UK-Japan Joint Statement – Ministerial Japan-UK Digital Council January 2025

Ministerial Digital Council Meeting

The third Ministerial Japan-UK Digital Council took place on 22 January 2025. In attendance were the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC), the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI), and the Digital Agency (DA) of the Government of Japan and the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) of the Government of the United Kingdom (hereafter 'Both Participants').

This was the first Ministerial Digital Council since the reaffirmation of the *Hiroshima Accord: An Enhanced Japan-UK Global Strategic Partnership* by the leaders of both countries, which committed Both Participants to accelerate and deepen bilateral collaboration across the UK-Japan Digital Partnership. At the Ministerial Digital Council, Both Participants celebrated a year of close and valued collaboration, welcomed significant progress across the four pillars of the Partnership agreement and set the

strategic direction for the next phase of the UK-Japan Digital Partnership. Both Participants affirmed the importance of the Partnership as a framework for enhancing collaboration across digital technologies, and indicated the intention to deepen bilateral science and technology collaboration further in 2025, building on the UK and Japan's complementary strengths.

Both Participants highlighted the work of techUK and JEITA on a UK-Japan White Paper setting out industry views on areas of strategic collaboration across the tech sector.

Amongst the wide range of areas for collaboration under the Digital Partnership, Both Participants highlighted particular successes and commitments towards cooperation in the year ahead, as follows:

Pillar One: Digital infrastructure and technologies

Semiconductors

Semiconductors remains a top priority for UK-Japan collaboration. Both Participants commit to continue to cooperate on supply chain resilience and foster R&D and commercial collaboration between UK and Japan stakeholders in areas including compound semiconductors, semiconductor design, and photonics.

Under the UK-Japan Semiconductor partnership, METI and DSIT held several policy exchanges over the year that have deepened understanding of how UK and Japanese partners can work together to support both countries' semiconductor strategies, drawing on complementary strengths. The UK and Japan also launched a joint call for early-stage semiconductor research through UK Research & Innovation and the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST).

To help enhance industry collaboration, the first UK-Japan Semiconductor Partnership Stakeholder Roundtable was held in March 2024, and a mission of innovative UK Small to Medium-size Enterprises (SMEs) attended SEMICON Japan to engage counterparts in Japan and identify R&D and innovation opportunities.

Both Participants have demonstrated commitment to significant multilateral cooperation, including on supply chain resilience, through the G7 Semiconductors Point of Contact Group and OECD Semiconductor Informal Exchange Network.

AI and Compute

The UK and Japan's AI Safety Institutes have built a strong and enduring relationship that has facilitated knowledge exchange on AI safety. Ahead of the Network of AI Safety Institutes launch event in November 2024, Both Participants participated in the first global joint safety testing exercise, a milestone moment of international technical collaboration. In the coming year, Both Participants will continue to scope opportunities for collaboration including on testing and the development of international norms that promote the safe and trustworthy development and deployment of Frontier AI models.

Recognising the importance of international AI governance, Both Participants committed to the Hiroshima AI Process Friends group in May 2024 and agreement of the Council of Europe Convention on AI. Bilateral policy exchanges on AI rules and regulation will also continue to drive interoperability where appropriate.

Both Participants look forward to supporting each other's strategies and sharing expertise where mutually beneficial. The UK's AI Opportunity Action Plan (published January 2025) outlines how the UK Government will accelerate the adoption of safe and effective AI across all parts of the UK. Building on collaboration in 2024, Both Participants will continue to scope opportunities to pursue bilateral R&D in AI and compute, and share infrastructure and expertise.

Future telecoms and diversification

Both Participants have made significant progress in strengthening bilateral collaboration on future telecoms and diversification. Key achievements over the past year include the delivery of an Innovate UK-led Global Business Innovation Programme (GBIP) to Japan. This initiative brought a delegation of innovative UK telecoms businesses to Japan to pitch for collaboration with major players in the Japanese telecoms market.

Bilateral engagement was further reinforced through the UK-Japan Telecoms Policy Dialogue, which took place on 19 November 2024. This meeting reaffirmed joint objectives on advancing future telecoms technologies (Beyond 5G/6G), promoting supply chain diversification through Open RAN, and exploring the role of governments in shaping future telecom networks through participation in technical standards development.

Progress has been made in installing and integrating Rakuten Symphony's Open RAN solutions at the UK Telecoms Lab. This initiative highlights the strength of UK-Japan collaboration in advancing telecoms diversification and underpins both nations' commitment to fostering secure, open, and interoperable networks.

