

**Effectiveness of University Evaluation:  
Experience and Lessons Learned from the Trial Evaluations  
Conducted by NIAD-UE in Japan**

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# Background of the trial evaluation

1998 The university council under the MEXT proposed to establish a third-party organization for university evaluation.

2000 NIAD was reorganized as a new entity charged with carrying out the evaluation of universities in addition to its degree-awarding functions.

AY2000 – 2003 NIAD-UE implemented the trial evaluations of selected universities and inter-university research institutes.

## Goals of the trial evaluation:

Assisting each higher education institution;

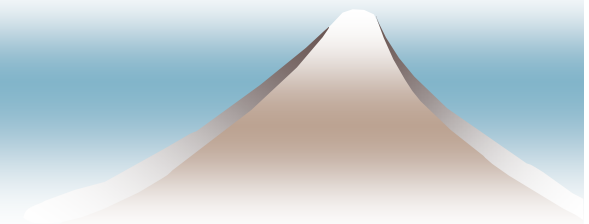
to **enhance its quality** by the improvement of its educational and research activities as a result of the evaluation, and

to **promote its accountability** and to win broad public understanding and support by the disclosure of the education and research conditions in an easily understood form.

(Not ranking, Not linked with funding)

# Three types of evaluation

- University-wide Thematic Evaluation (UwTE)
  - ✓ Targeting activities throughout the university
    - ◆ Education service to public,
    - ◆ Liberal arts education,
    - ◆ Cooperation with society for research activities,
    - ◆ International cooperation
- Evaluation of Educational Activities (EEA)
- Evaluation of Research Activities (ERA)
  - ◆ The targets were schools in nine fields: Natural Science, Medicine, Law, Education, Engineering, Humanities, Economics, Agriculture, Comprehensive Science



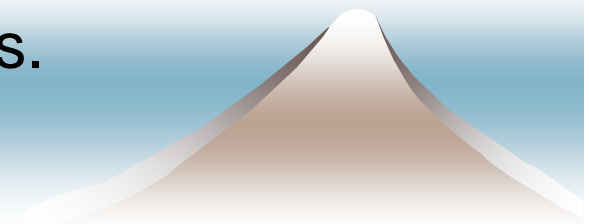
# The No. of evaluated institutions (Table 1)

Category	Starting	Themes / Fields	Number of Institutions
University - wide Thematic Evaluation (UwTE)	2000	Education service to public	98 national univ. and 14 luRIs(*)
		Liberal arts education	95 national univ.
	2001	Cooperation with society for research activities	99 national univ. and 14 luRIs
	2002	International cooperation	97 national univ., 14 luRIs and 4 public univ.
Evaluation of Educational Activities in each Academic Field (EEA)	2000	Natural science	6 national univ.
		Medicine	6 national univ.
	2001	Law	6 national univ.
		Education	6 national univ.
		Engineering	6 national univ.
	2002	Humanities	6 national univ. and 4 public univ.
		Economics	6 national univ. and 2 public univ.
		Agriculture	6 national univ. and 1 public univ.
Comprehensive science		4 national univ. and 2 public univ.	
Evaluation of Research Activities in each Academic Field (ERA)	2000	Natural science	5 national univ. and 1 luRI.
		Medicine	6 national univ.
	2001	Law	6 national univ.
		Education	5 national univ., and 1 luRI
		Engineering	6 national univ.
	2002	Humanities	5 national univ., 1 luRI and 3 public univ.
		Economics	6 national univ. and 2 public univ.
		Agriculture	6 national univ. and 1 public univ.
		Comprehensive science	4 national univ. and 2 public univ.

# The No. of evaluated institutions

- University-wide Thematic Evaluation (UwTE)
  - ◆ Education service to public, 112
  - ◆ Liberal arts education, 95
  - ◆ Cooperation with society for research activities, 113
  - ◆ International cooperation 115
- Evaluation of Educational Activities (EEA) 61
- Evaluation of Research Activities (ERA) 60
  - ◆ The targets were schools in nine fields: Natural Science, Medicine, Law, Education, Engineering, Humanities, Economics, Agriculture, Comprehensive Science

The total number of the evaluated institutions or schools was 550 throughout the trial sessions.



# Reports



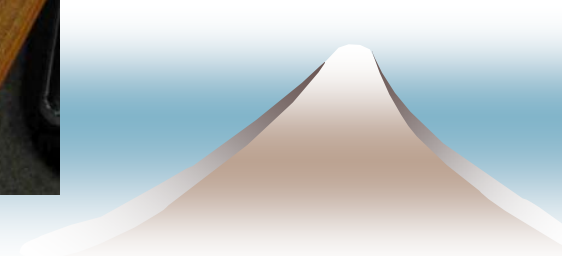
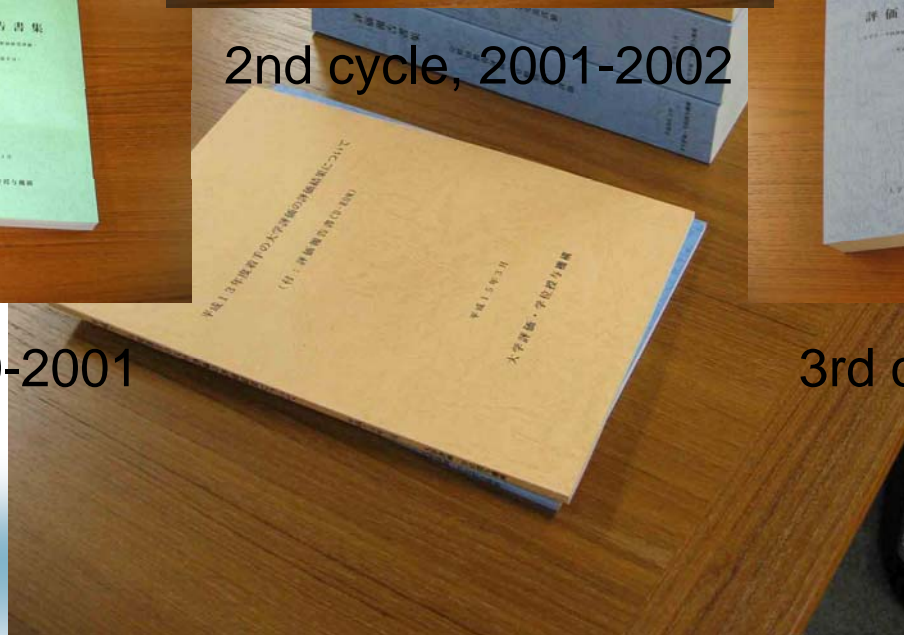
2nd cycle, 2001-2002



1st cycle, 2000-2001



3rd cycle, 2002-2003

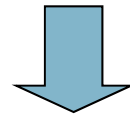


# New quality assurance system

AY2000 – 2003 NIAD-UE's trial evaluation

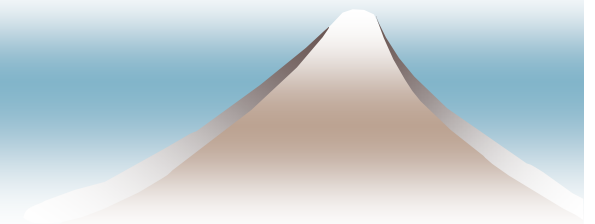
From AY2004

it would shift to the full-scaled evaluation



Two major changes of higher education policy

- ✓ Amendment of the School Education Law
- ✓ Corporatization of National Universities



# New quality assurance system

## Two evaluations

1. **Accreditation** (Quality assurance) based on the amendment of the School Education Law
  - ✓ All of the universities must receive an evaluation conducted by a independent evaluation agency every seven years to enhance their level of the education, research and other activities.
  - ✓ It is applied to Junior colleges, technical colleges and law schools.
  - ✓ The university can select one evaluation agency among those authorized (accredited) by the Ministry of Education (MEXT).

