

Meanwhile, the 2025 World Expo is set to attract participants from 160 countries and regions, as well as the United Nations, the European Union, ASEAN, the African Union Commission, and the International Red Cross. The expo's main theme is Designing Future Society for Our Lives, which is nothing less than the achievement of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and the introduction of Industry 5.0 and Society 5.0.

The expo will be a golden opportunity for Osaka and the broader Kansai region to demonstrate its ability to overcome global divisions and work with other countries to address increasingly complex social challenges and help make the SDGs, Industry 5.0, and Society 5.0 reality. With just a year to go, we must overcome negativity being directed toward the expo and remind ourselves of the true significance of holding the World Expo here in Osaka and the Kansai region.

We at the OCCI are working hard to facilitate collaboration among industries and fields, and to build up local factory networks, not only to boost the momentum of Osaka's post-Covid, innovative economy, but also to make a difference toward solving the many challenges facing society.

For instance, we are promoting cross-industry tie-ups and facilitating demonstration testing in the life sciences and wellness space—one of our region's particular strengths—with a focus on themes such as medical-industrial collaboration, disaster medical care, people-friendly hospitals, and reducing the burden on doctors and other medical personnel.

Meanwhile, the Osaka Health Care Pavilion, the expo pavilion of Osaka City and Prefecture, will support innovation by local manufacturers through exhibitions featuring local SMEs. These will focus on themes such as sustainable fashion, combining local factories' strengths to address global challenges, and the “wellness office.” In the run-up to the expo, the heart of the city is this being positioned as a forum for interaction and a testing ground for the future society, and to that end there are some major development projects underway, including the first and second phases of the Umekita area north of Osaka Station and the revamp of the Namba Station surrounds. At the same time, we must not neglect to burnish Osaka's tourist destinations, such as its many traditional shopping streets, cruises to Yumeshima, and the many, many festivals.

Moreover, are committed to helping revitalize the Greater Minami area, which extends from Osaka city's Minami neighborhood to Kansai International Airport and incorporates Osaka's southern districts, spreading the word about the many attractions, including its rich history, culture, and cuisine.

I am convinced that, as Japan has emerged from the chaos of the Covid era, now is time to unleash our wealth of strengths in the quest for new growth. One of our most important tasks is to support SMEs in Osaka and the Kansai region and help them build their businesses on sturdy bedrock. The OCCI and its five branches, the Osaka SME Revitalization Council, and the Osaka Business Ownership Succession Support Center make up a robust support regime, working alongside businesses to provide help for financing, mid-to-long-range planning, DX, IT, sales channel development, entry into new fields, overseas expansion, corporate revitalization, ownership succession, and more.

Looking to boost business with the ASEAN region? a global growth hub? have established the ASEAN-Japan Business Promotion Platform as a source of support for businesses in Osaka and throughout the ASEAN region to develop overseas sales channels and drive investment.

Thus, we at the OCCI call on companies of all sizes, from the hugest corporation to the tiniest start-up, and individuals of all ages to "yatte minahare"? have the ambition to dream big, take challenges, and never give up.

On behalf of everyone at the OCCI, I wish you a Happy New Year, and look forward to your ongoing support and cooperation in 2024.

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2. GIF OSAKA 2023 UPDATES

GIF Osaka Meet-ups

Meet-ups are a major part of GIF Osaka, in which the OCCI and the Osaka Business and Investment Center (O-BIC) seek to match up Japanese companies and startups with high-potential technologies from around the world.

The two winning startups visited Osaka on January 30 and 31, 2024, to meet with interested local companies.

