

# EMBO, EMBC and Japan

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across Europe and beyond



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## Japan and EMBO in numbers

Scientists from Japan and Europe have a long history of cooperation, and the EMBO community has traditionally maintained close ties with its Japanese peers. Since Mitsuhiro Yanagida became the first EMBO Associate Member in Japan in 1995, the Japanese EMBO community has expanded to over 25 EMBO Associate Members and 3 EMBO Members, including Nobel laureates Shinya Yamanaka (elected 2010) and Yoshinori Ohsumi (elected 2013), and most recently Yukiko Goda and Yukiko Gotoh in 2023, making Japan the second largest EMBO membership base outside Europe after the United States.

The broader EMBO presence in Japan includes Yuki Nakamura, a former EMBO Young Investigator now working at the RIKEN Center for Sustainable Resource Science in Saitama, Fjodor Kondrashov and Robert Robinson, both former EMBO Young Investigator now working at Okayama University, and current EMBO Young Investigator Momoko Ikeuchi working at the Institute of Science and Technology in Nara, and two EMBO Postdoctoral Fellows, Dr. Dolma Michellod based in Okazaki at the National Institute for Basic Biology and Dr. Felix Vaura based at Tokyo University.

Between 2019 and December 2024, 9 EMBO Courses & Workshops attracted 916 participants locally, and 1,312 researchers based in Japan attended EMBO Courses & Workshops worldwide. 19 EMBO Scientific Exchange Grants also supported Japanese scientists for short-term training abroad.

Scientists funded by several JST programmes are now eligible to apply to EMBO Scientific Exchange Grants and the EMBO Young Investigator Programme through the im-

plementation agreement. All eligible scientists wishing to move between Japan and an EMBC Member State can apply to EMBO Postdoctoral Fellowships. Funding for EMBO Workshops, Practical Courses and Global Lecture Courses for scientists in Japan is available through an agreement with The Company of Biologists.

## About EMBO

EMBO, founded in July 1964, stands for excellence in life sciences

EMBO is an organization of more than 2,100 leading researchers that promotes excellence in the life sciences in Europe and beyond. The major goals of the organization are to support talented researchers at all stages of their careers, stimulate the exchange of scientific information, and help build a research environment where scientists can achieve their best work.

EMBO helps young scientists to advance their research, promote their international reputation and ensure their mobility. Courses, workshops, lectures and EMBO Press publications disseminate the latest research and offer training in techniques to maintain high standards of excellence in research practice. EMBO helps to shape science policy by seeking input and feedback from our communities and by following closely the trends in science.

## EMBC: Funding for EMBO

The major EMBO Programmes and activities are funded by the European Molecular Biology Conference (EMBC). The EMBC, founded in 1969 as a way of funding and structuring the field of molecular biology in Europe, is an inter-governmental organization that comprises 32 Member States. EMBO and EMBC also cooperate with countries and

organizations beyond Europe to foster interactions with scientific communities elsewhere.

## EMBC Member states

Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Türkiye and United Kingdom

## EMBC Associate Member States and Cooperation Partners:

India | Associate Member State agreement (executing agency: DBT)

Singapore | Associate Member State agreement (executing agency: A\*STAR)

Taiwan | Associate Membership agreement (executing agencies: NSTC / Academia Sinica)

Chile | Cooperation agreement (executing agency: ANID)

Japan | Memorandum of cooperation between EMBO and JST

# Timeline of the joint EMBO and Japan activities

December 2022 – June 2025

## DECEMBER 2022

### Strengthening ties with the science community in Japan

1–2 December 2022, 45th Annual Meeting of the Molecular Biology Society of Japan, Chiba, Conference

The Molecular Biology Society of Japan (MBSJ), which has 12,000 members, held its 45th annual meeting in Chiba from 30 November to 2 December 2022. Several representatives of EMBO and its scientific communities were involved in the successful meeting and its satellite event.

