JST's Experience in Designing Flexible Review and Selection Models for International Joint Calls

International Research and Innovation Funders Forum @ Hanoi
November 6, 2026

YUGUCHI Reiko

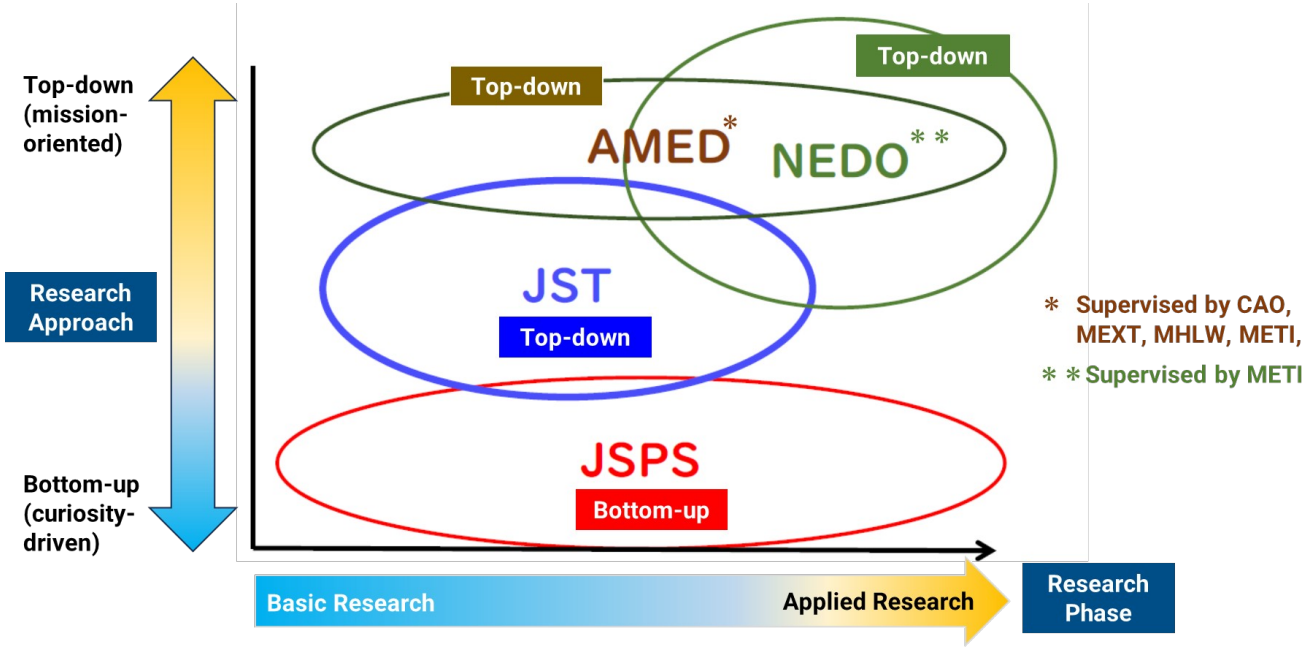
Director, Singapore Office / NEXUS Program Office
Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST)

