

## 2. Goal setting, action plans, and evaluation systems

### (1) Trends and issues

Most Japanese universities are implementing a variety of internationalization programs and international activities. But how often are these activities grounded in the founding spirit and institutional midterm goals and plans of the university concerned? Does the university have a clear philosophy and scheme to guide implementation of their programs and activities? According to a survey of internationalization in all four-year universities conducted by Yokota et al. (2006)<sup>1)</sup>, the proportion of respondent universities that professed a clear vision or mission for internationalization was as low as one fifth (20.1%). More specifically, universities with a clear vision/mission accounted for 40.6% among all national universities, but only 14.6% among public universities and 16.0% among private universities (Figure III-2-1-a).

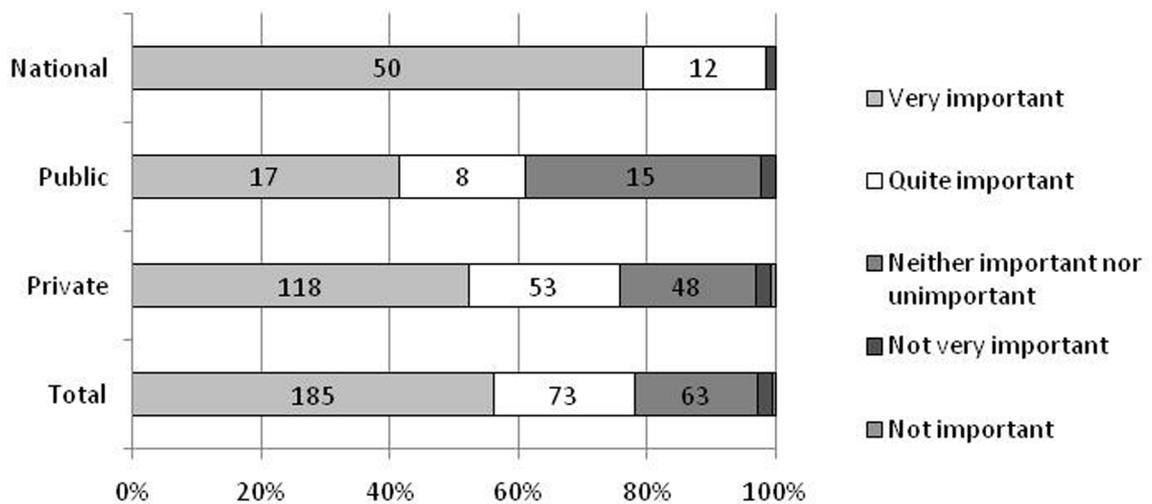
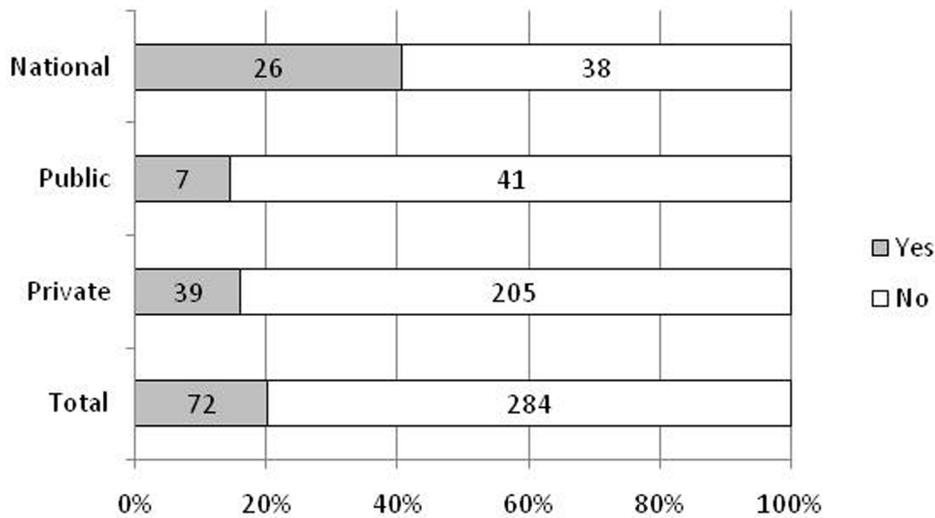
However, according to the same survey, 78.3% of universities responded that it is important to possess a vision/mission for university internationalization (this is an aggregate of those universities who responded with “important” and “very important”). Among national universities, 79.4% responded with “very important”, reaching close to 100% when combined with those that responded with “important”. With regard to private universities, 52.2% responded with “very important”: with the addition of those that responded with “important”, the proportion was 75.7%. The total of public universities that responded with “very important” and “important” was 61.0% (Figure III-2-1-b). Among national universities in particular, there is widespread recognition of the importance of developing visions or missions in education and research activities: it is likely that this has been triggered by the need to develop of midterm goals and plans as a result of the move to incorporation of national universities.

