



Comments on Energy RD&D Paper

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1. Institutional and Governance Options

The general approach is good, as the active participation of stakeholders will ensure that their services are not replicated. A common problem within the environmental and energy sectors, is that organizations with different agendas often work in overlapping areas. Through co-ordination, this research could be made much more effective and could be accelerated.

SEI would be more appropriate as the responsible body. SFI is involved in few research projects in the area of energy and has too broad a remit to adopt this role. SEI's sustainable agenda would not compromise the overall programme. A sustainability approach in the background of the RD&D programme can only serve to stimulate RD&D and improve Ireland's position. It is clear from security of supply issues, rising energy costs and Ireland's commitment to the Kyoto Protocol that this kind of approach is key. SEI is already experienced in energy related RD&D programmes. The group also understands the needs of the country in terms of energy development, so is better placed to lead a co-ordination council.

Technology Foresight Ireland's Energy Council has also made some excellent recommendations and their further contribution to the co-ordination council would be extremely valuable.





6. Links with Environment

Co-ordination of relevant work programmes is very important, because (as mentioned) environmental / energy research can be disjointed and overlapping.

There are a few programmes which demonstrate the success of linking energy research with environment, such as the EPA's Cleaner Greener Production Programme (CGPP). The synergy of environment and energy could be co-ordinated through the research council by engaging a person to manage environmental links and opportunities. Input from a broad range of bodies working in this area, including University research centres (CTC), ESRI, Cultivate, An Taisce, Friends of the Earth and so on would be valuable here.

7. Long-term vs short-term goals

Studies have shown that Ireland could be self-sufficient or indeed a net exporter of energy in the long term, given the plentiful sources of renewable energy. In order to achieve this, and the related improved security of supply, RD&D will be key. RD&D programmes will be required to cover everything from facilitating the transition to a higher penetration of renewable energies to assessing the ideal future energy/fuel mix and its implications for the economy, as well as other technical grid and related matters. Ireland's progress towards these goals remains slow, thus long term funding must be prioritised.

9. Capacity Building

Capacity building is critical in the energy sector if individual groups, organisations, institutions and society are to possess the ability to perform core functions, solve problems, define and achieve objectives, understand and manage the sectors needs in the short, medium and long term. Hence, there is requirement to invest in people, institutions and practices that will provide a co-ordinated approach to enable the energy sector to achieve its development objectives in relation to professional development, curriculum initiatives, awareness building and human resource development.

This requires the application of an appropriate Energy Capacity Building Methodology (ECBM) that contributes to energy analysis to identify planning initiatives and the development of an energy sector educational strategy, policy and action plan. It should take account and involve contributions from both the private and public sectors such as second level colleges, FAS, IT's, NUI's, Professional Organisations and Bodies, Training Organisations and the energy sector stakeholders SEI, EPA and ESCOs. This would help underpin the energy sector's soft and hard skills supply chain to meet the diverse



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requirements in regards to engineering, innovation, managing change and choosing the appropriate mix of capacity building activities.

Seminar Attendance

With this submission, we would like to express an interest in attending the seminar discussing the paper.

