

An Energy Research Strategy for Ireland: Analysis of submissions received

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An Energy Research Strategy for Ireland

Introduction: The story so far...

- Irish Energy Research Council (IERC)
 - Membership included academic and non-academic representatives North/South and UK
 - No delegate from industry, but initial Chair (Siemens)
- Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR) provided admin support [IERC Secretariat]
- Strategy developed from September 2007 to March 2008 (assisted by consultant)



An Energy Research Strategy for Ireland

- *An Energy Research Strategy for Ireland* submitted to Minister Ryan in April 2008
- Consultation phase commenced in May 2008
- Opportunity for interested parties to have their say
- Deadline for submissions: June 30th 2008



An Energy Research Strategy for Ireland: Submissions

- 23 submissions received between May 1st and June 30th
- Submissions received from:
 - SEI
 - IBEC
 - ESB
 - EPA
 - Coillte
 - Environmental Change Institute (NUIG)
 - Centre for Sustainable Technologies (UU)
 - Hydraulics and Maritime Research Centre (UCC)
 - Jose Ospina



An Energy Research Strategy for Ireland: Submissions

- Sustainability Initiative (DCU)
- Philip B. Farrelly & Partners
- Ocean Energy Limited
- Bord na Móna
- DIT
- EirGrid
- GeoThermal Energy Limited
- Bord Gáis
- Geosciences Committee of the Royal Irish Academy
- Dundalk Institute of Technology (DKIT)
- CSA Group Limited
- Prof. John Simmie, Combustion Chemistry Centre, NUIG
- Imperative Energy
- Forfás



An Energy Research Strategy for Ireland: Submissions

- Submissions were generally positive, welcoming the Strategy
 - *“Important and timely document”*
 - *“Provides a strong basis for development of research capacity”*
 - *“Positive step forward for Irish energy research”*
- Consensus was that the Strategy represented the way forward
- Majority of submissions welcomed research into:
 - Ocean Energy
 - Grid/Infrastructure
 - Energy in Buildings
 - Energy in Transport
 - Sustainable Bioenergy



An Energy Research Strategy for Ireland: Submissions

- Criticisms varied:
 - Not enough emphasis placed on wind/solar
 - Some criticism of sector specific fields (too narrow in remit)
 - No single agency charged with overseeing energy research (SFI?) (too much bureaucracy remains)
 - Lack of industry involvement (in developing Strategy)
 - Too much emphasis on renewable and sustainable energy
 - Strategy does not analyse current biofuels issue (rising prices etc)
 - Funding issues
 - Social aspects of energy
 - Pro's and con's of other energy sources (including nuclear) not discussed



An Energy Research Strategy for Ireland: Submissions

- Positive comments on Strategy included:
 - Welcomed Strategic Lines
 - Sector specific fields of R&D seen by many as necessary
 - International linkage between researchers
 - Suggestion that industry have more involvement with energy research activities
 - Provided a framework for energy research requirements
 - Agreed with sector specific areas: correct focus
 - Watching brief: *“will see better co-ordination between researchers at national, EU and international level”*.



An Energy Research Strategy for Ireland: Strategic Lines 1-5

- General consensus: welcomes Strategic lines as necessary
- Example: SL 2: *“Offers opportunity to enhance development of innovative research, enabled through linkages with SFI”*.
- SL 3: Acceptance that sector specific fields-positive impact for Irish research
- SL 4: Pro arguments (in several submission) for “watching brief”
- SL 5: Mapping Frontiers: Viewed by some as a “fundamental requirement”



An Energy Research Strategy for Ireland: Strategic Lines 1-5

- However:
- One submission critical of all five Strategic Lines
 - SL 1: Does not remove the existing barriers that hinder the development of energy efficient technologies
 - Some criticism of the funding mechanisms:
 - “Funding mechanism for Energy Modelling Systems should be funded on a as required basis and not as a percentage” [Table 5.1]



An Energy Research Strategy for Ireland: Strategic Lines 1-5

- SL 4: Watching brief: Limited emphasis should be placed on this area:
 - *“Research carried out by researchers will inevitably be followed”*
- Conversely:
 - *“The Watching Brief is an important element of the Strategy in order to avoid duplication”*
- Another submission argues:
 - **SL 5: *“Ireland should focus on mapping renewable resources/sources of energy”*** (as opposed to fossil fuels)
- Similarly:
 - **SL 5: *“Equal emphasis should also be placed on identifying and mapping all potential non-fossil energy resources”***
- One submission questioned the ratios attributed to Strategic Lines



An Energy Research Strategy for Ireland: Strategic Lines 1-5

- Summary:
 - Strategic Lines received positive feedback in the majority of submissions
 - General consensus: Strategic Lines “were a step forward”
 - Some issues raised, as outlined above.



An Energy Research Strategy for Ireland: Commercialisation

- Highlighted on a number of occasions:
 - Lack of incentives/too much bureaucracy for industry to become involved at initial stages
 - Too much bureaucracy seemed to be a recurring theme: One submission suggested:
 - ***“Too often the response from agencies such as SEI, COFORD, and Enterprise Ireland is that company ideas for applied research do not fit within the terms of their programmes”***



An Energy Research Strategy for Ireland: Vision

- Vision broadly welcomed:
 - *“Provides a sound basis for developing Strategy”*



An Energy Research Strategy for Ireland: Gaps?

- Several opinions/submissions:
 - Disappointment expressed that Strategy excludes/does not give “adequate treatment” to other power sources
 - Wind
 - Solar
 - Geothermal
 - Nuclear (or indeed, any discussion)
 - Hydrogen
 - Hydrocarbons
 - Carbon Capture and Storage
 - Combustion
 - Liquefied Natural Gas
- One submission:
 - Strategy does not “address the security of supply” issue



An Energy Research Strategy for Ireland: Gaps?

- One submission argued: Strategy lacks social analysis
 - Why more energy efficient options are not pursued?
- Not enough emphasis on renewable sources of energy? (SL 5)?



An Energy Research Strategy for Ireland: Additional matters raised/suggestions?

- Co-ordinated funding programme with input from academic group/industry
- Early termination of Charles Parsons (II) scheme criticised on three separate occasions
- One submission critical of the comment that Ireland is a “technology taker” in transport
 - Already well established research centres



An Energy Research Strategy for Ireland: Implementation/Co-Ordination

- ‘Who does what’ was a recurring theme?
 - SEI, SFI or DCENR?
 - Industry Forum suggested
 - Expert group of academics with responsibility for funding etc



An Energy Research Strategy for Ireland: Conclusions/Recurring themes

- ERS broadly welcomed
- However, some questions/recurring themes:
 - Does the ERS limit Ireland's research opportunities?
 - *"It seems unimaginative to limit our research to areas in which we already have proven strengths?"*
 - Should there be more industry involvement in developing energy research projects?
 - Identifying and Mapping Ireland's resources: Too much emphasis on securing oil and gas supplies and not on renewables?
 - Is there an over reliance on SEI to deliver elements of Strategy?
 - More co-ordinated approach (thus reducing bureaucracy) by DCENR and agencies?



An Energy Research Strategy for Ireland: Conclusions

- Ireland has a good structure for energy research to work on
- Funding has increased in recent years, but issues still remain (CP?)
- Strategy attempts to identify areas where research and funding has not been a priority



An Energy Research Strategy for Ireland: Conclusions

Thank you

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