

# NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

## TOKYO REGIONAL OFFICE

June 13, 2008

---

*The National Science Foundation's Tokyo Regional Office periodically reports on developments in Japan that are related to the Foundation's mission. It also provides occasional reports on developments in other East Asian countries.*

*Tokyo Office Report Memoranda are intended to provide information for the use of NSF program officers and policy makers; they are not statements of NSF policy.*

---

### Report Memorandum #08-06

#### Japan's New Law to Strengthen Its R&D

*This report, prepared by Kazuko Shinohara ([kshinoha@nsf.gov](mailto:kshinoha@nsf.gov)) of NSF Tokyo Regional Office, is to brief on Japan's new law to strengthen its R&D.*

"Law on Strengthening and Efficiently Promoting Japan's R&D through the R&D System Reform" passed the 169<sup>th</sup> Diet session on June 5, 2008. Its purpose is to strengthen Japan's international R&D competitiveness to overcome the increasing international competition and the rapidly decreasing birth rate in Japan.

The pillars of the Law are: (1) R&D personnel training; (2) More flexibility in managing government R&D funds; and (3) Technology transfer. Notable points are; promotion of both domestic and international exchange of researchers, increased participation of young and women researchers, job security for productive researchers, expansion of government competitive research funds, simplification of the presently complicated funding systems, improvement in financial accounting of government R&D funds, prevention of misuse of government funds, and more industry-university joint research.

Viewed historically, the law has its origin in a report entitled “To Strengthen Japan’s R&D” that was drafted in November 2007 by the Liberal Democratic Party’s (LDP) Committee for Establishing Science and Technology-oriented Nation (Chair: Mr. Kenji Kosaka, LDP member and former MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology) Minister). The report was submitted as a proposed law in May 2008, which passed the House of Representatives on May 30, and the House of Councilors on June 5, 2008, without extensive debate.

The Law clarifies responsibilities of the R&D implementing organizations and affirms the critical importance of improving Japan’s R&D system. Whereas the major items in the Law are already described in Japan’s Third Science and Technology Basic Plan (<http://www8.cao.go.jp/cstp/english/basic/index.html#third>) and the Strategy for Technological Innovation (<http://www.nsftokyo.org/rm08-05.pdf>), this legislation will make it easier to implement administrative actions for reforming Japan’s R&D system. NSF Tokyo Regional Office will follow up on the effect of the Law.

**APPENDIX:**  
**Law on Strengthening and Efficiently Promoting Japan's R&D  
through the R&D System Reform**

**Table of Contents**

Chapter 1: General rules

Chapter 2: Strengthening the infrastructure for the promotion of R&D

2-1 Improvement of education standard

2-2 Broadening participation of young researchers

2-3 Promotion of mobility of R&D personnel

2-4 Promotion of international people exchanges

2-5 Policy on career opportunities for R&D personnel

Chapter 3: Promotion of open competition for R&D funds

Chapter 4: Efficient management of Government R&D investment

4-1 Flexible distribution of R&D resources

4-2 Strengthening of R&D capacities at R&D corporations and universities

4-3 Evaluation of R&D activities

Chapter 5: Technology transfer

5-1 Joint use of R&D facilities

5-2 Removal of barriers for commercializing R&D results

Chapter 6: Studies on overseas and domestic trends on the R&D system reform

Chapter 7: Ministers' authority to command R&D organizations to act on time-sensitive issues