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August 26, 2021: GIF Osaka 2021 pre-event: Chinese Start-up Ecosystem Seminar

<https://www.osaka.cci.or.jp/event/seminar/202107/D11210826021.html>

September 9, 2021: GIF Osaka 2021 pre-event: Nordic Startup Ecosystem Seminar (line-up to be announced soon)

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2. THE OCCI AND THE GERMAN CONSULATE OSAKA-KOBE JOINT ONLINE SEMINAR “SUPPORT FOR BALANCING WORK AND CHILDCARE”

The OCCI and the German Consulate Osaka-Kobe celebrated 160 years of Japanese-German friendship with a joint online seminar titled Support for Balancing Work and Childcare: Efforts by Governments and Companies. The event attracted an audience of 108.

In response to a question from Martin Eberts, Consul General of the Federal Republic of Germany, Osaka-Kobe, about the most effective measures for balancing work and childcare, Tomoko Fujita, manager of the Corporate QA and Safety Vigilance Division at Rohto Pharmaceutical, said that for a company to establish systems that benefited both the company and its female employees required a deliberate effort by the company to incorporate women into the decision-making process.

OCCI Vice-Chair Kyoko Hirose said it was important to follow Germany’s example of guaranteeing that both men and women can return to their original positions after childcare leave, thus allowing them to take

leave with confidence.

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3. RESULTS OF THE 82ND BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC TREND SURVEY (ANNOUNCED IN JUNE 2021)

Survey Indicates Businesses Feel the Economy is Declining but Will Soon Improve

The OCCI and the Kansai Economic Federation have released the results of the 82nd Business and Economic Trend Survey, a quarterly, fill-in poll of member companies regarding their businesses and their perceptions of the economy. The survey was conducted between mid and late May; survey forms were sent to 1,570 companies, and 375 responses were received (RR: 23.9%).

The results show that 12.6% of respondents believed that the Japanese economy was improving in the April-June quarter of 2021 over the preceding quarter, and 41.2% believed it was declining. The business survey index score (BSI; calculated by subtracting the number of “decline” responses from the number of “improve” responses) was -28.6. Despite improving slightly from -29.5 in the previous quarter, this was the tenth straight quarter in which respondents returned a negative BSI score in this category.

However, when asked about the economic outlook moving forward, respondents predicted that the economy would improve, returning a BSI score of 0.8 for the July-September quarter, and 20.4 for the October-December quarter.

By scale of business, both large corporations and SMEs returned negative BSI scores for the April-June quarter. Only large corporations returned positive BSI scores for the July-September quarter, but they were joined by SMEs for the October-December quarter.

When asked for overall judgments regarding business confidence, 18.0% of respondents believed that the

situation was improving in the April-June quarter of 2021 over the preceding quarter, and 33.8% believed it was declining, resulting in a BSI of -15.8, the second straight quarter of negative BSI.

However, when asked about the outlook for their business moving forward, respondents predicted that their businesses would improve, returning a BSI of 0.8 for the July-September quarter, and 9.5 for the October-December quarter.

By scale of business, large corporations returned a BSI score of -13.6, lower than the preceding survey, and SMEs returned a slightly improved BSI score of -17.6.

When asked for their chief business concerns (multiple choice question) for FY2021, the most common responses were “stagnant demand in the Japanese market” (57.9%) and “regulations and restrictions on business activity” (54.9%). Among manufacturers, the most common responses were “stagnant demand in the Japanese market” (54.9%) and “rising procurement costs of materials and products” (52.9%).

When asked about the challenges they faced regarding digitalization of work processes, the most common response was “securing sufficient workers” at 50.9%, followed by “organizing work processes and adjusting procedures for digitalization” (45.6%) and “cost of developing or purchasing systems” (43.5%). Among non-manufacturing businesses, the most common response was “organizing work processes and adjusting procedures for digitalization” (48.6%).

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4. VIP REPORTS

6/25 MR. BENJAMIN YAU, DIRECTOR, HONG KONG TRADE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

Benjamin Yau, director of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council in Japan, said, “The Hong Kong Trade

Development Council and the OCCI have a long history of cooperation. As the Covid-19 pandemic drags on, let us continue to work together to overcome challenges and promote further economic exchange between Hong Kong and Osaka.”

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5. ALL THE LATEST ON EXPO 2025 OSAKA, KANSAI, JAPAN-REPORT ON THE SYMPOSIUM “OSAKA REBORN: THE 2025 WORLD EXPO AS A DRIVER OF NEW GROWTH,”

On June 23, 2021, the OCCI teamed up with the Osaka headquarters of Nikkei Inc. to hold “Osaka Reborn: The 2025 World Expo as a Driver of New Growth,” a live-streamed online symposium. The event attracted an audience of around 600. Viewers were treated to a sneak peek at how the host-town pavilion—the Osaka Pavilion—is coming along, as well as an expert panel discussion. The experts exchanged ideas about exhibiting in a way that showcases all that’s good about Osaka, about bringing a diverse range of businesses on board in order to generate long-lasting flow-on effects for the greater Osaka area, and about making sure that this leads to further growth for Osaka and the Kansai region.

In his opening remarks, OCCI Chairman Hiroshi Ozaki said that the World Expo is an ideal forum for showcasing ideas for a new kind of future society, ideas designed by a region that has worked hard to overcome the chaos of Covid-19. The Osaka Pavilion’s theme, “Reborn,” is indeed apt as we hope the World Expo will serve as the departure point for Osaka’s journey to become that future society.

Prof. Ryuichi Morishita, producer of the Osaka Pavilion and a member of the Osaka Pavilion Committee, introduced a variety of ideas in keeping with the Osaka Pavilion’s focus on health and medicine, including using health check-up data to make personalized meal suggestions. He reiterated the need for a cohesive framework in which universities, research institutions, SMEs, and start-ups can work together on the Osaka Pavilion’s exhibits in a way that leads to ongoing innovation in the post-expo future. Prof. Morishita also spoke of what the legacy of Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai, Japan might be, and suggested an economic zone with a local digital currency run on an infrastructure that allowed for the collection and use of positional and biological information, as well as hospitals of the future.

Yoji Sakuma, visiting researcher at the Osaka University Center for Global Initiatives,, spoke about Virtual Osaka, a “place” that people around the world can visit online in the run-up to the expo. By turning people into “fans” of Osaka and encouraging them to visit in person, the Virtual Osaka concept was potentially a new way to hold events like the World Expo.

Yuko Suzuki, founder and president of Musubi, a food and beverage marketing company based in Osaka, and a producer of the Osaka Food Creation City Organization, pointed out that Osaka, which is widely known in Japan as a culinary capital, is not recognized that way overseas. She spoke of the need to showcase Osaka in a way that is most attractive to the target audience, of the need for each and every local chef to promote Osaka, and of the need for an incubation hub for food entrepreneurs.

-The list of countries raising their hands to exhibit at the
World Expo in 2025 continues to grow

Cambodia, Central African Republic, Comoros, Cuba, Kuwait, Mexico, Mozambique, Romania, and the UK announced their participation on June 15, followed by Kazakhstan, Spain, the UAE, and the European Union on July 2; the Republic of Korea and the USA on July 16; and Portugal on July 30.

The current number of participants stands at 49 countries and five international organizations, well on the way to organizers’ goal of 150 countries and 25 international organizations.

See the EXPO 2025 website for more.

<https://www.expo2025.or.jp/en/>

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[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>



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