

FIRST Workshop with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

<Background/Objectives>

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) supports the Foundational Infrastructure for Responsible Use of Small Modular Reactor (SMR) Technology (FIRST) program led by the U.S. Department of the State. The FIRST program harnesses the power of the nuclear industry and innovation to advance energy security worldwide by engaging potential nuclear energy newcomers under the highest standards for nuclear safety, security, and nonproliferation.

<Details>

The U.S. Department of State held the FIRST Workshop with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) (hereinafter referred to as the "FIRST Meeting") in the Kingdom of Bahrain in late January 2026. It was co-hosted by Bahrain's Bapco Energies with additional support from the GCC Secretariat. The head of the U.S. delegation was Ms. Ann Ganzer, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary for Arms Control and Nonproliferation. The purpose of the meeting was to deepen understanding of various types of SMRs and their use in power generation and seawater desalination.

The GCC comprises six countries: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. A total of 39 participants from these countries attended the meeting. With the cooperation of the Association for Overseas Technical Cooperation and Sustainable Partnerships (AOTS), the Board Chairman of JICC participated as a panelist in a discussion on the theme "Challenges and Opportunities in the Global Introduction of Nuclear Energy." Additionally, one JICC Project Advisor (PA) served as an instructor for a workshop on evaluating and selecting SMR technologies. Another JICC PA gave a presentation on thermal utilization of high-temperature gas-cooled reactors (hydrogen production, power generation and desalination), sharing Japan's technology and experience with GCC stakeholders.

<Results>

The contributions made by three JICC members to the FIRST Meeting were highly appreciated by GCC countries and U.S. Department of State officials, who expressed their deep gratitude. This demonstrates that the cooperation provided by the Japanese government (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry) to the U.S. Department of State's FIRST program was sufficient.

Numerous GCC nuclear-energy policy officials and experts participated in this meeting, enabling the deepening of important relationships for advancing nuclear cooperation with the GCC countries. The partnership between Japan and the U.S. Department of State has been strengthened further by cooperation through this FIRST program.



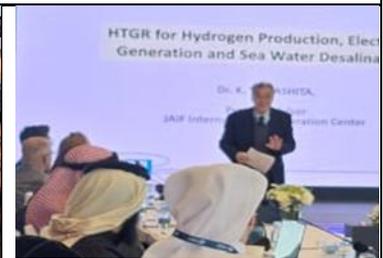
Group photo with the U.S. Department of State and GCC member states



The JICC Board Chairman joining the panel discussion



A JICC PA instructing the workshop on SMR technology evaluation and selection



A JICC PA delivering a lecture on thermal utilization of high-temperature gas-cooled reactors