

Mr Robert-Jan Smits  
Director  
DG Research and Innovation  
European Commission

19 May 2011

Dear Mr Smits,

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) is the national foundation for research in Ireland. SFI invests in academic researchers and research teams who are most likely to generate new knowledge, leading edge technologies and competitive enterprises in the fields of science and engineering underpinning Biotechnology, Information & Communications Technology (ICT) and Sustainable Energy & Energy Efficient Technologies (Energy). SFI also advances co-operative efforts among education, government and industry that support its fields of emphasis and promotes Ireland's reputation for science and engineering research.

SFI welcomes the European Commission's Green Paper "From Challenges to Opportunities: Towards a Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation Funding" which is a valuable opportunity to engage in defining the guiding principles, structure and content of the common strategic framework.

SFI endorses the Irish national submission to the European Commission on the proposed common strategic framework for research and innovation (Response by Ireland to the EC Green Paper, May 2011), in particular its focus on ensuring that the overall system is suited to the support of the full research and innovation cycle including eco-innovation, non-technological innovation and close to market innovation.

SFI welcomes the support in the Irish submission for the continued bottom up support for researchers via the Marie Curie Actions and the European Research Council. Research and development depend above all else on the talent, ideas and energies of outstanding individuals. Combining these talents is also required to drive ideas forward to best advance Europe's research, societal value and technological and economic competitiveness. SFI welcomes the opportunities for enhanced co-operation between Member States and more widely and supports the continued fostering of collaborative research through the Co-operation Programme.

To build a knowledge-based, prosperous and sustainable economy emphasis must be placed on the role of partnership and in particular on the linkages between scientific excellence and economic impact. On a national level, SFI works closely with other State agencies to foster enterprise activity in Ireland that incorporates more intellectual capital and ensures

enterprise has ready access to the talent and knowledge that it needs. SFI's 463 grant holders are currently collaborating with 534 companies on research projects. The number of SMEs participating in projects with SFI grant holders has doubled in two years and is now on par with the number of MNCs working with SFI groups. SFI welcomes the call in the Irish submission for supplementary support of commercialisation of outputs arising from European research, facilitating exploitation by industry and, in particular, assisting SMEs.

We would like to thank the Commission for this opportunity to engage in development of a common strategic framework for EU research and innovation and we look forward to continued fruitful engagement with the Commission in this process.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "John Travers". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

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John Travers  
Director General