

## S&T Highlights

### April 2010

#### NSF Tokyo Regional Office

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1. **[Review of 151 Programs]** The Government Revitalization Unit (GRU) reviewed 151 programs of 47 Independent Administrative Organizations on April 23<sup>rd</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>, 2010. This was the first half of the spring review (the second-half in late May 2010) that followed the review in November 2009. The objective is to cut government waste and explore possible ways to improve efficiency. Among the 47 organizations reviewed were science agencies such as OIST (Okinawa Institute of S&T), JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency), JSPS (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science), JST (Japan Science and Technology Agency), NEDO (New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization), RIKEN, NIMS (National Institute of Materials Science), and JAXA (Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency). The outcome of the review will form the basis of recommendations to the Government to simplify the overall administrative systems. NSF Tokyo Regional Office will compile a report on the S&T-related review. (Summary of an article in GRU HP)



GRU Review  
Source: Yomiuri Online

2. **[100% Cultured Eels]** The Fisheries Research Agency (FRA) has at last succeeded in culturing eels from eel eggs after 40 years of effort. Although eels are known to spawn in the mid-Pacific, the exact location is still unknown. The natural diet of elvers (young eels) remains a mystery. So, previous eel-farming attempts started with elvers caught in the rivers and lakes in Japan after their long journey from where they spawned. FRA has now made it possible for the eel to undergo the entire life cycle and reproduce in culture. This is timely since the decreasing catch of elvers is moving national authorities worldwide toward regulating elvers harvest. (Summary translation of an article in Nihon Keizai Newspaper – 4/9/10)

**3. [Support for Cloud]** The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications (MIC) plans to designate, in spring of 2011, a prefecture in northern Japan to house a large-scale data center, using cloud computing technologies. Without a data center, half of the Japanese Internet traffic currently relies on overseas data centers, costing ¥761.2 billion (\$7.6 billion) per year. Establishing a data center in Japan could save this enormous expenditure and also protect classified government documents. When a prefecture is designated by the government as a special prefecture to carry out a special mission, the prefecture will receive as much as ¥ 50 billion (\$500 million) from MIC. MIC has selected a northern location as the facilities can be kept at a low temperature at a relatively low cost. (Summary translation of an article in Nihon Keizai Newspaper – 4/9/10)

**4. [Citation Frequency]** Thomson Reuters, a US-based company that provides statistical information in economics and science fields, made public the ranking of research institutions based on the paper literature citation in major scientific journals from 1999 through 2009. Viewed by the institution, the University of Tokyo ranks top in Japan and 11<sup>th</sup> in the world. Viewed by field, Osaka University ranks the 5<sup>th</sup> in immunology, and the University of Tokyo the 5<sup>th</sup> in pharmacology/toxicology. This is the first time that a Japanese university is ranked within the top five in a specific field. (Summary translation of an article in Nihon Keizai Newspaper – 4/14/10)



Dr. Vitousek & Dr. Iwasaki  
Source: Japan Prize HP

**5. [Japan Prize]** Dr. Peter Vitousek, Professor of Biology, Stanford University, and Dr. Shun-ichi Iwasaki, Director of Tohoku Institute of Technology, received the 2010 Japan Prize at a ceremony held in the presence of the Emperor and the Empress in Tokyo on April 21. Dr. Vitousek was recognized for his contribution to solving global environmental issues through his analysis of nitrogen and other substances' cycles; and Dr. Iwasaki for the breakthrough HDD (hard disk drive) technology that uses a perpendicular magnetic recording method. The Japan Prize started in 1985 with Japanese government support and the Prize is annually awarded to honor the achievements of people throughout the world who have contributed to the progress of S&T and advancement of world peace and prosperity. A laureate

receives a certificate, a medal, and a cash award of ¥50 million (\$500,000). (Summary of an article on Japan Prize HP)

**6. [HFSP Nakasone Award]** The HFSP (Human Frontier Science Program) Nakasone Award will be conferred to Dr. Karl Deisseroth of Stanford University for his pioneering work on the development and application of optogenetics techniques for the study of the relationship between neural circuits and behavior. The HFSP Nakasone Award was established to honor scientists who have made key breakthroughs at the frontier of life sciences. It recognizes the vision of former Prime Minister Nakasone of Japan in creating the Human Frontier Science Program. Dr. Deisseroth will receive the award that includes \$10,000 in cash at the annual meeting of HFSP awardees to be held in Kerala, India in November 2010. (Summary of an article in HFSP HP)

## Grants and Announcements

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- MEXT (Ministry of Education, S&T) has selected 36 Super Science High Schools (SSH) for JFY2010 from 71 applications. The 5-year grants enable the high schools to develop their own unique curriculum on science education. The decision this time makes a total number of SSH 125. MEXT plans to increase the number to 200 in 2014. The budget for SSH for JFY2010 is ¥2 billion (\$20 million).
- JST (Japan S&T Agency) has selected 17 projects to be supported under its Science Diplomacy program [http://www.ist.go.jp/pr/info/info730/index\\_e.html](http://www.ist.go.jp/pr/info/info730/index_e.html) from 109 applications. It is a 3-5 year program to be carried out in cooperation with the Official Development Aid (ODA). The counterparts for the 17 projects are researchers located in Asia and Africa, and Afghanistan, Panama, and Mexico. JST provides research fund of ¥3.8 million (\$38,000) per year per project for 3-5 years. Other costs incurred from non-research activities (about ¥180 million (\$18 million)) are born from ODA.

- JSPS (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science) solicits proposals (with deadline between May 18 and 20, 2010) for 'Funding Program for Next-Generation World-Leading Researchers.' Male researchers under 45 years of age and women researchers of any age whose research can make contributions to Green Innovation and Life Innovation are eligible to apply. An awardee will receive up to ¥200 million (\$2 million) total for four years (JFY2010-JFY 2013).
  
- JSPS solicits proposals (with deadline between May 12 and 14, 2010) for Restart Postdoctoral Fellowship (RPD). Ph.D. holders who had to stop research activities for more than 3 months within the past 5 years due to child birth and/or child care responsibilities. 40 successful applicants will receive ¥362,000 (\$3,620) per month for three years, and be entitled to apply for Grants-in-Aid to continue research.
  
- RIKEN's Foreign Postdoctoral Researcher (FPR) program offers young foreign researchers with opportunities to pursue research under RIKEN laboratory heads in physics, chemistry, biology, medicine, engineering and any other fields being conducted at RIKEN. Details are on: <http://www.riken.jp/fpr/>

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