

EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation

Procurement documents

Contracting authority:

EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation

Procurement name:

Outsourcing the EU-Japan Regional and Clusters Cooperation Helpdesk in FY2023

Procurement reference number	022-WP7-23
Type of procurement procedure	Call for proposal
Code name	Promotion of Regional, Industrial Innovation and Business R&D Cooperation
Type of procurement contract	Services Contract
Name of the responsible person of the contracting authority	Fabrizio Mura

Terms of Reference

Preliminary remarks:

- (1) The "Centre" refers to the EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation, Tokyo, Japan, which is a general incorporated foundation established in Japan;
- (2) The "service provider" refers to the outside organization - legally independent from the EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation - whose services are requested by the EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation under the framework of this proposal;
- (3) The "EU-Japan Regional and Clusters Cooperation Helpdesk" is hereinafter referred to as the "EJR2C Helpdesk";
- (4) This proposal has 9 numbered pages;

**A) Submission of proposals**

Interested parties are required to submit a written proposal to the call for proposal to outsource the services of the "EU-Japan Regional and Clusters Cooperation Helpdesk in FY2023". To be valid, all written proposals must arrive at the Centre by e-mail, fax or post no later than **Friday 24 February 2023, 17h30, Tokyo local time.**

Contact:

**Attn: General Managers**

**EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation**

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### **Important notes**

1. Size limitation on e-mail attachments: all files and proposals attached by e-mail must be smaller than 10 Mega Bytes in total cumulative size (obtained by adding the sizes of all file attachments) – contact the Centre beforehand if you plan to send files with total cumulative size exceeding 10 Mega Bytes.
2. Acknowledgment of receipt: all submitted proposals will be returned by an acknowledgement of receipt from the Centre for validation purposes. All applicants who have sent their proposals must promptly confirm their sending by calling the Centre at +81 (0)3 6408-0281 (Attn: Deputy General Manager, EU side).

### **B) Service providers targeted in this call for proposal**

To be eligible, applicants must form a consortium which shall include one entity from the EU and one entity from Japan within the following categories:

- 1) In the EU: organizations officially belonging to or representing European regions, or Cluster Organizations with a legal representation based in the EU, which are officially recognized by the national or regional authority in which they are located.
- 2) In Japan: organizations officially belonging to or representing prefectural governments, cluster organizations or special economic zones with a legal representation based in Japan, which are officially recognized by the national or regional authority in which they are located.

The consortium shall submit one proposal only, written in English language which describes, among others, a plan to achieve the objectives of the project and the means used to carry out the project to a successful outcome.

The objectives of the EU-Japan Regional Cooperation Helpdesk are to support and strengthen industrial cooperation between regions and clusters in the EU (including European networks of regions and networks of clusters) with regions, prefectures and clusters in Japan.

The Helpdesk will focus on the following cooperation dimensions.

- Industry: support partnership building between EU and Japanese Regions/Clusters with the goal to promote industrial cooperation in particular involving SMEs and startups and including the organization of matchmaking events.
- Trade: raise awareness, guidance to SMEs to reap maximum benefits from the EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement, the Partnership on Sustainable Connectivity and Quality Infrastructure, the EU-Japan Green Alliance and the EU-Japan Digital Partnership.
- Investment: improve the investment environment in the regions and the local services to businesses, and facilitate concrete and tangible projects related to promoting investments.

- Innovation: promote regional innovation ecosystems approach and smart specialization, raising awareness about the Japanese and European research and innovation programmes.
- Tourism: promote cooperation to diversify and improve the range of tourism products and services such as sustainable tourism, tourism for seniors, and low-season tourism.
- People and jobs: enhance people-to-people connectivity, e.g. researchers, students, entrepreneurs, for study or work purposes.

In this context, cooperation can take the following forms of partnerships:

- 1 to 1: bilateral cooperation between one region / cluster in the EU and one prefecture / cluster in Japan
- 1 to Network: cooperation between a network of regions / clusters in the EU and one prefecture / cluster in Japan (or vice versa)
- 1+1 to 1 in a third country: EU-Japan region-to-region cooperation targeting a region / cluster in a third countries, in e.g. Asia, Latin America, Africa and EU neighboring countries.

The helpdesk must also help fulfill the Centre's strategic goals in terms of a) promoting all forms of industrial, trade and investment cooperation between the EU and Japan and b) strengthen the competitiveness and technological capabilities of the EU and Japanese industries *through* cooperation.