## 2. Evaluations concerning education and research activities at national university corporations and inter-university research institutes based on the National University Corporation Law

- ✓ In 2004 all national universities were corporatized and contracted six-years medium-term plans with the MEXT.
- ✓ At the end of term the achievement of their plans are evaluated by the Committee under the MEXT, then the committee requests NIAD-UE to implement the evaluation concerning education and research activities.
- ✓ The results will be used for budget allocation.

**NIAD-UE is assigned to implement both evaluations.**



# Development of New evaluation

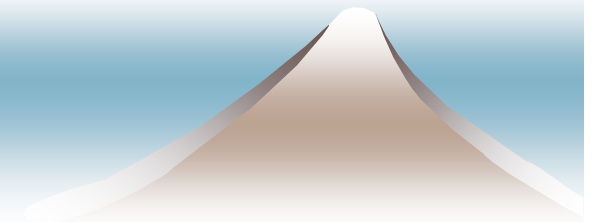
NIAD-UE must reconstruct its new evaluation systems as a whole.

To develop appropriate and effective evaluation system, NIAD-UE must take advantage of its accumulated experiences and lessons learned through the trial evaluations over the past four years.

**What did we learn from the trial evaluation past four years?**

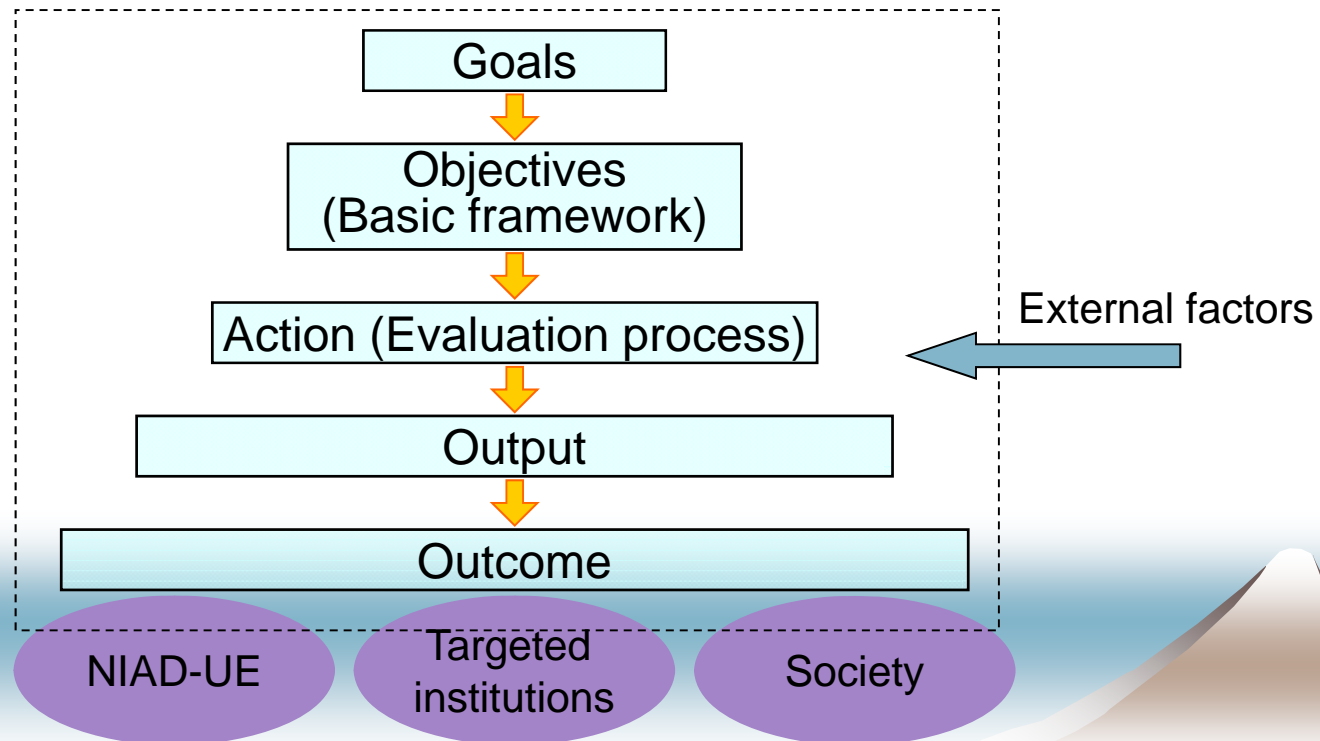
# Purpose of this research

- ✓ To clarify **successful aspects** and **problems** of the NIAD-UE's trial university evaluation
- ✓ To help the new evaluation systems to be **efficient and effective** in order to enhance the quality of education and research at universities and other institutions in Japan

