



[SME Challenge Project “Yatte Minahare”\*]

At the press conference held on April 15 to announce the appointment of Shingo Torii as the OCCI’s new chairperson, Mr. Torii unveiled a new initiative: the SME Challenge Project “Yatte Minahare.”\* The project began with gathering information from 1,000 SMEs to gauge the challenges they face to ensure support is accurately targeted to real needs. Then, in the first half of FY2022, the chamber will implement an eight-part program of support designed to help SMEs create new businesses, revamp existing business models, expand sales channels, and improve productivity, thus putting wind in the sails of SMEs pursuing new ventures.

To begin with, fifty business advisory staff from the OCCI’s various branches gathered information from, and provided support to, 1,000 SMEs in March and April 2022, so as to get a clear picture of the challenges facing local SMEs. These interviews revealed the struggles that businesses faced, including effects arising from the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Covid-19, and rising material costs. Based on the insights gathered, the OCCI put together an eight-part program of support focusing on five core themes: using design thinking to foster young proprietors’ corporate transformation abilities; producing promotional video content as an aid to online business meetings; boosting earning power; using the internet to expand sales channels and exhibiting and consulting of digital technology .

Using design thinking to foster young proprietors’ corporate transformation abilities

- (1) A seminar on design thinking was held on April 20.
- (2) Four workshops will be held in June and July to develop plans for new businesses.

Producing promotional video content as an aid to online business meetings

- (3) An online seminar on video-content-based marketing was held on April 20.
- (4) A simple video content production service is available until June (fees apply).

## Boosting earning power

(5) A seminar on earning power will be held on June 3, and will include a get-together event where participants can meet and interact with expert advisors.

(6) Business management advisory services from the SME Revitalization Council\* are available as needed to help with issues such as business restructuring and profitability improvement.

## Using the internet to expand sales channels

(7) A dedicated “urgently wanted” page has been created within the OCCI’s Business Mall site to help SMEs locate and procure urgently needed items.

## Exhibiting and consulting of digital technology

(8) An SME Digital Expo will be held in late September to help smaller businesses harness the potential of IT tools to boost productivity. The event will feature case studies of successful adoption of digital tools, IT-related exhibits, and advisory services.

## [International Business Development Support]

Generating opportunities for business meetings (in person and online)

## International Business Development Support

Generating opportunities for business meetings (in person and online) We host business meeting sessions to help Osaka-based companies forge overseas sales channels.

## Post-Covid Landscape and 2025 World Expo

The OCCI is working in close partnership with the Japan Association for the 2025 World Exhibition, the government, and local governments to build momentum for the expo and promote business participation. We are excited to help with a variety of activities, including city-based events linked to the expo’s program, venue coordination, and operational help to ease the way for businesses to participate. In addition to working with the

Osaka Business Development Agency to advance plans for SMEs and startups to exhibit at the Osaka Pavilion, we are making our own proposals, such as participation by businesses involved in the OCCI's wellness and innovation projects. With our eyes firmly on the post-Covid landscape, the 2025 world expo, and fully exploiting the advantages of Osaka's Super City status, we at the OCCI look forward to working with the business community on a variety of projects, including Phase 2 of the Umekita Development Project (the redevelopment of the former railway yards to the north of Osaka Station), the 2025 world expo, and the development of Yumeshima Island.

### Green Innovation Support

We offer support to help make the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and ESG principles an integral part of business. We provide information on national and local government policies on reducing carbon dioxide emissions, environment and energy business insights, and pioneering cases from overseas. In this way, we seek to offer SMEs concrete ideas on how they can move forward. We serve as a bridge connecting the technologies held by major corporations, SMEs, universities, and research institutions to contribute to carbon neutrality. As part of Osaka's partnership with Manchester in the UK, the OCCI will hold events aimed at sparking green innovation, including seminars and forums, business matching, and study delegations together with the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce.

### International Business Matching for Innovation

The Global Innovation Forum (GIF) is aimed at generating new business and attracting new inbound investment by matching Osaka-based and Kansai-based businesses with overseas enterprises with innovative technologies.

### Promoting Osaka and Attracting Inbound Investment

The Osaka Business and Investment Center (O-BIC), which the OCCI operates jointly with the Osaka prefectural and city governments, works together with relevant organizations to spread the word worldwide about Osaka's favorable business environment, and to match Japanese and overseas businesses in an effort to attract

foreign companies to Osaka.