As a tangible opportunity for future in-depth collaboration, Both Participants agreed to further explore a bilateral R&D initiative in areas of Beyond 5G/6G such as AI in telecoms, non-terrestrial networks (NTN), and optical networks.

The UK and Japan have also continued to strengthen their cooperation through the Global Coalition on Telecoms (GCOT), alongside the governments of Australia, Canada, and the United States. GCOT's first year of operations saw the establishment of key workstreams on supply chain diversification and future telecoms, reflecting the shared ambition to address global challenges.

Cyber Resilience

A sharing of views and approaches to cyber resilience has continued through the Japan-UK Cyber Dialogue, which convenes a range of UK departments (FCDO, Cabinet Office and DSIT) to meet counterparts in MIC, METI and other relevant Japanese ministries.

At the 8th Dialogue, held in September 2024, the UK updated on the development of the new UK Cyber Security and Resilience Bill, and provided insights on the Cybersecurity of AI and Emerging Technologies, Digital Supply Chains, Internet of Things (IoT) Device Security, Cyber Essentials and Cyber Skills. MIC officials reported their activities of international cybersecurity capacity building, IoT security measures, and international standards, and METI officials presented Japan's approach to IoT Product Security, Software Security and Cyber Skills.

As like-minded nations, Japan and the UK have a shared understanding of the importance of collaboration in line with UN norms. Upcoming opportunities to align resulting from the Cyber Dialogue include collaboration on international cybersecurity capacity building and ensuring interoperability of schemes for IoT product security as well as sharing thinking and experiences on Cyber Essentials.

Pillar Two: Data

Data

Both Participants continue to work closely in multilateral fora such as the G7 and OECD to champion the promotion of trusted government access measures and operationalisation of Data Free Flow with Trust (DFFT) and address barriers to cross-border data transfers including unnecessary data localisation. Both Participants promote interoperability of data governance, including through the Global Cross Border Privacy Rules Forum as well as deepening common understanding on the security of data in the context of DFFT. This is underpinned by the understanding that data can be exploited for malign purposes by hostile actors. Both Participants appreciate this is a shared global challenge to ensure that increased global data collection, processing, storage and flows do not also increase national security risks.

Bilaterally, significant progress has been made on the reviews of the UK-Japan adequacy arrangements, including the commencement of discussions between the UK's DSIT and Japan's Personal Information Protection Commission (PPC). DSIT and PPC are exploring the possibility of expanding the scope of the respective UK-Japan adequacy arrangements, taking into account the 2021 reform of the Japan's data protection framework to extend protections to new areas such as academia and the public sector.

Data Infrastructure

Both Participants recognise the importance of the data centre sector to support economic growth, innovation, and public services. In the UK, data infrastructure was officially designated as Critical National Infrastructure in 2024.

Collaborative research initiatives have included a demonstration experiment in the UK in May 2024, conducted by Japan's NTT DATA Group. In the experiment, data centers located in Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, and Dagenham, East London, 89 km apart, were successfully connected by the Innovative Optical and Wireless Network (IOWN) All Photonics Network to communicate with a low latency of less than 1 millisecond.

Pillar Three: Digital Regulation and Standards

Online Safety

Landmark legislation on online safety is now in place in both the UK (Online Safety Act 2023) and Japan (Information Distribution Platform Act 2024), marking the importance of this issue for both nations. Under the Digital Partnership, Both Participants continue to share knowledge and exchange best practice. The latest exchange took place in October 2024.

Digital Technical Standards

Building on the outcomes of the successful World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly in 2024, Both Participants will share approaches to wider global digital technical standards through a workshop in 2025 and explore future areas of collaboration within the ITU’s Telecommunication Standardization Sector.

Both Participants will also discuss our broader approach to digital technical standards for critical and emerging technologies, including discussions on domestic efforts to improve

private sector and academic contributions to digital standards development through global standards development organisations (such as but not limited to ISO, IEC, IEEE).

Pillar Four: Digital Transformation

Digital Government Transformation

Under the UK's Memorandum of Co-operation between the UK Government Digital Service (GDS) and the DA of Japan, which was signed in 2022, Both Participants regularly share information and expertise on broader subjects on digital government transformation.

In July 2024, the UK's GDS hosted a series of virtual knowledge sharing sessions with Japan's DA. These sessions allowed thematic experts to exchange learning from the UK and Japan, including on the Digital Marketplace and benefits of Government Cloud to reduce costs and increase operational productivity.

GDS is working to advance plans in 2025 to send an expert mission to Japan and progress mutual priorities to deliver digital public services.