

## Application Guidelines for the “Global Startup Acceleration Program”

### “AI Course”

#### 1. Description

The purpose of the Global Startup Acceleration Program (hereinafter “**Program**”) is to accelerate the globalization of Japanese startups to formulate strategies for overseas expansion (Go-to-Market Strategy), overseas market development, and fundraising from overseas investors.

This “AI Course” aims to support Japanese startups in entering new markets. Participants will receive resources and guidance necessary for market entry, including access to specific markets, building local networks, and understanding regulatory environments. This leads to build a strong global ecosystem in Japan with top-level overseas accelerators, angel networks, venture capitalists, and other startup ecosystem builders (hereinafter “Accelerator(s)”). The goal is to mainly aim customer discovery, POCs/ LOIs, and fundraising.

The Japan External Trade Organization (hereinafter “**JETRO**”) will sponsor 12 weeks of the Main Program to be provided by Accelerators.

#### 2. Program outline

JETRO will provide 12 weeks of acceleration program up to 20 startups in cooperation with the Accelerator partner(s). The program structure and schedule may be flexibly adjusted based on the wishes of the Accelerator(s).

Main Program: 12 weeks

Immersion Program: 5-10 business days (1-2 free days\* may be included)

Including...

- 1-2 days Demo Day
- Orientation/Bootcamp: Prior to the main program, interviews will be conducted with each company to ensure content is relevant and immediately applicable.

Accelerator and three key mentors will visit Japan for 2-5 days to match with startups and initiate the main program.

- Presentation Support

\* Note on Free Days:\* "Free days" are not designated leisure days but are intended as flexible time to encourage participating startups to pursue their business developments.

### **3. Location**

The Japan bootcamp and US immersion program will be mainly held in-person. In between the bootcamp and the immersion program, mentoring and sessions will be held online. In-person program is expected to be in the location the applicant proposes after discussing with JETRO. Provide necessary support and business arrangements in-person when Japanese startups physically come to the Bay Area or the location the applicant proposes. Whenever possible, the content of the program should be provided to online participants. In case of online participation, the schedule will consider the time difference with Japan. The workspace for the participants will be secured so that they can continue their business operations effectively during the period.

### **4. Language**

English.

### **5. Participants**

JETRO will make an open call for this program and will accept applications from startup companies. Accelerator(s) will be involved in selecting suitable startups to participate in the program together with JETRO. During the selection process, time for interviews with applicants (optional) will be scheduled. Accelerator will be required to customize the Program based on the qualified startups' products, services, and needs. The eligible companies will be Pre-Seed to Series B\*.

\*Note: Pre-Seed to Series B is based on funding received in Japan by mostly Japanese investors. As such, these rounds tend to be much less than Silicon Valley startups.

## 6. Budget

**Maximum US\$984,195**

Please specify the pricing for each program in the proposal.

① Bootcamp 2-5 days in Japan (2-3 mentors will be expected) US\$---

② Main Program Minimum 10 startups US\$---

\*Plus US\$--- per each additional startup, up to 20 startups in total.

③ 5-10 day immersion in Bay Area or the location the applicant proposes US\$---  
(minimum 10 startups, up to 20 startups)

④ Osaka Global Startup Expo (GSE) Expert Panel (3 nights and 3 panelists) US\$----

## 7. Program Contents

Program should include the following contents:

- Seminar and interactive group coaching sessions  
1-2 seminars or interactive group coaching sessions should be included each week at the Acceleration phase. The session length is about 60 to 120 minutes including discussions.
- One-to-one mentoring session  
One-to-one mentoring sessions (45-60 minutes) with industry experts should be provided to each startup individually, at least once a week (at least 12 times). More mentoring should be provided to startups who request it or seemingly need it.  
It is preferred that each startup is assigned one key mentor who is knowledgeable in their respective fields. It would be beneficial if mentors could focus on business strategies for overseas expansion, providing necessary advisory for in-person programs and business arrangements.

\* i and ii may cover the following items:

Assessment & Business Model refinement, Value Proposition refinement, Customer Discovery & Development, Building Go-To-Market Strategy, Business Development & Pipeline Development, Enterprise Tech Growth Strategy.

- Business meetings/VC speed dating  
Meetings which provide access to potential investors and partners. Arranging business meetings with potential investors including angel investors, venture capitalists, corporate venture capitalists and/or potential partners/clients such as Fortune 500 companies. At least 3 valuable introductions per startup should be delivered during the program depending on their readiness. The proposal should include specific methods on how such business arrangements will be conducted. All startups have ongoing discussions with potential clients after the end of the program.

Towards the end of the program, it is desirable to encourage and support participants for on-site conferences, events, and key meetings based on the startup's needs, with a target of average 10 key appointments per startup. This should maximize their engagement with potential partners and stakeholders.

