

# Global Startup Campus Initiative Pilot Activities

## Program on Overseas Researcher Networking for Innovation Ecosystem (GP-ONE)

### 2025 Open Call Application Guideline

#### Application Period:

Tuesday, July 15, 2025 – Friday, August 22, 2025, 14:00 (Japan Standard Time)

The Cabinet Office, Science and Technology Innovation Promotion Secretariat

and

The Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST)

(Department of Pilot Research Promotion at Global Startup Campus Initiative)

# **Chapter1 Overview of the program**

## **1.1 On the Pilot Activities of the Global Startup Campus Initiative**

The mission of the Global Startup Campus (GSC) Initiative is to transform Japan's overall innovation ecosystem and build a global hub of world-class innovation ecosystems through collaboration with outstanding researchers, startups, forward-thinking venture capital firms (VCs), accelerators, and companies from both Japan and abroad. To attract top global talent and investment from around the world, the initiative will implement the following three pilot activities in an integrated manner in partnership with overseas institutions: (1) International Research Program to attract researchers and investors, (2) Venture Builder Program, (3) Talent Development (Fellowship) Program. These programs aim to develop and refine the initiative toward the realization of the overall vision, while building partnerships with stakeholders.

These pilot activities will be implemented while pursuing flexible and continuous improvement by leveraging domestic and international external experts with proven track records in deep tech research and venture building support. This includes the integration of mechanisms that gather and foster groundbreaking ideas from innovative young individuals. The Cabinet Office (CAO) and JST (Japan Science and Technology Agency) will promote the initiative based on the "Implementation Policy for Pilot Activities of the Global Startup Campus Initiative" and its "Detailed Implementation Guidelines," both issued on June 10, 2025. This initiative falls under the competitive research funding system.

## **1.2 Purpose and Goals of the Talent Development (Fellowship) Program for Inbound Host Institutions**

Among the pilot activities, the (3)Talent Development (Fellowship) Program is designed to foster innovation ecosystems by nurturing young researchers with strong entrepreneurial mindset and attracting researchers with a high motivation to engage in Japan's innovation ecosystem. The goal is to foster talent that will contribute to the formation of a robust innovation ecosystem.

GP-ONE(hereinafter referred to as "the Program") is now calling for domestic institutions (universities, research institutes, companies, etc.) to establish environments to host researchers affiliated with

overseas institutions, to establish environments for the startup generation and to invite foreign researchers.

This open call seeks domestic institutions that will conduct the following:

- Development of hosting environments for foreign researchers (e.g., providing research and living environments in English)
- Establishment of an environment for the creation of startups (e.g., entrepreneurial training, business development support, strengthening domestic and international networks)
- Securing research positions tailored to researchers' career stages and facilitating their acceptance
- Advanced research and development conducted by invited foreign researchers

Even during or after the support, host institutions are expected to continue accepting foreign researchers through the Partner Entity and participate in other pilot activities of the GSC Initiative.

## **Chapter 2. Call for Applications and Selection Process**

### **2.1 Eligible Applicants**

This program targets the following research fields and eligible applicant institutions:

- Research Fields

Deep tech domains such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Robotics, Biotechnology, and Climate Tech

- Eligible Applicant Institutions
  1. Universities, inter-university research institutes, and technical colleges
  2. National and public research institutions, public testing and research facilities, and incorporated administrative agencies

3. Public interest corporations and other entities recognized by JST<sup>1</sup>
4. Companies (including startups) that meet specified criteria <sup>2</sup>

Applications must be submitted via the unified government research and development management system (e-Rad) on an institutional basis. Even if the organization wishing to host the researchers is a laboratory or research unit, proposals can be submitted through their affiliated institutions.

## **2.2 Process from Application to Funding Support Initiation**

The support process under this open call will proceed as follows:

- (1) Selection of host institutions
- (2) Signing of a research agreement between JST and the host institution for development of environments (e.g., hosting foreign researchers, startup ecosystem development).
- (3) Implementation of environmental development and coordination for accepting foreign researchers.
- (4) Upon confirmation of foreign researcher acceptance, an amendment to the research agreement will be signed to provide additional funding for the costs related to the invitation of the researcher.
- (5) If the host institution additionally accepts a foreign researcher selected by the partner entity, the expenses related to inviting that researcher will be provided separately.

