Topics

Promotion of Information morals education at school to acquire the basic attitude for behaving appropriately in information society

With the spread of the Internet and cell phones, children are being exposed to illegal and harmful information and the dangers of being entangled in trouble are increasing. There are some cases where children themselves become the main cause of trouble, and we see how "Information morals education" is important in developing the skill of handling information in an appropriate way.

Considering the situations above, MEXT has started the "Research Study on Effective Teaching Method for Information morals Education to acquire the basic attitude for behaving appropriately in information society" by organizing teaching content into five groups, and drawing up the "Model Curriculum for Information Morals Education Teaching" which sets an instructional objective according to the student's stage of development for each group. (Reference: http://www.japet.or.jp/moral-guidebook/)

Furthermore, as an attempt to spread Information morals education teaching, teaching guidelines and pamphlets for diffusion and development have been published by putting together the necessity for Information morals education teaching, explanations on model curriculum, and example cases where Information morals education teaching was implemented, to distribute to schools and boards of education nationwide.

As for 2007, seminars were held in 47 prefectures for supervisors who are responsible for instructing other teachers.

Additionally, as informatization spreads in our society, the age of being exposed to Information and Communication Technology is getting lower. Therefore, the need to start Information morals education from the elementary school level is increasing, and it becomes important to provide Information morals education in each subject and the Period of Integrated Study, even in elementary schools that have no subjects related to information education. In 2007, example cases where Information morals education teaching was implemented according to the instructional objective from the "Model Curriculum for Information Morals Education Teaching" have been collected to be diffused via the Internet. It will be important for schools to newly recognize the importance of Information morals education at schools, and MEXT will encourage the works for improvement of Information morals education as an entire school, such as reflecting the Information morals education in the teaching plan and cooperating between each subject, according to example cases above, model curricula, and guidelines.

Topics

Building school facilities to promote Special Needs Education

The Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology is preparing the "Guidelines for Designing Educational Facilities," which will provide information on its basic thinking and points of consideration up until now regarding the planning and design of school facilities.

On this occasion, to promote the construction of school facilities for Special Needs Education, the "Guidelines for Designing Educational Facilities" has been revised (Reference: http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/shisetsu/seibi/main7_a12.htm).

1. Background

Recently there has been an increasing trend in the number of students receiving Special Needs Education in special classes and in resource rooms (both are at regular schools), and that of students enrolled at Schools for Special Needs Education. In addition, around half of the students in elementary and lower secondary departments of Schools for Special Needs Education enroll in multiple-disability classes, which shows that the number of students with severe/multiple disabilities is also increasing.

Given the situation, there is a need to promote Special Needs Education that offers educational support to meet each individual student's educational needs in order to encourage independence and social participation. The School Education Law and related laws were therefore revised and came into effect in April 2007.

Regarding facilities, in addition to addressing any problems that arise during the process of promoting Special Needs Education, it is also necessary to improve the quality of facilities. As a result, the Consultative Committee for Research and Surveys Relating to the Formation of Guidelines for Designing Educational conducted an inspection and compiled a report in July 2007. Based on this report the "Guidelines for Designing Educational Facilities" was revised.

2. Summary of revisions to the "Guidelines for Designing Educational Facilities"

(1) Complete revision "Guidelines for Designing Facilities of Schools for the Blind, Schools for the Deaf, and Schools for the Otherwise Disabled"; creation of "Guidelines for Designing the Facilities of Schools for Special Needs Education"

Below are the points of consideration regarding the basic thinking and the planning and design of improvement of facilities to promote Special Needs Education in the new guidelines

- Measures to meet each individual's educational needs (dealing with the increasing number of children with severe/multiple disabilities etc.)
- Measures concerning the functions of Schools for Special Needs Education as the local center of Special Needs Education
- Measures to promote stepped-up exchanges and joint learning between students with and without disabilities
- Enhance Activities to Promote Independence* and vocational training
- Necessity of a comprehensive long-term plan taking into account future trends in the number of students with disabilities

Also shown are the points of consideration regarding the plan and design drawn up to respond to current issues concerning school facilities such as strengthening earthquake resistance or crime prevention measures.

