

**【NEWS RELEASE】**

April 2, 2025

Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group, Inc  
Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation  
TIS, Inc  
Ava Labs, Inc  
Fireblocks Pte. Ltd

Agreement on the Memorandum of Understanding to initiate joint discussions  
on the commercial use of stablecoins

Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group, Inc. (President & Group CEO: Toru Nakashima, hereinafter referred to as "SMBC Group"), Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (President & CEO: Akihiro Fukutome), TIS, Inc. (President & CEO: Yasushi Okamoto, hereinafter referred to as "TIS"), Ava Labs, Inc. (CEO: Emin Gün Sirer, hereinafter referred to as "Ava Labs"), and Fireblocks Pte. Ltd. (CEO: Michael Shaulov, hereinafter referred to as "Fireblocks") have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (hereinafter referred to as "this Agreement") to initiate joint discussions on the potential utilization of stablecoins for future commercialization.

**Summary of the Agreement**

SMBC Group, TIS, Ava Labs, and Fireblocks have formally agreed to commence joint discussions on the future commercialization and utilization of stablecoins (hereinafter referred to as "this Joint Discussion").

This Agreement will see SMBC, Fireblocks, Ava Labs, and TIS collaborate to develop a framework for stablecoin issuance and circulation, including exploring key technical, regulatory, and market infrastructure requirements both in Japan and further afield. This Joint Discussion will not only focus on pilot projects but will aim to concretely define use cases for ongoing business applications.

Additionally, the initiative will examine potential use cases that leverage the defining features of stablecoins, including as a settlement method for tokenized financial and real-world assets (RWAs), such as government and corporate bonds, as well as real estate.

**Background of this Agreement**

Stablecoins are a type of digital currency designed to be pegged to the value of fiat currencies such as the Japanese yen or US dollar. Compared to cryptocurrencies, stablecoins typically experience much lower price volatility, making them stable in value. They are expected to be useful in scenarios such as international remittances, corporate payments, and small-value, high-frequency transactions due to their cost-effectiveness and speed compared to traditional payment methods.

The tokenization of traditional financial assets and real-world assets (RWA) has grown rapidly, particularly in the U.S. and Europe, with stablecoins emerging as an important settlement tool for these digital assets and regulatory frameworks being developed in lockstep.

Japan's regulatory environment has also evolved to support stablecoin adoption. With the amended Payment Services Act taking effect in June 2023, stablecoins have been officially recognized as electronic payment

instruments, opening the door for financial institutions and businesses to explore their use for remittances and settlements. Several financial institutions and businesses are currently exploring and conducting pilot projects on the issuance and circulation of stablecoins.

This collaboration between SMBC Group and TIS, Ava Labs, and Fireblocks, which have been advancing initiatives in digital assets both domestically and internationally, is seen as an important step toward supporting the enhancement and efficiency of financial functions in Japan.

## **Company Overview**

### **1. Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group, Inc.**

Name: Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group, Inc.

Representative: President & Group CEO Toru Nakashima

Business Description: Management of banking subsidiaries and other companies that can be treated as subsidiaries under the stipulations of Japan's Banking Act as well as the performance of ancillary functions.

### **2. Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation**

Name: Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation

Representative: President & CEO Akihiro Fukutome

Business Description: Deposit, lending, exchange, and other ancillary banking operations.

### **3. TIS, Inc.**

Name: TIS, Inc.

Representative: President & CEO Yasushi Okamoto

Business Description: System integration and related services.

### **4. Ava Labs, Inc.**

Name: Ava Labs, Inc.

Representative: CEO Emin Gün Sirer

Business Description: Development of cutting-edge tools for developers and the community utilizing the Avalanche blockchain, and businesses such as building scalable decentralized applications and custom blockchains for companies through the provision of AvaCloud

### **5. Fireblocks Pte. Ltd.**

Name: Fireblocks Pte. Ltd.

Representative: CEO Michael Shaulov

Business Description: Digital asset infrastructure and custody technology provider

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