

JST International Youth Exchange

Sakura Science Exchange Program (SSP)

India-Japan Circulation of Talented Youths in Science Programme

LOTUS Programme

NEXUS Networked Exchange, United Strength for Stronger Partnerships between Japan and ASEAN

Young Talents Exchange and Capacity Development Program (Y-tec)



Sakura Science Exchange Program

Welcoming the world's talented youth
for a new era of cooperation

Background and Purposes

Countries and regions share the future challenge of promoting research and development and transforming results into innovations. In 2014, the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) started the "Sakura Science Program." Since then, the program has invited talented young foreign human resources

for short-term visits to Japan, giving them the opportunity to experience both Japan's cutting-edge science and technology and culture.

As of the end of FY2024, we have invited approximately 43,000 outstanding young individuals.

The Sakura Science Program's objectives include:

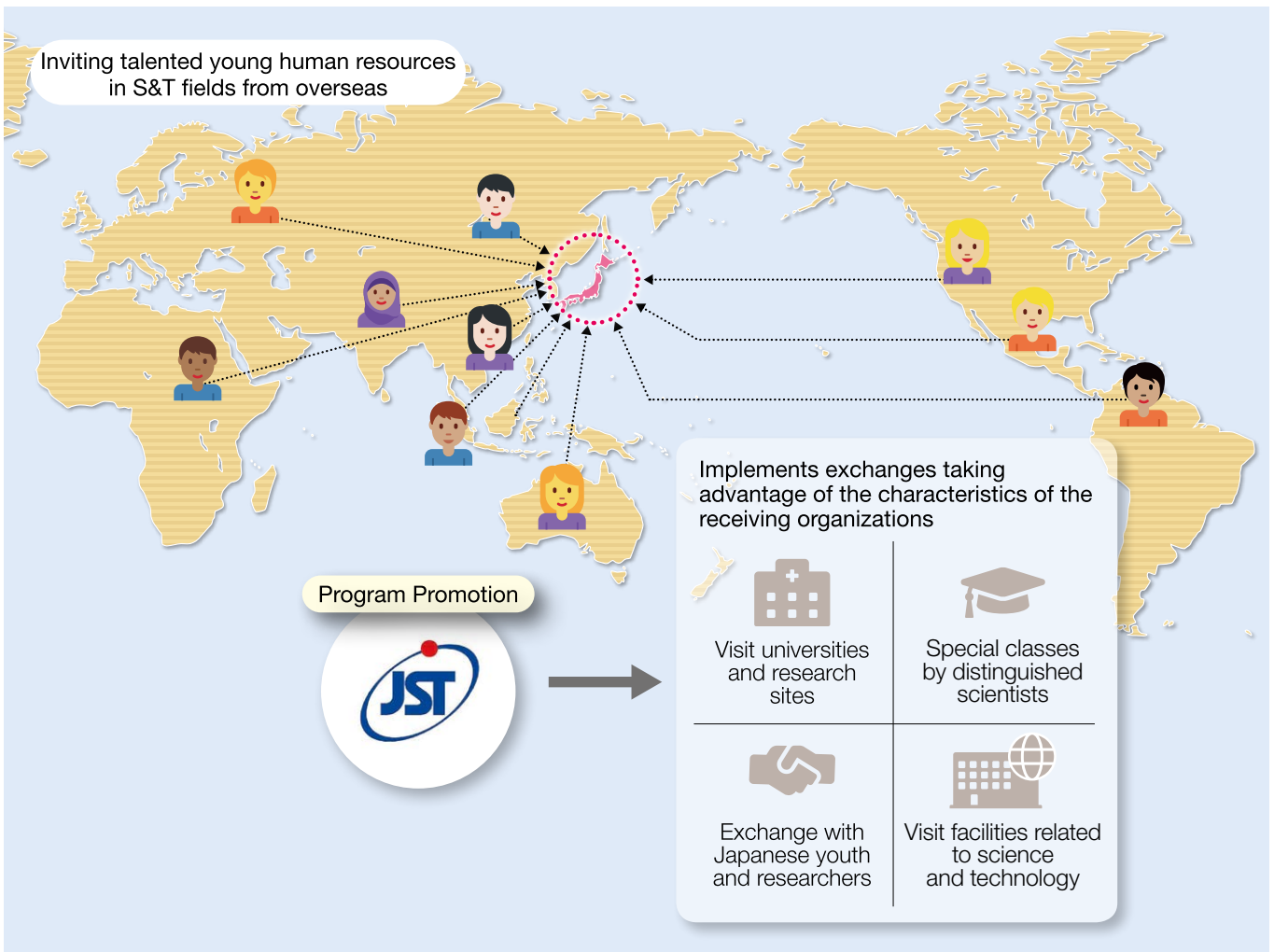
- To support the development of talented human resources from overseas who have the potential to contribute to innovation in science and technology
- To accelerate international brain circulation
- To promote continuous collaboration, cooperation and interaction between educational and research institutes in Japan and other countries and regions
- To strengthen good relationships between Japan and other countries and regions that can encourage diplomacy in science and technology