(2) Partial revision of "Guidelines for Designing Elementary School Facilities" and "Guidelines for Designing Lower Secondary School Facilities"

Below are the points of consideration regarding the basic thinking and the planning and design of improvement of facilities to promote Special Needs Education, for example, measures concerning teachings provided in resource rooms or in special classes (both are in regular schools).

- Measures to meet each individual's educational needs
- Measures to promote stepped-up exchanges and joint learning between students with and without disabilities
- Measures concerning special support service in resource rooms for children with disabilities enrolled at regular elementary and secondary schools
- Necessity of space for students with developmental disabilities to regain composure
- Necessity to accelerate barrier-free renovations of school facilities under jurisdiction

(3) Partial revision of "Guidelines for Designing Kindergarten Facilities" and "Guidelines for Designing Upper Secondary School Facilities"

The basic thinking on improvement of facilities aimed to promote Special Needs Education at kindergartens and upper secondary schools is shown.

* Activities to Promote Independence
Special teaching that is given all through school education to help students improve or overcome various difficult conditions arising from their disabilities.

Summary of revisions to the "Guidelines for Designing Educational Facilities"

Background

◆ **Measures concerning the "Schools for Special Needs Education" system (Starting in April 2007)**
- Measures concerning students with severe/multiple disabilities
- Measures concerning the function of Schools for Special Needs Education as the local center of Special Needs Education
- Ensure appropriate teaching and supports in all regular schools in consideration of the individual needs of children with disabilities

◆ **Measures concerning the course of study**
- Further promotion of self-motivated activities aimed to establish independence
- Promotion of vocational independence based on social changes and development
- Measures concerning suitable educational consultation from an early stage (including infancy)

◆ **Measures addressing current issues surrounding school facilities**
- Measures addressing current issues such as barrier-free renovation, earthquake resistance, crime prevention, collaboration with local governments, etc.

Proposal of review of "Guidelines for Designing Educational Facilities"

◆ **Guidelines for Designing Facilities of Schools for the Blind, Schools for the Deaf, and Schools for the Otherwise Disabled**

➡ **Comprehensive revision; creation of "Guidelines for Designing Facilities of Schools for Special Needs Education"**
- Facility plan that accommodates severe/multiple disabilities (taking into consideration multiple disabilities, etc.)
- Facility plan that accommodates the function of Schools for Special Needs Education as the local center of Special Needs Education
- Facility plan that accommodates the courses of study that offer more Activities to Promote Independence and vocational training
- Facility plan that addresses current issues such as barrier-free renovation, earthquake resistance, crime prevention, collaboration with local governments, etc.

◆ **Guidelines for Designing Elementary and Lower Secondary School Facilities**

➡ **Partial revision of regulations concerning Special Needs Education**
- Facility plan that accommodates students in need of special support (including those with developmental disabilities)
  - Special classes: facility plan that accommodates stepped-up exchanges and joint learning
  - Resource rooms: facility plan that accommodates students and parents who come to the school
  - Regular classrooms: Plan to include a small space for students with developmental disabilities to regain composure in close proximity to regular classrooms

◆ **Guidelines for Designing Kindergartens and Upper Secondary School Facilities**

➡ **Partial revision of general rules**
- Facility plan that accommodates children (or students) in need of special support (including those with developmental disabilities)

Proposal of measures concerning improvement of facilities to promote Special Needs Education in the future

(Background) : increase in number of students with disabilities, increase in number of severe/multiple disability cases

(Issues concerning Special Needs Education facilities)
- Expansion of Schools for Special Needs Education and a lack of classrooms
- Necessity to accommodate the function of Schools for Special Needs Education as the local center of Special Needs Education
- Upgrading of resource rooms in regular elementary and lower secondary schools is lagging behind

Measures to advance the upgrading of Special Needs Education facilities in the future

❍ Promotion policies for school founders
- ① Systematic upgrade based on future trends in student enrollment
- ② Obtaining space required for adding function of Schools for Special Needs Education as the local center of Special Needs Education
- ③ Obtaining space required for resource rooms in regular elementary and lower secondary schools

❍ National promotion policies
- ① Necessary review of standard area of national subsidies (the function of Schools of Special Needs Education as the local center of Special Needs Education, resource rooms in regular elementary and lower secondary schools)
- ② Financial support for school founders (obtaining necessary estimates for designing facilities of Schools for Special Needs Education)
- ③ Actively offer information such as concrete plans or collection of excellent case studies concerning improvement of facilities
- ④ "Soft" measures concerning operating systems etc. and corresponding overall promotion of Special Needs Education

3. Measures concerning improvement of facilities to promote Special Needs Education in the future

The report by the Consultative Committee for Research and Surveys Relating to the Formation of Guidelines for Designing Educational proposes not only revisions to the "Guidelines for Designing Educational Facilities" but also measures concerning improvement of facilities to promote Special Needs Education in the future.

