

Made in Japan cosmetics from Saga to Asia

Saga taking on challenge to be an Asian hub of cosmetics industry

“Kyushu Saga” – a prefecture in Japan that is nearest to other Asian countries – aims to build an Asian version of the Cosmetic Valley, an extensive cluster of cosmetic companies in France

Saga is attracting companies related to health and beauty to Karatsu City and Genkai Town with the aim of creating a cosmetics industry hub in the growing Asian market under the “Cosmetic Hub Project.”

The project started in 2013. The idea came from Mr. Alban Muller, Honorary President of the French Cosmetic Valley at that time when he visited Karatsu City and Genkai Town a year ago, and commented that “nothing can possibly go wrong with the development of this place as a cosmetics hub.”

There are four reasons. First is the proximity with Asia. Facing Genkainada Sea in northern Kyushu, Karatsu is one of the regions in Japan that offers easy access to other Asian countries. It has an international port with facilities to accommodate large cargo ships weighing up to 30,000 tons. It is also near to Fukuoka, the largest city in Kyushu, and it’s only an hour drive to Fukuoka Airport via the expressway.

Second, Karatsu already has a small cluster of cosmetic companies, such as OEM factories, inspection analysis institutions, and logistics companies, and the entire process from manufacturing to inspection and distribution can be carried out here consistently. In particular, the inspection analysis institutions are some of the leading ones in Japan.

Third is the presence of “Institute for Medical Plant Cultivation, Genkai” in Genkai Town, which is adjacent to Karatsu. This research center contributes to the stable supply and quality improvement of medical plants, and studies the possibilities of new raw materials by cultivating more than 200 varieties of medicinal plants at any time.

Fourth is the natural environment. Karatsu is blessed with magnificent scenery, such as the beautiful pine forest named Niji-no-matsubara. The natural environment helps to raise the brand image of cosmetic products and health foods, creating possibilities for developing naturally derived raw materials.

The Japan Cosmetic Center (JCC) was set up to promote the project. There are 174 corporate members



Karatsu City, Saga where a cosmetics hub is growing

and 19 supporting members which are institutions/groups (as of Dec 2016). The extensive range of members from industry, government and university – three local government agencies including Saga prefecture, cosmetics and beauty related manufacturers, raw material manufacturers, distribution companies, retailers, financial institutions, Saga University, and Kyushu University – are developing a collaborative framework.

JCC’s forte is in the matching of companies with compatible needs. In the course of expanding its network overseas, it has signed cooperative agreements with cosmetic associations in France, Italy, Spain, Taiwan and Thailand, and is trying to match member companies on both sides. Furthermore, it has also achieved results in producing raw materials using local agricultural products, and commercialization of products, such as cleansing cream using organic lemons from Karatsu and skin creams using oil extracted from the seed of the tea plant from Ureshino City.

Section chief Ohashi from the Saga prefecture Cosmetics Project Promotion Office calls out to overseas companies, saying, “We gladly respond to any enquires related to cosmetics, and strive to be the best mediator between companies looking for partners or specific raw materials. Above all, we are looking forward to foreign companies coming to Saga. We offer the best support in Saga for companies that want to do business here. Saga and JCC will work together to provide all-round support, such as looking for potential sites or recruiting staff.”

Setting up a base in Saga, creating made in Saga products with high added value, and expanding into the Asian market. This may become the trend in the cosmetic industry. ■

Website

Japan Cosmetic Center (JCC) <http://jcc-k.com/en/>
 Saga Industrial Location Guide <http://saga.klgyouricchi.jp/en/>

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