General of the Japanese Section of EXPO 2020 Dubai, has virtually attended the EXPO's Steering Committee.

During the meeting, members have expressed their appreciation towards the decision of H.H Sheikh Hamdan bin Mohammed Al Maktoum, Crown Prince of Dubai and Chairman of the Executive Council of Dubai, to offer free COVID-19 vaccines to all the members of the official delegations of countries participating in the EXPO to ensure the safety of all the participants.

JETRO and Japan Pavilion's Stakeholders will continuously working on its participating preparations, and looking forward to welcome the world at Japan Pavilion, EXPO 2020 Dubai on 1st October 2021.

❖ Mr. Takahisa Ota joins JETRO Dubai as new Director



Mr. Takahisa Ota joined JETRO Dubai as Director in charge of Business Development and EXPO 2020 from January 2021. He replaced Mr. Naoki Tanabe who served at JETRO Dubai in the same capacity for the last three and half years.

Mr. Ota, a 2012-batch graduate in foreign studies from Sophia University in Tokyo; joined JETRO in the same year. From 2012 to 2014, he worked at JETRO Tokyo HQ supporting the Business Support Division, Overseas Business Support and Intellectual Property Department. In November 2014, he was assigned as Assistant Director on a training program at JETRO Bengaluru, where he supported business development and Japan Pavilion exhibition activities. Returning back to Japan, he worked at the Planning Division Department of JETRO Tokyo from 2015 to 2018.

Between 2018 to 2020, he worked at the Japan Patent Office in Tokyo providing IP-related support to Japanese SMEs to do business overseas. In 2020, he was transferred to JETRO Tokyo's International Exhibitions and Trade Fair Department, in charge of Japan's participation at EXPO 2020. In Dubai, Mr. Ota will work on business matters such as the exhibition participations and business meeting arrangements, Iraq Business, Japanese SME Platform and EXPO 2020.

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