

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

### **Sustainability**

#### **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 “Sustainability” 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 provided by Accelerators.

#### **2. Program outline**

JETRO will provide 14 weeks (up to 24 weeks total) of acceleration program to 15 startups in cooperation with the Accelerator partner(s). The program structure and schedule may be flexibly adjusted based on discussion with Accelerator and JETRO, depending on the possibilities and desires of the participating companies.

##### **a. Period**

Main Program: 14 weeks (+10 weeks follow-up)

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

Including...

- Demo Day: 1-2 days

- Orientation/Bootcamp: 3-5 days with proposes for a full arrangement to visit Japan is welcomed. 2-3 mentors will be expected.

\* 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.

**b. 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.

**c. Language**

English.

**d. 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. The participants' verticals are primarily decided before the applications, discussed formally with JETRO. 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.

**e. Budget**

Maximum US\$ 1,284,595

Please specify the pricing for each program in the proposal.

①Phase1: Startup Sourcing & Selection:

②Bootcamp in Japan (on boarding, maximum 15 startups):

③Phase 2 (Group Coaching sessions and mentoring) minimum 10 startups US\$---

\*Plus, US\$--- per each additional startup, up to 15 startups in total.

④5-10 day in-person immersion program in the Bay Area or the location the applicant proposes (up to 15 startups)

⑤Phase 3 Group Coaching sessions and mentoring) minimum 10 startups US\$---

\*Plus, US\$--- per each additional startup, up to 15 startups in total.

Osaka Global Startup Expo (GSE) Expert Panel Invitation Element (3nights and 3people) US\$---

Please specify the pricing for each program in the proposal.

**3. Program Contents**

Program should include the following contents:

Phase1: Startup Sourcing & Selection

Screening of application and evaluation of participants. JETRO may collaborate with Contractor for this process.

Phase 2: Acceleration

Bootcamp in Japan (on boarding)

3 to 5 day with 3 to 5 mentors, experts

Seminar and interactive group coaching sessions (14 weeks)

1-2 seminars or interactive group coaching sessions should be included each week. The session length is about 60 to 120 minutes including discussions.

One-to-one mentoring session (14 weeks)

One-to-one mentoring sessions (45min to 1-hour) should be provided to each startup individually, at least once a week. 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 and business needs to provide necessary advisory and report each track to the Accelerator.

\*Above may cover the following items:

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

#### Immersion week in the US

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

\* 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.

#### **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. 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/Showcase**

An in-person / hybrid Demo Day or pitch event at the final stage of the acceleration program. Contractor will arrange venue, invites, event page, and other logistics.

### Phase 3: Follow-up

#### **Seminar and interactive group coaching sessions (10 weeks)**

1-2 seminars or interactive group coaching sessions should be included each week. The session length is about 60 to 120 minutes including discussions.

#### **One-to-one mentoring session (10 weeks)**

One-to-one mentoring sessions (45min to 1-hour) should be provided to each startup individually, at least once a week. 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 and business needs to provide necessary advisory and report each track to the Accelerator.

### **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.

### **3. 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.

### **4. 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.

## 5. **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.