INPACE

Indo-Pacific-European Hub for Digital Partnerships

Report on workshop “Advancing Collaboration in the Digital Sector”

Osaka, Japan – 2 July 2025

Funded by
the European Union

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SUMMARY

As part of the global programme at **Expo Osaka 2025**, the **INPACE Project, as the initiative of the EU-Japan Digital partnership**, hosted the high-level workshop **"Advancing Collaboration in the Digital Sector"** at **Portugal's Pavilion**. Represented by **Sara Medina (SPI)** and **Alessandro Bassi (EURESCOM)**, the event marked a key step forward in advancing strategic digital cooperation between Europe and Japan.

The workshop brought together policymakers, industry leaders, and researchers from Europe and Japan to explore collaboration in three priority areas:

- **Next-Generation Connectivity (5G/6G)**
- **Cybersecurity & Digital Trust**
- **Cloud-Edge-IoT for Smart Industries**

These themes align closely with the **EU's International Digital Partnerships strategy**, and directly support **INPACE's mission** to promote trusted, human-centric digital technologies and resilient digital ecosystems between the EU and Japan.

The workshop opened with remarks from **Lee Woolgar** (Delegation of the European Union to Japan) and **Joana Gomes Cardoso** (Commissioner General of Portugal at Expo Osaka Kansai). **Lee Woolgar** emphasised the importance of the EU's digital partnerships, particularly in areas such as semiconductors, the exchange of information between the EU and Japan, and the importance of technology and innovation for the future. **Joana Gomes Cardoso** highlighted Expo 2025 as a platform to promote dialogue and the sharing of best practices between European countries, highlighting Portugal and Japan's shared maritime history and commitment to ocean sustainability, followed by an introduction to the INPACE project by **Sara Medina**. The workshop featured a panel discussion moderated by **Alessandro Bassi**, with insights from:

1 **Masahiro Bessho**, Toyo University

2 **Christopher Price,** Ericsson

3 **Hideaki Takahashi**, Nokia

4 **Rob van Kranenburg**, IoT Council

5 **Judit Erika Magyar**, EURAXESS Japan

Professor **Masahiro Bessho** (INIAD, Toyo University) delivered an intervention titled *"Enhancing Public Mobility Through Open Data – Opportunities for EU–Japan Digital Collaboration."* He highlighted why public transportation is central to sustainable urban futures, to provide safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable transport systems for all. Both Japan and the EU, he argued, share the same mission: advancing inclusive, low-carbon mobility. Open and standardized data can transform today's fragmented transport networks into seamless journeys, laying the foundation for a global mobility data ecosystem that leaves no one behind. In Japan, the **Association for Open Data of Public Transportation (ODPT)**—an industry–government–academia alliance—plays a key role in this transition. Unlike the EU, where open data policies are mandated, Japan's highly developed yet privatized transport sector is fragmented, with multiple operators sharing routes. To address this, ODPT launched the ODPT Center in 2019, providing standardized open data (GTFS, GBFS) from railways, buses, airlines, ferries, and shared bicycles, thereby building an ecosystem for open

distribution of mobility data. Looking ahead, Bessho called for **EU–Japan collaboration**, fusing Europe's policy-driven platforms with Japan's multi-stakeholder model to accelerate a **global inclusive mobility ecosystem**. He also proposed citizen-driven open innovation, such as an EU–Japan contest rewarding data-powered solutions for safer, greener, and more accessible journeys, and an inclusive mobility PoC, where digital technologies—like multimodal LLM-powered navigation for visually impaired users—could establish best practices for accessible transport in complex cities.

