

FAQ on Foreign Entrepreneurship Promotion Project

1. In regards to the “Foreign Entrepreneurship Promotion Project” System

Q1. How is it different from the “Business Manager” status of residence granted by the Regional Immigration Services Bureau?

A1.

This system was established as a special exception to the "Business Manager" status of residence. Normally, in order to qualify for this status, a foreign national must "secure a place of business" as well as "hire two or more full-time employees" or "invest 5 million yen or more" (landing examination criteria) upon landing in Japan. However, in Gifu Prefecture, in the case that the plan for new business preparation activities has been examined and confirmed by the prefecture, the foreign national can meet these criteria within a maximum of one year after landing or a change of status of residence.

While the normal procedures for status of residence are conducted at the Regional Immigration Services Bureau, this system requires two steps: first, the applicant must have his/her new business preparation activities confirmed by Gifu Prefecture, and then apply to the Regional Immigration Services Bureau with a "Certificate of Confirmation of Entrepreneurial Preparatory Activities" issued by Gifu Prefecture (along with other materials).

If you believe that you have already met the requirements for "Business Manager", please consult directly with the Regional Immigration Services Bureau for procedures. If you intend to start a business in Gifu Prefecture in the near future and expect to complete the preparations within one year, you may use this system to engage in new business preparation activities in Gifu Prefecture.

Q2. Who can use the system?

A2.

This system is available for use by foreign nationals who are newly starting a business within Gifu Prefecture. Both those who are currently residing abroad and those who are residing in Japan under other statuses ("Student," "Researcher," "Engineer/Specialist in Humanities/International Services," etc.) are eligible. There are certain conditions for changing from other statuses of residence, so please ask the Regional Immigration Services Bureau in advance. (See Question 3 and Question 9)

Q3. Can I start a new business in any industry?

A3.

The system is for one of the following businesses.

- (1) IT and IoT, etc. related field
- (2) Tourism field

Specific business activities and examples include the following:

<IT, IoT and Related Fields>

Business description: business improving the productivity of corporations, developing new corporate products and technologies, and creating additional corporate values by introducing and utilizing IT and IoT, etc.

Examples: manufacturing of data collection devices (sensors, etc.), robots and machine tools that automate through data analysis, systems (servers, AI, software, etc.) necessary for data linkage and analysis, or businesses that provide related services.

<Tourism Field>

Business description: business related to the expansion of tourism consumption in the prefecture and promotion of attracting tourists to the prefecture.

Examples: tourist information services, service businesses related to travel planning and arrangements, tourist facilities operators (accommodation facilities, transportation facilities, tourist souvenir sales facilities, outdoor activity facilities, etc. which are mainly offered for use by tourists. *Restaurants are not included.).

Q4. What aspects of the new business preparation activities are checked? Are there cases that I cannot receive a “Certificate of Confirmation of Entrepreneurial Preparatory Activities”?

A4.

The applicant's “Plan for New Business Preparation Activities,” etc. shall be reviewed to determine whether the said activities meet the requirements as stipulated in Notice No.5-6(1)((2) for renewal) on “Foreign Entrepreneurship Promotion Project” after obtaining an expert's opinion. The criteria include whether the new business is appropriate in forming a base for international economic activities, as well as strengthening the international competitiveness of Gifu Prefecture's industries, whether the business plan is appropriate and reliable, whether the business is expected to exceed a certain scale, whether the said activities are expected to result in the establishment of a place of business in Gifu Prefecture within one year (within six months for renewal), etc.

The term "appropriate and reliable business plan" means that the business is feasible and that the business is sufficiently likely to be continuously and stably operated. Therefore, the following information must be included in the submitted "Plan for New Business Preparation Activities" or attached documents in an easy-to-understand manner. If the submitted documents do not show sufficient feasibility, etc., we will not be able to confirm the new business preparation activities.

