

Agency of Industrial Science & Technology

— What It Is & Does —

The Agency of Industrial Science and Technology was established in 1948 as a branch of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) to conduct research and development work in mining and manufacturing science and technology.

As scientific and technological development continues to break new barriers, countries around the world are stepping up their research efforts. Japan, too, is striving to ensure the stable growth of its economy and society and to contribute to global socio-economic development through the development of creative technology. As a result, the Agency of Industrial Science and Technology is increasingly growing in stature, as the government body at the heart of the development of new industrial technology.

Japan's policy on industrial technology is designed basically to provide an environment in which the private sector—the driving force in the nation's technological development, accounting for slightly more than 70% of total R&D spending—can operate at full potential. But the government itself embarks on R&D in those cases where the private sector alone finds it difficult to smoothly carry out the development programs despite the economic importance and urgency of the programs.

Organizational structure

The Agency consists of the agency proper and 16 laboratories and research institutes. The agency proper is divided into the General Coordination Department and the Standards Department. The General Coordination Department includes among its responsibilities the planning of industrial technology policy, promotion of government-financed national projects, assistance for private R&D work, promotion of international research cooperation, and facilitation of regional technical development. The Standards Department is responsible for undertakings associated with industrial standardization, including the work of the Japanese Industrial Standards (JIS).

Of the 16 laboratories and research institutes, some are about a century old. Nine are located in the Tsukuba "science

city" northeast of Tokyo while the remaining seven are scattered throughout the country. These organizations carry out basic research and do other work to unleash the potential of frontier technology which will lay the groundwork for future technical innovation. They are also committed to government-funded national projects, contributing greatly toward their realization.

There is another associated body, the Industrial Technology Council, a panel of advisers to the Minister of International Trade and Industry. Consisting of industrial and academic experts, the council discusses industrial technology policy from various viewpoints.

Staff & budget

The Agency has an authorized staff of 3,929, of which 3,609 or 92% belong to the laboratories and research institutes. These research staffers account for nearly a quarter of Japan's total governmental research personnel.

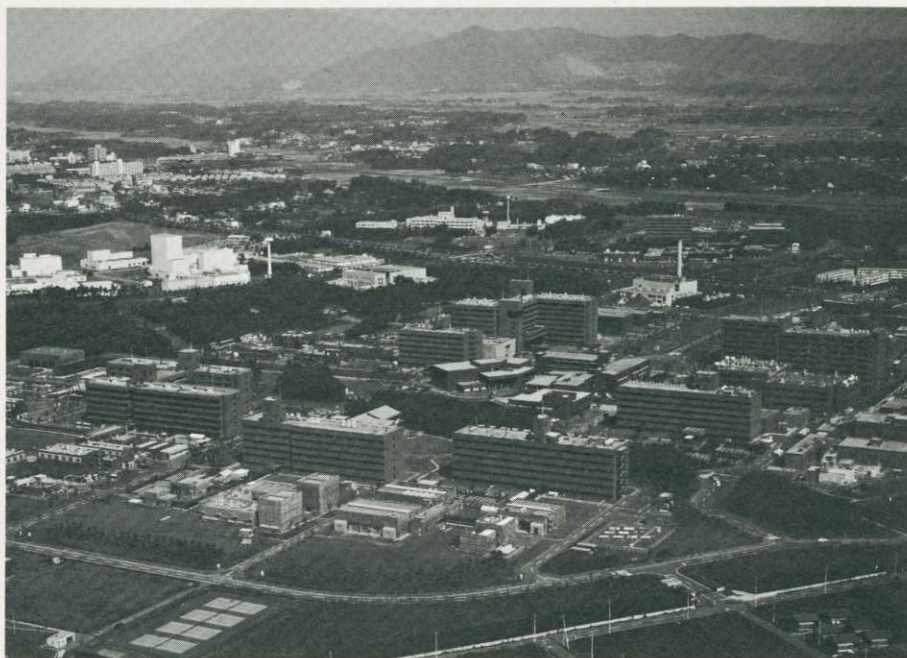
The agency's budget for fiscal 1983 is ¥119.2 billion (\$496 million), or about 10% of the MITI budget and about 8% of Japan's science and technology budget of

¥1,448.9 billion (\$6.037 billion). About half of Japan's science and technology budget goes to basic studies at universities, and slightly more than a quarter to major scientific studies, such as those involving atomic power and space, conducted at the Science and Technology Agency.

Outline of work

Of the various programs undertaken by the Agency, the costliest is the program for national projects, which accounts for 62% of the budget.

Among the projects are R&D work, begun in 1981, on the technology which is expected to help sustain Japan's industrial prowess into the next generation, including the development of biotechnology, new materials, and new electronic devices; the Large-scale Project that began in 1966; and two projects calling for the development of energy—the Sunshine Program (begun in 1974) and the Moonlight Program (launched in 1978). The second largest sum is spent on research at the 16 research affiliates, whose budget accounts for about 31% of the agency total. Another 5% goes to promoting technological development in the private sector.



An aerial view of the Agency of Industrial Science & Technology's research institutes at Tsukuba, northeast of Tokyo.