

J-StarX Dual-Use Market Entry Program

1. PURPOSE

JETRO is seeking proposals from qualified organizations ("Accelerator") to design, plan, and execute the **J-StarX Dual-Use Market Entry Program**, a program supporting Japanese startups with dual-use technology potential in entering the United States defense market.

The program is intended primarily for companies that possess commercially developed technologies with potential defense applications, but have limited experience working with defense customers or navigating the U.S. defense ecosystem.

The program shall help participating companies understand how their technologies can create value within the U.S. Department of Defense and broader national security ecosystem, and develop a realistic pathway toward customer engagement and market entry.

2. PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The selected Accelerator shall provide a program that enables participating startups to:

A. Understand the U.S. Defense Market

- Provide participating companies with an understanding of how technologies are adopted within the U.S. defense ecosystem.
- Equip companies with the knowledge and documentations/registrations necessary to engage with U.S. government procurement processes.

B. Develop Defense Go-to-Market Strategies

- Support each company in developing a clear, realistic, and actionable go-to-market strategy for the U.S. defense market.

C. Validate Customer Fit

- Help companies identify and validate defense use cases, operational needs, and potential customers through customer discovery with relevant stakeholders whenever possible.

D. Build Meaningful Relationships

- Facilitate targeted engagement with potential end users, relevant government organizations, and active or retired military personnel, based on each company's technology and target market.

E. Enable Long-Term Defense Market Entry

- Prepare companies for sustained engagement with the U.S. defense market by establishing a foundation for long-term business development, partnerships, and future contracting opportunities.
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3. TARGET PARTICIPANT PROFILE AND NUMBERS

Proposals must outline a plan for recruiting and selecting Japanese startup companies located in Japan.

- Companies should represent all sectors with dual-use technology potential.
 - Participants should typically be early to middle-stage (Pre-Seed to Series A).
 - Companies must be actively considering or planning overseas business expansion.
 - Participants must demonstrate English proficiency sufficient for program participation and final presentations.
 - The program should support up to 20 companies in Phase 1, of which approximately 5-10 companies will be selected to advance to Phase 2 and the U.S. Immersion Program.
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4. PROGRAM STRUCTURE AND DURATION

The program is expected to follow a multi-phase acceleration process, potentially structured as follows. The program structure and schedule may be flexibly adjusted based on the wishes of the Accelerator and JETRO.

Recruitment and Selection

Approximately 4 weeks (e.g., October 2026)

The Accelerator shall support JETRO in recruiting and selecting Japanese startups with dual-use potential and an interest in entering the U.S. defense market. This phase should include outreach, application management, document review, screening, and evaluation of applicants based on their technology, potential defense applications, U.S. market readiness, team commitment, and expected benefit from the program. Up to 20 companies will be selected to participate in the Phase 1 program.

Phase1: Online Program for Phase 1 Companies

Approximately 4–6 weeks (e.g., November–December 2026), up to 20 companies

Selected Phase 1 companies shall participate in a weekly online program covering the fundamentals of the U.S. defense market, defense customer discovery, government procurement and acquisition pathways, development of defense use cases, and initial go-to-

market planning. The program should combine group sessions with mentoring and practical assignments to help companies apply the content to their own technologies and begin identifying potential users, use cases, and relevant organizations.

Phase1: Japan Bootcamp and Phase 2 Selection

Approximately 1 week (e.g., December 2026), up to 20 companies

The Accelerator shall conduct an intensive in-person bootcamp in Japan for Phase 1 companies. The bootcamp should provide practical workshops and mentoring to further develop each company's defense use cases, customer hypotheses, go-to-market strategy, government-facing materials, and readiness for the U.S. defense market. The bootcamp shall also include company pitches and evaluations to select approximately 5–10 companies to advance to Phase 2 of the program. Selection should consider not only technology and market potential, but also commitment, coachability, progress during Phase 1, and the Accelerator's ability to provide meaningful support and relevant connections to the company.

Phase2: Company-Specific Online Preparation for Phase 2 Companies

Beginning December 2026, approximately 6 weeks, 5–10 companies

Following Phase 2 selection, support shall shift from primarily cohort-based programming to individualized preparation for each company. The Accelerator shall work closely with each company to refine its U.S. defense go-to-market strategy, identify and validate potential defense use cases, map relevant end users and organizations, and prepare for targeted stakeholder engagement. Company-specific mentoring and relevant subject-matter experts should be provided based on each company's technology and target market. Pitch and communication preparation should be substantially completed during this phase so that the U.S. on-site program can focus primarily on customer and stakeholder engagement.

