

Roundtable on Science Advice 2024
“The Role of Science and Technology Advisors/Advice
in ensuring research security”
organized by the Center for Research and Development Strategy (CRDS),
Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST)
Saturday, 5th October 2024, 16:30-17:50 Kyoto International Conference Center,
～ Discussion Summary ～



Participants (alphabetical order):

BECKER, Katja	President, German Research Foundation (DFG)
GÖTHENBERG, Andreas	Executive Director, Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education
HASHIMOTO, Kazuhito	Science and Technology Advisor to the Cabinet; President, Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST)
HENZLER, Sabine	Director for Strategy and Impact, Joint Research Centre (JRC), EU
KOYASU, Shigeo	Science and Technology Advisor to the Minister of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT); President, National Institute for Quantum Science and Technology (QST)
MATSUMOTO, Yoichiro	Science and Technology Advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs
OHNO, Hideo	Special Advisor on Science and Technology to the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI); Special Senior Advisor to the President, Tohoku University
SMITH, Dave	National Technology Adviser, UK Government

Moderation and Secretariat:

ARIMOTO, Tateo, the Senior Advisor to the President of JST (Moderator)
 ASANO Kana, Fellow, Center for Research and Development Strategy (Moderator)
 TSUGITA, Akira, Executive Director
 SAEKI, Koji, Deputy Director General, Center for Research and Development Strategy
 ARAI, Tomohiko, Director, Department of Planning and Management
 KOBAYASHI, Osamu, Director, Department of International Affairs

Discussion Summary:

In an era when emerging technology, such as AI, quantum, biotechnology, and materials, are having a profound impact on society and destabilizing geopolitical situations, the participants agreed that openness and freedom of research should be observed, balancing the inherent nature of such research and protection of research security and integrity, while the participants acknowledged that it is important to promote research security and integrity while balancing the inherent nature of such research and its protection. The participants then shared best practices and recent initiatives in their respective countries and regions, and had a frank discussion on the roles that science and technology organizations should play and the common challenges they face as institutions. Specifically, the following were recognized.

1. Science and Technology Innovation (STI) is essential to confront global issues such as climate change, pandemics and economic disparity. It is an undeniable fact that the free cross-border exchange of researchers and ideas based on free thinking play an important role in the promotion of STI. Therefore, it is essential to create an open research environment that guarantees research freedom and actively promotes international collaboration.
2. On the other hand, emerging technology now have a significant influence not only on economic growth, but also on key agendas such as national security and diplomacy. It is also an urgent task to protect such science and technology to ensure that it is handled appropriately in today's complex era of conflicting economic interests and rising geopolitical tensions, which cannot be described by the globalism of a generation ago.
3. In the context of international relations, striking a balance between the relative concepts of freedom and protection of research is today a very difficult and important challenge shared by countries and regions. The approach of keeping research as open as possible and minimizing the areas that are protected or restricted (as open as possible, as closed as necessary) is the current common understanding. Research security is never about restricting the freedom or openness of science, but is a means to protect and preserve the essence of such research.
4. It must also be understood that it is impossible to absolutely control all research security risks. It is then important to assess the “Risk and Benefit” associated with international collaboration in a responsible manner, and to strategically de-risk in order to achieve maximum results. In addition, given that risks vary from study to study, it is effective to take a risk-based approach to address individual risks, rather than applying uniform or general rules.

5. In order to promote such an approach, it is important to raise awareness of research security and integrity among researchers and research institutions. Besides to providing rules and guidelines, it is also effective for governments to establish a mechanism to support responsible decision making by researchers and research institutions. The Secure Center in the U.S.ⁱ, RACT in the U.K.ⁱⁱ, and KEF in Germanyⁱⁱⁱ are good examples.
6. In order to provide a solution to this problem involving many stakeholders, it is necessary to continue dialogue across the boundaries of politics, industry, government, and academia. It is important for the government to formulate and widely communicate a clear policy based on discussions with academia and other stakeholders to foster understanding and trust. Each researcher should promote free, open, and responsible research with consideration for research integrity and security in accordance with his/her own ethical standards, with the support of his/her research institution, while continuing efforts to understand the government's thinking.

Finally, since the situation differs from country to country, the participants confirmed the need to share individual cases and experiences, respect policies and initiatives, and harmonize efforts in promoting responsible international collaboration. The participants also recognized the importance of the role of scientific advisors/scientific counsel in such efforts and agreed to actively continue such dialogue in the future.

***Note:** This meeting was held under Chatham House Rule.*

Contact:

ASANO, Kana, Fellow, Center for Research and Development Strategy

Email: k2asano@jst.go.jp

ⁱ <https://new.nsf.gov/news/nsf-backed-secure-center-will-support-research>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/research-collaboration-advice-team>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.sicherheitsrelevante-forschung.org/>