UTokyo Policy Alternatives Research Institute

Today, accelerating social transformations have given rise to new problems and complex new challenges. In such an environment, there is a pressing need for contributors to the formation of public policy to adapt to the times. Policy formation fully utilizing the results of advanced research is now a prerequisite to the resolution of the various problems that face society.

Faculty members of the University of Tokyo have over many years made significant contributions in the policy making process, in particular through their participation in various advisory bodies to the government. With universities expected to make a social contribution, however, one of the responsibilities of the University of Tokyo as a "national university corporation" should be to provide intellectual resources for policy formation and offer policy options.

For this reason, UTokyo Policy Alternatives Research Institute was established as a think tank organization, a body intended to transmit the University's wealth of accumulated knowledge to society at large.
Mission of UTokyo Policy Alternatives Research Institute

—Finding Solutions: Contributing to Problem Solving and Supplying Feedback to Academic research

Ichito Sakata
Director, UTokyo Policy Alternatives Research Institute

Today, we see a growing potential in the explosive growth in specifically targeted academic research. However, the number of cases where such challenges can be met using the principles of a single scientific discipline is relatively small. For this reason, we need mechanisms in place that will allow us to design solutions that combine diverse areas of scientific knowledge.

UTokyo Policy Alternatives Research Institute (PARI) aims to make recommendations and statements on a range of policy alternatives for real-world problem solving. Capitalizing on the advantages offered by the University of Tokyo as a comprehensive university, we create forums for multidisciplinary communication as well as combine research outcomes in various departments and disciplines.

With five key research areas and a diverse mix of more than 50 personnel, including internal researchers and staff, cooperating university faculty researchers, and invited researchers, we are advancing our activities while linking our interdisciplinary research with society. Designing our research to identify specific challenges that require resolution, the institute has been proposing policy options in the form of “Policy Recommendations” along with data, evidence and papers acquired through our research.

In the future, we also hope to emphasize our role in providing individual academic research projects with constructive feedback from field-based problem solving and to further expand and enrich the scope of our networks.

Painting a Picture of Tomorrow

—Expectations for UTokyo Policy Alternatives Research Institute

Junichi Hamada
President, The University of Tokyo

Today, we live in rapidly changing times. The world economy has yet to emerge from the recent global slump and, even if the hoped-for recovery materializes, there remain innumerable problems to be solved, including the global environment, an aging society, security in Asia, along with the problems of overcrowding in urban areas coupled with depopulation in rural areas. It is unlikely that such problems will be solved by the orthodox extension of existing knowledge. We need a vision of the future based on new knowledge and far-sighted innovative ideas, looking forward 20, 50, even 100 years.

The organization and expertise that could paint such a picture of a new world and lead us to it are available now in our academic institutions and universities. Among them, the University of Tokyo, with its large number of skilled top-level researchers in a variety of disciplines, is uniquely placed to stand as a cornerstone in this endeavor, as an “intellectual center that plays an important Role in the world”.

Recognizing that the time was ripe for a new initiative to meet new challenges, in 2008, the University of Tokyo founded the Policy Alternatives Research Institute as a unit under the direct supervision of the President. In 2013, the Institute was transformed into a university-wide center, the first to be formed since the University of Tokyo had become a “national university corporation” 10 years earlier. I am confident that the Institute will continue to further connectivity of knowledge between the various organizations and disciplines within the University of Tokyo on a university-wide basis and that, through a deeper cooperation with overseas research institutes, it will develop into the “hub” of domestic and international networks, where people gather to solve problems.
**Mission**

### Roles and Activities of the Institute

**Communicating policy alternatives utilizing research results at the University of Tokyo**

We both present policy proposals ourselves and draw ideas from various research results arising in different departments of the university in order to disseminate them to society as policy alternatives.

**Detecting problems by constructing networks covering a wide range of fields**

Taking advantage of being a part of a university which has diverse research interests, we try to detect problems and to look for comprehensive solutions which could not be found by research done in any single discipline, by constructing networks covering a wide range of fields.

**Activating policy research by interacting with internal and external organizations**

In order to facilitate multidisciplinary and multilateral research, we form networks with the government, companies, mass media, NPOs, and other organizations, as well as with departments inside the university, and try to activate mutual exchanges and policy research initiatives.

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**Research/Policy Recommendations**

### Methodology of Policy Research and Recommendations

We call a unit which conducts policy research a "policy research unit" and a unit which conducts concrete social demonstration research a "research demonstration project". Policy recommendations based on research results are published under the name of the policy research unit or the research demonstration project.

