



CaSE Press Release: Embargoed 12.01am Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2009

## **Case Calls on the Government to Develop an Evidence-Based Approach to its Economic-Impact Agenda for the Research Base**

The Campaign for Science & Engineering's (CaSE) policy report *Impacts of Investment in the Science and Engineering Research Base* analyses the government's economic impact agenda. The main conclusion of the report is that policy initiatives to increase the impacts of science and engineering research need to be informed by evidence, clearly articulated and fully debated prior to implementation.

Dr Hilary Leever, CaSE Assistant Director and the report's author, said:

"There is strong evidence for the rich contribution that science and engineering research makes to the UK. Investment in science and engineering is more critical now than ever if the UK is going to have a more balanced economy in the long-run.

"It is important that the UK gets the greatest possible impact from its investment in science and engineering research. However, initiatives to increase the impact of the research base have been poorly articulated and lacked the evidence necessary to gain the support and confidence of the research community. The Chancellor should appoint a Chief Scientific Adviser to develop the evidence-base and lead a debate about the future direction of the government's economic impact agenda prior to the next spending review.

"Efforts to increase impact must not undermine the government's aspiration for the UK to be a world leader in science and innovation. The breadth of the UK's research base provides a competitive advantage, developing high-level skills across a range of sectors, as well as the ability to respond to unexpected future challenges."

The report was sponsored by the Institute of Physics. The Institute's Chief Executive, Dr Robert Kirby-Harris, commented: "As we recover from recession, investment in science and engineering is one of the best bets this country can make to ensure long-term economic growth, and establish a competitive edge for the 21st century. But it is not easy to predict which research will create the biggest impact. History shows us that in many cases it is basic research, undertaken purely out of curiosity to understand more about our world, that has delivered revolutionary breakthroughs. X-rays, lasers and semiconductors - technologies which are widely used in every aspect of our lives - all stem from discoveries made through fundamental research, undertaken without any immediate application in mind.

"A key conclusion of this report is that one of the UK's competitive advantages is the breadth of our research base - from basic science to applied engineering, across a wide range of disciplines. I strongly endorse the view that strategies to improve impact must not put this rich diversity at risk."

Dr Chris Francis, Government Programmes, IBM, commented: "IBM was delighted to host CaSE for this important subject. IBM supports clarifying the objectives and transparency of the various funding streams and strengthening their impact on and relevance to the social and economic well-being of the UK."

**ENDS**

## Notes to Editors

1. Contacts: Dr Hilary Leever, Assistant Director, [hilary@sciencecampaign.org.uk](mailto:hilary@sciencecampaign.org.uk), 020 7679 4995, 07905 304702.

Joseph Winters, Senior Press Officer, Institute of Physics, [joseph.winters@iop.org](mailto:joseph.winters@iop.org), 020 7470 4815, 07946 321473

Ken Saunders, External Relations, IBM UK Communications, [saundken@uk.ibm.com](mailto:saundken@uk.ibm.com), 0207 021 8422, 07830 123 145.

2. The full document is available for download from:

<http://www.sciencecampaign.org.uk/documents/2009/impacts.pdf>

3. Campaign for Science & Engineering (CaSE) is a policy advocate for science and engineering in the UK. CaSE is supported by its members, which includes individuals, corporations, universities and learned societies. Further information on CaSE can be found on our website: <http://www.sciencecampaign.org.uk>

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