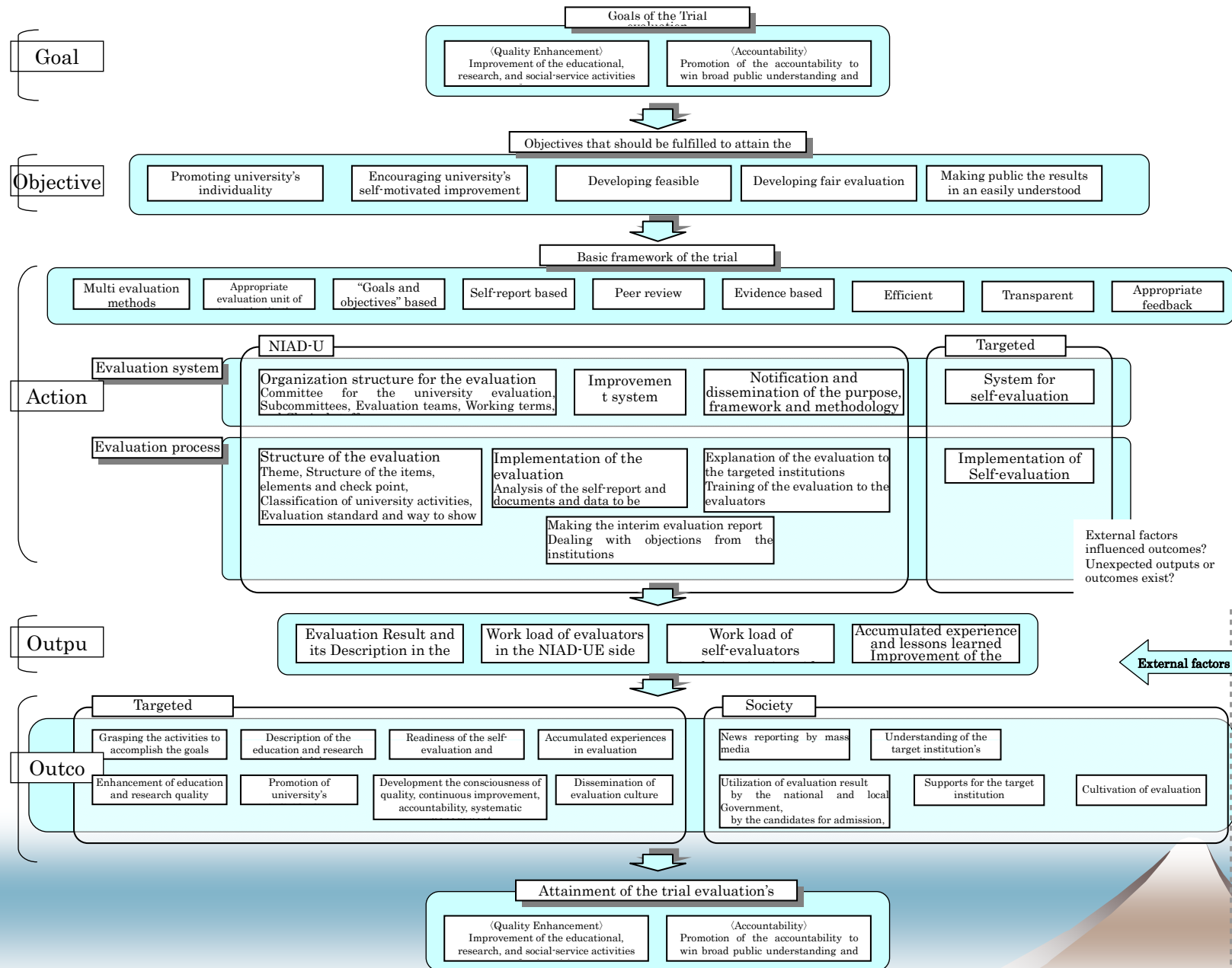


# Methodology

- ✓ A logic diagram of the trial evaluations was constructed according to the original plan. (Figure 2)
- ✓ All of the factors and activities in the framework, input, process, output and outcome were verified to ascertain that each step was appropriate to the missions.



# Logic Diagram of the trial university evaluation



## Goals

Assisting each higher education institution;

1. to **enhance its quality** by improving its educational and research activities as a result of the evaluation, and
2. to **promote its accountability** and to win broad public understanding and support by disclosing the education and research conditions in an easily understood form.

(Not ranking, Not linked with funding)



# Objectives

## <Precondition of Japanese higher education policy>

1. To promote university's individuality

## <Enhancement of university's quality>

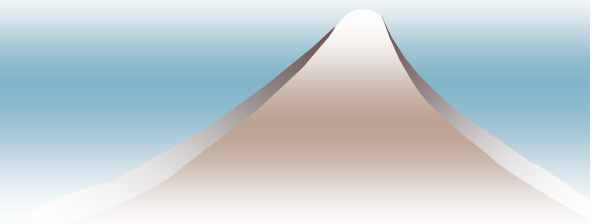
2. To encourage university's self-motivated improvement for its quality enhancement

## <Promotion of university's accountability>

3. To publish the evaluation results in an easily understood form for promotion of its accountability

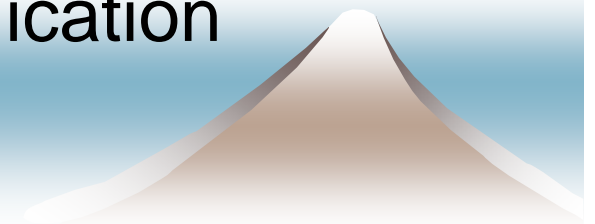
## <Development of evaluation system for the full-scaled>

4. To develop feasible evaluation
5. To develop fair evaluation



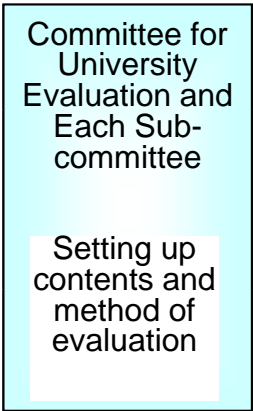
## Basic framework

1. Multi-faceted evaluation (UwTE, EEA, ERA)
2. Appropriate evaluation unit of target institution
3. “Goals and objectives” based
4. Self-report based
5. Peer review (but highly trained reviewers)
6. Evidence based
7. Efficient
8. Transparent
9. Appropriate feedback and publication



# Action (Evaluation Process)

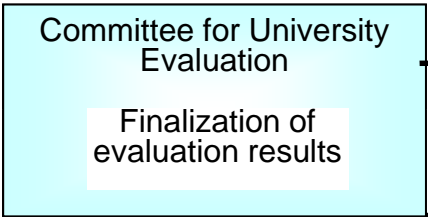
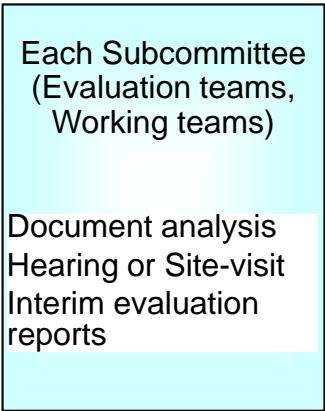
Helping universities gain broad public understanding and supports



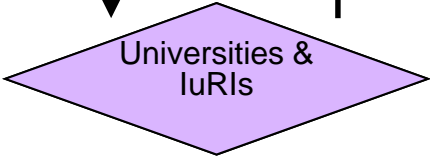
Explaining Evaluation Manuals etc.



Submission of Self-evaluation report



Announcement of the results of evaluation (before finalization)



Objection



Improving education and research activities



# Evaluation criteria

## Education evaluation

1. Organization for education
2. Contents of education
3. Methods for education and assessment
4. Attainment of student learning
5. Student support
6. System for quality improvement and enhancement of education activities

## Research evaluation

1. Research organization and research support system
2. Contents and quality of research
3. Social, economic and cultural effect of research
4. Research policy and its accomplishment
5. System for quality improvement and enhancement of research activities

- ✓ Under each criterion a number of “elements” and “checkpoints” were set for evaluation.
- ✓ Each elements were evaluated by five-point scale.

# Outputs

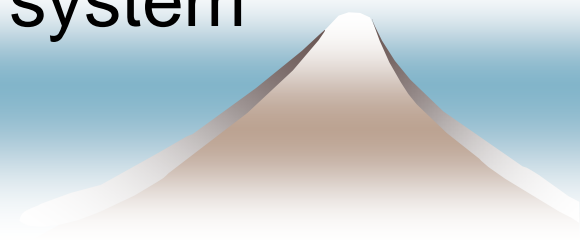
## **(Evaluation results)**

1. Evaluation Results and its Descriptions in the report

## **(Process)**

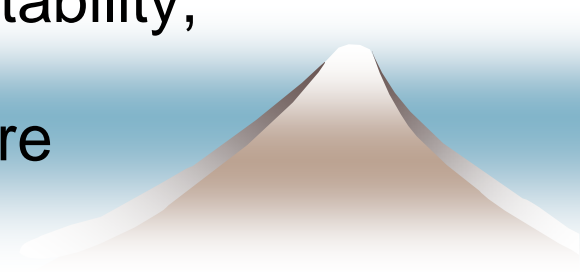
2. Workload of evaluators in the NIAD-UE side
3. Workload of self-evaluators in the institution side

## **(For the full-scaled evaluation)**

4. Accumulated experience and lessons learned
  5. Improvement of the evaluation system
- 

# Outcomes

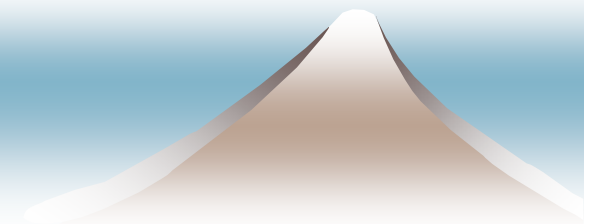
## <Outcomes in targeted institutions>

1. Grasping the activities to accomplish the goals
  2. Description of the education and research activities
  3. Readiness of the self-evaluation and self-improvement
  4. Accumulated experiences in evaluation
  5. Enhancement of education and research quality by improvement
  6. Promotion of university's individuality
  7. Development the consciousness of quality, continuous improvement, accountability, systematic management, etc.
  8. Dissemination of evaluation culture
- 

# Outcomes

## <Outcomes in society>

9. News reporting by mass media
10. Understanding of the target institution's situation
11. Utilization of evaluation result by the national and local Government, candidates for admission, industrial world, etc.
12. Supports for the target institution
13. Cultivation of evaluation mind



# Data

## 1. Opinion Survey:

- ✓ Participants: evaluated universities and inter-university research institutes, evaluators and concerned organizations (ex. National University Association)
- ✓ Date: from time to time during the trial evaluations
- ✓ Method: mainly free responses to the evaluation by mail
- ✓ More than 5,000 opinions (sentence base) were collected and then sorted into approximately 500 categories.

