

2025 JICA Co-Creation × Innovation Program "QUEST"
Co-Creation Idea Competition Guidelines

May 2025
QUEST Program Office: quest@tohmatsu.co.jp

1. Background of the Program

In an increasingly globalized and interdependent world, we face complex, global-scale challenges. Additionally, achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires addressing a \$4.2 trillion annual funding gap. This calls for strengthening the "catalytic" function of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in mobilizing private sector funding toward developing countries.

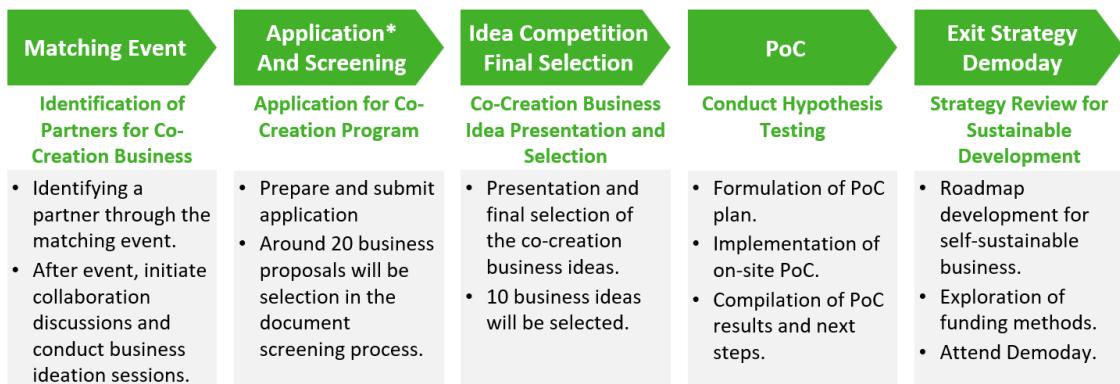
To address these challenges, it is essential to introduce innovative approaches and create collective impact through the participation and collaboration of diverse stakeholders. To drive this effort, JICA has launched the Co-Creation × Innovation Program, "QUEST."

2. Program Overview

Through QUEST, JICA and the Deloitte Tohmatsu Group (JICA's commissioned partner and an expert in new business development and projects in developing countries) provide hands-on support for co-creation ideas submitted by participants.

Following the matching event, a Co-Creation Idea Competition will be held to select promising co-creation ideas. During this competition, 10 outstanding ideas will be chosen.

Participants whose co-creation ideas are selected will receive dedicated guidance and support to bring their ideas to fruition. This includes planning and implementing Proof of Concept (PoC), as well as developing exit strategies (such as fundraising) for the selected co-creation ideas.



*Applications for the Idea Competition are not limited to partners met during the matching events. You may also apply with partners you have connected with through other activities or with existing partners you already have.

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|---|--------|-------------------------------|
| Matching Event | Tokyo | June 3, 2025 |
| | Nagoya | June 9, 2025 |
| Participant Applications | | May 27, 2025 – June 23, 2025 |
| Document-based Evaluation and Notification of Results | | June 24, 2025 – July 22, 2025 |
| Idea Competition (Final Evaluation) | | July 31, 2025 |
| Selection Notification | | August 1, 2025 |
| Submission of PoC Plan and Agreement | | Around August 2025 |
| PoC | | August 2025 – December 2025 |
| Demoday | | January 2026 |

3. Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Affiliation and Authorization:**

Applicants (both primary and co-applicants) must belong to an organization with legal status and have obtained approval from their respective organizations. Eligible entities include:

- Private companies (large enterprises, SMEs, startups)
- Academia (universities, technical colleges, research institutes)
- Civil society organizations (NGOs)
- Public institutions (government agencies or local governments in developing countries)

- Co-Creation for Social Impact:**

Applicants must aim to address social challenges through co-creation with other organizations.

- **Location:**

Applicants are welcome from any location, whether in Japan or internationally.

- **Commitment:**

Applicants must demonstrate a commitment to completing the selected project by the Demo Day. Selected applicants will also be required to:

- Implement their proposed projects.
- Prepare and submit a program report upon the completion of this year's QUEST program.
- Participate in activities to disseminate program outcomes (e.g., promotional activities) during and after the program.

These conditions will be confirmed in writing with selected applicants after the selection process.

4. Application Form

- Application Submission: Submit your proposal via the Idea Competition Application Form [Application from for idea competition of Co-creation and Innovation Program "QUEST" in 2025](#)
- Application Period: May 27, 2025 – June 23, 2025

5. Support for Selected Project

Selected projects will receive the following support. QUEST is a program designed to foster co-creation and innovation among diverse stakeholders. JICA and its commissioned partner, Deloitte Tohmatsu Group, will provide assistance to selected project proponents to ensure successful implementation. Active participation and execution by the proponents are essential prerequisites for receiving support.

Support Provided:

- **Refinement of Co-Creation Project Proposals:**

Professional advice and utilization of relevant relationships to enhance project proposals.

- **PoC (Proof of Concept) Planning and Testing:**

Expert advice and in-kind provision of necessary expenses (up to ¥3 million per project).

- **Travel Planning for Field Operations:**

Professional advice on travel arrangements and, if necessary, accompaniment during trips (travel expenses for accompaniment will be covered by the above budget).

- **Exit Strategy Development (Fundraising):**
Professional advice on planning and executing exit strategies.

