

# Host Institution's Commitment

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To MEXT

National University Corporation  
Tokyo Institute of Technology

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

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

Tokyo Institute of Technology (herein after "Tokyo Tech") has formulated the long-term vision "Vision 2009" as well as the mid-term targets and plans as follows.

### [Tokyo Institute of Technology Vision 2009]

The Vision 2009: A Vision for the Future of Tokyo Institute of Technology (herein after "Tokyo Tech"), which focuses on the next ten years, is a view to enable Tokyo Tech to fulfill this mission over the long-term and contribute to ongoing world development in the midst of the unprecedented difficulties facing humankind. We have set the followings as goals for the item "III. Research":

#### 1. Create new academic fields

Pay adequate attention to securing the research funds and space necessary to promote basic and challenging research that conventionally should be encouraged by Tokyo Tech as a university.

#### 2. Create new values by systematically strengthening research

Select research fields in which Tokyo Tech can demonstrate its strengths on a university/departmental basis, and strengthen the Institute's research capacity by concentrating investments on resources in these areas, etc.

#### 3. Establish a hub for international collaborative research

Rally researchers with diverse global perspectives and establish an international collaborative research hub to contribute to addressing social needs and solving global issues.

### [Medium-term targets/plan]

- The forewords of the medium-term plan (2010 to 2015) define the basic principles of Tokyo Tech as follows: "Based on the recognition that the basis of the sustainable development of Japan and contribution to the world lies in "human resources", Tokyo Tech will stabilize its position as a global education and research base through nurturing "knowledgeable, skilled, ambitious, peace-minded and harmony-seeking scientific creators of the times".
- "Target concerning research level and results" of the medium-term target states, "Based on the variety of creative research results in the basic and fundamental areas backed by a long-term viewpoint, Tokyo Tech will create new values including integrated areas and new areas."
- "Target concerning research implementation structure, etc." states, "Establish a structure for flexible implementation of organizational research utilizing the knowledge and resources of Tokyo Tech."

The **Earth-Life Science Institute (ELSI)** will integrate the research in various disciplines and gather world-leading researchers to solve one of the most fundamental questions of humankind: how did life originate and evolve on Earth. The establishment of ELSI and associated innovations in science and technology match the above-mentioned vision and medium-term targets and plan. Therefore, the university will promptly revise to include ELSI in the medium-term targets and plan.

## <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. In the case of project exploiting previously-initiated center-building efforts, how it will

assist the center in securing sufficient independent resources to continue to secure the same scale of the measured amount through independent resources after that funding eventually ends.

From the start, ELSI will be competitive in its ability to attract external grants, given the excellent track record of its PIs, who have already brought in a level of funding comparable to what WPI can provide. In addition to that very promising outlook, we will add additional support in the following ways.

**a) Concrete support for acquiring and utilizing competitive funding**

We will provide extensive guidance, in terms of advice, coaching and language support to the foreign members of ELSI, to enable them, too, to be competitive in applying for Grants-in-Aid for Scientific Research (KAKENHI). This will make ELSI an unusually attractive place for foreigners to work, given the existing barriers in language and culture in most other Japanese research institutes.

In addition to these concrete scientific and administrative forms of support, we will also provide an equally concrete financial form of support: part of the indirect expense of acquired research grants (KAKENHI) will be provided directly to the researchers at ELSI.

**b) Concrete measures to increase research time for ELSI members**

We fully understand that the main goal of a WPI institute is the creation of a place where scientists can concentrate on their research, in an international and interdisciplinary setting. The university will work toward this goal in two ways. First, the PIs employed by Tokyo Tech will be transferred to ELSI to reduce their current duties. Second, we will provide members from our own administrative staff at no cost to ELSI, to build up an independent Administrative Division (for general affairs and planning, research support, financing and facilities, etc.). In doing so, we will select staff members with excellent linguistic abilities and extensive administrative experience. In short, we will shield ELSI members from much of the day-to-day chores interfering with research, both by lightening their non-research work load and by providing administrators of high caliber to help them focus on establishing an ideal research environment.

**c) Concrete continued funding through discretionary funds**

After the current Global Center of Excellence (herein after G-COE) Program is terminated, about 100 million yen (the same amount as the operating cost of the existing G-COE program) will be provided to ELSI from discretionary funds by the President of Tokyo Tech.

(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 practice, allows the center director autonomy in making decisions regarding the center's operation.

- ELSI will be established as an independent organization inside Tokyo Tech. The prospective Center Director of ELSI will have authority to make all decisions related to the Center, including personnel affairs (excluding hiring and firing of the Center Director him/herself) and execution of the budget, etc. He receives advice from the Steering Committee, for which the Center Director him/herself serves as the Chairperson, but makes final decisions by himself.
- The Center Director will evaluate both researchers and administrative staff members, and can provide them with extra incentives, depending on their performance.

