

Press Release

Science and technology can play a key role in supporting sustainable development - ICSTI

The Irish Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (ICSTI) today, [1st October 2004], published its Statement on **Sustainable Development in Ireland: The Role of Science and Technology**. The Statement examines how science and technology can support the achievement of sustainable development in Ireland and the implications for Irish public policy of sustainable development as a national and international goal.

The Statement outlines that economic prosperity and quality of life of present and future generations will depend on equipping our scientists and technologists (in all areas of the sciences and scholarship) with the structures and funding to enable them to contribute effectively to sustainable development. The Statement also emphasises that Ireland needs to play its part in what is a global science and technology endeavour.

“Sustainable development is about meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Science and technology can play an important role in formulating the responses needed for sustainable, long-term growth and competitiveness and quality of life. To achieve the goal of sustainable development in Ireland we need to effectively forge the links between science and technology and policy and between the environment and the economy and our international competitiveness,” said Dr Edward M. Walsh, Chairman, ICSTI.

The Statement focuses on enhancing the capability of the science and technology (S&T) system to respond to the challenges of developing and implementing policies on sustainable development, including:

- Ensuring appropriate baseline research is available to best understand the impacts of 'business-as-usual' in key environmental, economic and

technological sectors prior to deciding on actions to promote sustainable development;

- Developing a better understanding of underlying processes and dynamics in key areas of pressure – transport, energy, tourism – to inform effective action;
- Linking research in the natural and social sciences in devising effective solutions and linking science, policy and economic research on key issues to improve the rigour of sustainability assessment;
- Focusing research and analysing the science and technological opportunities for overcoming constraints inhibiting sustainable development in key areas;
- Engaging the public's interests and insights in relation to S&T and sustainability;
- Fostering the development of R&D clusters that are internationally competitive in their depth and range with high levels of interdisciplinary cooperation and international networking;
- Linking S&T to the mission of major Government Departments. The generation of S&T advice and the formulation of R&D programmes should contain explicit provision for the fulfilment of sustainable development objectives and should be integrated into the policy development process.