

July 16, 2026
Noetra Corp.
Sony Group Corporation
SoftBank Corp.
NEC Corporation
Honda Motor Co., Ltd.

Noetra Launches Full-Scale R&D for Japan- Developed Multimodal Foundation Model

Noetra Corp., along with its core member companies and investors—Sony Group Corporation, SoftBank Corp., NEC Corporation, and Honda Motor Co., Ltd.—launched full-scale R&D for a Japan-developed multimodal foundation model that will serve as the foundation for AI-enabled robots and physical AI, in collaboration with a broad range of partners engaged in the development and application of sovereign AI in Japan.

Noetra has received investments from a total of 44 companies and organizations, including enterprises engaged in the development of sovereign AI and companies across a wide range of industries, led by the manufacturing sector, that are promoting AI adoption, all of which share Noetra's vision and business strategy. For the development of its homegrown multimodal foundation model, Noetra established a research and development organization centered on engineers seconded from its core member companies and investors, the National Institute of Advanced Industrial Science and Technology (AIST), Preferred Networks, Inc., and other participating organizations. By leveraging the technologies and expertise these organizations have cultivated through AI model development, Noetra will accelerate its R&D initiatives.

Noetra will begin developing its homegrown multimodal foundation model by leveraging AI computing infrastructure operated by Japan-based providers. To accelerate development of the model, in collaboration with NVIDIA, Noetra also plans to build AI computing infrastructure equipped with approximately 27,500 NVIDIA Rubin GPUs, NVIDIA's latest graphics processing units (GPUs) optimized for agentic AI workloads centered on large-scale foundation models. Construction is scheduled to begin in April 2027, with operations expected to begin in June 2028.

Starting in phases from the fiscal year ending March 31, 2027 (fiscal 2026), Noetra aims to build a reasoning foundation model that will serve as the core of AI agents and natural language processing, equipped with foundational capabilities such as advanced Japanese language understanding, logical reasoning, and instruction following. By fiscal 2028, Noetra plans to develop an omni-modal foundation model capable of seamlessly processing text, images, video and audio, with the goal of realizing AI that can understand and leverage diverse data across modalities. Looking ahead to fiscal 2030, Noetra will pursue the realization of “Real-world Native AI” capable of understanding physical properties such as

spatial awareness and designed for deployment in real-world environments. The models developed by Noetra will be made available externally and released in stages, factoring in R&D progress as well as real-world implementation.

Hironobu Tamba, President and CEO, Noetra Corp., commented as follows:

“For Japan to become a global leader in physical AI, it is essential to develop multimodal foundation models that will strengthen the nation's industrial competitiveness while helping address societal challenges and creating new value. Working together with our partners, Noetra will build these multimodal foundation models while striving to realize trusted AI infrastructure that supports the transformation of Japan's industries and society.”

Hiroki Totoki, President and CEO, Sony Group Corporation, commented as follows:

“The development of a multimodal foundation model in Japan is an important initiative that will strengthen Japan’s capabilities in the field of physical AI and accelerate its real-world deployment. We consider it highly meaningful for Sony to participate in this initiative as one of its core member companies. Going forward, we intend to leverage the knowledge and insights gained through the joint development of this foundation model not only in the area of entertainment, but also in semiconductors, which play a critical role in physical AI. By collaborating with a diverse range of partners, we aim to contribute to the creation of new value.”

Junichi Miyakawa, President & CEO, SoftBank Corp., commented as follows:

“In a society that coexists with AI, the data held by Japan's industries and businesses will be a key source of competitive strength. Creating an environment in which that data can be securely utilized within Japan is essential to strengthening the country's industrial competitiveness. We expect Noetra to play a central role in building that environment. As a core member, we will support Noetra's efforts by providing AI infrastructure and other resources, while working closely with Noetra and our fellow partners to drive the growth of Japan's industries and foster innovation.”

Takayuki Morita, President and CEO, NEC Corporation, commented as follows:

“NEC is one of the few companies in Japan capable of providing end-to-end AI development—from building foundation models entirely from scratch to system implementation and operation. Leveraging our expertise and technologies, NEC will contribute to the development of Noetra's domestically produced multimodal foundation models. Building upon this foundation, we will accelerate the development and real-world deployment of specialized AI models that power advanced services, including those for physical AI. As AI is increasingly utilized across every facet of society, developing unique Japanese models and expanding options through collaboration among various companies is critical, particularly from the perspective of economic security. By turning Japan's renowned know-how and high-quality physical data into value, NEC is helping to strengthen Japan's competitiveness in the AI-driven industrial revolution.”

Toshihiro Mibe, Director, President and Representative Executive Officer, Honda Motor Co., Ltd., commented as follows:

“Since its founding, Honda has embraced the philosophy of 'Technology for People,' continually taking on new challenges to expand the possibilities of people's lives and mobility. We also believe AI is a technology that can help address challenges people and

society are facing. Realizing AI's potential requires collaboration with a diverse range of companies and research institutions. By leveraging the technologies and expertise we have cultivated through decades of manufacturing, we aim to accelerate the real-world deployment of technologies born from our collaboration through Noetra and contribute to solving societal challenges and creating new value in fields, including mobility and robotics.”

Major participating companies (in alphabetical order)

Asahi Kasei Corporation
DAIICHI SANKYO COMPANY, LIMITED
DAIKIN INDUSTRIES, LTD.
DAIWA HOUSE INDUSTRY CO., LTD.
DMG MORI CO., LTD.
FANUC CORPORATION
Fujitsu Limited
Hitachi, Ltd.
Honda Motor Co., Ltd.
JERA Co., Inc.
JFE Steel Corporation
KAJIMA CORPORATION
Kawasaki Heavy Industries, Ltd.
KDDI Research, Inc.
Kobe Steel, Ltd.
Matsuo Institute, Inc.
Mitsubishi Electric Corporation
Mitsui Sumitomo Insurance Company, Limited
Mizuho Bank, Ltd.
MUFG Bank, Ltd.
Murata Manufacturing Co., Ltd.
NEC Corporation
NIPPON STEEL CORPORATION
Nippon Life Insurance Company
Okuma Corporation
Oki Electric Industry Co., Ltd.
OMRON Corporation
Preferred Networks, Inc.
Rakuten Group, Inc.
Sakana AI K.K.
SG HOLDINGS CO., LTD.
Sharp Corporation
Shimadzu Corporation
SoftBank Corp.
Sony Group Corporation
Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation
SUMITOMO LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY
Tokyo Electron Limited
TOPPAN Holdings Inc.

Toshiba Corporation
YASKAWA Electric Corporation
Yamazaki Mazak Corporation

- Product and service names in this press release are registered trademarks or trademarks of the respective companies.