= A Serial Introduction Part 1 = Winners of ITU-AJ Encouragement Awards 2026

In May every year, The ITU Association of Japan (ITU-AJ) proudly presents ITU-AJ Encouragement Awards to people who have made outstanding contributions in the field of international standardization and have helped in the ongoing development of ICT.
These Awards are also an embodiment of our sincere desire to encourage further contributions from these individuals in the future.
If you happen to run into these winners at another meeting in the future, please say hello to them.
But first, as part of the introductory series of Award Winners, allow us to introduce some of those remarkable winners.

Shoki Inoue
NEC Corporation
shoki@nec.com http://www.nec.com
Fields of activity: 3GPP RAN3



An Open Architecture for Base Stations with Flexibility and Reliability

I am honored to receive the prestigious ITU Association of Japan Encouragement Award. I would like to express my gratitude to everyone at the ITU Association of Japan and those from whom I have received support thus far.

My primary focus has been on improving the resilience of base stations in mobile communication networks. As mobile networks become increasingly important as social infrastructure, it has become essential to ensure that they provide both flexibility and high reliability. Meanwhile, virtualization and disaggregation of network functions have been progressing. Under these circumstances, through discussions in 3GPP, I have been working on highlighting the necessity of mechanisms to minimize the impact of failures and to enable rapid recovery.

Through my experience in standardization activities, I have recognized that technical validity alone is not sufficient; it is equally important to explain the necessity of proposals and their applicable use cases clearly. Since participants in 3GPP come from different countries and companies with diverse perspectives, I have learned the importance of understanding each stakeholder's position and incorporating a wide range of opinions. Refining proposals through repeated discussions and shaping them into forms acceptable to many participants has been a valuable experience that has allowed me to appreciate both the difficulty and significance of consensus building. These experiences have become an important asset in understanding the essence of standardization beyond its technical aspects.

Currently, I am contributing to discussions in 3GPP RAN3 on High Layer Split as part of studies on 6G architecture. While 5G achieved flexible network configurations through CU/DU split, 6G is expected to advance the functional split at higher layers. This architectural evolution is expected to enable more flexible and advanced network architectures based on cloud-native technologies and AI integration. However, challenges such as increasing control complexity, ensuring reliability in distributed environments, and aligning rapidly evolving virtualization technologies with standardized specifications have become apparent. I am continuing these discussions by leveraging the knowledge gained from resilience-related work.

From now onwards, mobile-communication networks will continue to grow in importance not only as social infrastructure but also as a platform supporting a wide range of services and applications. I will continue contributing to standardization activities that aim to implement open networks that achieve both flexibility and reliability.

Katsunari Uemura
1FINITY Inc.
u-katsunari@fujitsu.com https://www.1finity.com/
Fields of activity: 3GPP RAN Working Group 2 (RAN2)



Standardization Activities in 3GPP RAN2 concerning Network Energy-saving Technologies

I am honored to receive the Japan ITU Association Encouragement Award. I would like to express my gratitude to everyone at the Japan ITU Association and all those who have supported me thus far.

I have been engaged in international-standardization activities within 3GPP RAN2 for a long time, and in recent years, I have focused on the standardization of network energy saving (NES) technology for 5G. NES reduces power consumption by making base-station transmissions on-demand or partially suspending them during periods of low communication traffic. Throughout the discussions about 3GPP Releases 18 and 19, I consistently submitted proposals and—particularly when conflicting views arose—led the deliberations as a Rapporteur in a manner that contributed to the resolution of concerns among the various companies and the achievement of consensus.

As for international standardization, the ability to coordinate diverse perspectives is just as essential as technical expertise, and the resulting outcomes play a vital role in underpinning global telecommunications infrastructure. Discussions about 6G are currently underway within 3GPP,

and NES remains a key technical challenge being discussed. I aim to continue addressing challenges—including those beyond NES—and to take a leading role in standardization activities. I are committed to contributing to the creation of a sustainable, advanced telecommunications society, and I hope to see more colleagues join me in tackling the challenges that we face in this field.

