

Announcement of Winners for the Fifth “Marie Sklodowska Curie Award”

The Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) has selected winners for the Fifth Marie Sklodowska Curie Award for young female researchers.

Grand Prize



KUROKI Yuko
Data & AI Researcher
Intesa Sanpaolo AI Research (Italy)
Research field: Information Science

Inspiration Prize



KOBAYASHI Ami
Distinguished Senior Assistant Professor (Principal Investigator)
Department of Medical Science and Innovation, Institute of Medical Research
Tohoku University
Research field: Neuroscience



YAMAGUCHI Sonomi
HFSP Postdoctoral Fellow
Department of Cancer Immunology and Virology
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute (United States of America)
Research field: Phage Biology, Structural Biology, Biochemistry

Recognition Prize



MORIMOTO Mariko
Assistant Professor
Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry
University of Notre Dame (United States of America)
Research field: Chemical Biology, Immunology, Cancer Biology

For the Fifth Marie Sklodowska Curie Award, we accepted applications from October 1 to December 10, 2025. Through document screenings and interviews with external experts, we have selected one Grand Prize winner and two Inspiration Prize winners. In addition, considering the efforts of other applicants who meet the criteria for the award and deserve appreciation, we also selected one Recognition Prize winner.

JEOL Ltd. will award 1M yen for the Grand Prize, 500K yen for each Inspiration Prize, and 300K yen for the Recognition Prize. In addition, the Grand Prize winner will be offered an opportunity

to visit research institutions in Poland—where Maria was born and raised—through the Embassy of the Republic of Poland in Japan and the Polish Academy of Sciences.

Appendices

Appendix 1 The Winners of the Fifth Marie Skłodowska Curie Award

Appendix 2 About the Marie Skłodowska Curie Award and Selection Committee Members

Contact

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“Empowering Science, Inspiring Futures”

Our world faces unprecedented global challenges - such as climate change, energy crises, and emerging infectious diseases - that demand innovative solutions. JST will rise to these challenges through “Science and Technology,” as a national research and development agency that plays a central role in implementing Japan’s science, technology, and innovation policy. We support fundamental research and startups to create new value, develop R&D strategies, foster the next generation of talent, disseminate vital information, and manage the Japan University Fund. Like a compass guiding ships through turbulent waters, JST will chart the way towards a vibrant and secure future by empowering science through a multifaceted approach.

The Winners of the Fifth Marie Sklodowska Curie Award

Grand Prize

Prize pot: 1M yen

Sub prize: Travel expenses (transportation and accommodation) to visit research institutions in Poland

KUROKI Yuko

Data & AI Researcher

Intesa Sanpaolo AI Research (Italy)

<Research field>

Information Science

<Research experience>

2021 Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Computer Science, Department of Computer Science, Graduate School of Information Science and Technology, The University of Tokyo

2021 Assistant Professor, Department of Computer Science, Graduate School of Information Science and Technology, The University of Tokyo

2023 Postdoctoral Researcher, CENTAI (Center for Artificial Intelligence) Institute S.p.A. (Italy)

2025 Research Scientist, CENTAI Institute S.p.A.

2026 Data & AI Researcher, Intesa Sanpaolo AI Research

<Reasons for winning>

Dr. Kuroki has produced research achievements that successfully integrate theoretical rigor with societal relevance in the fields of machine learning theory and graph mining. Through theoretically grounded studies accompanied by empirical evaluation, including the development of novel algorithmic foundations for addressing data uncertainty, she has made significant contributions to the field.

She is expected to further excel as a researcher who leads cross-disciplinary knowledge creation in an international research environment and advances mathematically grounded AI research through academic networks spanning Japan, Europe, and the United States.

Inspiration Prize

Prize pot: 500K yen each

KOBAYASHI Ami

Distinguished Senior Assistant Professor (Principal Investigator)

Department of Medical Science and Innovation, Institute of Medical Research

Tohoku University

<Research field>

Neuroscience

<Research experience>

- 2021 Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Medicine, Department of Reproductive, Developmental and Aging Sciences, Graduate School of Medicine, The University of Tokyo
- 2021 Collaborative Researcher, Research Team for Mechanism of Aging, Tokyo Metropolitan Institute of Gerontology
- 2021 Senior Research Scholar, Department of Neurology, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School, JSPS Overseas Research Fellow
- 2026 Distinguished Senior Assistant Professor (Principal Investigator), Department of Medical Science and Innovation, Institute of Medical Research, Tohoku University

<Reasons for winning>

Dr. Kobayashi conducts research on the molecular mechanisms of neurodegenerative diseases and gliomas, as well as on the development of novel therapeutic approaches, building upon her clinical experience as a practicing physician. Through innovative studies employing live imaging of mitochondrial component dynamics, RNA network analysis, and antisense oligonucleotide (ASO)-based therapies, she has developed original research that organically integrates basic biomedical science with clinical medicine. Her strong sense of mission toward overcoming disease, and her ability to seamlessly connect fundamental research with industry collaboration in translational research, merit particularly high recognition.

