

## Message from the New President Dr Ikuo WATANABE

I took over the position of President of the Railway Technical Research Institute (RTRI) in June this year, succeeding my predecessor Dr. Kumagai.

Currently, Japanese and global rail industries are facing an unprecedented predicament due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We will, nevertheless, continue our activities based on the principles set out in the master plan RESEARCH 2025, a roadmap guiding RTRI towards the realization of its vision: “We will develop innovative technologies to enhance the rail mode so that our railway can contribute to the creation of a happier society.” Along with efforts to further improve the safety of railways, with a particular emphasis on improving the resilience of railways against frequent and increasingly severe natural hazards, RTRI is actively encouraging the adoption of digital technologies such as IoT, big data, and AI in all fields of R&D, with a view to stimulating innovation in railway systems.

While digitalization technologies have been showing spectacular progress, the circumstances around railways are dramatically changing in terms of passengers’ behaviors and supply chains’ business practices. Therefore, we may have to advance into new research fields and we may not be able to produce useful outcomes just by following our conventional ways of thinking and doing research.



**Dr. Ikuo Watanabe**  
President of RTRI

We also need to raise the basic ability of each researcher including the insight to understand the essence of problems or various phenomena, and to solve problems based on scientific and engineering approaches. For this purpose we will put emphasis on basic research, which provides fundamental training to researchers. Since RTRI needs to conduct investigations into disasters and troubles of railway facilities quickly and to propose effective solutions, human development and construction of testing facilities for these activities will be continued.

I think research and development is fun because it creates new value that no one has ever thought of before. In these difficult times, railway innovation through the creation of new value through research and development is even more important than usual, and I believe it is necessary for all those involved in the world’s railways to work together as a team.

## Preface Message from the New General Director Dr Tetsuo UZUKA



The year 2020 has unfortunately been made historic by the Covid-19 pandemic. The decline in passenger flow is taking a heavy toll on the management of the world’s railways. However, RTRI has welcomed a new Chairman and President and started its work based on the new

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master plan RESEARCH 2025. In this issue, we provide an outline of RESEARCH 2025. Priorities in this master plan may change depending on how the Covid-19 pandemic unfolds, but the goals we aim for will not be affected.