

## **OIST and Mizuho Bank sign memorandum of understanding for collaboration**

Today, the Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology (President and CEO: Karin Markides; OIST) and Mizuho Bank, Ltd. (President & CEO: Masahiko Kato) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) for collaboration to advance the development of a startup ecosystem.

### **1. Areas of collaboration under the MOU**

- (1) Supporting the growth of startups originating from OIST
- (2) Development of an entrepreneurial education program for the OIST community, including faculty, staff, and students
- (3) Other related areas that contribute to the interests of both parties

### **2. Background and purpose of the MOU**

OIST was established by the Government of Japan in 2011 to foster a world-class research hub and create an intellectual cluster that drives technology transfer and industrial innovation in Okinawa. As a graduate university offering a five-year integrated PhD program in science and technology, OIST attracts researchers and students from over 80 countries and regions worldwide. In promoting interdisciplinary collaboration, OIST supports creative and innovative discoveries and solutions to global challenges. Furthermore, through industry collaboration and support for entrepreneurs, OIST is working to establish itself as a center for innovation, striving to accelerate economic growth in Okinawa and Japan, attract top global entrepreneurs to Okinawa, and create diverse industries.

Mizuho Bank, under the Mizuho group's shared corporate Purpose of "Proactively innovate together with our clients for a prosperous and sustainable future", leverages its extensive network, financial service capabilities, and consulting expertise to foster innovation. For over a decade, it has been actively building an ecosystem to support the growth of innovative companies, including operating the local startup acceleration program "M's Salon", which

has over 4,000 member companies. In Okinawa, Mizuho Bank traces its roots back to the Okinawa Agricultural and Industrial Bank, the first locally funded financial institution in the prefecture, established in 1898. In addition to operating branches in the prefecture, Mizuho Bank plays a key role in promoting economic development by collaborating with local financial institutions and economic organizations. It serves as a mainland-side coordinator for the Okinawa Konwakai and the Okinawa Future Creation Council, actively participating in initiatives to advance the Okinawan economy.

OIST and Mizuho Bank have agreed to sign this MOU to integrate OIST's intellectual cluster—driving cutting-edge research and technological development—with Mizuho Bank's innovation ecosystem framework. Through this collaboration, both parties aim to address societal challenges through open innovation, foster the growth of innovation-driven companies originating in Okinawa, and create new industries in the region.