

Memorandum of Understanding among the Embassy of the Republic of Finland in Japan, the City of Sapporo, and MURC

We are pleased to announce that Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting Co., Ltd. (“MURC”; headquartered in Tokyo, President: Masakazu Ikeda), Embassy of Finland Trade Section in Japan (“Business Finland”; Country Director: Kimmo Ojuva), and the Economic & Tourism Affairs Bureau of the City of Sapporo, Hokkaido (“Sapporo”; Director General: Toshinari Tanaka) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) intended to promote collaboration and cooperation for start-up development and innovation creation in both Finland and Sapporo.

1. Background

Finland has been a leader in the global start-up scene since the early 2000s and has made the transition to open innovation, where start-ups, large companies, universities, research institutions, and other diverse players work together. Today, Finland is home to some of the world’s leading start-up ecosystems, including the cities of Espoo and Oulu. In addition, Slush, the world’s leading start-up event, is also held in Finland.

Recognizing the importance of forming a start-up ecosystem for the creation of regional innovation, Sapporo has been working since the 1990s to establish start-up ecosystems through collaboration among industry, academia, and government. Currently, Sapporo is home to several start-up ecosystems and is providing support to local start-ups, with the aim of playing an active role on the global stage.

MURC has a proven track record of promoting regional open innovation in Japan and has established a cooperative relationship with Finland and Sapporo in order to support start-ups. To promote this mutual cooperation in a systematic manner, Finland, Sapporo, and MURC will work together to build a collaborative relationship with the aim of realizing an unprecedented level of innovative value creation.

Based on this MoU, the three parties will utilize their respective knowledge and networks to promote initiatives in various fields to contribute to the growth of start-ups in Finland and Sapporo by hosting seminars, business matching events, and so on as well as by promoting the development of human resources and exchanges between companies.



From left to right: Ambassador Pekka Orpana (Embassy of Finland in Japan), Social Innovation Evangelist Kensuke Nakajima (MURC), Country Director of Business Finland Kimmo Ojuva (Embassy of Finland in Japan), Director General of Economic & Tourism Affairs Toshinari Tanaka (Sapporo), and Deputy Mayor Toshiya Ishikawa (Sapporo)

2. Overview of organization

■ Embassy of Finland Trade Section (Business Finland)

Embassy of Finland Trade Section is a government agency under the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment in Finland. It aims to promote Finnish companies internationally and create a world-class business ecosystem by providing innovation support to companies, attracting foreign companies to invest in Finland, and promoting trade and tourism.

■ Economic & Tourism Affairs Bureau of the City of Sapporo

The Economic & Tourism Affairs Bureau of the City of Sapporo is the main department in charge of industrial and tourism policies. Among other things, it is responsible for the promotion of commerce, industry, and agriculture; the planning and coordination of small and medium - sized enterprise support programs; the planning and promotion of tourism and MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions); the planning and promotion of international economic exchange; and the promotion of innovation and start-ups.

■ Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting Co., Ltd.

MURC is a think tank and consulting firm within the Mitsubishi UFJ Financial Group (MUFG). It has offices in Tokyo, Nagoya, and Osaka and drives a variety of projects, including consultancy services for firms, policy research for national and local governments, management information services, human resource development, and economic research.

■ For more information

Social Impact Partnership Business Dept., Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting, Co., Ltd.
5-11-2 Toranomom, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105-8501, Japan

Email: ivc-sip@murc.jp

Points of contact: Mr. Kensuke Nakajima, Ms. Natsumi Kanajiri, and Mr. Tomohiro Suzuki

■ Media contacts

Corporate Communications Dept., Mitsubishi UFJ Research and Consulting, Co., Ltd.

E-mail: info@murc.jp