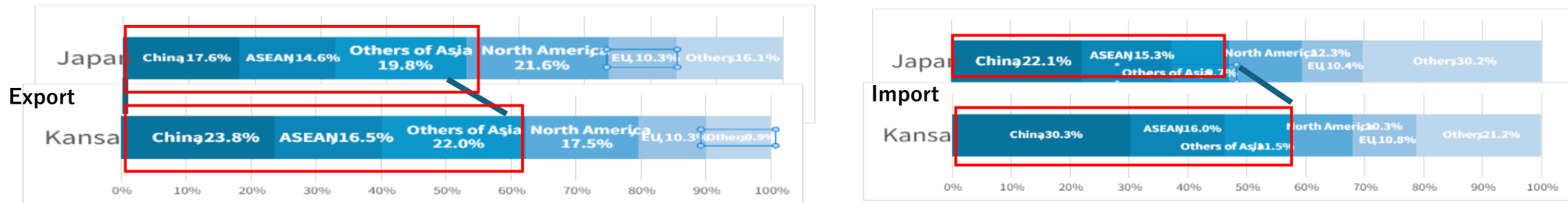


“Kansai’s Initiatives to strengthen business ties with Asia”

1. Background

- The Kansai region, Japan's second largest economic zone, has strong historical, economic, and business ties with ASEAN and other Asian countries.
- In particular, Kansai economic organizations are taking unique steps to promote business collaboration with ASEAN and other Asian countries, such as building a platform for business promotion with multiple ASEAN business organizations and concluding MOUs to strengthen business relationships.



【Reference】 Platforms for promoting business collaboration between Kansai economic organizations and ASEAN and other Asian economic organizations

i) Asia Business Creation Platform (ABCP)

In April 2019, the Kansai Economic Federation established the ABC Platform to promote business together with economic organizations from seven Asian countries (Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Vietnam Federation of Commerce and Industry, Federation of Thai Industries, Singapore Manufacturing Federation, and Myanmar Chamber of Commerce and Industry). Activities are carried out mainly through seven thematic committees, and an annual general meeting is held to decide on activity policies and share results and challenges.

ii) ASEAN-Japan Business Promotion Platform (AJBP)

In April 2023, the Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry established the AJB Platform, together with the Singapore Business Federation, the Thai Chamber of Commerce, and the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce, the Indonesian Chamber of Commerce, and the Malaysian Chamber of Commerce to further expand business and strengthen the economic relationship throughout various activities. A Representative Meeting is held to discuss collaboration or other important matters.

iii) The KANSAI Association of Corporate Executives signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Building Friendly and Cooperative Relations with the Korea International Trade Association in 2023, aiming to foster mutual understanding between companies in Kansai and Korea.

2. Purpose

- Multifaceted collaboration among economic organizations to promote international business exchanges among companies, which are the driving forces behind the economy, will expand opportunities for business collaboration, contribute to the strengthening of sustainable and trustworthy business relationships, and ultimately contribute to the region's sustainable economic growth.
- For this reason, the Kansai Bureau of Economy, Trade and Industry has compiled the efforts of Kansai economic organizations to promote business collaboration with ASEAN and other Asian countries into the "**Kansai's Initiatives to strengthen business ties with Asia (Kansai's Initiatives)**," and will encourage cooperation from related organizations through the publication of Kansai's Initiatives, thereby supporting the steady and smooth implementation of Kansai's Initiatives and hoping that it will develop into new initiatives in the future.

3. Outline of the "Kansai's Initiatives to Strengthen Business Ties with Asia"

1. Main target countries :

ASEAN (especially countries with advanced cooperation between economic organizations), China, South Korea, India, etc.

2. Main themes ;

Aiming to contribute to the challenges raised by policy dialogues such as ASEAN Plus Three, AEM-METI, and the ASEAN-Japan Economic Co-creation Vision, the various initiatives of Kansai's economic organizations, which promote private-sector collaboration and co-creation, have been classified into four key business priorities.

- (i) Expanding and deepening business exchanges,
- (ii) Facilitating human resource development and personnel exchange,
- (iii) Promoting innovation,
- (iv) Addressing the challenges of resolving global issues.

