

“KOBE Global Startup Gateway 4th Batch”

Now accepting applications for the Startup Contest: changing the world, starting in Kobe.

ABOUT

The KOBE Global Startup Gateway (KGSG) is a startup contest to select teams of budding entrepreneurs to enter the acceleration program.

The Acceleration Program in KOBE

The winners of KGSG will be provided with a further support based on the KOBE STARTUP OFFICE.

What winners can get?

- **Networking:** Opportunities to build good business relationships and partnerships.
- **Mentoring:** Business plan brush-ups with advice coming from experienced mentors from closely related private companies and large enterprises and businesses with both national and international scope.
- **Pitch opportunities to investors:** A demonstration day will be held to showcase to VC, etc. in order to support a fund raising and a fast customer acquisition.

MENTORS

Be backed by the strongest mentor team to brush up your business.

In the mentoring sessions, the finalists will receive advice from the following mentor team to brush up their business plans and presentations for the final pitch.

- Shinichiro Isago (LINE Corporation, Manager, Customer Connect Business Planning Team AD&BusinessPlatform Department LINE Biz Center Director, Business Strategy)

Mr. Isago has been active in promoting supporting startups programs in Microsoft Japan. Not only basic technical support for infrastructural matter, his backup covers all about business scene. After the graduation of Tokyo Tech, he went through the dot-com bubble when he was working for Oracle Corp Japan. Strategy Consultant in Roland Berger and Product Marketing Officer in REALCOM Inc., which listed with Market of the high-growth and emerging

stocks (aka Mothers) of the Tokyo Stock Exchange. After that he supported startups in Microsoft Ventures Tokyo then present post. @shin135

- Tetsuya Yamashita (Yamashita Project President & CEO / 500 Startups, US-Japan Liaison Officer)

Mr. Yamashita was developing a system of mobile phone in NEC and Motorola. In NTT, he was a strategic marketing director of i-mode and smartphones. From Strategic alliances, to release of smartphones, he has been working in mobile IT industry for more than 20 years. He built Yamashita Project, Inc. in 2012 which is researching technology and provides professional consultant service of designing business strategy. From 2015, he is active in promoting NFC, an international standard of a short range wireless data transfer. From 2016, joined 500 Startups acceleration program operating team and being active in the Corporate Startup Innovation Program which assists collaborations between enterprises and startups. Mr. Yamashita has a MBA from MIT Sloan Fellows Program.

- Junji Oshita (AXEL MARK INC. President & CEO)

After graduated his university, Mr. Oshita spent two year in a company and started his own business in 2002. In 2003, he launched his freelancing career, and in 2005 he started to work for ICP, Inc. He temporally transferred to FROUTE Corp. which is provides web portal for mobile phone, and transferred completely to the corporation and took up a post as CEO. After merged with AXEL MARK INC., he is President & CEO of the present corporation.

Mr. Isago and Mr. Yamashita, Mr. Oshita are coming to this program as mentors

*The mentors are subject to change. Thank you for your understanding.

In the 1st batch, the finalists and mentors had very heated discussion on the mentor session day. However, that was just for a day. In this batch, the overnight stay mentoring camp is scheduled to have even better session. You can get unlimited supports during the camp as much as you want.

OUTLINE

- KGSG 4th Batch OUTLINE/APPLICATION -

Since 2015, Kobe has been proactive in accumulation of startups and programs to support the proliferation and growth of startups capable of driving social innovation for further economic development the city.

As one of the main project of this activity, KOBE STARTUP OFFICE has been established. In the office, the 1st seed-acceleration program was provided to the finalist of the 1st batch.

To provide the 4th seed-acceleration program, we are now accepting entry for the KGSG 4th Batch, which is the selection for the program.

KOBE STARTUP OFFICE

The KOBE STARTUP OFFICE is located on the 14th floor of Mint Kobe. The aim is to create a new community of investors, such as entrepreneurs and large companies.

In the office, not only the acceleration program, other events are held such as sessions and seminars for entrepreneurs with support from invited experts.

THE ACCELERATION PROGRAM IN KOBE CITY

We have created a system where startups can receive advice from private companies in Japan and abroad during the 3 months program in KOBE STARTUP OFFICE, as a base of the Acceleration Program, and we provide support for drastic business expansion which cannot be achieved by seed- and early-stage startups alone. Pitch your proposal to VCs at the Demo Day event to raise further funds and take your business to the next growth stage.

SUBSCRIPTION PERIOD

April 7th, 2017 (Fri) - May 27th, 2017 (Sat)

REQUIREMENT FOR APPLICANTS

- Startups (entrepreneur or entrepreneurial candidates) that aim to create new products and services using IT, are eligible.
- The program is intended for entrepreneurs in the final stage of the seed period (prototypes of products and services under development) or in the middle phase (existing products and services with a small number of users ensured) of an early stage project from the previous year (we also target so called "second-business" founders).
- We recommend entrants to apply in teams. The team size can be up to 5 people.
- Nationality and place of residence do not matter. Japanese or English language will be used. However, the team includes more than one member who is allowed to work in Japan, if your team is from outside of Japan.

Criteria for selection

The initial preselection and final pitch (final selection meeting) are in principle evaluated according to the following criteria.

- Excellence of the team: How the skills and experience of the team members are balanced
- Affinity to Kobe: Whether there is a possibility that the business activities take root in Kobe
- Creativity/Innovation: How the business is different from competitors
- Marketability/Growth: How the business can develop and scale
- Sustainability/Profitability: How the business model can develop traction

Options of possible finalist

Go Global Course

Eligible team: Startups attempting to enter the international business scene (Max 5 teams)

Mentoring: Business plan brush up with advice coming from experienced mentors from closely related private companies and large enterprises and businesses with both national and international scope.

