



Advisory Council for Science
Technology and Innovation
An Comhairle Eolaíochta

PRESS RELEASE

Ireland must continue to support research and innovation for stability and growth

Advisory Council for Science, Technology and Innovation End of Year Statement

(Monday, 17 January 2011) The Advisory Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (ACSTI) today published a statement highlighting the main areas which need to be addressed to ensure Ireland continues to support research and innovation as key priorities for economic and employment stability and growth. The statement, "Staying the Course", gives the Council's views on what can be done now to support the research community and the R&D-based enterprise sector.

"We must maintain our commitment to science and technology as a central element of our enterprise policy" said Tom McCarthy, Chairman of ACSTI. "In reviewing the status of science, engineering and research in Ireland, the Council sees a need to increase co-ordination and networking of core activities. We warmly welcome the announcement by Government in September 2010 of spending plans with €2.4 billion of support for science, technology and innovation over the next six years to create new high-quality jobs. Short-term measures will not suffice."

In the statement, the Council suggests a number of practical actions which can, in its view, maximise the return on investment in science, technology and innovation including:

- Further measures to co-ordinate research and to link academic and industrial research should be investigated;
- Full consideration must be given to our infrastructure needs and how they can best be maintained;
- Measures to embed employability in all emerging graduates should be accelerated;
- Measures outside of the direct research system to enable research excellence by facilitating mobility of Irish researchers and mobility of top class research into Ireland and other collaborative opportunities are essential as a means to sustain our economy through science and technology. For example, measures to improve the transfer of pension and social welfare entitlements are required;
- The provision of networking and communication mechanisms which enable industry to be informed about and consider engaging with the research and funding systems are very important. The Council believes that full exploration and consideration of the knowledge transfer partnerships model by government departments and agencies should be a priority for 2011;
- The Council believes that the issue of the recognition of engineering as a discipline in its own right should be pursued. Excellent and creative engineers should be valued for what they deliver to society;

- The major reform now underway through Project Maths should be progressed quickly and supported with the necessary investment; and
- The elements of the Teaching Council Acts relating to continuing professional development (CPD) of teachers should be acted upon now and a requirement should be introduced that engagement in continuing professional development is a pre-requisite for maintaining professional registration.

Martin Shanahan, Chief Executive of Forfás, said: "Forfás welcomes efforts aimed at maximising the enterprise impact of Ireland's public investment in research and development."

In 2011, the Council will continue its work by examining the sustainability of research centres and assisting, with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Innovation and Forfás, in prioritising our national research efforts in science, engineering and technology, as well as developing a national view on the upcoming EU Eighth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development 2014-2020 (FP8), Europe's largest research funding programme.

Tom McCarthy noted that "Ireland has both contributed to and benefited greatly from the internationalisation of research. In 2011, the Council will engage in leading a national consultation process on the Irish priorities for the Eighth Framework Programme and will be inviting the informed input of stakeholders from all areas of the research and innovation system."

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