

JETRO Dubai Topics

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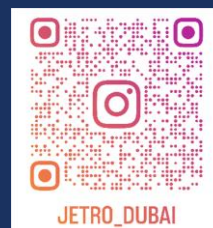
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Message from the new Managing Director - Mr. Masaru Nishiura



Assalaam Alaykum!

It is a great honor to assume the role of representative for the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.

At the outset, I would like to express my deepest respect and sincere appreciation to all those who have contributed to strengthening the longstanding economic relationship between Japan and the United Arab Emirates, as well as the Gulf and the broader MENA region.

The UAE stands as a vital hub for trade, finance, and innovation, not only within the Gulf but across the wider MENA region. For Japan, it has long been an indispensable partner, initially grounded in energy cooperation, but increasingly defined by a diversified and forward-looking economic relationship. Today, our collaboration spans across a wide range of sectors, including renewable energy, digital transformation, advanced manufacturing, healthcare, food security, and start-up ecosystems.

Looking across the Gulf and MENA region as a whole, we are witnessing profound transformation. Governments are actively pursuing economic diversification, investing in sustainable development, and fostering innovation-driven growth.

At the same time, demographic expansion and rapid urbanization are creating significant demand for infrastructure, services, and technological solutions. These developments present opportunities for Japanese companies to contribute meaningfully to the region's future.

In this dynamic environment, JETRO will serve as a strategic platform to further deepen and expand economic ties not only with the UAE, but across the entire region.

We are committed to supporting Japanese businesses in their global endeavors, strengthening partnerships with local stakeholders, and fostering new avenues of collaboration in areas such as innovation, sustainability, and human capital development.

Moreover, the relationship between Japan and the MENA region is built upon a foundation of mutual trust cultivated over decades. It is our firm belief that this trust will continue to guide us as we explore new frontiers of cooperation, not only in economic terms, but also through enhanced people-to-people exchange and cultural understanding. In addition, the UAE and Japan confirmed the conclusion of the negotiations for the Japan-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, and this is based on the long-term relationships and would surely be the booster to develop economic ties of both countries.

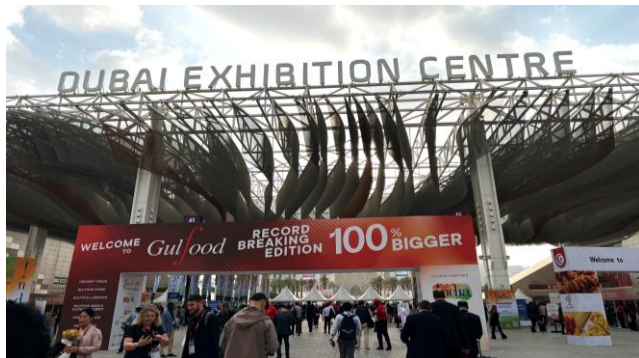
In my closing, I would like to mention "A friend in need is a friend indeed." Japan and JETRO would be a real friend of this region even under the current complicated situation. I look forward to working closely with all of you to further advance the presence and success of Japanese enterprises in this region, and to contribute to the continued growth and prosperity of MENA-Japan relations.

Thank you very much for your continued guidance and support.

Shukran Jazeelan!

Japan Pavilion Expands Scale and Momentum at GULFOOD 2026

From 26 to 30 January 2026, JETRO organized and operated the JAPAN PAVILION at GULFOOD 2026, held across two major venues—the Dubai World Trade Centre and the Dubai Exhibition Centre. Compared to the previous year, the exhibition expanded significantly in scale, reinforcing its position as one of the world's largest and most influential food trade platforms.



GULFOOD 2026 brought together more than 8,500 exhibitors from 195 countries, showcasing approximately 1.5 million food and beverage products. Building on the strong international participation seen in 2025, this year's edition further strengthened its role as a global hub for business negotiations and industry networking.

The JAPAN PAVILION featured 62 companies and organizations, marking a notable increase from the previous year and reflecting growing interest among Japanese participants in expanding into the Middle East market. JETRO supported exhibitors through on-site business matching and promotional activities, enabling active engagement with international buyers.

