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**FY2024 Scandinavia-Japan Sasakawa Foundation**  
**MIRAI Global Challenges Winter School**  
**Participation Report**

Name of participant	Yan Chen
University	WASEDA University
Department (Graduate School, Faculty)	Department of Life Science and Medical Bioscience, Graduate School of Advanced Science and Engineering
Major (keywords)	Biomaterials
Link to your researcher profile (if any)	

1. What is the purpose of your participation in the Winter School?

The purpose of my participation in the MIRAI Winter School is to broaden my understanding of global challenges, particularly in the areas of health, innovation, and cross-cultural collaboration. The program aligns closely with my academic focus on addressing healthcare needs, especially those related to ageing populations.

By engaging with experts and fellow researchers, I aim to gain insights into innovation policies, sustainable development strategies, and the intersection of digitalization with societal challenges. This knowledge will directly enhance my research by introducing interdisciplinary approaches and global perspectives.

Additionally, the Winter School offers a unique platform to network with international scholars and policymakers. I plan to leverage this opportunity to explore potential collaborations, exchange ideas, and build professional connections that could support my future academic and professional endeavors.

2. What did you gain from participating in the Winter School (so to say, key takeaways)?  
What did you feel was good about participating? Please include the reasons.

Key takeaways

● Enhanced Understanding of Innovation Regulations:

Sessions on topics like the Brussels Effect, GDPR, and ESG ratings highlighted the regulatory and innovation dynamics between the EU and Japan. These discussions provided a new perspective on how global standards influence innovation, which is directly relevant to my research on implantable cancer treatment devices, especially as these devices must

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meet strict safety and efficacy regulations.

- Insights into Sustainable Innovation:

Learning about green economy transitions, digitalization in creative industries, and fossil capitalism inspired me to consider sustainability and environmental impacts in my work.

- Cross-Cultural Communication Skills:

The experience on cross-cultural management and business communication resonated with my experience as an international student in Japan. It reinforced the importance of adaptability and cultural sensitivity when collaborating with diverse teams, a skill that is critical for my career in global academia.

#### Benefits of participation

- Interdisciplinary Perspectives:

The program brought together experts from various fields, allowing for rich, interdisciplinary discussions. These broadened my outlook on how global challenges, such as ageing populations and digital transformation, intersect with healthcare innovation.

- Exposure to Innovative Ideas:

Engaging with topics like the Osaka EXPO 2025, and smart cities introduced me to emerging global trends and strategies, which are useful for aligning my research with broader societal goals.

- International Experience:

It enhanced my understanding of the Nordic approach to innovation and sustainable development. This experience complements my academic journey in Japan and strengthens my ability to navigate diverse academic cultures.

3. How would you like to make use of the outcomes and networks you gained at the Winter School in your research activities in the future? Please describe specifically, and, in particular, please let us know any initiatives you would like to try in MIRAI.

The MIRAI Winter School has been an invaluable experience, offering insights and connections that I am already applying to my research activities. Since the program, I have continued engaging with the MIRAI community and related events, such as the 2024 Sophia Symposium on Advanced Electrolyte Materials for Energy Storage and Conversion, held on December 11–12. It deepened my understanding of developments in sustainable energy materials and their relevance to global challenges, including healthcare innovation and climate goals. I have built valuable local and international networks with researchers working on cutting-edge research and exchange ideas with experts across disciplines.

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Moreover, I hope to see MIRAI expand its offerings to include long-term exchange programs for joint research or internships, enabling researchers to engage in deeper, more sustained collaborations. Such initiatives would allow me to work directly with Swedish or Japanese institutions, applying interdisciplinary approaches to my research.

4. Please feel free to share your ideas on how to make MIRAI more interdisciplinary and function as a platform to promote the development and exchange of young researchers (e.g., what opportunities and initiatives would further accelerate exchange).

- **Create Cross-Disciplinary Research Clusters**

MIRAI could establish small, focused research clusters that bring together young researchers from diverse disciplines to collaborate on shared SDG challenges. For example:

A Health and Technology Cluster combining life sciences, materials engineering, and digitalization to explore innovations in healthcare.

A Sustainability and Policy Cluster integrating environmental science, economics, and public policy to address climate adaptation and sustainable urban development.

These clusters could involve regular virtual meetings and culminate in joint publications or project proposals.

- **Expand Exchange Programs and Co-Supervision**

**Research Fellowships:** MIRAI could facilitate exchange programs where young researchers spend several weeks at partner institutions, gaining insights into different academic environments.

**Co-Supervision Opportunities:** Establish a system for co-supervision of PhD students or postdocs by mentors from both Japan and Sweden, promoting intercultural learning and collaborative research.

- **Foster Industry Partnerships**

Building partnerships with industries can give young researchers exposure to practical applications of their work. MIRAI could:

Host regular Industry Meetups for networking and potential collaborations. Facilitate internships or sponsored projects with companies, particularly in healthcare, sustainability, and other sectors.