Christopher Price, Director at the CTO Office of Ericsson, presented *"Collaboration toward Reliable Digital Mobility – Why Mobility, Data and AI Will Drive Innovation into 2030."* He underlined that mobility and data, enhanced by AI-driven intelligence, will be at the core of innovation in the coming decade, with 6G serving as the foundation for an immersive, sustainable future. Price highlighted Ericsson's active role in collaborative projects such as 6G-MIRAI and HARMONY—brought together as the EU–Japan 6G-MIRAI-HARMONY cross-regional research initiative. Funded under the European Union's Smart Networks and Services Joint Undertaking (SNS JU), 6G-MIRAI focuses on developing Machine Intelligence-Based Radio Access Infrastructure to shape the future of 6G cellular networks, while HARMONY advances AI-native wireless communication in Japan. Building on the outcomes of the recent (May 2025) EU–Japan Digital Partnership Council, the European Commission announced a reinforced commitment: *"The partners agreed to expand their cooperation on beyond 5G/6G research, with a focus on the joint project 6G-MIRAI-HARMONY which aims to develop AI-powered networks for user-focused communications."* Ericsson situates this collaboration at the heart of its 6G vision, which rests on intent-based and programmable architectures, open interfaces, operation across existing 3GPP bands and new cmWave bands, and spectrum sharing between 5G and 6G. He emphasized that 6G will enable competitive enterprise and indoor systems while supporting new and evolved use cases—from immersive experiences to critical infrastructure—delivered in an efficient and sustainable way. This vision, Price concluded, requires continued international collaboration, ensuring that the evolution of 6G is inclusive, reliable, and aligned with societal needs.

Hideaki Takahashi, Head of Standards at Nokia Japan, presented *"Global Technology Standards: Empowering EU–Japan Collaboration."* He began with a simple yet powerful example: electricity sockets, which differ from country to country—England, Germany, Italy, Japan—illustrating how a world without technology standardization leads to market fragmentation, hindered collaboration, and higher costs. In contrast, he argued, standardization creates immense value for the global ecosystem, ensuring interoperability, efficiency, and innovation. Takahashi emphasized that as emerging technologies reshape mobility, connectivity, and digital services, a true EU–Japan collaboration on global standards will be mutually beneficial and bring significant value to industry and society alike. He called for both regions to work closely in developing a common vision and roadmap for IT and technology standards, ensuring that future systems are not only globally interoperable but also sustainable, competitive, and inclusive.

Although unable to attend in person, **Rob van Kranenburg** (Martel) shared his views via video message in *"Toward a Democratic 6G Architecture."* Reflecting on the evolution of TCP/IP as a new ontology, he contrasted how different regions built their digital ecosystems: in the US, entrepreneurial dynamics generated a huge amount of wealth for a few individuals; in China, political-engineering centralism created a tightly controlled "system of systems." Europe, he noted, faced its own challenge—integrating 28 Member States while historically prioritizing analog industries, often overlooking the digital transformation. Today, however, momentum is building, in particular to strengthen strategic autonomy and sovereignty in digital infrastructures. Van Kranenburg argued that the innovation triangle of IoT, 6G, and AI will define the next decade, and called for bold steps, such as developing a secure 6G device within the next five years. Such a device, he proposed, could be jointly developed by EU, Japan and Korea, and would embed digital wallets, enable personal AI assistants tuned to the individual, and act simultaneously as a router, IoT gateway, and edge cloud, turning 450 million devices into the "primary cloud." This would allow Europe to reclaim value chains, enable open-source app stores, and ensure data sovereignty. He underlined that without secure

hardware and infrastructures, even policies like the EU AI Act cannot be effectively enforced. Van Kranenburg concluded by stressing the need for EU–Japan–Korea collaboration to build the foundations of 21st-century sovereignty, and shared his work with IEEE on shaping a democratic architecture for 6G.

Judit Erika Magyar explained the different programmes that Europe has put in place to help research, such as Horizon Europe and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions & Postdoctoral Fellowships. This led to a very interesting discussion on how the Japanese actors can participate to EU projects and programmes, and what would be the barriers for Japanese partners in case a full integration with the Horizon Europe programme will be achieved. In particular, while in Europe SMEs are very important in research projects, in Japan it might be much harder to reach the technological SMEs, for many different reasons (cultural, linguistic, …) and therefore targeted actions should be taken in order to educate and disseminate the specific advantages that collaborative research project offer.

The event concluded with a networking cocktail at Portugal's Pavilion and a short visit to the European Commission's Pavilion, creating an informal space to build connections and highlight Portugal's and Europe's innovation leadership and maritime sustainability legacy.

