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EVALUATING APPLIED RESEARCH

Lessons from Japan

John Irvine



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Despite the central importance of Japan in the world R & D arena, there is still very little English-language material available on how its research system operates. It was for this reason, as well as the widespread current interest in R & D evaluation, that the decision was taken to publish this report to DTI in book form. The intention is that it will go some way to informing researchers, research managers and policy-makers about Japanese approaches to evaluating applied research, and hopefully to stimulating debate about the extent to which we in the West can learn from the methods and techniques they employ. That said, the short-term nature of the study does mean that the report should be regarded as no more than an overview of the Japanese evaluation system. Moreover, despite attempts to check the accuracy of the source material (much of which came from interviews conducted through interpreters), it is probably inevitable that some errors and misinterpretations will remain.

x *Acknowledgements*

Finally, it should be stressed that the findings of this report are the responsibility of the author alone, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Trade and Industry or the Technical Change Centre.

Foreword

I am glad to have this opportunity to introduce the report which John Irvine has written on the Japanese approach to evaluating applied research.

All over the world there is increasing recognition of the important role evaluation can and must play in ensuring that maximum benefit is gained from the resources invested in research. This imperative applies to the Department of Trade and Industry as much as any. In 1985/86 we spent £185.8m supporting applied research at our own research establishments and in industry. This was 50.5% of our total R&D budget and the UK needs to make the most effective use of this investment.

In commissioning the report, the Department of Trade and Industry's R&D Assessment Unit hopes to learn about, and make a contribution to, a developing methodology. I believe that in the event we shall do both.

Philip Hills
Assessment Unit/Research & Technology Policy Division
Department of Trade and Industry