



Autonomous driving system developed by South Korea's A2Z adopted for the first time in a Japanese automated taxi pilot project in Naruto, Tokushima

An autonomous driving system developed by Autonomous A2Z Co., Ltd. ("A2Z"), a partner company of Kanematsu Corporation ("Kanematsu"), has been adopted in an automated taxi pilot project starting on February 6 in Naruto City, Tokushima Prefecture. In August 2025, Kanematsu and A2Z, the South Korea's autonomous driving technology leader, signed a memorandum of understanding for the joint deployment of the technology in the Japanese and global markets. This is the first pilot project to deploy A2Z's technology in public transport in Japan. (Please see our [press release](#).)



In-vehicle autonomous driving hardware: tablet terminal (left) and green buttons (bottom)

Led by NEC Corporation ("NEC"), DennoKotsu Inc. ("DennoKotsu"), and the Tokushima Prefectural Government, the pilot project will provide automated taxi services on trial routes in Naruto City, Tokushima Prefecture and other areas for an approximately two-month period from Friday, February 6 to Tuesday, March 31, 2026. Kanematsu and A2Z will be responsible for preparing the necessary autonomous driving technology and vehicles, as well as technical verification.

By leveraging an integrated system that combines NEC's autonomous driving service platform, DennoKotsu's ride-hailing system "DS," and A2Z's autonomous driving control system, the

project allows automated taxi services to be provided seamlessly without significantly altering existing taxi operations. As part of efforts toward the future deployment of Level 4 autonomy (fully autonomous driving under specific conditions) in Tokushima Prefecture, the pilot project will be operated at Level 2 autonomy, with a driver on board at all times to intervene manually if necessary.

Kanematsu and A2Z consider this project as a model case for evaluating the costs and operational burdens associated with feasible implementation by regional taxi operators, as well as for developing a viable business model. In the context of regional transport infrastructure, we will also be considering the application of autonomous driving technology in buses and other public transport services. In particular, against the backdrop of increasingly severe driver shortages and growing challenges in securing mobility in aging communities, we seek to contribute to the implementation of safe and sustainable next-generation mobility services across society through this pilot project.

◆ Overview of the autonomous driving vehicles

The project will use Hyundai IONIQ5 vehicles equipped with A2Z’s autonomous driving system. Aiming to develop a dedicated autonomous driving platform for the global market, A2Z has conducted field trials over a cumulative distance of approximately 900,000 km across 14 out of 17 regions in South Korea where autonomous driving is allowed (as of December 2025). In addition to ranking 7th in the 2025 Automated Driving Systems Leaderboard compiled by U.S.-based consulting firm Guidehouse Inc, A2Z has expanded its business by conducting field trials and acquiring certification in countries such as Singapore and the United Arab Emirates.



Hyundai IONIQ5 to be used in the pilot project

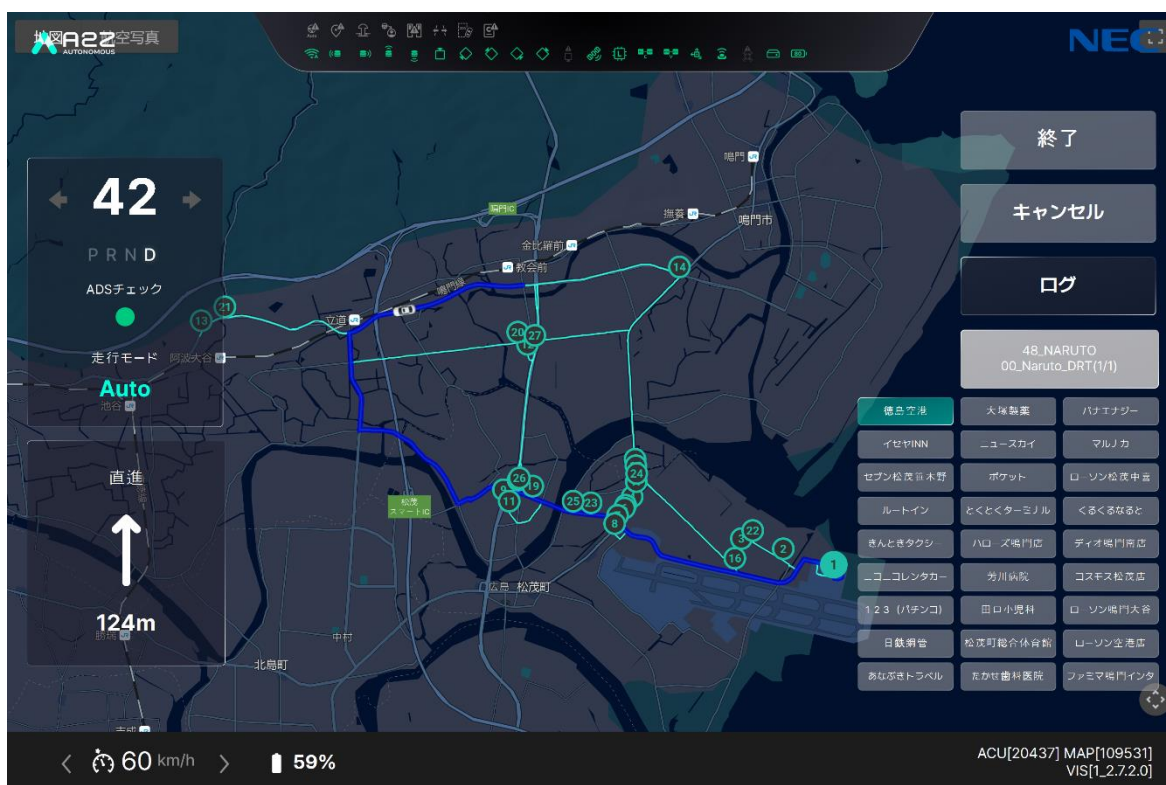
Item	Vehicle information
Vehicle manufacturer	Hyundai
Vehicle	IONIQ5
Top speed	In compliance with the speed limits prescribed by the Government Order on Road Design Standards (during autonomous driving)

◆ Overview of the pilot project

Item	Details
Period	From Friday, February 6, 2026 to Tuesday, March 31, 2026 ^{*1}
Fare	Free of charge
Operator	Tabisapoto Co., Ltd. (Kintoki Taxi)
Operation area	Western area of Naruto City, Tokushima Prefecture
Boarding/alighting points	27 locations in total
Operation method	Semi-on-demand
Service hours	8:00–19:00 ^{*2}

*1 : Service will not operate on Saturdays, Sundays, public holidays, and on February 19 and 20.

*2 : The ride-hailing service will be available until 6:45 p.m.



Dedicated in-vehicle monitor showing travel routes

A2Z Company Profile

Name	Autonomous A2Z Co., Ltd.
Establishment	July 18, 2018
Representative	Ji-Hyeong Han
Address	Silseup-dong, 50, Gamasil-gil, Hayang-eup, Gyeongsan-si, Gyeongsangbuk-do, Republic of Korea
Business	Research, development, and sale of autonomous driving technology and autonomous vehicles
URL	https://autoa2z.ai/

【Contact】

PR Section, Kanematsu Corporation Tel: +81-3-6747-5000

<https://www.kanematsu.co.jp/en/inquiry/>