

The Tokyo One-Stop Business Establishment Center (TOSBEC) is a one-stop consultation service that provides administrative procedures required to start your business in Japan. It is jointly operated by Japan's national government and the Tokyo Metropolitan Government and has the main office in Akasaka and satellite centers in Shibuya and Marunouchi. In this issue, we spoke with Silvana Petkovic, founder of Clover Arts Inc., a company that promotes and disseminates the best of Japanese creativity in art, film, music, design, and traditional crafts to the rest of the world.

## User Relay Interview .....



### I visited Japan for the first time when I was 16 and fell in love at first sight with Japan and Japanese culture!

In 1996, when I was 16 years old and attending a foreign language high school, the principal took the students who were learning Japanese to Japan. Of course, it was my first time in Japan. During our trip, we visited Osaka, Kyoto and Nara. Everything I saw was new and fascinating, including the traditional culture and customs, the way people lived, and the attitudes toward manufacturing, and revealed the discerning nature of the Japanese character. It was a trip that made me feel like I needed to know more about Japan.

At university, I studied political science as well as Japanese studies, but at that time, being born in a multi-ethnic country, I felt that it was culture, especially cross-cultural exchange, that had a very important role in international relations. With these thoughts in mind, I first encountered the term "cultural diplomacy" when studying Japanese political science. I was strongly attracted to Japan's understanding and respect for different cultures, which was the most important aspect of its diplomacy, and to its policy of international cooperation based on these principles. I strongly felt that I wanted to let more people around the world know about this attitude that was unique to Japan.

I am currently involved in the overseas development of Japanese arts and cultural projects, but the starting point for this was the various internship programs and seminars on cultural policy that I participated in while I was a student at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies in Japan from 2005 to 2006. There, I learned about regional revitalization through art and cultural activities, policies for the protection of cultural assets, and international exchange activities and their promotion, but the connections I made through these programs led to my work introducing Japanese films, art and classical music to the rest of the world.

### I decided to establish my own company because I cherish my connection with Japan!

As I became involved in a number of projects, including overseas events and exhibition productions, I gained a wide variety of colleagues. To my delight, I started to receive one call after another from these colleagues to help them with their work. In addition, I was frequently advised that it would be easier to ask for help if I were a corporation rather than an individual, or that I could introduce larger projects if I were a corporate organization.

However, I put it off because I had assumed that it would be difficult to set up a company in Japan. Then, last December, my work achievements were recognized as a contribution to Japanese society, and I was unexpectedly granted Japanese citizenship. It was a moment when I felt a really strong connection to Japan. That was a major factor in deciding to establish my company.

## Clover Arts Inc.

### Representative Director Silvana Petkovic

**Profile** / Born in the former Yugoslavia, now the Republic of Serbia. Majored in Japanese language at a foreign

language high school in the capital city of Belgrade. Holds a degree in Japanese Studies and Political Science from SOAS University of London in London, England. She came to Japan in 2004 with a scholarship from the Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, and majored in Cultural Policy at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, where she studied international cultural exchange management at the grassroots level. In 2010, she represented Japan at a film industry society conference held at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris. Since then, she has planned and implemented numerous projects to promote art, film, music, design and traditional crafts that showcase Japan's unique creativity to overseas audiences. In December 2021, she was granted Japanese citizenship in recognition of her contributions to Japanese society. In April 2022, she established Clover Arts Inc. [www.clover-arts.co.jp](http://www.clover-arts.co.jp)



### I was able to register my corporation within a week of the start of my consultation!

First, I called the Legal Affairs Bureau directly, told them I wanted to form a company, and asked for advice, and they introduced me to TOSBEC. I immediately called TOSBEC and consulted with them, asking if I could create a company in one week. I called them on March 22 and I wanted to start operating as a company on April 1, so it was a reckless thing to request.

However, the consultant at TOSBEC encouraged me, saying, "It is quite possible if you prepare the application documents according to this schedule." So, first, I had the Articles of Incorporation, which I had prepared on my own beforehand, corrected and completed in just three days. During that time, I received a call from a consultant from TOSBEC, who gave me a lot of advice. As a result, I was able to apply electronically and complete the registration of the incorporation on March 28.

The advantage of TOSBEC is that they have experts in every field related to establishing a company. As a one-stop follow-up service, you can receive advice from these people as many times as you like, free of charge. In my case, I have received a lot of advice even after the company was established. I can't thank them enough!



### One point of advice from me

For foreigners, there are many things that are difficult to understand, such as social insurance, pensions and taxation, let alone the procedures for registering a corporation. TOSBEC is very helpful because their experts can provide accurate explanations and advice on all such matters related to establishing a company. Furthermore, multiple consultants will review the same material, so you can get a second opinion, which is very reassuring.

Consultation and introductory sessions are held as needed. Now accepting participants! Available to everyone, free of charge!

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