

# **The Organisation of Science and Technology Policy in Iceland**

The legislation on the organisation of science and technology policy and public funding of research and technological development in Iceland was enacted by the Althing in 2003.

The legislation is composed of three separate laws:

- **Law (2/2003) on the Science and Technology Policy Council - under the Office of the Prime Minister**
- **Law (3/2003) on Public Support to Scientific Research - under the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture**
- **Law (4/2003) on Public Support to Technology Development and Innovation in the Economy - under the Ministry of Industry and Commerce**

The Science and Technology Policy Council (SPTC) is headed by the Prime Minister of Iceland. Three other ministers have a permanent seat on the Council: The Minister of Education and Science, the Minister of Industry and Commerce and the Minister of Finance. At the discretion of the Prime Minister, two other ministers with research in their portfolio may join the Council. Currently these are the Minister of Fisheries and the Minister of Agriculture. Fourteen other members are appointed to the Council upon nominations by the Ministers with research portfolio (6 nominations), parties to the Employers Association and Employees Union (4 nominations) and by the coordinating committee of higher education institutions (4 nominations).

The Minister of Education and Science appoints nine of the non- ministerial members to the Science Committee and the Minister of Industry appoints an equal number to the Technology Committee. The mutual overlapping membership on the committees contributes to coordination between science, technology and innovation in the policy making process.

The objective of the STPC is to strengthen scientific research, scientific training and technology development in the country in support of Icelandic cultural development and to increase economic competitiveness. The STPC issues declarations for public policy on science and technology. The policy declarations are prepared by the Science Committee and the Technology Committee respectively. The composition of the STPC Council brings STP issues to the highest political level.

The Research Fund was established through fusion of the previous Science Fund and the Technology Fund. The Research Fund is governed by a board, whose chairman also chairs the Science Committee. Linked to the same board is also the Equipment Fund. Similarly the Law on the public support to technology development and innovation established a Technology Development Fund. Thus link a between policy and implementation through funding is provided. This law also established the Innovation Center (IMPRA), operationally linked to Icelandic Technology Institute.

The Ministry of Education Science and Culture and the Ministry of Industry and Commerce provide support for the two respective committees in preparing policy documents. Overall co-ordination is provided by the Science Office including a secretary to the STPC placed at the Ministry of Education Science and Culture.

The Icelandic Center for Research (RANNÍS), reporting to the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, provides operational support to the committees and funding bodies, to manage the international connections, monitor the effects and impacts of policies and to provide intelligence and informed advice to the STPC and its boards and sub-committees, as requested. Thus RANNÍS administers the Research Fund, the Technology Development fund, the Instrument Fund, the Graduate Training Fund and other funds for science that the government may want to assign to it. It maintains the National Contact Point Coordination and support network to the EU Framework Program, the Nordic NOS - organizations and membership to several other international bodies in science and technology co-operation.

The structure is shown schematically below.

