

Cool Japan Fund Inc.
Tokyo, October 3, 2017

Investing in Japanese Dining and Retail Business that Delivers Japanese Food Culture in London

Cool Japan Fund (CJF) is pleased to announce an investment of up to 3 million pounds towards the establishment of a platform to operate a Japanese dining and retail business that will deliver a unique experience of Japanese food culture together with Japan Centre Group Ltd. (JCG), a corporation in London which pioneered the introduction of Japanese food culture and developed the Japan Centre, a retail store handling Japanese groceries, lifestyle goods, and books, as well as Shoryu Ramen, a Hakata tonkotsu ramen restaurant recommended in the *Michelin Guide*.

Facing the uplifting trend in Japanese food market in London, the project will create a space where one can experience unique Japanese food culture in London. The space will include a food zone that offers various Japanese cuisine in an open kitchen concept, a retail zone that sells unique groceries and other products from all over Japan, as well as cooking demonstrations that use Japanese ingredients, seasonal festivals and other promotional activities which will enrich the customer experience and help promote Japanese food culture. The project strives to create a space where traditional Japanese food culture can be vibrantly experienced through “Dining, Shopping, and Exploring.”

Through this project, CJF will assist in the exportation of unique Japanese groceries and household goods while promoting the understanding of Japanese food culture by people from around the world through developing business in London.

Following the increasing popularity in Japanese food in recent years, Japanese food service enterprises have expanded, more new Japanese restaurants have opened ⁽¹⁾, and as Japanese food has become more popular, the number of people keen to adopt various unique and traditional Japanese cuisine, groceries and other product is showing unprecedented growth.

Located in London, JCG has been playing a key role in developing a broad range of businesses relating to Japanese cuisine for more than 40 years. Starting with the Japan Centre, which sells Japanese groceries, lifestyle goods, and books, they have also developed Shoryu Ramen, a Hakata tonkotsu ramen restaurant recommended by the *Michelin Guide*; a traditional washoku restaurant named Sakagura which boasts a large selection of Japanese Sake; and the JCG delicatessen, which offers sushi, bentos, and various side dishes. Besides being an expert in local business, JCG is also creating partnerships with various local and Japanese corporations seeking opportunities to expand into the London market, and played a significant role in bringing Japanese food culture to London. With increasing interest towards unique and traditional Japanese groceries and other products, JCG intends to expand its business into the next stage, where people can explore Japanese culture, as well as shop and dine.

(1) An approx. The number of Japanese restaurants increased 1.7-fold from 2011 to 2016 in England. (Source: JETRO)

Based on this current environment, CJF has decided to invest up to 3 million pounds towards the establishment of a joint venture operating Japanese dining and retail business that delivers Japanese food culture together with JCG.

The project creates a space where one can experience unique Japanese food culture through related dining, shopping, demonstrations, and promotional activities. It is set to open in the first half of 2018. The food zone will offer sushi, ramen, curry, tempura, and other staple menu items in an open kitchen style where people can enjoy seeing their food being made.

Also, in the shopping zone, in addition to the wide variety of national brands that JCG currently sells, the project seeks to showcase unique groceries including seasonings and alcohol and other attractive products from all over Japan. Furthermore, the project strives to create a space where traditional Japanese food culture can be vibrantly experienced through “Dining, Shopping, and Exploring” via Japanese Sake tastings and seminars, Japanese food demonstrations using seasonal Japanese ingredients that are rare in the region, and implementing seasonal promotions. Similar initiatives may take place not only in the UK but also in other parts of Europe in the future.

Through this project, CJF combines the needs of Japanese regional groceries supplier with the needs of JCG, which intend to introduce more groceries and other products from diverse regions, to support the exportation of unique domestic Japanese groceries and household goods. Also, by operating in London, CJF hopes to promote the Japanese food culture to people from around the world.

[About Japan Centre Group Ltd.]