## 2. Questionnaire Survey:

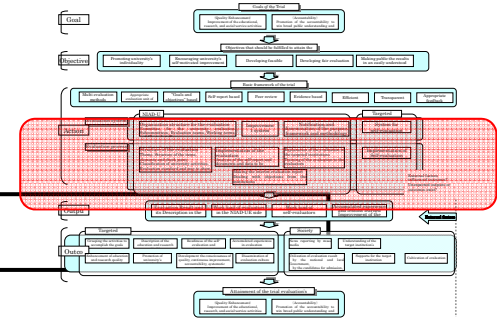
- ✓ Participants: 539 persons in charge of the self-evaluation of universities and inter-university research institutes, and the rate of collection was 98 percent
- ✓ Date: July 2004
- ✓ Method: mainly five-point-scale questions by mail

## 3. Interview:

- ✓ Participants: administrators and persons in charge of the self-evaluation of nine universities and one inter-university research institute
- ✓ Date: September and October 2004

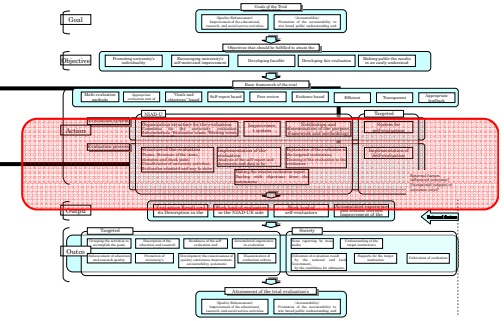
# Results

## Process of the evaluation



- organizational structure and quality of the evaluators
  - ✓ Positive responses
  - ✓ Some universities pointed out insufficient preparation of the evaluators
- “Goals and objectives” based evaluation
  - ✓ Many complaints from universities for the first cycle;
    - “When the institution sets moderate goals and objectives and hides dirt, it can get good results intentionally. It is terribly unfair”.
  - ✓ Gradually decreasing
  - ✓ Accepted as a proper procedure for the progress of the institution’s individuality and improvement.
  - ✓ The easy understood form is really needed to entrust the stakeholders with decision-making

## Methodology of the evaluation



- Self-evaluation based evaluation

- ✓ Free writing vs. Format based

- ✓ Fear for uniformization vs. Understandable

In the 1st cycle, only “evaluation items” was set for self-evaluation.

(University) “A fear of making uniformity in the universities”

“Neglect of the institution’s characteristics”

“Irrelevancy of those items to the real situation”

“Difficult evaluation scheme”

(Evaluator) “Low quality self-evaluation report”

“Insufficient Information and evidence to make an accurate evaluation”

From 2nd cycle, the hierarchical evaluation items were set for self-evaluation; “evaluation items,” “elements,” and “checkpoints.”

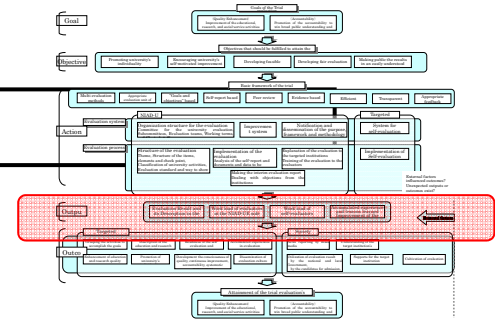
Evaluation manuals and contents of seminars were also improved.

(University) Problems mentioned above still remain, but

“Easier way to make the self-evaluation report”

(Evaluator) positive responses

# Output of the evaluation



# Appropriateness of the evaluation result

The evaluation result was commensurable with your university's **goals and objectives**.

The evaluation result was commensurable with your university's **current situation**.

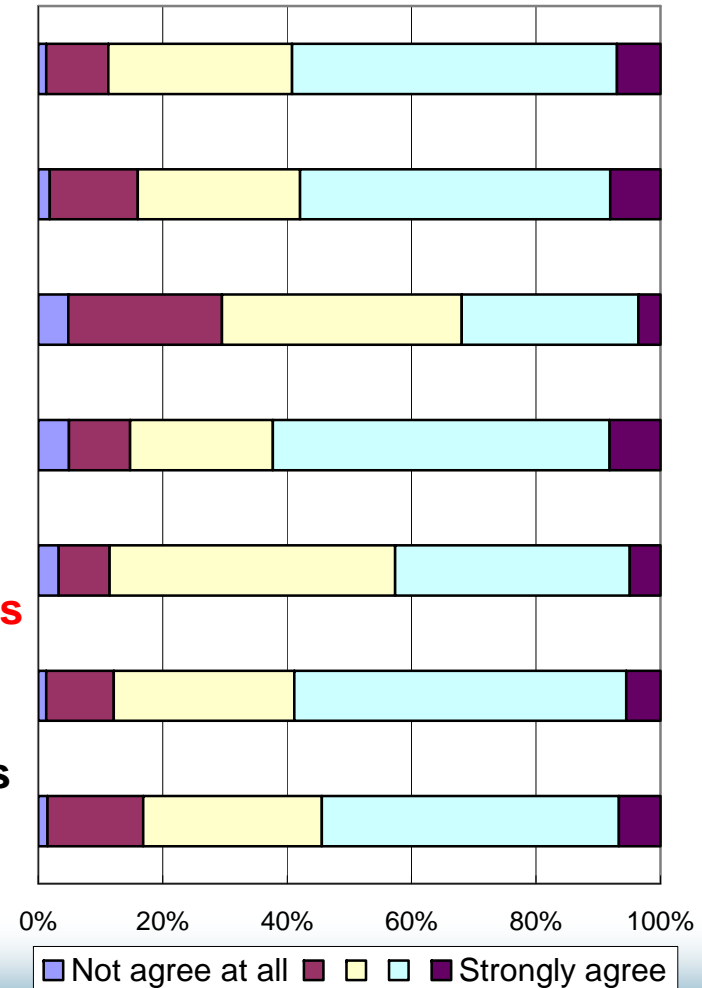
The evaluation result was commensurable with the **restrictions** of your university (environment, resources, characteristics, etc.).

The result of **the ratings on the research assessment** was appropriate.

The result of **the ratings on the social effects** based on the research activities was appropriate.

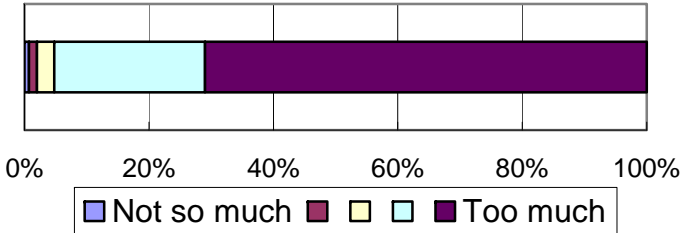
**The description of the evaluation report** was appropriate from an overall standpoint.

