

## **MEXT, METI Make Nuclear Budget Requests for Fiscal 2006**

**On August 29 and 30, respectively, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT) publicly announced their general budget requests for the upcoming fiscal year (April 1, 2006, to March 31, 2007).**

The MEXT budget includes ¥194.3 billion (\$1.766 billion at \$1.00=¥110) for the Japan Atomic Energy Research Institute (JAERI), up 1.7% (by ¥3.2 billion) from the current year. Other major nuclear-related items are ¥22.5 billion (\$205 million) for the FBR Monju, up 79% (by ¥9.9 billion), ¥31.0 billion (\$282 million) for the Japan Proton Accelerator Research Complex (J-PARC), up 24% (by ¥6.0 billion), and ¥2.8 billion (\$25.5 million) for the ITER project, up 7.7% (by ¥200 million). In addition, the Ministry has requested ¥3.3 billion (\$30 million) for the construction of X-ray free-electron laser facilities.

Meanwhile, the METI budget includes ¥36.7 billion (\$334 million) for safety-related expenses dealing with nuclear power, up 5.2% (by ¥1.8 billion). In the area of subsidies to help revitalize electric power source areas, another ¥5.6 billion (\$51 million) has been earmarked for new budget categories for support for coexistence with local communities to deal with aging reactors and to site nuclear fuel-cycle facilities. Also, some ¥50 million (\$450,000) has been requested for feasibility studies for the development of next-generation light water reactors (LWRs).

The nuclear-related budget of MEXT for the upcoming fiscal year will reduce 0.5% (by ¥1.4 billion) to ¥285.3 billion (\$2.594 billion). That reflects the significant increase of 79% in FBR Monju-related costs, mentioned above, due to remodeling work that started this month. In addition, ¥31.0 billion (\$282 million) is to go to J-PARC, up 24% from the previous year, owing to the construction of the materials and life sciences experimental facility, one of the accelerator's core facilities. Of that figure, ¥20.0 billion (\$182 million) will go to the Japan Atomic Energy Research Institute (JAERI), and the remaining ¥11.0 billion (\$100 million) to the High-Energy Accelerator Research Organization (KEK). Now that the decision has been made to construct the ITER in France and not in Japan, the budget will now concentrate on the procurement and arrangement of those pieces of equipment and facilities that Japan has been put in charge of. Also, a sum of ¥5.8 billion (\$53 million) has been allocated to heavy-particle cancer treatment, up 12% (by ¥600 million).

With the X-ray free-electron laser facility scheduled to be completed by FY2010 in the site adjacent to the SPring-8 accelerator, some ¥40.0 billion (\$364 million) will be needed for total construction expenses. The work to be completed in the upcoming fiscal year includes the drawing up of the specific design, and the first construction of some of the buildings. The ultra-high-intensity X-ray laser will allow the measurement and analysis of the super-fast dynamic state and changes of the ultra-fine structure and chemical-reaction boundaries on the level of a single proton.

In the METI general budget, a sum of ¥43.3 billion (\$394 million), up 2.9% (by ¥1.2 billion), will go to the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency (NISA). The budget for nuclear power safety has been increased by ¥1.8 billion to ¥36.7 billion, up 5.2%, of which Japan Nuclear Energy Safety Organization (JNES) gets an operational subsidy of ¥23.7 billion (\$215 million). New budget categories include ¥1.0 billion (\$9.1 million) for activities to reinforce the infrastructure for aging measures, ¥500 million (\$4.5 million) to study technologies for the maintenance and management of reprocessing facilities, and ¥1.9 billion (\$17 million) for activities to organize a facility to train nuclear power safety inspectors.

Subsidies and other payments to electric power source sites have been increased by ¥700 million to ¥134.9 billion (\$1.23 billion), up 0.5%. Of that figure, some ¥5.6 billion (\$51 million) has been assigned to a new budget category to support communities to deal with aging nuclear reactors and to site nuclear fuel-cycle facilities. In the budget for the Agency for Natural

Resources and Energy (ANRE), a new category has been created for feasibility studies on next-generation light water reactors (LWRs), as well as ¥100 million (\$900,000) to train on-site maintenance workers, ¥55 million (\$500,000) to support Asian countries wishing to introduce NPPs, and so forth.

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