

RCUK response to Report on “The Current and Future Role of Technology and Innovation Centres in the UK”

Foundation for Science and Technology
18th May 2010

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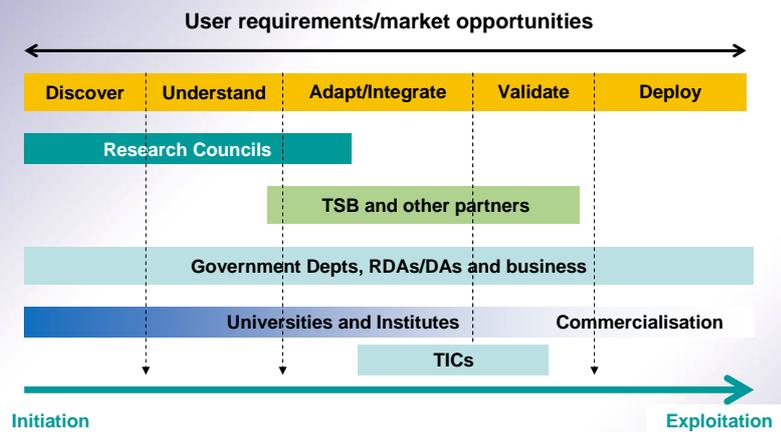


Research Councils & TSB – an introduction

- **Research Councils** generate the fundamental knowledge and skilled people essential to business, government and society.
- **Research Councils** and **TSB** work together to provide seamless support from research idea through to technology development to enable the excellence and innovation of researchers to have greatest impact for the benefit of all in the UK
- During the current SR period RCs and TSB have:
 - Trebled collaborative spend (up to £189 million);
 - Broadened targeted sectors (including creative industries, financial services, agri-food);
 - Developed challenge-led approach



UK research and innovation landscape



“TICs can enable industry to exploit new and emerging technologies by closing the gap through the provision of a business-focused capability that bridges research and technology commercialisation.”



Existing Centre - based RC Initiatives (1)

- The report calls for new sustained investments in Technology and Innovation Centres (TICs) to facilitate the UK's ability to translate scientific leads into leading positions in new industries.
- Research Councils already support many centres that build on academic excellence and encourage those working in research institutions to think about how they can exploit the outcomes of their research.
- **ESRC Centres** – Advanced Institute of Management Research, Innovation Research Centre at Cambridge and Imperial (BIS, ESRC, NESTA, TSB) – including a Knowledge Exchange Hub, Centre for Business Relationships, Accountability, Sustainability and Society
- **MRC Institutes** – National Institute for Medical Research, Laboratory of Molecular Biology, Institute of Hearing Research, as well as 28 units and 22 centres. 3 'lifelong health' research centres are funded by MRC, BBSRC, EPSRC and ESRC.
- **STFC Campuses** – Daresbury and Harwell Science and Innovation Campuses
- **NERC Institutes** – British Antarctic Survey, British Geological Survey, Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, National Oceanography Centre



Existing Centre - based RC Initiatives (2)

- **BBSRC Institutes** – Institute of Food Research, John Innes Centre, Institute of Animal Health, Rothamsted Research Institute, Babraham Institute, The Genome Analysis Centre, Roslin Institute, Institute of Biological, Environmental and Rural Sciences: approx £150m per annum, long term funding
- **EPSRC Innovative Manufacturing Research Centres (IMRCs)** -18 centres funded between 2001 – 2009, £125m, 5 years (+ 5 years) model
- **EPSRC Centres in Innovative Manufacturing (CIMs)** - 3 centres in Liquid Metal Engineering, Regenerative Medicine, Photonics, £14.5m, 5 years each
- **EPSRC/TSB/BBSRC Innovation and Knowledge Centres (IKCs)** - 4 centres, £32m, 5 years each. Areas: Advanced Manufacturing Technologies for Photonics and Electronics, Ultra Precision and Structured Surfaces, Centre of Secure Information Technologies, Regenerative Therapies and Devices. *New applications being assessed now.*
- **EPSRC 'Centres'** - Science and Innovation awards (37 awards, £112m, up to 5 years), Centres for Doctoral Training (52 centres, >£3000m, up to 10 years each), Programme grants (18 grants, £80m, up to 5 years)



Initial Response to the Hauser Review

- The Research Councils agree with the recommendations put forward in the report:
 - Maximising our innovation potential;
 - Identifying areas in which to focus investment;
 - Encouraging best to work with best.
- These have a natural connection with RCUK Impact Strategy:
 - Engaging key stakeholders;
 - Maximising research impact;
 - Delivering highly skilled people.