Although the need for internationalization of Japanese universities has long been acknowledged, as described above, only a limited number of universities possess clear philosophies or schemes for internationalization, set concrete goals and action plans under their philosophies and schemes, and actually pursue internationalization in practice. It would be no exaggeration to say that most Japanese universities have promoted internationalization in education and research activities on an ad hoc basis and following the lead of others, without first clarifying the purpose, goals, and direction of their internationalization initiatives. The one-fifth of universities that do possess clear philosophies and schemes for internationalization, and promote international education and research activities founded on them, can be described using the key terms “national,” “large scale (a large number of students),” “large foreign student population” and “long-standing”.

What of systems to evaluate internationalization? In the survey conducted by Yokota et al. (2006), only 8.8% of universities responded that they have (are implementing) a system for evaluation of their internationalization activity. The proportion was 21.9% among national university respondents, but as low as 6.3% and 4.5% for public and private universities respectively (Figure III-2-2-a). Furthermore the importance of evaluation systems was recognized by 59.7% of respondents (a total of those who responded with “important” and “very important”) – a lower proportion than recorded for the question on the importance of vision and mission. As many as 51.6% of national universities stated that an evaluation system was “very important”. The proportion reached 95.1% when combined with those that responded with “quite important”. Among private universities, however, only 27.2% responded with “very important” and the total of those that responded with “very important” and “important” was 53.1%. Among public universities, the total was 40% – less than half (Figure III-2-2-b).