The proposal provides measures that should be implemented by both the central government and school founders. It calls for overall promotion of Special Needs Education that corresponds to "soft measures" such as upgrading operating systems on the government's side.

Based on the revisions to the "Guidelines for Designing Educational Facilities" and the proposal by the Consultative Committee for Research and Surveys Relating to the Formation of Guidelines for Designing Educational, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology will strive to further promote Special Needs Education.

Topics

Promoting improvement in earthquake resistance of public school facilities

In recent years, some school buildings have suffered partial destruction or serious damage caused by powerful earthquakes such as the Niigata-Chuetsu earthquake in October 2004, that off the western coast of Fukuoka Prefecture in March 2005, that in the Noto Peninsula in March 2007 and that off the coast of Niigata Prefecture in July 2007.

School facilities are not only places where schoolchildren spend almost all day; they also serve as temporary evacuation centers for local residents in case of earthquakes and other disasters. Therefore, to improve earthquake resistance is urgent issue so as to ensure the safety of these facilities.

A pillar of a school building cracked by the Niigata-Chuetsu Earthquake.
(Ojiya City, Niigata Prefecture)

However, according to a survey conducted by MEXT in April 2007, less than 60% of public elementary and junior high school (including the first half of secondary school) facilities were earthquake resistant. And also there were large regional gaps in the progress in improving earthquake resistance (Fig. 1 and Fig. 2). Furthermore, this survey also revealed there was still certain a percentage of facilities which would have a high risk of collapse if an earthquake with an intensity of 6 Upper or more powerful occurs.

(See http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/houdou/19/06/07060507/002/001.htm)

MEXT has provided state subsidies to cover the expenses for projects to improve earthquake resistance implemented by local governments such as expenses for reconstruction, seismic reinforcement, and seismic diagnosis which are a prerequisite for improving earthquake resistance. In 2006, with a view to expanding the range of discretion of local governments and promoting efficient improvement of facilities, MEXT established the *Grants to Create Safe and Secure Schools*.

A Ceiling of a gymnasium collapsed partially due to the Niigata-Chuetsu Earthquake
(Uonuma City, Niigata Prefecture)

In addition, MEXT has expanded the financial support to promote improvement in earthquake resistance. For instance, the state subsidy proportions for reconstruction and seismic reinforcement based on the laws concerning seismic disaster prevention measures have been increased (Fig. 3). From 2007, regarding seismic reinforcement carried out in accordance with the *Special Measures Law on Earthquake Disaster Prevention*, local allocation tax measures that had been restricted to certain regions had extended to the whole country, which considerably reduced the financial burden of local governments.

In April 2007, a council of advisers inspected the factors which were necessary to promote improvement in earthquake resistance and published their results of the inspection in August 2007. (*To settle on The Plan to Promote Improvement Earthquake Resistance of Public Schools Facilities*, the report by the Consultative Committee for Setting Guidelines on School Facility Improvement)

Appearance of a school building reinforced to resist earthquakes
(Tokamachi City, Niigata Prefecture)