### Navigating your career across boundaries

The session on Navigating your career across boundaries on 2 December started with a panel discussion on how to find PhD/postdoctoral/research/faculty positions and get grants. The panelists shared their career paths, personal experiences and different motivations for moving between countries. They included Susan Gasser, who is director of the ISREC Foundation in Lausanne, EMBO Member, previous Chair of EMBO Council and current EMBC Delegate for Switzerland, and Yuki Nakamura, who is team leader at the RIKEN Center for Sustainable Resource Science in Yokohama and professor at the University of Tokyo and EMBO Young Investigator.

## Promoting International Science

The MBSJ Special Programme: The role of organizations in international science on 1 December started with presentations by the Human Frontier Science Program (HFSP), EMBO, the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) and the Stellar Science Foundation. The speakers gave an overview of their organizations and funding schemes, a lively Q&A session with approximately 60 participants followed. In addition, EMBO Press Head Bernd Pulverer gave a presentation on EMBO Press and Review Commons, the preprint peer-review platform, and their work on transparent publishing and Open Science. EMBO Press also held a poster clinics at the meeting.

## Supporting female scientists and EMBO Lab Leadership Course

3 and 5 December 2022, Satellite Workshop of the 45th Annual Meeting of the Molecular Biology Society of Japan, Chiba

EMBO Lab Leadership – providing leadership and communication courses, as well as scientific courses – and Women in Science Japan (WiSJ), a group led by eight Japanese female scientists, hosted two satellite events that were open to women and men alike.

An EMBO Laboratory Leadership Course took place at the Tokyo International Forum on 3 December 2022. Launched in 2005 by the EMBO

Young Investigator Programme, EMBO Lab Leadership celebrate their 20th anniversary. The mission is to help scientists get the best from themselves and their people through leadership, communication, project management, and scientific skills training. EMBO Lab Leadership run courses for three or four days, either in person or online. So far, EMBO Lab Leadership provides more than 30 courses yearly across Europe, the US and beyond, in addition to courses delivered in Heidelberg.

The one-day “Taster Course” at the Tokyo International Forum introduced key elements of the full EMBO Lab Leadership Course. Topics included communication skills, recruitment, supervision, mentoring, and combining family and career.

The third International Symposium for Female Researchers in Chromatin Biology was held online on 5 December. Presentations by invited female speakers from Australia, Germany and the UK, and short talks provided international views on chromatin biology as well as the opportunities and challenges for female researchers in the field.

Full article originally published at

[embo.org/features/strengthening-ties-with-the-science-community-in-japan/](https://embo.org/features/strengthening-ties-with-the-science-community-in-japan/)

## Advancing life science collaborations between Europe and Japan

24 July 2023, EMBO and JST sign a Memorandum of Cooperation, JST Tokyo Headquarter

The Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) and EMBO have signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with the aim of promoting the life sciences in Europe and Japan and providing support for international research endeavours. The collaboration aims at facilitating activities that foster cooperation and knowledge exchange between scientists in the two regions.

[www.jst.go.jp/report/2023/230725.html](http://www.jst.go.jp/report/2023/230725.html)

