

**Global Startup Campus Initiative
Implementation Guidelines for Pilot Activities**

June 10, 2025

Cabinet Secretariat

Decision of Director for Global Startup Campus Initiative

Regarding the pilot activities related to the Global Startup Campus (GSC) Initiative prior to the establishment of the GSC operating entity, these activities shall be conducted in accordance with the “Basic Policy for the Global Startup Campus Initiative” (as decided by the Integrated Innovation Strategy Promotion Council on August 29, 2024) and the “Implementation Policy for Pilot Activities” (as decided by the Director for the Global Startup Campus Initiative Promotion Office, Cabinet Secretariat on June 10, 2025), will be based on the following implementation guidelines.

1. Basic Approach to Pilot Activities

- (1) To realize the mission of the Global Startup Campus (GSC) Initiative – “to build a world-class innovation ecosystem hub,” pilot activities will be implemented in an integrated manner to attract top global talent and investment. These activities will include: ① international research program to attract researchers and investors, ② venture builder program, and ③ talent development (fellowship) program, in collaboration with overseas universities and other institutions. Funding will be provided through a fund allocated to the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST).
- (2) The Cabinet Office (CAO) will oversee the overall program of pilot activities while consulting with the Steering Committee, composed of external experts, established within CAO. The Steering Committee will evaluate these pilot activities and provide advice to CAO.
- (3) Through these pilot activities, the initiative aims to further develop and refine the GSC concept, while building partnerships with stakeholders both in Japan and overseas.
- (4) In implementing the activities, the initiative will flexibly and continuously improve its approach by leveraging domestic and international external organizations with proven track records in deep tech research and commercialization support. In executing the fund, measures such as multi-year contracts and flexible budget acceleration aligned

with R&D progress will be adopted to maximize program outcomes in line with the fund's objectives.

- (5) Mechanisms will be incorporated to attract and nurture groundbreaking ideas from innovative young individuals.
- (6) To effectively link and advance each program, attention will be paid to encouraging a high volume of applications from both domestic and international participants, and to fostering community-building among selected researchers to spark new international research collaborations.

2. Scope of Fund Utilization

The fund allocated to JST, pursuant to Article 27-2, Paragraph 1 of the Act on the Activation of Science, Technology and Innovation Creation, shall be allocated to competitive research and development expenses necessary for implementing pilot activities, as well as associated costs such as commercialization support expenses, talent development expenses, event hosting expenses, and administrative management expenses. Once the GSC operating entity is established, the implementation of pilot activities will be transitioned as swiftly as possible from JST to the GSC operating entity, including the transfer of contract authority. The GSC operating entity will then be responsible for executing each activity. In this transition, CAO, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), and JST will take necessary measures to facilitate the process.

3. International Research Program to attract researchers and investors

(1) Purpose of the International Research Program

To gain valuable insights for future international research programs at the flagship campus, the International Research Program aims to pilot and validate a model that attracts top global researchers and investors. This will be done in collaboration with overseas universities and institutions, under innovative research themes with high social impact set by Venture Directors (VDs) who have experience in both research and commercialization support, particularly in deep tech fields.

(2) Program Overview

① Program Content

- VDs will define high-impact, innovative research themes aligned with cutting-edge

global trends in deep tech, with a view toward future social implementation.

- VDs will be granted discretion to make swift decisions and lead the selection of Principal Investigators (PIs) and the advancement of R&D under these themes.
- Support for commercialization from the research stage will also be provided, including market feedback.

② Program Scheme

CAO will be responsible for:

- Define criteria for selecting VDs and setting research themes in this implementation guideline.
- Establish a Steering Committee composed of external experts.
- Designate a partner entity who will support running the international research program, through a public call or other appropriate means, in collaboration with JST, based on Steering Committee deliberations.
- Decide on VD candidates and research themes recommended by JST, based on Steering Committee deliberations.
- Monitor program progress and take necessary measures based on Steering Committee's advice and evaluations.

JST will be responsible for:

- Outsourcing the works related to international research program such as VD candidates' selection, theme development, and collaboration with overseas public and non-profit organizations (overseas partners) to the partner entity.
- Recommend VD candidates and innovative research themes to CAO in corporation with the partner entity.
- Commission or employ of VDs selected by CAO. Offering flexible arrangements as needed, to meet the international standard considering VDs' backgrounds.
- Conduct public calls, review, and selection of PIs under each theme decided by CAO, and contract with their institutions for funding.