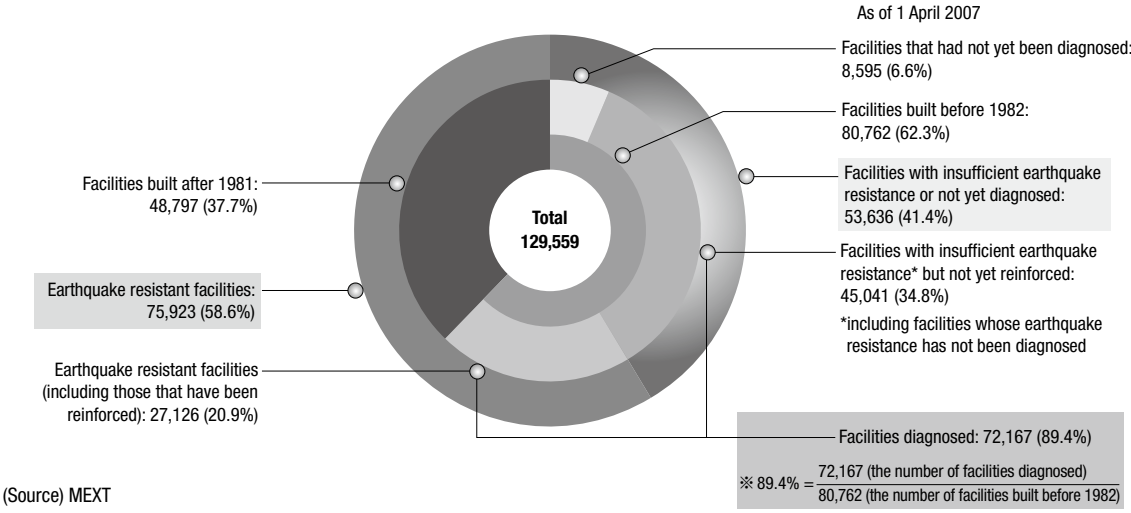
(See http://www.mext.go.jp/b_menu/houdou/19/08/07081403).

The report stated, based on its final goal of making all school facilities earthquake resistant, MEXT and local governments needed to settle on the 5-year long plan to promote improvement in earthquake resistance beginning in 2008. It also stated that improving earthquake resistance of facilities with a value of Is * of below 0.3 was the highest priority. Furthermore, based on situations and damages from earthquakes in the past in each region, it also pointed out that local governments needed to improve earthquake resistance of facilities with a value of Is of below 0.4 as much as possible.

MEXT *plans to settle on the Plan to Promote Improvement the Earthquake Resistance of Public School Facilities* based on this report.

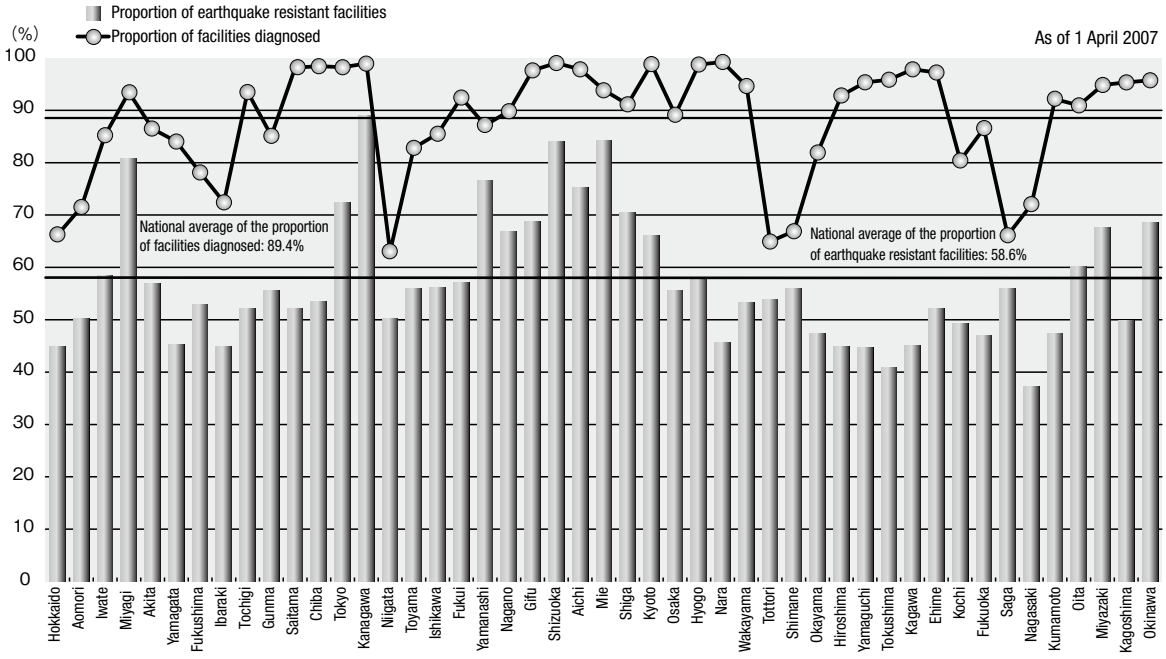
* Is (Seismic index of structure)
An index that shows the capacity of facilities to resist earthquakes. Facilities with a value of Is of below 0.3 have a high risk of collapse in case of an earthquake with an intensity of 6 Upper or more powerful.