- What kind of business do you conduct? [Business description]
- Where do you conduct the business? [Business implementation region]
- Where do you open a business office? [Opening place]
- What kind of preparations and activities will you do before starting a business? [Specific plan prior to the start of business]
- How much money do you need to start a business (new business preparation activities)? How will you raise the money? [Funds for new business preparation activities]
- Who will be the officers of the corporation (when establishing a company) and what role will they play? [Corporate officer]
- What is the size of the business? [Business scale]
- Is housing secured during the period prior to the start of business (new business preparation activities)? Do you have enough money for living? [Residence, living expenses]

Q5. If I obtain a "Certificate of Confirmation of Entrepreneurial Preparatory Activities" from Gifu Prefecture, can I assuredly receive the status of residence of "Business Manager"?

A5.

The "Certificate of Confirmation for Entrepreneurial Preparatory Activities" issued by Gifu Prefecture is an important document for examination by the Regional Immigration Services Bureau, but just because you have the certificate does not guarantee that you will be granted the status of residence.

Q6. I currently live abroad. I am thinking of coming to Japan in the future, can I apply? Is it possible for the application form to be submitted by an individual other than myself?

A6.

It is also possible for an individual currently living abroad to apply. Documents to be submitted at the time of application must be brought to the designated place by an individual who falls under one of the following categories. Please note that applications by mail will not be accepted.

<Who can bring the documents?>

(1) Applicant

(2) Lawyer or a Certified Administrative Procedures Legal Specialist who is registered at Nagoya Regional Immigration Service Bureau via the Bar Association or the Certified Administrative Procedures Legal Specialists Association

(3) Staff of the business office in Japan for business to be managed by an applicant

(4) A Person or legal entity entrusted by an applicant for establishing a business office in Japan (in case of a legal entity, staff of the legal entity should submit the from)

* In the event that a person under the categories from (2) to (4) submits the documents, they are required to also submit documents that prove the relationship with applicant and their status in terms of the business concerned. .

This system is designed for those who intend to start a business that meets certain requirements by conducting new business preparation activities within Gifu Prefecture during the one-year period of stay, and to confirm such activities of the applicant in the cases of those whose plans are highly feasible. If the applicant is not expected to conduct new business preparation activities within Gifu Prefecture, we may not be able to confirm his/her new business preparation activities.

Q7. I currently live outside of Gifu Prefecture (in Japan). Can I apply for this system? I currently live in Gifu Prefecture, but I plan to move out of the prefecture in the near future. Can I still apply?

A7.

There are no restrictions on the applicant's current address. However, since the one-year new business preparation activities must be conducted within Gifu Prefecture and the new business office must also be established within Gifu Prefecture, it will be difficult to confirm the new business preparation activities if the applicant lives in an area that is not suitable for conducting activities within Gifu Prefecture during the period of the new business preparation activities.

Q8. I live in Gifu Prefecture and plan to establish my business office outside of Gifu Prefecture, can I use this system?

A8.

The system is intended for foreign nationals who are preparing to start a business within Gifu Prefecture and who plan to establish a business office in Gifu Prefecture in the future.

Q9. I have no experience in starting a business, can I still apply?

A9.

Although experience in starting a business is not necessarily required, applicants must meet one of the following criteria:

- Graduated from a university or received equivalent or higher education.
- Completion of a specialized course at a special training college in Japan.
- Have at least three years of work experience in a business related to the field in which the business is to be established.
- Have been engaged in the management or administration of a business related to the field of business in question for at least one year abroad.

* Except in cases where the applicant is expected to meet the criteria such as "hiring two or more full-time employees" or "investing 5 million yen or more" along with "securing a place of business" within 6 months.

Q10. I do not have a plan to start a business myself (not involved in the business), but a family member (relative) is planning to start a business within Gifu Prefecture. Can I also apply?

A10.

This system is intended for those who are newly starting their own business (business managers, executives, etc.), so other family members are not included in the applicant. Also, even family members who plan to work for the company as employees are not eligible for this system. However, there is a possibility that another status of residence may be applicable, so please contact the Regional Immigration Services Bureau.

Q11. I plan to take over and run the company currently managed by my acquaintance. Can I also use this system?

A.11

Since this system is intended for foreign nationals who are newly starting a business, you are not eligible. However, there is a possibility that another status of residence may be applicable, so please contact the Regional Immigration Services Bureau.

Q12. We plan to start a business jointly with two or more people. How should I apply?

A.12

The status of residence is certified individually. Please complete and submit the application form for each individual. In case two or more individuals start a business

jointly, the contents of "2 Business Outline" to "4 Financial Plan at the Time of Opening" etc. of the "Plan for New Business Preparation Activities" may be the same, but each individual needs to apply after preparing the relevant documents.