**The rating in each evaluation item** was appropriate from an overall standpoint.



# Workload and schedule for the self-evaluation

How great a **workload** did you have for making the self-report?



Making the self-report **obstructed the daily education and research activities** in your organization as a whole.

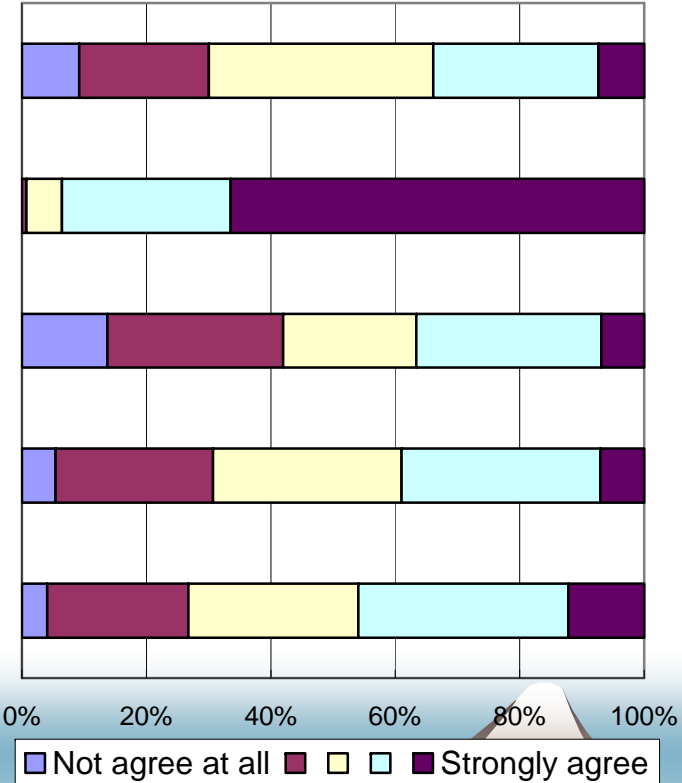
The workload for the self-evaluation was **concentrated on the particular person(s)**.

**The period** assigned to make the self-report was enough.

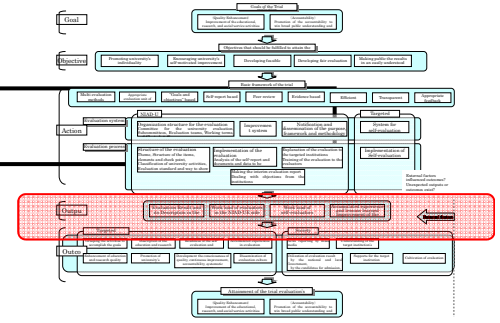
(1st cycle)

(2nd cycle)

(3rd cycle)

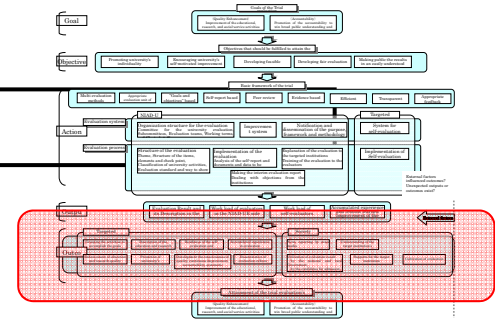


## Output of the evaluation



- Evaluation Result and its Description in the report
  - ✓ Almost positive answers
  - ✓ More consideration of the characteristics of each university was requested as the “goals and objective based evaluation.”
- Workload and schedule
  - Too much burden on self-evaluators
    - ✓ The task was concentrated on particular person(s)
    - ✓ The task, especially data collection, was not assigned to them as a daily duty or special mission.
  - Too much burden on evaluators
    - ✓ Improved (simplification and formulation of the evaluation sheet)

# Outcome of the evaluation



# Enhancement of the university quality

This evaluation promoted (will promote) the **improvement** of your institution's **targeted activities**. (UwTE)

(UwTE)

(EEA)

(ERA)

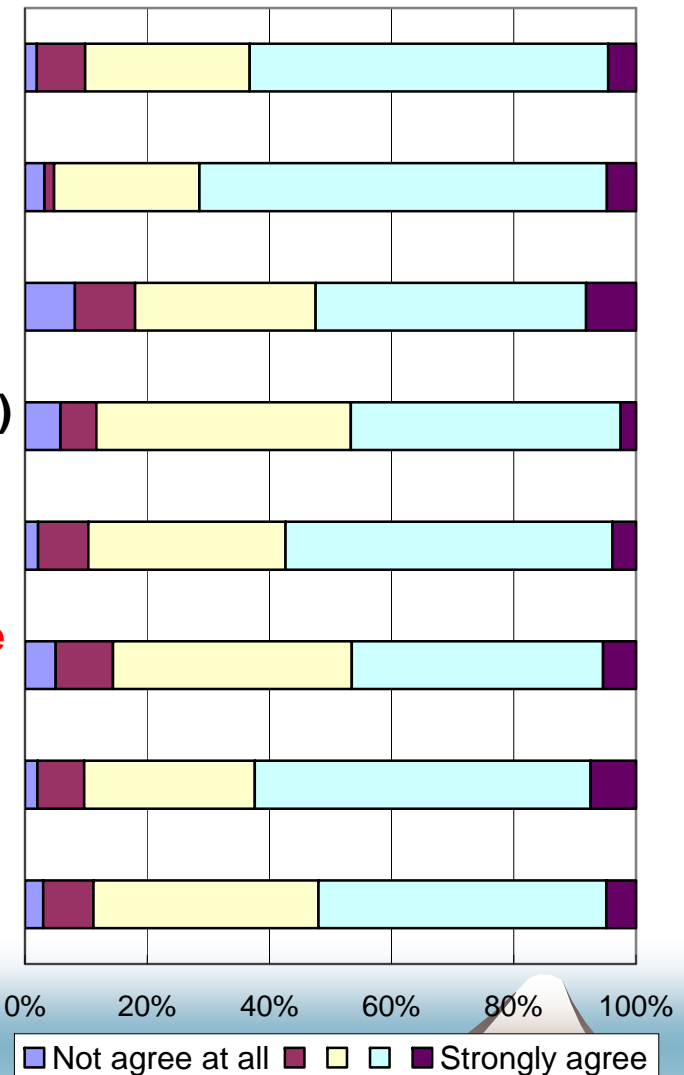
Faculty's **consciousness of education and research** was raised by the evaluation. (EEA&ERA)

The evaluation promoted (will promote) **improvement** of your organization's **overall management**. (UwTE)

The evaluation promoted (will promote) **distinctive activities** in your organization.

**More systematic evaluation** was realized compared with the former self-evaluation under the old system.

**More useful results** could be gained compared with the former self-evaluation under the old system.



# Enhancement of the university quality

Staff in your organization **fully understood** the university evaluation.

