

Natural Resources and Energy (ANRE), a part of MITI, carries out much of this work. In particular, it is responsible for a rational development for energy and mineral resources, achievement of security of energy supply, the promotion of energy efficiency, and the administration of certain energy-related industries. Energy R&D apart from that concerning the nuclear industry, is shared between ANRE and another MITI agency, the Agency of Industrial Science and Technology. Nuclear sector R&D is managed by yet another MITI organization, the Science and Technology Agency.

It is also worth noting that many of the key energy-related policy decisions are made only after substantial consultation, and consensus building, has occurred with the private sector. Much of this policy review work is undertaken by an Advisory Committee for Energy which has been struck, and its subcommittees.

Given the unique energy situation outlined above, it should come as no surprise that Japanese energy policy centres on three main objectives: ensuring a secure supply of energy, particularly the oil towards which Japan's industrial structure is now geared; over time, achieving a more balanced mix of energy supply, with less dependence on oil; and the enhancement of the efficiency of energy use. These three objectives, and how the Japanese government has undertaken to achieve them, are set out in this section below. The final section of the paper will address the policies which have been adopted and are currently being envisaged to deal with the environmental challenges facing the country. These, it can safely be argued, embody important energy policy considerations.

A. Ensuring A Secure Supply Of Oil

Concerns over the security of oil supply in Japan extend back at least two decades, to the 1973 oil crisis. Then, the government of the day deemed it prudent to take a more active role in ensuring that adequate supplies would be available in the future. It subsequently (1978) strengthened the state-owned oil company which was established in 1967. Since then, the principal function of the Japan National Oil Corporation (JNOC) has been to make sure that adequate and secure oil supplies were available to the nation.