

**AHEAD50 (ASEAN Human Educational Development Scholarship Partners)  
for STD Officials of the ASEAN Secretariat  
(Short-term Invitation Program to Japan-Mission #5) Report**

**1. Program Overview**

**【Program Objective】**

From 17 to 23 May, four officials from the Science and Technology Division of the ASEAN Secretariat visited Japan.

Under the theme of “Strengthening STI (Science, Technology, and Innovation) Governance and Exploring Future Prospects for Sustainable Regional Development,” a series of program activities was conducted. Through lectures on economic and social aspects, site visits to relevant institutions, and exchanges of views with Japanese experts, the program aimed to enhance capacities for advancing the science and technology agenda in ASEAN, strengthening policy planning and formulation capabilities for STI, and promoting international cooperation in the STI field.

The working-level cooperation and human networks between Japan and ASEAN that will be established through this program are expected to further promote collaboration in the STI sector and contribute to sustainable development across the ASEAN region.

**【Overview of AHEAD50】**

AHEAD50 (ASEAN Human Educational Development Scholarship Partners) is an invitation program launched on the occasion of the 50th Year of ASEAN-Japan Friendship and Cooperation in 2023. The purpose of this program is to provide promising staff of the ASEAN Secretariat and other related organizations with an opportunity to learn about Japan's policies, systems, and positions, thereby strengthening the ASEAN Secretariat through human resource development and enhancing smooth cooperation with Japan.

**【Participants】** Total: 4 staff members (1 Director-level Officer, 2 Senior Officer, 1 Officer) from the Science and Technology Division (STD) of the ASEAN Secretariat

**【Locations】** Tokyo, Ibaraki, Hyogo, Kyoto

**【Schedule】**

■ Invitation Program:

May 17 (Sun) – May 23 (Sat), 2026 (6 nights, 7 days)

May 17 (Sun)                      Arrival at Narita International Airport

May 18 (Mon)                      **【Opinion Exchange】**

Science and Technology Policy Bureau, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports,  
Science and Technology (MEXT)

**【Opinion Exchange】** Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST)

**【Opinion Exchange】**  
 Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) Tsukuba Space Center  
 May 19 (Tue) **【Opinion Exchange】**  
 STS forum (NPO): Science and Technology in Society forum  
 Travel from Tokyo to Hyogo  
**【Opinion Exchange, Observation】** RIKEN Center for Computational Science  
 May 20 (Wed) **【Opinion Exchange】** Kyoto University Office of Research Acceleration  
**【Observation】** Sanjusangen-do Temple  
**【Observation】** OMRON Communication Plaza  
**【Lecture, Opinion Exchange】** Ritsumeikan University Graduate School of  
 Technology Management  
 “Technology Management for Sustainable Innovation: Lessons from Japan’s  
 Industrial and Space Ecosystems”  
 Lecturer: Dr. (Mr.) MINATO Nobuaki, Dean / Professor, Graduate School of  
 Technology Management, Ritsumeikan University  
 May 21 (Thu) **【Cultural Experience】** Tea ceremony experience (Gen-an)  
**【Observation】** Ginkaku-ji Temple  
 Travel from Kyoto to Tokyo  
 May 22 (Fri) **【Workshop】** Preparations for the Reporting Session (summarizing program  
 findings, preparation of action plans)  
**【Reporting Session】** Presentations of Program Findings and Action Plans  
 May 23 (Sat) Departure from Narita International Airport

## 2. Program Photos

### Invitation Program



May 18 **【Opinion Exchange】** Science and Technology Policy Bureau, Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)



May 18 **【Opinion Exchange】** Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST)



May 18 【Opinion Exchange】 Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) Tsukuba Space Center



May 19 【Opinion Exchange】 STS forum (NPO): Science and Technology in Society forum



May 19 【Opinion Exchange, Observation】 RIKEN Center for Computational Science



May 20 【Opinion Exchange】 Kyoto University Office of Research Acceleration



May 20 【Observation】 OMRON Communication Plaza



May 20 【Lecture, Opinion Exchange】 Ritsumeikan University Graduate School of Technology Management



May 21 【Cultural Experience】 Tea ceremony experience (Gen-an)