### Helping Japanese Companies Globalize

We offer a range of initiatives to help local SMEs venture overseas and to promote import/export business. These include organizing overseas study missions for Japanese businesses and hosting those from overseas, conducting online study “tours,” and holding seminars. Not only are we authorized to issue trade certificates (including those for EPAs), but we also offer support to help Osaka businesses take advantage of EPAs and broaden their sales channels. For instance, we hold seminars and advisory events regarding the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, the new “mega-EPA” that represents Japan’s first ever EPA with China and the Republic of Korea.

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## **2. GIF OSAKA 2022 UPDATE: NORTH & SOUTH AMERICAN GIF OSAKA DATES CONFIRMED**

Global Innovation Forum (GIF) Osaka has been a fixture of the business calendar since 2019. This year, as always, we look forward to matching international start-ups with Japanese companies. The OCCI has announced the dates for the North & South American GIF Osaka 2022 events.

GIF Osaka provides startups interested in doing business in Japan to exhibit, make pitches, and meet with local business. For the 2022 edition of the event, we are seeking startups from four regions.

GIF Osaka 2022: North & South America (all dates and times JST)

GIF Osaka 2022 website and online exhibition launch: May 31 (subject to change)

Live pitches: 09:00 - 12:00, Jun. 29

One-on-one meetings: Jul. 12 & 13

GIF Osaka 2022 event details are as follows.

1) To be held 4 times/year in various regions

Past GIFs were held once a year, but starting this year, a new format has been introduced, with four business matching events across different regions featuring online exhibits, live pitch sessions, and business matching.

Regions covered:

North & South America in late June, Middle East/Southwest Asia in late August, Europe in late October, and East/Southeast Asia in December.

(Schedule subject to change)

2) Pitch session winners to be invited to Osaka

During each regional event, there will be a vote to select the start-ups that participants would most like to meet in Osaka. One winner from each region will be invited to visit Osaka in January 2023, allowing for the chance for real-time capability displays and meetings with Japanese companies to pursue business opportunities.

3) Exhibitors sought from GIF's 7 focus sectors, now including new sectors

GIF2022 is open to start-up companies operating in one (or more) of these seven sectors:

(1) Augmented/virtual/mixed reality

(2) Robotics

(3) Digital transformation

(4) Carbon neutrality

(5) Agri-tech, food-tech

(6) Health-tech

(7) Advanced materials

To apply to exhibit, contact us at: [gif@osaka.cci.or.jp](mailto:gif@osaka.cci.or.jp)

Schedule: North & South America in late June, Middle East/Southwest Asia in late August, Europe in late October, and East/Southeast Asia in December.

(Schedule subject to change)

\*Pitch and meeting times will take time zone differences into account and vary by region.

Location: Online

To join, please register for GIF online.

Details on how to join the event will be provided upon registration.

Pitch winners will be invited to Osaka to take part in business meetings in person.

Program

1. Online exhibition
2. Live pitches
3. Online business meetings

GIF 2022 website-launching soon!

The GIF Osaka 2022 website will feature helpful information around participant programming, exhibitors, presenters, and more.

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### **3. ALL THE LATEST ON EXPO 2025 OSAKA, KANSAI, JAPAN**

Basic Plan Unveiled for the 2025 World Expo Osaka Pavilion

The Japan Association for the 2025 World Exhibition, an organization of the Osaka prefectural and city governments and the OCCI, held its general meeting (online) on March 24, 2022. Outgoing OCCI Chairman Hiroshi Ozaki was in attendance. Prof. Ryuichi Morishita, producer of the Osaka Pavilion and a member of the association, submitted the Japan Association for the 2025 World Exhibition Basic Plan for the Osaka Pavilion for approval, explaining that the plan was designed to ensure the pavilion would be an all-Osaka effort. The motion was passed.

Mr. Ozaki commented that the pavilion envisaged by plan would surely wow many visitors with an exciting

vision of the future. He hoped that visitors would be treated to bold and surprising exhibitions, and that as the plan subsequently progressed to the fleshing-out stage, SMEs would be included in the process. The OCCI, he said, together with the Osaka Business Development Agency, would endeavor to ensure that many local enterprises could participate in the exhibition zone for SMEs and startups.

Details of the plan are available (in Japanese) at:

[https://www.pref.osaka.lg.jp/bampakuyuchisuishin/osaka\\_pavilion/index.html](https://www.pref.osaka.lg.jp/bampakuyuchisuishin/osaka_pavilion/index.html)

### Briefing and Call for Osaka Pavilion Exhibit Proposals for SMEs and Startups

The SME & Startup Exhibition Committee\* (chairperson: Junzo Tateno, president of the Osaka Business Development Agency and vice chair of the OCCI), an organization established jointly by the OCCI and the Osaka Business Development Agency to administer planning and operation of the Osaka Pavilion's Exhibition Zone, has released an outline of its plan for the zone.

