

RTRI and DZSF Sign Comprehensive Agreement to Strengthen Bilateral Railway Research Cooperation

On July 18, 2025, the Railway Technical Research Institute (RTRI) concluded a comprehensive agreement with the German Centre for Rail Traffic Research (known in German as Das Deutsche Zentrum für Schienenverkehrsforschung, DZSF) at the RTRI headquarters in Tokyo to enhance future collaboration between the two institutes.



Prof. Eckhard Roll, Director of DZSF (left) and Dr. Ikuo Watanabe, President of RTRI (right) shake hands after signing the comprehensive agreement

1. Purpose of the Agreement

The agreement aims to promote beneficial cooperative programs for advanced and practical R&D in the field of railways while leveraging the R&D capabilities and testing facilities of RTRI and DZSF, thereby contributing to the development of railways as well as the academic and technological progress in both Japan and Germany.

2. Activities to Be Implemented under the Agreement

- (1) Collaborative research
- (2) Reciprocal visits or stays of researchers and engineers
- (3) Exchanging information in preparation for future collaborative research, and holding seminars for strengthening relations through presentation of research outcomes and information exchange

The above (1) Collaborative research and (2) Reciprocal visits or stays of researchers and engineers will be conducted in the fields of climate change, automatic train operation, digital

maintenance, decarbonization, and train-animal collisions, which are key focus areas for both institutes.

The next seminar is scheduled to be held at DZSF in 2027.

3. Comments from the Representatives on the Agreement

Dr. Ikuo Watanabe, President of RTRI

We are delighted that RTRI has formalized the agreement with DZSF. Our Master Plan, RESEARCH 2030 sets 'Creating sustainable railway systems' as a core goal. Among our fundamental policy objectives are enhancing resilience to intensifying natural disasters, improving productivity and achieving decarbonization of railway systems—challenges we share with DZSF. The agreement represents an important milestone, allowing us to collaboratively address these issues and pioneer a sustainable future for railways.

Partnering with DZSF, a research institute from Germany, a major railway nation, holds great significance for us. Moving forward, through collaborative research and personnel exchanges, we will leverage each other's expertise and insights to pursue further innovation and advancement in railway technology.

Prof. Eckhard Roll, Director of DZSF

We are greatly honored to enter the agreement with RTRI. Despite geographical and cultural differences, Japan and Germany face many common challenges in the railway sector. We hope the agreement will mark a significant first step toward meaningful bilateral cooperation.

Collaboration with RTRI will undoubtedly strengthen R&D efforts in rail traffic for both countries. We are convinced that sharing scientific knowledge, data, and experience to address common challenges faced by both countries—such as demographic changes, aging infrastructure, and climate change—is of great value for the sustainable development of railway systems.

About DZSF

The German Centre for Rail Traffic Research (DZSF), headquartered in Dresden, Saxony, Germany, was established in 2019 as a national research institute evolving from the research activities of the Federal Railway Authority (Eisenbahn-Bundesamt, EBA). With approximately 70 staff members, DZSF conducts R&D covering 15 or more diverse fields. It operates an open digital test field utilizing active rail lines near Dresden. DZSF also provides scientific advice to the Federal Ministry for Digital and Transport (Bundesministerium für Digitales und Verkehr, BMDV) on maintaining and enhancing the safety of railway transportation, particularly regarding responses to advancements in digitalization such as cybersecurity.

For more details, visit: https://www.dzsf.bund.de/DZSF/EN/TheDZSF/dzsf_node.html