

**AIRTO Position Statement on influencing
government
approved 18 July 2024**



Summary

The purpose of this document is to set out AIRTO's approach to influencing and informing government. AIRTO provides factual (not political) information and advocacy about the role of the UK's Innovation, Research & Technology sector to the government. AIRTO seeks to bring expertise, impartiality and scientific evidence to the policy development process.

AIRTO's key governing principle is to operate in a manner that is politically impartial and ensures the proper use of our member subscriptions. AIRTO is the Association for Innovation, Research and Technology Organisations, the foremost membership body for organisations operating in the UK's innovation, research and technology sector.

We exist to:

- assist members to 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
- encourage enterprise and the commercial take up of scientific and technological advances
- 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
- provide a forum through which members can network and engage to share best practice

About AIRTO

AIRTO is the Association of Innovation, Research and Technology Organisations. Its membership comprises approximately sixty of the principal organisations operating in the UK's Innovation, Research and Technology (IRT) sector. The IRT sector has a combined turnover of £6.9 bn, employing over 57,000 scientific and technical staff (equivalent to the academic staffing of the Russell Group of universities) and, for comparison, it is significantly larger than the network of Fraunhofer Institutes in Germany both in size and its scope of activities. The sector contributes £34 bn to UK GDP. AIRTO's members work at the interface between academia and industry, for both private and public sector clients. Members include independent Research and Technology Organisations, Catapult Centres, Public Sector Research Establishments, National Laboratories, some university Technology Transfer Offices and some privately held innovation companies. AIRTO Ltd is a company limited by guarantee registered in England No 1217006. Registered office address: The Scalpel, 18th Floor, 52 Lime Street, London EC3M 7AF

AIRTO is a not-for-profit organisation funded by membership subscriptions, and managed under contract by the Net Zero Technology Centre.

AIRTO representation do not necessarily represent the views of individual member organisations.

AIRTO conducts a number of day to day activities, for its members including:

- assisting members to network and engage collectively, including with government and policy makers in the UK's science and innovation landscape on matters of mutual interest, including research policy and innovation strategy;
- helping to shape the climate for innovation through progressing dialogue and advocacy with key decision makers in government and industry across technology intensive sectors;
- providing a forum through which members can network and engage to share best practice and improve their own business performance.

AIRTO's position on lobbying

Lobbying is a normal part of the democratic process and is defined on the Parliament [website](#) as “when an individual or a group tries to persuade someone in Parliament to support a particular policy or campaign. Lobbying can be done in person, by sending letters and emails or via social media”.

AIRTO does not engage in paid lobbying, but rather provides factual (not political) information and advocacy about the role of our sector to the government and politicians. Although AIRTO is not a public body, a number of its members are and when dealing with government or elected representatives they operate in alignment with the [‘Rules on Lobbying for Non Departmental Public Bodies’](#).

Beyond the government in Westminster, AIRTO operates in accordance with the accordance with the [‘Code of Conduct for lobbying’](#) published by the Scottish Parliament, and the [Lobbying \(Scotland\) Act 2016](#) in its dealings with members of the Scottish Parliament, and other relevant codes produced by devolved administrations.

AIRTO's key governing principle is to operate in a manner that is politically impartial, transparent and ensures the proper use of our member subscriptions. Specifically, AIRTO:

1. complies with government conventions on publicity and advertising, ensuring that any such activities are:

- relevant to our responsibilities;
- objective and explanatory;
- not party political and not liable to misrepresentation as being party political;
- produced and distributed in an economic and relevant way, having regard to the need to justify the costs to our members and the AIRTO Board;

2. does not employ third parties to attempt to influence Parliament, government or political parties, from time to time AIRTO may work in partnership with other similar bodies whose role is to promote science, technology and innovation adoption in the UK;

3. does not employ third parties to attend Party Conferences in an official capacity;

4. submissions or representations made to Ministers, Members of Parliament, Parliamentary or Departmental inquiries or consultation exercises – either via written material, oral evidence or in face to face briefings – are restricted to information which is:

- constructive and intended to help improve the outcome of government policies or interventions for UK plc and our wider society;
- based on evidence;
- and which seek to avoid being party political;

5. submissions do not necessarily represent the views of individual AIRTO member organisations, and this is explicitly stated.