

Co-Creating the “World’s Coolest Cross-Border Startup Community” Takagi Building (Japan) and BusinessOulu (Finland) Sign MoU of Startup Ecosystem Collaboration

— Strengthening the connection between the Japanese and Finnish startup ecosystems through a new model of equal public-private partnership. —

TOKYO, Japan – December 23, 2025 – Takagi Building Co., Ltd. (Headquarters: Minato-ku, Tokyo; CEO: Hidekuni Takagi), a company dedicated to creating new value in real estate through the operation of office buildings, residences, and coworking spaces, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with BusinessOulu, the employment and economic development agency of the City of Oulu, Finland. The MoU, signed on December 23, 2025, aims to expand opportunities for startups from both Japan and Finland to challenge international markets. The signing coincided with "Polar Bear Pitching TOKYO," the Japanese qualifier for the "Avanto" (ice hole) pitching competition scheduled for February 26, 2026, in Oulu.



Creating a “Home-like” International Community

This MoU marks a significant milestone as the first cooperation agreement BusinessOulu has signed with a private Japanese company. It is also the first initiative between the City of Oulu and Japan centered specifically on the startup ecosystem. This agreement, which establishes an equal partnership between a private enterprise and a public institution, symbolizes the deep trust and shared vision between the two parties. Through this MoU, both organizations aim to accelerate startup support, form an international community, and drive cross-border innovation.

Key Areas of Cooperation

- Exchange of Knowledge & Expertise: Sharing insights related to startup support ecosystems.
- Mutual Service Provision: Offering support services to startups from both regions.
- Market Access Support: Leveraging respective networks and platforms to assist expansion into new markets.
- Event Hosting: Organizing the "Polar Bear Pitching TOKYO" (Japanese qualifier for the global event in Oulu).
- Program Collaboration: Creating opportunities in training, education programs, and international events.

Both parties share a vision of nurturing a "global family" where members respect and trust one another across borders, creating a world where anyone feels at home ("My Home") while taking on new challenges.

A Relationship Built on Trust via Polar Bear Pitching

The relationship between Takagi Building and BusinessOulu began with "Polar Bear Pitching TOKYO," held on January 24, 2025, at "BIRTH LAB / WORK," a coworking space in Azabu-Juban, Tokyo, operated by Takagi Building. Through this event, both parties confirmed their mutual interest in startup support and international business exchange.

On June 2, 2025, during the visit of the Oulu City delegation to Japan as an official partner of the Nordic Pavilion at Expo 2025 Osaka, an official side event was co-hosted at the same venue. The event brought together startups, educational and research institutions, and government officials, sparking discussions and exchanges that led to new value creation between the two countries.



▲ 「Polar Bear Pitching TOKYO」 (January, 2025)

Through continuous dialogue, a shared recognition emerged that both parties should work together to advance international startup expansion, talent exchange, and ecosystem connectivity. This led to the conclusion of this MoU. Takagi Building and BusinessOulu will strengthen their support for international expansion by linking their unique platforms to assist Finnish startups aiming for the Japanese/Asian markets and Japanese startups targeting the European market.



▲ official side event (June, 2025)



▲ 「Polar Bear Pitching」 (February, 2025)

Operating a Community of Co-Creation and Challenge, Rooted in “BIRTH”

TAKAGI GROUP / Takagi Building operates "BIRTH," a life creation brand exploring the future of real estate by fostering connections with local communities, the environment, and education. Centered around the coworking space "BIRTH LAB / WORK" in Azabu-Juban, the company promotes soil for startup growth. The community attracts diverse professionals from IT, creative industries, public-private partnerships, education, finance, and HR, generating new synergies such as co-creation projects and new business ventures. The group also pursues challenges beyond traditional real estate frameworks, such as "SALON 91°," a complex project promoting cross-industry collaboration and placemaking from both soft and hard perspectives. Leveraging the co-creation know-how cultivated thus far, Takagi Building aims to realize the "world's coolest cross-border startup community" through this MoU, expanding the environment for Japanese and Finnish startups to compete globally.

