

# EU-Japan Region-to-Region Innovation Cooperation



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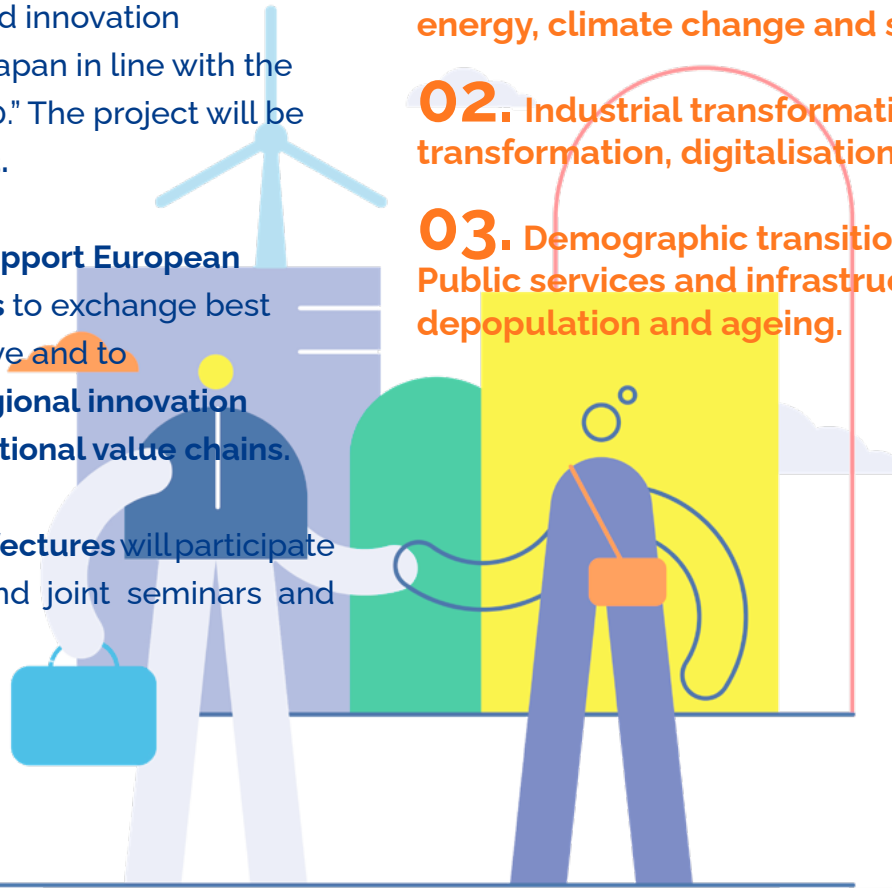
The **EU-Japan Region-to-Region Innovation Cooperation** is a project of the European Union managed by the Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) and the Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy (DG REGIO) of the European Commission, and implemented in cooperation with the Japanese Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (MLIT). Its overall aim is to contribute to sustainable urban development and innovation cooperation between the EU and Japan in line with the external dimension of "Europe 2020." The project will be implemented until **November 2023**.

The objective of the project is to **support European Regions and Japanese Prefectures** to exchange best practices and knowledge to improve and to internationalise their respective **regional innovation strategies** while promoting **international value chains**.

The **selected EU and Japanese Prefectures** will participate to conduct mutual study visits and joint seminars and meetings.

The cooperation will be based on the **Smart Specialisation strategies for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth (S4+)** of each region, including **methodology, practice and governance**. Therefore, the project will focus on **regional innovation and competitiveness policies**:

- 01. Green transition: Circular economy, clean energy, climate change and sustainable mobility.**
- 02. Industrial transformation: Industrial transformation, digitalisation and social innovation.**
- 03. Demographic transition and competitiveness: Public services and infrastructures in regions facing depopulation and ageing.**



