

Japan mulls high-tech economic stimulus

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An teacher instructs a student in a Tokyo computer lab. Japan may invest two billion dollars or more in new information and communication systems, including linking the nation's schools with fibreoptic networks, under an economic stimulus package with the aim of creating 400,000 jobs by 2011.

Japan may invest two billion dollars or more in new information and communication systems under an economic stimulus package with the aim of creating 400,000 jobs by 2011, an official said Tuesday.

Under the blueprint, the government would build vast fibreoptic networks to supply broadband to entire communities, and subsidise new technologies such as wireless communication networks for cars, the official said.

The three-year plan, if approved, could be financed under a new economic [stimulus package](#) that Prime Minister Taro Aso announced last

week, said Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications official Yoshinori Shibayama.

Under the proposal, expected to be worth at least 200 billion yen (two billion dollars), [Japan](#) could also link many of the nation's schools, hospitals and other public institutions with fibreoptic networks, said Shibayama.

"The government wants to support that kind of new technology," he told AFP.

The ministry predicts the new investments could create 300,000 to 400,000 [new jobs](#) across a broad range of industries by 2011, he said.

"For example, by building a ubiquitous communication system we could provide services such as remote medical care or remote education," Shibayama said.

Aso announced last week plans for a third stimulus package to revive Asia's largest economy, which is heading for its worst [recession](#) since World War II.

He did not say how much the latest package would be worth but local media estimated it could be as much as 20 trillion yen (203 billion dollars).

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