The partner entity (under contract with JST) will be responsible for:

- Establish a governance structure, such as an advisory body of global experts including international researchers, founders, and investors.
- Support VD candidate selection.
- Support innovative research theme development, including research, market

feedback, and community-building.

- Assist with PI recruitment, evaluation, and progress monitoring, including IP and commercialization support.
- Facilitate collaboration between JST and overseas partners.

The recruitment of the PIs can be carried out using one of the following methods:

(i) Joint Call by JST and Overseas Partners:

Under the innovative research theme, JST will conduct the recruitment of PIs for domestic research, while overseas partners will handle the recruitment for overseas one. The selection of PIs will be carried out by each institution based on the evaluation results of the review committee, chaired by the VD established at each institution. Based on the selection results, JST will conclude a commissioned research contract with the institution to which the selected domestic PI belongs and will disburse research funds. In cases where overseas researchers participate as co-researchers in the domestic PI's research team, JST, which has concluded a commissioned research contract with the institution to which the domestic PI belongs, will bear the research expenses for the co-researchers.

(ii) JST-Only Call:

Under the innovative research theme, JST will conduct the recruitment of PIs. The selection of PIs will be carried out by JST based on the evaluation results of the review committee, chaired by the VD established at JST. Based on the selection results, JST will conclude a commissioned research contract with the institution to which the selected PI belongs and will disburse research funds.

③ VD Selection Criteria:

- (i) Experience in research and commercialization support.
- (ii) Ability to define innovative research themes and manage a research portfolio.
- (iii) Commitment to contributing to Japan's innovation ecosystem.

④ Innovative Research Themes:

Themes should target key areas such as AI/robotics, biotechnology, and climate tech, and meet the following criteria:

- (i) Potential to create globally impactful startups, that could transform society and economy.
- (ii) Attractive and novel to top global researchers.

(iii) Aligned with Japan's strengths and challenges.

⑤ Eligible PIs:

(i) Common Criteria

- JST to open call researchers affiliated with domestic institutions (universities, national research institutes, etc.).
- Researchers affiliated with overseas research institutes at the time of application are also eligible for the solicitation. However, from the perspective of realizing the GSC Initiative of attracting excellent researchers both from Japan, and from overseas to Japan, if an overseas researcher is selected, the researcher is encouraged to affiliate with a domestic research institute and conduct research in Japan.
- No nationality restrictions for PIs.
- In cases where collaboration with overseas researchers under the direction of the PI can have a significant effect on the promotion of the PI's research and venture building activities, a team including researchers affiliated with overseas research institutes may be proposed.
- Young researchers such as postdoctoral researchers and doctoral students may participate in the research team.
- Domestic research institutes to which the PI belongs include universities, inter-university research institutes, technical colleges, national research, and development agencies, etc. However, considering that this initiative aims to create startups and then grow them into international ventures, proposals from researchers who have already launched startups are also accepted.
- Funding for domestic research institutions will be allocated through direct contracts with JST.

(ii) Joint Call by JST and Overseas Partners:

The allocation of funds to overseas research institutions will be carried out through subcontracting from domestic research institutions to overseas research institutions (less than 50% of the annual funding allocation for the research project).

(iii) JST-Only Call

When overseas researchers conduct research abroad, the total amount of research funds disbursed to the overseas institution shall be less than 50% of the annual

funding allocation for the research project.

⑥ Research Locations:

Primarily domestic research facilities provided by Japanese institutions or private entities.

⑦ Program Scale:

3 domains (e.g., AI/robotics, biotech, climate tech), with 1–2 VDs per domain, and a budget of ¥1–2 billion per VD annually. This amounts to approx. ¥7 billion/year over a period of 3 years.

⑧ Evaluation:

- The overall progress of the program (including the activities of the partner entity) shall be evaluated annually by the Steering Committee. Based on the results of these evaluations, CAO shall take necessary measures.
- Regarding the VDs, the Steering Committee shall evaluate the status of research portfolio management annually. Based on the results of these evaluations, CAO, in cooperation with JST, shall take necessary measures. A stage-gate evaluation shall be conducted in the third year from the start of research, and decisions shall be made regarding continuation, acceleration, modification, termination of the project, or revision of the portfolio.
- Regarding the PIs, the theme-specific review committees established within JST shall evaluate the progress of research annually. Based on the results of these evaluations, JST shall take necessary measures.