# Who is invited to participate?

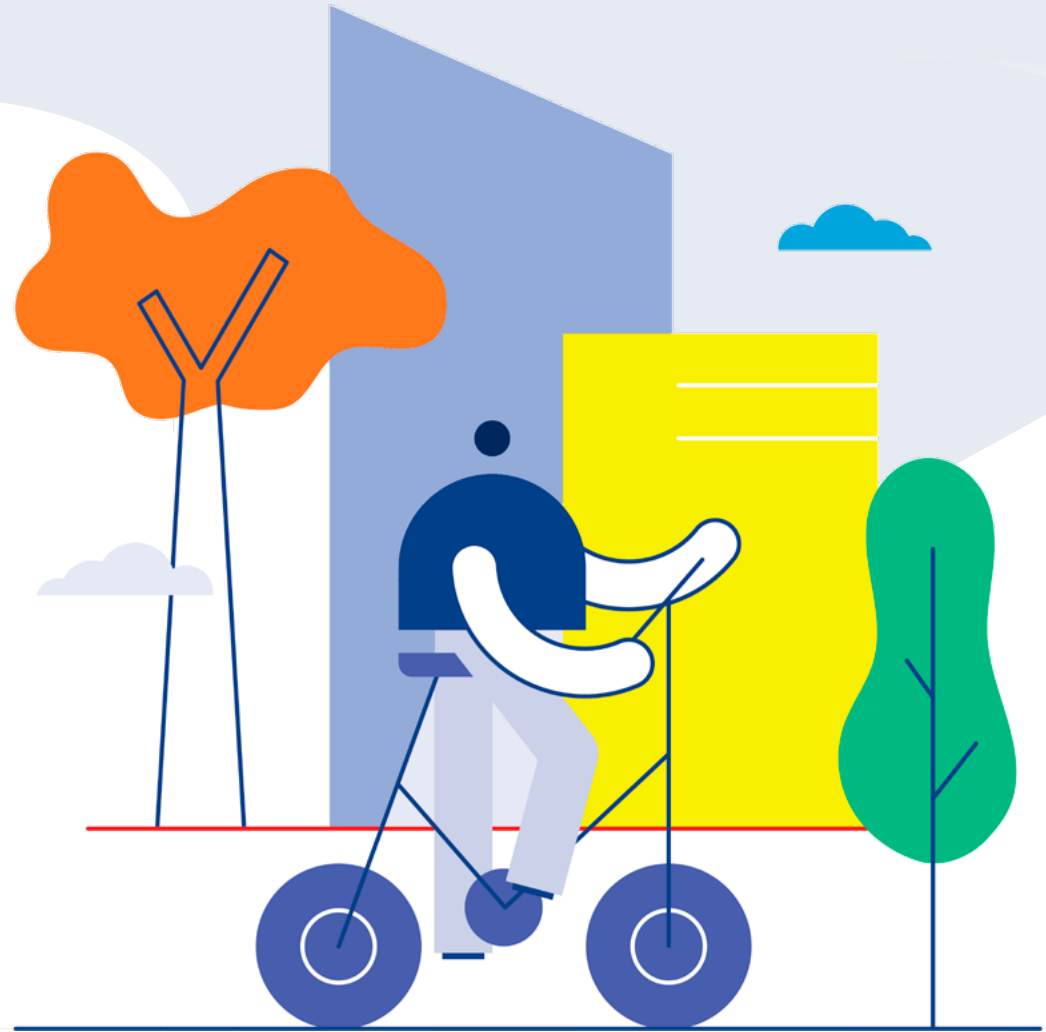
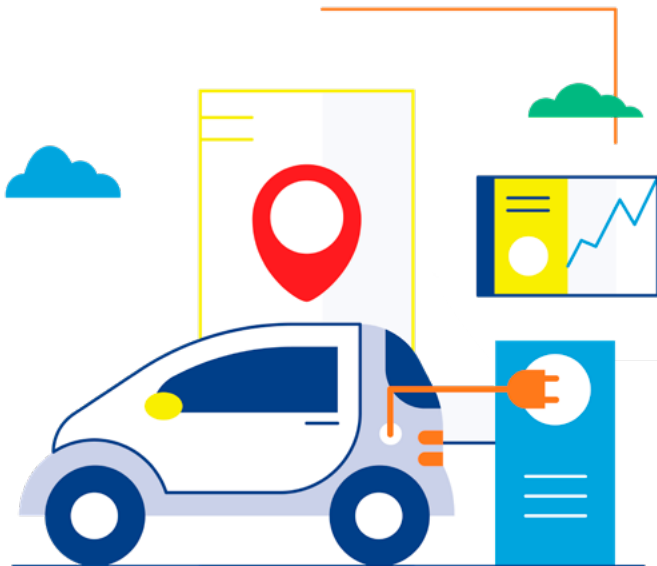
**5 Regions from different Member States of the EU and 5 Prefectures from Japan.** The project will be operational and results-oriented. Participants will be regional authorities in charge of innovation policies and smart specialisation strategies, as well as **local stakeholders from universities, research centers and private firms.**