Eligibility

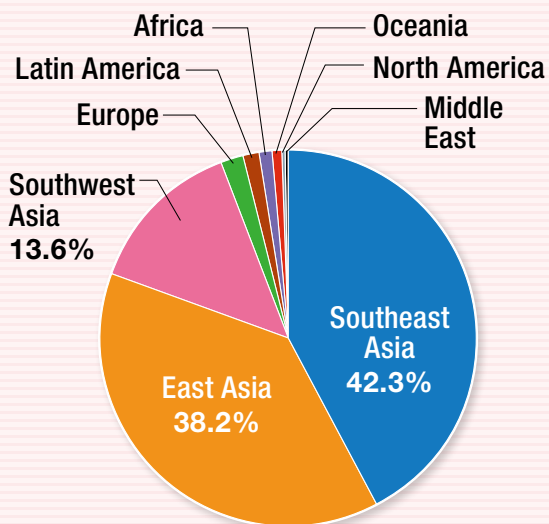
- ▶ **Invited countries and regions:** Generally, all countries and regions are eligible for invitation.
- ▶ **Eligible persons:** Students, researchers and others engaged in science and technology who are 40 years old and under
- ▶ **Eligible fields:** Exchanges in the fields of science and technology, including the humanities and social sciences
- ▶ **Receiving organizations:** Educational and research institutes throughout Japan, companies, local governments, various organizations, and others
- ▶ **Expenses:** JST will provide the required expenses* (expenses of travel, stay, and others).

*If a company is implementing as a receiving organization, only travel expenses will be provided.

Note: The Sakura Science Program or SSP is used as a common name for the Sakura Science Exchange Program.