Fig. 1: the State of Improvement in earthquake resistance according to *the Survey on Improvements in the Earthquake Resistance of Public School Facilities* in FY2007 (elementary and junior high school including the first half of secondary school)



(Source) MEXT

Fig. 2: The state of improvement in earthquake resistance of public elementary and junior high school (including the first half of secondary school) facilities



(Source) MEXT

Fig. 3: Overview of state subsidies for earthquake disaster prevention measures

School classification	Project classification		Calculated proportions of state subsidies	Proportions of state subsidies for facilities eligible for the laws concerning earthquake disaster prevention measures)	Eligibility
Elementary and junior high schools etc.	Reconstruction		1/3	1/2 (School buildings only)	In the regions that strengthened earthquake disaster prevention measures in preparation for a Tokai earthquake (173 municipalities in 8 prefectures) * As of 1 April 2007
	Reinforcement	Non-wooden school buildings	1/3	1/2 (2/3*)	
		Non-wooden gymnasiums	1/3	1/2	In the whole country
		Facilities other than the facilities above mentioned	1/3		
Schools for special needs education	Reconstruction		1/3		
	Reinforcement		1/3		

*Facilities are eligible for the proportion of two-thirds if one third of the total of the values of fiscal years financial capability index from FY1978 to FY1980 of local governments which founded them was 0.5 or lower.

Topics

Decentralization reforms

On December 8, 2006 the National Diet (the 165th extraordinary session) passed a Law on the Promotion of Decentralization (which was issued on December 15, 2006 and came into effect on April 1, 2007).

Based on "Basic Policies for Economic and Fiscal Reform 2006," (Basic Policies 2006) this law determines the system of government promotion regarding the "Comprehensive review of related legislation" designed to facilitate decentralization and prescribes the basic philosophy of decentralization as well as the duties of central and local governments.

(Main composition of the Law on the Promotion of Decentralization)

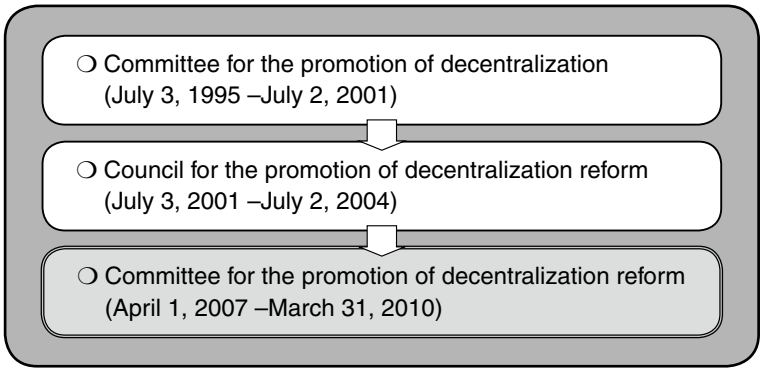
- ❍ Basic philosophy
- ❍ Duties of central and local governments
- ❍ Basic policies for promotion of decentralization
- ❍ Decentralization program
- ❍ Committee for the promotion of decentralization

Based on the same law, in April 2007 the "Committee for the promotion of decentralization" was established within the Cabinet Office as an advisory council to the Prime Minister. This committee consists of 7 members (appointed by the Prime Minister with the agreement of both Houses), and investigates the basic factors involved in the promotion of decentralization. It then submits recommendations to the Prime Minister based on the result of the investigation. In addition, this committee takes over the roles of similar committees founded by the government before 2007.

The committee allows lively exchanges of arguments among different government ministries and agencies. It published the "Basic philosophy concerning the promotion of decentralization" in May 2007 and the "Interim summary" in November of the same year, in which it maps out the direction to be taken by the government with regards to examining decentralization, including reform of the financial relations between central and local governments and transfers of authority. Based on these documents the committee plans to make sequential recommendations from the following spring and eventually produce a new "comprehensive decentralization law" some time within FY2009.