(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.

- We will make arrangements directly with those departments that provide one or more researchers belonging to ELSI, to ensure that those researchers will have unusual amounts of time and freedom to concentrate on their research, for example by appointing substitute professors for educational activities.

(4) Its 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.

- English will be used as the primary language inside ELSI.
- Some departments of Tokyo Tech have internationally recruited researchers and provided support for them in English for research and administration. Utilizing such know-how, international recruiting will be conducted for all research positions in ELSI, to prepare a top-notch internationally inviting environment.
- We will support the dispatch and extended visits for several months of the administrative staff in ELSI to an overseas satellite. In addition, exchange visits of part of the administrative staff of the satellite center to Tokyo Tech will be encouraged.
- Tokyo Tech has already introduced a salary system that provides extra financial incentives for researchers and administrative staff members in recognition of their proven abilities and performance. For the overseas Principal

Investigators, an annual salary system will be adopted.

- Additional incentives will be made available for members of ELSI, based on their performance, such as improvements in research facilities for researchers, and opportunities to be dispatched overseas for administrative staff members (if they so desire). Decisions will be made depending on presentation of results held at the Annual Evaluation Workshop that will be the end of every academic year.
- Except for cases of hiring and firing of personnel or a drastic revision of financial projects, the Center Director of ELSI will be given the freedom to follow a streamlined and flexible policy in which he/she can make decisions without the need to consult the Steering Committee.
- In addition to these specifics, in general we will operate its existing systems in flexible ways, leaving room for revisions and additions when required by ELSI.

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

- The board of Tokyo Tech assured approximately 1500 m<sup>2</sup> of floor space for ELSI at the start-up and additionally up to approximately 2100 m<sup>2</sup> by 2015 in an existing building. The building is located closely to the building of the Department of Earth and Planetary Sciences that ELSI is most closely related. This will include research labs, offices for clerical work, and a presentation room for an audience of 150, as well as meeting rooms on each floor. Research can be carried out there from the opening day of ELSI. Moreover, renovation of the building will create an environment encouraging researchers from different fields to communicate frequently and comfortably on a daily basis.
- Moreover, approximately 500 m<sup>2</sup> of research space is currently used by the existing G-COE program. In addition, ELSI will be eligible for the system already established at Tokyo Tech that provides space preferentially to researchers who acquire large competitive funding. These additional spaces will enable researchers of ELSI and related graduate students of Tokyo Tech to conduct joint research.
- Depending on additional growth of ELSI, we are prepared to provide more space on its campus.
- The Ookayama Campus of Tokyo Tech, housing ELSI, is located near a train station about 30-minutes away from the center of Tokyo. It has a number of large and small conference halls that can hold an international symposium, a main hall, a library, and a restaurant. Therefore, the campus is suited for meetings of world-leading researchers. We will provide support for preferential usage of such common spaces.
- Meeting spaces and the lecture hall in our Tamachi Campus, located in the heart of Tokyo, is convenient for researchers from abroad and from locals who are working with a tight schedule. We will provide support for preferential usage of such spaces as well.
- We will encourage researchers of ELSI to use the most advanced research equipment available at Tokyo Tech in coordination with each department.
- Our on-campus accommodation, the International House, offers single and family rooms for young overseas researchers and short-term visitors. It is conveniently located right next to the building of ELSI and provides a preferable environment for researchers. 20 rooms of which will be preferentially secured for ELSI use. Off-campus accommodations will be also arranged.

(6) How it will support to sustain the center as a world premier international research center after the WPI-grant period ends.

- ELSI's goal is to become an established institute where superior geoscientists and biologists gather from around the world when the WPI-grant period ends. With ELSI forming a significant face for Tokyo Tech as a leading research center, we will in turn continue to provide support, such as funding and space.
- In addition, we will aid ELSI in obtaining continuous support from outside of Tokyo Tech, in terms of competitive funding, and contribution from foundations and enterprises.
- Already before the end of the WPI program, Tokyo Tech as a whole will internally adopt widely those parts of ELSI's innovative systems that have proven to be effective.
- We will encourage ELSI to coordinate with centers of other programs at Tokyo Tech that have a similar structure to provide stronger ties with higher efficiencies and more leverage.

(7) 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.

- In order to develop ELSI into a truly global research institute, it is very important to publicize the activities of ELSI both inside and outside of Japan, in order to highlight its presence. From such a viewpoint, the Research Strategy Office, the Planning Office, the International Office, and the Center for Public Relations will all collaborate to plan public relations strategies of Tokyo Tech to effectively advertise the research activities and results of ELSI.
- While integrating the PR activities of ELSI with the PR activities of Tokyo Tech, the PR activities of Tokyo Tech will be strengthened in line with public relations strategies.