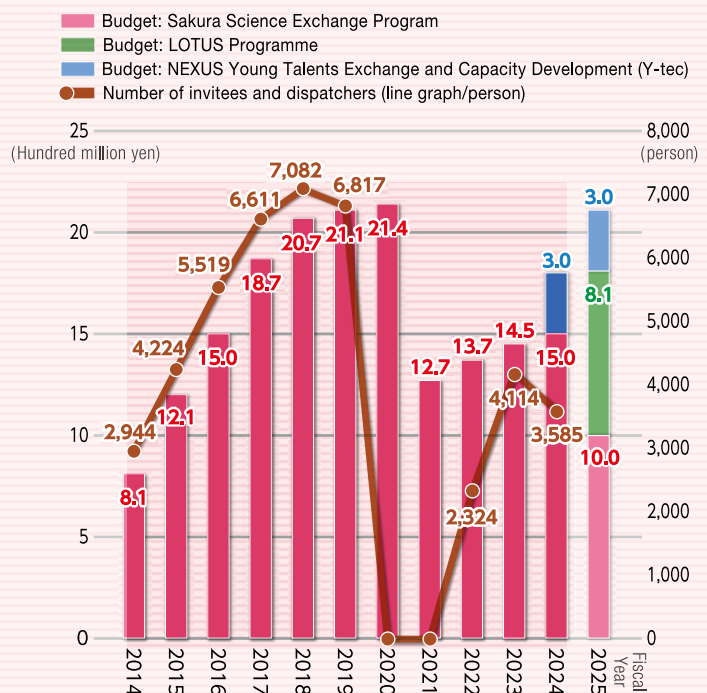


Sakura Science Exchange Program Breakdown of Invitees by Region



■ FY2014 to FY2024: 42,652 persons in total
■ Invited from 90 countries/regions

JST International Youth Exchange Budget and Number of Invitees





* NEXUS (Networked Exchange, United Strength for Stronger Partnerships between Japan and ASEAN)
 * The number of invitees decreased in FY2019 due to the COVID pandemic. From FY2020 to FY2021, no invitations were issued.

Contents of Sakura Science Program

Open Application Invitation

Exchange plans prepared by Japanese receiving organizations and overseas sending organizations are publicly offered and adopted. As of FY2024, SSP has implemented **3,692** exchange programs and invited **34,661** people. (*2,002 organizations have sent young people, and 402 organizations in Japan have accepted them, supporting the expansion of exchanges.)

Types of Open Application Invitation

Course	Exchange Duration	Eligible Countries/Regions	Eligible Persons	Application
A Science and Technology Experience Course Experience Japan's advanced science and technology	7 days maximum (in principle)	FY2025 Asia, Africa, Middle East, Latin America, Island Countries, etc. (148 countries/regions)	Students at high school, technical college, university, or graduate school; post-doctoral researchers and faculty members aged 40 or under. (limited to first-time visitors to Japan)	Several times a year
B Collaborative Research Activity Course Conduct preliminary experiments and participate in developing collaborative research topics, etc.	21 days maximum			
C Science and Technology Training Course Opportunity for training in Japan's cutting-edge technologies and expertise	10 days maximum	• Application Guidelines (Refer to Attachment 1)  (Refer to website 1 below)		• How to apply Application must be prepared and submitted by the Japanese host organization.
D Annual Mutual Exchange Course Opportunity for exchanges (dispatch and invitation) between youth from India and Africa, and Japanese youth	1 year maximum* In-person dispatch or invitation is a maximum of 3 months per individual; hybrid exchange including online exchanges is a maximum of one year. *Duration is defined as from the date of adoption until the end of the fiscal year.	India and African countries • Application Guidelines  (Refer to website 2 below)	Students at technical college, university, or graduate school; post-doctoral researchers and faculty members aged 40 or under. (not limited to first-time visitors to Japan)	Once a year • How to apply Application must be prepared and submitted by the Japanese host organization.

Website 1 https://ssp.jst.go.jp/media/files/pdf/program/2025/en_gaiyou_2025.pdf

Website 2 https://ssp.jst.go.jp/media/files/pdf/program/2025/souho_en_gaiyou_2025_ver2.pdf

Process to Implement a Program

Program preparation and application to JST by Foreign and Japanese organizations

Program selection by JST through the SSP selection committee
Provision of expenses by JST

The program begins!

Direct Invitation

JST, acting as a receiving organization, plans and implements invitation programs with distinctive features. A total of **7,991** people have been invited as of the end of FY2024.

High School Program

The program invites excellent high school students from various countries and regions to provide them with an opportunity to learn about Japan's most advanced science and technology. The program offers a range of program contents.

- ▶ **Participate in special lectures given by Nobel laureates and other respected scientists**
- ▶ **Visit renowned universities and research institutions in Japan**
- ▶ **Exchange with Japanese high school students**
- ▶ **Attend information sessions about Japan study abroad programs**

● Activity report on website
<https://ssp.jst.go.jp/en/report/2024/#section2>



Lecture by Nobel laureate AMANO Hiroshi at Aichi Prefectural Okazaki High School (June 2024)



Study of low-temperature plasma sciences at Nagoya University (June 2024)



Information session for Japan Study Abroad Program held by Japan Student Services Organization (JASSO) (December 2024)



Drone programming challenge conducted together with Japanese high school students at Ibaraki Prefectural Tsuchiura First High School (October 2024)

Supporters Program

The program aims to invite international stakeholders in science and technology, who act as a bridge for exchange between Japan and their home countries, to deepen their understanding of Japan's administration in science, technology, and education fields. It also implements academic exchanges between administrators of overseas and Japanese universities.



