

Preface

Numerous programs have been implemented in recent years to help revitalize regional industries. Two of the most common measures are the promotion of industry clusters by METI (Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry) and intellectual clusters by MEXT (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology). Still, in many cases it is difficult to determine whether or not regional industrial SMEs (particularly those in machine and information industries), which are responsible in part for the health of regional economies, are becoming involved in these cluster concepts.

In order to acquire a deeper understanding of the situation, the Japan Society for the Promotion of Machine Industry decided to conduct a statistical analysis of the success factors in regional industrial innovation. Our analysis is based on detailed case studies of cluster-related business in regions nationwide that focus on regional industrial innovation; these case studies are part of our 2004 research project entitled "Conditions for the Formation of Innovation Systems in Machine Industry in Japan." Our analysis is also based on valuable information gathered through a survey sent to nationwide universities, national colleges of technology, and related prefectural and municipal organizations. We sincerely appreciate all the cooperation extended by academic and governmental institutions.

This is a condensed English version of the Japanese-language report of our findings, entitled "Innovation in Regional Industries: Success Factors & Analysis of Current Conditions." The framework of the condensed version is as follows.

Introduction

Outlines the objectives, methodologies, and basic framework of this research project.

Chapter 1

Discussion of the diversity and potential of regional industrial innovation from the perspectives of industrial agglomeration, SMEs, and promotion of innovation.

Chapter 2

Introduction of regional industrial innovation case studies from Mie, Aomori, and Hyogo Prefectures.

Chapter 3

Discussion of the findings of a survey sent to nationwide academic and governmental organizations

Chapter 4

Discussion – based on findings from each chapter – of regional industrial innovation success factors and how engineering industries help to make regional economies more competitive.

Our goal in organizing this report is to offer useful information to anyone involved in policy planning and research that is related to Japanese machine and information industries.

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