

Allocations for Biotechnology in Japan*

The budgetary allocations for Biotechnology in Japan for the period 2003 have been released. This year Yen 2,33,331 million have been kept aside for the frontier technology. There are five major ministries which are sharing this allocation. The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (11.97 per cent); Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare (57.42 per cent); Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (15 per cent); Ministry of Environment (1.70 per cent) and Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (6.25 per cent).

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry has proposed to spend Yen 3028, 11 per cent of its budget on consolidation of intellectual infrastructure which covers expenditure on National Institute of Technology and Evaluation. This Ministry is also responsible for promotion of R&D for creative research and product development. This activity would get 89 per cent of Yen 27,949 the biotechnology budget marked for the Ministry. Among the research projects DNA sequencing, genome informatics, recycling based industrial system using biological functions are some of the top priorities. One of the upcoming areas for research funding is development of highly efficient techniques for conversion of biomass energy. The Human Frontier Science Programme is also proposed to be restrengthened for developing international linkages.

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The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare has a total budget of Yen 1,33,994 million. Out of this a large sum is proposed to be spent on management of clinical research data; improving of national testing and research institutes for ensuring food safety; expenses for assessment and research on risks from medicine and other technologies and expenses for research on overcoming intractable diseases. At least 15 per cent of the budget is proposed to be spent on research related to treatment of cancer at different national hospitals.

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology has an earmarked budget of Yen 72,754. This is largely proposed to be spent on promotion of research and development projects for economic vitalization, development of combine facilities for government industry and academia and for promotion of life science research by core research institutes which play a leading role in scientific and technological development. The Ministry of Environment has proposed to spend a large sum on carrying out independent studies pertaining to the adoption and defusion of GM goods. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries which gets 6 per cent of total biotechnology allocation proposes to spend a large sum on strengthening agro-marine research infrastructure along with promotion of R&D activities in the private sector especially food industry.

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(Unit: million yen)

	2002	2003
1. The Ministry of Economy Trade and Industry		
A. Consolidation of intellectual infrastructure	3887 (1.43)	1514 (0.65)
B. Promotion of R&D	21,285 (7.86)	24,956 (10.70)
C. Consolidation of environment for market expansion		61 (0.03)
D. International relations	1,418 (0.52)	1,418 (0.61)

	2002	2003
2. The Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare		
A. Science and technology promotion expenditures	102,510 (0.52)	106,378 (9.10)
B. Welfare, labour and science research subsidies	40,702 (15.02)	41,687 (17.87)
3. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology		
A. Promotion of research and development projects for economic vitalization (leading projects)	0 (0.00)	21,238 (9.10)
B. Promotion of research and development programme (RR 2002) toward the national target by combined facilities of government, industry and academia	20,541 (7.58)	9,900 (4.24)
C. Promotion of life sciences research by core research institutes which play leading roles in scientific and technological developments	50,006 (18.46)	3,887 (1.67)
4. The Ministry of the Environment		
A. Expenses for tests and researches on global environment conservation	927 (0.34)	803 (0.34)
B. Expenses for surveys and research on pollution control, etc.	3,018 (1.11)	3,143 (1.35)
C. Expenses for investigation on biotechnology	23 (0.01)	31 (0.01)
D. Expenses for general promotion of environmental research	(3,660) (1.35)	(3,730) (1.60)
5. The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries		
Budget related to innovative industrial technologies such as biotechnology, etc.		
A. Promotion of R&D by testing and research institutes, etc.	14,525 (5.36)	10,691 (4.58)
B. Promotion of R&D activities of private sectors through providing subsidies	7,400 (2.73)	3,010 (1.29)
C. Consolidation of R&D infrastructure	97 (0.04)	94 (0.04)

	2002	2003
D. Expenses for the promotion of R&D	135 (0.05)	87 (0.04)
E. Measures to ensure security of innovative technologies such as genetic recombination, etc.	612 (0.23)	521 (0.22)
F. Promotion of international exchange	198	182
Total	2,70,944	2,33,331

Note: The figure in parenthesis is % share on total.