

Column 5 Japan and Emerging countries CO-creation Project (Kanto Bureau of Economy, Trade and Industry)

The Kanto Bureau of Economy, Trade and Industry is engaging in the JECOP (Japan and Emerging countries CO-creation Project),²⁴³ intended to create “value co-creation business,” whereby companies in emerging countries, which we regard as co-creation partners, form partnerships with Japanese companies to create new products and services.

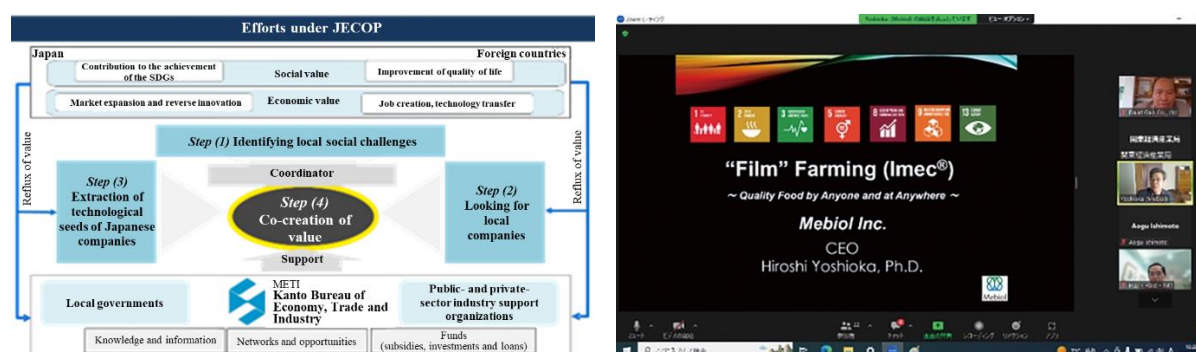
1. Project outline

Specifically, under this scheme, we first identify social challenges in foreign countries and the needs related to those local social challenges (Step 1), and then look for local companies that address those needs (Step 2). We support the matching between the local companies and Japanese companies possessing technological seeds that could meet the needs and resolve the challenges (Step 3).

In FY2022, matching events were held under the scheme in four countries, Viet Nam, Thailand, India, and Ethiopia.

Following the events, Mebiol Inc. (Hiratsuka City, Kanagawa Prefecture), which possesses an agrotechnology to grow plants on special film made of hydrogel, has been holding negotiations about a partnership with an agrotechnology company in Viet Nam. In addition, OUI (Shinjuku Ward, Tokyo), a venture firm derived from Keio University, is continuing negotiations about conducting a demonstration test for the Smart Eye Camera, a medical device for ophthalmological diagnosis that is attached to a smartphone, in partnership with hospitals in Ethiopia, where many people lose their eyesight or suffer from visual impairment caused by preventable and treatable diseases due to poor access to ophthalmological care.

Column Figure 5-1. Overview of Japan and Emerging countries CO-creation Project (JECOP) and scenes of business matching events



Source: *GUROO BARU KACHI KYOUSOU NO SUISHIN (JECOP)* (Kanto Bureau of Economy, Trade and Industry)

²⁴³ See the website of the Kanto Bureau of Economy, Trade and Industry, “Japan and Emerging countries CO-creation Project (JECOP)” (https://www.kanto.meti.go.jp/seisaku/kaigai_tenkai/jecop.html).

2. Training of coordinators

To develop value co-creation business, it is important to use coordinators knowledgeable about Steps 1 to 3. Therefore, in FY2022, the Kanto Bureau of Economy, Trade and Industry, in cooperation with the Association for Overseas Technical Cooperation and Sustainable Partnerships (AOTS), implemented training programs for local coordinators, which were targeted at alumni of the AOTS Alumni Societies, in three countries, Viet Nam, Thailand and India. Alumni of the societies are foreign people who have received training in Japanese in the past and who are contributing to local industries after returning to their home countries. As they have a high level of interest, understanding, and eagerness about JECOP, they are expected to make successful contributions to the project in the future.

Column Figure 5-2. Scenes from training programs for local coordinators



Note: Scenes from training programs for local coordinators in Viet Nam and India (shot by the Kanto Bureau of Economy, Trade and Industry)

Source: Excerpts from the JECOP special website *GENCHI KOODHINEETAA KENSHUU WO KAISAI SHIMASHITA (BETONAMU, INDO, TAI)* (Kanto Bureau of Economy, Trade and Industry).

3. Conclusion

As a result of the realization of partnerships between Japanese and local companies in foreign countries under this project, social value is expected to be created, including contribution to the SDGs in Japan and the improvement of quality of life in those foreign countries. As for economic value, market expansion and reverse innovation are expected in Japan, while job creation and technology transfer are expected in the foreign countries.

Finally, in order to make this project a sustainable one, support by public- and private-sector industry support organizations and local governments is important. Therefore, it is essential to establish systems that enable those support organizations to actively provide support and consider systems of collaboration among them.