“Kansai’s Initiatives to strengthen business ties with Asia”

(draft)

*Abbreviation of the initiative principal

Kansai Economic Federation; Kankeiren, Osaka Chamber of Commerce and Industry; OCCI, Kansai Bureau of Economy, Trade and Industry; METI-Kansai

(i) Expanding and deepening business exchanges

1. Supporting the discovery of new business partners between Kansai and ASEAN and other Asian countries

(a) Preparations are underway to establish a new business matching website where companies from both Kansai and ASEAN countries can exchange digital information on their products and technologies and easily find new partners. (METI-Kansai, Kankeiren ABCP)

(b) Continuing the ABC Challenge Support Program, which invites companies recommended by partner ASEAN business organizations to Kansai to provide hands-on business collaboration support. (Kankeiren ABCP)

(c) In cooperation with partner ASEAN business organizations, we will carry out collaborative projects on themes such as “market development”, “creating innovation,” “green,” and “human resource development,” and will also continuously dispatch and accept missions. (OCCI AJBP)

(d) In cooperation with local governments, support organizations, and economic organizations in the Kansai region, we will conduct research into areas and industries in India that have high potential for business collaboration, and based on the results, we will promote business between India and the Kansai region through measures such as sending and receiving business missions.(METI-Kansai)

2. Improving the business environment from a corporate perspective

(a) Through regular dialogue with ASEAN partner organizations, Kansai business organizations will work together with the public and private sectors to resolve the issues raised, including requests to the government regarding deregulation etc. (Kankeiren ABCP, OCCI AJBP)

(i) Expanding and deepening business exchanges

3. Facilitating foreign capital investment in small and medium-sized enterprises

(a) In order to promote business collaboration through smooth capital collaboration such as M&A, we will work to build an effective support system by specialized related institutions in Kansai and ASEAN. We will also promote awareness among medium-sized and small enterprises. (METI-Kansai)

4. Promoting the utilization of EPAs by SMEs

(a) In cooperation with partner ASEAN business organizations, we will promote the holding of seminars to encourage SMEs to utilize EPAs in Kansai and ASEAN countries. We will also work with the ASEAN-Japan Centre to provide PR support and encourage SMEs to participate in seminars held by the Centre in each country. (OCCI AJBP)

(ii) Facilitating human resource development and personnel exchange

1. Developing international business talent

(a) In collaboration with partner ASEAN business organizations, “Young Entrepreneurs Business Exchange Program” will be established to foster organic networks among young international businesspeople from Kansai and ASEAN countries, to brush up their ideas through mutual challenges and exchange diverse opinions. (OCCI AJBP)

(b) The ASEAN Management Training Program will be continuously implemented for corporate executives recommended by economic organizations in ASEAN countries. The program aims to enable them to recognize management challenges in their respective countries, learn together, and learn about Japanese examples. The program will also enable them to interact beyond national and cultural boundaries, build a foundation for mutual collaboration, and strengthen future relationships. (Kankeiren)

(ii) Facilitating human resource development and personnel exchange

2. Promoting the acceptance of highly skilled foreign talent and promoting the repatriation of human resources within Asia

(a) In order to promote the international flow of human resources, where highly skilled foreign professionals who have worked in Kansai and acquired a wide range of knowledge can then use these skills and experiences in their own countries after returning to their home countries, we will (1) promote the appeal of Kansai as a place to work, (2) improve the system and environment for accepting highly skilled foreign professionals from Asia, and (3) promote human mobility by utilizing internships, etc.

(Kankeiren, METI-Kansai)

(iii) Promoting innovation

1. Promoting business collaboration between startups in Kansai and ASEAN

(a) In collaboration with partner ASEAN business organizations, we will continue to hold business creation events, such as GIF ASEAN-Japan, for startups in the Kansai region and ASEAN. (OCCI AJBP)

(b) The Startup Working group, one of the thematic working groups of the ABC Platform, will continue to provide support to startups in both Asia and Kansai to find new business partners. (Kankeiren ABCP)

2. Strengthening collaboration with startup support organizations in Asia

(a) We will promote collaboration with startup support organizations in Singapore, Thailand, India, etc., and aim to encourage overseas VCs/CVCs and startups to expand their business in Kansai. By strengthening Kansai's hub function in the global startup ecosystem, we aim to promote startup-centered innovation creation in ASEAN and other Asian countries. (OCCI, METI-Kansai)

(iv) Addressing the challenges of resolving global issues

1. Promoting the recycling of marine plastic waste

(a) We aim to view the large amounts of plastic waste that washes up on the coast of Tsushima as a "resource," utilize it, and build a "circular economy" business model that can be expanded to other regions. (KANSAI Association of Corporate Executives)

2. Promoting carbon neutrality across Asia

(a) We will contribute to the steady progress of the "Asia Zero Emission Community (AZEC)" proposed by the Japanese government and promote decarbonization in Asia. To this end, we will support the organization of seminars to introduce carbon-neutral technologies and efforts to promote private-sector business collaboration. (OCCI, METI-Kansai)