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<sup>1</sup>Corporations treated as public interest corporations or public entities under the Corporation Tax Act

<sup>2</sup> A small or medium-sized enterprise as defined in Article 2, Paragraph 14 of the Act on the Revitalization of Science, Technology and Innovation, which is registered in Japan, engages in research and development, was established within the past 15 years, and is not deemed to be a large enterprise.

## **2.3 Number of Selections and Support Term**

Approximately five institutions will be selected under this program. CAO's Steering Committee will evaluate project progress annually, and support may continue until the end of March 2029 depending on the progress and outcomes.

## **2.4 Support Amount (Upper Limit) and Scope**

Each institution may receive up to JPY 100 million per year (including indirect costs) to cover development of hosting environments, startup ecosystem development, and invitation of foreign researchers. Please note that initial amount will be limited to what has been determined based on the hosting plan submitted by the host institution, specifically for expenses related to preparing the environment for accepting foreign researchers and creating startup opportunities. Regarding support for hosting foreign researchers, necessary expenses will be covered as needed within the amount excluding the above-mentioned environmental preparation costs. As a general guideline, the support amount per foreign researcher is approximately JPY 30 million for PI-level researchers and JPY 15 million for postdoctoral researchers. It is assumed that around two to three individuals will be hosted. The host institutions are free to determine the salary amounts and the number of researchers to be accepted.

JST will provide the payment to the host institutions based on the research contract, covering both direct<sup>3</sup> and indirect costs<sup>4</sup> (generally 30% of direct costs). The following items are eligible for expenditure from the direct cost portion of the support amount:

- (1) Equipment and Supplies: Costs for purchasing new equipment, fixtures, and consumables<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Expenditures that do not align with the project's objectives, those considered suitable for indirect costs, or those that JST deems inappropriate for use in the settlement of commissioned research expenses, cannot be covered by direct costs.

<sup>4</sup> For information on indirect costs, please refer to the appendix document of this guideline (document in Japanese).

<sup>5</sup> The government is promoting the shared use of research facilities and equipment.

- (2) Travel Expenses: Travel costs for foreign researchers and research participants<sup>6</sup>
- (3) Personnel and Honoraria: Salaries and allowances for foreign researchers and research participants<sup>7</sup>
- (4) Other Costs: Expenses for publishing research results (e.g., article submission fees), equipment leasing, transportation, and patent-related costs<sup>8</sup>

## **2.5 Application Requirements**

Please be aware of the following important notes when applying. Additionally, ensure you have read and understood the contents of “Notes on Application” in the appendix document of this guideline (document in Japanese) before submitting your application.

- (1) If it is found that the application requirements are not met before selection, the proposal will, in principle, be rejected or not selected.
- (2) Once selected, the application requirements must be maintained throughout the entire support period of the project. If the requirements are no longer met during the support period, the project may be partially or entirely terminated (early termination) as a rule.
- (3) The proposals must be submitted in both English and Japanese, with English as the primary language and Japanese as the secondary. Both versions are mandatory.

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<sup>6</sup> Includes relocation expenses for eligible international researchers and their accompanying family members.

<sup>7</sup> Includes housing allowance, dependent allowance, and child support expenses for eligible international researchers.

<sup>8</sup> For patent-related expenses, please refer to the appendix document of this guideline (document in Japanese).

### 2.5.1 Requirements for Applicant Institutions

Institutions applying to this program must meet the following requirements:

- (1) Must be able to provide research and living environments in English for foreign researchers as an institute conducting world-class research and willing to contribute to the development of Japan's innovation ecosystem
- (2) Must be able to offer an environment where foreign researchers and research teams can actively contribute to startup creation, including reform of governance in human management, salary, and job assignment
- (3) Must be able to provide posts appropriate to the career stage and research field of foreign researchers
- (4) Must have the prospect of securing posts for foreign researchers after the program's support period ends
- (5) If requested to accept additional foreign researchers selected by the Partner Entity, the institution must consider acceptance under the condition with an additional support.
- (6) Must take responsibility for the operation and administrative processing of the program and bear overall responsibility for the project throughout the support period<sup>9</sup>

### 2.5.2 Requirements for Foreign Researchers

Foreign researchers eligible for this program must meet the following requirements. Institutions must conduct due diligence and implement appropriate risk management for the researchers they accept.