# How will the project be implemented?

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Selected EU regions and Japanese prefectures will be divided into two groups according to their topics of interest. For each group, there will be study visits of EU regions to Japan and Japanese prefectures to the EU, in which senior officials and experts from each region / prefecture will participate. In parallel, a collaborative online Helpdesk will be established to facilitate the exchange of information and good practices, through **training sessions, webinars, and reports.**

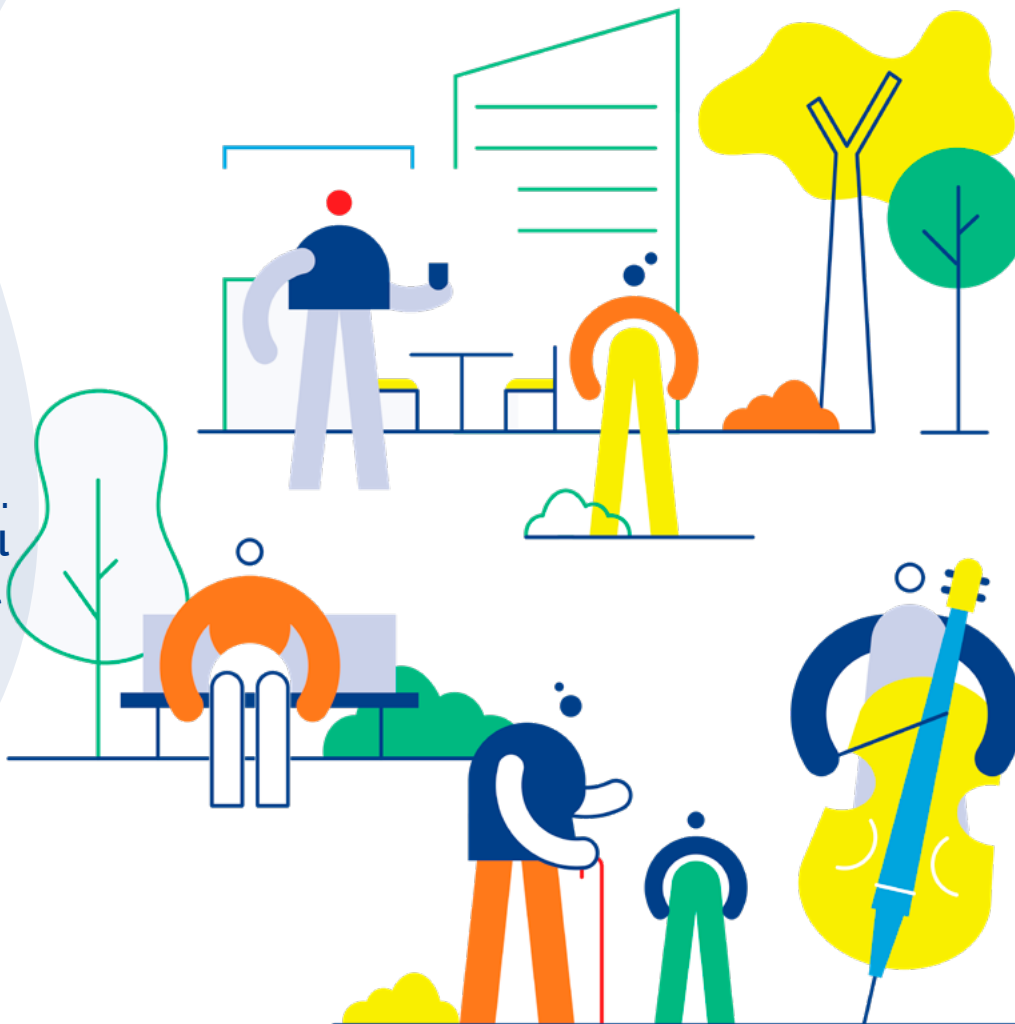


# What can the project offer to the regions and prefectures?

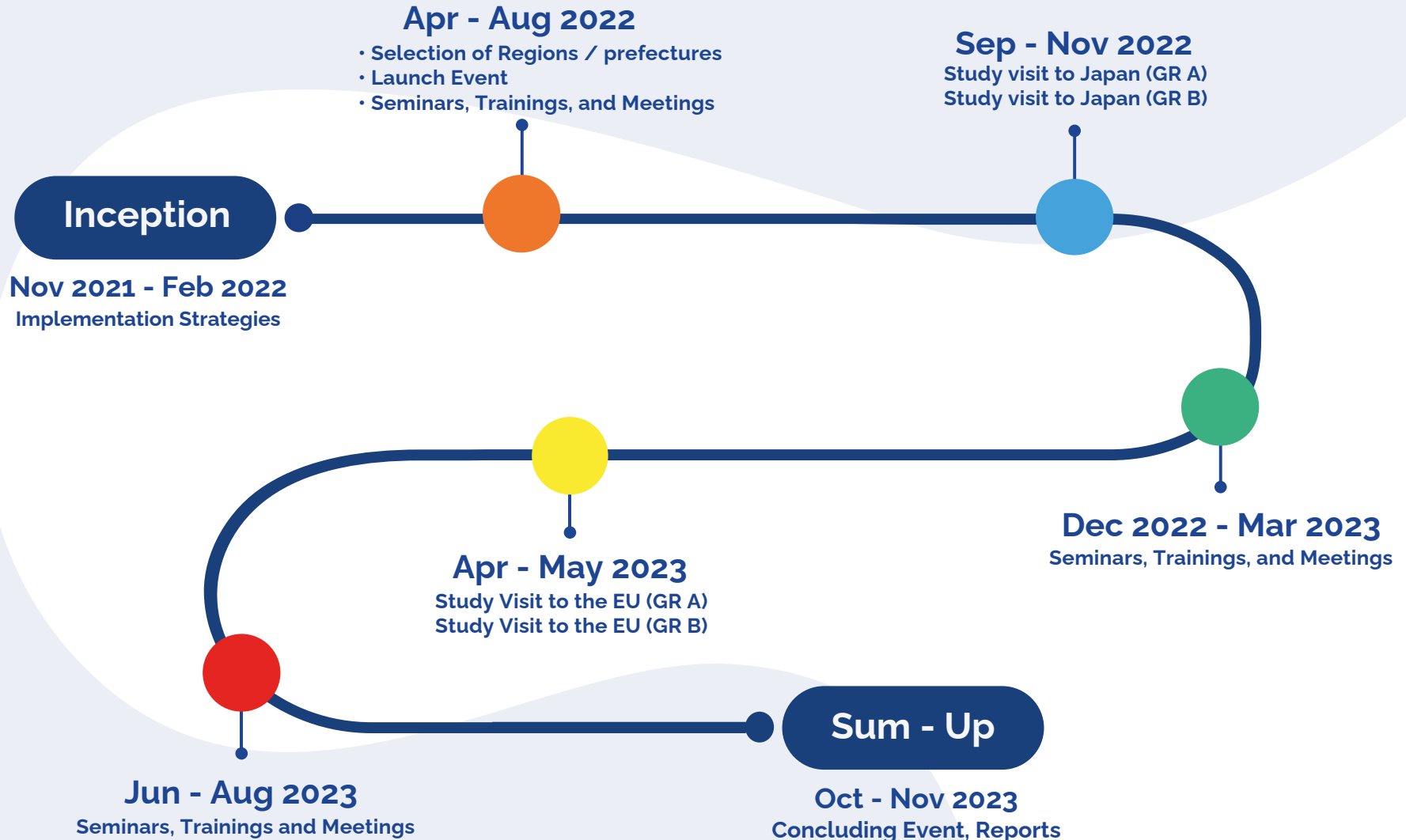
The project seeks to improve and internationalize the regional innovation strategy of the selected regions/prefectures.

**First**, the project will offer **peer-level (region-to-region) information sharing and exchange of best practices** between the EU and Japan with a focus on selected thematic areas.

**Second**, the **planning and management capacities** of participating EU and Japan regional authorities **will be strengthened**. Furthermore, **business opportunities will be promoted** to the benefit of **regional stakeholders**.



# How does the timeline look like?



# Planned Activities and Schedule

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- **April 2022:** Call for applications by EU regions and Japanese prefectures will start.
  - **June-August 2022:** The participating regions / prefectures will be selected. The **Launch Event** and a series of trainings / seminars will take place, where conferences and **case studies on regional innovation and smart specialisation policies** will be presented.
  - **September-November 2022:** The **study visits of EU regions to Japan** will take place, divided into two groups. Each group will visit different Japanese prefectures, with the aim of **learning best practices, exchanging ideas and seeking opportunities for cooperation** in the field of regional innovation.
  - **December 2022-March 2023:** **Seminars and meetings** will be held to **analyze and communicate the results of the study visits of European regions to Japan.**
  - **April-Jun 2023:** The **study visits of Japanese prefectures to Europe** will take place, divided into two groups. Each group will visit different EU regions, **with the aim of learning best practices, exchanging ideas and seeking opportunities for cooperation** in the field of regional innovation and smart specialisation.
  - **July-September 2023:** **Meetings** will be organized to **summarize the recommendations and findings of the study visits.** Seminars will also be organized to **develop plans for future cooperation.**
  - **October-November:** A **concluding event** will be organized, where **the results of the project will be reported.**
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# Useful Information

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## Who can participate?

