

MEMORANDUM OF COOPERATION
Regarding Deep-Sea Mineral Resource Development
Between the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry of Japan and the Department of
Commerce of the United States of America

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan, and the Department of Commerce of the United States of America (hereinafter referred to collectively as the “Participants”);

Recognizing the importance of joint research and technical and scientific cooperation to enhance the understanding of oceanic sciences; that the United States is the global leader in the commercial acceleration of seabed mineral resource development through the successful modernization and streamlining of the federal regulatory process; that Japan has successfully conducted the world’s first system integration test for rare-earth muds mining, and achieved world class results in deep-sea mineral resource development;

Emphasizing that deep-sea mineral resource development offers significant potential for ensuring a stable future supply of critical minerals for both nations;

Affirming their intention to advance bilateral cooperation in a mutually beneficial manner through this partnership,

Have reached the following understandings:

I: Establishment of the Japan-U.S. Working Group on Deep-Sea Mineral Resource Development

1. Participants intend to establish a Japan-U.S. Working Group on Deep-Sea Mineral Resource Development (“the Working Group”) to facilitate bilateral cooperation in science and technology, and support efforts to accelerate deep-sea mineral resource development.

II: Areas of Cooperation

The Working Group intends to focus on the following activities

1. Sharing information on deep-sea science and seabed mineral resource projects, including presentations on Japan’s rare-earth muds project near Minamitorishima Island and polymetallic nodules project, to explore potential cooperation.

2. Presenting technologies related to deep-sea science and mineral resource development, including through site visits and organizing scientific and technical exchanges with relevant experts, researchers, and industry stakeholders.
3. Engaging with U.S. and Japanese industry to obtain input, discuss regulatory approaches and best practices, share information, and facilitate partnerships to inform research priorities and support development of new economic opportunities.
4. Exploring opportunities for the mutual utilization of relevant assets related to deep-sea science and mineral resource development.

III: Participants and Meeting Format

1. Participants intend to convene the Working Group at the senior level (Director and Deputy Assistant Secretary level), led by Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and the United States' National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Other relevant agencies may participate as appropriate, including but not limited to:

Japan: Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI); Cabinet Office; Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA); Ministry of Defense (MOD) and other relevant organizations.

United States: Department of Commerce; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA); Department of the Interior (DOI) and associated agencies; Department of State (DOS); Department of Energy (DOE); Department of War (DOW); and other relevant organizations.

2. Meetings should be convened on an as-needed basis and may take place either in person or online.

IV: Legal Character

This Memorandum of Cooperation (hereinafter "MOC") does not constitute nor create rights or obligations under the domestic laws of either Japan or the United States or under international law. Nothing in this MOC is intended to alter or affect any existing agreements between Japan and the United States. Cooperation under this MOC is intended to take place in accordance with respective laws and regulations of Japan and the United States. Nothing in this MOC commits the Participants to the expenditure of funds.

V: Discontinuation

This MOC becomes operative upon signature by both Participants. Either Participant may discontinue this MOC by providing written notice of discontinuation to the other Participant. The Participants intend to review this MOC every two years to determine whether the arrangement should be revised or discontinued. Discontinuation is expected to commence on a date mutually determined by the Participants or, if the Participants cannot mutually determine a date, 180 days after the date on which notice of discontinuation is delivered.

The foregoing represents the recognition reached between the Participants.

SIGNED on March 19, 2026, in duplicate, in the English language.

**FOR THE MINISTRY OF ECONOMY
TRADE AND INDUSTRY
OF JAPAN:**

**FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF
COMMERCE
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:**

BY: _____

BY: _____

AKAZAWA Ryosei

Howard Lutnick

Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry
of Japan

Secretary of Commerce,
United States Department of Commerce