

UK-Japan Tech Forum Joint Statement

From Hiroshima to Osaka:
Building a Roadmap from
the Hiroshima Accord to
the Expo 2025 Osaka,
Kansai, Japan to Strengthen
UK-Japan Tech Collaboration

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Since the UK's Integrated Review in 2021, and in response to the increasing awareness of the indivisibility of Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific security and prosperity, we have seen a transformation in the relationship between the UK and Japan. No international relationship has seen more progress in the last four years. The two like-minded Governments have opened up bilateral trade, increased defence and security cooperation, and raised ambitions for collaboration in science and shared innovation.

The UK and Japan are amongst the world's top economies and the UK boasts the largest tech sector in Europe. Close collaboration in emerging technology areas, such as AI and Quantum, will support the two countries' prosperity and resilience. The Japan Electronics and Information Technology Industries Association (JEITA) and techUK welcome the two governments' continued commitment to fostering and bolstering cooperation between our two advanced technology sectors, which has huge potential to be a growth engine for both economies.

The 2023 Hiroshima Accord commits the UK and Japan to work together to build strategic advantage in emerging technologies. The Accord has three pillars. First, it establishes a new Cyber Security Partnership and enhances defence-industrial cooperation, advancing a resilient, interoperable UK-Japan defence relationship grounded in technology. Second, it promotes science, technology, and innovation cooperation, creating a partnership aimed at competitive advantage in key technologies for economic prosperity and security. Third, it reinforces UK-Japan collaboration on global challenges like Net Zero, working through the G7, G20, and UN. Japan's support for the UK's successful accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) highlights the potential of their strategic and economic cooperation.

The Accord followed the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) signed in October 2020, with its modern digital chapter and the Digital Partnership agreed in December 2022. The UK and Japan have consistently developed their tech and trade cooperation agenda to increase resilience and advance global leadership in digital. It is crucial that the two governments build on this momentum and deliver practical opportunities for collaboration.

The Hiroshima Accord was made possible through Japan's hosting of the G7 in 2023, where Japan emphasised the importance of multilateral cooperation in addressing global challenges. The UK used this focus on Japan to advance our two countries' bilateral priorities, with tech firmly at the heart of these joint ambitions.

In 2025 Japan will host the Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai. At Expo 2025, Japan's technological leadership will once again be showcased in many fields. The UK Government is planning a significant British presence both in Osaka and across the events taking place during the Expo.

Expo 2025 represents a significant opportunity for both countries to secure a lasting legacy for tech collaboration by delivering on the full potential of the Hiroshima Accord and Digital Partnership. The UK-Japan Tech Forum – a joint initiative of JEITA and techUK – is calling on both the UK and Japan to set out a practical roadmap for the UK Japan tech partnership, involving the vibrant tech sectors of both countries, from the Hiroshima Accord to Osaka 2025 and beyond.

This paper sets out our sector's view on the most important areas of strategic collaboration and sets out recommendations on bi-lateral actions between now and the conclusion of Expo 2025. The UK and Japan governments can rely on the support of the tech sector working together to realise the potential of this critical international partnership.

Proposals Toward Expo 2025 Osaka, Kansai

Between now and the conclusion of Expo 2025 in October this year, the new governments of both the UK and Japan can build on the achievements of their relationship to date and bring clear results and benefits to the technological sectors of both countries.

To promote UK-Japan technology and trade cooperation, techUK and JEITA propose the following to the British and Japanese governments:

1. Establishing of a clear programme of ministerial dialogues

As outlined in the Hiroshima Accord and Digital Partnership, the two Governments should set out a roadmap of ministerial dialogue involving lead departments on both sides including the Department for Science, Innovation & Technology (DSIT) and the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) on the UK side and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), and the Digital Agency on the Japan side. This dialogue should focus on agreeing on the priorities for UK-Japan technological cooperation, utilising the planned UK presence at Expo 2025, and setting out clear routes for industry involvement to ensure effectiveness and outcomes.