Q13. I plan to start a business with two or more individuals, but I will be the only one involved in running the business and the others will work as employees. How should I apply?

A13.

This system is intended for "Management" under the "Business Manager" status of residence. In other words, it is intended for foreign nationals who are newly starting a business by themselves (as a manager), so even if you are a member of a start-up company, employees and others are not eligible. Whether or not an individual is "involved in the management of the business" is substantially determined by investment in the business (ratio), role in the business, etc. Therefore, only those who are involved in the management of the business should apply.

2. Application Procedures

Q14. Where can I obtain an application form? And where should I submit it?

A14.

Application forms can be downloaded from the "Gifu Prefecture website" or can also be obtained at the following location:

Industry Human Resources Division
Department of Commerce , Labor and Industry
Gifu Prefectural Government
(11F of the Gifu Prefectural Government Building
2-1-1 Yabuta-minami, Gifu City)

Documents to be submitted at the time of application should be brought to the "Industry Human Resources Division, Department of Commerce, Labor and Industry, Gifu Prefectural Government" during office hours (8:30 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. (closed on Saturdays, Sundays, national holidays and year-end/New Year holidays)) by an individual who falls under one of the following categories. Please note that applications by mail will not be accepted.

<Individuals who can bring the documents>

- (1) The applicant himself/herself
- (2) An attorney or an administrative notary who has notified the Director General of the Nagoya Regional Immigration Service Bureau via the Bar Association or Administrative Notary Association to which he/she belongs
- (3) A staff member of the domestic business office of the business to be managed by the applicant
- (4) An individual who has been commissioned by the applicant to establish a domestic business office (in the case of a corporation, a staff member of the corporation)

* When individuals (2) to (4) bring the documents, please submit documents that show the relationship with the foreign national in question and documents that prove that the individual is in such a position.

Q15. How long does it take to receive a response after I apply?

A15.

If all required documents are in order, Gifu Prefecture will reply to the applicant

with the results of the confirmation of new business preparation activities in about one month. However, if the documents are incomplete, or if additional certifications or other documents are required, more time may be needed.

Q16. After submitting my application, I decided to change my address (or contact information), business description, etc. What should I do?

A16.

If you change your address (or contact information) or business description, please contact us immediately and submit a "Notification of Change" along with documents showing the change. Please explain the change in business description, etc. at the progress check that takes place about once a month.

Q17. How will you contact me with the results?

A17.

If the application for the confirmation of new business preparation activities is deemed appropriate and meets all the requirements (hereinafter referred to as "said requirements") as stipulated in Notice No.5-6(1)((2) for renewal) on Foreign Entrepreneurship Promotion Project, a "Certificate of Confirmation of Entrepreneurial Preparatory Activities" will be issued. The individual in charge will contact you regarding the issuance procedure.

If the application is incomplete or if it is deemed that all or part of the said requirements are not met, the applicant will be notified that a "Certificate of Confirmation of Entrepreneurial Preparatory Activities" has not been issued by a "Notice of Decision Concerning Confirmation of Entrepreneurial Preparatory Activities" by mail.

3. About Filling Out the “Plan for New Business Preparation Activities” and Other Forms

Q18. I am not sure how to fill out the form, where can I go for assistance?

A18.

The Industry Human Resources Division of the Gifu Prefectural Government will answer your questions.

Q19. I don't have enough space to fill out the information within the documents I received. What should I do?

A19.

If you download the form, you can expand the spacing by inserting a line. When writing on the distributed paper, please attach additional paper as appropriate and write out the necessary contents.

Q20. Can I fill out the forms in my own language? If the attached documents (originals) are not in Japanese, do I need to provide a Japanese translation?

A20.

Please fill out all application forms and other documents in Japanese. Names should be written in alphabet, kanji, or kana (hiragana and katakana). If you are submitting non-Japanese documents (copies of certificates, etc.), please attach a Japanese translation.

Q21. I am currently staying in a hotel for a short period of time. What should I put as the address on my application?

A21.

