

Major Boost for Ireland's Attractiveness to Leading Researchers and Knowledge Intensive Enterprises

Advisory Science Council welcomes Government's Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation, 2006-2013

The Chair of the national Advisory Science Council today (18 June 2006) welcomed the publication of the Government's new Strategy for Science Technology and Innovation, 2006-2013.

The Strategy represents a comprehensive approach to national science, technology and innovation policy. It links, in a coherent way, the key Government policy areas of education, research and enterprise, providing a focused approach to developing Ireland as a leading knowledge society.

'While most countries are becoming more knowledge intensive, the challenge for Ireland is to ensure that we are at the forefront of this transition. This Strategy shows that Ireland is serious about committing the necessary resources to research to enable us stay with the leading pack of countries in this transition and to develop as one of the most attractive locations for world-class researchers and knowledge intensive enterprises', said Mary Cryan, Chair of the Council at the launch of the Strategy.

She added, 'By taking concerted action to increase the participation of young people in the sciences to produce the required number of higher research-based degree graduates needed for the economy for the future and by maintaining the strong focus on international competition and excellence in funding for research and scholarship, the Government is demonstrating that research is now at the heart of economic and social policy. The Government has already increased PhD output by 60 percent from 2002 to 2005 and the further doubling of PhD output proposed in the sciences and humanities to 2013 will go a long way in addressing the emerging needs of the economy.'

'The improvements in science and maths teaching proposed at primary and second level education are essential to secure the pipeline of young people entering third and fourth level research and entering the labour market as highly skilled researchers', she continued.

Ms Cryan also welcomed the additional resources allocated to promoting in-company R&D and technology application. 'The support being provided to double the number of indigenous and overseas companies doing R&D in Ireland and to double their sales from new innovations recognises the reality that there is no other source of sustainable competitive

advantage for enterprises competing in global markets than to engage in a continuous process of innovation. The Strategy's focus on driving a step change in the number and quality of inter-connections between our enterprise and science bases and the additional resources and structures for the commercialisation of research should have a real impact on converting investment in research into new products and processes, driving wealth and job creation and providing sustained returns to the economy in the long run', she said.

Ms Cryan concluded that the publication of the Strategy by Government was testament to the effectiveness of the new governance arrangements for science policy introduced by Government in 2004, which include the Cabinet Committee and Inter-Departmental Committee for STI.

'The Council looks forward to undertaking the roles set out for it in the Strategy and will continue to work with the other elements of the Governance structure to achieve the efficient and effective implementation of the Strategy,' said Ms Cryan.