- (1) Must possess an entrepreneurial spirit and a strong motivation to commercialize their research.

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<sup>9</sup> For more details, please refer to "Responsibilities of the Implementing Organization" in the appendix document of this guideline (document in Japanese).

- (2) Must have an excellent track record of research accomplishment.
- (3) Must be willing to contribute to the development of Japan's innovation ecosystem.

### 2.5.3 Requirements for Organizational Implementation

#### (1) Project Leader

- Must belong to the applicant institution at the time of application.
- Must have coordination capabilities within the applicant institution.
- Must be well-versed in the proposal (hosting plan) and participate as the practical leader responsible for the project.
- Must have completed a research ethics education program at the applicant institution in advance, or complete the program provided by JST by the application deadline.
  - \* For details, please refer to the appendix document of this guideline (document in Japanese) .

#### (2) Operation Team

- Under the leadership of the project leader, must be capable of managing the project with enthusiasm for realizing the hosting plan.
- Must secure enough personnel and effort to promote the project.

#### (3) Implementation Structure

- The applicant institution must establish an optimal implementation structure centered on the project leader and operations team to promptly advance the project.
- Must clearly define the organizations that support the activities of the project leader and operations team.
- Must clearly define the primary organization responsible for developing the hosting environment for foreign researchers.



- Must clearly define the primary organization responsible for providing support that contributes to startup creation.

#### 2.5.4 Limitation of application

The following restrictions will be placed on duplicate applications. Certain measures may be taken, if they are judged to be unreasonable duplication or excessive concentration even in other projects inside and outside of JST, not mentioned in this section. For details, please refer to “Unreasonable Duplication and Excessive Concentration” in the appendix document of this guideline (document in Japanese).

- (1) No more than one application can be submitted from the same institution.

In the case of a corporation managing multiple universities, applications may be submitted on a university-by-university basis.

- (2) No more than one application can be submitted as a project leader.

In the case of a corporation managing multiple universities, the same person may be in charge across universities.

## 2.6 Review and Selection Framework

### 2.6.1 Review and Selection Process

Proposals will be reviewed in English by the Steering Committee. During the review process, applicants may be asked to respond to questions or provide additional materials, as necessary.

Members of the Steering Committee will be announced on CAO’s website.

Once a proposal is selected, the applicant institution will be notified via email, along with guidance on procedures to initiate the project. Notifications and communications will be sent to the email address registered in e-Rad, so please ensure that your settings allow receipt of such messages.

Notifications of non-selection during the document screening stage will also be sent via e-Rad.

In principle, no written/physical documentation will be issued regarding the outcome of the selection

process.

### 2.6.2 Conflict of Interest Management

To ensure fair and transparent evaluation and allocation of research funding, the following individuals will be excluded from the selection process if they are members of CAO's Steering Committee and have a conflict of interest:

- (1) Individuals who are relatives of the project leader.
- (2) Individuals who belong to the same department or major at the same university or research institution as the project leader, or who engage in the management of the university or its governing corporation, or who represent the corporation in external activities.
- (3) Individuals who belong to the same company as the project leader, or to a parent company or related entity of the project leader's company.
- (4) Individuals who are engaged in close collaborative research with the project leader. This includes joint project execution, co-authorship of research papers, research with the same objectives, or being a co-researcher within the project leader's research theme those considered to be part of the same research group.
- (5) Individuals who have a close mentor-mentee relationship or a direct employment relationship with the project leader.
- (6) Individuals who are in academic competition with the project leader or belong to companies that are market competitors.
- (7) Any other individuals deemed to have a conflict of interest by CAO or JST.

## 2.7 Selection Criteria

Selection will be based on the feasibility and implementation structure of the proposal, as evaluated against the requirements outlined in the "Application Requirements" section.

