

Discussion Summary

Japan ASEAN High-level Roundtable on Science, Technology and Innovation

Date and Time: 9:00-13:30, April 22, 2024

Venue: OECD Conference Centre, 2 rue André-Pascal, 75016 Paris

Organizers:

Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan (MEXT), ASEAN Secretariat, and Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST)

Co-Organizer:

Cabinet Office of Japan



The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology of Japan (MEXT), the ASEAN Secretariat and the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) organized the "Japan ASEAN High-level Roundtable on Science, Technology and Innovation" as the official side event of the Ministerial meeting of the OECD Committee on Science and Technology Policy (CSTP) in cooperation with the Cabinet Office of Japan. The leaders/representatives of Science and Technology Innovation (STI) Policy from Japan, the ASEAN Secretariat and ASEAN Member States, including science and technology ministers, science and technology advisors and senior government officials, gathered to discuss STI cooperation between Japan and ASEAN (Appendix). The participants reaffirmed that Japan and ASEAN as well as ASEAN Member States have so far built up important and valuable STI cooperations. Furthermore, the leaders/representatives welcomed to deepen STI cooperation in the future through seizing the opportunity of the 50th anniversary of friendship and cooperation in 2023 and acknowledged the following suggestions.

1. Regarding policy-making, Japan would soon commence the formulation of their 7th Science, Technology and Innovation Basic Plan (2026-2030), ASEAN would begin formulating the next ASEAN Plan of Action on Science, Technology and Innovation (APASTI: 2026-2035), and ASEAN Member States were also formulating and promoting their own STI core plans and strategies. Under these circumstances, it would be important to identify the possible synergies as well as common challenges faced from the various policies.
2. Additionally, the following three actionable strategies were proposed to provide direction and greater alignment in the regional STI policy infrastructure: (a) establishment of a Plan of Action on Science, Technology and Innovation between ASEAN and Japan to foster collaboration in STI; and (b) for the proposed new program (see para 4) to focus on with fundamental research at the



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bilateral level, and applied research at the regional level; and (c) commitment to foster collaboration in STI through working towards and confirming the next APASTI.

3. Regarding the specifics of STI cooperation, it would be beneficial to collaborate in areas of regional importance and of mutual interest such as climate change, energy, AI, robotics, quantum, semiconductors and biotechnology. In tandem, attendees agreed on the importance of developing human resources as it would underpin the longevity and effectiveness of STI collaboration and ensure the maximisation of the advantages that could be accrued from next-generation/emerging technology. The development of human resources could be achieved by providing more avenues and opportunities for talent development through the promotion of talent mobility (both student and researchers) between Japan and ASEAN.
4. Japan unveiled their ‘Networked Exchange, United Strengths for Stronger Partnerships between Japan and ASEAN’ (NEXUS) which would be the central tool for deepening cooperation with a funding of approximately 100 million USD over a span of 5 years. It is essential that NEXUS must be inclusive. Thus, to implement this program, the diverse circumstances of both ASEAN as a region and respective ASEAN Member States should be kept in mind, and cooperation should be balanced according to the needs of each country, so as to bring comprehensive benefits to the ASEAN Member States and the ASEAN region as a whole. Therefore, JST, the implementing body of NEXUS must (a) carefully understand both the needs of ASEAN Member States and ASEAN, (b) identify the forms of cooperation and areas of cooperation that are beneficial to both Japan and ASEAN region, and (c) to design effective systems.
5. It was recognized that ASEAN and its member states have needs for STI cooperation involving not only basic research but also applied research which should involve the industry; especially in emerging technologies such as AI and quantum, which are progressing extremely fast and have a large impact on the economy and society. In this connection, basic research and applied research are closely related and cooperation between academia and industry would be integral to the long-term development of ASEAN and its member states.