

Competitive Research Fund in JAPAN.

By Keiko Okano

According to the list provided by the Japanese Cabinet Office, seven out of twelve ministries in Japan and their office come together to provide a competitive research fund. The total budget for the fund for the fiscal year of 2014 is about 407 billion JPY (about 3.9 billion USD), and over 80% of it is granted by MEXT, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science & Technology. This is done mostly through its two agencies, The Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) and The Japan Science and Technology Agency (JST). Please remember these names.

The fund comes from Japanese tax revenue, therefore the vast majority of it is intended for Japanese researchers working in Japanese institutions. Even becoming a co-PI or a sub-awardee is not an option for non-Japanese researchers in most programs. (They are not so explicitly mentioned, so I had to look through many guidelines for different programs to verify.) However, if the researcher belongs to an eligible Japanese research institution, s/he is welcome to apply, with a little issue of gathering information and having your English application reviewed by non-English-native judges, let alone the complicated, often Japanese-only, online application system.

Is there any positive news at all?

Well, Japan has been trying hard to promote international research exchange and collaboration. The above-mentioned JSPS is very good for sending/inviting researchers to/from Japan. Also, both JSPS and JST have started conversation with overseas funding agencies, such as the National Science Foundation and the European Commission, about funding collaboratively on joint research.

Such funds may not directly pay your research bills, but matching funds should make working with Japanese researchers a bit easier.

Moreover, JSPS and JST have offices overseas, so you may be able to talk to them directly. I will list them below, so please check them out for more specific opportunities. **N**



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USA	Washington, D.C.	http://www.jspsusa.org	+1-202-659-8190
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GERMANY	Bonn	http://www.jsps-bonn.de	+49-228-375050
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