With the INPACE project's active representation, this event reinforced the INPACE project's objective in shaping the future of digital cooperation between Europe and the Indo-Pacific—supporting innovation, policy dialogue, and sustainable technological growth.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. **Shared Vision for Inclusive, Low-Carbon Mobility**

- Both the EU and Japan are committed to sustainable, accessible public transportation.
- Future collaboration could fuse Europe's policy-driven open data frameworks with Japan's multi-stakeholder innovation model (e.g., ODPT).
- Potential pilot: **EU–Japan open mobility data ecosystem** for multimodal, inclusive transport solutions.

2. **6G and AI as Cornerstones of Future EU–Japan Tech Collaboration**

- The joint **6G-MIRAI-HARMONY initiative** exemplifies EU–Japan commitment to co-developing next-generation connectivity.
- This positions mobility, AI, and data at the heart of innovation, ensuring inclusivity and reliability in global 6G standards.
- Potential pilot: **AI-powered multimodal navigation system**, tested in both EU and Japanese urban contexts.

3. **Standardization as a Strategic Enabler**

- Joint EU–Japan leadership in global technology standards (mobility, AI, 6G, digital services) will ensure interoperability and competitiveness.
- Standardization avoids fragmentation and accelerates adoption of new technologies.
- Potential pilot: **EU–Japan joint standards roadmap**, aligning mobility data, 6G protocols, and AI governance.

4. **Toward Democratic, Sovereign Digital Architectures**

- A stronger EU–Japan (and possibly Korea) collaboration could anchor sovereign digital infrastructures, balancing innovation with strategic autonomy.
- Pilots could explore **secure 6G-enabled devices** (with digital wallets, AI assistants, and IoT gateways) as building blocks for a democratic digital ecosystem.
- This reinforces long-term EU–Japan cooperation beyond research, into shared infrastructures and value chains.

5. **Engaging SMEs for Deeper EU–Japan Research Cooperation**

- Japanese SMEs are less active in collaborative research than their European counterparts due to cultural, linguistic, and structural barriers.
- Targeted evangelisation and capacity-building are needed to highlight the advantages of Horizon Europe participation and EU–Japan partnerships.
- Potential action: **tailored outreach and training programmes** to engage Japanese SMEs in EU-funded collaborative projects.