African top leaders of universities and administrative officials in education at Tokyo Institute of Technology* (May 2023)
 *Since 2024: Institute of Science Tokyo

● Activity report on website
<https://ssp.jst.go.jp/en/report/2024/index.html#section3>



■ The Indian University Student Invitation Program was implemented in FY2023 and FY2024.

Activity Reports for Open Application Invitation



A Course

Indian university students take part in cutting-edge chemistry experiments (National Institute of Technology, Toyama College, September 2024).



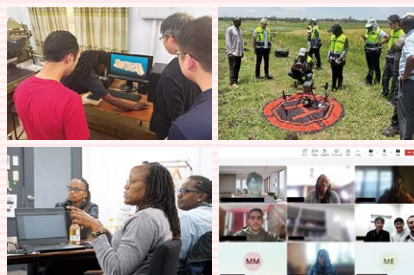
B Course

Malaysian graduate students explore biodiversity resource management in the era of genome information to establish a foundation for joint research (National Institute of Genetics, September 2024).



C Course

Through training in medical engineering technology, students acquire new perspectives toward solving medical challenges in India (The University of Electro-Communications, September 2024).



D Course

The Japan-Kenya-Egypt joint research project pursues agricultural crop monitoring technologies and their underlying infrastructure (Kyushu University, from January to March 2025).

Bilateral and Multilateral Exchanges

JST strategically promotes exchanges between organizations in India/Africa/Asia and Japan to contribute to brain circulation.

India

Japan-India Universities Forum

The Japan-India Universities Forum is held to establish a platform for academic exchange, with the aim to further promote cooperation between Japan and India in the fields of science and technology. Active discussions are held among the leaders of top universities in both countries.

Forum	Date/Venue	Theme	Participating Organizations
1st	January 23, 2023 Tokyo, Japan	Enhancing exchanges among universities and research institutions in Japan and India, to figure out solutions for future issues — Cultivating innovative young researchers with an international outlook —	9 universities from India; 21 universities and research institutions and 1 related organization from Japan
2nd	September 30, 2023 Kyoto, Japan	Promotion of brain circulation between Japan and India	10 universities from India; 21 universities and research institutions, 2 related organizations, and 3 private companies from Japan
3rd	October 19, 2024 New Delhi, India	Promotion of Japan-India brain circulation and effective utilization of human resources	33 universities from India; 28 universities and research institutions, 6 related organizations, and 5 private companies from Japan
4th	November 15, 2025 Telangana, India To be held at Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (IITH)		



The 2nd Japan-India Universities Forum (left to right) H.E. Sibi George, Ambassador of India to Japan, delivers remarks; Keynote speech; Participants engaged in lively discussions

At the 3rd Forum, through the sharing of current efforts and advanced case studies related to Japan-India brain circulation, discussions were held on the challenges that must be addressed to further expand future exchanges. In addition to in-depth discussions on promoting industry-aca-

demia-government collaboration between Japan and India —joined by companies interested in entering the Indian market or hiring talent from India—individual exchanges of views were conducted among various organizations of both countries to build concrete cooperative relationships.



The 3rd Japan-India Universities Forum (left to right) Group photo; Round Table Conference

Africa

Japan-Africa University Exchange Meeting

The Japan-Africa University Exchange Meeting is held to promote inter-university collaboration as well as to activate human resource exchange between Japan and African countries. Through discussion and exchange of opinions, participants shared the characteristics and strengths of each organization, the status of international exchange between Africa and Japan, and expectations and prospects for the future.