MEXT continues the promotion of decentralization, following the revised Basic Act on Education, which prescribes the obligation that educational administration must be done in a fair and reasonable way under appropriate divisions of roles and in cooperation with central and local governments. Also, MEXT will perform its duties properly as a central government and strive for more improvement and development in order to achieve equal opportunity in education and to advance educational standards.

Sequence of events concerning decentralization



Comprehensive evaluation of intellectual property strategy and the industry-academic-government collaboration system that enable universities to give back the fruits of their research to society

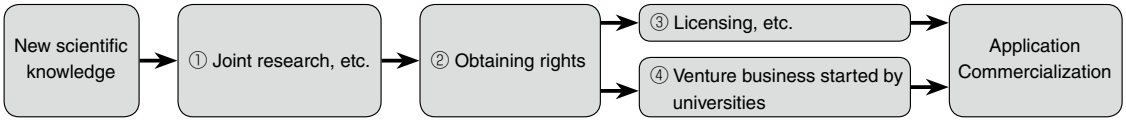
1. Background and Aim

According to the Third Science and Technology Basic Plan (March 2006) and Innovation 25 (June 2007), the industry-academic-government collaboration system which generates innovations needs further strengthening. In addition, Japan's industry-academic-government collaboration is moving from the stage of system construction (system revision, etc.) to the result stage where the system runs efficiently and generates innovation. Given this background, with a view to contributing to the examination of policies to be implemented in the future and planning new policies, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) made a comprehensive evaluation of the results of these policies for each industry after ascertaining past achievements and current conditions concerning industry-academic-government collaboration (Reference: Chapter 1 Section 1 (3)). A report of the evaluation was published in December 2007 (Reference: http://www.mext.go.jp/a_menu/hyouka/seido/005.htm).

2. Targets and method of evaluation

The comprehensive evaluation, which covers the period between the fiscal year when the Second Science and Technology Basic Plan started (FY2001) and FY2006, has been done regarding the intellectual property strategy and this industry-academic-government collaboration system that enable universities to give back the fruits of their research to society. This is a comprehensive evaluation of the results of the projects that MEXT carried out: (1) Project on Developing University Intellectual Property Headquarters, (2) Project on accelerating industry-academic-government collaboration, (3) Project on Collaborative Development of Innovative Seeds, (4) Project on Developing Creative Technology seeds, and (5) Project on Technology Transfer Support Center. The effect of each project is analyzed, specifically the analysis focuses on indicators for each milestone in the process until the results of university researches are put to practical use (Fig. 1: (1) – (4)), and the effect of projects in terms of the relationship with resource input amount is evaluated.

Fig. 1 Process in which the results of university researches are put to practical use



3. Result of evaluation

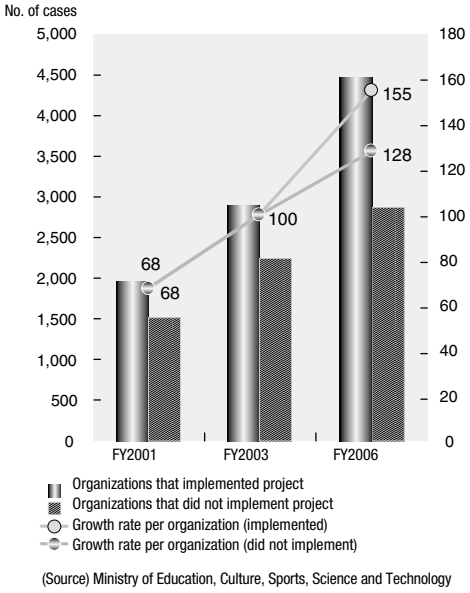
The industry-academic-government collaboration policies dealt in this evaluation, as well as the spin-off effects, play a major role in the development of an intellectual property strategy and industry-academic-government collaboration system that enable universities to give back the fruits of their research to society (Fig. 2 and 3).

The closer to the commercialization stage, the larger the contribution rate of these policies in industry-academic-government collaborative activities to the whole university. The aim of these policies, which is to give back the fruits of university research to society, has been achieved (Fig. 4).

Furthermore, while the estimated investment between FY2001 and FY2006 is around 110 billion yen, the direct total revenues earned from sales of products and joint research, etc. is projected to reach 230 billion yen, proving the cost-benefit performance of the ventures (Fig. 5).

