



The Kyoto Roundtable for Japan, Australia & India: Trilateral Academic Dialogue

Background

The increasing velocity of global mobility and logistical interconnectedness have amplified societal fragmentation and tensions arising from divergent value systems, thereby underscoring the critical role of researchers in proactively engaging in science and technology diplomacy. This necessitates not only the application of researchers' specialized expertise but also the strategic leveraging of academic networks as aggregations of international experts within specific domains.

At Kyoto University, research advancement entities, such as the Strategic Development Center for Next-Generation Researchers, have actively sought to establish frameworks and opportunities for international academic exchange and cultivate relationships with institutions across diverse national contexts. Recognizing the complexities of the contemporary global landscape, university faculty and professional staff have identified a growing imperative to foster collaborative efforts that go beyond conventional rigid structures. This cross-positional cooperation aims to synergize diverse expertise and capabilities to more effectively address the evolving demands of policy and societal needs.

This initiative is a direct response to these dynamic shifts and seeks to explore the potential for contributing to a future characterized by normalized international cooperation through collaborative endeavors that bridge cultural spheres and institutional. The ultimate goal is to create new value through innovative ideas transcending established paradigms. This aligns with the broader aspiration to foster international academic partnerships that will enable the next generation to live better lives.

Why Japan, Australia, and India?

Japan and Australia have been identified as states with distinct strategic perspectives within the Indo-Pacific. Historically engaged in building partnerships in this area, their cooperation, alongside that of India, has gained further impetus due to the evolving geopolitical landscape characterized by the emergence of the Indo-Pacific as a significant strategic geography. This re-evaluation of the regional construct, coupled with a growing emphasis on India as a partner with shared democratic values that revere freedom and the rule of law, has fostered increased diplomatic engagement among these three nations, notably within frameworks like the Quad. Conversely, formal collaboration within academic networks among Japan, Australia, and India has experienced a less pronounced trajectory of institutionalization, possibly reflecting their respective and nuanced regional positionings. However, recent years have witnessed a discernible increase in working-level cooperative initiatives between universities in these countries. These encompass areas such as student exchange programs and support mechanisms for emerging researchers, gradually cultivating inter-institutional relationships built on mutual understanding. Leveraging this foundational trust, a collaborative academic network has the potential to convene researchers' proficient in international and interdisciplinary methodologies, irrespective of their institutional origins or disciplinary boundaries. To this end, the establishment of the Kyoto Roundtable is proposed, with the objective of forging robust international academic partnerships capable of contributing to the enhanced well-being of future generations.



What is the purpose of this collaboration?

1. The overarching objective of this collaboration is the advancement of human well-being.
2. The sub-objective, underpinning the engagement of these three countries, centers on generating novel value originating from the Indo-Pacific. Our focus is on leveraging the unique strengths and perspectives of these geographical areas to address shared challenges and foster mutual progress.

3. Proposed Themes

The themes below represent potential areas of focus for the collaboration, demonstrating a commitment to addressing complex challenges and generating impactful outcomes relevant to the Indo-Pacific and its broader global context.¹

- **Global Geopolitical Issues and International Relations:** This area encompasses discussions on complex global challenges, including postcolonialism and the role of international institutions in shaping regional and global order. This aligns with the broader strategic debates occurring in the Indo-Pacific, where the interplay of various actors and institutions is a central focus.
- **Enhancement of Citizen Well-being:** This theme focuses on tangible improvements to the lives of citizens through diverse scientific and technological applications. Examples include advancements in drinking water treatment, earth resource management, and applications of nuclear science. This resonates with the broader aspiration for peace and prosperity in the region.
- **Innovation in Human Health:** This category emphasizes scientific and technological breakthroughs aimed at improving human health, such as the development of advanced biosensors and carbon dioxide utilization technologies, as well as cell manipulation techniques. This aligns with discussions on health security and pandemic response, which are increasingly part of regional cooperation agendas.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** This theme addresses critical environmental challenges, including biodiversity conservation, nature-based solutions for health, and nuclear physics applications relevant to environmental protection. Environmental concerns are increasingly prominent in discussions about regional stability and cooperation.
- **Cyber-Physical Systems:** This area explores the integration of computational and physical processes, with examples including advancements in human-computer interaction and computational design in urban environments. This reflects the growing importance of technology and interconnectedness in the contemporary world.

¹ Illustrative themes for discussion, building upon the outcomes of the first Roundtable meeting on February 13, 2025 that identified four key areas – AI, human healthcare, global environment, education – could be categorized by their potential societal impact. Emerging research themes, such as those identified within L-INSIGHT, also offer specific examples. The continuation of discussions from the previous roundtable, building upon the identified keywords, suggests an iterative and focused approach to these important areas.