Event	Date/Venue	Participating Organizations/Persons
Japan–Africa University Exchange Conference TICAD8 (8th Tokyo International Conference on African Development) Official Side Event	August 22, 2022 (online)	263 participants from 44 countries/regions including 36 countries/regions from Africa such as South Africa, Tunisia, etc.
Japan–Africa University Exchange Meeting 2023	May 31, 2023 Tokyo	9 universities from Africa (Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa and Zambia); 18 universities and 2 organizations from Japan
Webinar 2024: Sharing case studies of building strong and productive collaboration between Japan and African countries	July 23, 2024 (online)	190 participants from 21 countries/regions including 10 countries/regions from Africa
Japan–Africa University Exchange Meeting 2025 TICAD9 Partner Project	August 19, 2025 Tokyo (scheduled)	Expected participants from Africa (Botswana, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Tunisia and Zambia)



Japan–Africa University Exchange Meeting 2023 (left to right) Group photo; Sharing ideas in discussion

Asia

Asia Universities Forum

The Asia Universities Forum builds on and expands the Japan-China University Fair & Forum, which was held 16 times from 2010 to 2022. By bringing together leading universities specializing in science and technology from Japan, China, and other Asian countries/regions, the Forum provides a platform for universities to share their diverse and advanced initiatives. The Forum aims to develop international brain circulation by promoting academic cooperation across the entire Asian area.

Forum	Date/Venue	Theme	Participating Organizations/Persons
1st	January 27, 2024 Hong Kong, China	Inter-university exchange, human resource development, and the establishment of a supportive environment for human resource development in Asia	27 leaders from top universities in Asia (10 from Japan, 9 from China, 8 from ASEAN countries)
2nd	February 17, 2025 Tokyo, Japan	Promoting brain circulation and innovation in Asia	30 leaders from top universities in Asia (11 from Japan, 10 from China, 9 from ASEAN countries)
3rd	January 2026, China (scheduled)		



The 2nd Asia Universities Forum (left to right) Keynote speech; Round Table Conference; Group photo

Results of Sakura Science Program

Understanding and positive impression of Japan were heightened

▶ **99%** of the invitees answered that they became more favorable toward Japan (questionnaire results).



Miraikan (National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation) (Musashino University, February 2025)

Promotion of revisit to Japan by innovative human resources

▶ A total of approximately **3,000** excellent young people returned to Japan for study, research, and so on.

Contribution to the globalization of the receiving organization

▶ Responses by the receiving organizations to the questionnaire included: “internationalization of the organization has been promoted,” “the organization became better known worldwide,” and “it contributed to an improvement in the university rankings.”



Workshop aiming to achieve SDGs (Chiba University, February 2025)

▶ Conclusion of an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding) for academic exchange, etc.

Effects in science and technology diplomacy

▶ The Sakura Science Program gained a high reputation and support from key persons in other countries, including Xi Jinping (President of China), Narendra Modi (Prime Minister of India), and Ranil Wickremesinghe (Former Prime Minister of Sri Lanka).

▶ In March 2023, high expectations for the Sakura Science Program, which fosters interactions between faculty and students by inviting young foreign human resources to Japan, were expressed at the Japan-India Summit Meeting.

▶ In October 2024, at the 27th ASEAN-Japan Summit, the Chairperson's statement referred to continuous efforts of the Sakura Science Program to promote human interaction, science and technology exchanges, and research collaboration.



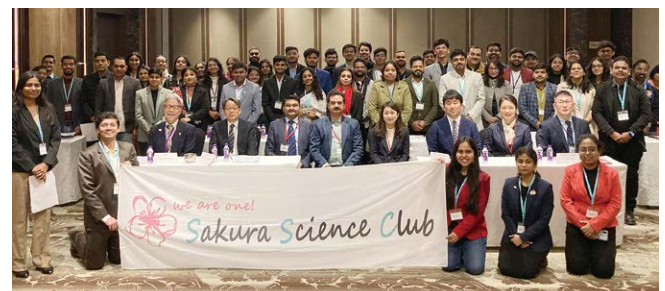
ASEAN-Japan Summit (Vientiane, Laos, October 2024)
Source: Adapted from the Prime Minister's Office of Japan website
https://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/102_ishiba/actions/202410/10asean_1.html



Japan-India Summit Meeting (Delhi, India, March 2023)
Photo courtesy of Cabinet Public Affairs Office

Building a Network in Sakura Science Club

The Sakura Science Club provides valuable information on its website to support members playing an active role as a bridge between Japan and their home countries. It also organizes alumni reunions in each area. In addition, the members are connected and interact with each other freely through social media. The club has grown into a large network with approximately 43,000 members.