2. Ensuring a defined role for industry

Utilising the second anniversary of the UK-Japan Digital Partnership to establish a clear role for industry input across the four pillars of the partnership, ensuring that both the UK and Japan's high-tech sectors have a clear understanding of the priorities for advancing this comprehensive agreement. This could be achieved through regular thematic or technology focused workshops with companies from both national tech sectors and representatives from both Governments.

3. Establishing a regular dialogue between regulators and industry

Setting up regular dialogues between policy authorities, incorporating opinions from multi-stakeholders, such as industry, academia and civil society to discuss how the UK and Japan can promote innovation and harmonise regulations and standards for emerging technologies, such as AI.

4. Cooperation on digital trade and data free flow with trust

The UK and Japan are two of the strongest supporters of free trade and an international rules-based order. Both countries share an understanding that the need for international rulemaking in the rapidly developing digital economy is greater than ever, and they are actively contributing to negotiations on digital trade within the WTO. They place particular importance on facilitating e-commerce, ensuring the free flow of data across borders, addressing data protection and privacy concerns, and enhancing cybersecurity. Building fair and transparent rules in these areas is considered crucial not only for promoting international trade but also for underpinning global economic growth and innovation. Furthermore, the UK and Japan aim to maximise the economic benefits brought by digital technologies while minimising associated risks by strengthening multilateral cooperation and establishing an inclusive trade environment from which all member countries can benefit. Based on this shared vision, the two countries should continue to cooperate as key partners in advancing digital trade negotiations within the WTO. Both countries called for the early incorporation of the Agreement on Electronic Commerce into the legal framework of the WTO. As digital and data become increasingly central to international trade, the tech sector has a particular contribution to make to advancing the shared priorities of both countries. The IAP (Institutional Arrangement for Partnership) was established under the OECD to address issues related to expanding cross-border data. Both Japan and the UK actively support this IAP framework and promote data free flow with trust (DFFT). Both countries should explore how the tech sector can actively contribute to this shared agenda, such as through a joint workshop with industry, academia, and trade experts from both countries on operationalising data flows to inform bi-lateral priorities.

5. Government support for research activities

Exploring funding mechanisms for strategic cooperation areas as outlined in the Hiroshima Accord. We welcome the announcement of joint funding contributions in the semiconductor field in May 2024. Both the UK and Japan have strong research institutions and extensive experience in joint research. Whether led by the governments of Japan and the UK or by public-private partnerships, funding should generate concrete means for joint activities and outcomes to support these ambitions. In line with the joint research and development encouraged by the Semiconductor Partnership, a widening of this activity should be explored. The leading national research funding bodies such as Innovate UK and Japan's New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization (NEDO) should explore mechanisms for joint funding within the existing funding requirements of both organisations. The UK and Japan have successfully collaborated through the multi-lateral EUREKA Global Stars. A bi-lateral focus would enable a more targeted approach to technology cooperation, potentially at a higher technology readiness level (TRL). Such collaboration would lead to a new wave of UK-Japan innovation

in emerging technologies.

6. Opening up government data to support joint innovation

Agree on an approach that supports open innovation accessible to universities and companies of all sizes in both the UK and Japan. The CEPA, signed in 2020, includes provisions for opening government data to support joint innovation. By finding ways to open this data with appropriate safeguards in place, substantial contributions can be made to innovations tied to national strategic challenges and public services.

7. Expo2025 Osaka, Kansai Programme

The UK government should place science and technology at the heart of the Expo 2025 Osaka program, alongside clear programs to enable the industry to respond. This activity should include systematic engagement with SMEs to support ongoing collaborations and opportunities beyond 2025. Similarly, the Japanese government should detail how Expo 2025 Osaka will support the ambitions of cooperation with countries including the UK within the broader Expo program.

The UK Japan Tech Forum was established to allow both of our tech sectors to speak with one voice to both Governments on the potential for UK-Japan tech trade and collaboration. We are proud to have contributed to the significant progress made to date on bi-lateral tech collaboration. Through this statement, we encourage both the UK and Japan to continue to progress this dynamic partnership into new areas and toward practical outcomes to benefit both countries and create opportunities for UK and Japanese tech companies of all sizes.

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