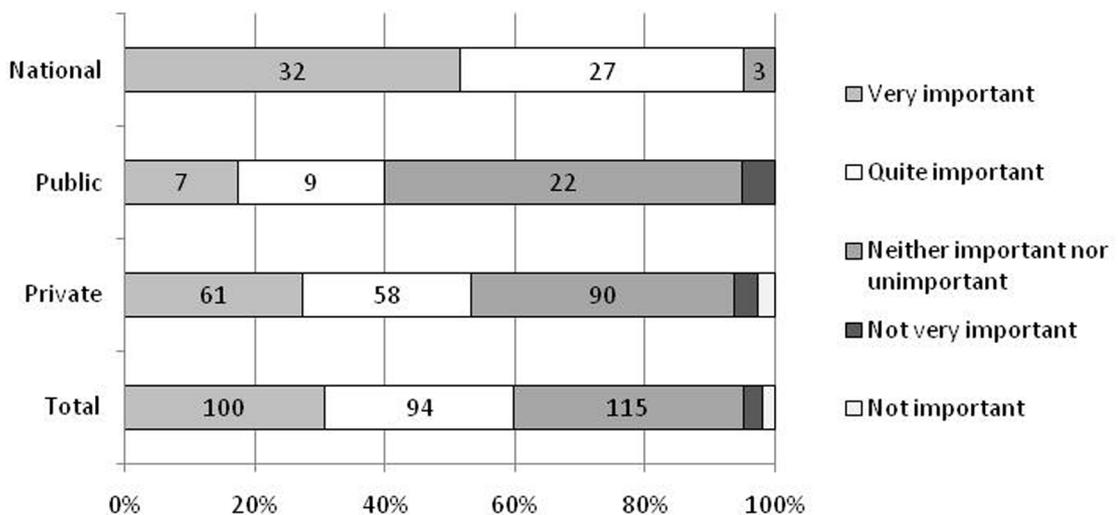
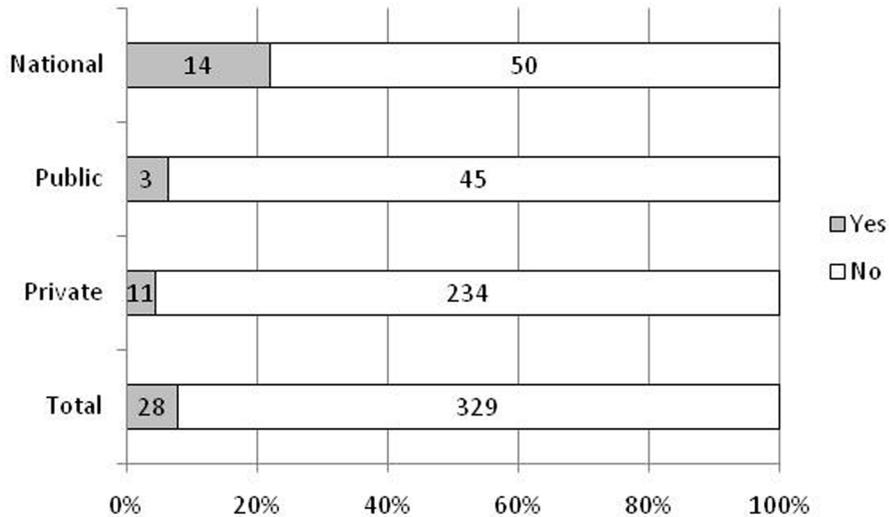
**Figure III-2-1 Clear vision and/or mission for university internationalization (implementation rate) and awareness (degree of importance)**

Source: Yokota Masahiro, Tsuboi Tsuyoshi, Shiratsuchi Satomi, Ota Hiroshi, and Kudo Kazuhiro (2006) *Kiro ni tatsu nihon no daigaku – zen yonensei daigaku no kokusaika to ryūgaku kōryū ni kansuru chōsa hōkoku [Japanese Universities at a Crossroads: Research Report on the Internationalization and International Education Exchange of Japanese Universities]*. Centre for Student Exchange, Hitotsubashi University.



**Figure III-2-2 System for evaluation of university internationalization (implementation rate) and awareness (degree of importance)**

Source: Yokota Masahiro, Tsuboi Tsuyoshi, Shiratsuchi Satomi, Ota Hiroshi, and Kudo Kazuhiro (2006) *Kiro ni tatsu nihon no daigaku – zen yonensei daigaku no kokusaika to ryūgaku kōryū ni kansuru chōsa hōkoku [Japanese Universities at a Crossroads: Research Report on the Internationalization and International Education Exchange of Japanese Universities]*. Centre for Student Exchange, Hitotsubashi University.



Evaluations have been conducted not only in the field of internationalization but also across a broad range of educational and research activities. Third-party evaluation (accreditation) by an evaluation body became mandatory for universities in 2004. However, according to the results of the survey mentioned above, universities responded less positively to the implementation of an internationalization evaluation system than to the idea of developing a vision and mission for internationalization. At present, only a small number of universities have a philosophy or scheme for internationalization, so it makes sense that even fewer of them have developed a system to evaluate internationalization and international activities.

It is expected that more universities will establish both philosophies/schemes and evaluation systems for internationalization in the future, because many appear to attach importance to these tasks in spite of the low implementation rate at present. It is up to the 20 institutions selected for this SIH Project to develop case examples that can provide models for other universities.