### C) Description of services to be rendered

The service provider shall:

- 1) Organize a “short-term mobility programme in Japan for EU Cluster managers” and bring 10 EU Cluster Managers to be hosted by Japanese counterpart organizations based in Japan within FY2023. Each selected EU Cluster Manager shall be matched with a suitable host in Japan and is expected to stay in Japan for a period of up to one and half months. The goals of this mobility programme will be in line with the European Commission's priority actions for supporting the internationalization of EU clusters in the context of Japan, e.g. a) to promote and support partnering with Japanese Clusters and counterpart organizations; b) to raise awareness about the excellence of EU innovation clusters with the aim to help EU clusters bring their innovative start-ups and SMEs to the Japanese market; and c) to explore various forms of cluster collaboration with Japanese counterpart organizations in the areas of research and innovation.
- 2) Assemble, update and manage the dissemination of information aimed at facilitating EU-Japan regional cooperation through a dedicated, easy-to-navigate website as well as through various media (newsletters, twitter, Facebook etc.). The website shall contain categorized information about existing EU and Japanese programmes and available funding which

facilitate regional cooperation, e.g. European Commission programmes related to international cooperation between regions and between clusters building upon the European Cluster Collaboration Platform's (hereinafter referred to as the ECCP) EU-Japan cluster cooperation section, JETRO's Support for Regional cooperation, EIB-JBIC MoU, activities of the EU-Japan Centre for Industrial cooperation, city2city cooperation, covenant of mayors, etc. The website shall also contain a dedicated and updated page with publications of cooperation profiles of EU and/or Japanese regions/clusters seeking to establish cooperation agreements with one another in the future; the service provider shall actively promote requests for cooperation with the aim to support the creation of at least 2 partnerships between EU and Japanese regions/clusters during the project lifespan.

- 3) Offer regular information and guidance to other regions and clusters in the EU and Japan in order to fully exploit these existing EU and Japanese programmes and funding, with the overarching outcome of furthering EU-Japan industrial cooperation along the objectives laid out in paragraph B).
- 4) Map out existing cooperation (in the form of an MoU) between EU and Japanese Regions / Clusters; document best practices and share experience of existing cooperation agreements between regions and clusters in the EU and Japan order to support new regional partnerships and develop further the existing ones. Identify needs and expectations / challenges and opportunities of regions and clusters in the EU and Japan interested in engaging in partnerships. Regularly publish the best practice cases on the helpdesk website.
- 5) Plan, prepare and organize quarterly webinars as well as 1 annual conference with the support and participation of European and Japanese regions in order to gather together interested members of the EU-Japan regional cooperation platform with the aim of presenting success stories, sharing best practices and pooling concrete ideas and suggestions towards better EU-Japan regional industrial cooperation. The conference shall also include a matchmaking event between regions and clusters to explore new /expand existing cooperation, and follow-up actions assessing the results in terms of cooperation cases initiated. Due to the ongoing COVID-19 global health crisis, the conference could be organized online.

### **Tandem Management of the Helpdesk**

The EJR2C Helpdesk will be managed by a tandem of two representatives belonging to one region/cluster in Europe and one prefecture/cluster in Japan which have already built a sustainable and experienced cooperation between them. The tandem will have to ensure full openness of the platform to any EU Regions / Japanese Prefectures / Clusters interested.

The tandem managing the Helpdesk will also have to closely interact with the (future) European and Japanese members of the regional cooperation platform, and with the ECCP especially with regard to the mapping of cluster actors.

The tandem could be hosted in the Tokyo and/or Brussels offices of the EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation if needed (in which case a formal request shall be made to the Centre).

In implementing the assignments described in paragraph C), the service provider shall contribute to producing the following deliverables:

1. 10 Shortlisted EU Cluster Managers and Japanese counterpart organizations which are matched to take part in the “short-term mobility programme in Japan for EU Cluster managers” (refer to paragraph C.1));
2. An interactive and easy-to-navigate homepage for EU and Japanese regions and clusters (refer to paragraph C.1) for more details) which shall be included under <http://www.eu-japan.eu> and respect the layout and format of the website;
3. A documented and publishable list of queries made by EU and Japanese regions or clusters which have expressed an interest in the EJR2C Helpdesk;
4. A list of cooperation profiles published by EU and Japanese regions seeking to establish region-to-region partnerships with the aim of supporting the creation of 2 such partnerships within the project lifespan;
5. A publishable document of best practices from existing EU-Japan regional cooperation agreements which shall include an analysis of challenges / benefits of cooperation / impacts for SMEs based in the region;
6. A short summary report of the annual conference, which is to be published on the EJR2C homepage under <http://www.eu-japan.eu> ;
7. A list mapping out existing EU-Japan Regional / Cluster cooperation agreements;

The maximum available budget to render the services under this call is set at 100k EUR, which shall be allocated to the consortium during the Japanese Fiscal Year 2023 (hereinafter referred to as FY2023, which starts on 1 April 2023 and ends on 31 March 2024) for: (i) fulfilling services listed under C.1), C.2), C.3), C.4) and C.5) on an ongoing basis; and (ii) preparing, promoting, executing and reporting about the annual conference. The Centre will set aside an additional 30k EUR to cover services specifically related to the annual conference, provided that 1) the consortium can demonstrate that these costs cannot be covered by the maximum available budget allocated to the ERJ2C Helpdesk; and 2) that these costs are justified and deemed necessary for the successful execution of the conference. The costs of these services will be paid directly by the Centre to relevant services provider(s).

