

Japan-United States Space Cooperation and the International Space Station Program

In a world faced with challenges and boundless opportunities in outer-space, it is of the utmost importance for Japan and the United States, as advanced spacefaring nations, to further develop civil, commercial and national security space cooperation to ensure the continuous and stable use of outer space for current and future generations.

The Government of Japan (GOJ) and the Government of the United States of America (USG) have enjoyed a long and successful history of civil space cooperation, as demonstrated by many years of outstanding collaboration in aeronautics research, Earth science, space science, satellite navigation, and human space flight. Our current cooperation on the International Space Station (ISS) has become a visible symbol of bilateral cooperation of political, strategic and diplomatic significance.

With more than 15 years of permanent human presence on-orbit, the ISS has proven to be a world-class facility for scientific advancement and a foundation for human space exploration beyond low-Earth orbit. More than 1,760 research investigations from researchers of more than 83 countries have been conducted on the ISS to date. These studies increase our understanding of technology and educational activities, and in multiple scientific disciplines, including human health, physical science, biology and biotechnology, and Earth and space science. On a daily basis, the ISS continues to demonstrate the strong and mutually beneficial partnership between the GOJ and the USG.

The GOJ and the USG are pleased to announce the establishment of a new Partnership Program for cooperation regarding the operation of the ISS through at least 2024. Known as the “Japan-U.S. Open Platform Partnership Program (JP-US OP3)”, this program will assist in ushering in a new phase of cooperation in the advancement of human space exploration between our two nations.

Our two governments share the belief that the ISS should be used to further the well-being of all the people on Earth and to pursue respective

space policy goals. In this regard, increased international cooperation with non-ISS participants, including developing spacefaring countries in the Asia-Pacific region, represents an important shared interest.

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Japan-United States Open Platform Partnership Program
[JP-US OP3]

In recognition of the strategic and diplomatic importance of the ISS, the new JP-US OP3 cooperative partnership will maximize the benefits derived from both nations' contributions to the ISS program. The general element of cooperation can be summarized as set out below and the details of OP3 continues to be consulted between the GOJ and the USG.

1. Development of a new initiative for the operation of the ISS enhancing Japan-U.S. cooperation, including through:

(a) Promotion of mutual utilization of experimental installations and devices (including experimental data) along with collaborative research inside and outside of the ISS KIBO.

(b) Operations focused on development of new space technologies, which may include discussion of the possibility of using small return capsules, in a mutually beneficial manner as part of a future adjustment to the Common System Operations Costs (CSOC) offset if the USG finds useful.

2. Increased cooperation with developing spacefaring countries in the Asia-Pacific region, possibly through utilization of ISS resources.

3. Promotion of new uses for the ISS:

(a) As a platform for technology demonstration, such as support of a Japanese technology demonstration to capture a non-functional space object.

(b) Utilization of the operational opportunities of the H-II Transfer Vehicle (HTV) and HTV-X.

4. Promotion of utilization of effective and efficient space-related technologies.