PHOTOS


Speaker Profile
Lee Woolgar
• Senior Digital Policy Officer at Delegation of the European Union to Japan
• Lecturer – Technology Management for Innovation (TMI) at University of Tokyo
• Consultant at Innovation Policy Research
Lee Woolgar
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Speaker Profile
JOANA GOMES CARDO
• Commissioner General of Portugal at Expo Osaka Kansai
• Former President of Lisbon's Cultural Agency
• Consultant for Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation
Joana Gomes Cardoso
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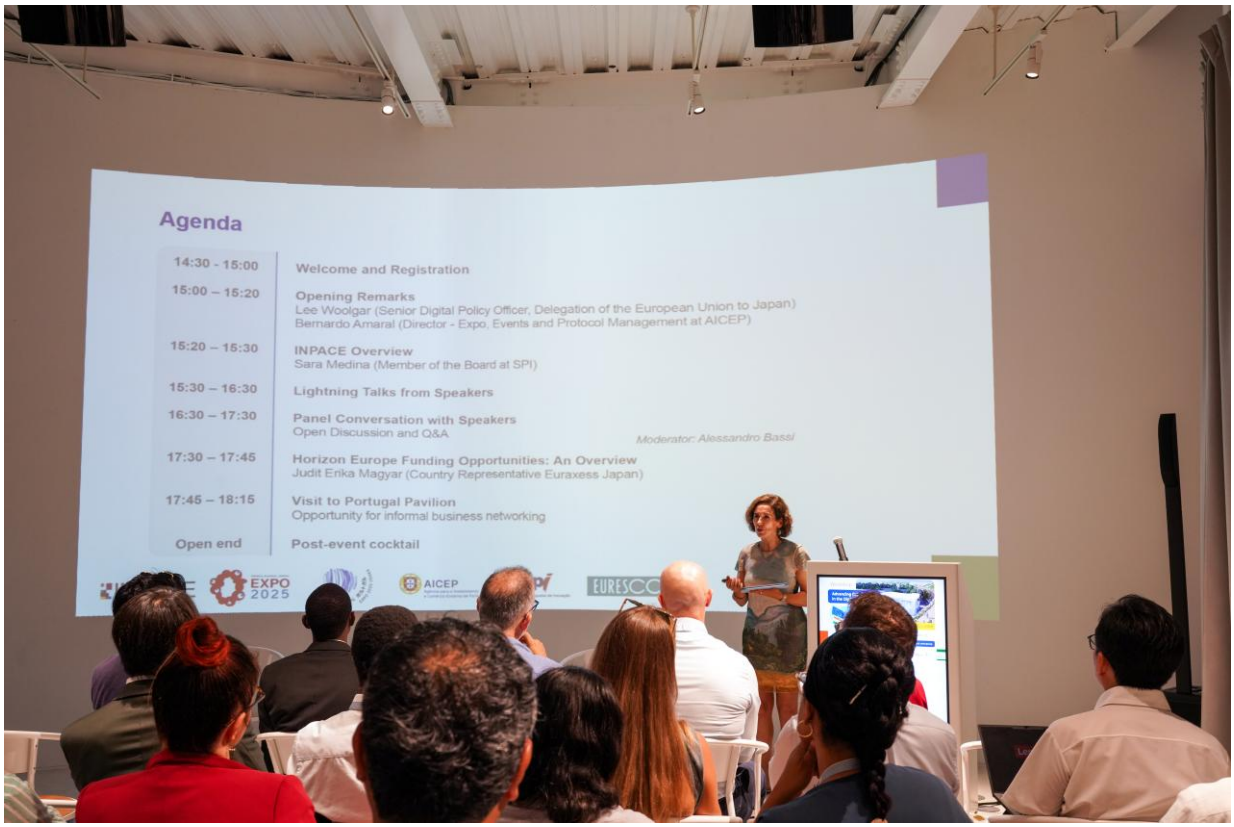
Agenda
14:30 - 15:00 Welcome and Registration
15:00 – 15:20 Opening Remarks
Lee Woolgar (Senior Digital Policy Officer, Delegation of the European Union to Japan)
Bernardo Amaral (Director - Expo, Events and Protocol Management at AICEP)
15:20 – 15:30 INPACE Overview
Sara Medina (Member of the Board at SPI)
15:30 – 16:30 Lightning Talks from Speakers
16:30 – 17:30 Panel Conversation with Speakers
Open Discussion and Q&A
Moderator: Alessandro Bassi
17:30 – 17:45 Horizon Europe Funding Opportunities: An Overview
Judit Erika Magyar (Country Representative Euraxess Japan)
17:45 – 18:15 Visit to Portugal Pavilion
Opportunity for informal business networking
Open end Post-event cocktail
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Indo-Pacific-European Hub for Digital Partnerships
Collaboration toward reliable digital mobility...
Why mobility, data and AI will drive innovation into 2030
Christopher Price
Director, CTO Office - Ericsson
Funded by the European Union
Ready to create the digital future?
Key trends are shaping the way we'll work in the future, which will use sustainable solutions and advanced new applications to connect virtual and digital worlds.
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Workshop
Advancing Collaboration


Workshop
Advancing Collaboration in the Digital Sector
PORTUGAL
July 2nd, 2025 | 14:30- 18:00
Multipurpose Room Ground Floor, Portugal Pavilion
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Enhancing Public Mobility Through Open Data
Opportunities for EU–Japan Digital Collaboration
Masahiro BESSHO
Professor, Faculty of Information Networking for Innovation And Design (INIAD), Toyo University
Association for Open Data of Public Transportation
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Advancing Collaboration in the Digital Sector


Global efforts on the way to make 6G a reality
Active participation in public private partnerships around the globe
6GSNS
HEXA-X-II
NIST
SUSTAIN 6G
India
Bharat6G Alliance
Japan
XGMF
South Korea
6G FORUM
China
6GANA
Nokia holds key leadership positions within the European (6G-IA) and


Workshop
Advancing Collaboration in the Digital Sector
デジタル分野における
July 2nd, 202
Portugal Pavi


Workshop
Advancing Collaboration in the Digital Sector
デジタル分野におけるコラボレーションの推進