Among the products on display, matcha continued to attract significant attention, demonstrating sustained global demand beyond the strong interest observed in 2025. In addition, seafood products and Japanese seasonings also drew considerable interest from buyers, highlighting the broad appeal and diversity of Japanese food offerings.

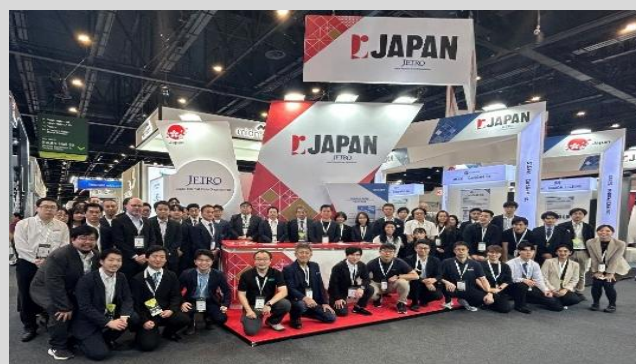
Overall, the exhibition reaffirmed the strong global demand for Japanese food products, which are recognized for their quality, safety, and diversity. The expanded presence of the JAPAN PAVILION underscored Japan's continued commitment to international market expansion and its ability to deliver high value-added products worldwide.



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Innovative Showcase: Japan Pavilion at WHX Dubai 2026

JETRO organized the JAPAN PAVILION at World Health Expo Dubai (WHX Dubai) 2026, held from 9 to 12 February 2026, at the Dubai Exhibition Centre in Expo City Dubai. Formerly known as Arab Health, the exhibition was rebranded as WHX Dubai this year and relocated from the Dubai World Trade Centre to its new venue at the former Expo 2020 Dubai site.



According to the organizer, the exhibition welcomed more than 80,000 visitors, reaffirming its position as one of the world's leading healthcare trade fairs.

At the JAPAN PAVILION, JETRO showcased 24 Japanese companies, including 8 startups specializing in digital health. This year marked JETRO's 16th participation in the JAPAN PAVILION since the Arab Health era, including the online edition held during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Across the exhibition venue, 62 Japanese companies exhibited, placing Japan 15th in terms of the number of exhibitors among participating countries and regions.

On the final day of the exhibition, the Minister of Health and Prevention visited the JAPAN PAVILION as part of an official tour of the WHX venue. JETRO introduced the JAPAN PAVILION and its exhibiting companies, and one participating startup presented its technology. The Minister showed strong interest in the startup's innovative solution as well as in the exhibits of the Japanese companies.

Despite the venue change, the JAPAN PAVILION attracted strong interest throughout the exhibition. Many participating companies commented that their booths received more visitors than in the previous year, and exhibitors reported productive discussions with promising distributors in the Middle East and Asia, as well as opportunities to explore collaboration with major companies that would have been difficult to reach through ordinary channels.

49th Edition of Baghdad International Fair



The 49th edition of the Baghdad International Fair was held from February 1 to 7, 2026 at the Baghdad International Fairgrounds under the theme "New Visions for the Future Economy." Organized by the State Company for Iraqi Fairs and Commercial Services under Iraq's Ministry of Trade, this year's event brought together more than 1,050 companies from 36 countries and attracted 150,000 visitors, marking a significant increase from the previous edition.

At the opening ceremony, Iraqi Minister of Trade Atheer ALGhurairi stated that the rise in exhibitor numbers reflected growing interest in establishing a presence in Iraq's large and active consumer market and in building partnerships across various sectors. He also emphasized that Iraq offers promising investment opportunities in trade, industry, and tourism.

This year, the Japan Pavilion, organized by the Embassy of Japan in Iraq, featured 19 Japanese companies and organizations. On February 2, a Japan Day ceremony was held at the venue, during which Chargé d'Affaires ad interim Hiroshi Honjo noted that the participation of Japanese exhibitors was proof that Japan's private sector is ready to contribute to the future of the Iraqi economy.

Within the Japan Pavilion, the JETRO booth showcased product samples and catalogs from 23 Japanese companies seeking to enter the Iraqi market. The booth served as an opportunity to introduce Japanese products and technologies to Iraqi businesspeople, officials, and other visitors attending one of Iraq's leading commercial and investment exhibitions.

