



Helsinki invites Japanese companies to solve common health challenges together

Osaka, Japan, 26 January 2018

*Helsinki Business Hub in cooperation with the Finnish Embassy organized an event today in Osaka inviting Japanese health companies to explore the business opportunities of Helsinki. The topics included challenges that Japan and Finland share in the health sector. The event sought to enforce the strategic partnership between Finland and Japan initiated by Japanese Prime Minister **Shinzo Abe** and president of the Republic of Finland **Sauli Niinistö**.*

Finland and Japan have a long-standing friendship tracing back to nearly a hundred years of diplomatic relationships. Besides their joint values and interests, the countries also share similar challenges in healthcare. Common challenges include the search for preventive medicine, need for improving cyber security, and high healthcare expenditure.

Finland is at the forefront of solving these issues with their expertise in genomics, public-private cooperation, digital solutions, and innovations for the silver aged, which all were discussed today in Osaka. Helsinki Business Hub and embassy of Finland presented world-class Finnish knowhow, which offers wide strategic possibilities to Japanese life sciences companies. "What makes Finland interesting to Japanese companies is its potential as a high-tech innovation hub and as a gateway to the European market," emphasized CEO of Helsinki Business Hub, Dr. **Marja-Liisa Niinikoski**.

Japanese companies also shared their insights of the Finnish ecosystem strengths. One of the Japanese companies that has invested in Finland is Fujitsu, an active participant also in the Finnish health care development field. "Finland is a good country to operate and co-operate with. It is an "eSociety" with a reliable infrastructure and people. The atmosphere encourages new business development," says **Mr. Kei Noritsugu**, Manager, New Business Development Office, Healthcare Solution Unit II, Fujitsu Limited.

High global interest for Finnish genomics possibilities

The combination of a long-standing tradition in efficient healthcare, digitalization of health data and the Nokia engineering ecosystem has made Finland the premier location for health R&D. Finland has the highest gross domestic expenditure on R&D in EU and offers many advantages for Asian companies compared to other EU countries.

In Finland, genomics research has for long been integrated into healthcare, and the healthcare workforce have the knowledge and skill to apply genomic information. Reliable and comprehensive registries and population databases have been in use since the 1950's. All this data, such as patient, demographic, lifestyle and open data, is now being combined into a single database for the secure use of research. This all makes Finland an attractive research and innovation environment for collaboration and investment: Finland is an ideal development location for precision medicine, and with its small population, a great test case location for EU markets.

Another major strong suit of Finland is the high willingness amongst the general public (99%) to take part in medical research, with more than 98% of patients giving permission for their samples to be stored in biobanks. For HUS, Helsinki's globally leading health organisation, it means up to 500,000 samples by 2023.

Functional public-private cooperation key to developing future healthcare

World-leading health innovations require extensive, new kind of co-operation, where public decision makers, service users, technology developers and application producers and financial sector all work together towards the same goal. A good example of such collaboration is the city of Helsinki that functions as an open development platform, offering piloting opportunities for companies. Helsinki has already piloted new innovation e.g. on virtual care and distance monitoring, censoring technology and robotics with private sector. Many of these innovations help in providing the best possible care for the silver age generation, which is one of the biggest challenges in Finland and Japan. Finland's population is ageing second fastest in the world with Japan holding the first place. In Finland, there are soon 1,4 million over 60-year-olds, and their purchasing power is estimated to be over 20 billion euros.

"By combining our strengths, we have excellent possibilities to solve these challenges in healthcare. Helsinki Business Hub seeks to build long-lasting relationships with its Japanese stakeholders. The Osaka event was the first step and the next one is an event organized in Tokyo in March," Niinikoski says.

Helsinki Business Hub

Helsinki Business Hub, the regional development agency for the Finnish capital region, helps foreign companies considering establishing operations in the region with a suit of market access and business solutions. Helsinki Business Hub provides information resources as well as matchmaking services to help foreign companies understand the Finnish business ecosystem and connect with the right business partners – free of charge. It also helps foreign companies identify the right growth opportunities for their business, such as R&D, manufacturing or Regional Headquarters, as well as connect with relevant public financing entities. Helsinki Business Hub is especially focused on personalized health (including biobanks) and medtech devices and is ready to help Japanese life sciences companies tap into the Helsinki region health ecosystem.

For more information: www.helsinkibusinesshub.fi

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Interviews with Dr. Marja-Liisa Niinikoski available upon request.