

Supplementary Estimate 2019 - Speaking Points for Minister Halligan

I welcome the opportunity to introduce very briefly the research and innovation related elements of the Supplementary Estimate which is before you.

Under the Department's proposed allocation, just over €11 million would be apportioned to meet commitments in respect of various research and development programmes of national importance and will help us to accelerate delivery against our targets and goals as set out in Innovation 2020.

The €5 million supplementary estimate funding for the **European Space Agency** will be invested across six technology development programmes to drive Ireland forward as a competitive player in the space sector. This investment is directly aligned with the new National Space Strategy for Enterprise, which I published earlier this year and which aims to increase public and private investment in ESA by 50% by 2025 and develop a strong and economically sustainable space-active industry in Ireland.

As I have noted previously, our investment through ESA delivers a 7-fold return in terms of its ultimate impact and I think it is critical that we increase our ambition in this area. The specific programmes that we will invest in include telecommunications and integrated applications, exploration, transportation and earth observation.

An additional €1.7m will be paid to the **European Southern Observatory** as a contribution to our existing membership liabilities, including the joining fees, which are to be paid over a number of years and Ireland's contribution to the Extremely Large Telescope (ELT).

Membership of ESO affords Irish astronomers and researchers the opportunity to be part of an international scientific community, conducting ground-breaking research in the most advanced facilities.

ESO membership will help grow Ireland's skill base in high tech areas, delivering on the ambitions of Future Jobs Ireland.

The proposed allocation of €1.5m for **Tyndall National Institute** in Cork will contribute towards upgrading works to accommodate more researchers in the field of cutting-edge ICT. This funding will enhance Tyndall's ability to support innovation and deliver significant economic benefit in terms of highly skilled jobs, new start-up activity and investment.

An additional €1m is proposed for **Science Foundation Ireland** for a number of existing commitments that fall due in 2019. Taken together with increases in its capital funding in 2020, SFI will be able to fund additional research activity through both its Research Centres and its funding for individual awards.

The €2 million for **Cycle 5 of the PRTL** will address existing financial commitments under that programme. The PRTL has supported investment in top class infrastructure and human capital development across Ireland's Higher Education Institutions. It has been an important programme for creating the foundation upon which further investments by SFI and our other funding agencies now build.

Chair, the evolution of research, development and innovation and its associated investment have been a cornerstone of Ireland's enterprise policy for many years. In order to become an innovation leader, it is essential that the Ireland keeps apace with and anticipates developments in the field. This ambition must be matched by investment in innovation, research and development, and reflected in the above funding decisions.

This supplementary allocation of just over €11 million will provide welcome additional funding into our system which will support the quality and impact of our scientific capacity, will contribute to job creation and enterprise growth, and will help us to deliver on our Innovation 2020 targets and commitments. As we look ahead to its

successor strategy, due to be published in early 2021, we hope to build on our successes and, working with other Government Departments, ensure that Ireland is operating at the forefront of research, development and innovation.