Q5D Technology Limited

<https://gif.osaka.cci.or.jp/en/company/index.php?mode=show&seq=8>

IPtoki

<https://gif.osaka.cci.or.jp/en/company/index.php?mode=show&seq=10>

Find out more about GIF Osaka 2023 here:

<https://gif.osaka.cci.or.jp/en/overview/>

GIF Osaka Challenge: Joint Exhibition at CES

Kansai Startups Exhibit at CES, the World's Largest Trade Show

As part of the GIF Osaka Challenge, in which we at the OCCI offer support Japanese startups in their efforts toward international expansion, we helped 22 local startups from

Osaka, Hyogo, and Kyoto to exhibit in the Japan Tech booth, which we co-host within the startup-focused Eureka Park area of the 2024 Consumer Electronics Show (CES), the world's largest tradeshow, between January 9 and 12, 2024.

The Osaka-based exhibitors were:

Horiuchi Machinery (hydraulic cylinders that eliminate oil leaks and minimize electricity consumption)

Kaltec (innovative air purifiers that use photocatalysts)

Jikantechno (motor casings made from biomass carbons, resins, and magnetic materials)

Cool Flash (medical devices to treat hot flashes).

This year's CES was a huge affair, with participants from more than 150 countries and regions worldwide attracting some 130,000 visitors, a much larger audience than last year.

The Japan Tech booth was a popular stop for hungry businesses and media, too. One repeat participant and OCCI member reported that visitor numbers were way up over last year, and that the event had been very fruitful, including offers of investment and numerous in-depth talks with major corporations which were likely to lead to new business.

Find out more about the Japan Tech booth at CES here:

<https://ces-japantech.jp/>

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3. ASEAN-JAPAN BUSINESS PROMOTION PLATFORM NEWS

Steering Committee Holds 2nd Meeting in Osaka

The ASEAN-Japan Business Promotion Platform Steering Committee held its second meeting in Osaka on January 11-12, 2024, to exchange views on future activities. Staff from the platform member chambers of commerce in Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam were invited to attend and discuss projects to meet the needs of their countries. While here, they visited Xport (pronounced “cross port”), the city center hub for open innovation operated by the OCCI and the Osaka Institute of Technology, as well as the currently-under-construction venue of the 2025 World Expo to be hosted here in Osaka.

EEC Seminar and Discussion with EEC Secretary-General

On January 25, 2024, the OCCI held the Thailand Eastern Economic Corridor (EEC)

Business Seminar as part of its greentech-focused initiatives under the ASEAN-Japan

Business Promotion Platform. The seminar proved popular, attracting an audience of 70,

including business proprietors and others. This was followed the next by a visit to the OCCI by a 13-strong delegation led by EEC Secretary-General Chula Sukmanop to discuss reaffirm out two countries' close business ties.

Find out more (in Japanese) about the ASEAN Business Promotion Platform at:

<https://www.osaka.cci.or.jp/abp/>

Phone: +81-6-6944-6400

4. 2025 WORLD EXPO UPDATES

2025 World Expo Website Is Now Online!

The OCCI has launched a website showcasing the various pavilions of the 2025 World

Expo in Osaka as part of its efforts to generate momentum for the big event. The

different countries' and regions' pavilions are surely the star attraction of

any World Expo, and the excitement for the 2025 edition is building steadily with

each announcement of pavilion concepts and each groundbreaking ceremonies. The

OCCI's expo website meets a strong desire among participating countries to

promote their pavilions in Japan, providing an easy to read list of all pavilions.

The site launched with videos and other content provided by earlybirds Austria, Canada, Switzerland, and the Netherlands, and hot new content will be added as other countries' preparations progress.

In addition to heightening expectations for expo through means such as the website, the OCCI is also committed to building stronger ties with the participating countries with a view to promoting business exchanges between Osaka and those countries in future.

Check out the OCCI's 2025 World Expo website at

<https://www.osaka.cci.or.jp/expo2025/pavilion>

Launched: January 19, 2024

Hosted: Within the World Expo section of the OCCI's website

Want to have your country's or region's pavilion featured on our site? Contact us now at intl@osaka.cci.or.jp

Featured content: Videos showcasing the pavilions, their concepts and themes, etc.,
and links to each country's official websites

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5. NEWS FROM O-BIC

The Osaka Business and Investment Center (O-BIC) is scheduled to hold an online inspection “tour” for an overseas audience on February 26.