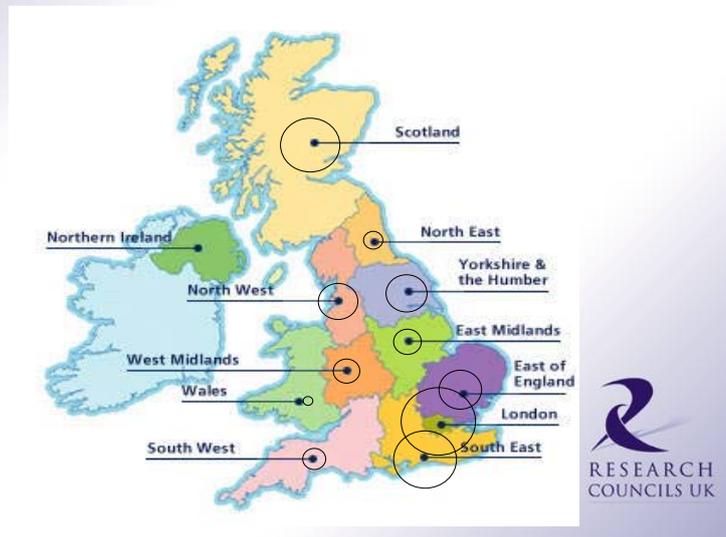


Responding to the Hauser Review

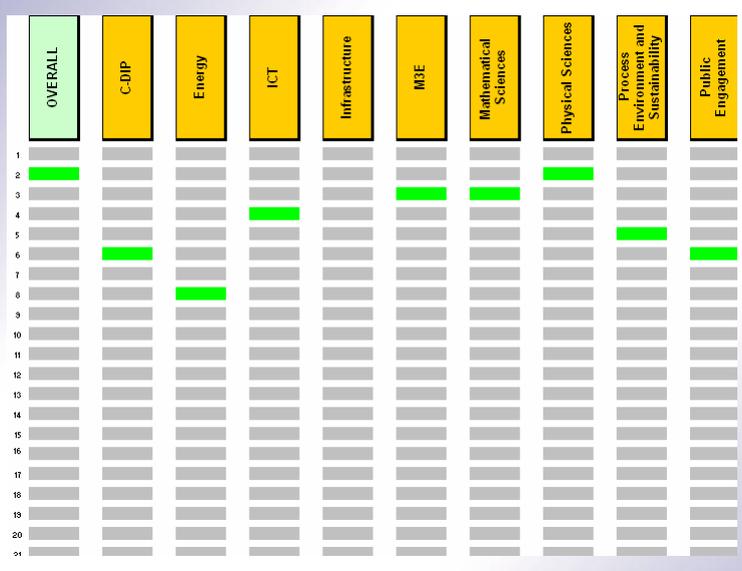
- To have the desired outcome, there needs to be a real commitment to TICs (£5m-10m p.a for at least 10 years per centre), both in terms of sustained financial investment and in time/resources for planning their implementation.
- TSB propose, subject to Ministerial support, to work with industry, stakeholders, wider government including the Research Councils, RDAs and DAs on an implementation strategy for the recommendations.
- At this stage, it is not possible to say what the outcome of this process would be, but a TSB national strategy would include:
 - A vision for the development of the centres over the next 10 years;
 - A process for implementation;
 - Priority technology areas;
 - Scale of investment required;
 - How the Centres would be governed.



Linking TICs to the strongest academic groups: RCUK funding by region based on funding received by top 30 HEIs, excluding RC Research Institutes



RC knowledge of where academic expertise lies: example of EPSRC University 'DNA Plot'



Issues for consideration during strategy development

- Affordability and sustainability of the TICs. Will the proposed funding model allow long term sustainability and where is the money coming from? Funding should **not** come from RC budgets.
- Governance: free-standing? Embedded in other organisations? Banker of last resort? Many major issues must be resolved
- Criteria for selecting TICs – how will it be decided *where* the TICs are based and *what* the priority technology areas are? Who will be involved in the decision making process?
- Ensuring that there is a seamless funding transition from support of fundamental research to take up by TICs.
- Role of TICs in UK research, skills and technology landscape – for example, could TICs act as the industrial partner for an Industrial Doctorate? Could TICs be agents for Industrial CASE? Will they impact on the role of IKCs/KTNs/ RC Institutes/other existing bodies/schemes? How to ensure there is no duplication of effort, or conversely, obvious gaps in the landscape?
- Possible close links to training – such as Centres for Doctoral Training?
- Should TICs also be involved in skills training?



Conclusions

- RCs and TSB welcome the report and note that the recommendations are complementary to our existing strategies, providing TICs are in the right areas and sited correctly.
- The TICs should build on the research supported by RCUK, but they do not themselves fall within the remit of RCUK.
- TSB is well-positioned, subject to Ministerial support, to coordinate the national strategy for the TICs to ensure that they are implemented successfully.
- TSB and RCs will continue to work together to address the identified issues relating to the implementation of the TICs.