Established: 1976

Business Description: Operates 2 Japanese groceries shops (Japan Centre) and 11 restaurants

Location: London, UK

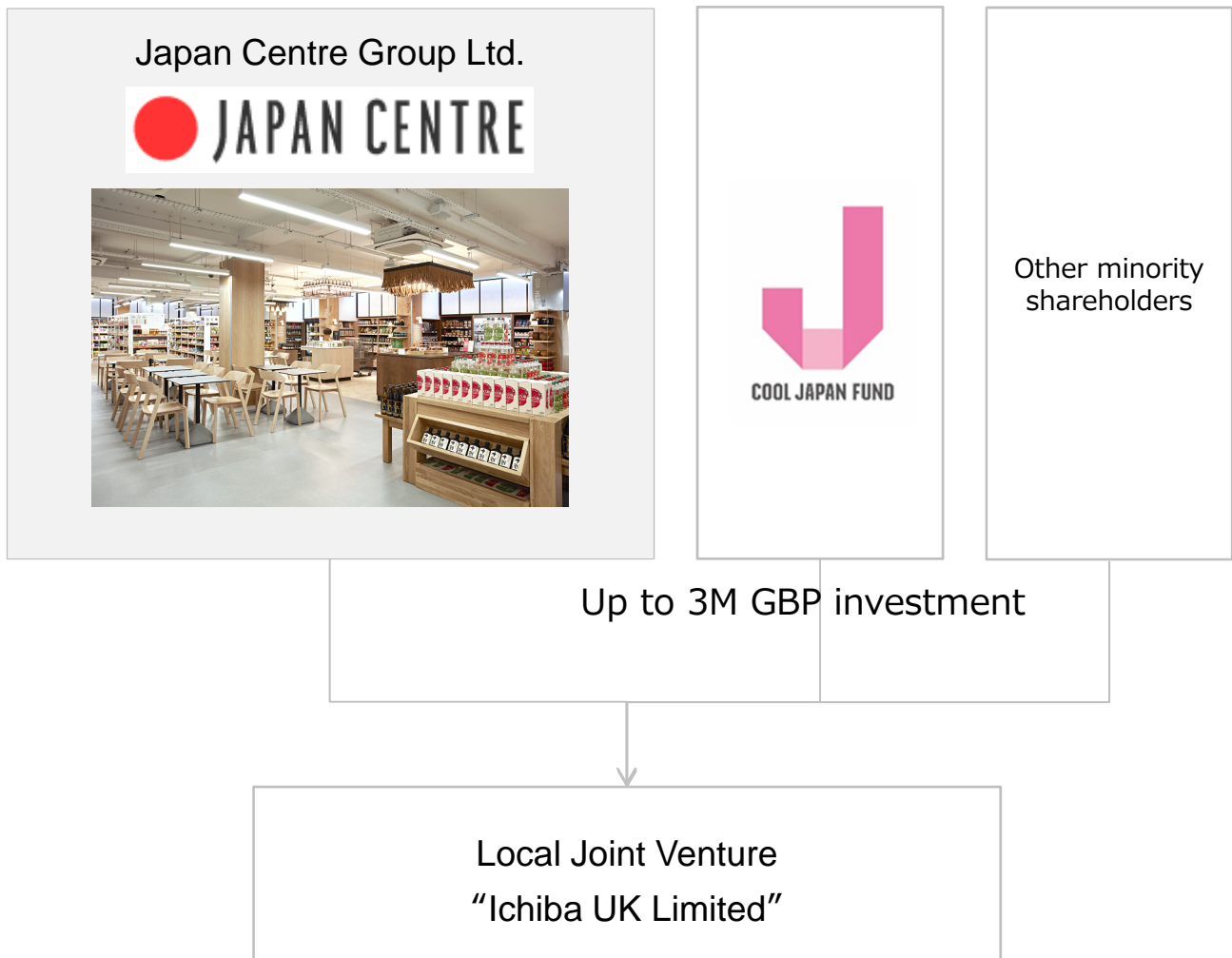
Representative: Kunizo Tokumine

Employees: Approx. 600 (as of July 2017)

Homepage: <https://www.japancentre.com/>

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[Project Scheme]



[Images]

