

February 5, 2020



JETRO Hosts Japan Innovation Night in Boston

On January 30, JETRO hosted “Japan Innovation Night”, a social exchange event intended to showcase corporate innovation. Held at the [Cambridge Innovation Center \(CIC\)](#), Boston’s premier incubation space, the event was co-sponsored by The Consulate-General of Japan in Boston and the Japan Society of Boston. It was put on for the dual purpose of providing sponsors of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics and Paralympics and local enterprises in related industries with both a venue for giving presentations and seminars and an opportunity for networking. The event was attended by over 500 participants, including affiliates of Japanese and U.S. venture firms.

The event began with introductory remarks from Consul-General Setsuo Ohmori from the Consulate-General of Japan in Boston, followed by a speech from JETRO New York President Issei Hatakeyama, who stated that he hoped the Olympics would be an opportunity to share Japanese innovation with the world, and that by partnering with CIC and others through JETRO’s [Global Acceleration](#)

[Hub program](#), he hoped to further improve the outcomes of JETRO's support for Japanese ventures. President Hatakeyama also noted for instance that Japan is the third-largest investor in the U.S. and has the highest capital expenditure for research and development (R&D), and he expressed his desire to raise awareness about how Japanese companies operating in the U.S. are creating synergies in areas such as hiring and technology.

During the company presentations, Japan Airlines discussed raising customer satisfaction through accelerated transportation services made possible by the development of supersonic passenger jets, while Asics held a panel discussion that introduced the latest sports performance monitoring technology in the form of apparel and wearable terminals. Panasonic cited its video production technology using high-performance displays and VFX (visual effects) as well as its smartphone applications, and discussed with local E-sports organization how to improve fan satisfaction. Venture firm [Capy](#) (a JETRO-backed company) also presented on recent trends in cyberattacks—which pose a risk to the administration of the Olympics—and on its proprietary security technology for preventing fraudulent access using unique puzzle-based concepts.



Asics panel discussion during the event.

Director Ruth Saunders of the non-profit organization [Venture Café](#), which ran the event, commented that this was a good opportunity for event participants to see how Japanese technologies were changing the experiences of sports fans,

improving athletes' performances, and innovating methods of transport.

The Boston area is home to several of the world's leading universities including Harvard and MIT, and in particular is a hotbed of research and development activity in the life sciences fields of medical instruments, biotechnology, and pharmaceuticals as well as in artificial intelligence (AI) and robotics, with a large number of related companies concentrated in the area. Venture firms are also highly active and numerous support organizations are in place there as well.

CIC has itself been gaining attention with its activities, such as signing an MOU in November 2019 with Tsukuba City pledging mutual assistance for venture firms. It was also announced at this event that CIC Tokyo is set to open in July 2020.

JETRO New York