



## Science and Engineering in Budget 2009

### Research Councils (Table 6.1, p. 130)

No change in the **science budget**, but £106 million will be reallocated to support key areas of economic potential. It is understood that research councils have been asked by DIUS to make administrative savings and re-allocate funding from other parts of their budgets to give greater support to the cross-council research programmes.

- This move has undermined the independence of the research councils and should be reviewed immediately.
- The debate started by Lord Drayson on focusing the UK's research effort is now being implemented, this could risk the breadth and long-term impact of the research base.

### Science and Mathematics Education (Section 4.36, p. 80)

£3 million of additional funding over the coming year for the DCSF's **Triple Science Support Programme**. £2 million of additional funding for the DCSF over the next two years to support **widening post-16 participation in physics and mathematics**.

- The additional investment in science and mathematics teaching is more than welcome and definitely needed.
- We want a guarantee that all students who would gain from taking triple science, that is, physics, chemistry and biology GCSEs together, have the opportunity to do so. The current government target is for 90% of schools to offer this. The current uptake of schools offering triple science is 32%. The percentage of students taking triple science is 8.5% (2% for students on free schools meals).

### Strategic Investment Fund (Section 4.37, p. 81)

£750 million over two years is allocated to a new Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) aimed at supporting **advanced industrial projects**. £50 million is set aside for the Technology Strategy Board and £250 million will go towards low-carbon investments.

- More information is needed about the operation of the SIF before a proper assessment of it can be made. It has the potential to provide much needed support for emerging technologies.

### Tax (Section 4.34, p. 80)

Treasury will assess potential reforms to the tax system to support priority sectors, including factors such as **location of R&D** and registration of intellectual property rights (IPR).

- A good announcement as corporate R&D and the registration of IPR are both highly mobile.

### Government R&D (Table 6.1, p. 131)

£10 million of cuts were announced for research within the **Department for International Development**. £170 million of cuts from the **Ministry of Defense's** Nuclear Weapons Capability Sustainment Programme, which sustains key skills, research and manufacturing facilities.

- The government needs to implement the Sainsbury Review recommendation to protect departmental R&D budgets from cuts.

### Further information

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