Researches at UTokyo Policy Alternatives Research Institute are organized by projects ongoing here, such as existing funded research or corporate sponsored research programs in our various departments. In addition to these, independent policy research units or research demonstration projects may be launched by the institute on important issues which, from the researcher's viewpoint, could potentially arise in the future, even if such issues are not presently socially recognized.

As a general rule, research undertaken by each policy research unit and policy recommendations based on the results of that research are conducted under the name of the unit or its director.

When we propose policy recommendations, we make it a principle to indicate multiple possibilities and provide information which would aid actual policy making, showing clearly both advantages and disadvantages based on objective data.

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### Policy Recommendations (notable examples)

- **Final Report - Resilient Governance Study**
  - PARI & COCN (March 2014)

- **University Reform from the Viewpoint of Innovation System: Evaluation of a National University 10 years after its Incorporation**
  - University and Society Policy Research Unit (December 2015)

- **Recommendations for the Review of the Basic Plan on Ocean Policy**
  - UT Ocean Alliance & PARI (September 2012)

- **Final Report - The Silver New Deal for our Active Aging Society**
  - PARI & COCN (March 2012)

- **Options for Institutionalizing Technology Assessment in Japan**
  - Technology Governance Policy Research Unit (December 2010)

- **The Future of Asian Security**
  - IGCC, Yonsei University & Northeast Asian Security Policy Research Unit (PARI) (December 2010)

- **The Silver New Deal for our Active Aging Society**
  - PARI & COCN (February 2010)

- **Energy and Environmental Policies for our Society**
  - Technology Governance Policy Research Unit (July 2009)
In response to an agreement toward an Energy Efficiency Roadmap for East Asia concluded at the Fourth EAS Energy Ministers Meeting held in Viet Nam in July 2010, PARI started to work on scenarios and policy recommendations on energy policy for individual East Asian countries in order to formulate an energy efficiency roadmap for the country concerned, in collaboration with the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA).

For East Asian countries, PARI draws up scenarios of economic and social development to create an energy roadmap, including in the field of energy efficiency. In line with the roadmap, PARI provides an economic and social assessment of energy technology and policies. For the first two years, PARI focused on Lao PDR. The roadmap of Lao PDR aimed to achieve energy efficiency, in particular by reducing energy loss during electricity transmission and distribution. In response to a request by the Lao government, PARI continued to work on the roadmap from the demand side perspective. Based on the above experience in Laos, in 2013 PARI began research on Myanmar with a view to formulating an integrated energy policy with improved energy electricity access, particularly in rural areas, with the specific aim of improving the electrification rate in the country. In this research, PARI aims to cover off-grid areas, including border areas, and has been implementing the following methodologies: fieldwork, electricity demand forecasting, mini-grid development simulation and analysis of Thai actors. PARI also studies good practice in rural electrification in other ASEAN countries. From the same year, we have been conducting collaborative research with the Energy Research Institute (ERI) of Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, which aims to determine how to take advantage of the economic dynamism of Thailand to supply more electricity to rural areas in Myanmar, particularly the border areas.

ERIA Energy Research
http://pari.u-tokyo.ac.jp/eng/unit/ta_energy.html

Technology Assessment Research Demonstration Project
http://pari.u-tokyo.ac.jp/eng/unit/ta.html
Five Key Research Areas
Establishing a New Structure
The latest university-wide center in 10 years founded within the University of Tokyo

UTokyo Policy Alternatives Research Institute made a fresh start in 2013 as a university-wide center with the aim of further expanding university-wide activities and building stronger internal and external networks. Taking this opportunity, five major research departments have been established to tackle pressing social problems. We will continue as before to disseminate our jointly accumulated knowledge and at the same time take on a new challenge of connecting that knowledge to the research production process.

1. Universities and Social Systems
Established to study methods of knowledge management at universities with especial focus on specifics such as intellectual property, security export control, organizational management and human resource development.

2. Innovation Systems
Established to adapt to new innovation environments, and study systems to promote innovation from a multifaceted perspective, covering economy, technology, society and other related fields.

3. Technology and Risk Governance
Established to organize a wide range of expertise and knowledge obtained through extensive practice to deal comprehensively with technological issues, natural disasters, financial markets, risk in space activities, and policy issues, etc., and study mechanisms for social decision-making and policy instruments.

4. Security Studies
Established to conduct cross-national research on the future of national security from various angles, covering foods, energy, economy, and human interaction, as well as military power.

5. Institutions for an Aging Society and Medical Innovations
Established to make a comparative review of various policy instruments in many policy areas to deal with the aging of society, assess the impact of medical innovation and study the future of comprehensive policy measures and systems.