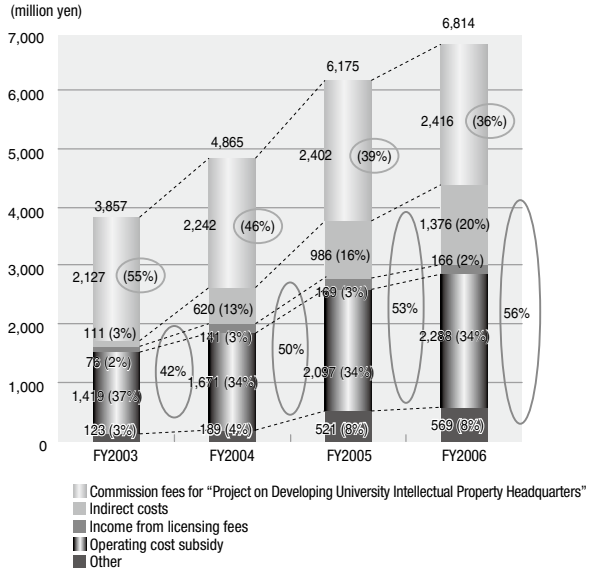
On the other hand, the result of this evaluation shows us clearly that it is necessary to shift the focus from quantity to quality regarding further efforts and policies to promote systematic and strategic joint research and to commercialize research results.

Fig. 2: Comparison of trends in the number of joint research cases and the growth rate between organizations that implemented the project on Developing University Intellectual Property Headquarters and organizations that did not



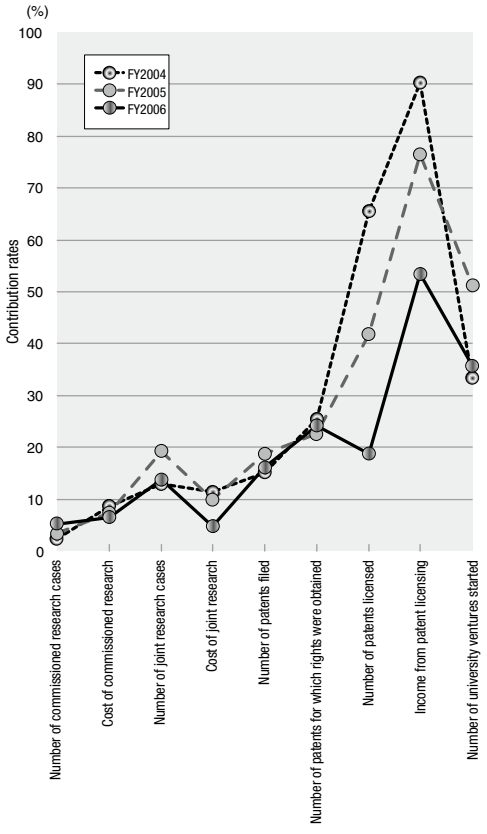
(Source) Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

Fig. 3: Trends in patent-related costs in organizations that implemented the project on developing university intellectual property



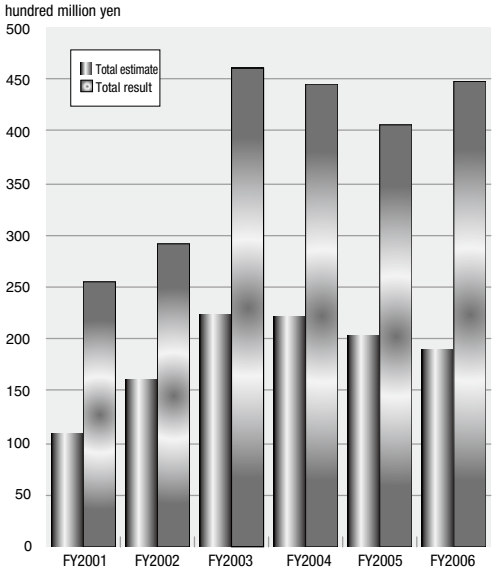
(Note) Due to rounding the total may differ from the sum of the parts.
(Source) Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

Fig. 4: Trends in contribution rates at each milestone



(Source) Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

Fig. 5: Costs and results of projects targeted in the evaluation



(Source) Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology

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