#### **D) Request for pricing**

Applicants must quote fees for the following services (but not limited to), as described in paragraph C):

1. Assembling and managing the dissemination of relevant information through a

- dedicated website during the Japanese FY 2023;
2. Ongoing work for answering and documenting relevant queries made by other regions and clusters in the EU and Japan regarding EU-Japan regional cooperation;
  3. Work for organizing the annual conference;
  4. Relevant project management fees;

All costs must be quoted in EUR and must include VAT.

#### **E) Legal, economic and technical information required**

Interested service providers must hand in the following documents with their proposal:

1. Legal position: a copy of the papers indicating the professional registration of the service provider in agreement with the requirements set out in paragraph B). The papers must contain information about the service provider's legal status on the profession;
2. An up-to-date list of the directors and managers in the service provider's organization;
3. Technical capacity:
  - a) The service provider's CVs which shall include professional qualifications and experience in the fields directly relevant and/or adjacent to the areas covered in the scope of this call for proposal;
  - b) A list of projects in the field of advice and support to inquiries related to supporting and internationalizing regional cooperation carried out in the past 3 years with dates.

#### **F) Payment terms**

Payment is expected to be made directly as service fee for managing the EJR2C helpdesk, whose terms will be discussed with the selected applicant following the final selection procedure.

#### **G) Remarks**

1. The Centre reserves the right to request modifications of the services to be rendered within the framework of the EJR2C Helpdesk at any time during the execution of the contract by the service provider.
2. Relevant expenses will only be paid to the service provider who has been selected by this call for proposal.

#### **H) Award criteria**

The contract will be awarded on the basis of the following criteria to determine the best value for money:

1. Quality of the proposal: validity of the solution and ideas proposed for the implementation of the EJR2C helpdesk (30%).
2. Quality, profile, experience and ability to deliver by the service provider's staff selected to be in charge of the project (40%).
3. Total price (30%).

## I) Notes

### 1. Background about the EU-Japan Regional and Clusters Cooperation Helpdesk

The entry into force of the **EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)** on February 1st, 2019, marks the start of a new era for the European Union and Japan, as rightly highlighted by the EU-Japan Business Round Table. The EPA creates the largest open-trade zone in the world, which covers 600 million people. The majority of duties paid by EU companies exporting to Japan are removed. The EPA opens the Japanese market to EU agricultural exports and increases opportunities in sectors such as pharmaceuticals, medical devices, motor vehicles or transport equipment. It opens up services markets, in particular financial services and telecommunications, and improves the protection of intellectual property rights. The agreement removes obstacles to procurement in the railway sector. EU businesses are guaranteed non-discriminatory treatment in the procurement markets of 48 large cities in Japan. Another important agreement to take into account was signed in September 2019 as the **EU-Japan Partnership on Sustainable Connectivity and Quality Infrastructure** (see: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000521432.pdf>) whose goal shall also support EU-Japan partnership building in regions such as South-East Asia, Africa and the Indo-Pacific Region.

However, the entry into force of EPA is not the end of the story: it is actually the beginning. The priority for the EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation<sup>1</sup> is now implementing the EPA, in particular ensuring that businesses, in particular SMEs, reap the maximum benefits from the agreement. This means raising awareness with promotion campaigns, making information accessible, providing guidance and reaching out to SMEs.

This means also mobilizing important relays in Europe, in particular existing pan-European networks, such as the Enterprise Europe Network, the European Cluster Collaboration Platform and the networks of regions.

- The **Enterprise Europe Network**<sup>2</sup> helps businesses innovate and grow on an international scale. It is the world's largest support network for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with international ambitions. The Network is active in more than 60 countries worldwide. It brings together 3,000 experts from more than 600 member organisations – all

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.eu-japan.eu/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://een.ec.europa.eu/>

renowned for their excellence in business support. Member organisations include technology poles, innovation support organisations, universities and research institutes, regional development organisations, chambers of commerce and industry.