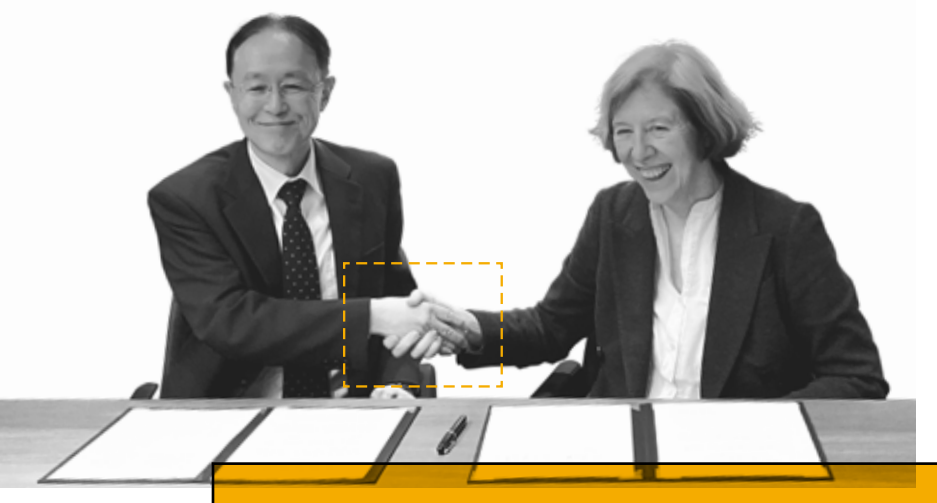


Fiona Watt, EMBO Director, and JST President Kazuhito Hashimoto, with the signed Memorandum of cooperation.



*We are excited to cooperate with JST in order to support a network of excellence involving the scientific communities in Japan and Europe*

Fiona Watt, Director of EMBO



Shigeo Morimoto, Vice President of the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST), and Fiona Watt, EMBO Director, with the signed implementation agreement



*I am grateful for being able to participate in the signing of the joint implementation arrangement which will pave the way for future collaborative activities between JST and EMBO*

Shigeo Morimoto, Vice President of JST

### MARCH 2024

15 March 2024, EMBO and JST sign an Implementation Agreement, Miraikan, Tokyo

The Implementation Agreement between EMBO and JST opens new opportunities for life scientists in Japan. Scientists funded by several JST programmes are now eligible to apply to EMBO Scientific Exchange Grants and the EMBO Young Investigator Programme. All eligible scientists wishing to move between Japan and an EMBC Member State can apply to EMBO Postdoctoral Fellowships. Funding for EMBO Workshops, Practical Courses and Global Lecture Courses for scientists in Japan is available through an agreement with The Company of Biologists.

Full details of opportunities for scientists based in Japan are available online.

[www.jst.go.jp/report/2024/240422\\_e.html](http://www.jst.go.jp/report/2024/240422_e.html)

[www.jst.go.jp/world/ja/researcher/embo.html](http://www.jst.go.jp/world/ja/researcher/embo.html)



13 to 15 March 2024, First EMBO/ JST Workshop at the Miraikan in Tokyo

The formal signing procedure was embedded into the first JST/ EMBO Workshop that took place at the Miraikan (the National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation) in Tokyo.

“The joint workshop with JST was a great success and stimulated many connections between the scientists who attended. We are excited to take the cooperation further and foster even stronger ties between the life science communities in Japan and Europe,” said Fiona Watt, EMBO Director.

A total of 29 researchers, 15 early career researchers in life sciences supported under JST’s CREST and

FOREST program and 14 European researchers from EMBO’s network, participated in the workshop. At the opening session, both JST President Hashimoto (via video message) and EMBO Director Watt expressed their hope that the collaboration between the two organizations would strengthen the relations between Europe and Japan in the life science field. The participating researchers attended training courses offered by EMBO Lab Leadership, gave presentations on their research, and engaged in discussions with other researchers to explore future international research collaborations.

During her visit to Japan, EMBO Director Fiona Watt also took the opportunity to (re)engage further with a range of key stakeholders – including AMED President Yoshi-

nao Mishima, JSPS representatives responsible for the WPI programme, and Tokyo University President Teruo Fujii – for open discussions on how to jointly support and strengthen the life science communities in Europe and Japan and foster future collaboration.

### Further reading

Interview with Sam Krahll on EMBO Lab Leadership Courses:

[www.jst.go.jp/innov-jinzai/sekai/survey/casestudy/overseas/article07en.html](http://www.jst.go.jp/innov-jinzai/sekai/survey/casestudy/overseas/article07en.html)



OCTOBER 2024

## Expanding scientific collaboration in Japan

5 October 2024, EU-Japan Science Policy Forum in Kyoto

EMBO Director Fiona Watt participated in a roundtable on "Research Security and Integrity for Promoting International Collaboration".