## **(2) Notable Efforts**

### **Tokyo Institute of Technology: A bottom-up approach to policy development through collaboration between faculty and administrative staff**

The Tokyo Institute of Technology produced a policy paper entitled “Tokyo Tech’s Strategy for Internationalization” in July 2003, a pioneering effort in this field. In preparing the policy paper, the Institute conducted a satisfaction survey among its foreign students, faculty, staff, and tutors for foreign students. This enabled deeper recognition of the current state of internationalization and facilitated identification of problem areas. The Institute then organized four groups under the respective themes of exchange, projects, education, and infrastructure with each group composed of both faculty and administrative staff members. The groups each created a draft policy paper and set priorities for action among the different proposals presented. The process of formulating these drafts promoted greater cooperation between the faculty and administrative staff. The final policy paper begins by introducing the philosophy underpinning internationalization: why the Institute must pursue internationalization and what internationalization actually is. The paper then outlines a vision for the Institute’s future and a basic strategic approach to internationalization, before proceeding to delineate specific internationalization objectives in terms of education, research and governance, including numerical targets in each area. Care is taken to ensure that all parties within the Institute can develop a common understanding of the objectives. Lastly, the paper presents a timetable for internationalization, establishing deadlines for each individual objective. .

### **Nagoya University: Setting goals, developing an action plan and improving systems for evaluation, utilizing the Academic Consortium (AC21)**

As part of the move to incorporation, Nagoya University carried out a series of institutional reforms modeled on the University of Melbourne. Drawing on the latter university’s formulation of mid-term objectives, the “Nagoya University Internationalization Strategic Plan”, developed in December 2005, is organized hierarchically around items; Mission, Vision, Goal, Objective, and Action. The Mission is based on the “Academic Charter of Nagoya University” established in 2000. The Vision consolidates the university’s scheme for internationalization in the mid-term (until 2010) into three points, notably contribution to exchange with Asian countries and active participation in cooperation for international development. The Goal specifies targets to be reached in the process of developing international linkages to realize the internationalization scheme articulated in the Vision, across the four fields of research, education, development cooperation, and management. The Goal, Objective, and Action portions of the Strategic Plan are presented in a tree diagram,

which identifies more specific targets towards achievement of the Goal and describes how they should be pursued (an action plan) in an easily understandable manner. The five items are described concisely so that persons within the organization can share a common understanding of the university's plans for internationalization.

Nagoya University plans to revise its Strategic Plan during the 2007 academic year by reference to advice solicited from the University of Sydney, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, and Tongji University, fellow members of the Academic Consortium (AC21). It also plans to utilize AC21 connections in its evaluation activities, conducting benchmarking with the University of Sydney in the field of education, and with the University of Warwick in research and business-academia collaboration.

#### **Hiroshima University: Application of SWOT analysis by an overseas expert**

Hiroshima University invited Mr. Bob Goddard, Director of International Relations for the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee and also Pro Vice-Chancellor of La Trobe University (responsible for strategy development), to its campus for two weeks in November 2002. This was realized with support from an "international competitiveness enhancement grant" from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT). Hiroshima University asked Mr. Goddard to employ SWOT analysis methods to assess the university's current position in terms of internationalization and international activities.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Goddard produced 33 recommendations for strengthening the university's international competitiveness. Based on these recommendations, Hiroshima University developed the "Hiroshima University Internationalization Strategy" before incorporation (September 2003), clarifying specific targets for internationalization. This was subsequently revised and released as the "New Hiroshima University Internationalization Strategy" in December 2005.