For the address on the application form, you are required to provide a residence address where you can be contacted during the period of stay for one year (6 months for renewal), as well as at the time of the issuance of the “Certificate of Confirmation of Entrepreneurial Preparatory Activities.” If you have no choice but to change your address after the application is submitted and before the end of your period of stay, please notify the address where you submitted the application documents so that we can contact you at any given time.

Q22. From what point in time should I record my career history on the resume sheet? What should I do if there is too much information about my education and work experience?

A22.

There are no restrictions on what you can include, but please include information that will help us evaluate the feasibility of your new business or preparation activities, such as your school major and research, work experience and achievements, etc. If there is not enough space, you may insert lines or add additional paper.

Q23. I do not have a complete overall picture of the business I will be undertaking. Can I leave the areas that cannot be filled in blank?

A23.

The "Plan for New Business Preparation Activities" should describe the contents that can be realized and implemented in the future with some grounds. Please do not fill in anything that is not feasible or very unlikely. If you are unable to fill in some items, you may leave them blank. However, as we will use the information in the plan to determine whether it is feasible or not, we recommend that you take the time to review your business plan before submitting your application if you have too many blank items.

Q24. What should be written in "1. Outline of Applicant (2) Position/Role of the Applicant in the Business" in the "Plan for New Business Preparation Activities" (Form No. 1-3)?

A24.

If you are essentially starting a business on your own (e.g., wholly owned), your description would be "representative director," "general management," or "overseeing the entire business as a representative." If you are starting (or applying for) a joint venture with another foreigner, or if there is another Japanese business manager, you may describe your specific role in the business, such as "Vice President of Sales, responsible for sales in XX region," "Director, responsible for planning, development, and production of XX project," "Financial Director, responsible for fundraising and financial management," and so on.

Q25. I can't think of anything to write in the "1. Outline of Applicant (2) Qualifications, Work Experience, Special Skills, Intellectual Property Rights Held, etc., that Would Provide Background for Starting a Business" in the "Plan for New Business Preparation Activities" (Form No. 1-3). What should I write?

A25.

In reviewing the "Plan for New Business Preparation Activities," we will focus on the feasibility of the applicant's ability to start the scale of business that meets the requirements through the preparation activities. If the applicant has qualifications,

experience, or skills that will be advantageous to the business he/she intends to start, the feasibility of the business can be considered to increase. In addition to national qualifications, for example, it may be effective if the applicant states that he/she "majored in AA at university and conducted extensive research on BB" or "developed sales channels for CC products to major companies in the DD industry, such as EE and FF."

Q26. In reference to "1. Outline of Applicant (5) Plans for Starting a Business" in the "Plan for New Business Preparation Activities" (Form No. 1-3), I plan to start a business without forming a company. What should I write for the "a. Expected Date of Business Opening" and "b. Total Capital and Investment (or own funds)"?

A26.

Generally, when starting a business as a corporation such as a joint-stock company, the date of registration of incorporation is considered as the date of commencement of business, and when starting as an individual business without forming a company, the date of commencement of business as stated in the "Notification of Commencement" (submitted to the tax office) or the date when the first sales are recorded may be considered as such. In the case of individual business owner, instead of capital, enter the amount of business funds specifically provided for starting the business in the "own funds" column.

Q27. Since I have just arrived in Japan, I cannot come up with specific details and amounts (levels) for the customer, sales unit price, cost breakdown, etc., as required in "2. Outline of Business" in the "Plan for New Business Preparation Activities" (Form No. 1-3). What should I do?

A27.

Starting a new business requires a lot of funds, a great deal of effort, and the risk of failure is not small. We recommend that you apply only after you have acquired sufficient knowledge in your field of expertise and established a concrete image of your business.

Q28. I am not sure how many sales will be made in the future or how much they will cost. How should I write in "3. Profit Plan" in the "Plan for New Business Preparation Activities" (Form No. 1-3)? Also, what items should I include in the breakdown of sales and expenses?

A28.