[www.jst.go.jp/report/2024/241129-2\\_e.html](http://www.jst.go.jp/report/2024/241129-2_e.html)

6-8 October 2024, STS Forum in Kyoto

EMBO Director Fiona Watt chaired the session "Breakthroughs in Biotechnology"; and met with JST President Hashimoto, AMED President Mishima, RIKEN, Tokyo University President Fujii

[www.stsforum.org/kyoto2024/day2/](http://www.stsforum.org/kyoto2024/day2/)

NOVEMBER 2024

## Sharing insights into support of research and exploring potential areas for future cooperation

15 November 2024, Visit from the Japan Agency for Medical and Development (AMED), Heidelberg, Germany

EMBO welcomed Yasushi Ogasaka, Managing Director of the International Strategy Department of AMED, to its offices in Heidelberg. Yasushi Ogasaka met with EMBO Director Fiona Watt and senior staff of the organization. During the meeting, participants discussed their respective programmes, shared insights into

support of research and explored potential areas for future cooperation. The EMBO team provided an overview of their initiatives aimed at promoting excellence in the life sciences and supporting researchers.

"We were pleased to welcome Yasushi Ogasaka to Heidelberg and learn more about AMED's work," said Fiona Watt. "This visit was an opportunity to identify shared priorities. We look forward to further discussions with our colleagues in Japan."

The meeting highlighted the EMBO commitment to international collaboration and support for the global scientific community.

[www.embo.org/features/shared-insights-into-support-of-research/](http://www.embo.org/features/shared-insights-into-support-of-research/)



NOVEMBER – DECEMBER 2024

## Growing interest for EMBO Lab Leadership Courses

These courses were among the first ones to be held in Japan. The courses included lectures and small group discussions on leadership, research supervision, and fostering young researchers that are necessary to build a high-quality research team. The courses provided a unique opportunity to comprehensively learn about independent laboratory management.

- 30 November 2024 Satellite event of MBSJ annual meeting, Fukuoka
- 2–3 December 2024, Kawasaki, organized by EMBO Associate Member Keiko Sugimoto, Team Director of the Center for Sustainable Resource Science at RIKEN Yokohama, and funded by JST ASPIRE programme

A key thought from a participant: "The course was run in an interactive manner, which perfectly aligns with the keyword "thoughtful." It felt like the essence of EMBO Lab Leadership was embodied in this approach. I found it very inspiring,

as creating such a dialogic environment seems essential for sustaining good science."

- 4-6 December 2024, Tokyo University, organized by Katsuhiko Shirahige, Director of IQB at Tokyo University

A key thought from a participant: "We could recognize that for PI, self-management, effective communication, and coaching are important. However, in Japan, we never have the opportunity to become aware of these points."

[sites.google.com/view/embo-lab-course-2024/en](https://sites.google.com/view/embo-lab-course-2024/en)



## Networking excellence – JST-EMBO workshop in Heidelberg

26-28 February 2025, Second JST-EMBO Joint Workshop, Heidelberg, Germany

EMBO hosted the second joint meeting co-organised with the Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST) for new collaborations and scientific exchanges. The event is part of EMBO Global Activities to strengthen research dialogue and promote collaborations at global level, and based on the EMBO-JST Memorandum of Cooperation signed in July 2023 to promote the life sciences in Europe and Japan.

"Bringing together the scientific communities in Japan and Europe is part of our mission to promote

exchange and excellence in the life sciences in Europe and beyond," said EMBO Director Fiona Watt.

EMBO was pleased to host this second joint workshop, welcoming to the EMBL Campus in Heidelberg nearly 90 researchers based in Japan and in several European countries. The meeting hosted 11 speakers from Japan and 30 from Europe, as well as PhD students and Postdocs from both countries and provided ample opportunity to listen to scientific talks, network, and hear about options for collaboration funded by JST and EMBO. The scientific meeting spanned a variety of areas in the life sciences, covering topics from stem cell research to the impact of ageing.