**Importance of setting the goals and objectives** to permeate your organization.

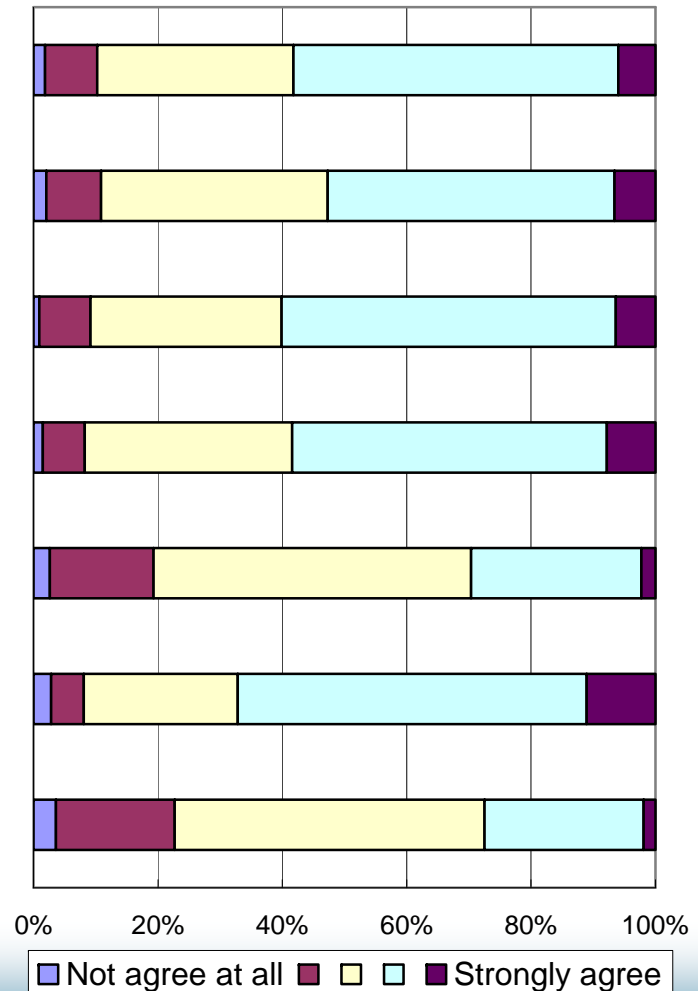
**Importance of the self-evaluation** permeating your organization.

**Importance of systematic management** of the targeted activities to permeate your organization.

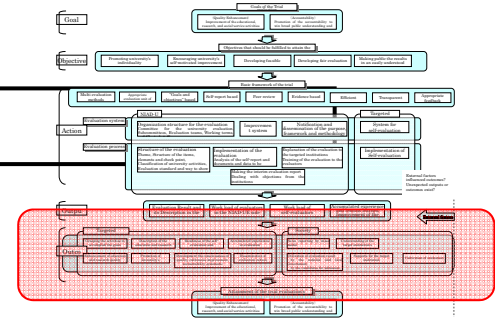
**The evaluation result** permeated your organization.

The evaluation was **useful for making future plans or mid-term plans**.

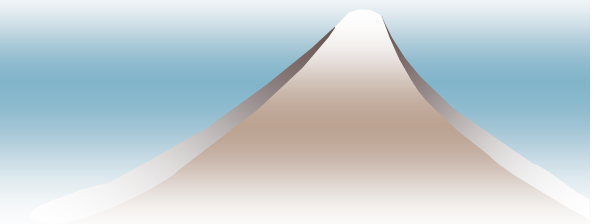
**Good practices** could be referred to in the other university's evaluation report.



## Outcome (impact) of the evaluation



- Quality enhancement
- ✓ Almost positive answers
- ✓ Improvements of their activities responding not only to the evaluation result but also to findings in the self-evaluation
- ✓ Establishment or enhancement of a systematic organization or relationship for fundamental functions; needs surveys, databases, publicity activities, faculty development, reconstruction of curriculum and instruction methods, development of new funding systems, promotion of research projects, etc.
- ✓ Self-evaluator's experiences? or Organization's experiences?



## Number of the cases of improvement and the contribution rate of the NIAD-UE evaluation result

No. of improvement case Theme/ Category		Degree of contribution of the NIAD-UE evaluation result to the improvement						Total no. of cases	No. of respondents
		Not at all ←————→ Very much					No answer		
UwTE	The systems for implementation or improvement	6	13	66	235	100	7	427	425
	Methods or contents for the implementation	2	11	35	158	71	9	286	
EEA	The systems for implementation or improvement	1	1	11	44	16	2	75	65
	Methods or contents for the education or learning support	1	0	10	47	19	1	78	
ERA	The systems for implementation or improvement	1	2	5	45	21	4	78	62
	Method or functions for the research activities	0	0	8	36	11	0	55	
	Contents of the research activities	0	1	2	16	6	0	25	
Total		11	28	137	581	244	23	1024	552

# Degree of understanding of the universities' activities

“Did following persons gained a better understanding of your university’s activities through the trial evaluation?”