The intention behind the zone is to uncover and support outstanding local SMEs and startups, and present their unique achievements and activities to the world. With that in mind, organizers are focused not only on the expo period, but the pre-expo preparation period and post-expo developments as well.

### Namba Precinct Rebuilding Vision

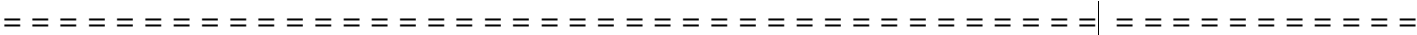
At a press briefing held on April 15, 2022, Kazuyoshi Zenitaka, chairman of Zenitaka Corp., and chairperson of the OCCI Metropolis Development Committee, unveiled a vision developed by the OCCI and Nankai Electric Railway for enhancing the urban status of the Namba precinct by harnessing the area's characteristics as an entertainment destination and accommodation base.

The vision was formulated by the Community Building Committee for Enhancing the Urban Status of the Namba Area\*, which was established in July 2021. Membership of the committee draws from shopping arcade business proprietors, community associations, and local businesses. The vision provides a blueprint for the



future of Namba, through the 2025 World Expo and the 2029 opening of Osaka’s integrated resort, to the 2031 inauguration of the new Naniwasuji railway line and beyond. The plan proposes that, while the expo is in town, a festival be held incorporating the whole Namba area, including the soon-to-be-completed Namba station plaza, the Tombori Walk promenade along the Dotonbori River, and multiple shopping arcades. It also includes plans for development of the new railway stations to be built along the under-construction Naniwasuji Line, area management initiatives to promote interaction, and ensuring an environment conducive to the pursuit of new ideas.

Mr. Zenitaka said he looked forward to laying the groundwork for a variety of festive events to be held in the heart of the city during the expo.



**VIP REPORTSI**

**1. COURTESY VISIT BY THE SLOVENIAN AMBASSADOR**

On April 13, 2022, the Slovenian Ambassador to Japan, H.E. Ana Polak Petric, made a courtesy visit to the OCCI recently and met with Vice-Chair Akihiro Kuroda.

Mr. Kuroda thanked the ambassador for Slovenia’s declaration of participation in the 2025 World Expo in Osaka, and reiterated Osaka’s strengths as a hub for businesses in segments highly relevant to the expo’s core themes, such as medicine and healthcare. Ambassador Petric noted that these themes were more important to people than ever in an age defined by the Covid-19 pandemic, and that she hoped that the expo would serve to spark further trade between Slovenia and Osaka. Slovenia and Japan had many shared values and cultural similarities - not the least of which was a love for food made from buckwheat - and Ambassador Petric hoped to promote further exchanges between the two nations.

**2. COURTESY VISIT BY THE UZBEK AMBASSADOR & UZBEKISTAN ECONOMIC SEMINAR IN KANSAI**

On April 14, 2022, the Uzbek Ambassador to Japan, H.E. Mukhsinkhuja Abdurakhmonov, visited the OCCI. The ambassador exchanged opinions with Minoru Tomita president of the Osaka Branch of Marubeni Corp., and chairperson of the International Business Committee, regarding future exchanges.

Ambassador Abdurakhmonov noted the importance of interregional interaction, and hoped that 2022, which marks the 30th anniversary of diplomatic ties between Uzbekistan and Japan, would lead to stronger ties between Osaka and the Kansai region and their counterpart cities in Uzbekistan. Mr. Tomita thanked the ambassador for his country's declaration of participation in the 2025 World Expo in Osaka, and expressed his hope that Uzbekistan would join Osaka in its march toward development despite the chaos caused by Covid-19.

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\*No official English translation could be reliably confirmed for this term. This is our own unofficial translation.

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**INFORMATION FOR COVID-19-**

Japanese Government

<https://japan.kantei.go.jp/>

Osaka Prefecture Government

<https://covid19-osaka.info/en/>

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[O-BIC as one-stop service center for creating a foothold in Osaka]

<http://o-bic.net/>

[Information about scheduled events (in Japanese only)]

<https://www.osaka.cci.or.jp/event/index.php>



Chief Editor :Takayoshi Negoro(Mr.), Director of International  
Division, OCCI

Mailed by : Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry, International  
Division

Address : 2-8 Hommachi-bashi, Chuo-ku, Osaka, Japan 540-0029

Tel : +81-(0)6-6944-6400

Fax : +81-(0)6-6944-6293

Contact Persons : Ryosuke SHIMIZU (Mr.), Risa TAKESHIMA (Ms.)

Back Numbers of OCCI e-Magazine:

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