We understand that it may be difficult to forecast future sales and expenses. However, since they are essential to determine the sustainability of the business and to check the key points for checking the new business preparation activities

described in question 4, please include figures that are in line with the nature of the business and customers you are expecting (e.g., average unit price, number of customers), with some grounds. Please provide a breakdown of sales and expenses in terms of typical items (e.g., large amounts, items that indicate the characteristics of the business, etc.); other items may be summarized as "other. In general, sales are often broken down by type of product/service or by customer. Cost of sales includes material costs, subcontracting costs, and labor costs (labor costs for individuals in charge of production), while selling, general and administrative expenses include labor costs (labor costs for indirect departments), rent and rental costs, and sales-related expenses (advertising, communication, travel, shipping, etc.). Interest expense, extraordinary losses, and income taxes are subtracted from operating income (loss) to arrive at net income (loss) after taxes.

Q29. What should I write in "4. Financial Plan for Opening a Business" in the "Plan for New Business Preparation Activities" (Form No. 1-3)? What is the difference from "3. Profit Plan"?

A29.

In general, the financial plan indicates how the funds required for the business will be raised and managed, while the profit plan indicates how much profit (loss) will be generated by subtracting expenses from sales. Particularly, in "4. Financial Plan for Opening a Business," based on one year of preparation (new business preparation activities), please indicate the funds needed to open a business and how to raise and repay those funds, so that we can evaluate the feasibility of the applicant's starting the scale of business that meets the requirements for the status of residence. For example, for the necessary funds, enter the store's deposit, interior construction costs, machinery and equipment, fixtures and fittings, and working capital for purchases and payment of expenses, etc. For the method of procurement, enter the applicant's own funds, loans from banks and other financial institutions, loans from relatives, etc., and make sure that the total amount of necessary funds and procurement method match the total of each.

Q30. I intend to work in Japan during the period of stay granted under this system and save the funds necessary to start a business. If so, do I still need to describe how to raise the funds?

A30.

The maximum one-year period of stay granted under this system is for the purpose of conducting new business preparation activities, and as a rule, working (activities outside the status of residence) is not allowed. If the applicant has not secured the necessary funds in advance for one year's living and preparation

activities, it will be difficult to confirm the preparation activities.

Q31. The “Schedule for New Business Activities (Form No. 1-4) is vague and I am not sure what to write. What are the key points in filling it out?

A31.

Please provide a step-by-step description of what needs to be done before starting the business in terms of administrative procedures such as incorporation (preparation of articles of incorporation, payment of capital, registration of incorporation, obtaining permits and licenses, etc.), hiring management executives and employees, preparing products and services, building relationships with customers and suppliers, and obtaining funds. Please keep in mind to identify the key points for checking the new business preparation activities described in A4. Particularly, you need to provide realistic details of how much funding is needed at each stage and how you will procure said funding.

Q32. I plan to start a business immediately. Even in such a case, do I still need to write a one-year schedule on the “Schedule for New Business Activities (Form No. 1-4)?

A32.

In that case, regarding after starting the business, please describe your plans for business development (sales activities, production activities, etc.), sales, funding, etc. of the business you have started.

4. Other

Q33. What exactly are "Documents that verify the applicant's address during the period of one year after their arrival in Japan or change in their status of residence" (see Form No. 1)?

A33.

If you are planning to stay in a rental house, a lease agreement or rental application form, etc.; if you are planning to stay at an accommodation facility for long-term residents, proof of reservation with the facility; if you are staying at the residence of an acquaintance, etc., a document that acknowledges the stay made by the acquaintance, etc. and a document certifying the residence of the acquaintance, etc. (copy of lease agreement, etc.) and so on. If rent is required, a document that proves that the applicant can pay the rent for at least one year (proof of bank balance) is also necessary.

Q34. What exactly are "Documents that verify the applicant's ability to cover their expenses for staying in Japan during the period of one year after their arrival in Japan or change in the status of residence" (see Form No. 1)?

A34.

Documents proving that business (living) funds have been secured (e.g., a copy of the applicant's bank book) must be submitted.

Q35. What exactly are "other documents required by the Governor of Gifu Prefecture" (see Form No. 1)?

A35.

Please submit any documents that will help Gifu Prefecture confirm your new business preparation activities (pamphlet of the business (company) you are going to start, product (service) descriptions, contracts with (potential) customers, and documents proving your career and achievements)

Q36. Is there a validity period for the "Certificate of Confirmation of Entrepreneurial Preparatory Activities" issued by the Prefecture?

A36.