"I sincerely hope that by strengthening the research network between Japan and Europe, through activities

such as this workshop, we will make major advancements in science as well as contributing to the realization of a sustainable and vibrant world in the future," said JST Vice President Shigeo Morimoto.

Building on the success of the first two workshops, a third event will be co-organised in 2026. In between workshops, invited speakers have the opportunity to apply for dedicated funds to cover travels costs for visits to each other's labs and start collaborative projects.

[www.embo.org/features/networking-excellence-second-jst-embo-workshop/](http://www.embo.org/features/networking-excellence-second-jst-embo-workshop/)

## EMBO MEETS WPI

27 June 2025, Half-Day Event at EMBL Operon, Heidelberg, Germany

From 27 June to 1 July 2025, EMBO hosted a delegation from the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) in Heidelberg to promote scientific exchange between EMBO communities and Japan.

Fifteen researchers from Japan highlighted one of the country's flagship programmes, the World

Premier International Research Center Initiative (WPI), shared their science, discussed the challenges of global research careers and had the opportunity to attend the annual EMBO Fellows' Meeting that gathered more than 100 EMBO Postdoctoral Fellows.

Participants learned about the structure and the different research lines conducted at WPI centres, while representatives from the JSPS office in Bonn, Germany, introduced JSPS's funding schemes for interna-

tional research collaboration, including fellowship programmes and joint research opportunities to work in or with Japan.

[meetings.embo.org/event/embo-wpi-meeting](https://meetings.embo.org/event/embo-wpi-meeting)

# EMBO opportunities for life scientists in Japan

## EMBO Postdoctoral Fellowships

fund internationally mobile researchers for a period of up to two years, for researchers from Japan wanting to carry out postdoctoral work in an EMBC Member State, and researchers from EMBC Member States wanting to do postdoctoral work in Japan.

Applications are open all year round.

## EMBO Scientific Exchange Grants

fund research exchanges of up to three months for scientists funded by several JST programmes (see the EMBO website for specific information). The grants facilitate collaborations with research groups with expertise, techniques, or infrastructure that is unavailable in the applicant's laboratory.

Applications open all year round.

## EMBO Young Investigator Programme

supports group leaders based in Japan and funded by several JST programmes in the early stages of setting up their independent laboratories for a period of four years. Networking is a key aspect.

Application deadline: 1 April.

## EMBO Press

publishes five journals that serve the global life science community: The EMBO Journal, EMBO Reports, EMBO Molecular Medicine, Molecular Systems Biology, and Life Science Alliance, which is published in partnership with Rockefeller University Press and Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Press.

### Find out More:

[embo.org/the-embo-communities/embo-communities-by-country/focus-on-japan/](https://embo.org/the-embo-communities/embo-communities-by-country/focus-on-japan/)

[www.jst.go.jp/world/researcher/embo.html](http://www.jst.go.jp/world/researcher/embo.html)

[www.mbsj.jp/en/](http://www.mbsj.jp/en/)



## Learn more about EMBO's impact through interviews with researchers in Japan

### Improving diversity to strengthen research and society

An interview with Noriko Osumi, former Vice President of Tohoku University and EMBO Associate Member

[embo.org/people/improving-diversity-to-strengthen-research-and-society/](https://embo.org/people/improving-diversity-to-strengthen-research-and-society/)

### Unravelling plant regeneration

Meet new EMBO Young Investigator Momoko Ikeuchi

[embo.org/people/unravelling-plant-regeneration/](https://embo.org/people/unravelling-plant-regeneration/)

### A first international experience through EMBO

An interview with Cheng-Han Ho, postdoctoral researcher at the University of Tokyo and 2025 Scientific Exchange Grantee at EMBL, Heidelberg

[embo.org/people/a-first-international-experience-through-embo/](https://embo.org/people/a-first-international-experience-through-embo/)