The new strategy is based on the university's mid-term goals and mid-term plan, the "Long-term Vision for Hiroshima University" (established in January 2003), and the five guiding principles based on the university's founding spirit. It sets six different strategic agendas – branding, universalization, networking, devolution, business models, and infrastructure maintenance – under the four pillars of promotion of internationalized knowledge, internationalized people, international social contribution, and an internationalized campus. Three to five objectives are set under each of the six strategies, describing specific, detailed action plans and the relationship of those action plans with the midterm plan. A particular feature is the reference material at the end of the strategy document, which provides examples of numerical objectives under the new strategy and calculations of targets for foreign student intake. The action plans are written in a strategic manner while clarifying the relationship with the university's mid-term plan, and have been designed for ease of comprehension and shared appreciation by all members of the university community.

The new international strategy was evaluated highly by the Center for the Study of Higher Education of the University of Melbourne.

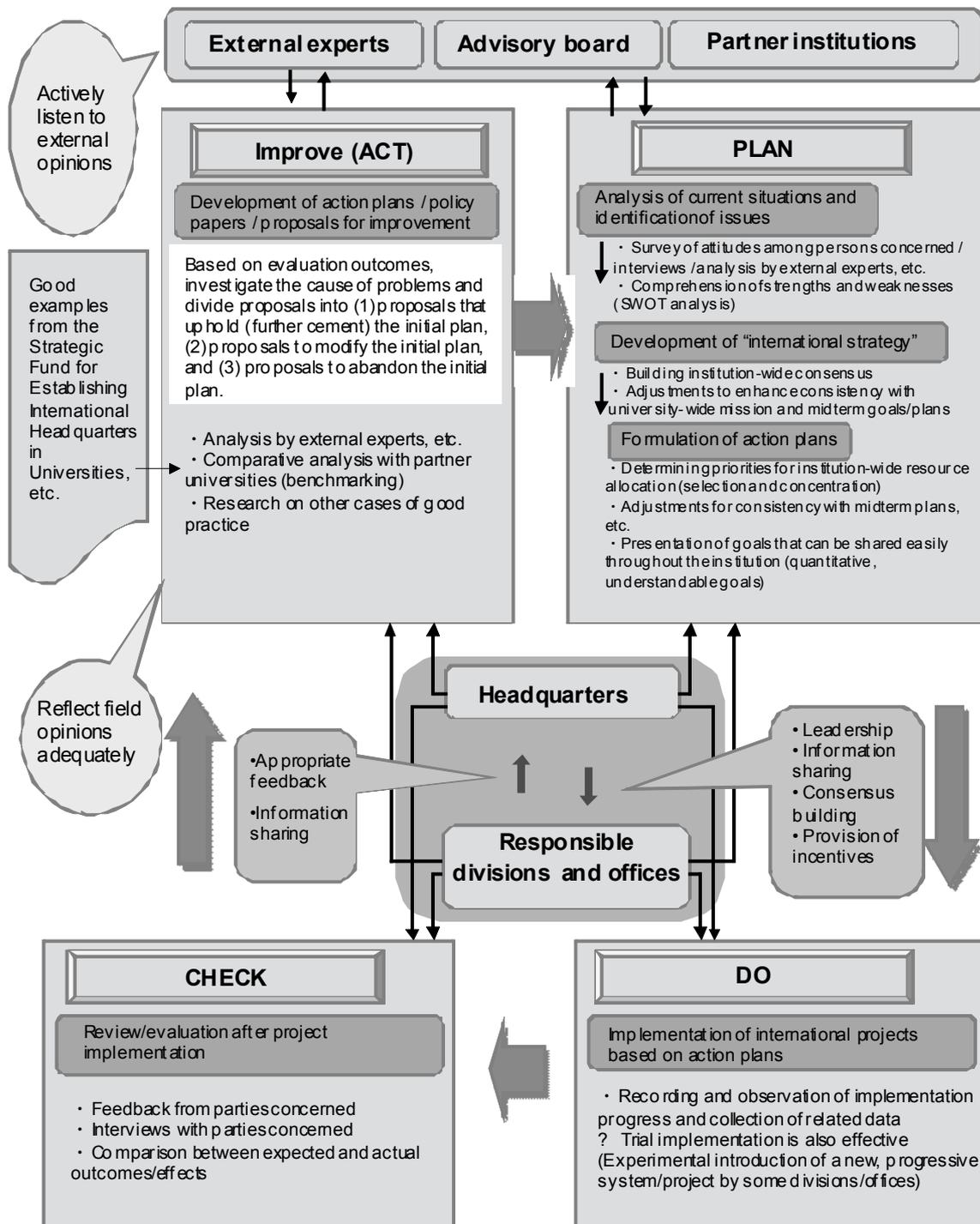
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<sup>4</sup> SWOT analysis is a framework used chiefly to develop a marketing strategy or a corporate strategy. It evaluates an organization from the four perspectives of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. The purpose of SWOT analysis to assess the position of the organization comprehensively, based on an "external environment analysis" of business opportunities, external threats, etc. ("opportunities" and "threats" in the formulation mentioned above – factors that cannot be controlled by the organization), and "internal environment analysis" of factors such as core competence, organizational structure, etc. ("strengths" and "weaknesses" that can be improved by the organization).

