

Richard K. Lester

ICEF Steering Committee;
Associate Provost, International Activities, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Nationality

United States of America

Career History

Richard Lester is the Japan Steel Industry Professor and Associate Provost at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he oversees the international activities of the Institute. From 2009 to 2015 he served as head of MIT's Department of Nuclear Science and Engineering, leading the Department successfully through a period of rapid rebuilding and strategic renewal.

Professor Lester's research is concerned with innovation strategy and management, with a frequent focus on the energy and manufacturing sectors. He is widely known for his work on local, regional, and national systems of innovation, and he has led major studies of national and regional competitiveness and innovation performance commissioned by governments and industry groups around the world. He is the founding director and faculty chair of the MIT Industrial Performance Center.

Professor Lester is also well known for his teaching and research on nuclear technology innovation, management and control. He has been a long-time advocate of advanced nuclear reactor and fuel cycle technologies to improve the safety and economic performance of nuclear power, and his studies in the field of nuclear waste management helped provide the foundation for new institutional and technological strategies to deal with this longstanding problem.

Professor Lester's latest book, *Unlocking Energy Innovation: How America Can Build a Low-Cost, Low-Carbon Energy System* (written with David Hart), outlines a strategy for mobilizing America's innovation resources in support of a decades-long transition to an affordable and reliable low-carbon global energy system. Professor Lester is also the author or co-author of seven other books, including: *The Productive Edge: A New Strategy for Economic Growth*; *Innovation—The Missing Dimension* (with Michael Piore); *Making Technology Work: Applications in Energy and the Environment* (with John Deutch); *Made in America: Regaining the Productive Edge* (with Michael

Dertouzos and Robert Solow); and Radioactive Waste: Management and Regulation (with Mason Willrich.)

Professor Lester obtained his undergraduate degree in chemical engineering from Imperial College and earned his Ph.D. in nuclear engineering from MIT. He has been a member of the MIT faculty since 1979. He is an advisor to governments, corporations, foundations and non-profit groups, and he serves as chair of the National Academies' Board on Science, Technology, and Economic Policy.