Details of PoC Costs (Up to ¥3 Million Per Project):

The PoC costs will be disbursed by Deloitte Tohmatsu Group, the program's operational partner. These costs will primarily be provided in-kind, with certain exceptions like daily allowances and accommodation fees. The anticipated expense categories at the time of application include:

- Specialized labor costs
- Vehicle-related costs
- Travel and transportation costs (including domestic and international airfare, daily allowances, accommodation fees, and domestic transportation within Japan)
- Equipment costs (rental fees, shipping costs for equipment)

Daily Allowances and Accommodation Fees:

Daily allowances and accommodation fees will be provided at fixed rates based on the number of days spent on the project:

- International Travel:
 - Daily allowance: ¥3,800/day
 - Accommodation fee: ¥11,600/night
- Japan Travel:
 - Daily allowance: ¥1,100/day
 - Accommodation fee: ¥10,300/night

Important Notes:

1. Approval Process:

Selection does not automatically guarantee approval for project implementation. After selection, proponents must submit a PoC plan and obtain written agreement as designated by JICA.

2. Budget Approval:

Not all budget items submitted during the application process will be approved. Only items that receive approval through the hands-on support provided after selection will be recognized.

6. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

① Development Impact

- Is the target issue clearly defined?
- To what extent does the co-creation project proposal contribute to solving the identified development issue?

② Innovation

- How innovative is the co-creation project proposal?
- Does it contribute to the creation of new value that has not been realized before?

③ Co-Creation

- To what extent does the co-creation generate significant synergies?

④ Feasibility

- How concrete and specific is the content of the co-creation project proposal?
- How feasible is it to validate the proposal during the program's PoC period?

⑤ Business Potential/Public Good

- Does the target market have sufficient scale, or is the scale of beneficiaries adequately large?
- To what extent does the proposal have the potential for domestic and international expansion?

⑥ Uniqueness of the Project/Activity

- How clearly does the proposal differentiate itself from other companies or organizations?

⑦ Commitment to the Program

- To what extent can resources be allocated to the program?
- How clearly defined are the objectives the applicant seeks to achieve during the program's PoC period?

⑧ Alignment with [JICA's Global Agenda](#)

- To what extent does the proposal contribute to achieving JICA's global agenda?

7. Important Notes

• Collaborative Proposals:

This competition seeks ideas for proof-of-concept experiments through co-creation. In principle, joint proposals by multiple companies or organizations are required. A primary contact person should be designated as the lead applicant, and all co-applicants must be specified in the application form.

• Multiple Submissions:

A single company or organization can submit multiple project proposals.

• Childcare Considerations:

If you plan to bring children to the idea competition's final selection venue, please consult with the program office in advance.

• Disqualification:

Applications may be disqualified if JICA determines that the applicant organization or proposal falls under any of the following conditions. If such issues are discovered after selection, the selection may be revoked:

- Violations of laws, regulations, or public order and morals, or the potential for such violations.
- Past or present affiliations with anti-social forces, such as organized crime groups.
- Incomplete application materials.
- Submission of false information or declarations.
- Being subject to measures that exclude participation in JICA's competitive contracting processes.

• Selection Process:

The selection will be conducted by a panel that includes external experts. Results will be communicated to all applicants via the designated lead contact. Please note that individual inquiries regarding the selection process or results cannot be accommodated.

• Use of Application Materials:

Submitted application forms and related documents will be shared with external experts for evaluation purposes. These materials will not be returned to applicants.

• Application Fee:

Participation in the idea competition is free of charge. However, applicants are responsible for any costs incurred in preparing their applications.

• Intellectual Property:

Submitted ideas will remain the property of the applicant or co-applicant. JICA assumes no responsibility for intellectual property rights. Applicants are responsible for ensuring that their ideas do not infringe on third-party intellectual property rights or violate trade secrets protected under the Unfair Competition Prevention Act. Applicants are also responsible for protecting their own ideas.

• Reporting Requirements:

Selected applicants are required to participate in reporting sessions and submit a program report. Exceptions for non-participation in reporting sessions may be granted only under unavoidable circumstances and with prior agreement.

• Program Publicity and Records:

The program may involve photography and recording of activities, such as information sessions and program outreach efforts, which may be published on the program website

and other platforms.

- **External Disclosure:**

Reporting session content and report details will generally be made public. However, if JICA and the applicant agree that certain PoC outcomes should not be disclosed for subsequent development, adjustments will be made to limit public disclosure to a non-sensitive scope.

- **Use of Personal Information:**

Personal information collected through the application form will be used to facilitate the smooth implementation of QUEST and as a reference for JICA's operations. Specifically, this includes notifications about QUEST events and activities, JICA's private sector partnership projects, and business support initiatives by other organizations. Personal information may also be shared with relevant departments within JICA and with Deloitte Tohmatsu Group, the QUEST program operator.

- **Program Termination or Withdrawal:**

If the applicant violates the application guidelines or agreements made after selection, or if unforeseen circumstances such as deteriorating security make project implementation inappropriate or impossible, JICA reserves the right to terminate or withdraw support, even after the selection notification.

- **Disclaimer:**

JICA and Deloitte Tohmatsu Group will strive to provide reliable information and useful advice to the extent feasible. However, applicants are responsible for verifying the accuracy, completeness, relevance, timeliness, and applicability of the provided information and advice, and for making their own decisions on its use. JICA and Deloitte Tohmatsu Group are not liable for any direct or indirect damages incurred by applicants during the application or implementation process.

8. Contact Information

QUEST Program Office: quest@tohmatsu.co.jp

Office Hours: 9:30 AM – 6:30 PM JST (Weekdays only, support available in Japanese and English)