Japan Science and Technology Agency

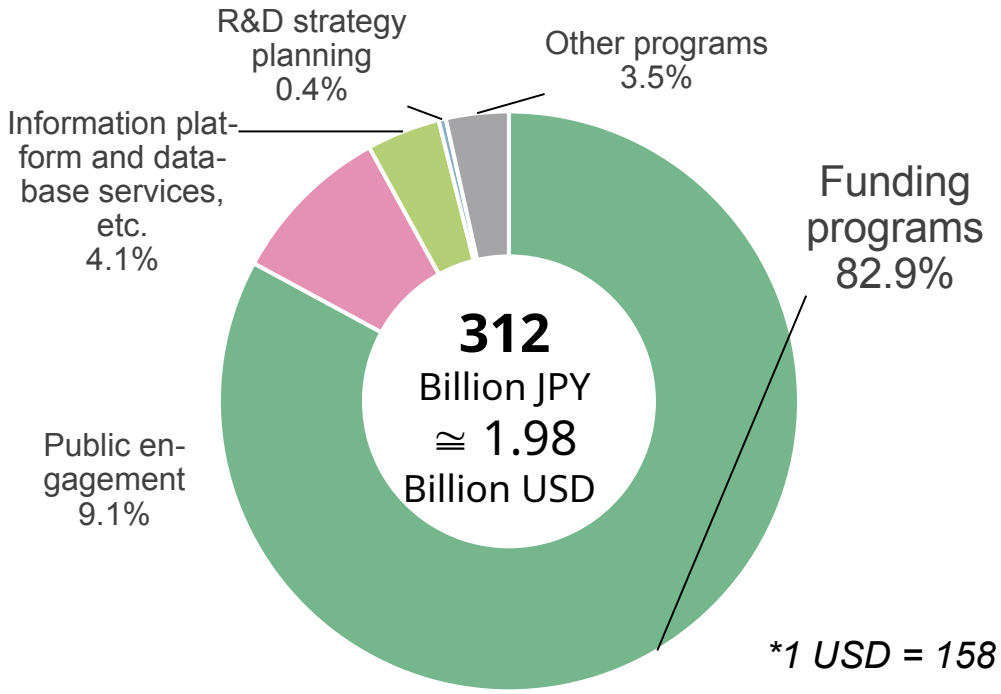
About JST

JST is a **national research and development (R&D) agency** that plays a central role in the national Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) Basic Plan.

Funding Agency Mapping in Japan



Budget for FY2026



*1 USD = 158 JPY

Types of JST Funding

1. Strategic Basic Research

- ✓ Create innovative technology seeds that achieve national strategic goals
- ✓ Create “new value desired by society and industry”

2. Industry-Academia Collaboration and Technology Transfer

- ✓ Create an environment for universities, research institutes, and industry to continuously generate innovation and promote commercialization

3. International Collaboration

- ✓ Ensure continuous joint innovation and contribution to global challenges

	Objective
SATREPS	Address global challenges through collaborative S&T research and ODA-based cooperation
SICORP	Promote strategic joint calls for bilateral / multilateral collaboration under intergovernmental coordination
ASPIRE	Promote top-level research and talent mobility through collaboration with leading countries
NEXUS	Strengthen Japan-ASEAN cooperation through joint research and exchange

In addition to the above, there are **LOTUS** program (research collaboration w/ India) and **SAKURA Science** program (young talent exchange program w/ countries worldwide).

Designing Joint Calls: Balancing Principles and Priorities

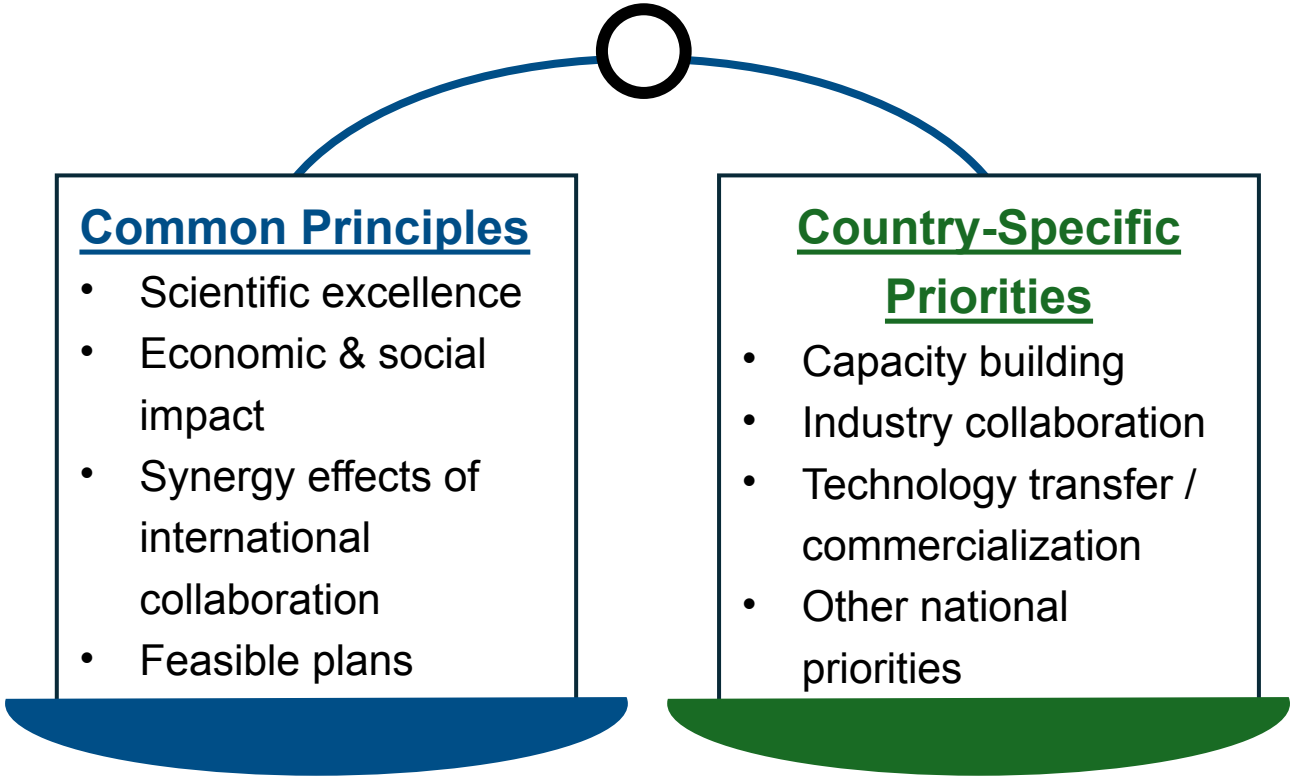
in examples of bilateral calls

Japan's Priorities (w/ expert input)

