



Enjoy Your Research Life

Kenji Yamaji, Director-General,
Research Institute of Innovative Technology for the Earth



Major challenges in the 21st century are making a clear image after the first decade. While global constraints of natural resources and environmental capacities such as the global warming have been apparent in a concrete manner, new emerging nations such as China are achieving remarkable economic growth. The realization of sustainable development of human society on the earth makes a focal issue in the 21st century. Sustainable development is no longer a mere concept, but appearing as a realistic challenge to be responded.

The Research Institute of Innovative Technology for the Earth (RITE), which was founded for the New Earth 21 Program launched by the government of Japan in 1990, has to contribute to the realization of the sustainable development. While the issue of sustainable development is a theme given to RITE from the society, the theme is too broad for researchers to deal with. The broad research objective should be interpreted as a set of the issues to be addressed as research subjects.

The essence of research lies, after all, in the discovery of new facts and/or the creation of new useful artifacts including not only physical products but also systems in a form of software. RITE has achieved various world leading research outputs such as the technologies for CO₂ capture and storage (CCS), bio-refinery technologies, and the mathematical models for systems analysis of the measures to cope with global warming. These outstanding achievements were resulted from the research activities to tackle with the problems properly derived by interpreting the broad societal needs for realizing sustainable development as concrete research subjects particularly in the field of climate change issues. The staff of RITE should have gained precious experiences, which lead to the proud as researchers, through these achievements in the discovery of new facts and the development of useful technologies and systems.

RITE must meet the expectations from the society as a trustworthy research organization; in addition, RITE should be a place for the staff to enjoy research activities leading to its corporate identity. The staff should exert their ingenuity in individual roles: the management to set a proper research agenda for meeting the social expectations; administrative staff to support research activities and disseminate the results; and researchers to think the implication of research in the society as well as to conduct professional research. While scientific curiosity is an important motivation for the research, recognition of the objective of the research will strengthen the power to develop new ideas. Joy of research is not enough for researchers to enjoy their research life, recognizing the social context of the research is another important element.

RITE, with the fruitful 20 year history, will continue to be an active research organization to tackle with global environmental issues. We would like to ask for your encouragement and continuing support.