Leveraging her international research experience in the United States, she is expected to make significant further academic and societal contributions to the advancement of neurological disease research.

YAMAGUCHI Sonomi

HFSP Postdoctoral Fellow

Department of Cancer Immunology and Virology

Dana-Farber Cancer Institute (United States of America)

<Research field>

Phage Biology, Structural Biology, Biochemistry

<Research experience>

2023 Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Biological Sciences, Graduate School of Science, The University of Tokyo

2023 JSPS Overseas Research Fellow

2023 Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Cancer Immunology and Virology, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

2024 HFSP Postdoctoral Fellow, Department of Cancer Immunology and Virology, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

<Reasons for winning>

Within only a few years of obtaining the doctoral degree, Dr. Yamaguchi has published research findings in internationally prestigious scientific journals, demonstrating highly original contributions to the fields of anti-phage defense mechanisms and nucleotide signaling. Since her student years, she has consistently exhibited outstanding research execution skills, distinguished by incisive conceptual insight in pursuing the elucidation of novel cellular functions and by the ability to independently design and carry out sophisticated, multifaceted experimental approaches. Leveraging strong international experience and a cross-disciplinary perspective cultivated in overseas research environments, she is a researcher from whom further academic advancement and significant international contributions are strongly anticipated.

Recognition Prize

Prize pot: 300K yen

MORIMOTO Mariko

Assistant Professor

Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry

University of Notre Dame (United States of America)

<Research field>

Chemical Biology, Immunology, Cancer Biology

<Research experience>

2021 Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Chemistry, University of California Berkeley

2021 Postdoctoral Research Associate, Department of Chemistry, Stanford University

2025 Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, University of Notre Dame

<Reasons for winning>

Dr. Morimoto pioneered a distinctive research domain by integrating chemical biology and immunology to chemically reprogram the immune system using targeted chimeric compounds and artificial glycans. Her research is highly regarded for using precise molecular design to elucidate previously unknown mechanisms of action and for its clear orientation toward therapeutic applications.

Within a short period following the completion of her doctoral degree, she established an independent research program, demonstrating a strong commitment to translating fundamental research outcomes into societal application. Furthermore, she shows a deep dedication to sharing the experiences and expertise gained through her international research activities with the next generation of scientists. She has the potential to serve as a role model who bridges Japan and the global research community by promoting the cross-border exchange of talent. In recognition of these contributions and their broader significance, a Recognition Prize is hereby established and conferred upon her.

About the Marie Skłodowska Curie Award

JST recognizes the importance of initiatives designed to promote the activities of female researchers in science, technology, and innovation, and based on this belief we established the “Marie Skłodowska Curie Award” in 2021, together with the Embassy of the Republic of Poland, for awarding young female researchers who are expected to flourish across the world. The award’s namesake, Dr. Marie Skłodowska Curie, was recognized for her achievements in her early thirties and later won two Nobel Prizes. The award honors her great contribution and achievements to the development of science and technology, and we hope her example will inspire the ambitions of Japanese female researchers.

While the latter half of the doctoral program and the first few years after obtaining doctoral degrees are the most promising period for female researchers to make great strides as independent researchers, it is also true that they often face various life events during this period. By honoring the achievements of the winners and making them widely recognized, we hope that this award will support them to take a leap forward with their passion and flexibility as well as to foster the next generation of female researchers.

Further information: <https://www.jst.go.jp/diversity/en/OurEfforts/mscaward/index.html>

List of Winners: <https://www.jst.go.jp/diversity/en/OurEfforts/mscaward/winners.html>

Selection Committee Members

Name	Position and organization
HIBIYA Junko (Committee Chair)	Professor Emerita, International Christian University
IWAO Emma Haruka	Software Engineer, Google
EBISUYA Miki	Professor, Physics of Life, Dresden University of Technology Alexander von Humboldt Professor
OOGURI Hiroshi	University Professor, The University of Tokyo Fred Kavli Professor and Director of the Walter Burke Institute for Theoretical Physics, California Institute of Technology
GODA Yukiko	Professor, Synapse Biology Unit, Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology
SAITOH Eiji	Professor, Department of Physics and Engineering, Graduate School of Engineering, The University of Tokyo
TAKANO Eriko	Professor of Synthetic Biology, Manchester Institute of Biotechnology, The University of Manchester

NUMATA Keiji	Professor, Department of Material Chemistry, Graduate School of Engineering, Kyoto University Team Leader, RIKEN Center for Sustainable Resource Science
Edyta DZIEMINSKA	Associate Professor, Department of Engineering and Applied Sciences, Faculty of Science and Technology, Sophia University
Tomasz M. RUTKOWSKI	Research Scientist, RIKEN Center for Advanced Intelligence Project Research Fellow, The University of Tokyo

(Members are listed in order of the Japanese syllabary except Committee Chair.)

(Position and organization are as of starting of an open call.)