



### **Press Release: AIRTO welcomes Government's Research and Innovation Strategy for Growth**

AIRTO welcomes the Government's newly launched Research and Innovation Strategy for Growth. AIRTO recognises that creating a favourable environment for innovation is a fundamental component of the current drive to grow the UK's high-value, knowledge-based economy because innovation is the basis of competitiveness. The real value of research lies ultimately in its translation into real commercial success and social benefit, so the role of AIRTO's members in bridging research outcomes and inventions to eventual commercial and practical uptake is fundamental. It is therefore welcomed that the Government's strategy recognises and highlights the important role of intermediate research and technology sector in the innovation ecosystem for the UK.

The research and technology organisations (RTOs) form a cornerstone of the UK's innovation capabilities. RTOs specialise in assisting clients with the adoption of innovative technologies, processes, business proposals and related knowhow. RTOs provide solutions for commercialisation with the backing of widely experienced experts.

*"AIRTO concurs with the Government's belief highlighted in the strategy, that 'the intermediate sector is an under-used asset'," comments AIRTO's President Professor Richard Brook, OBE, FEng. "Our members operate specialist laboratories, test houses and proving grounds for new technologies. With extensive involvement in the management and execution of collaborative R&D programmes, our members have tremendous practical experience of helping clients to bring innovations successfully to market. And their strong relationships with academia ensure that the latest relevant research can be brought to bear".*

Commenting on the launch of the strategy, AIRTO's Chairman, Dr Neil Sanderson, said:

*"In the current economic circumstances, where public spending is constrained a clear set of measures is needed for successful stimulus to innovation – providing new investment for high tech innovative businesses via the Technology Strategy Board will be a real boost to innovation."*

#### **What more is needed?**

The Government has recognised that a tremendous asset lies in the intermediate research and technology sector. The UK needs to better utilise these assets to maximise its innovation potential. AIRTO welcomes BIS' intention to work with RTOs to use their experience and expertise to help realise the UK's mission to compete globally and AIRTO looks forward to working with BIS to realise this ambition.

The strategy document can be found at: <http://www.bis.gov.uk/assets/biscore/innovation/docs/i/11-1387-innovation-and-research-strategy-for-growth.pdf>

**Notes to Editors:**

AIRTO – The Association for Independent Research and Technology Organisations – is the foremost membership body for organisations operating in the UK’s intermediate research and technology sector. AIRTO’s members deliver vital innovation and knowledge transfer services which include applied and collaborative R&D, frequently in conjunction with universities, consultancy, technology validation and testing, incubation of commercialisation opportunities and early stage financing. AIRTO members have a combined turnover of over £2Bn from clients both at home and outside the UK, and employ over 20,000 scientists, technologists and engineers.

AIRTO members include commercial companies, Research and Technology Organisations, Research Associations and selected research and technology exploitation offices from universities, operating at the interface between academia and industry. Most of AIRTO’s members operate in the important space between pure research and the pull of the market for commoditisation of knowledge into new products and services.

AIRTO exists to assist members network and engage collectively with government and policy makers in the UK’s R&D landscape on matters of mutual interest, including research policy, innovation strategy, encouraging enterprise and developing the commercial take up of scientific and technological advances. AIRTO works to influence and improve the strategy and climate for innovation for our Members by forging links and progressing dialogue with key decision makers in government and industry across technology intensive sectors. Our interests cover the activities of the Research Councils, the TSB, the European Commission and a number of UK Government Departments, as well as topics such as the use of public procurement to support innovation, challenge led research, skills provision, support schemes such as SBRI and those that deal with contract and collaborative R&D.

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