

RIKEN
5th Administrative Advisory Council (AAC)
Report

September 5, 2023

5th RIKEN Administrative Advisory Council Report

The 5th RIKEN Administrative Advisory Council (AAC) was convened on September 5, 2023. The AAC was asked to deliberate the following Terms of Reference.

5th AAC Terms of Reference (TOR)

1. Evaluate and make recommendations on the points from the 4th AAC's Report.
2. Evaluate and make recommendations on administrative reform initiatives and administrative functions of the National Research and Development Agency.
3. Evaluate and make recommendations on initiatives for RIKEN's personnel systems.

The 5th AAC's evaluations and recommendations are as follows.

Introduction

RIKEN is currently undergoing a variety of reforms, including personnel policies, as well as discussions for the 5th Mid- to Long-term Plan. Under the management policy of President Gonokami, who was newly appointed in FY 2022, the committee submitted evaluations and advice on the current situations for matters pointed out in the previous AAC and administrative reform in the 4th Mid- to Long-term Plan.

In “RIKEN’s Vision on the 2030 Horizon,” President Gonokami set forth a mission, that RIKEN “seeks to be a place where scientists conduct the research that they themselves wish to pursue, research that coincides with the creation of knowledge needed to secure humanity’s future, a place where science and society converge and deepen mutual trust.”

The deepening of mutual trust between science and society cannot be achieved by research alone but must be realized by RIKEN as a whole. As a major goal for this purpose, it is highly significant that the direction in which scientists themselves wish to pursue their research has been clearly indicated. The role of the administrative divisions in realizing these goals is extremely important.

Recognizing that administrative staff are management practitioners, positioning their activities in light of “RIKEN’s Vision on the 2030 Horizon” and visualizing to communicate how the administrative divisions support the activities of RIKEN will increase the motivation of administrative staff. The promotion of the motivation also leads to the acquisition and development of excellent human resources.

The research division and the administrative division are two wheels in the management of RIKEN. The AAC expects that RIKEN will make more effective use of the management strategy function of the administrative staff of RIKEN and become a strong supporter of the research power of RIKEN, so that RIKEN will continue to make improvements to become a pioneering model for research institutions in Japan and around the world.

TOR 1. Evaluate and make recommendations on the recommended points from the 4th AAC's Report.

- Changes in organizational structure since the previous AAC and establishment of key performance indicators (KPIs)

RIKEN considers that the contribution the administrative divisions can make to maximize R&D results is "to create an environment that facilitates research by researchers." Two KPIs have been established to indicate them.

- Ensure that researchers to have more time to devote to their research activities
- Staff satisfaction with their work

The background for the proposal of the establishment of KPIs at the 4th AAC was that RIKEN considers that it is not sound to focus only on the cost side for a research institution such as RIKEN, but that it is also important to understand the value created by the administrative staff members themselves. RIKEN conducted a survey for research management staff for thorough consideration taking into account the researchers' opinions in setting the KPIs. Those two specific KPIs, which were established on RIKEN's own, are a certain degree of quantitative representation of the qualitative evaluation that staff members have, and the evaluation shows that those KPIs were established in a form with which is simple to engage.

The AAC expects that continuing to improve the KPIs is important, with the aim of further quantifying the near-quantitative nature of how satisfied researchers and staff are with their work. In measuring KPIs, it is also important to utilize objective data. The AAC believes that explaining the effectiveness of administrative efforts using data and other means will help to gain understanding and trust from the research staff and help them feel closer. The AAC would like to add that expressing words of appreciation to the administrative staff at every opportunity, not only from supervisors but also from research staff, will help motivate the administrative staff.

It is necessary to analyze the results of the survey of research managers and the reasons for the low response rate of about 35%. It is important to capture potential opinions as to why the response rate is low and connect them to

operational reforms.

- Development of international offices

The AAC asked RIKEN about its missions and strategies which are set and developed according to the different roles of each location. While the objective of overseas collaboration is not simply to increase the number of international offices, some things can be seen by analyzing approaches to new relationships and active participation in events in light of quantified indicators. The AAC expects that it is desirable to utilize this information in the evaluation of activities after considering points that should be quantified.

In addition to collaboration with overseas universities and research institutions, it is important to collaborate with companies for RIKEN to implement RIKEN's activities in society. The AAC expects RIKEN to actively seek points of contact with companies by utilizing its overseas bases, and to develop activities that will lead to successfully attracting foreign companies to RIKEN.

The AAC advises to utilize this position from the perspective of human resource development as it is important to assign promising talent for international operations to take charge of international expansion, as well as to become a good opportunity to gain diverse work experience. In addition to paying attention to the ever-increasing importance of security export control in relations with foreign countries and the need for careful control, it is also necessary to develop specialized personnel in this field.