Partner Country's Priorities

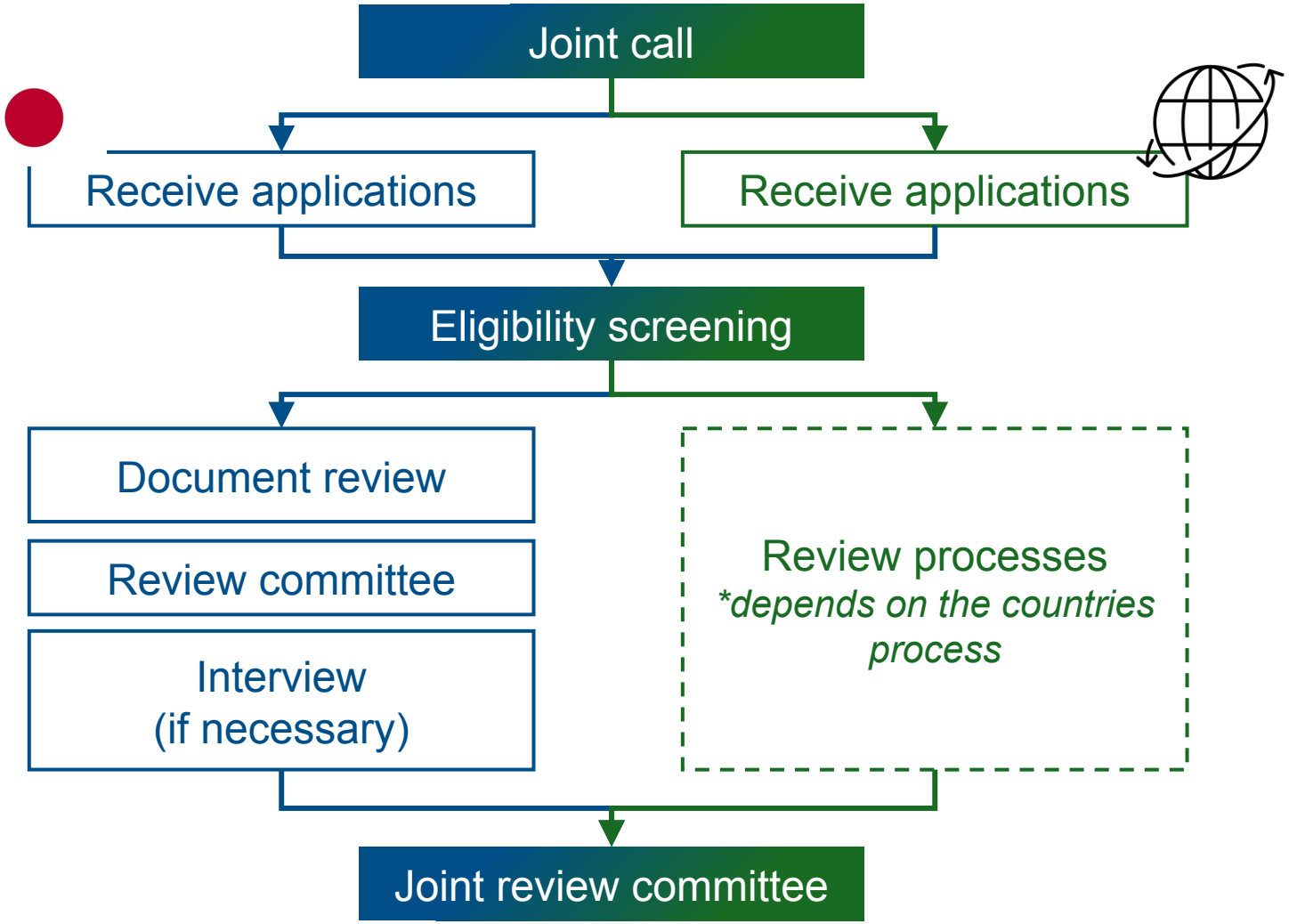
Joint Call Design

- Research field / subtopics
- Funding size / number of projects
- Eligibility
- Evaluation criteria
- Schedule / application process



Designed by balancing shared scientific principles with the priorities of each participating country

Designing Review Process: Overview



Designing Review Process: Key Perspectives

Key perspectives in JST's review process

JST places importance on application and review process that ensures quality and efficiency.

