

Dear Mr Hanna
Chief Technical Adviser
Department of Communications, Marine and Natural resources
Adelaide Road Dublin 2

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I am an energy consultant who has been working on energy efficiency and CO2 reduction throughout Ireland for over ten years, funded by private sector clients, EU SAVE, and the NI public housing sector. I helped promote renewable electricity tariffs in N.Ireland and have interests in residential energy efficiency and future energy supply infrastructures for the whole island.

1. Factors that affect Ireland more than other areas should be identified as cues for focusing research : Economic growth and new house building, peripherality, wind energy with an extended grid, the availability of wavepower, risks of climate change including slowing of the gulf stream.
2. It would be important that a co-ordinating body had effective control of funding streams, and a statutory energy agency would be the best choice for this. It would also be appropriate that this body identifies which of the research carried out by semi-state bodies is contributing to strategic rather than corporate objectives, perhaps by selectively validating or part-funding particular projects.
3. It would not be appropriate to have energy research controlled by bodies accustomed to controlling basic scientific research. Most potential for reducing energy demand and increasing renewable energy production lies in the integration and application of existing or commercially available technologies within a socioeconomic framework. Academic control could run risks of academic inflation where detail could be divorced from bulk application.
4. The energy sector is fortunate in that CO2 emissions are the strategic focus and can be measured. E.g. Setting a 30 year time period for the measurement of potential extra reductions due to the results from any research project would enable different projects to be rated for their potential. Although 60% reductions from current levels may be appropriate to stabilise emissions, economic growth in China and India makes it appropriate to reduce Irish emissions per person by more than this for competitiveness.
5. Measurement of CO2 reduction or actual electricity production can be a good mechanism to support public/ private sector co-operation.
6. The effective critical mass of a research sector can be enhanced by good communications and transparency. E.g. With linked websites in standard formats to cut down replication in projects and to identify weak projects at an early stage.
7. Current levels of state R&D and energy conservation funding seem to be way below any economic optimum, given our regime of energy imports

Yours faithfully

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