



SBA 2025 PROOF OF CONCEPT COHORT PROGRAM

February 12, 2025

Cohort Profile

TARGET: Seed – Series B startups considering their global expansion. Tokyo cohort will target early-stage startups.

NUMBER OF STARTUPS: 6 startups, up to 2 participants per startup

PROGRAM DURATION: 4 months (approx. 16 weeks)

FORMAT: The program kickoff to take place in Tokyo and the final Demo Day will take place online. The rest of program will be online.

PARTICIPANT REQUIREMENTS:

- Participants from each startup must have **business-level English proficiency**, and this will be evaluated during the application process by the CIC team. Participants will be requested to submit a short video introducing their startups.
- Participants will have already explored their **proof of concept in the Korean market** prior to their application to this program. The aim of this program is to validate and explore proof of concept in the US or Japan market.



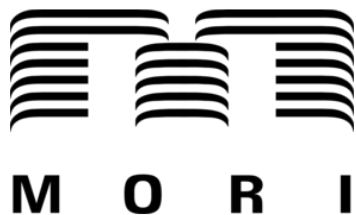
Timeline – Japan Cohort

Feb. 7	Open application
Feb. 21	Close application
Feb. 24 - 28	Selection of participants by CIC Tokyo
Feb. 28	Notify and confirm participants
April. 14	Program starts & Orientation
May. 12 -16	Business lectures, Matching, Closed Networking Event (in-person week)
Jul. 25	Program ends
Jul. 28 – Aug. 1	CIC sources feedback from participants

Japan Program components

WEEK 1 INTRODUCTION PHASE	WEEK 2-10 ACCELERATION PHASE	WEEK 11-12 IMMERSION PHASE	WEEKS 13-16 MATCHING & MENTORING (VIRTUAL)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orientation and CIC Tour • 1-1 Program Advising Appointments between CIC and startups to better understand the needs of each startups and goal-setting with each startup 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 Business Lectures Topics may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Perspectives of Local VCs ○ Product Market Fit Workshop ○ Opening a Local Subsidiary • Site visit to location innovation partners • Practical insights from local entrepreneurs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All startups will participate in an online Demo Day pitch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CIC will help arrange 2 meetings per startup with potential business matches. These can take place virtually or in-person
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 hours of 1:1 coaching and consultation by a team of experts on topics such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Individual proof of concept evaluation ○ Pitch coaching ○ Business development strategy 		

Sample Business Networks from 2024 Robotics Cohort



PHASE 1: INTRODUCTION

WEEK 1: ORIENTATION AND 1-1 PROGRAM ADVISING

CIC will provide an overview of the program and hold 1-1 meetings to learn more about the specific needs and goals of each participating startups to best support them during the program.

- CIC will host an **orientation session** to give the startups an overview of the program, discuss expectations of the program, introduce tools utilized during the program, and allow the startups to meet each other.
- CIC will also have **1:1 meetings** with each of the startups to discuss their particular goals during the program and answer any questions they may have.



PHASE 2: ACCELERATION

WEEKS 2 - 10: SEMINARS, MENTORSHIP, and PREPARATION

CIC will organize and deliver virtual lectures and panel discussion to prepare and inform startups for local market exploration and entry. These sessions will be led by industry experts, such as executives and successful entrepreneurs in relevant fields. Topics may include:

- **Perspectives of Local VCs:** Panel discussion from local venture capitalists, investors, and serial entrepreneurs on the state of the market in their respective locations, and how startups can best build connections and make an impact.
- **Product Market Fit Workshop:** This workshop will provide information on developing a product roadmap in the local market, assessing risk, scaling in the local market, and identifying their market fit.
- **Industry Insights:** This will invite a panel of experts from the program industry to speak on their experiences working in their respective locations, and how best to develop a foothold in the market.
- **Opening a Local Subsidiary:** An expert will provide information on considerations when opening up a local subsidiary in the location of choice.

PHASE 2: ACCELERATION (cont.)

WEEKS 2 - 10: MENTORSHIP & PREPARATION

CIC will also arrange 1-1 mentoring sessions, up to six (6) one-hour sessions, for the startups to get personalized coaching, advice, and feedback. CIC will survey the startups before to better understand their specific needs and priorities. These notes will be shared with the mentors so make these sessions more effective.

We expect each startup will meet with several mentors throughout the course of the program to discuss topics that include the following areas:

- **Proof of Concept Evaluation & Advice:** Startups can receive individual feedback from an expert who understands local regulations, and therefore the go to market strategy and market fit for the startups to consider in their expansion efforts.
- **Pitch Coaching:** Advice on how to tailor their pitch to their audience and strengthen it for the local audience.
- **Communication:** Coaching on how best to communicate in local culture and inspire trust from potential investors or collaborators.
- **Business Development Strategy:** Mentorship regarding building strategic connections, launching in their respective territories, and strengthening their business for the market.

PHASE 3: IMMERSION

WEEKS 11-12: MATCHING AND DEMO DAY

Startups will get a chance to showcase their technologies to potential business partners and investors during 1-1 business matches, closed networking event, and during Demo Day.

- CIC will source 2 business matches per startups (virtual or in-person), which may include potential collaborators, investors, or business partners. CIC will arrange this meeting for up to 1 hour with the match.