About BusinessOulu

BusinessOulu is a public utility agency responsible for industry and employment support as well as economic policy implementation for the City of Oulu, Finland's fifth-largest city by population. Often called the capital of Northern Finland, Oulu is known as a major global hub for R&D in wireless communication technology, spearheading the world in 6G research, HealthTech, and CleanTech. BusinessOulu provides public services to support business and employment (including immigrants and their families) at all stages—from pre-startup to overseas expansion and investing in Oulu —to develop the regional economy as well as foster the creation of new businesses and jobs through co-creation, while acting as a key ecosystem enabler to strengthen collaboration between education, research, industry, and the public sector.

URL: <https://www.businessoulu.com/en/>



Comments



BusinessOulu Director
Juha Ala-Mursula

"Japan's technology and innovation cluster is among the best in the world. Tokyo alone hosts several leading universities, numerous success stories, and a vibrant startup ecosystem. Our goal at BusinessOulu is to build a strong bridge between technology and innovation clusters of our two countries, enabling companies to access new markets and create opportunities for growth."



BusinessOulu Senior Advisor, Japan
Takako Uchida

"I have learned that the logo of BIRTH LAB, the coworking space provided by Takagi Building in Tokyo, represents a "ladder," symbolizing the connection and bridging between various communities to expand networks broadly. I believe that this new collaboration, leveraging our respective platforms, will further strengthen and accelerate the progress of our goal. I hope that we will build not just a business partnership, but a close and warm relationship like a family."



TAKAGI GROUP / Takagi Building Co., Ltd. CEO
Hidekuni Takagi

"I am truly delighted and filled with excitement to have signed this Memorandum of Understanding with BusinessOulu. It is a major milestone for us that our accumulated exchanges have borne fruit in the form of cross-border trust and co-creation. I am convinced that combining our experience in community building at BIRTH with Oulu's world-class technology, talent, and challenger spirit will open new doors for startups in both countries. We will build an international community that feels like 'home,' where anyone can feel comfortable taking on challenges, creating the driving force for talents from both Finland and Japan to leap into the future. With this partnership, we will continue to challenge ourselves even more boldly to create new value."

About TAKAGI GROUP / Takagi Building Co., Ltd.

Founded in 1961 (Showa 36), Takagi Building started as a parking lot and rental house management company. Beginning with the first “Old Toranomom Takagi Building,” the company has been involved in office building construction and management. In a real estate industry traditionally focused on rental income, Takagi Building strives to break free from old customs and fixed concepts to pursue “new value in real estate,” placing the utmost importance on “People.” We believe our mission is to accompany the challenges and better lives of the people who gather in our “places,” such as office buildings. Under the philosophy “For ‘Stand by me.’,” the company operates the “LIVE Business” (building management) and the “BIRTH Business” (community projects centered on coworking offices). Starting with the operation of the communication space “BIRTH LAB,” the company is pushing beyond the boundaries of traditional real estate to create new social value, including accompaniment-style support for entrepreneurs and public-private partnership projects aimed at regional revitalization.


BIRTH
THE LIFE TERMINAL


▲“BIRTH LAB,” the hub of the life creation brand “BIRTH”

Company Overview

Establishment: April 20, 1961 **Representative:** Hidekuni Takagi, CEO

Headquarters: 1-7-2 Nishi-Shimbashi, Minato-ku, Tokyo

Phone: +81-3-3595-1221

Affiliations: Japan Building Owners and Managers Association / Tokyo Building Owners and Managers Association

Business Activities:

- Development, leasing, and management of office buildings, residences, and parking lots.
- Planning and operation leading to “placemaking” and “town-making” that generate new real estate value.

Related Companies:

① TAKAGI Property Co., Ltd. ② TAKAGI Partners Co., Ltd. URL | <https://t-bldg.jp/>

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