

<b>Accelerator program for Central Japan Startup Ecosystem</b>	
1. Background	<p>Based on the central government's Startup Ecosystem Strategy, a selection committee consisting of the Cabinet Office, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, and other ministries selected core cities (July 2020). Aichi Prefecture, Nagoya City and Hamamatsu City were selected as "Central Japan Startup Ecosystem" (hereinafter referred to as Central Japan) as one of the four global hub cities. Gifu, Mie, and Shizuoka were also added in 2025.</p> <p>STATION Ai, the largest incubation facility in Japan opened in 2024. JETRO Nagoya aims to accelerate the growth of the startup ecosystem in Central Japan by fostering a global business mindset among local startups. The program focuses on targeted business matching and customer discovery in the U.S. Midwest, leveraging IMTS2026 (International Manufacturing Technology Show), curated visits, and mentor guided outreach to secure qualified meetings and move them toward pilot projects and Proof of Concept (PoC) phase.</p>
2. Project Overview	<p>Participants: Four (4) Japanese Startups based in the Central Japan region (Aichi, Shizuoka, Gifu, and Mie Prefectures)</p> <p>Area of Startups: All manufacturing-related startups, including Mobility, Robotics, Industrial AI, and adjacent technologies</p> <p>Stage of Startups: Seed - Series A*</p> <p>Duration: approximately July to September</p> <p>Location: Japan, Virtual, U.S. Midwest</p> <p>*Note: Seed to Series A is based on funding received in Japan by mostly Japanese investors. As such, these funding rounds tend to be smaller in scale than those of the U.S. startups.</p>
3. Deliverables	<p>1. Domestic Bootcamp, Virtual Workshops, and 1 on 1 Coaching Sessions</p> <p>Program Structure:</p> <p>A domestic bootcamp of up to three (3) days will be held in Nagoya City, during which group sessions and 1 on 1 sessions will be conducted. This will be followed by a series of preparatory virtual workshop sessions and online 1 on 1 sessions conducted prior to the in-person Midwest program.</p> <p>These sessions may cover the following items:</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● U.S. Go-to-Market (GTM) strategy tailored to the Midwest manufacturing landscape</li><li>● Effective Storytelling for U.S. corporate executives and investors</li><li>● Founder readiness and cross-cultural business negotiation tactics</li><li>● Goal setting for the U.S. program</li><li>● Strategic outreach and lead generation methods for connecting with key decision-makers via optimized communication channels (email, LinkedIn, etc.) aligned with Midwest business practices</li><li>● Audit and support for pitch decks, one-pagers, and English online presence</li><li>● Strategic Targeting and Outreach for U.S. Manufacturing (IMTS2026+Midwest)</li></ul> <p>2. In-person assistance: Company Visits and Networking in the Midwest</p> <p>The In-person program shall be conducted for approximately one (1) week in the U.S. Midwest, centered around IMTS2026.</p> <p>Aims to generate tangible business opportunities and accelerate market entry through direct industry engagement, customer discovery, and strategic matching with potential partners. The program will focus on high-touch business development activities, including strategic participation in IMTS2026, targeted company visits, facility tours, and curated interactions with decision-makers. All activities must be tailored to align with each startup's specific technology area and commercial objectives to facilitate local partnerships and pilot project opportunities.</p> <p>Example Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Networking opportunities for connections to potential U.S. partners, subject matter experts and investors.</li><li>● 1 on 1 Mentoring from industry experts, as well as practical assistance for conducting business in English.</li><li>● 1 on 1 intensive matching with industry veterans.</li><li>● Visits to companies, research centers, manufacturing facilities, or innovation hubs relevant to each startup's sector with efforts made to maximize the number of meaningful on-site engagements.</li><li>● On-site pitching and feedback sessions with corporate innovation teams and subject matter experts to validate localized product-market fit (PMF) and refine value propositions.</li></ul>
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3. One (1) online / hybrid Demo Day, One (1) Online follow-up workshop and One (1) 1 on 1 session, and Office Hours with the Program Staff

- Following up with prospective clients and partners post events
- Determining next steps for U.S. expansion
- 1 on 1 follow-up mentoring sessions after the on-site visit
- Year-round office hours are provided by program staff for monthly 1 on 1 meetings with Program Managers.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

The Accelerator(s) shall be responsible for delivering the following Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for each participating startup, taking into account the startup's business domain and the feasibility of local engagement.

• 1 on 1 Mentoring Sessions:

The Accelerator(s) shall provide structured 1 on 1 mentoring sessions for each participating startup as follows:

- One (1) 1 on 1 session during the domestic bootcamp
- One (1) online 1 on 1 session per week during the preparatory phase, for up to four (4) weeks
- Two (2) 1 on 1 sessions during the In-person program
- One (1) 1 on 1 session after the U.S. Midwest visit

Accordingly, each startup shall receive up to eight (8) 1-on-1 mentoring sessions in total, subject to schedule coordination and feasibility.

• Business Matching (Appointment setting with promising potential customers and Midwest-based investors, both during and outside of IMTS2026):

A minimum of five (5) appointments per startup.

Priority shall be given to arranging meetings with potential business partners rather than venture capital investors, depending on each startup's needs.

• Company and/or Facility Visits:

	<p>A minimum of four (4) company and/or facility visits per startup (duplicates allowed).</p> <p>The number and type of visits may vary depending on the specific needs and business objectives of each participating startup.</p> <p>All meetings and visits shall be structured engagements with relevant decision-makers and shall be aligned with each startup's business objectives.</p> <p>· Monitoring and Progress Visualization: The Accelerator(s) shall manage and visualize the progress of the above KPIs and the overall acceleration goals of each startup through an online dashboard, such as SmartSheet or an equivalent tool, in a manner that allows JETRO to monitor the status on an ongoing basis.</p>
4.Compensation	<p>The total contract amount shall not exceed USD 200,000 in total, with a maximum of USD 50,000 per startup.</p> <p><b>Please include the following for the budget calculation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. Pre-program<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Application review of up to twenty (20) applications &amp; Startup Interviews</li><li>● Promotional materials</li><li>● Startup onboarding</li></ul></li><li>b. Bootcamp<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Maximum three (3)-day Bootcamp in Nagoya, Japan</li><li>● Group sessions and structured 1 on 1 mentoring sessions conducted during the bootcamp</li></ul></li><li>c. Online Components<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Virtual Workshops – Up to four (4) weeks</li><li>● 1 on 1 Sessions - held at least once per week</li></ul></li><li>d. In-person Components<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Support for developing global business mindset through lectures</li><li>● 1 on 1 mentoring sessions from industry experts, as well as practical assistance for conducting business in English.</li><li>● IMTS2026 centered business matching and company visit support, including targeted outreach, meeting coordination, and curated visits</li></ul></li></ul>

	<p>to relevant companies, research centers, and manufacturing facilities in the U.S. Midwest.</p> <p>e. Post Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Follow-up workshop and 1 on 1 sessions</li><li>● Demo Day</li><li>● Program Final Report</li><li>● Post Program Office Hours</li></ul> <p>NOTE: JETRO shall not be liable for any cancellation fee due to any incidents in Japan or the Operator's convenience.</p> <p><b>Payment Terms</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a. First payment (50%)</li><li>b. Second payment (50%)</li><li>c. All payments to be made in USD via JETRO Chicago</li></ul>
5.Contract Period	From the date of contract execution to February 28, 2027

JETRO Chicago

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