

## Application Guidelines

### **“Seed Startups Global Growth in Silicon Valley Program”**

#### **1. Description**

The purpose of the Seed Startups Global Growth in Silicon Valley Program (hereinafter **“Program”**) is to accelerate the globalization of Japanese startups and entrepreneurs to formulate strategies for overseas expansion (Go-to-Market Strategy), overseas market development, and fundraising from overseas investors.

This “Seed Startups Global Growth in Silicon Valley Program” is designed to provide startups and entrepreneurs with insights and analysis to assess potential market opportunities and reduce risks before business expansion. Participants will be supported in strategic decision-making through market research, competitive analysis, and customer needs assessment. In the end of the program, participants can demonstrate PMF, obtain repeatable partnership, and customer development. This consequently 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 for POCs/ LOIs, and commercial traction.

The Japan External Trade Organization (hereinafter **“JETRO”**) will sponsor 9 weeks (+ optional 8 weeks) of the program to be provided by Accelerator.

## **2. Program Outline**

JETRO will provide a minimum of 9 weeks of acceleration program for up to 12 startups and entrepreneurs in cooperation with the Accelerator partner(s). The program structure and schedule may be flexibly adjusted based on the adjustment between JETRO and the Accelerator(s).

Main Program: 9 weeks

Phase 1: Mindset Development: 2 weeks

Phase 2: Preparation: 3 weeks

Phase 3: On-Site Immersion 4 weeks

Phase 4: Follow-up: mainly online for about 2 weeks

(Optional) Additional Expansion: up to 8 weeks

**a. Location**

**Phase 1:** Mainly in-person. 2-week in-person program in Tokyo. The schedule will be determined by the adjustment between JETRO and the Accelerator.

**Phase 2:** Online and/or in-person. 3-week program in Tokyo. The schedule will be determined by the adjustment between JETRO and the Accelerator.

**Phase 3:** Mainly in-person. 4-week in-person program in Silicon Valley. The program will be delivered at the venue expected to be in the Bay Area or the location the applicant proposes. The schedule will be determined by the adjustment between JETRO and the Accelerator.

**Demo Day:** The Demo Day will be held at the venue expected to be in the Bay Area or the location the applicant proposes. The schedule will be soon after Phase 3.

**Phase 4:** Follow-up mainly online for about 2-weeks. The schedule will be determined by the adjustment between JETRO and the Accelerator. The contents may include seminars, mentoring, and facilitating connections.

**(Optional):** Up to a total of 8 weeks of mentoring program in Silicon Valley. The program will be delivered at the place expected to be in the Bay Area or the location the applicant proposes or online. The startups eligible for the optional mentoring service and its duration will be determined in discussion with JETRO and the Accelerator.

**b. Language**

English

**c. Participants**

JETRO will make an open call for this program and will accept applications from startup companies. The Accelerator(s) will be involved in selecting suitable startups to participate in the program together with JETRO. The participating startups should be sector agnostic. The 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 A\*, also ready to invest at least 50% of 1 executive's time for duration of program

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

**d. Budget**

Maximum US\$2,344,195

Please specify the pricing for each program in the proposal.

①Phase 1 (up to 30 startups) US\$---

\*5-7 mentors are expected to participate.

②Phase 2 (minimum 8 startups) US\$---

\*Plus, US\$--- per each additional startup, up to 30 startups in total.

③Phase 3 (minimum 8 startups) US\$---

\*Plus, US\$--- per each additional startup, up to 12 startups in total.

④ Phase 4 (minimum 8 startups) US\$---

\*Plus, US\$--- per each additional startup, up to 12 startups in total.

⑤ Additional Expansion (Each startup per week US\$---, Total up to 8 weeks)

\*Up to 3 startups

\*Participating startups will have the option to continue their activities while receiving mentoring from the Accelerator in Silicon Valley, after returning to Japan for Phase 4. The startups to be granted this option will be decided upon discussions between JETRO and the Accelerator. Please specify the cost per week. Note that the option may not be granted to all participating startups.

⑥ Osaka Global Startup Expo (GSE) Expert Panel (3 nights and 3 panelists)

US\$----

### 3. Program Contents

The program should include the following contents:

i. Seminar and interactive group coaching sessions

About 2 seminars or interactive group coaching sessions should be included each week. Assignments will be assigned to startups for advanced efforts. The session length is about 120 minutes including discussions.

ii. One-on-one mentoring session

Weekly one-on-one mentoring sessions with industry experts should be provided to each startup individually. Additional mentoring should be provided to startups who request it or seemingly need it.

It is preferred that each startup is assigned a mentor who is knowledgeable in their respective fields. It would be beneficial if the mentors could focus on business strategies for overseas expansion, providing necessary advisory for in-person programs and business arrangements.

\* and 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.

iii. Business meetings / VC Introductions

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 3~5 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 should have ongoing discussions with potential clients after the end of the program.

iv. Tactical Market Validation Efforts

Tactical support that is designed to enhance the operational efficiency of startups across various industries by engaging local professional support. These professionals provide strategic assistance with tasks such as building contact databases, developing ideal project profiles, optimizing online profiles, setting up management systems, editing promotional materials, and preparing for major industry events. Startups will access this support 1-2 hours weekly, accumulating up to 48 hours. The program includes monthly reports tracking the completion and impact of the support provided, ensuring tailored and effective assistance.

v. Demo Day

Demo Day at the final stage of the acceleration program. The 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
- Hybrid (online/offline)

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

vi. In-person Program

The in-person program structured to encompass introductions and pitching, workshops on networking and market validation tactics, interactive discussions with VCs, and a session highlighting direct feedback sessions, refine their pitches, and prepare for a final showcase with enterprise buyers.

vii. 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 should be distributed to the Accelerator's networks via newsletter, social media, etc.

\*For items i, iii, iv, and vi, it is required that they are implemented for at least 10 hours per week during the Phase 1 to Phase 3 period. However, it is not necessary to carry out all the contents of i, iii, iv, and vi within those 10 hours.

viii. Follow-up Program

The Accelerator's mentors will set up a follow-up meeting with the participating startups prior to returning from the program in Silicon Valley, to provide feedback on their progress, check in on their follow-up status

with stakeholders that the startups have connected with, and to offer advice on next steps.

ix. (Optional) Additional support

Startups granted the option during the Follow-up Program can continue their activities in Silicon Valley, while receiving at least one mentoring session per week, and when necessary, they can also gain opportunities to connect with investors. The details of the optional support are determined through meetings with JETRO, the Accelerator, and the startups that have been granted the option.

x. **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.

#### **4. 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.

## **5. Term of contract**

The term of the contract is from the contract start date through March 19, 2027.

## **6. 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 and in-person program in Bay Area.

### **<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