

INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

Despite a growing R&D sector, Singapore still lags behind other developed countries in terms of R&D as a percentage of GNP. Countries such as the USA, Japan, the former West Germany, Switzerland and Sweden devote between 2.5% and 3.0% of GDP or GNP to R&D. Even compared to other NIEs, Singapore's 0.9% falls behind Taiwan's 1.0% and South Korea's 1.8% of GNP (R&D Survey, 1987/88).

In terms of the number of people involved in R&D, Singapore is also behind most of these countries. Japan with 79 per 10,000 labour force, leads the way followed by the USA (67) and West Germany (52). Sweden (44), Switzerland (36) and Taiwan (35) are also devoting a larger percentage of their labour force to research and development. Only South Korea with 27 per 10,000 is comparable to Singapore (27) (R&D Survey, 1987/88).

PROBLEMS AND PROJECTIONS

Although Singapore currently trails these countries, projections indicate that by 1991, R&D expenditure will have reached 1.3% of GNP. Estimates are that by the year 2000, R&D expenditure will equal 2% of GNP. If these projections are attained, Singapore should achieve the level of R&D expenditure of the developed countries by the turn of the century (Source: NSTB).