- The **European Cluster Collaboration Platform**<sup>3</sup> (ECCP) is an action of the Cluster Internationalisation Programme for SMEs funded under COSME launched by DG GROW of the European Commission in 2016. The ECCP provides networking and information support for clusters and their members aiming to improve their performance and increase their competitiveness through trans-national and international cooperation. The EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation organises yearly matchmaking missions<sup>4</sup> to Japan for EU Clusters and their SMEs members, notably thematic missions in the sectors of Biotechnology, Nanotechnology, and ICT.
- The **Clusters Go International**<sup>5</sup> scheme under COSME provides support to European Strategic Cluster Partnerships for Going International (ESCP-4i) that aim to develop and implement joint internationalisation strategies to support SME internationalisation towards third countries. They contribute to develop common actions (i.e. business missions, cooperation agreements, gateway services, export consortia, etc.) strengthening European SMEs access to specific third markets and initiating a long-term cooperation agenda with strategic partners in third countries. First generation (2016-2017): 15 co-funded partnerships and 10 partnerships on voluntary basis. Second generation (2018-2019): 25 co-funded partnerships, including 2 partnerships on earth observation data application and 2 partnerships in the defence and security sector. Of which 8 EU cluster partnerships are targeting Japan in a range of sectors.
- The **International Urban Cooperation (IUC) programme**<sup>6</sup> aims to enable cities to link up and share solutions to common problems. It is part of a long-term strategy by the European Union to foster sustainable urban development in cooperation with both the public and private sectors. IUC focus on 3 components (i) City-to-city cooperation on sustainable urban development by pairing up EU with non-EU partner cities, (ii) Sub-national action under the Global Covenant of Mayors initiative to reduce CO2 emission and adapt to climate change, and (iii) Inter-regional cooperation on innovation for local and regional development to share expertise on clustering, global value chains and smart specialization strategies.
- **European regional networks** have been set up in Europe such as ERRIN<sup>7</sup> (European Regions Research and Innovation Network) focusing on regional innovation ecosystems and knowledge exchange, SERN<sup>8</sup> (Startup Europe Regions Network) to promote scaling up and startup support, ENDR<sup>9</sup> (European network of Defence-related Regions) integrating defence into smart specialisation strategies, ECRN<sup>10</sup> (European Chemical region Network),

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.clustercollaboration.eu/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.eu-japan.eu/high-tech-cluster-support>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.clustercollaboration.eu/news/eu-commission-action-clusters-go-international-contributes-strongly-boost>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.iuc.eu/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.errin.eu/who-we-are>

<sup>8</sup> <http://startupregions.eu/>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.endr.eu/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://ecrn.net/>

MOBIREG<sup>11</sup> (Mobility of people between Regions) and many other networks mobilizing regions from different European countries on specific areas of common interest.

- On the Japanese side, several initiatives are also set up, such as the **JETRO Regional Industry Tie-Up**<sup>12</sup> (RIT) supporting the internationalisation of Japanese regions was developed by JETRO and has been running since 2007. JETRO supports business networking and meetings between industry clusters of Japanese SMEs and those from overseas regions, aiming to facilitate export, technology partnership and the joint development of products in software, contents and processed food as well as manufacturing and environmental areas.
- The EU-Japan Centre organised in November 2018 a **regional cooperation seminar**<sup>13</sup> to highlight examples of region-to-region cooperation and share experience with European and Japanese regions interested to engage in partnerships and cooperation related to industry, trade, investment and innovation. The seminar also touched upon Europe-Japan region-to-region cooperation targeting operations in third countries, such as in South East Asia, Latin America or Africa. Region-to-region cooperation appears to an effective means for bringing dynamism to local economy by notably internationalizing activities of local entities, including SMEs.
- **Synergies between region-to-region cooperation and the other activities of the EU-Japan Centre** are multiple given notably (i) the 3 helpdesks dealing with EPA implementation, public procurement, and technology transfer / intellectual property that all call for reaching out to SMEs, (ii) the Vulcanus actions in Europe and in Japan needing information and guidance at local level to ensure people mobility, (iii) research and innovation partnership where universities and innovation clusters at local level are essential stakeholders to mobilise and inform about EU-Japan opportunities for S&T cooperation, and (iv) the MoU between the Centre and Prefectures in Japan such as Osaka and Miyagi. Overall, regional cooperation will leverage the Centre activities<sup>14</sup>.

## 2. Suggested rollout schedule of services

Launch of the call for proposal:	Monday 16 January 2023
Closing of the call for proposal:	Friday 24 February 2023 17h30 Tokyo local time
Announcement of the winning bidder:	Week of the 20 February 2023
Expected kick-off of EJ2C Helpdesk:	Monday April 2023

End of document.

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<sup>11</sup> [http://www.mob-reg.eu/mobilitaeuropea/index.html?language=en\\_EN](http://www.mob-reg.eu/mobilitaeuropea/index.html?language=en_EN)

<sup>12</sup> [https://www.jetro.go.jp/ext\\_images/en/jetro/activities/business/rit.pdf](https://www.jetro.go.jp/ext_images/en/jetro/activities/business/rit.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.eu-japan.eu/events/cooperation-between-european-and-japanese-regions>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.eu-japan.eu/summary-activities>