

S&T Articles from Japan

October 2009

NSF Tokyo Regional Office

1. **[S&T Budget Allocation Guidelines]**
2. **[Evaluation of S&T Budget Request]**
3. **[S&T Strategy Headquarters]**
4. **[\$2.7 Billion to \$1.5 Billion]**
5. **[\$0.3 Billion to \$0.076 Billion]**
6. **[More Tuition Waivers]**
7. **[*Thunnus orientalis* Genome Sequencing]**
8. **[Six Million to Miraikan]**
9. **[New Funding Opportunities and Awards from MEXT (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology), JSPS (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science), JST (Japan Science and Technology Agency), and NEDO (New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization)]**

1. **[S&T Budget Allocation Guidelines]** The Hatoyama government announced on October 8, 2009 the new S&T-related budget allocation guidelines for JFY2010 (April 2010-March 2011), replacing the S&T-related budget allocation guidelines issued in June 2009 by the previous government. The new guidelines place priorities on: (1) promotion of “green innovation” to support the national goal pledged by Mr. Hatoyama at the United Nations Climate Change Summit in September 2009 that Japan will decrease the greenhouse gas emission by 25 percent by 2020 from the base year 1990; (2) realization of the healthy and long-life society; (3) regional S&T promotion; (4) practical application of S&T investment results; (5) support to innovative technologies; and (6) promotion of science diplomacy. The guidelines recognize the importance of basic research as well as S&T education at all levels. (Summary translation of the announcement on the Cabinet Office WEB – 10/9/09)

2. **[Evaluation of S&T Budget Request]** CSTP (Council for S&T Policy) will assess the JFY2010 S&T-related budget requests submitted by the Japanese ministries and agencies by the deadline of October 15, 2009, in the same way as in the previous years, except that a priority will be given to activities in support of the Green Innovation initiative. CSTP will evaluate the newly proposed projects with a budget of more than ¥100 million (~\$1 million) and rank-order them as S, A, B, and C. The continuing projects with a budget of more than

¥1 billion (~\$10 million) will be categorized into the three priority groups. [NSF Tokyo Office will report the evaluation results when it is made public in December.] (Summary translation of the announcement on the Cabinet Office WEB-10/23/09))

3. [S&T Strategy Headquarters] The Japanese Government will newly establish the 'S&T Strategy Headquarters' (unofficial translation of a provisional name) in JFY2010 (April 2010-March 2011), which will be totally responsible for all S&T-related activities including establishing R&D strategies and assessing the outcomes. The HQs will replace the Council for S&T Policy (CSTP) that was established in 2001 chaired by the Prime Minister and consisting of six ministers and eight appointed members. Details of the new HQs, including its membership, are to be determined. The bill for revising the current S&T policy-making process will be submitted to a Diet session in 2010. (Summary translation of an article in Nihon Keizai Newspaper – 10/26/09)

4. [\$2.7 Billion to \$1.5 Billion] Mr. Naoto Kan, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of State for National Policy has reduced the 5-year ¥270 billion (~\$2.7 billion) FIRST (Funding Program for World-leading Innovative R&D on S&T) fund established as part of the Economic Stimulus Package-2009 under the previous government, to ¥150 billion (~\$1.5 billion). Different from the original plan, ¥50 billion (~\$0.5 Billion) of the fund will launch a new program that supports young researchers in the 20's-40's and women researchers. Details of the program are still being worked out. The remaining ¥100 billion (~\$1 billion) will be provided over a 5-year period to the 30 FIRST grantees who had already been selected in early September under the previous government and have been waiting for the new government's decision on the program. While the original announcement of the FIRST promised a grant of up to ¥15 billion (~\$150 million) per project over a five-year period, the new amount will be about ¥3 billion (~\$30 million) per project over a five-year period. (Summary translation of an article in Nihon Keizai Newspaper – 10/19/09)

