

Space BD Completes Basic Land Survival Training for Japanese Astronaut Candidates



Left: Training for carrying a wounded person in wilderness (Ms. Yoneda)
Right: Reading maps in wilderness (Mr. Suwa) (©JAXA/Space BD)

Space BD, a leading Japanese space startup, has completed the basic land survival training phase for Japanese astronaut candidates selected by the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA). The training program was designed to prepare candidates for future missions, focusing on acquiring essential survival skills needed in the event of an emergency landing under various climate and weather conditions.

The initial phase of basic land survival training began in April 2024 with the Scout Association of Japan. The training included comprehensive practical lectures and hands-on training of fundamental wilderness survival skills. Candidates learned essential techniques including fire starting and maintenance, land navigation with compasses and maps, knife handling, safe water identification, and emergency signaling methods using available materials, along with other crucial land survival skills.

During the practical training sessions, candidates demonstrated their skills by constructing a signal tower over 4 meters tall using logs and ropes. This exercise required them to navigate through wilderness using compasses and maps to locate and gather additional materials, helping develop critical leadership, teamwork, and conflict management skills.

The program also incorporated innovative leadership and team-building exercises using theatrical methods. These workshops were conducted under the guidance of Associate Professor Kunihiro Tano from Senszoku Gakuen College of Music, a theater director and workshop designer, and Professor Tatsuo Kitagawa, affiliate professor at Seisa University's Faculty of Symbiotic Sciences. The workshops employed theatrical techniques to simulate unexpected situations and address communication challenges, aiming to develop participants' non-cognitive skills required for group collaboration.

The second phase took place in July 2024, operated by the JGSDF Itazuma Camp 34th Infantry Regiment. This advanced land survival training focused on skills under more demanding conditions. The astronaut candidates led teams including Space BD personnel through navigation exercises

with survival gear, field shelter operations, and medical evacuation scenarios. Each candidate served as squad leader during multiple mission scenarios.

Astronaut Candidate Osamu Suwa reflected on the training, saying, "The wilderness navigation training with maps and compasses helped me develop diverse leadership approaches. I want to always be conscious of my position within the group and consider how to contribute most effectively." Astronaut Candidate Ayu Yoneda noted, "The wilderness survival scenarios demonstrated how teamwork, technical skills, and resource management directly impact mission success. I recognized the importance of clarifying each person's desires and their underlying thoughts when seeking consensus."

Both astronaut candidates completed their basic training and received astronaut certification on October 21, 2024.

■ About Space BD

Space BD is a one-stop service provider of various solutions to foster commercial utilization of space. Ranging from launch of small satellites with commercial launchers as well as via the International Space Station, to supporting pharmaceutical research with protein crystallization in microgravity, Space Bd can support everything from business plan formulation and market research to hands-on technical operations. As of Oct 2024, Space BD has supported over 80 satellite projects from and over 450 related missions.

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