

The 1st Japan FIRST Study Tour 2026 Co-hosted by the U.S. and Japan

<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 State. The FIRST program harnesses the power of the nuclear industry and innovation to advance energy security worldwide by engaging countries considering nuclear energy deployment. This time, Japan and the United States conducted a study tour focused on the site selection for nuclear power plants.

<Details>

In July 2026, the U.S. Department of State, the Association for Overseas Technical Cooperation and Sustainable Partnerships (AOTS), and JICC collaborated to invite 14 nuclear industry professionals to Japan from nine countries interested in SMR deployment. JICC was responsible for planning the program, coordinating with the organizations for site visits, and delivering lectures.

We received tremendous cooperation and support from each of the organizations visited: Sendai Nuclear Power Station (Kyushu Electric Power Co., Inc.), OYO Corporation, Japan Atomic Energy Agency (JAEA), and Ibaraki Nuclear Science Museum.

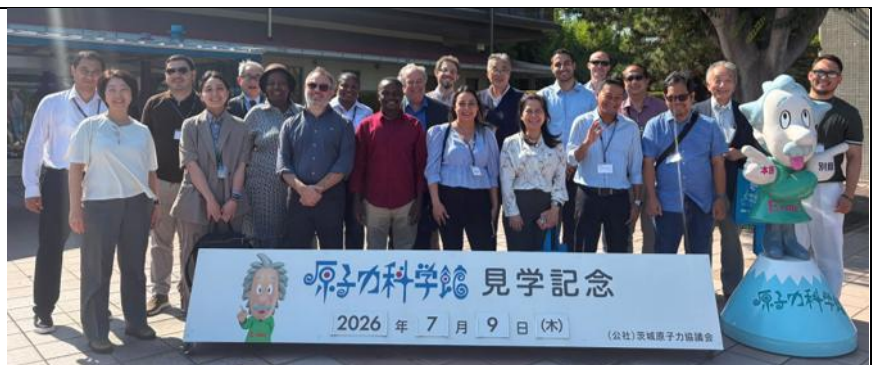
<Results>

Participants gained practical insights into the site selection process for nuclear power plants, particularly regarding safety measures against volcanic activity. They also came to understand that the JAEA played a role in fostering self-confidence in nuclear technology and served as a Technical Support Organization (TSO) during the pre-siting phase of commercial reactors. Comments from participants included that they had “gained valuable experience regarding nuclear power generation” and that their “interest in Japan’s nuclear technology had deepened further.”

We were able to successfully complete this training program through international cooperation between Japan and the United States, further deepening the relationship of trust between the two countries.



Learning about site selection and safety considerations—particularly regarding volcanoes—at Sendai Nuclear Power Station



Learning about nuclear awareness initiatives in a host prefecture at the Ibaraki Nuclear Science Museum



Learning about ground investigation methods and equipment at the site with OYO Corporation



Learning about the role of research reactors in the introduction of nuclear power generation and their applications at the JAEA