

The University of Tsukuba and Toyota Jointly Open the R&D Center for Strategic Frontiers in Social Planning

Advances toward Society 5.0 through the Development of Infrastructure for Future Communities and the Formation of Industrial Centers through Long-term Collaborative Action

The National University Corporation University of Tsukuba and Toyota Motor Corporation announce that the R&D Center for Strategic Frontiers in Social Planning (Director: Isamu Takahara, Specially Appointed Professor, University of Tsukuba, and Project General Manager of Toyota Motor Corp.) had opened at the University of Tsukuba this April for research and development into social infrastructure for communities of the future. The center is planned to operate for five years, and will employ an open laboratory system for genuine collaboration between industry, academia, and government.

Research at the center will include verification into solutions for regional socioeconomic issues, development of future industries, and formation of industrial centers, as well as policy recommendations. Through social measurements made with effective application of the Internet of Things (IoT) and coordination with the University of Tsukuba's Center for Artificial Intelligence Research, the center will contribute to the sustainable cycle of growth in communities. Specifically, the center will conduct studies into the causes and solutions of issues that require improvement from a social engineering and mathematical engineering approach, and will support human resources training and intelligence development.

There are several socioeconomic issues that threaten the existence of regions outside the Tokyo metropolis. These include the decline in industrial competitiveness as a result of the rapidly aging population and increasing depopulation of rural areas, a shrinking workforce in agricultural, forestry and marine enterprises, and an aging infrastructure. In particular, there are issues that are difficult within the industry structure, such as agricultural support, child care support, disaster prevention/mitigation and other elements of social infrastructure of future communities. These are key issues where Japan must address with urgency through coordinated effort between industry, academia and government as part of the drive to realize the establishment of Society 5.0¹ as raised in the Fifth Science and Technology Basic Plan².