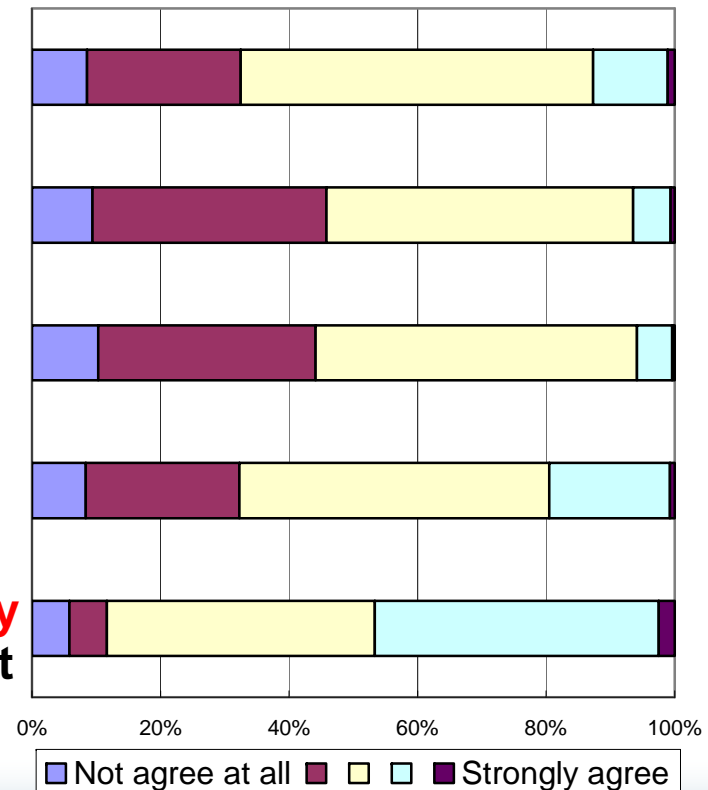
## General public

Candidates for admission to the **undergraduate school** and their parents

Candidates for admission to the **graduate school** and their parents

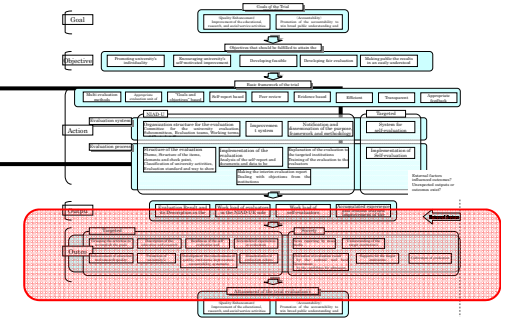
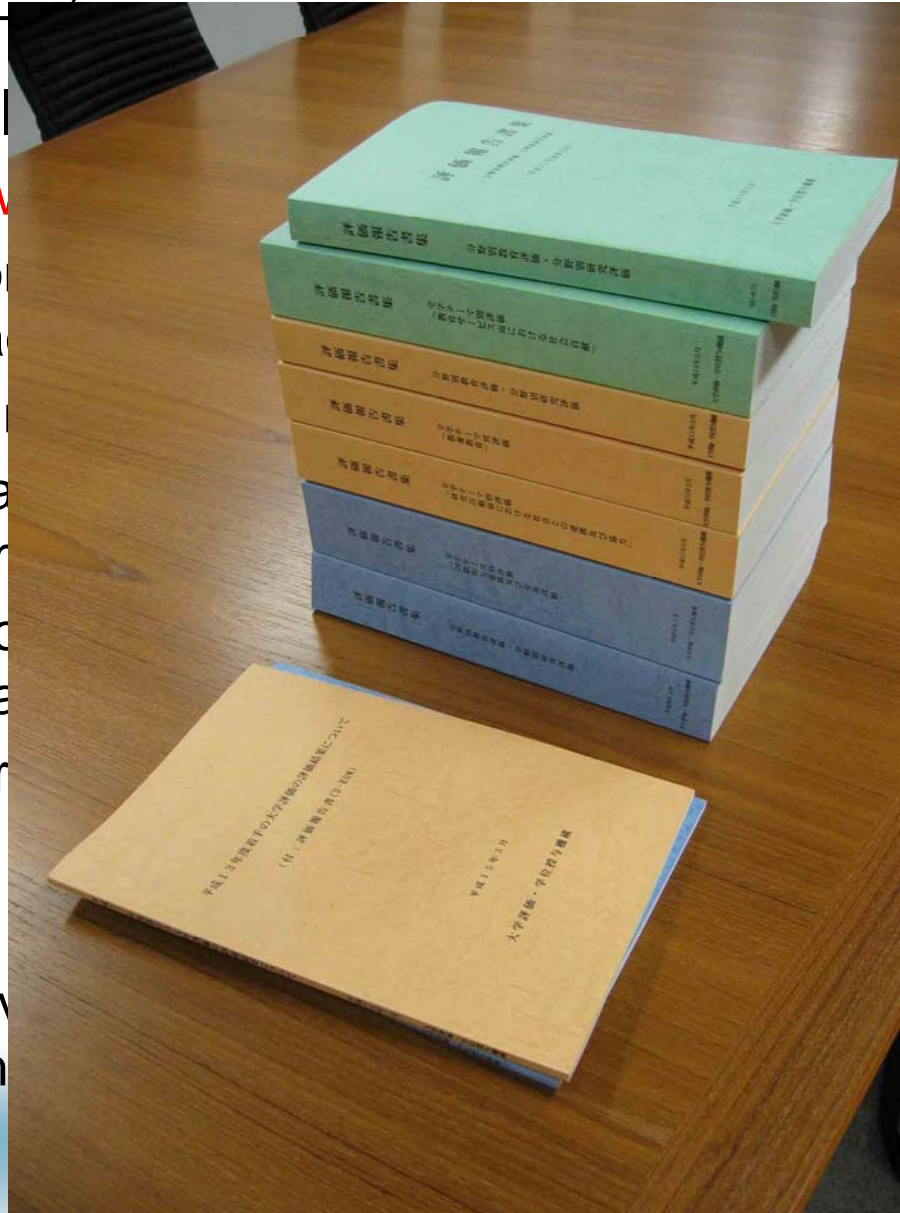
National and local **government** and public organizations

**Parties concerned with the university** (e.g. business enterprises, non-profit organizations, etc.)



## Outcome (impact) of the evaluation

- Accountability
- ✓ Negative answers
- ✓ The evaluation of the universities' activities
  - Reporting, ...
  - Indicating areas for improvement, not the complete picture
  - Showing both strengths and weaknesses, not only "balanced" results
- ✓ The misunderstanding of the evaluation
- ✓ Apathy of the universities
- ✓ Should improve the evaluation system, set up better communication with the university



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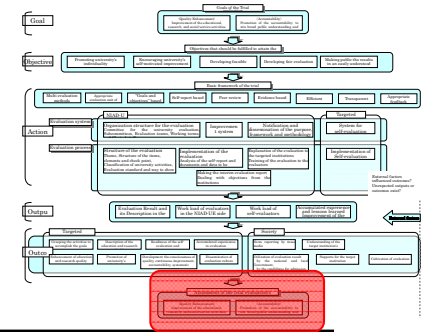
s to be solved.

n results and set

society by sharing

results.

# Conclusions



- ✓ Our mission, **“improvement of universities’ educational and research activities,”** was **attained** to a greater or lesser extent, but
- ✓ another mission, **“promotion of universities’ accountability to win broad public understanding and support,”** remained a **distant goal.**

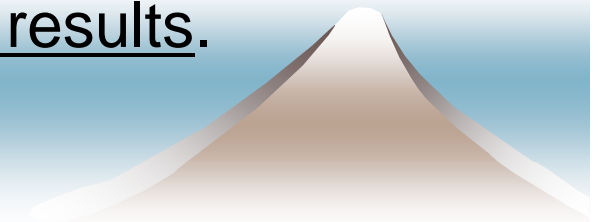
## Remaining problems

### Problems concerning the evaluation method:

- ✓ Appropriate settings of the evaluation items that consider the characteristics of the universities and of the targeted unit for the evaluation should be more considered.
- ✓ Balancing of evaluation efficiency and quality of the evaluation result is needed to be realized in pursuing the simplification and efficiency of the evaluation process.
- ✓ A system of the daily collection, arrangement, and accumulation of the documents and data to use for the evaluation is hoped to be established in each university.

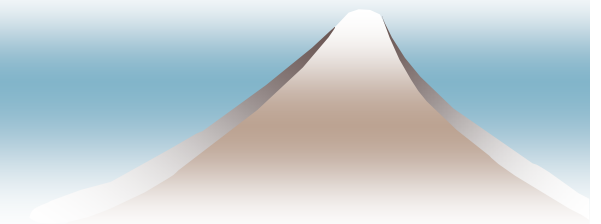
## Problems concerning the evaluators and self-evaluators:

- ✓ The evaluator should have knowledge of the situation and characteristics of the educational and research activities and management in the universities.
- ✓ Further improvement of the evaluator's training and development of the training for persons in charge of self-evaluation in universities is necessary.
- ✓ The communications between the targeted institutions and NIAD-UE is needed to be improved for more effective evaluation.
- ✓ To promote the further improvement of the educational and research activities in universities, many parties concerned should be involved in the evaluation process and promote utilization of the evaluation results.