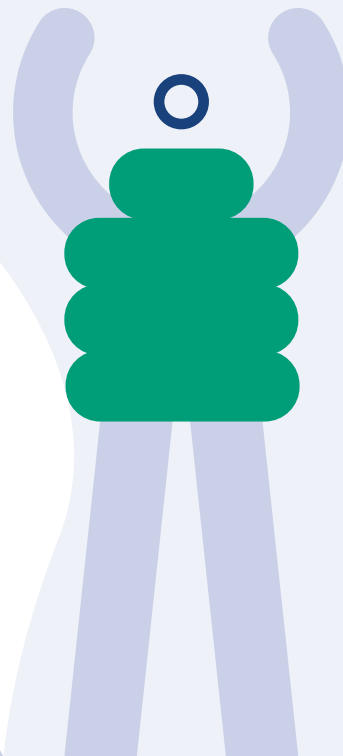
Applicants should be **regional authorities** from the different **European States and from Japan**.

## What does the project cover?

The project will **cover travel and accommodation for the members of the study visits (up to 3 persons per each EU region and 2 persons for each Japanese prefecture)**. The project will accommodate, to the extent possible, the needs of the delegations regarding travel choices, routes, and flexibility. **The project will facilitate online training, seminars and activities.**

## What resources does the regions need to provide?

It is expected that regions participating will contribute with their **best practices and experiences, mobilizing experts that can contribute to enrich the pairing activities and meetings.**





# Useful Information

## What are the requirements to participate?

It is desirable that the participants have a **working level of English**.

English-Japanese interpretation will be provided for the main activities.

If you are representing an EU region interested in participating in the project, please fill the **online questionnaire** and submit your candidature **before 30/05/2022**.

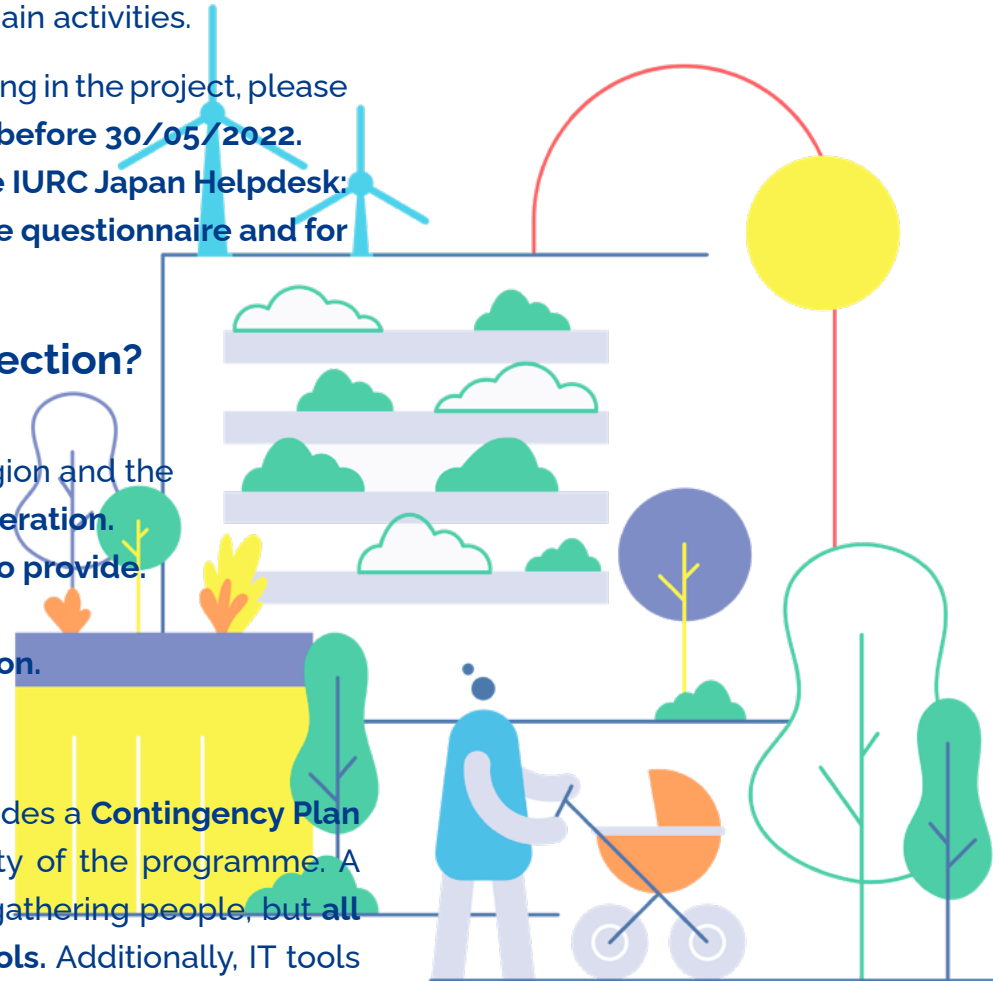
If you represent a Japanese prefecture, please **contact the IURC Japan Helpdesk: <japan@iurc.eu>** for more information about the Japanese questionnaire and for any questions in Japanese.