Requirements:

Startups must complete programmatic pieces in Phase 2 before matches are available



CIC cannot guarantee partnerships, NDAs, or LOIs between the startup and potential clients and/or partners

PHASE 4: FOLLOW-UP PHASE

WEEKS 13-16: CONSULTING AND WRAP-UP

Following the demo-day pitches, startups will work with mentors in revising their market strategy or business model to take their business to the next level.

- CIC will provide curated office hours with industry experts and seasoned professionals based on the needs emerging from the demo-pitches.
- CIC will design and share the activity details.

A black and white photograph of an exhibition space. In the foreground, a metal grid railing is visible. Behind it, several large, clear, spherical objects are suspended from the ceiling. In the background, a group of people is gathered around a large, rounded, white structure that appears to be an interactive display or a piece of art. The scene is brightly lit, and the overall atmosphere is that of a modern, open-plan exhibition or museum.

ANNEX

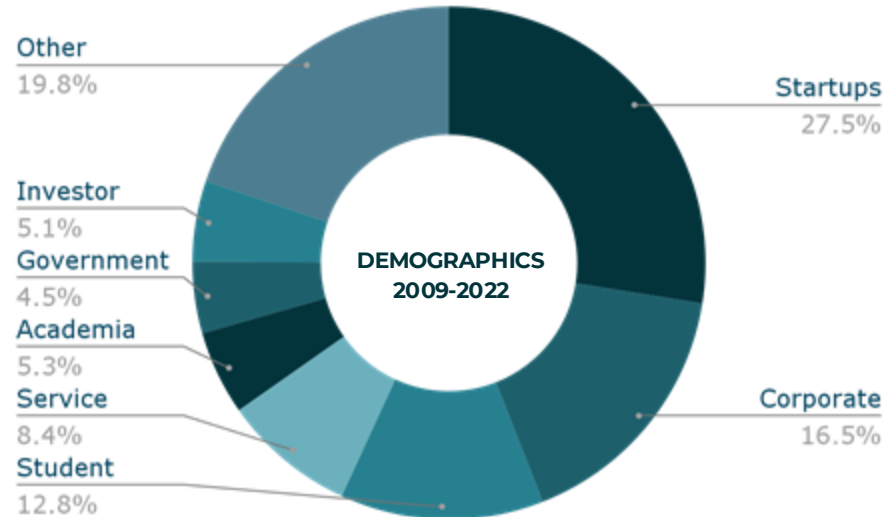
Demo Day will take place during Venture Café, a gathering created by CIC in 2009 to further strengthen local innovation ecosystems.

Through the Thursday Gathering—a weekly event that happens in 10 cities around the globe—we convene the entire ecosystem to facilitate connections and uncover opportunity at the intersections of people, ideas, and resources.

Venture Café Cambridge: 300+ visitors/week

Venture Café Tokyo: 300+ visitors/week

Since 2009, we have convened more than 650,000 innovators at Venture Café.



Our centers have rich networks, and work with myriad industries. Some examples include the industries listed, as well as other specialities.



MEDTECH



**DIGITAL
HEALTH**



CLEANTECH



ROBOTICS



PHARMACEUTICALS



BIOTECH



**LIFE
SCIENCES**

“

Lots of people lease space as a business—*but CIC is different* because of the culture they create through the *services and programs* they provide and the *connections* they help make happen.

– Patrick Mulvihill, Senior Vice President,
Leasing Properties

Some notable network connections include:



Johnson & Johnson



myomo[®]
my own motion

And others. Specific connections will be made as appropriate based on startups' interests and background.

PARTNERSHIP WITH MASSROBOTICS

2017 LAUNCH (BOSTON)

- **In 2017** CIC was a founding partner and co-creator of MassRobotics, the world's largest shared robotics lab. It houses 77 robotics companies today.
- **Formed by CIC** and leaders of major robotics and AI organizations, including iRobot, Amazon Robotics, Vecna, MIT
- **The largest** shared robotics innovation facility in the world
- **Space expanded** from 15K SF to 50K SF
- **Chosen by NASA** as home to one of only four of its most advanced humanoid robots



10,000+
COMPANIES

\$17B RAISED
BY OUR CLIENTS



Client Success Story

C4U (CRISPR 4 U)



C4U manages worldwide, patent rights to CRISPR-Cas3 gene editing technology platform, which offers significant benefits over CRISPR-Cas9 such as high specificity, wide genome deletion, and no off-target effects.

C4U have taken part in several Japan Desk cohort programs since 2020, starting first with their CEO. He found it so useful that that he then sent other members of his team to future programs to ensure they could receive the same high-level connections, trainings, and insights to aid in their business development.

C4U continued to work with their CIC-appointed mentor through the GAH program. The mentor helped them in the lead up to the BIO International Conference in Boston, and they had 30+ meetings scheduled during their visit in June. They are continuing to utilize their Boston network through connections that Japan Desk helped facilitate to grow their business overseas. Most recently, they shared a strategic partnership with Healiva SA to develop CRISPR-Cas3-based cell & gene therapy solutions.

Since joining CIC programs in 2020, C4U raised \$8.5 million in Series A funding in 2021, and approximately \$11M in Series B funding in 2023.