- Development of science and technology hub locations

Collaboration between industry, academia, and government is important to complement the activities of RIKEN, to generate synergy, and to implement research results in society. It should be noted that promoting regional cooperation involving local governments will lead to the further expansion of activities. To engage in projects that cannot be done by a university, it is important to clearly show the advantages of RIKEN and what cannot be done by RIKEN alone. The AAC expects the administrative staff to play a large role in coordinating these activities. The AAC considers that it is also a very important perspective to form an internal hub by attracting bases not only outside the office but also within RIKEN.

TOR 2: Along with evaluations and recommendations on administrative work reform initiatives, evaluate and reform the administrative functions of the

National Research and Development Agency needed by society

- Administrative work reform initiatives

The AAC recognizes that the efforts to reform administrative operations have not been made by specific divisions, but rather by related divisions and administrative/research staff working together to incorporate perspectives from the research field and to vigorously examine and respond to administrative issues in a bottom-up manner. It is important to specify milestones for solving issues, not only for the current fiscal year but also for the future, and it would be good to share these milestones among both administrative and research staff members to clarify what each employee has to do.

The issue with unifying rules among offices appears to have less to do with differences in rules, but rather there are differences in the work among the divisions, thus standardization of duties is considered necessary. This issue is not limited to RIKEN and is a problem that exists in any organization as the size of the organization increases. Conducting training on standard business models can prevent the adverse effects of local rules due to handover among personnel on site.

In addition to administrative staff in administrative divisions, Assistants in laboratories play a role in contributing to the smooth operation of business. It is important to improve the overall administrative capabilities of RIKEN by establishing a management system for these Assistants, designing their careers, and providing them with opportunities to improve their skills through training and other programs.

In the review of business systems, the AAC considers that the direction of improvement is correct, aiming to strengthen information system maintenance and information security, and to routinely implement operations to build a business system environment that is not partially but totally optimal as the ideal state of business systems. As a more concrete measure to resolve the situation where it is difficult to locate where a certain thing is, the AAC expects that the one-stop portal will be effectively operated, and it is also essential to promote the use of cloud services, centralization of master data, and standardization of operations together.

Middle management in administrative positions is a pivotal position where diverse requests and opinions are gathered from above and below, and this is not only in RIKEN but also the same in other organizations. Resources are

limited in terms of both manpower and time, and it is not realistic to respond to every challenge. It is important for the President and the Executives to share the priorities of issues through frank exchanges of opinions, to share with management/administrative staff how to allocate limited resources, and to demonstrate the concept of selecting and choosing issues that need to be addressed. It is also important to measure the effectiveness of the operational reforms that have been undertaken. Visualizing and sharing the results with administrative and research staff as well as management will provide the impetus for continuous operational improvement.

- Administrative functions of the National Research and Development Agency needed by society

The AAC recognizes that RIKEN strives to become an organization that is needed by society as a national research and development institution. It was evident that RIKEN is making every possible effort to become such an organization. It goes without saying that researchers and technicians who conduct excellent research are important for RIKEN, but those who perform administrative work to support research activities are equally important in managing the organization. The research and administrative divisions are two wheels of the cart. The role of administrative work has expanded beyond the traditional scope of clerical work, as it is required to function in terms of management strategy and at the same time be a practitioner of management. In order to ensure the realization of the president's message in "RIKEN's Vision on the 2030 Horizon", which is expressed in the management policy "as needed by the society," it is important to embody this message in the management strategy and disseminate it in an easy-to-understand manner both internally and externally. From this point of view, the role of the administrative offices is significant, and the AAC expects that administrative functions must be improved. The administrative staff must not only raise their awareness but also expand their own skills.

In light of these considerations, administrative work at RIKEN encompasses what would be called corporate planning or strategic management in a company, and the name "clerical work" may not be a sufficient term to describe the mission of RIKEN. It is expected that the administrative function will be strengthened to manage the management resources and operations of RIKEN so that the research and administrative staff can function smoothly together as

a collaborative effort to achieve the goals set forth by RIKEN.

As social conditions become increasingly complex, the administrative staff at RIKEN must take on an increasing number of tasks, including bolstering legal functions, internationalization of research activities, and research integrity toward new risks associated with openness to the public. Efforts to improve the system for economic security are essential to reduce risk. Legal functions will not be solved by hiring lawyers, but will be effective through organizational design as well as the assignment of surrounding staff to deal with legal issues as an organization.

