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INTERVIEW

“Our mission aligns perfectly with the current trends in clean energy”

Interview with Aris Maroonian, Founder and CEO at *Neology*

[Neology](#), A Swiss start-up based in the canton of Vaud, is revolutionizing clean energy with its Ammonia Power Generator (APG). By integrating proprietary ammonia cracking technology and hydrogen purification, *Neology* enables the efficient and emission-free conversion of ammonia into hydrogen, unlocking new opportunities for decentralized power generation. Their innovative system provides a scalable, cost-effective solution for off-grid power and industrial applications. For this edition of our newsletter, we interviewed Mr. Aris Maroonian, founder and CEO of *Neology*.

Can you explain the core mission of *Neology* and how it aligns with the current trends in clean energy?

At *Neology*, we're pioneering innovative and sustainable hydrogen solutions to address the world's growing energy needs. Our focus is on developing advanced ammonia cracking technology, combined with hydrogen purification, to deliver accessible, zero-emission energy solutions. Our mission aligns perfectly with the current trends in clean energy, particularly the growing demand for sustainable and efficient energy storage and transportation solutions. The energy transition is accelerating, with global investment in clean energy reaching



Aris Maroonian, the founder and CEO of *Neology*
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new heights. However, there's still a significant gap between current investment levels and what's required to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Our goal is to contribute significantly to reducing carbon emissions and combating climate change by making hydrogen an accessible and viable energy source worldwide.

How do you differentiate yourself from other companies in the clean energy sector?

Many people underestimate the complexity of hydrogen as an energy carrier, but at *Neology*, we've embraced this challenge head-on. We tackle the complexity of hydrogen by utilizing ammonia as a carbon-free hydrogen carrier, which offers advantages in energy density and storage ease. Our vision includes developing the Ammonia Power Generator (APG) for clean, decentralized hydrogen production from ammonia, replacing

diesel generators in industries like construction, mining, and events that often rely on diesel generators. Secondly, our ammonia cracking technology facilitates the use of ammonia in industrial and transport applications. We differentiate ourselves with a holistic approach, addressing the entire value chain from storage to on-site conversion, leveraging existing ammonia infrastructure and a proprietary low-temperature catalyst for efficient cracking. By building on existing infrastructure for industrial ammonia handling, which makes it easier to deploy and scale compared to other hydrogen technologies.

Can you explain your Ammonia-to-Hydrogen Generation System (AHGS) and why it's important for energy transition? What are the main benefits of using ammonia to

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INTERVIEW



Neology's ammonia-powered zero-emission demonstrator vehicle

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transport hydrogen compared to other methods?

Our Ammonia Power Generator (APG) integrates an ammonia cracker and hydrogen purification system, enabling the on-site production of high-purity hydrogen on demand. The cracker converts ammonia into hydrogen and nitrogen through a process called **ammonia cracking**, which involves heating ammonia—typically between 600-900°C—and using catalysts to break it down. The purifier then ensures that the produced hydrogen meets the purity requirements for fuel cells and other industrial applications. By combining these technologies into a compact and efficient system, the APG enables decentralized hydrogen production, eliminating the need for complex and expensive hydrogen storage infrastructure. Ammonia is a practical hydrogen transportation solution due to its higher energy density, safer storage, and existing supply chain. Our ammonia cracker and purification system provide clean, cost-effective hydrogen by cracking ammonia on-site, without the need for high-pressure storage or complex distribution infrastructure. This makes hydrogen more accessible for industries looking to transition away from fossil fuels.

What role does Japan play in *Neology's* business strategy, especially considering its advancements in clean energy technology?

Japan plays a crucial role in our business strategy, particularly given its advancements in clean energy and commitment to carbon neutrality by 2050. Our experience with Japanese innovation events has been instrumental in shaping our approach to the market. Winning *Hack Osaka* a couple of years ago and being finalists in the 2025 edition of *SusHi Tech* were not only great achievements for us but also opened several doors in the Japanese market. Japan's strategic emphasis on hydrogen as a next-generation energy source is particularly relevant to *Neology's* work and we see great potential in contributing to Japan's renewable energy growth.

How do you perceive the Japanese market's response to ammonia as a clean energy solution?

I see Japan's response to ammonia as a clean energy solution as highly proactive and innovative. The Japanese market has shown a strong commitment to developing ammonia-based technologies, particularly in the power generation sector. Their approach is significantly more advanced compared to many other countries. Japan has set ambitious targets, aiming to increase hydrogen and ammonia consumption to 20 million tons per year by 2050. The dialogue about ammonia-based power generation is much more sophisticated in Japan. This level of commitment and progress provides valuable insights and opportunities for companies like ours. I would say that Japan's market response, which is characterized by strong governmental support and pioneering initiatives, makes

it an attractive and forward-thinking market for clean energy solutions.

How effective have JETRO's services been in helping you achieve your objectives in Japan?

JETRO's services have been incredibly helpful. JETRO's support was particularly valuable when we were preparing for *Hack Osaka*, which provided us with a significant platform to showcase our innovations and connect with potential partners. Additionally, JETRO introduced us to a Kumamoto-based company, allowing us to present our solutions directly to them. It has helped a lot, and I believe that there is still a lot of potential there. We are excited about the opportunities that JETRO continues to open for us in the Japanese market.

What are your long-term goals for *Neology*, particularly regarding expansion into international markets like Japan?

I see significant potential in Japan, despite the challenges. Currently, it's not easy, but we remain optimistic, and Japan definitely remains interesting for us. The Japanese market can be tough because they often want things done quickly, which isn't always possible. However, we're committed to navigating these challenges through strategic partnerships and collaborations. We understand that success in Japan often takes longer compared to other markets, but we believe the potential rewards are worth the effort.