May 21 【Observation】 Ginkaku-ji Temple



May 22 【Reporting Session】



May 22 【Reporting Session】 Group photo

### 3. Voices from the Participants (excerpt)

- The knowledge gained from the AHEAD50 programme is expected to contribute to enhancing productivity and strengthening work discipline, particularly through adopting the “Kokoro kara” value of sincerity, ownership, and attention to detail. These principles can be applied to improve planning, coordination, and overall efficiency in programme implementation. Additionally, exposure to Japan’s integrated innovation ecosystem reinforced the importance of stronger internal coordination and strategic alignment, which can support more effective delivery of science, technology, and innovation initiatives within the ASEAN Secretariat.
- The most memorable aspect of the program was the visit to the OMRON Communication Plaza, as it was the only private-sector organization we had the opportunity to visit. In addition to gaining knowledge through lectures, we also had valuable hands-on experience interacting directly with automation technology. The most valuable aspect of this program was that it not only strengthened our relationships with partners, but also served as an important platform for discussing future opportunities for collaboration.
- After learning about the mandates of organizations related to STI in Japan, as well as the research issues prioritized by Japan, we were able to explore how to leverage their expertise to add value to projects proposed by ASEAN Member States. This is expected to encourage further collaboration between ASEAN and Japan in the STI area, particularly in fields where ASEAN still lags behind, such as high-performance computing (HPC), AI, quantum technology, space technology, and technology and innovation management.

#### 4. Presentations of Program Findings and Action Plan at the Reporting Session (excerpt)



#### 【Findings and Action Plans from each Visit】

- **Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT)**

1. AGREED to explore the possibility of having Networked Exchange, United Strength for Stronger Partnerships between Japan and ASEAN (NEXUS) to support ASEAN STI Fund (ASTIF), ensuring the fund to benefit all 11 AMS.
2. COMMITTED to discuss with Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) on having the details of how to have NEXUS-ASTIF joint call, aimed to be launched in the 16th meeting of the ASEAN-Japan Cooperation Committee on Science and Technology (AJCCST-16) in June 2027.
3. WELCOMED the cooperation with ASEAN Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation (COSTI) on AI, quantum research and also aging technology and ready to have further discussion with COSTI Singapore who is the country coordinator for Japan and also ASEAN chair in 2027.

- **Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST)**

1. e-ASIA Joint Research Program (e-ASEAN JRP) AGREED to share details with ASEC to have the remaining AMS (Brunei and Timor-Leste) to join in officially into the program.
2. NEXUS COMMITTED to explore further on how the fund can be used to support ASTIF and have a joint call.
3. AGREED to expand cooperation under the Science and Technology Research Partnership for Sustainable Development (SATREPS) to include Timor-Leste, subject to its eligibility.

- **Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) Tsukuba Space Center**

1. AGREED to develop a new project proposal, which served as an extension of the current Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF)-supported project. The proposal can be shared with ASEC and also JAIF Management Team for their input and consideration.
2. PROPOSED to utilise big data generated by JAXA satellite and use AI modelling to enhance disaster management and weather prediction in ASEAN.

- **STS forum**

1. SECURED a 6-minute speaking slot for the ASEAN Secretary-General at the main Opening Plenary of the STS Forum 2026 to be held on 4 October 2026, with the draft intervention to be submitted to organizers two weeks in advance.
2. AGREED to host the ASEAN STS Forum 2027 in Singapore, with commitment to elevate its strategic profile up to the ASEAN-Japan Summit level.
3. AGREED to highlight the achievement of the 10th Anniversary of the ASEAN STS Forum at the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Science, Technology and Innovation (AMMSTI).

● **RIKEN Center for Computational Science (R-CCS)**

1. COMMITTED to explore the continuation of the ASEAN High-Performance Computing (HPC) School leveraging on the new ASEAN HPC Facility in Indonesia;
2. AGREED to explore projects on quantum computing using JAIF/NEXUS during Singapore's ASEAN Chairship;
3. COMMITTED to explore possibility of having dedicated support for ASEAN students to attend internship programme;
4. PROPOSED R-CCS to explore the revival of ASEAN-dedicated open call for access to Fugaku;
5. PROPOSED promoting access of R-CCS e-learning platform to ASEAN researchers/ students

● **Kyoto University Office of Research Acceleration (KURA)**

1. COMMITTED to explore strengthening university-industry linkages and engagement with the private sector; COMMITTED to engage with Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) and Japan Mission to ASEAN;
2. PROPOSED promoting the visibility of ASEAN-Japan Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) Coordination (JASTIC) Fellows through ASEAN Talent Mobility/ Technology Management Hub platforms;
3. PROPOSED a Courtesy Call by Sec-Gen of ASEAN to the President of Kyoto University in October 2026 to further strengthen ASEAN–Japan academic and strategic cooperation

● **Ritsumeikan University, Graduate School of Technology Management**

EXPLORED potential cooperations in :

1. Participation of private firms and students from ASEAN in the School's corporate internship program – pilot initiatives, with support from JETRO
2. Technology foresight initiatives through the ASEAN Foresight Alliance (AFA);
3. Space S&T following the adoption of ASEAN Declaration of Space Cooperation;
4. Leveraging AJSTD to disseminate the School's research outcome to the wider community;
5. Special lecture by ASEAN Sec Gen in October to strengthen engagement between ASEAN and the academic community

Implementation Agency: Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)