

PRESS RELEASE

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TECHNOLOGY STRATEGY BOARD TO REFOCUS KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER NETWORKS

- Review confirms value of networks for sharing knowledge and accelerating innovation
- Coverage of business and technology areas by individual networks to be revised; existing communities will continue to be served
- Call for more businesses to join knowledge transfer networks to speed up innovation.

Following a major review, the Technology Strategy Board is to refocus the work of their Knowledge Transfer Networks (KTNs), which bring together people from business, universities and research organisations to stimulate innovation through knowledge exchange.

The changes will see a revision of the coverage of business and technology sectors, creating a more targeted, comprehensive and accessible range of network resources to help accelerate innovation.

The comprehensive review, which obtained views from 2100 KTN users and R&D intensive businesses, strongly confirmed the value of the networks. 75% of business respondents rated KTN services as effective or highly effective. Over 50% have developed, or are developing, new R&D or commercial relationships with people met through a KTN and 25% have made changes to their innovation activities as a result of their engagement.

The most highly rated functions of KTNs, according to the survey, are monitoring and reporting on technologies, applications and markets; providing high quality networking opportunities; and identifying and prioritising key innovation-related issues and challenges.

The review did however identify some areas where networks overlapped, and some where there is poor provision and a good opportunity to develop new networks.

David Way, Director of Knowledge Exchange and Special Projects at the Technology Strategy Board, said: "We were very pleased to have the value and importance of Knowledge Transfer Networks confirmed by this review. However it also identified some areas of overlap and some areas where there are gaps. This is why we are refocusing the portfolio to build on the successes, at the same time aligning the KTNs more closely with the innovation priorities which we have identified in our strategic plan. We will also increase the support the KTNs give to international activities, recognising the increasingly global nature of innovation and business in general"

David Way added: "While the number of formal networks will reduce from the current 25 to around 15, all existing knowledge exchange communities, which have over 45,000

members, will continue to be supported within the new structure. We are also planning to establish new KTNs in some areas, for example financial services and energy generation and supply.”

The Technology Strategy Board would also like to see a great increase in the number of individuals and businesses who use and are part of a KTN. “The feedback from existing business members of KTNs is very positive” David Way said. “We now want to roll these benefits out through UK business as widely as possible. I would encourage every technology-enabled business to find out more about how KTNs can help them to innovate.”

The review also highlighted the strong benefits brought to the KTN programme through links with a wide range of partners. KTNs engage with trade associations, technology providers, research councils, Regional Development Agencies and the Devolved Administrations to deliver benefits to businesses of all sizes. The Technology Strategy Board will use its own links to strengthen these bonds where possible.

Notes to Editors

1. The review of KTNs was informed by a study carried out on behalf of the Technology Strategy Board by Technopolis Group between May and August 2008.
2. The Technology Strategy Board is a business-led executive non-departmental public body, established by the government. Its role is to promote and support research into, and development and exploitation of, technology and innovation for the benefit of UK business, in order to increase economic growth and improve the quality of life. It is sponsored by the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills (DIUS). For further information please visit www.innovateuk.org.
3. Knowledge Transfer Networks (KTNs) are national networks in specific fields of technology or business application, which bring together people from businesses, universities, research, finance, the public sector and technology organisations to stimulate innovation through knowledge exchange. Funded primarily by the Technology Strategy Board, their activities play an increasingly important role in the development of the Government's technology strategy, and help to feed and drive the Collaborative Research & Development Programme and other innovation interventions. For further information please see www.ktnetworks.co.uk

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