HOUSE OF LORDS SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY SELECT COMMITTEE CALL FOR EVIDENCE: ‘SETTING SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY RESEARCH FUNDING PRIORITIES’ INQUIRY

The Science and Technology Select Committee, on 31 July 2009, issued a call for evidence to inform its inquiry into how priorities are established for scientific and technological research funding.

This response covers the Cabinet Office including: the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel; Office of the Third Sector; Committee on Standards in Public Life; and, the Independent Offices.

We have identified only one area of the work of Cabinet Office where research funding falls within the terms of the Select Committee’s call for evidence; Information Security and Assurance Research. The details are set out in Annex A attached.

I am copying this letter to Alex Allan, Alexis Cleveland and John Suffolk in Cabinet Office.

Peter Lawrence
Information Security and Assurance Research Evidence

The Information Security and Assurance team is a unit within the Cabinet Office which sits within the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer and Senior Information Risk Owner structure. The team provides a central focus for Information Assurance (IA) activity across the UK.

ISA works in partnership with a range of partners including CESG (The National Technical Authority for Information Assurance) and CPNI, Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure which aims to provide assurance to government that the UK’s ICT systems and the information they handle are appropriately protected. ISA produces and maintains the National Information Assurance Strategy and, along with partner organisations, coordinates and sponsors work programmes to deliver on the strategy’s recommendations.

ISA has a lead role in helping government to realise the following future strategic outcomes:

- Government is better able to deliver public services through the appropriate use of ICT
- The UK’s national security is strengthened by protecting information and information systems at risk of compromise
- The UK’s social and economic well-being is enhanced as government, business and citizens realise the full benefits of ICT

There is a particular need for HM government to fund information assurance research as there are particular requirements for government, especially within the national security domain, which will not be delivered by the sector for its own market needs.

ISA Research Funding to CESG

ISA provides £5 million annually to CESG in research funding. CESG needs to develop and maintain its intellectual capital base in subjects relevant to Information Assurance in order to fulfil its role as the National Technical Authority. This funding has enabled CESG to work with academia and industry to develop expertise and skills in a wide spectrum of technical subjects such as:

- Cryptography and key management,
- risk assessment and management,
- software engineering and security analysis,
- hardware engineering and security analysis,
- operational assurance techniques, as well as
- key technologies and products used by Government and its delivery partners

The expertise developed has put CESG at the forefront of Information Assurance in the Internet Age, and in a strong position to help HMG manage risks to its electronic information and services.