

# Enhancing the quality and value of our research services at the National Diet Library, Japan

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# 1 Introduction



# (1) Research and Legislative Reference Bureau

- The National Diet Library is an assisting body for the National Diet (Parliament) of Japan.
- The Research and Legislative Reference Bureau (the Research Bureau) conducts “legislative research services” for the Diet Members on a wide range of policy issues.

## (2) Legislative Research Service for Diet Members

### On-demand Research

- Response to specific requests from individual Diet Members

### Anticipatory Research

- Publish articles proactively in every field of national policy issues of current or future interest to Diet Members

The Research Bureau, with the help of other departments of the Library, also provides “library services” such as loans for the legislature.

## (3) On-demand Research

**Mandatory behaviors for  
legislative research services**

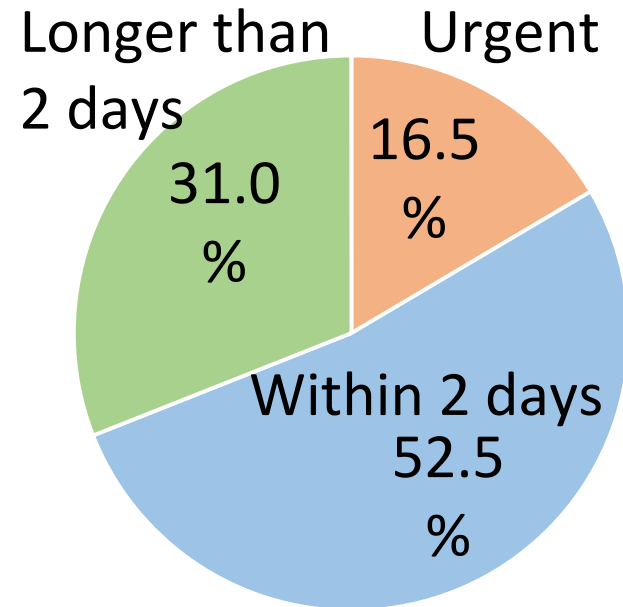
**Nonpartisan**

**Confidentiality**

**Objectivity, Relevance and  
Timeliness**

**Promptness**

Deadlines of Legislative Research  
Services in 189th Ordinary Session



## (4) Anticipatory Research

### **The results of the anticipatory research**

**Publish and deliver** both physically and electronically to the Diet Members.

337 new anticipatory research products in FY2014

### **Organize seminars on policy issues**

(15 – 20 seminars per year)

Researchers give explanations on the results of specific anticipatory research and conduct Q&A sessions with Diet Members.

## (5) Interrelationship between anticipatory research and research on requests

**Our anticipatory research and research on requests from the individual Diet Members are interrelated.**

- **We learn the issues of the Diet Members' interest from the research trends on request, and then rewrite and develop some of the research reports into publications.**
- **Experience of anticipatory research also nurtures the abilities of the researchers and leads to the enhancement of the quality and value of our research.**



# (6) Mission and Objectives 2012-2016 and Strategic Goals

The Research Bureau, with other departments of the National Diet Library (NDL), has been improving its services under **the Mission and Objectives 2012-2016** and **the Strategic Goals** of the NDL.

## **Strategic Goals of the NDL: Objective 1: Support to the Diet (Excerpt)**

- We should **respond promptly, precisely and in an advanced manner to research requests** and, to do so, produce publications which are fully utilized for research inquiries.
- We should **conduct various research projects on basic policy issues of the nation, and publish and utilize their outcomes for research inquiries.**
- We should **cooperate with research institutions, researchers and others in Japan and abroad** and utilize their expertise for our research.

## (7) Our Recent Efforts under Mission and Objectives 2012-2016

- a) Collaborative research projects, which are proactively conducted in cooperation with external researchers.
- b) The satisfaction survey of the Diet Members, which we implemented in 2014.

## 2 Collaborative Research Projects



# Collaborative Research Projects

- Some of our anticipatory research is performed in **cooperation with external researchers and scholars.**
- We initiate **several types of joint-research projects** with external experts under **comprehensive and interdisciplinary research approaches.**
- The results of our collaborative research projects are **published and delivered to Diet Members.**

# Effects of Collaborative Research Projects

Through collaborative research

**We can enhance the quality of the research**

- Our staff researchers are capable of **producing higher-quality tailored reports, performing in-person briefings for the Diet Members sometimes giving expert testimony during the Diet committee meetings.**
- The collaborative research also gives us the advantage of conveying **the multi-faceted ideas or thoughts from the public to the Diet Members.**

# (1) Interdisciplinary Research Projects

- We form a **project team** to conduct interdisciplinary research on important national issues.
- The team consists of **our staff researchers from various divisions** and often a **few external researchers**.
- We also **invite various scholars to our lecture-discussion meetings**.