Arisa Ema

The University of Tokyo
tg-event@tc.u-tokyo.ac.jp https://sites.google.com/g.ecc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/ema/home_en
Fields of activity: Science and Technology Studies



Bridging Global AI Governance and Practice: Advancing Transparency through International Collaboration

It is an honor to receive the ITU Association of Japan Encouragement Award. I would like to express my gratitude to everyone who has worked with me over the years—including colleagues from academia, government, industry, and international organizations. This recognition reflects our collective efforts rather than my own achievements alone.

My research focuses on AI ethics and governance. In particular, I am investigating how to build trustworthy AI through international cooperation and dialogue. In recent years, I have been contributing to the G7 Hiroshima AI Process, in which I am working to promote transparency and responsible AI governance. Beyond international discussions, I have sought to bridge global policy frameworks and practical implementation by conducting interviews with companies, organizing public events, and publishing handbooks that help stakeholders understand and apply the Hiroshima AI Process Reporting Framework.

I believe that effective AI governance requires more than establishing principles or regulations. It also depends on creating opportunities for governments, companies, researchers, educators, and citizens to understand these frameworks and participate in shaping them. Making governance accessible and actionable is just as important as designing the governance itself.

As AI technologies continue to evolve rapidly across borders, governance must also become increasingly collaborative. At the same time, AI is being utilized in diverse social, cultural, and industrial contexts; accordingly, global principles must be translated into practices that reflect local realities. I see this "bridging" role between international frameworks and real-world implementation as one of the most-important challenges to be faced in the coming years.

Looking ahead, I hope to continue contributing through not only research but also education, public engagement, and international collaboration. By connecting policy, industry, academia, and society, I aim to help build AI governance that is transparent, inclusive, and practical. Ultimately, I hope these efforts will contribute to a society in which everyone can benefit from AI while respecting shared values, human dignity, and cultural diversity.

Makio Kawamoto

Formerly with Mitsubishi Electric Corporation
https://www.mitsubishielectric.com/en/
Fields of activity: ITU-R SG5, AWG



Standardization Activities targeting Harmonization of Spectrum for Railway Radiocommunication Systems

I am honored to receive the ITU Association of Japan Encouragement Award. I would like to express my gratitude to the ITU Association of Japan and to all those who have supported my work.

These activities aimed to promote the international harmonization of spectrum for railway radiocommunication systems. Since there were concerns that such harmonization efforts might affect railway radiocommunication systems currently used in Japan, the Railway Radiocommunication International Standardization Study Group, comprising railway operators and radio-equipment manufacturers, was established to formulate Japan's positions going into ITU-R meetings and related international meetings.

During these standardization activities, railway radiocommunication experts, including myself, played a leading role in developing a total of four reports in the ITU-R and AWG as well as one ITU-R Recommendation. The Recommendation adopts different approaches to frequency harmonization for each ITU Region. For Region 3, to which Japan belongs, an approach based on identifying frequency ranges under consideration or proposed for harmonization was adopted. By ensuring that all frequency bands currently used by railway radiocommunication systems in Japan were included in these frequency ranges, Japanese experts, including myself, achieved Japan's objectives.

I also addressed the exportability of Japan's railway radiocommunication infrastructure and technologies through these standardization activities. In each report, details of Japan's railway-radiocommunication systems are introduced and their unique features are highlighted. In addition, a representative from a railway operator presented the details of these systems at railway-radiocommunication workshops organized by the AWG.

A key lesson from this work was that Japanese railway radiocommunication systems do not always conform to international standards. Compliance with international standards is a key factor for successful exports of infrastructure, and I am concerned that this situation will remain an important challenge in the future. While my involvement in this activity is coming to a close, I hope that efforts toward international standardization of Japan's railway radiocommunication systems will continue to advance in the years ahead.