⑨ Handling of Intellectual Property Rights in JST Research Funding Allocation

Intellectual property (IP) rights shall belong to the commissioned research institution, or the researchers affiliated with said institution. In cases where overseas research institutions participate in the research team under funding provided by JST, more than 50% of the ownership share of the IP generated through the research shall be held by domestic institutions or the government (JST), based on the total ownership share between the overseas and domestic institutions or the government (JST). Furthermore, from the perspective of promoting the utilization of IP for startup creation, efforts shall be made to consolidate IP ownership within domestic institutions. This shall be achieved, for example, by concluding contracts that stipulate the payment of appropriate

compensation based on the contribution to inventions or the utilization of IP rights. Detailed guidelines on the handling of intellectual property rights shall be stipulated separately.

⑩ Compliance with Laws and Regulations:

The program must comply with laws on security trade control, research integrity, genetic resources, personal data, bioethics, and safety. Conflict-of-interest management, misconduct prevention, and proper accounting must follow applicable laws and guidelines.

(3) Partner Entity

① Eligibility:

- (i) Must not fall under the provisions of Articles 70 and 71 of the Cabinet Order on Budget, Settlement of Accounts, and Accounting (Imperial Ordinance No. 165 of 1947).
- (ii) Must not be subject to suspension of transactions by CAO, MEXT, or JST during the relevant period.
- (iii) Must be graded A, B, C, or D under the unified qualification for participation in government procurement (FY2025–2027 Cabinet Office Competitive Participation Qualification), specifically for “Provision of Services,” and must hold competitive participation qualification for the Kanto–Koshinetsu region.

② Selection Criteria:

- (i) Meets the above eligibility requirements.
- (ii) Must have a proven track record and expertise in theme-based research and its venture building in the deep tech field.
- (iii) Must possess networks with overseas universities and institutions necessary for the effective and efficient implementation of the program.

(4) Schedule

Selection of the International Research Programs partner entity: July to September 2025 (tentative).

Program implementation period: Begins in October 2025 (for a duration of 3 years).

※Additional selections of partner entities may be conducted as needed.

4. Venture Builder Program

(1) Purpose of the Venture Builder Program

The purpose of the Venture Builder Program is to pilot and validate a commercialization support model that anticipates global expansion from the research stage in the deep tech field, thereby supporting the commercialization of research outcomes generated through the International Research Program and promoting the creation and growth of startups.

In addition to outcomes from the International Research Program, this program also targets research results generated by domestic universities, national research and development agencies, funding agencies, and Startup Ecosystem Hub Cities.

(2) Program Content

①Program Activities

The program will provide commercialization support within the International Research Program and related initiatives. This includes; provision of business management know-how to researchers aiming for commercialization, implementation of on-the-job training (OJT) programs within startups, mentorship support, community-building support, provision of gap funds, networking opportunities between overseas venture capital firms (VCs) and startups, intellectual property (IP) strategy development, and support for IP protection and rights acquisition.

②Program Scheme

CAO, in collaboration with JST, will publicly solicit or otherwise recruit domestic and overseas entities with a proven track record in commercialization support based on university research outcomes and with a view toward global expansion. Based on deliberations by the Steering Committee, these entities will be designated as commercialization support partner entities.

JST will commission the designated entities to carry out the program's operations.

③Program Scale

The program will operate with an annual budget of approximately ¥1 billion for 3 years. Commissioning multiple Venture Builder Program partner entities is permitted. Subcontracting by these entities is also allowed, subject to approval by the Steering Committee.

④Evaluation

The overall progress of the Venture Builder Program (including the activities of the Venture Builder Program partner entities) will be evaluated annually by the Steering Committee. Based on the evaluation results, CAO will take necessary measures and conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the entire program over the three-year period.

(3) Regarding the Partner Entity in Venture Builder Program

①Eligibility Criteria

- (i) Must not fall under the provisions of Articles 70 and 71 of the Cabinet Order on Budget, Settlement of Accounts, and Accounting (Imperial Ordinance No. 165 of 1947).
- (ii) Must not be under suspension of transactions by CAO, MEXT, or JST during the relevant period.
- (iii) Must be graded A, B, C, or D under the unified qualification for participation in government procurement (FY2025–2027 Cabinet Office Competitive Participation Qualification) for “Provision of Services,” and must hold competitive participation qualification for the Kanto–Koshinetsu region.