# Recent Interdisciplinary Research Projects

The results of research have been published in monographs or featured in our monthly magazine, and presented at our seminars on policy issues.

- 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic games (2015)
- Recovery Efforts in the Aftermath of the Great East Japan Earthquake (2014)
- Decentralization in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: Implication for the Doshusei Regional System Plan (2013)
- Japan-U.S. Relations Reconsidered (2012-013)
- Regeneration of Japan through Technology and Culture (2011-2012)
- China in Global System (2010)



## (2) International Seminars on Policy Issues

- Every year the Research Bureau **invites foreign and Japanese scholars** and hosts an **International Seminar on Policy Issues** for the Diet Members, together with a separate **open seminar on the same theme for the public**.
- We invited scholars from the UK, the USA, Switzerland, China and Germany.



International Policy Seminar  
“Parliamentary Control over Governmental  
Activities – Parliamentary Reservation in  
Germany” in February 2015





### (3) Science and Technology Research Projects

In 2010 we created the Science and Technology Research Office and launched **a science and technology research project.**

- Every year we select **significant policy issues related to science and technology** and **outsource part of the research to a think-tank.**
- **The Research Bureau** is in charge of **planning and overseeing the whole project** as well as **conducting part of the research.** We form a **project team of staff researchers and visiting scholars.**
- **The think-tank organizes a research committee comprising external scholars and conducts their part of the research** per detailed specifications set by the Research Bureau.

# Recent Science and Technology Research Projects

- Life Science (2015)
- Information and Communication Technology (2014)
- Renewable Energy (2013)
- Ocean Development (2012)
- State Promotion of Research and Development (2011)
- International Trend in Science and Technology Policy (2010)

*Research Material*  
“Advances in Information and Communication  
Technology and Cyber Security”



## (4) Foreign Constitution Research Projects

- Both houses of the Diet have been conducting **broad and comprehensive research on the Constitution of Japan** and fundamental legislation closely related to the Constitution.
- In response, the scope of constitutional research performed by the Research Bureau has been widened.
- The recently established **Constitution Division** of the Research Bureau **carries out research on the constitutions of foreign countries.**

# Recent Foreign Constitution Research Projects

The projects entail publication of translations into Japanese of foreign constitutions, often performed with the help of external scholars.

**Research of foreign legislation and institutions is one of the strengths of the Research Bureau, which differentiates us from other agencies providing legislative assistance to the Diet.**

Already translated the constitutions of Sweden, Ireland, Austria, Canada, Greece, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Portugal and Finland.  
Now completing the Hungarian.



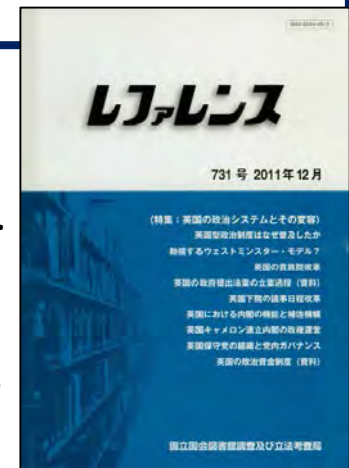
## (5) Research Cooperation Projects

- Every year the Research Bureau runs **several Research Cooperation Projects**.
- Each of them is **planned and organized by one of the research divisions** of the Bureau.
- The research is **conducted by the researchers of the division** and, sometimes, those of **other related divisions** and in cooperation with **external researchers and scholars**.

One of the main projects

- British political system and its transformation (2011)  
A professor was invited and held a seminar for Diet Members.  
7 researchers of Politics and Parliamentary Affairs Division wrote articles on the issue.

Special issue of monthly magazine *Reference*



# 3 Satisfaction survey of the Diet Members



# (1) 2014 Satisfaction survey of the Diet Members

## Purpose

- To learn how Diet Members evaluate our legislative research services
- To clarify our strengths & weaknesses and to serve them better in the future

