Science and Technology Diplomacy Roundtable: What actions are called for in today's turbulent global environment?

October 8, 13:00–15:00 at JST Tokyo Headquarters

Participants from diverse sectors shared the key points of the current draft of the 7th Science and Technology Basic Plan, along with related Science and Technology Diplomacy activities, and had in-depth discussions on the actions needed in today's rapidly changing global environment.

Participants:

Last name alphabetical order

- **Tateo Arimoto**, Adjunct Professor, The National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies (GRIPS)
- **Laura Barbieri**, Science Fellow / GRIPS visiting scholar, Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education (STINT)
- **Andreas Gothenberg**, Executive Director, Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education (STINT)
- **Susan Jones**, Counsellor (Education and Research) Australian Embassy
- **Kei Koizumi**, Former Principal Deputy Director, the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP)
- **Takeshi Nagasawa**, Director for Integrated Strategy, Secretariat of Science, Technology and Innovation Policy, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan
- **Takahiro Nozaki**, Associate Professor, Department of System Design Engineering, Faculty of Science and Technology Keio University/ JST-STPF
- **Shinsuke Okada**, Director for International Cooperation, International Science and Policy Division, Science and Technology Bureau, MEXT
- **Yuki Okada**, Professor, Institute for Quantitative Biosciences, University of Tokyo, JST-STPF
- **Mamiko Ohno**, Senior Science & Technology Officer, British Embassy Tokyo
- **Koji Saeki**, Deputy Director General, Center for Research and Development Strategy, JST
- **Marie-Louise Taylor**, Counsellor, Science & Technology, British Embassy Tokyo
- **Kumiko Tsukamoto**, Senior Manager (Education and Research), Australian Embassy

Organizer/Moderator:

- **Kana Asano**, Fellow and Head of Science Diplomacy Group, Center of Research and Development Strategy (CRDS) Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST)

Secretariat:

- **Ayako Endo**, Assistant, Science Diplomacy Group, Center of Research and Development Strategy (CRDS) Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST)

Discussion Summary:

(Scientific Advice and Diplomacy)

- In the past, science and technology have occasionally been included in diplomatic strategies. However, against the backdrop of the rapid development of critical and emerging technologies such as AI and quantum computing, science and technology have today become a central pillar of diplomatic strategy. Science diplomacy is no longer a peripheral policy; it has become both a key component of overall science and technology policy and an essential element of diplomatic strategy.
- Scientific achievements, knowledge, and information have become indispensable for decision-making in diplomacy, significantly contributing to core diplomatic objectives such as security and the maintenance of peace. In the case of the United States, for example, there are instances where scientific and technological collaboration has been maintained even with countries where diplomatic relations are difficult, such as North Korea, Iran, and Cuba.
- Conversely, diplomacy also supports science. Multilateral international frameworks such as ITER and the IPCC are crucial for advancing research and should be actively engaged with. Additionally, programs launched through diplomatic opportunities, such as HFSP[1] and NEXUS[2], demonstrate how diplomacy can promote scientific progress and contribute to academic achievements.

(Inter-Ministerial Coordination and the Science Advisor System)

- Given that the gap between science and technology on one hand and diplomacy and security on the other is rapidly narrowing—not only with respect to the economy and industry—inter-ministerial coordination has become more important than ever. It is necessary to establish a multi-faceted framework for how the government coordinates science diplomacy.
- In international cooperation, for example, committees established under science and technology agreements would be most effective if they involve not only the traditional participants such as the foreign ministry and science and technology-related ministries, but also all relevant ministries, including those responsible for economy, industry, and security.
- Regarding the science advisor system, some time has passed since its initial establishment. For example, the position of Science and Technology Advisor to the U.S. Secretary of State was created about 30 years ago, and Japan's Science and Technology Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs was established 10 years ago. In light of changes in the global landscape, it is necessary to review the system for providing scientific advice in diplomacy.

[1] https://www.hfsp.org/history
[2] https://www.jst.go.jp/aspire/nexus/en/about/index.html

(Dialogue and Collaboration among Diverse Stakeholders)

- Science diplomacy is a powerful tool for addressing many global challenges, but it must be remembered that it is researchers and scientists who actually advance science and technology. Over many years, they have built international networks based on trust, and their mobility and collaboration play a critical role that is distinct from government-led policies.
- Even when governments establish international agreements, these do not always align with the preferences of individual researchers. The right to choose research collaborators lies with the researchers themselves. Therefore, effective science diplomacy must be promoted through dialogue and collaboration with a broad range of stakeholders, including universities, research institutions, and NGOs.
- At the same time, an important reality is that promoting international collaboration requires ensuring research security. The degree of research security varies depending on the institution, the nature of the research, and the collaborating countries, but all researchers must take it into account. Responsibility for research security should be shared by governments, research institutions, and researchers alike. However, governments should not attempt to control researchers; instead, they should take an approach focused on fostering understanding and awareness.
- Moreover, there remains a significant gap between the research community and the world of government and policy-making. Considering that science and technology will become increasingly important across all policy areas, it is essential to bridge this gap. Programs such as the Science Policy Fellowship programs implemented by AAAS and JST hold great promise in this regard.

Finally, participants reaffirmed the importance of dialogue and discussion across diverse sectors, as exemplified by this roundtable.

Note: This meeting was held under Chatham House Rule.