Phase3: U.S. Immersion Program

Approximately 1 week between January and March 2027, 5–10 companies

The Accelerator shall conduct an intensive one-week on-site program in the United States. The program should focus primarily on direct engagement with stakeholders relevant to each company's identified use cases and go-to-market strategy, including potential end users, relevant government and defense organizations, active or retired military personnel, defense industry partners, and other relevant stakeholders. Activities may include curated business meetings, customer discovery, site visits, demonstrations, networking opportunities, and participation in relevant industry or defense events. General lectures and extensive pitch practice should be minimized during the on-site phase.

Phase4: Follow-up Mentoring

March 2027 onwards

Following the U.S. immersion program, the Accelerator shall provide follow-up mentoring to help participating companies maintain and advance relationships and opportunities developed during the program. Support should include follow-up with potential customers and partners, further refinement of market-entry strategies, identification of relevant procurement or funding opportunities, and assistance toward pilots, partnerships, proposals, contracts, or other concrete U.S. defense market-entry outcomes.

5. PARTICIPANT SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals must describe the methodology and criteria the implementing organization will use to select participant companies. The selection process should evaluate candidates based on factors including:

1. **Technical Excellence:** Assessment of the superiority and technical capabilities relevant to business development.

2. **Market Potential:** Evaluation of feasibility, continuity, and future potential in both Japanese and international markets.

3. **Team Readiness:** Assessment of the applicant team's drive, capacity for success, and language capabilities.

4. **Dual-Use Applications:** Clear demonstration of potential for applications in both commercial and defense sectors.

6. PROGRAM CURRICULUM AND ACTIVITIES

The program curriculum must provide comprehensive support tailored to dual-use global expansion. Core learning modules should cover:

- Dual-Use Technology Fundamentals (concepts, U.S. procurement landscape, TRL, IP).
- Market Entry Strategies (U.S. defense market, government customer strategies, competitive analysis, partnerships).
- Government Contracting (OTA, SBIR, compliance, security clearances, export control).

- Business Development (customer discovery, pitching to government, fundraising, partnerships).

Practical applications and activities must include:

- Development of standardized documentation for U.S. government processes (e.g., Penta-Charts, Quad-Charts, Capabilities Statements).
- Multiple live pitch practice sessions.
- Structured networking opportunities with U.S. Department of Defense personnel, defense contractors, the investment community, academic institutions, and regional business leaders.
- Participation in a significant conference with pitch presentations.

7. MENTOR STRUCTURE

Every company for Phase 2 shall receive a dedicated Lead Mentor.

The Lead Mentor shall:

- understand the company's technology
- support weekly progress
- review assignments
- coordinate SME support
- develop introductions
- advise on market strategy
- monitor progress

Additional Subject Matter Experts should be engaged based on the company's technology area. SME sessions should be organized by technology sector rather than requiring attendance by the full cohort.

8. REQUIRED DELIVERABLES

For every participating company for Phase 2, the Accelerator shall deliver:

Defense Go-to-Market Strategy

Including:

- target customer
- target mission
- acquisition pathway

Customer Identification Report

Including:

- end users
- Program Offices
- acquisition organizations
- government laboratories
- defense primes
- strategic partners

Government Engagement Materials

Including:

- Penta Chart
- Quad Chart
- Capability Statement
- defense-oriented pitch deck

Introduction Report

Documenting:

- organizations introduced
- meetings conducted
- follow-up actions
- next steps

9. PROGRAM SUCCESS METRICS

The Accelerator should propose KPIs focused on outcomes rather than activity volume.

Examples include:

- Customer interviews completed
- Qualified stakeholder introductions
- Defense customer meetings
- Program Office engagements
- Follow-on discussions
- Pilot opportunities
- Teaming agreements
- SBIR/OTA opportunities identified
- Proposal submissions
- Partnerships established

- Investment discussions
- U.S. market entry milestones

Program Schedule

The contractor will propose a tentative schedule for the above services. Upon contract execution, the contractor will work with JETRO to finalize the schedule leading up to the program start.

Language

All services will be conducted in English.

Budget

Maximum: USD 733,700

Applicants must provide a detailed cost breakdown in the attachment 3 Price List.

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 programs in the world.
- (e.) 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.
- (f.) Has knowledge and system/tools for handling confidential and/or personal information accordingly.
- (g.) Can comply with applicable laws and regulations, especially the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act and state unfair competition laws.

Term of Contract

The term of contract is from the contract start date through March 31, 2027.

Payment

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

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

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

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

<For reference>

About JETRO

JETRO is a government organization that works to promote mutual trade and investment between Japanese 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 towards promoting foreign direct investment into Japan and helping Japanese startups and scaleups to maximize their global potential.