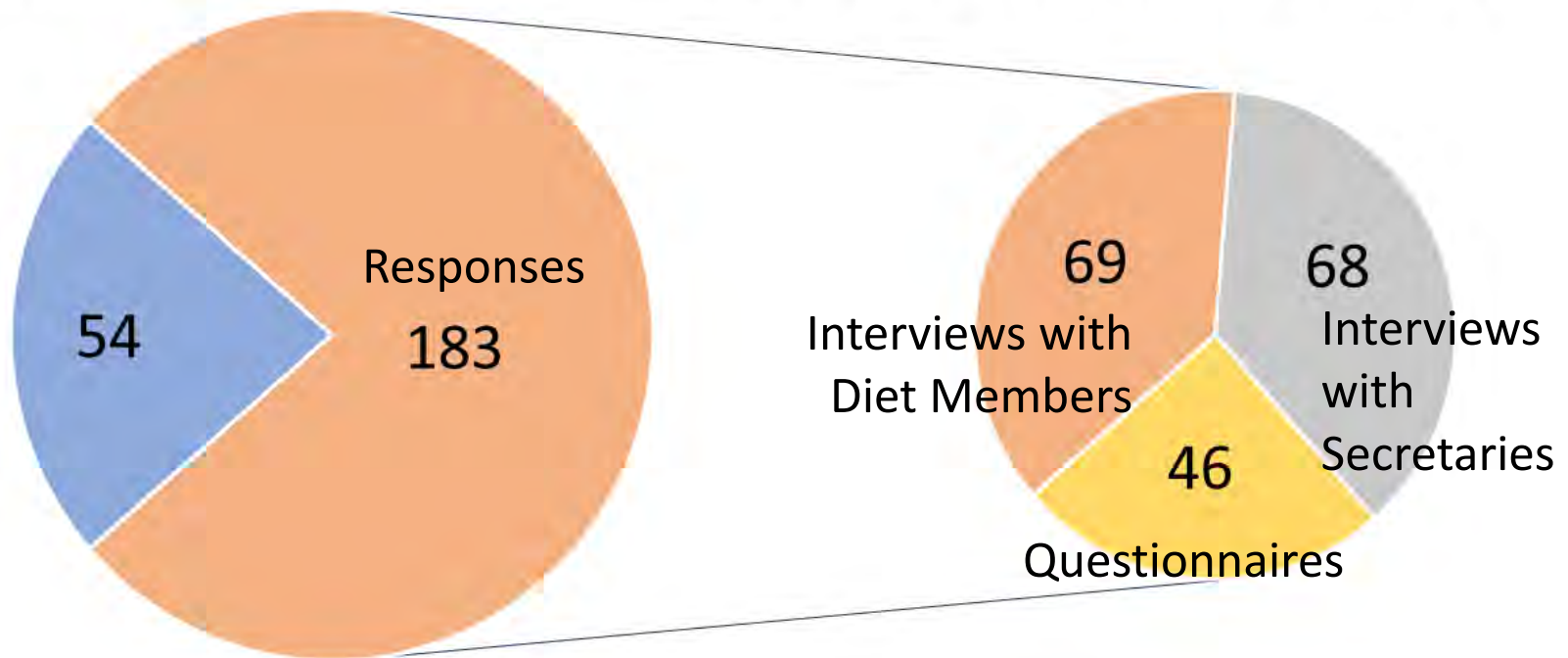
## Past surveys

- Conducted in 2005, 2006, 2007, 2011



# Interviews and Responses

Survey for 237 newly elected Diet members for one month  
(elected 2012 Lower House election and 2013 Upper House election)





## Opportunity to recognize and understand the value of our services

- We learned that many of them were already regular customers.
- Even though there were some who were not yet familiar with our services.
- For the latter, this survey also served as an opportunity to recognize and understand the value of our services.

# High Level of Satisfaction and Some Suggestions

## Satisfaction

- Evaluated on promptness, neutrality and objectivity of our on-demand research as well as reliability of the data & information
- Tailored reports were most appreciated
- 70% of respondents often referred to *Issue Brief*

## Suggestions

- Improvements of interdivisional research performed on request of individual Diet Members & other suggestions



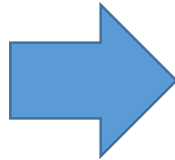
**Established a working team to clarify the matters needing improvement  
Implemented changes**

## **(2) Questionnaires attached to our responses to Diet Members' requests**

Last year we made changes to the questionnaire that we attach when responding to requests for materials from the Diet Members.

### **Previous Questionnaire**

**"Any comments?"**



### **Current Questionnaire**

- 1. Were materials to the point?**
- 2. Was the volume satisfactory?**
- 3. Were the reports easy to understand?**
- 4. Did you find the materials useful?**

**With the introduction of the new questionnaire, the number of Diet Members who kindly take time to respond has increased.**

# 4 Conclusion

- Next year NDL will evaluate our achievements under the current Mission and Objectives and draw up new future objectives and strategies.
- Our primary mission is assisting the National Diet of Japan.
- The mission will remain the same and we will continue to enhance the quality and value of our legislative research services in fully assisting the Diet.

Thank you.