- Demo Day  
An online / hybrid Demo Day at the final stage of the acceleration program. Accelerator will include the information below in the proposal:
  - Expected Number of participants
  - Invited VIP including top-tier VCs, key opinion leaders, influencers, media
  - Private (invitation only) or public
  - With judges or without judges
  - Pre-recorded or Live
  - Online or hybrid (online/offline)

All startup pitches should be recorded and archived with their pitch deck after the event. The archived link should be distributed to Accelerator's investor network after the event if the startups opt in to share their pitch videos.

- PR & Marketing

Building a PR brand for the program and participating companies and developing communications that resonate across investors, potential customers and business partners. (Ex. Perfecting pitch deck, marketing materials for global audiences, advertising materials). Materials to be distributed to Accelerator(s) networks via newsletter, social media, etc.

- Osaka Global Startup Expo (GSE) Expert Panel Invitation Element

At the request and discretion of JETRO, the Contractor shall support the planning, coordination, and on-site execution of a session at the Global Startup Ecosystem (GSE), a global deep-tech conference to be held in early October 2026 in Osaka, Japan.

The session is expected to take the form of a panel discussion consisting of a total of four participants: one JETRO representative serving as moderator, two global investors, and one representative of the Contractor. Thus, the Contractor will arrange up to three (3) panelists (two investors and one Contractor representative). However, the composition and number of participants may be subject to change.

The scope of work may include, but is not limited to, program design, speaker selection and invitation, and travel and logistical arrangements related to the participation of overseas speakers. Travel and accommodations will be included for three (3) panelists for three (3) days and four (4) nights.

The invited investors are expected to be top-tier global venture capital investors who meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Have the capability or track record to invest in Japanese startups;

- Have an interest in establishing a Japan-focused fund; or
- Are affiliated with a Tier 1 venture capital firm outside Japan.

In all cases, it is preferable that the investors be at the partner or general partner level with investment decision making power, not only in operations. Potential candidates should be proposed to JETRO before confirming.

#### **8. Conditions for the Contractor(s) engaged in the project**

- a.** Has an established organizational structure and capabilities to manage and complete the project properly. Has a global network, and knowledge necessary for the implementation of the project.
- b.** Can promptly share any changes or updates that might impact the arrangement process.
- c.** Will conduct regular internal meetings with JETRO to report on the business progress of each participating company.
- d.** Has broad and effective experience of implementation of acceleration programs in the world. Has experience of building up unicorns in the past five years(desirable).
- e.** Has investment arms and has close connections with world top tier VCs.
- f.** Can adhere to JETRO's requests, as well as report to, communicate with, and consult with JETRO in an adequate manner. Can present efficient data for the program evaluation.
- g.** Has knowledge and systems/tools for handling confidential and/or personal information accordingly.
- h.** Can comply with applicable laws and regulations, especially the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and state unfair competition laws.
- i.** Is willing to invest in Japan and establish an entity in Japan(desirable). \* Contact JETRO SF, if considering investing in Japan, forming a fund, or partnering with a Japanese company. JETRO is considering Equity Model acceleration programs.

## **9. Term of contract**

The term of the contract is from the contract start date through March 19, 2027. The Accelerator(s) is required to regularly report on each company's business progress to JETRO. JETRO demands the submission of two official reports aimed at facilitating payments—one interim and one final. These reports must include detailed descriptions of the program structure, evaluations, delivery specifics, achievements and feedback from the participating companies, the impact of Demo Day, and promotional activities. The format will be provided by JETRO.

## **10. Payment**

In compensation for the services to be provided by Accelerator(s) to JETRO, JETRO shall pay a total amount to Accelerator(s) in two payments.

The first half payment will be made by JETRO to Accelerator(s) upon execution of this agreement. This will be half the amount of the maximum possible value of the contract.

The second half payment will be made by JETRO to Accelerator(s) upon the completion of program and receipt of final report and invoice from Accelerator(s), and will be the actual value minus the first amount JETRO paid to Accelerator(s). Payment will be made by wire transfer to Accelerator(s) bank account designated by Accelerator(s) in writing.

Necessary adjustments will be made according to the number of participants.

**<For reference>**

## **About the Cabinet Office, Government of Japan**

The Cabinet Office is enhancing Japan's Innovation and formulated "Beyond Limits. Unlock Our Potential. -Strategies for creation of startup ecosystem to compete with the world top ecosystems-" (<https://www8.cao.go.jp/cstp/openinnovation/ecosystem/>).

In line with this strategy, the Cabinet Office has selected 13 areas (Hokkaido, Tohoku

region, Tokyo region, Nagoya region, Kansai region, Hiroshima, Fukuoka, Hokuriku region, Nagano/Niigata, Setouchi region, Kumamoto, and Okinawa) as Startup Cities and is providing startup support programs vigorously.

### **About JETRO**

JETRO is a government organization that works to promote mutual trade and investment between Japan and the rest of the world. Originally established in 1958 to promote Japanese exports abroad, JETRO's core focus in the 21st century has shifted toward promoting foreign direct investment into Japan and helping Japanese startups and scaleups maximize their global potential.