The 6th reunion in India (New Delhi, India, January 2025)

• Sakura Science Club website
<https://ssp.jst.go.jp/sns/top.html>



Messages from Participants Active in Society

Mr. Vipul Nath Jindal (India)

Present affiliation Founder and CEO, Next Bharat Ventures IFSC Private Limited
*Subsidiary of Suzuki Motor Corporation in India

The Sakura Science Program (SSP) was an important milestone in my life. If it had not been for SSP, I would probably never have visited or worked in Japan. I hope that SSP will continue to support students from all over the world to connect with Japan, learn in Japan, and sow the seeds for future collaboration between various countries with Japanese individuals and companies.



Dr. Aunsaya Eksatit (Thailand)

Present affiliation Research Center for Electronic and Optical Materials, NIMS
Postdoctoral Researcher, Polycrystalline Optical Material Group,
Optical Materials Field

The Sakura Science Program (SSP) exposed me to interesting research activities I had never heard of before, broadening my perspective on scientific research and deepening my knowledge. Without this program, I may not have had a chance to start my career in Japan. I hope that SSP will continue to support international students who wish to participate in activities in Japan.

Dr. Yihong Feng (China)

Present affiliation National Institute for Basic Biology (NIBB)
National Institute of Natural Sciences
Postdoctoral Researcher, Division of Cellular Dynamics

Before participating in the Sakura Science Program (SSP), I never imagined pursuing a PhD abroad. The experience in SSP motivated me to study more and try harder to do good research. I am really happy to see my own growth here. For the future, I hope SSP can provide more opportunities for communication between international students and Japanese students during the SSP program.



Support Network for Sakura Science Program is expanding

(Sakura Science Program Supporters)

Honorifics omitted

ESAKI Leo	Nobel Prize in Physics in 1973	NAKAMURA Shuji	Nobel Prize in Physics in 2014
TONEGAWA Susumu	Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1987	ŌMURA Satoshi	Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 2015
SHIRAKAWA Hideki	Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2000	KAJITA Takaaki	Nobel Prize in Physics in 2015
NOYORI Ryoji	Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2001	OHSUMI Yoshinori	Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 2016
TANAKA Koichi	Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2002	HONJO Tasuku	Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 2018
KOBAYASHI Makoto	Nobel Prize in Physics in 2008	MANABE Syukuro	Nobel Prize in Physics in 2021
SUZUKI Akira	Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2010	TSUTSUI Yoshinobu	Chairman, Keidanren
YAMANAKA Shinya	Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 2012	KURODA Reiko	Distinguished Professor, Chubu University; former Vice President of International Council for Science (ICSU)
AMANO Hiroshi	Nobel Prize in Physics in 2014	MOHRI Mamoru	Chief Executive Director Emeritus, Miraiikan; former JAXA astronaut



India-Japan Circulation of Talented Youths in Science Programme

LOTUS Programme



Support for graduate students and postdoctoral researchers from India to participate in research exchanges in Japan

The LOTUS Programme invites and supports talented young researchers from India to participate in research exchanges in Japan. The programme aims to strengthen Japan-India joint research efforts by fostering collaborations and building networks between research institutions in Japan and India. The research projects and exchanges will be jointly supervised by faculty members from both countries. This opportunity is open to young researchers joining ongoing or upcoming joint research projects between Japanese and Indian academic institutions. In addition, the programme will provide career development support for those who are interested in pursuing a research career in Japan.

