

To: Heads of higher education institutions in Wales

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Response By: N/A
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OFFICE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY'S STRATEGIC RESEARCH RATIONALISATION FUND

Circular W03/07HE, published in February 2003, announced arrangements for the second round of the Science Research Investment Fund (SRIF) and indicated that the Office of Science and Technology (OST) had reserved funding for a UK-wide Strategic Research Rationalisation Fund. This Fund is intended to contribute to the costs of co-operation between UK HEIs, including merger, where this strengthens the international excellence of the UK's science research base. The Circular indicated that further information on the Fund would be issued in due course.

I now enclose a statement on the arrangements for the Fund which we have been asked to circulate to institutions on behalf of the OST. You will note that any application for support will be dependent on the relevant Funding Council having given at least in principle support to the proposed merger or restructuring activity. You will also note that proposals will be expected to produce a critical mass of world class research excellence.

Any institutions which are considering making an application for support from the Fund should, in the first instance, contact Linda Tiller at HEFCW for an informal discussion of their intentions (029 2068 2228; Linda.Tiller@hefcw.ac.uk).

Yours sincerely

PROFESSOR PHILIP GUMMETT
DIRECTOR OF HIGHER EDUCATION

SRIF – STRATEGIC RATIONALISATION AND RESTRUCTURING OF THE HEI SCIENCE BASE

CIRCULAR TO BE SENT BY THE FUNDING COUNCILS ON BEHALF OF OST

In *Investing in Innovation, a strategy for science, engineering and technology*¹, the Government announced that an element of the capital stream earmarked for science research infrastructure would be retained centrally by OST to support strategic rationalisation and restructuring of the science base, including mergers. Up to £20m is available from OST.

Applications for these funds should be made to the relevant Funding Council who will take the lead in evaluating any merger or other restructuring proposals. OST will not consider a proposal to the Strategic Research Rationalisation Fund unless the appropriate Funding Council has carried out an initial evaluation of, and provided in principle support to, the underlying case for the merger or restructuring. These funds will only be provided towards supporting the science research element of restructuring; wider benefits, including those to teaching and the regional economy should be funded from other sources.

Once the Funding Council has carried out an initial evaluation of the business plan and agreed, in principle, to provide funding support for the proposal, it will need to present a short background paper to OST on the nature and benefits of the restructuring project together with a more detailed case from the HEIs about the particular areas of science for which support is being sought from the OST fund.

OST will need to be convinced that within the overall proposal, there are proposals for science research capital facilities designed to produce a critical mass of world class research excellence that could not be achieved by the institution(s) using their individual SRIF funding allocations. RCUK will be asked to evaluate the scientific merit of the proposals.

¹ http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/Spending_Review/spend_sr02/spend_sr02_science.cfm