

Message from Program Committee of the World Premier International Research Center (WPI) Initiative

Over recent years, global competition in recruiting the best and brightest researchers has intensified. To maintain and improve Japan's scientific and technological standing, we will need to position ourselves within the global flow of outstanding human resources while creating research platforms that will naturally attract and amass such human resources in Japan.

Given this imperative, it is the aim of the WPI Initiative to establish research centers of a caliber that will win high esteem throughout the world for the outstanding results they produce. Like Bio-X at Stanford University, the Robotics Institute at Carnegie Mellon University, Janelia Farm at Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI), or MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology in the United Kingdom, these research centers should be capable of attracting frontline researchers from around the world and of advancing research that integrates cutting-edge fields while pioneering new domains of scientific pursuit.

Doing so will require the realization of high level of research, done by physical assembly of outstanding researchers over a critical mass, and an excellent research environment. The WPI Initiative will provide financial support for measures aimed at realizing such a research environment free of conventional systemic constraints and achieving a critical mass of outstanding researchers in fields in which Japan's expertise excels. In this sense, it should be understood that this program is of a completely different nature from the usual funding programs operated mainly to provide support for research projects.

In view of Japan's unique geographical and infrastructural contexts, the establishment of top world-class research centers as described above will not be an easy task. Undauntedly, the Program Committee, working in consortium with the Ministry of

Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, is dedicated to seeing the process of establishing such top-flight centers in Japan through to their successful actualization. In doing so, the Committee will provide support, both ongoing and follow-up, for institutional efforts to build truly world-class research centers while regularly monitoring the adopted projects to verify that their concepts and schemes are being steadfastly implemented.

It is our sincere hope that institutions wishing to apply for a grant under this program will formulate a robust and attractive center concept underscored by a resolute determination to go forward in building a world-class research center—one that, while not being bound by existing organizations or departments, can attract scores of outstanding researchers from around the world. To encourage the unrestricted ideas of researchers, multiple applications will be accepted from each institution.