Remark*: You can get chance to be nominated to 500 Kobe Accelerator.

Make a Social Impact Course

Eligible team: startups capable of driving social innovation (Max 5 teams)

Theme: A business plan or service that the "sharing economy" idea is applied to.

* From 4th batch, we are addressing "Sharing economy", although all business plans are welcome to this contest.

Mentoring: Business plan brush up with advice coming from experienced mentors from closely related private companies and large enterprises and businesses with both national and international scope.

*Remark

This program aim to provide mentoring sessions and lectures every week for 3 months in the office. If you cannot attend to sessions in series, we can take your privilege for the program, even if it is in the middle of the program. Please be clarified it beforehand.

SCHEDULE

Apr 7th, 2017: Start of Accepting Application

May 27th, 2017: End of Accepting Application

May 27th – end of May 2017: The Finalist will be nominated. The result will be sent with e-mail.

June 8,9th, 2017: **Mentoring Sessions for the Finalist**

Business plan brush up with advice coming from experienced mentors from closely related private companies and large enterprises and businesses with both national and international scope. Finalists will be provided overnight stay Mentoring Camp to brush up presentation for Final pitch. Through the sessions, you will get advice, and brush up your business plan and, presentation, strategy on international scene, capital management.

<Mentors>*

Shinichiro Isago (LINE Corporation, Manager, Customer Connect Business Planning Team
AD&BusinessPlatform Department LINE Biz Center Director, Business Strategy)

Tetsuya Yamashita (Yamashita Project President & CEO / 500 Startups, US-Japan Liaison Officer)

Junji Oshita (AXEL MARK INC. President & CEO)

*The mentors are subject to change.

End of June, 2017: **Final Pitch**

The participants for the Seed Acceleration Program will be selected at the final pitch

Jul, 2017: Seed acceleration program begin.

The 4th seed acceleration program for 3 months in KOBE STARTUP OFFICE starts!!

- 1 on 1 mentoring by program directors (1 hour / week)

You can get advice to your business plan from 2 program directors.

- Sessions (1 / week)

Gain a knowledge and learn about useful technics for each levels and domains. You can built a business network through sessions with successful entrepreneurs.

- Optimized experts help is available. (Free access)

Mentors will be assigned to each teams.

- Pitch opportunities to investors: A demonstration day will be held to showcase to VC, etc.

Subscription Period

Apr 7th, 2017 (Fri) – May 27, 2017 (Sat)

FAQ

Q1. What service or project is eligible as Sharing Economy?

A1. Here are the examples:

- Matching Services which allow busy parents to find elderly neighbors who are willing to help them.
- Platforms which allow house wives to raise money with their talented skills, such as cooking or cleaning.

As examples above show, from sharing profitable skills to useful vacant space, which can turn into a profitable economic model.

We are currently looking for ideas which can solve problems related to a local situation with using a local resources, ideally it can encourage local people.

Q2. Business plans which are not sharing economy qualify for this contest?

A2. All business plans are welcome to this contest. From 4th batch, we are addressing "Sharing economy", although we had not been focus on specific topic. You can refer previous selected batch companies. <http://kobe-startupoffice.jp/team.php>

Q3. Are travel expenses reimbursed to participate in the final pitch?

A.3 Transportation expenses for finalists to participate in the final pitch (one way 100 km or less by rail (from Sannomiya Station or Shin-Kobe Station) is excluded) will be paid by the secretariat. Finalists participating from outside Japan will have their round-trip airfare (economy class) and accommodation expenses reimbursed.

Q4. A startup of students or a new project by multiple existed companies or corporation could be acceptable for this program?

A4. Certainly, yes. Both teams fit to our program. We strongly suggest a team of multiple members. It is because multiple members are very good for raise chance of success. However, there is no requirement about how a team is organized.

Q5. Are travel expenses reimbursed to participate in mentoring session?

A5. Transportation expenses for finalists to participate in mentoring sessions will not be refunded. However, it is also possible to participate in mentoring sessions remotely via Skype or similar software.

Q6. What is the acceleration program in Kobe Startup Office?

A6. It is limited to startups that have been selected in the Global Startup Gateway Kobe, and provides a focused support program over a period of 3-4 months. It offers a Silicon Valley type of seed acceleration program.

Q7. Who organizes the acceleration program?

A7. It will be organized by a private governing body (accelerator operators) selected by the City of Kobe.

For your reference: Operator of last program in 2016: Kobe Shinbun (Executive organizer)•Kwansei Gakuin University

Q8. What kind of support is offered in the acceleration program?

A8. The program will assist with planning and follow-up of the business through mentors, and we also plan to support projects with sub-mentors to provide expertise, such as how to write code. You can seek advice for your business from private companies such as venture capital and support organizations, including large domestic companies.

Q9. Is it possible to decline the assistance of the acceleration program?

A9. The details of the acceleration program and the finalists notification will be announced to the successful candidates. At that stage, you can decline the finalists' privileges. It should be noted that if a candidate declines, we will select the entry's runner-up as a finalist.

Q10. I would like to relocate to Hyogo Prefecture in order to work in the Startup Office. Are there any programs to grant expenses for moving, rent, etc.?

A10. There is no such program for Kobe, but Hyogo Prefecture provides assistance and partial refund of expenses for business startups for relocating from outside the prefecture and establishing a business in Hyogo. Regarding Kobe Startup Office, if moving from outside Hyogo Prefecture, assistance may become available when starting a business in Kobe.

Reference URL: information about assistance program (Japanese only)

<http://web.pref.hyogo.lg.jp/sr10/furusatokigyuu.html>

Organized by Kobe City
Operated by Communitylink