(1) Capability to Provide a Research and Living Environment in English for Foreign Researchers

- Overview of the English-language research and living environments at the host institution
- Availability of administrative support capable of handling English
- Language used in meetings at the host institution and whether accommodations are made for foreign researchers to participate without difficulty.
- Availability of English-language versions of various procedural documents
- Overview of support for living arrangements provided to foreign researchers, including support for housing and their family

(2) Capability to Provide an environment in which Foreign Researchers can Contribute to Startup Creation

- Overview of support provided by the host institution for startup creation
- Whether such support is available in English
- Availability of collaborative programs with external organizations aimed at startup creation
- Status of internal rules and their application for startups within the institution<sup>10</sup>

(3) Capability to Provide Posts Appropriate to the Career Stage and Research Field of Foreign Researchers, and Prospects for Securing Posts After the Program Ends

- Overview of the posts offered to foreign researchers, including research field, expected duties,

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<sup>10</sup> For example, refer to the explanation of "Establishment of Rules and Regulations by Universities, etc., for Entrepreneurship," which is required in the "University-Driven New Industry Creation Fund Project: Startup Ecosystem Co-Creation Program."

qualifications, annual salary, employment period, tenure track availability, and research funding

- For proposals from national universities and national research and development agencies, the proposal must address the following guidelines: “Guidelines on Personnel and Salary Management Reform for National University Corporations” (February 25, 2019), “Supplementary Guidelines” (December 21, 2021), and “Initiatives to Strengthen the Functions of National Research and Development Agencies” (March 29, 2024)

(4) Capability to Take Responsibility for Program Operations and Administration, and to Strongly Promote the Project Throughout the Support Period

- Overview of the project implementation structure
- Establishment of goals that enable objective evaluation of project progress

## **2.8 Post-Selection Evaluation**

The implementation status of the project will be evaluated by the Steering Committee based on the above-mentioned “Selection Criteria.”

## **2.9 Application Procedure**

Please download the required documents for application, including the proposal template, from the official website of this program.

Applications must be submitted via the Unified Government Research and Development Management System (e-Rad).

For instructions on how to operate e-Rad, please refer to in the appendix document of this guideline (document in Japanese).

As the e-Rad server tends to experience heavy traffic near the application deadline, there may be cases where the application process cannot be completed depending on the status of your proposal preparation. Please ensure that you complete your application well in advance. Please note that if the application procedure via e-Rad is not completed by the deadline, or if there are deficiencies in the proposal, the application will not be considered for review.

When applying, please also be sure to refer to the appendix document of this guideline (document in Japanese).

## **2.10 Application Period and Selection Schedule**

The application period and selection schedule are as follows. Please note that all steps following the document screening are tentative and may be subject to change. Any updates will be announced on the official website of this program.

Applications via e-Rad are scheduled to begin on Tuesday, July 15. The exact start date will be announced on the program's application website.

Application Start	Tuesday, July 15, 2025
Application Deadline (via e-Rad)	Friday, August 22, 2025 Strictly by 14:00 JST
Documentation Screening	August to September, 2025
Notifications and Announcement of Results	September, 2025
Project Start	Late September, 2025 and onward

## **2.11 Key Terms in This Program**

**(1) Hosting Plan**

The proposal under this call for applications. Upon adoption, the implementation plan will serve as the official hosting plan.

**(2) Project**

A general term referring to the activities conducted by the selected applicant institution to realize the hosting plan under this program.

**(3) Host Institution**

The institution selected through this call for applications.

**(4) Project leader**

The individual responsible for the practical execution of the project at the host institution, as specified in the research agreement.

**(5) Operations Team**

The team responsible for managing the project, serving as the point of contact with the Partner Entity and JST. Together with the project leader, they support the realization of the hosting plan and the stay of the invited researchers.

**(6) Invited Researcher**

A foreign researcher invited by the host institution from foreign research organization.

**(7) Research Participants**

A general term for individuals involved in the project, including the project leader, operations team, invited researchers, and others such as postdocs, engineers, research assistants, and students participating in the invited researcher's work.

**(8) Partner Entity**

An organization designated by CAO to support operations related to the pilot activities of the GSC

Initiative<sup>11</sup>. In this context, it refers to the organization supporting the Talent Development (Fellowship) Program.

(9) Steering Committee

A body composed of external experts established by CAO. The Steering Committee evaluates the pilot activities and provides advice to CAO, which operates the overall program based on the committee's input.

(10) Deep Tech

Technology based on scientific discoveries obtained through research in specific natural science fields. If successfully commercialized and implemented in society, it has the potential to make a significant impact by addressing economic and social challenges at the national or global level.

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<sup>11</sup> A separate call for proposals is being conducted by the Cabinet Office (CAO), and selections are expected to be made between August and September.