5. [\$0.3 Billion to \$0.076 Billion] JSPS (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science) launched a 5-year ¥30 billion (~\$0.3 billion) program in mid-August 2009 for sending young Japanese researchers abroad (see: <http://www.nsftokyo.org/rm09-05.pdf>) as part of the Economic Stimulus Package-2009 under the previous government. One and a half month later, the new government has decreased the value of the program to ¥7.6 billion (~\$0.076 billion). This has shortened the period of the program from five years to just one year. The program has already solicited proposals only in JFY2009. (Summary translation of JSPS WEB article)

6. **[More Tuition Waivers]** MEXT (Ministry of Education, S&T) plans to expand the number of students who receive the tuition waiver (undergraduate and graduate) both at national and private universities from the present 105,000 to 135,000. Currently, only 10 percent of the national university undergraduate students and less than one percent of those at private universities are exempt from paying tuition. MEXT includes the tuition waiver for 80,000 national and 55,000 private university students (both graduate and undergraduate) in the JFY2010 budget request. (Summary translation of an article in Nihon Keizai Newspaper – 10/15/09)

7. **[*Thunnus orientalis* Genome Sequencing]** The Japanese Fisheries and Research Agency will complete the sequencing of the *Thunnus orientalis* (tuna group) genome that has 24 chromosomes with 800 million base pairs by the end of December 2009. The Agency has already completed 60 percent of the sequencing, using the next-generation high-speed sequencers at Tokyo and Kyushu Universities. (Summary translation of an article in Nihon Keizai Newspaper – 10/2/09)

8. **[Six Million to Miraikan]** The National Museum of Emerging Science and Innovation (nicknamed 'Miraikan') received the 6 millionth visitor, a high school student from the Kagawa Prefecture, on October 22, 2009, eight years after its opening in July 2001. The student received a framed certificate from Dr. Mamoru Mori, Director of the Museum. (Summary translation of an article in Nihon Keizai Newspaper – 10/22/09)

9. **[New Funding Opportunities and Awards from MEXT (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology), JSPS (Japan Society for the Promotion of Science), JST (Japan Science and Technology Agency), and NEDO (New Energy and Industrial Technology Development Organization)]**

- JST solicits applications (deadline November 6, 2009) for the first round of **the Strategic Innovation Creation (S-Innovation) program** under four themes: (1) establishment of medical industries using iPS (induced pluripotent stem) cells; (2) development of new electronic technologies based on organic materials; (3) development of advanced information communication technologies by photonics polymer; and (4) creation of advanced energy/electronics industries based on superconductivity. Five projects will be selected under each theme, with each award receiving a total of ¥100 million (~\$1 million) per year for up to 10 years. The four themes were derived from the workshops held to report

the research results of JST's mission-oriented basic research programs: ERATO, CREST, and PRESTO. The S-Innovation program was launched in JFY2009, and consists of Stage I (Basic/applied research; 2-3 years), II (Further research on element technologies; 3-4 years), and III (Development; 2-3 years). The Stage III requires matching funds from industries.

- JSPS launched a new '**JSPS BRIDGE Fellowship**' program. The program invites alumni of any JSPS fellowship programs to spend 14-60 days in Japan during the period from December 2009 through March 2010. The JSPS alumni associations established in 11 countries and regions: Germany, France, U.K., U.S., Sweden, India, Egypt, East Africa (Kenya), Korea, Bangladesh, and Finland receive applications from the alumni members in the relevant countries/regions, coordinate with the country/region's JSPS offices, and make nominations to JSPS. This is the first year of the fellowship and about 20 fellowships will be awarded. A selected researcher will receive a round trip air ticket, a daily allowance of ¥15,000, a domestic travel allowance of ¥150,000, and the overseas accident and health insurance coverage. JSPS plans to hold this competition annually and hopes to expand it gradually. The URL for the fellowship program is at: http://www.jsps.go.jp/english/e-plaza/21_invitation.html.