TRIP is taking on the grand theme of connecting "future prediction" to "future control" by using leading-edge research platforms in each field at RIKEN, pioneering the knowledge demanded by the world and humanity in the future beyond the boundaries of any one field, and providing it widely to domestic and international society as an engine of social change. The challenge of this grand theme is to develop knowledge that transcends the boundaries of disciplines and to provide it to domestic and international society as an engine of social change. It is essential to share TRIP widely within RIKEN, from research/administration to management/general staff, to promote the participation of each organization, and to communicate it clearly not only within RIKEN but also outside of RIKEN as it is a difficult theme that seeks to open up new fields on a grand scale. The ACC expects that administrative personnel will play a large role in developing management concepts into concrete strategy and communicate them appropriately within and outside of RIKEN.

The AAC have pointed out opinions and proposals on RIKEN's administrative reform and the administrative functions. What is important, of course, is not to respond to all of them, but to make strict judgments on how to accept the proposals, how to consider them, and how to select and discard them.

TOR 3: Evaluate and advise on personnel system reform efforts.

- New personnel policies

The new personnel system reform for research staff introduced in FY 2022 declared the establishment of a career plan for researchers with stability and mobility as a new management policy. As an evolution of the fixed-term

employment system based on project employment, the elimination of the upper limit on the total contract period, the establishment of a special exception by the President and by the Center Director, and the strengthening of the research support program to actively promote internal-RIKEN personnel to strengthen the competitiveness of the Center. The President himself is at the forefront of these initiatives, sending out messages and taking action, which conveyed his conviction to create an excellent research environment where people can work with a high level of stability and mobility with a strong sense of determination and speed, and where people can work with peace of mind.

In order to bring about diverse work styles as labor shortages become more of a challenge in the future, the personnel system for administrative staff is very commendable, with bold and good initiatives such as abolishing the hiring of new Jun jimu kikan shokuin (fixed-term) and strengthening and expanding the hiring of Jimu kikan shokuin (permanent appointment), making the telework system permanent, and introducing an open concurrent position system and an open transfer system on a trial basis. RIKEN also implemented a cross-appointment system for staff at the RIKEN Cluster for Science, Technology and Innovation Hub (RCSTI) and university research administrators (URAs). At the same time, the telework system has both positive and negative aspects, and it is important to ensure appropriate operation through careful explanations that deepen staff understanding of the system so that it does not lead to a decline in performance. It is also important to give due consideration to the open transfer system, for example, to ensure that employees do not feel uncomfortable at work if they are unable to transfer. In the staff awareness survey, the chart indicated low scores for the personnel system and personnel policies; however, it is recommended RIKEN explores the specific efforts of other organizations that are achieving results.

- Human resource development and improvement of skills

In the future, it will be important for RIKEN's operations to become more sophisticated and specialized, and to create added value. Firstly, it is important to present vision for personnel during personnel development. Secondly, to clarify their roles, and thirdly, to develop personnel by encouraging their growth and success. The AAC understands that there are comments in other institutions that promotion to a management position is not appealing; however, looking into how this needs to be dealt with is important.

RIKEN has defined the roles and human resources for each administrative staff position. The AAC proposes RIKEN to consider if it is possible to clarify what each position model can achieve, position the activities of administrative staff in light of the management philosophy, and depict a structure in which administrative staff support RIKEN. In addition, the AAC considers that clarifying the significance of administrative staff work, visualizing how their work is connected to RIKEN's business, and appropriately evaluating their performance and linking it to their compensation will lead to the empowerment of administrative staff.

It is also important to flexibly revise the content of training programs in accordance with the times in order to raise the awareness of administrative staff and broaden and enhance the skills of each individual. In addition, reassignments for a certain period of time and the inclusion of other types of work (secondments, cross-appointments, dual employment, etc.), including those at private companies and national/public/private universities, will promote the exchange of diverse human resources, broaden the perspectives of administrative staff and deepen mutual understanding. It will enable RIKEN as a whole to improve the level of its administrative staff. The AAC looks forward to RIKEN continuing to attract and motivate outstanding human resources to raise standards even higher in the future.

Categorizing staff positions according to types of work, such as research DX specialists, coordinators for promotion of collaboration, IR personnel, rather than categorizing by their affiliation, will clarify the position of URA (University Research Administrator)-like research support positions and make it easier for staff to be active. As mentioned in TOR 2, research support staff and Assistants play a significant role in supporting researchers, and it is important to provide them with opportunities to improve their abilities and grow through education and training, and at the same time, to show them a career path.

In terms of promoting diversity, it must be said that the ratio of female managers is low compared to the ratio of female administrative positions. Although the ratio of female in administrative management positions has improved from 6.8% in 2011, when the first AAC was held, to 15.8% in FY 2022, improvement is required considering that the ratio of female administrative staff in FY 2022 is 49.3%. Further measures to increase the ratio of female in upper-level positions are required.

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