

Host Institution's Commitment

Date 5/28/2007

To MEXT

Name of host institution Tohoku university
Name and title of head of host institution
Akihisa Inoue, President

Signature

I confirm that the measures listed below will be taken faithfully if "(project title)" is adopted under the World Premier International Research Center (WPI) Initiative.

<Provision in host institution's mid-to-long-term plan >

Tohoku University will clearly stipulate the advance of research and organizational development based on this program as a priority in its interim plan.

Specifically, the relevant section of Tohoku University's interim plan – 2 Measures to Achieve Research Goals (1) Measures to Achieve Goals Concerning Research Levels and Research Results, Fields to be Addressed by the University on a Priority Basis – presently reads "Advance organizational development and promote research in basic research fields for which we have been recognized by the 21st Century COE Program and others on the basis of our performance and proposals for organizational restructuring." If the university is selected for this program, this passage will be amended to read "Advance organizational development and promote research in basic research fields for which we have been recognized by the World Premier International Research Center (WPI) Initiative, the 21st Century COE Program and others on the basis of our performance and proposals for organizational restructuring." and the university will give priority support to advancing research and organizational development based on this program.

The Tohoku University action plan "Inoue Plan 2007" released in April 2007 already clearly stipulates that the university will apply for the World Premier International Research Center (WPI) Initiative, and providing support once the university is selected for this program is already a common understanding throughout the university.

Tohoku University established the International Advanced Research and Education Organization in April, 2007, comprising the Institute for International Advanced Interdisciplinary Research and the Educational Organization. We have fully realized that interdisciplinary research and fusion of existing fields are very much important for creating a new discipline in science. It is expected that in future reorganization or unification between the WPI center and the existing institutes / organizations will be taken place, leading to construction of a World Premier Research Center on the new discipline.

<Concrete Measures>

(1) How it will support the center's need to secure resources that match or exceed the project grant through such means as competitive grants obtained by researchers participating in the project, in-kind contributions and other forms of assistance by the host institution (including partial payment of salaries, provision of research space), and/or external donations.

The host institution will provide the necessary space in accordance with the advance of the research and the expansion of the center's research organization by operating a new core facility for the center's activities so it can be used from around April 2008 as a target date, and research space will also be secured within the host institution's existing facilities. Additionally, the host institution will basically pay the personnel expenses of all researchers who were affiliated with the host institution prior to the formation of the center. Beyond that, the host institution will expend enough money each year on such items as research expenses and other researcher support, the installation of apparatus required for research at the center, the refurbishing of research space, and management, administration and other items required for the smooth execution of the center's research. Aside from that, the host institution will provide the researchers with priority access to the Technology Center for Research and Education Activities' high-performance electron microscopes and other research equipment and assistance so that the center can implement global top-level research.

In addition to this support from the host institution, the researchers who will participate in the center obtained approximately 11000000 US \$ in outside funds in FY 2006 and they are projected to obtain an equal or greater amount of research funds once they are at the center. Thus overall the host institution fully expects to secure an amount of resources for the center that is equal or greater than the amount of support provided by this program.

(2) How it will institute a system under which the center's director is able to make substantive personnel and budget allocation decisions necessary to implementing the center project – a system, which in part, allows the center director autonomy in making decisions regarding the center's operation.

To secure the independence of the center administration, the host institution will limit its authority to extremely important items such as the appointment and dismissal of the Center Director, and leave all other personnel, budget execution and other items effectively under the discretion of the Center Director.

For personnel matters, the host institution will only retain authority over the appointment and dismissal of the Center Director, and have all other personnel items within the center including the employment of lead researchers determined by the Center Director.

The budget allotted to the center (personnel expenses and non-personnel expenses) will be turned over in its entirety for free execution at the judgment of the Center Director, and it will be possible to carry over funds allocated for budget items that are not implemented by the end of the fiscal year to the subsequent fiscal year.

(3) The support it will provide to the center director in coordinating with other departments within the host institution when recruiting researchers for the center, while giving reasonable regard to the educational and research activities of those departments.

In applying for this program, Tohoku University established a "Council of Department Heads Concerned with the World Premier International Research Center (WPI) Initiative" as a coordinating committee within the university to assemble researchers from within the host institution, and this council has fully completed the coordination within the host institution.

After Tohoku University is selected for this program, the Council of Department Heads Concerned with the World Premier International Research Center (WPI) Initiative will continue to actively support the Center Director, meeting at his request and as otherwise needed to secure the cooperation of the related departments for the greater vitality of the center research activities.

(4) It's flexibility in applying, revising, or supplementing the host institution's internal systems as needed for the center to effectively implement new management methods (e.g. English-language environment, merit-based pay, top-down decision making) unfettered by conventional modes of

operation.

We plan to establish an international advisory board, including Nobel Prize recipients as members, which will report directly to the Center Director to support top-down type decision making by the Center Director. To these ends, the president of the host institution will make the necessary requests for cooperation from Nobel laureates. In addition, an environment will be established, including the use of Internet technologies, to facilitate swift consensus building and organic linkages between the Center Director and the international advisory board, and. Also, so that work at the center can be conducted smoothly in English, we will assign staff with superior English skills, in addition to expertise in such fields as accounting, personnel and research assistance, as administrative staff on a priority basis.

To introduce a compensation system that reflects researchers' abilities, we will urgently examine the introduction of new systems including a "Fellow Professor" (tentative name) system aiming at balance with the salaries paid by universities in the Tokyo area for professors playing leading roles in the research, as well as a system for preparations payments or contract conclusion payments when absolutely necessary for the invitation of Nobel Prize class researchers, etc.

Tohoku University's "University Professor System" will also be actively used to invite the world's cutting-edge researchers to the center.

A standing task team will also be established with the office of the President taking the lead of it for rapid examinations and responses in cases when the Center Director requests the flexible administration, revision, improvement or adjustment of the host institution's systems, and the host institution will otherwise prepare an environment for the smooth conduct of top management by the Center Director.

(5) Its accommodation of the center's infrastructural requirements (for facilities, e.g. laboratory space, equipment, land, etc.).

The host institution will operate a new core facility (building) for the center's activities so it can be used from around April 2008 as a target date. Research space will also be secured within the host institution's existing facilities. To secure research space in accordance with the advance of the research and the expansion of the center's research organization, the center will be given priority use of joint-use space at the university or campus level, and the Facilities Preparation and Administration Committee will deliberate all items of concern regarding the use of research space and other facilities and accommodate the center's needs.

(6) Other types of assistance it will provide to give maximum support to the center in achieving its concepts and objectives and becoming a world premier international research center in both name and deed.

The Tohoku University action plan "Inoue Plan 2007 (Toward Becoming a World Leading University)" released in April 2007 already clearly stipulates that the university will apply for the World Premier International Research Center (WPI) Initiative as a measure for strengthening Tohoku University's research foundations as a research-centered university.

Moreover, based on the results of the 21st Century COE Program, Tohoku University established the International Advanced Research and Education Organization (completed April 2007) comprising the Institute for International Advanced Research and Education (established April 2006), which supports graduate students pursuing interdisciplinary fields, and the Institute for International Advanced Interdisciplinary Research (established April 2007), which promotes interdisciplinary research by young researchers. The global COE Program at the University is advancing its activities in coordination with this Organization, and those activities will be smoothly transferred to this Organization when the COE Program is finished.

Tohoku University intends to provide the maximum support to the center as a special research zone within the host organization, arrange organic relations with the International Advanced Research and Education Organization, making them into vehicles for education and research and help us contribute, as one of the world's leading universities, to the development of our society.