Thank you for the interview!

If you have more questions, reach out to Mr. Maroonian [via email](#).

Ekiben Pop-up at Zurich Main Station

“Ekiben World Team” (EWT), a consortium consisting of three historic Japanese companies—Hanazen, Maneki Foods, and Matsuura Shoten—launched their *ekiben* (Japanese train station bentos) pop-up at Zurich’s main station during a pre-opening event on 5 February 2025. The initiative is supported by Japan’s Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries, as well as the Embassy of Japan in Switzerland.

The pre-opening event also included a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by representatives from Swiss Federal Railways (SBB-CFF-FFS), the Japanese ambassador, and several media outlets. The official sales period took place from 6 to 27 February 2025. Six varieties of *ekiben*, two unique bento types from each manufacturer, were offered, featuring specialties like chicken rice, beef rice, and shrimp tempura rice balls, with prices ranging from CHF 12 to CHF 22.5, reflecting Swiss market conditions. Each *ekiben* variety was limited to 30 portions per day. With the exception of rice, all ingredients used for the *ekiben* were sourced locally. The pop-up aimed to introduce Japanese *ekiben* culture—a hallmark of Japan’s railway experience—to Swiss consumers and marks the first step in EWT’s global expansion strategy, with the goal of exporting frozen *ekiben* worldwide by 2026. The



The *ekiben* pop-up by “Ekiben World Team” (EWT) at Zurich main station © JETRO Geneva

location of Zurich main station was strategically chosen due to its status as a major European railway hub with highly organized transfers. Although Hanazen has previously sold *ekiben* at Paris’ Gare de Lyon train station, the Zurich pop-up store marks the first collaborative project for the consortium. The vice chairman of EWT expressed to “Asahi Shimbun” that if such efforts gain traction abroad, they could have positive effects on inbound tourists visiting Japan.

Sources: [The Mainichi](#); [Asahi Shimbun](#); [JETRO](#); [Kyodo News](#)

動向

TREND

Results of the Federal Vote of 9 February 2025

A popular vote was held on 9 February 2025 in Switzerland. Votes were held on the “[Environmental Responsibility Initiative](#)”, which was ultimately rejected by an overwhelming majority of the voters.

The initiative launched by the Young Greens was rejected by 69.84%, with a voter turnout of 37.9%, which is below the average of 45%. The initiative’s objective was to guarantee that economic endeavors remained within acceptable resource consumption and pollution emission thresholds to safeguard natural re-

sources. To meet this set goal, “Greenpeace Switzerland” estimated that the country would need to reduce its per capita environmental footprint by more than 90%, encompassing areas such as CO2 emissions, biodiversity conservation, and water resource management.

The Federal Council and the parliament, along with the Swiss People’s Party, the Radical-Liberals, and the Center Party, opposed the initiative, warning of potential damage to the state’s finances.

They also raised concerns about businesses and jobs moving overseas, and the possibility of consumers facing higher prices. In contrast, the Greens and the Social Democratic Party, backed by a coalition of Swiss NGOs and a group of 83 Swiss scientists, supported the initiative. They argued that it is crucial for Switzerland to ensure economic growth that protects both people and the planet.

Sources: [admin.ch](#), [swissinfo](#)

動向

SITUATION

SoftBank and OpenAI Agree to Form Joint Venture in Japan

革新

INNOVATION

On 3 February 2025, [SoftBank Group](#) CEO Masayoshi Son and [OpenAI](#) CEO Sam Altman announced the formation of a joint venture named SB OpenAI Japan. This initiative aims to provide artificial intelligence services tailored for corporate clients in Japan.

SoftBank has agreed to invest \$3 billion annually to integrate OpenAI's technology across its operations and to support the marketing of AI solutions as enterprise offerings. SB OpenAI Japan will be co-owned by both companies and will focus on leveraging extensive data from client systems to deliver optimized management solutions. OpenAI based in San Francisco will supply the necessary technology and engineering assistance, while SoftBank will contribute sales personnel and engineers, along with insights into effectively selling these products within the Japanese market.

The collaboration is expected to facilitate the adoption and training of what is referred to as "Cristal intelligence", enhancing automation capabilities for large Japanese enterprises and potentially increasing their operational value. SoftBank has increasingly directed its focus towards investing in AI startups over recent years. The company continues to intensify its initiatives to establish AI infrastructure in Japan, recently announcing plans to build a data center for AI development in Osaka, alongside another facility in Hokkaido.

Son's support for OpenAI signifies his resurgence as a prominent investment player following a phase of retreat triggered by the declining value of SoftBank's technology portfolio and a series of notable missteps. The partnership also sheds light on the competitive landscape in AI

development, particularly considering emerging challenges from Chinese companies such as "DeepSeek". During their meeting with Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba on 3 February 2025, both Son and Altman discussed the implications of their collaboration for Japan's technological advancement.

Sources: [The Japan Times](#); [Reuters](#); [Kyodo News](#)

Agenda

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AGENDA

✓ EXPO 2025 in Osaka

Dates: 13 April – 13 October 2025

Theme: *Designing Future Society for Our Lives*

Find more information [here](#)

The official Swiss National Day at Expo 2025 is 22 April 2025. Find more information about the Swiss Pavilion [here](#)

JETRO is a government-related organization that works to promote mutual trade and investment between Japan and the rest of the world. Originally established in 1958 to promote Japanese exports abroad, JETRO's core focus in the 21st century has shifted toward promoting foreign direct investment into Japan and helping small to medium size Japanese firms maximize their global export potential.

The JETRO Switzerland Newsletter can also be viewed and/or downloaded online: <http://www.jetro.go.jp/switzerland/newsletter>

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