### (3) Analysis and proposals

One of typical management cycle follows a process of activity through the stages of “Plan”, “Do”, “Check” and “Act” – the PDCA cycle. This section applies the PDCA approach to the issue of university internationalization, examining “goal setting,” “development of an action plan,” and “development of an evaluation system”. Figure III-2-3 presents a PDCA cycle for university internationalization.

Figure III-2-3: PDCA cycle for university internationalization



As noted in (1), only a limited number of universities in Japan have specific goals or action plans for internationalization, or systems to evaluate internationalization and international activities. Many universities, including the 20 institutions selected for the project, engage in the activities given in “Plan” or “Do” in the right half of Figure III-2-3.

The PDCA cycle is in essence a model for improving operations in a spiral manner by repeating the plan-do-check-act process. A large number of universities in Japan are currently engaging in a process of repeated trial and error in the “Plan” phase. This phase is examined in detail in the following paragraphs.

The “Plan” phase can be divided into three stages of (i) analysis of the current situation, (ii) development of an international strategy, and (iii) formulation of an action plan. The stage of (i) analysis of the current situation can be further broken down, with the first process in this stage labeled “comprehension of the current situation”. This is not an easy task.

A common trait among universities cited in the “Notable Efforts” section above is that when developing international strategy, they worked first to gain a solid comprehension of their own conditions and the issues to be addressed. Tokyo Institute of Technology conducted a satisfaction survey, Nagoya University used the efforts of the University of Melbourne as a reference, and Hiroshima University invited the Director of International Relations for the Australian Vice-Chancellors’ Committee as an expert of university internationalization, requesting him to analyze their current situation. These universities developed focused internationalization strategies based on comprehension of current conditions and identification of issues. Their strategies are placed clearly in the broader context of institutional mid- and long-term plans and goals, and the spirit of each institution’s foundation or university charter. Furthermore, they articulate action plans in distinct and easily comprehensible language and present them in a straightforward manner that enables the strategy to be shared throughout the university and recognized as a common goal. This form of presentation could well be followed by other universities.

The phases of “Check” and “Act” in the left half of Figure III-2-3 are unexploited fields for many universities in Japan. As is the case with analysis of current conditions in the “Plan” phase, it is important in these phases to provide sufficient feedback on the actual situation and draw upon the opinions of external experts and concerned parties. As demonstrated by Nagoya University’s introduction of a benchmarking approach using AC21, comparative analysis with partner universities and effective application of external opinions are particularly notable approaches.

With regard to the development methods and guidelines for evaluation of internationalization and international activities, experts are currently conducting trials and feasibility studies. It is expected that further research will be conducted with an orientation to practical applicability. Moreover, it is hoped that more universities will utilize the results of such research and develop better systems to evaluate their degree of internationalization and international activities.