The validity period is three months. Within the validity period, this Certificate must be submitted to the Nagoya Regional Immigration Services Bureau (Gifu Branch Office) together with the prescribed attached documents, and an application for Certificate of Eligibility for the Status of Residence (application for permission for

change of status) must be filed.

Q37. Even after obtaining the status of residence "Designated Activities" under this system, I am still subject to confirmation of the progress of the plan for new business preparation activities. What exactly will need to be confirmed?

A37.

The progress of your new business preparation activity plan will be checked about once a month. In principle, a prefectural official will visit your business office or residence to interview you about the status of your new business preparation activities and compare your actual activities with the plan described in your business start-up preparation activity plan. In addition, we may ask to see your savings account books, etc. to confirm your financial situation. These investigations will be conducted on the premise that the applicant agrees to cooperate when applying for "Confirmation of Preparatory Activities for Starting a Business (*The applicant will be required to submit a "Letter of Commitment " with his/her name, and seal or signature.)

Q38. I would like to continue to engage in new business preparation activities after the expiration of my initial 6-month period of stay. What should I do?

A38.

If you wish to renew your period of stay, you must apply for permission to extend your period of stay at the Nagoya Regional Immigration Services Bureau (Gifu Branch Office) approximately three months prior to the expiration of your period of stay. A "Certificate of Confirmation of Entrepreneurial Preparatory Activities (for Renewal) from the prefecture is required for the application procedure, so please submit an application for Confirmation of Renewal of Entrepreneurial Preparatory Activities to the prefecture first. Please note that it takes about one month from the receipt of the application to the issuance of the Certificate of Confirmation of Entrepreneurial Preparatory Activities (for Renewal), so please submit the application well in advance.

Q39. What procedures are required when the one-year period of stay expires?

A39.

If you wish to continue to reside in Japan and manage a business for more than one year after landing or changing your status of residence, please complete the procedures for extension of period of stay at the Nagoya Regional Immigration Services Bureau (Gifu Branch Office) in the same manner as foreign nationals to whom this special measure does not apply. If it becomes difficult to continue the new business preparation activities during the period of stay, or if the renewal of the

period of stay for "Business Manager" is not approved, the foreign national will return to his/her home country. Travel expenses to return home (equivalent to a one-way airline ticket to your home country) must be secured separately from the business funds.

Q40. I would like a consultation about a business plan or sales strategy. Is there a point of contact for this?

A40.

At the Gifu Prefecture Yorozu Support Center and the Gifu Industrial Economic Promotion Center (OKB Fureai Kaikan 10F, 5-14-53 Yabuta-minami, Gifu City), various consultation services are available to help you prepare for starting a business. (Only Japanese-language services are available.).

Please ask the application desk (Industrial Human Resources Division, Department of Commerce, Labor and Industry, Gifu Prefectural Government) for the application form for the "Certificate of "Confirmation of Entrepreneurial Preparatory Activities."

Q41. Can you direct me to somewhere for housing or office space?

A41.

If you meet the requirements for housing, you can use prefectural housing in Gifu Prefecture (14 locations in total within the prefecture). For more details, please contact the Gifu Housing Development Public Corporation.

Tel: 0584-81-8503

Address: Workshop 24, 6F , 6-52-18 Imajuku, Ogaki City, Gifu Prefecture

If you are in a business related to IT, IoT, etc. and meet the requirements, you can also rent office space at Softopia Japan (4-1-7 Kagano, Ogaki City) .

Please contact Softopia Japan Center for more details.

Tel: 0584-77-1111

Address: 4-1-7 Kagano, Ogaki-City, Gifu Prefecture

Q42. I don't have a knowledge of Japanese in relation to administrative procedures. Is there a place where I can get an interpreter?

A42.

The Gifu Prefectural Consultation Center for Foreign Residents provides interpretation services for consultations on administrative procedures and daily life through a three-way call to the relevant department of the prefecture or municipality.

For more details, please ask the Gifu Prefectural Consultation Center for Foreign Residents.

Tel: 058-263-8066

Address: Gifu Chunichi Building 2F, 1-12 Yanagase-dori, Gifu City, Gifu Prefecture

Opening Hours: Monday-Friday 9:30-16:30 (except year-end/New Year holidays
and national holidays)