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Future Plan for WPI Program



Basic Research Promotion Division
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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,
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Positioning of WPI Program and Current Status

- **The aim of the WPI program is to build top world-level research centers that serve as hubs for the international circulation of the world's best brains.**
 - WPI is an ambitious program that hurdles borders and barriers encircling Japan.
- **The program has 4 missions:**
 - (1) Advancing top-quality of science, (2) Advancing new science by fusing research domains,
 - (3) Creating an international research environment, (4) Reforming research and administrative systems.
- **Assessing WPI program's achievement of large successes**
 - The five centers selected in 2007 have achieved “world premier status.”

Need for Long-term WPI Program Plan

- Significant results have been attained both in research achievements and research environment/system reform. These need to be continued.
- The long-term plan calls for increasing the number of WPI centers and further developing the WPI program.
- The principle is that the host institution sustains the center after its WPI grant ends.
- The WPI brand is a long-term asset that will need to be developed and sustained. To do so, **a new framework (WPI Academy)** is needed.



About the Number of New Centers to be Selected in Future

- Our aim is to recruit **two new centers in FY 2017** and more new centers after FY 2018.
- The number of new centers selected after FY 2018 may be adjusted based upon the state of their proposals and the results of existing centers' extension screen.
- Based upon the capacity of Japanese universities and research institutions, **up to 20** centers may be supported under the extended WPI program plan. (see references)

Scale of New Centers and Requirements

■ Scale of new centers

- Each center: **¥1 billion per year × 10 years** (no extension)
*may be change from budgeting
- To attain critical mass as a “visible” research center, a minimum of **7-10 PIs** (research group: **70-100**) (WPI focus scale) is required.
- To encourage center independence after WPI funding ends, a system is put in place to gradually reduce the scale of center funding after their 5th year interim evaluation.

■ Requirements

- **Revamp** existing organization - **Create** completely new center
- Clearly articulated plans for fostering young researchers such as including **graduate students** in projects

Target Domains and points to be considered for selection

■ Target domains

- Basic research fields in the natural sciences
 - With FY2017 proposals, mathematics and information science will also be considered.
(Mathematics and information science may be used or included as a project component. They may not be the main subject of a project.)
 - Positive evaluation will be given to humanities/social science components and societal contributions.

■ Application eligibility

- Host institutions that are in the middle of providing 10-year center support may not apply. (Kyushu U, U Tsukuba, Tokyo Tech, Nagoya U)
- Regarding the host institutions of centers selected in 2007, rigid screening will be given to the state of support for their existing centers.

Establishing a WPI Academy

- **Establishing a WPI Academy whose members will be centers that the WPI Program Committee judges to have attained “world premier status.”**
 - Research institutes other than WPI centers may be screened by the Program Committee for Academy membership.
 - Centers that become Academy members will periodically be evaluated by the Program Committee. (A center may be expelled if its project receives a low evaluation.)
 - Academy-member centers will continue to receive detailed follow-up reviews by PDs and POs.
- **Main functions of WPI Academy**
 - The Academy will cross-sectionally strengthen the WPI brand and facilitate networking throughout the WPI program.
 - The Academy will accelerate and expand (using WPI-pioneered international networks) the international circulation of the world’s best brains.
 - The Academy will compile and distribute the results and experiences amassed through the WPI program to Japanese universities and research organizations.

(Reference) Points to Consider in Deciding Number of Centers (1)

- **At least 18 universities and three national research and development agencies have goals similar to those of the WPI program**
 - Among the national universities, 16 have applied to MEXT for its “Global Top University” classification. 18 universities when adding Keio and Waseda Universities, which are participants in “Research University 11 (RU11).”
 - 3 designated national research and development institutes (RIKEN, AIST, NIMS)
- **Universities/institutes that receive at least a ¥10-billion in operating subsidies from MEXT have the potential to establish a center**
 - Among the existing centers situated in universities, most of the universities received more than ¥30 billion in operating subsidies from MEXT.
 - As exceptions, NIMS and Tokyo Tech established their centers with subsidies of ¥11.9 billion and ¥21.2 billion respectively.



(Reference) Points to Consider in Deciding Number of Centers (2)

■ Record of acquiring large-scale competitive funding

- An important factor is the thickness of the researcher layer including the possible center director and core PIs.
- 24 institutions have 5 or more researchers who have been selected for grants under the following competitive funding systems.
 - KAKENHI Grants-in-Aid (Specially Promoted Research, Scientific Research (S))
 - JST Strategic Basic Research Programs (CREST, ERATO)
 - Advanced Research and Development Programs for Medical Innovation (AMED-CREST)