## Notes

### I. PDCA cycle

The PDCA cycle is a classic management cycle that involves repetition of a plan-do-check-act process. The first “Plan” phase includes identification and examination of issues, based on analysis of the current situation. The “Do” phase involves implementing and developing solutions to issues. In the “Check” phase, the degree to which goals have been achieved is evaluated and if the issues have not been resolved, aspects that were not effective are identified. The final “Act” phase is connected with the next “Plan” phase by continuing (entrenching), modifying, or abandoning the initial plan, based on results of the “Check” phase. This spiral cycle enables management to promote continuous improvement. It is

considered important to measure and analyze processes to identify and modify the portions needing refinement and improvement, and make the improvement process serve as a serial feedback loop to implement the PDCA process continuously.<sup>3), 4)</sup>

## II. Benchmarking

Put simply, benchmarking is “learning from best practice (good examples)” to address inefficiencies in business processes. It is an approach to achieve better management through identifying and analyzing best practice in management and operations; using this best practice to formulate indicators (benchmarks) against which to measure and evaluate current business operations and activities; comparing and analyzing the gap between current practices and best practice; and promoting continuous process reform to bridge that gap.<sup>5)</sup> A benchmark is a numerical indicator used to compare the current situation with the goal. Setting an appropriate benchmark is the most important task in benchmarking activities. Numerical evaluation gives objectivity and clarity to judgments, providing a concrete goal to constituent members of an organization (university). In other words, effective use of benchmarking activities comprises: (1) selecting an “ideal scenario” against which to pursue reform and improvement – namely, identifying best practice (good examples) in the business processes of an organization with top-level performance and results in a certain field, and (2) quantifying the “current situation” of the organization and the desired “goal” to enable continuous measurement and comprehension of the progress and outcomes of improvement activities.<sup>6)</sup>

The management approaches discussed in I and II above are now being applied actively to university management, education, and research. The benchmarking approach has quickly been adopted in university evaluation structures in Western countries. One example is an initiative of the European Centre for Strategic Management for Universities (<http://www.esmu.be/>)<sup>7)</sup> which involved benchmarking among European universities under the themes of “internationalization” and “interuniversity cooperation” in 2005.

To conclude this discussion, Table III-2-1 presents the benefits of universities adopting a strategic approach to internationalization and international activity.

**Table III-2-1: Stages of university internationalization and international activity based on the PDCA cycle**

1st phase	Visualize the current situation and issues in internationalization and international activity.
2nd phase	Identify strengths and issues requiring attention; classify into actions needed to resolve the issues and those needed to further develop the strengths; analyze internal and external factors that hinder or promote resolution of the issues and development of the strengths (SWOT analysis).
3rd phase	Develop an international strategy and action plan, clarify priorities, and improve conditions (infrastructure) to enable their implementation.
4th phase	Implement the PDCA cycle on a continuous basis. International-level review can be achieved through collaboration with overseas universities in implementing benchmarking activities in the evaluation phase.
5th phase	Enhance international character and international competitiveness

## References:

- 1) Yokota Masahiro, Tsuboi Tsuyoshi, Shiratsuchi Satomi, Ota Hiroshi, and Kudo Kazuhiro (2006) *Kiro ni tatsu nihon no daigaku – zen yonensei daigaku no kokusaika to ryūgaku*

*kôryû ni kansuru chôsa hôkoku [Japanese Universities at a Crossroads: Research Report on the Internationalization and International Education Exchange of Japanese Universities.]*. Centre for Student Exchange, Hitotsubashi University.

- 2) “SWOT bunseki [SWOT analysis]”, *Jôhô manejimento yôgo jiten [Information Management Glossary]*, @IT Information Management. Online: <http://www.atmarkit.co.jp/aig/04biz/swot.html>. Accessed Mar. 7, 2007.
- 3) “PDCA saikuru [PDCA cycle]”, *Jôhô manejimento yôgo jiten [Information Management Glossary]*, @IT Information Management. Online: <http://www.atmarkit.co.jp/aig/04biz/pdca.html>. Accessed Feb. 26, 2007.
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