

Decision on Venture Directors for Global Startup Campus (GSC) Initiative Pilot Activities

October 2, 2026

Secretariat of Science, Technology, and Innovation Policy
Press Release

We are pleased to announce that we have decided Venture Directors to play a central role in developing innovative research themes and managing overall research projects under the International Research Program, one of the pilot activities of the Global Startup Campus (GSC) Initiative.

The mission of the GSC Initiative is to transform Japan's innovation ecosystem and build a global hub of world-class innovation ecosystem through collaboration with outstanding and ambitious researchers, startups, forward-thinking venture capital firms (VCs), accelerators, and companies from both Japan and abroad.

As part of the International Research Program, the pilot activity under this initiative, we have decided Venture Directors who possess experience in research and commercialization, as well as the discernment to identify the future potential of research and development. These Venture Directors will play a crucial role in the International Research Program, exercising the discretion to make swift decisions regarding the setting of innovative research themes, the selection of principal investigators (PIs), and the overall advancement of research and development projects.

We will cooperate with these Venture Directors and relevant ministries to determine innovative research themes and vigorously promote the pilot activities of the GSC Initiative.

List of Appointed Venture Directors

1. Douglas A. Wicks (Renaissance Philanthropy Japan)
2. Hidefumi Yokoo (Renaissance Philanthropy Japan)
3. David Schwartz (SRI International)
4. Kenji Yoshihira (SRI International)
5. Philip MC Davy (Stellar Science Foundation)

*Organizations in parentheses indicate the Venture Directors' affiliated partner entities.

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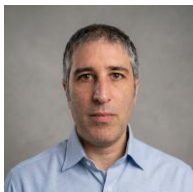
1. Douglas A. Wicks (Renaissance Philanthropy Japan)

- Spent approximately 40 years engaged in R&D and commercialization in the fields of chemistry and materials, including at German chemical manufacturer Bayer AG and other organizations.
- Served for six years as a Program Director at ARPA-E, U.S. Department of Energy, with experience leading the launch of R&D programs in critical minerals and other areas, as well as the selection and management of research projects.



2. Hidefumi Yokoo (Renaissance Philanthropy Japan)

- Has a background in environmental economics and related fields at Hitotsubashi University, the National Institute for Environmental Studies, and other institutions, and has experience in commercialization through collaborative research with industry. Has also served as an advisor to the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST), supporting efforts to commercialize research outcomes.
- Participated in Renaissance Philanthropy's ARPA-style Research Program Director Training Program (BiTS Japan) and was selected in light of having received the highest evaluation in the program.



3. David Schwartz (SRI International)

- Has engaged in R&D in information systems, AI, sensing, and related fields at research institutions of U.S. companies, including Xerox PARC, while also advancing the commercialization of research outcomes through patenting, licensing, and spinouts.
- At Xerox PARC, has directed and managed research portfolios and led multiple research projects funded by ARPA-E and other agencies.



4. Kenji Yoshihira (SRI International)

- Has engaged in R&D leveraging AI and machine learning at NEC Laboratories America and other organizations, and has experience deploying developed systems in U.S. aerospace and other applications, commercializing research outcomes, and supporting startups.
- At NEC Laboratories America, was also involved in planning research themes and managing R&D portfolios in advanced fields including AI and machine learning.



5. Philip MC Davy (Stellar Science Foundation)

- Has more than 15 years of research experience in biotechnology and has engaged in joint R&D with pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies in Japan, U.S. and Europe, as well as commercialization at a startup selected for the J-Startup program.
- At the University of Hawaii and other organizations, led translational research across a broad range of research fields and the development of novel disease models, and has experience allocating research resources while identifying key R&D challenges.