Eligibility Requirement	Individuals must be enrolled in a graduate program (master's or doctoral degree) or be a postdoctoral researcher at an Indian university.
Exchange Duration	Maximum of one year
Eligible Fields	(i) AI & Information Technology (ii) Biotechnology (iii) Energy (iv) Materials Science (v) Quantum Science (vi) Semiconductors (vii) Telecommunications, etc.
Application	Approximately once a year Applications must be submitted by the Japanese counterpart of the joint research project.

Process up to implementation

Indian and Japanese organizations jointly develop the exchange programme, and the Japanese organization submits the application to JST.

After review by the selection committee, JST selects the research plans. Provision of expenses by JST.

Programme implementation



A postdoctoral researcher from IIT Madras conducts experiments using a powder grinding machine and particle size analyzer for sample preparation (Nagaoka University of Technology, March 2025).



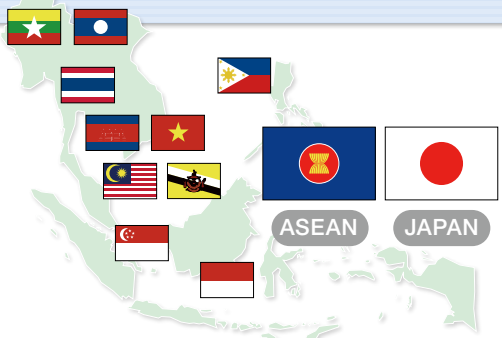
Graduate students from IIT Hyderabad conduct a particle physics experiment by Super KEK accelerator (KEK: High Energy Accelerator Research Organization, April 2025).

* The lotus flower is the national flower of India.



Program
Directed to
ASEAN

NEXUS
Networked Exchange, United Strength for Stronger Partnerships between Japan and ASEAN
Young Talents Exchange and Capacity Development Program (Y-tec)



By utilizing the exchange platform established by Sakura Science Program, **NEXUS aims to build a mutual, sustainable research ecosystem between Japan and ASEAN member states.**

Taking the opportunity of the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation in 2024, NEXUS (Networked Exchange, United Strength for Stronger Partnerships between Japan and ASEAN) promotes a flexible and multi-layered science and technology partnership, leveraged by the strength of Japan and ASEAN. It utilizes a network platform, established through various cooperative exchanges of activities between Japan and ASEAN. Specifically, we will proceed with the following three initiatives.

- ▶ **Researchers Exchange/ Development** NEXUS promotes the development of young international researchers through supporting personnel exchange. It aims to initiate international joint research and formulate a pool of research talent resources.
- ▶ **International Joint Research** NEXUS supports international joint research in common priority challenges.
- ▶ **Program Base** NEXUS establishes a “base” (program office) to promote cooperation in science, technology, and innovation, including strengthening the systems and functions of existing research platforms.

The Young Talents Exchange and Capacity Development Program (Y-tec) is part of NEXUS, which supports mutual exchanges by inviting and dispatching youth in the fields of science and technology between ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) member states and Japan. It is meant to further strengthen the sustainable cooperative research relationship between Japan and ASEAN by growing together as partners in co-creating innovations in science and technology.

	Young Talents Exchange Course	Leadership Exchange Course
Eligible Persons	Individuals who are 40 years and younger including high school students	School faculty/staff, researchers, etc.
Exchange Duration	Maximum of one year. Dispatching and invitation is a maximum of 90 days per person. The one-year term assumes the combination of on-site and online exchanges.	
Application	Approximately once a year	



Young researchers from National University of Malaysia discuss research cooperation for developing cyclic thermal energy storage materials (RIKEN: National Research and Development Agency, May 2025).



Students from National University of Laos receive an explanation from a graduate student in the laboratory about an experiment using a direct current circuit breaker (Institute of Science Tokyo, May 2025).

Y-tec website
<https://www.jst.go.jp/aspire/nexus/y-tec/en/index.html>



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Sakura Science Exchange Program website
<https://ssp.jst.go.jp/en/>



LOTUS Programme website
<https://www.jst.go.jp/program/india/en/>



NEXUS Young Talents Exchange and Capacity Development Program (Y-tec) website
<https://www.jst.go.jp/aspire/nexus/y-tec/en/index.html>