For Applicants:

Reduce unnecessary burden

- Clear guidelines and eligibility
- Simple application procedures
- Prevent avoidable ineligible applications

Fairness must be maintained

- Eligibility requirements

For Reviewers:

Focus on scientific quality

- Clear evaluation criteria
- Proposal structure aligned with criteria

Fairness must be maintained

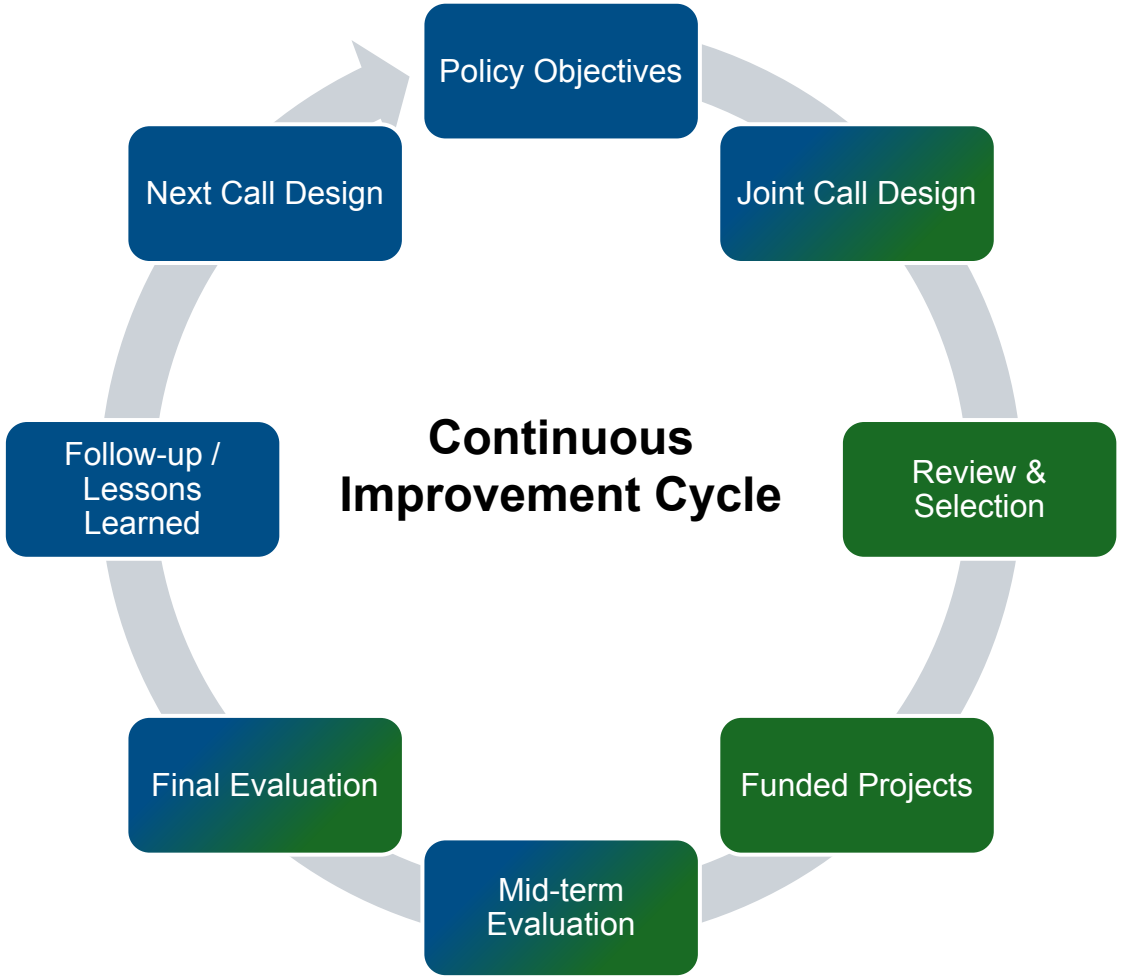
- Conflict of interest (COI) management

We ensure **independent**, **fair**, and **science-focused** bilateral review process.

Designing Continuous Improvement Cycle

Program Director (PD)

- Program strategy
- Review framework
- Program evaluation
- Continuous improvement



Program Officer (PO)

- Project monitoring
- Scientific advice
- Progress management
- Manage project review and evaluation

Continuous improvement of both funded projects and funding programs

Thank you for your kind attention!