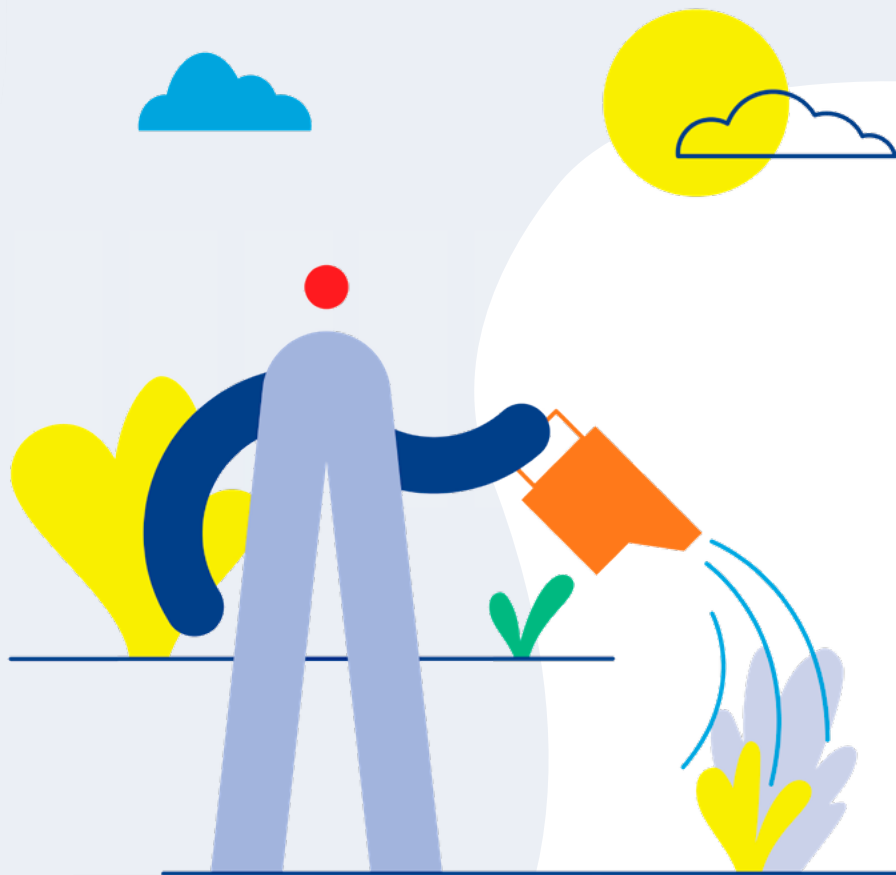
## What are the main criteria used for the selection?

- **Good prospects** for successful cooperation outcomes.
- **Existence of similar interests** between the European region and the Japanese prefecture that could **lead to successful cooperation**.
- **Level of commitment the region/prefecture is willing to provide**.
- **Geographic, economic and innovation stage** in the EU.
- **Previous experience in regional cooperation in innovation**.

## COVID-19 Health and Safety Protocols

Due to the challenging sanitary situation, the project includes a **Contingency Plan** that will guarantee the safety of participants and viability of the programme. A substantial part of the activities is based on moving and gathering people, but **all these activities will respect all the local sanitary protocols**. Additionally, IT tools will help in keeping an effective implementation of all the activities.





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For more information, please contact:

- [ialmora@iurc.eu](mailto:ialmora@iurc.eu) (for EU regions and questions in English)
- [japan@iurc.eu](mailto:japan@iurc.eu) (for Japan prefectures and questions in Japanese)



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