The 49th edition also featured Uzbekistan as the guest country, with 160 companies participating, highlighting the fair's growing international presence. JETRO Dubai & MENA remains committed to supporting Japanese companies aiming to expand into the Iraqi market and to contributing to the development of economic relations between Japan and Iraq.

JETRO Boosts Japanese Food Presence in UAE via Japan Mall and Summit Webstore

JETRO carried out its Japan Mall promotional project in the United Arab Emirates in collaboration with 1004 Gourmet, a premium Asian food retailer, and Summit Trading, a Japanese food trading company. Japan Mall is a JETRO initiative implemented with overseas e-commerce buyers in more than 20 countries, and in this case focused on promoting Japanese food products in the UAE market.

Founded in 2008 as a Korean grocery store, 1004 Gourmet has grown into a premium Asian food retailer operating five physical stores and an online platform.

It offers a wide range of products from across Asia, including seasonings, noodles, frozen foods, snacks, and beverages, and supplies more than 500 restaurants, hotels, and other food service businesses in the UAE.

Summit Trading, established in Abu Dhabi in 1977, has expanded its business as a distributor and wholesaler of Japanese food products in the UAE, while also exporting to neighboring Middle Eastern countries and providing corporate catering services.

As part of the project, 1004 Gourmet promoted 136 products from 56 Japanese companies in January 2026 under the campaign "Flavors of JAPAN." The campaign combined the company's website, retail stores, social media, restaurant events, and editorial features. In-store tasting stations and a reel video by a mega influencer, which generated more than 500,000 views, helped introduce Japanese products to a broad audience.

Meanwhile, Summit Trading promoted 18 products from 18 Japanese companies between October 2025 and March 2026 through its website, social media channels, and offline events. These efforts helped raise awareness of Japanese confectionery, sweets, gyoza wrappers, noodles, and other products among a wide range of consumers in the UAE.

JETRO Dubai Strengthens Regional Engagement on IP Protection in Q1 2026

During the first quarter of 2026, JETRO Dubai's Intellectual Property Department carried out a series of visits to key IP-related authorities. These engagements reaffirm JETRO Dubai's continued commitment to strengthening IPR protection and enhancing collaboration with government institutions and enforcement bodies.

In January, the IP Department visited Kuwait, where meetings were held with the Kuwait Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the GCC IP Training Centre. Discussions focused on the country's current IP situation, recent developments, and upcoming initiatives aimed at improving IP administration and enforcement.

The delegation also met with the Kuwait Customs and Dar Almuhamma Law Firm, gaining valuable insights into ongoing enforcement operations and the prevailing counterfeiting situation in the country. These visits provided an understanding of practical challenges and enforcement trends in Kuwait.

In addition, the visit was extended to Qatar, where meetings were conducted with the Qatar Ministry of Commerce and Industry and JAH Law Firm. Similar topics were addressed, including recent IP developments, enforcement mechanisms, and strategies to combat trademark infringement and counterfeit goods.

In February, the IP Department continued its regional engagement with a visit to Egypt. A key meeting was held with the Egypt Intellectual Property Authority (EGIPA), where JETRO Dubai learned more about this newly established authority and explored potential opportunities for future collaboration to strengthen IP protection in the country.

Further discussions were held with Egypt Customs regarding their current enforcement activities, border control measures against counterfeit goods and conducting brand training for their inspectors. The delegation also visited UTPS Cairo, where they gained additional insights into the broader IP challenges within Egypt.

Beyond in-person engagements, IP Department produced a series of Special Reports on "Measures Against Fraudulent or Bad Faith Trademark Filings in Middle East and African Countries." These reports aim to provide practical information on how to address fraudulent or bad faith trademark filings, including the use of opposition and invalidation systems. The reports have been made publicly available on JETRO's official website.

JETRO Dubai's IP Department will continue its efforts to safeguard the intellectual property rights of Japanese brands while further strengthening cooperation with government authorities and enforcement agencies. Through planned IP-related activities and brand training programs throughout 2026, JETRO remains committed to contributing to a more effective and collaborative IP protection environment across the region.