③ Selection Criteria of Partner Entity in the Venture Builder Program

- (i) Must meet the eligibility criteria listed above.
- (ii) Must have a proven track record in commercialization support based on university research outcomes or in the development of startups in the deep tech field.
- (iii) Must demonstrate a strong commitment to contributing to the development of Japan’s innovation ecosystem.

(4) Schedule

Selection of Venture Builder Program partner entities: July to September 2025
(tentative)

Program implementation period: Begins in October 2025 (for a duration of 3 years)

※Additional selections of Venture Builder Program partner entities may be conducted as needed.

5. Talent Development (Fellowship) Program

(1) Purpose of Talent Development

With the aim of supporting the creation and growth of startups based on research

outcomes generated through the International Research Program, this program seeks to pilot and validate a human resources or talent development model for building an innovation ecosystem. It will do so by fostering researchers and research teams with strong entrepreneurial ambition and by identifying and attracting those who are highly motivated to participate in Japan's innovation ecosystem.

(2) Content of the Talent Development (Fellowship) Program

①Program Activities

Talent Development will be conducted for researchers and research teams with strong entrepreneurial ambition. This includes dispatching domestic researchers overseas and accepting overseas researchers into Japan.

②Program Scheme

CAO, in collaboration with JST, will publicly solicit or otherwise recruit domestic and overseas entities with a proven track record in fostering researchers and research teams with entrepreneurial ambition. Based on deliberations by the Steering Committee, these entities will be designated as Talent Development (Fellowship) Program partner entities. JST will commission the designated entities to carry out the program's operations.

③Program Scale

The program will operate with an annual budget of approximately ¥1 billion for three years. Commissioning multiple Talent Development partner entities is permitted. Subcontracting by these entities is also allowed, subject to approval by the Steering Committee.

④Evaluation

The overall progress of the Talent Development Program (including the activities of the Talent Development partner entities) will be evaluated annually by the Steering Committee. Based on the evaluation results, CAO will take necessary measures and conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the entire program over the three-year period.

(3) Eligibility Criteria of the Partner Entities in Talent Development (Fellowship) Program

- i. Must not fall under the provisions of Articles 70 and 71 of the Cabinet Order on Budget, Settlement of Accounts, and Accounting (Imperial Ordinance No. 165 of

1947).

- ii. Must not be under suspension of transactions by CAO, MEXT, or JST during the relevant period.
- iii. Must be graded A, B, C, or D under the unified qualification for participation in government procurement (FY2025–2027 Cabinet Office Competitive Participation Qualification) for “Provision of Services,” and must hold competitive participation qualification for the Kanto–Koshinetsu region.

(4) Selection Criteria of the Partner Entities in Talent Development (Fellowship) Program

- (i) Must meet the eligibility criteria listed above.
- (ii) Must have experience implementing development programs for researchers and research teams with strong entrepreneurial ambition.
- (iii) Must have experience implementing development programs for venture capital (VC) investors in the deep tech field.
- (iv) Must demonstrate a strong commitment to contributing to the development of Japan’s innovation ecosystem.

(5) Schedule

Selection of Talent Development (Fellowship) Program partner entities: July to September 2025 (tentative).

Program implementation period: Begins in October 2025 (for a duration of 3 years)

Note: Additional selections of Talent Development (Fellowship) Program partner entities may be conducted as needed.

(6) Emergency Measures in Response to Recent Changes in the International Landscape

As an emergency measure in response to recent changes in the international landscape, support will be provided for up to 3 years to cover the costs of accepting overseas researchers and research teams. This support will be conditional on the establishment of an environment¹ that enables these individuals to fully contribute to startup creation. Such an environment must be established at universities and other institutions in Japan that conduct world-class research and development and are highly motivated to contribute to the development of Japan’s innovation ecosystem. It must also involve collaboration with Talent Development (Fellowship) Program partner entities that have partnerships with overseas universities and institutions, and include governance reforms such as changes to personnel, compensation, and task allocation systems.

The public call and review process will be expedited to ensure readiness for the Fall 2025 academic semester.

6. Miscellaneous

Details necessary for the implementation of pilot activities shall be determined through consultation among CAO, MEXT, and JST, based on this implementation guideline.

It should be noted that the pilot activities are transitional efforts to be carried out until the establishment of the operating entity. Therefore, a proper timeline shall be set with a view toward the launch of the operating entity, and progress shall be managed accordingly.

¹In the case of national university corporations, responses shall also include measures based on the Supplementary Guidelines on Personnel and Salary Management Reform for National University Corporations, etc. (issued on December 21, 2021).