The event is designed to spread the word among the foreign business community in Japan and abroad about Osaka's cutting-edge technologies, business environment, and noteworthy projects. The tour is not only an opportunity to showcase Osaka as a place to do business, but also to raise O-BIC's profile outside Japan.

It is the perfect introduction for people who have heard about Osaka but never been, and who want to learn more about our city?particularly now that it is set to host the World Expo in 2025.

The organizers see the tour as a hassle-free way to get a feel for Osaka without

leaving home, and a small nudge of encouragement to those who may otherwise be put off by the effort of undertaking a real inspection tour.

When (all dates and times JST): February 26, 2024

15:00-15:15: An overview of the upcoming World Expo by the Japan Association for the 2025 World Exhibition

15:15-15:30: “Visit” to Eco-Plaza and overview of the latest environmental information

15:30-15:45: “Visit” to TEQS and introduction of 5G applications and other advanced technologies

15:45-15:50: Overview of all the things that make Osaka a great place to visit and do business (with a particular focus on tourism, MICE, etc.) by the Osaka Convention & Tourism Bureau

15:50-16:00: “Visit” to Eco Plaza and inspection of the 2025 World Expo venue currently under construction

O-BIC was established in April 2001 by the Osaka prefectural and city governments, and the Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry. It is a reliable, one-stop source of information, advice, and support for overseas businesses looking to invest in

Osaka, either as their first Japanese venture or in addition to other in-country operations, as well as overseas diplomatic missions. Part of O-BIC's activities include spreading the word internationally about the many things that make Osaka an excellent investment destination and place to do business.

Online inspection "tour" bookings and other contact:

Email: o-bic@osaka.cci.or.jp

Phone: +81-6-6944-6298

Check out the O-BIC LinkedIn account at: <https://www.linkedin.com/feed/>

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6. 2024 NOTO PENINSULA EARTHQUAKE

We at the OCCI would like to express our condolences and sympathies to the victims of, and the many people still affected by, the earthquake that struck the Noto Peninsula in Ishikawa Prefecture on New Year's Day 2024. The quake, which measured a maximum of seven on the Japanese "shindo" scale of seismic intensity, has caused extensive damage.

An urgent survey of OCCI member companies, which focused mainly on those based in

Osaka, revealed that 30% of respondents have either been impacted by the earthquake or are concerned about its future impact. Many expressed concern about the impact on supply chains.

At a press conference on January 1, 2024, OCCI Chairperson Shingo Torii noted the close personal and business ties between the Kansai region and the stricken areas. Where supply chains have been disrupted, the OCCI would provide necessary support.

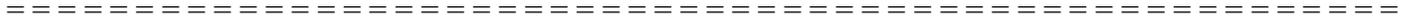
UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres also spoke about the earthquake, saying he was deeply saddened by the loss of life and damage. He offered his condolences to the families of the victims and wished those who were injured a speedy recovery.

The Japanese Red Cross Society is currently setting up relief activities in the affected areas and will work in cooperation with government agencies and other organizations to provide support. Details are available at:

<https://www.jrc.or.jp/english/relief/2024NotoPeninsulaEarthquake.html>

You Can Make a Difference: Donate Here!

<https://www.osaka.cci.or.jp/infomation/20240116.html>



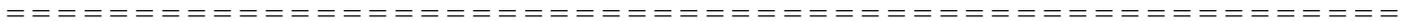
<Courtesy Visit (1th-30st January)>

(EEC : Eastern Economic Corridor) 26th January

- Dr. Chula Sukmanop, Secretary General

(Embassy of Uruguay in Japan)29th January

- H.E. Mrs. Victoria Eugenia, present Embassy of Uruguay in Japan. Ambassador



[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>

[linkedin]

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/osaka-o-bic-2025/recent-activity/all/>



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Back Numbers of OCCI e-Magazine: <http://www.osaka.cci.or.jp/e/emagazine/>



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