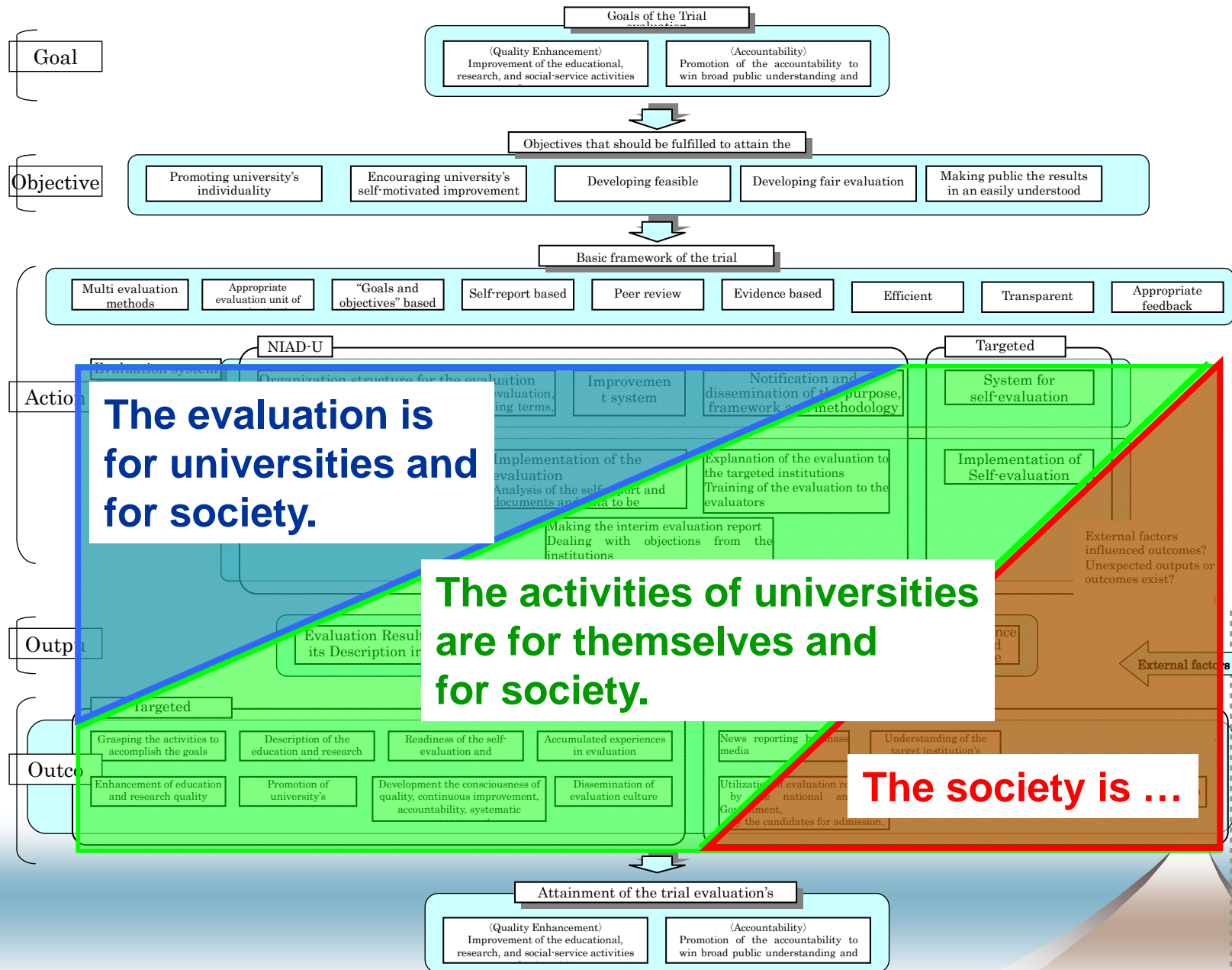
## Problems concerning publicity of the evaluation result:

- The contents of the evaluation report and the way of making them public need improvement so that the evaluation result can be effectively used by the evaluated institutions and stakeholders.
- The NIAD-UE must increase their effort so that all of the stakeholders may have a proper understanding of the purpose of the university evaluation and the meaning of the evaluation results; especially the effort is needed in mass communications.
- Even for the evaluated organizations, an appeal to the public is needed so that the society may have an appreciation of the organization's activities.



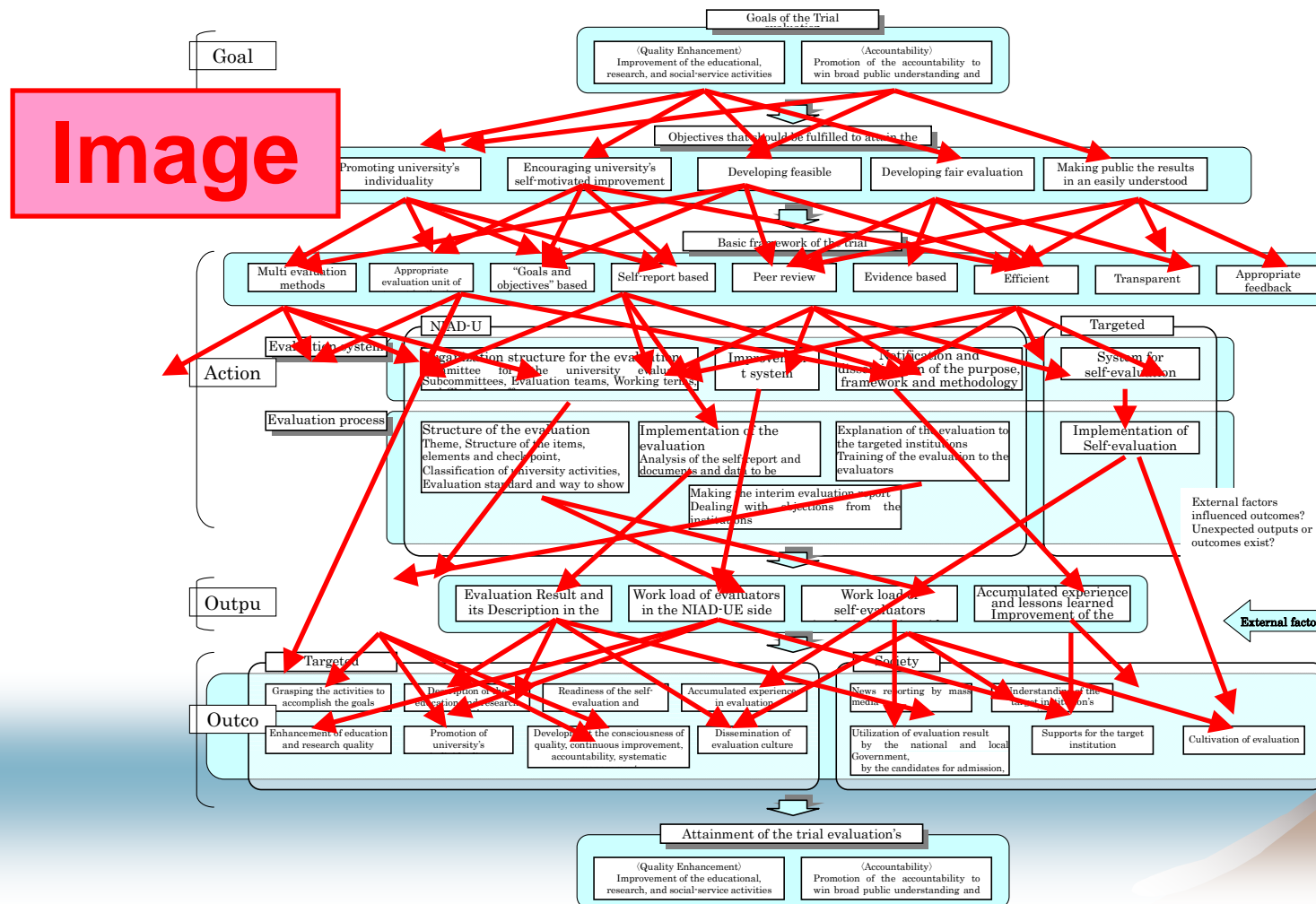
- By trying to solve those problems NIAD-UE constructs new effective evaluation frameworks in **cooperation with the respective institutions and the public, including the mass media.**
- Even though NIAD-UE's evaluation scheme are well-developed, the outcomes of the evaluation will be developed in the universities and society. **All that NIAD-UE can do is assisting the universities** to improve their quality and to promote its accountability.
- In the case of Japan how to wake up the universities and how to involve them in the quality improvement cycle still remain as a problem. Quality Assurance Agencies cannot intervene in the university management and cannot easily change the opinions of the general public (and the government).

# Logic Diagram of the trial university evaluation



# Further discussion as a research

- Causal relationships among factors should be concretely identified by using statistical approaches.



# Acknowledgement

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