

LEARNING FROM DIFFERENT CENTRAL ECONOMIC MINISTRY PERSPECTIVES ON RESEARCH & INNOVATION

July 2008 – TBC
Venue – TBC, Canberra

TOPIC BRIEF

The perspectives on research and innovation policy held by central economic ministries (sometimes known as the Treasury) play an important role in framing national policy agendas. In some countries, such as the UK, the Treasury has taken on an active role in innovation policy as integral to the wider national productivity and competitiveness agenda. In other countries, the nature and extent of any engagement by central economic ministries in this aspect of public policy is more remote – and frequently framed in relation to general value for money considerations without detailed intervention in research and innovation policy issues. Much rests upon guiding assumptions about government intervention rationales: how market failure is defined and, given this, how far beyond market failure it is seen as legitimate to intervene.

These differences between policy stances can influence how the relationship between innovation and productivity policies evolves in different national settings – both in relation to funding availability and the intended outcomes from funding. As such, institutional perspectives constitute a key, though often overlooked, component of national innovation systems. It is therefore important to close this gap in our understanding of this aspect of national innovation systems.

The aim of this workshop, and associated discussions and debates facilitated by The Australian National University's Research and Innovation Policy Project, is to:

- generate a better picture of the diversity of central economic ministry policy stances with regard to research and innovation policy
- consider the implications of these different policy stances for the effectiveness of national innovation systems
- seek to identify any emerging "best practices" in central economic ministry engagement with research and innovation policy.

The workshop will be of interest internationally to both senior central economic ministry officials seeking a better grasp of the inter-face with research and innovation policy and other officials, policy advisors, industrialists and academics active in research and innovation policy seeking to improve their understanding of the role played by central economic ministries in national innovation systems.

Workshop attendance
– invitation only

See overleaf for Key Questions

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KEY QUESTIONS

1. To what extent are differences in central economic ministry attitudes to research and innovation linked to the styles of economics deployed, particularly in regard to the balance of neo-classical versus institutional economics in framing market failure parameters?
2. What concepts and expectations do different central economic ministries have regarding the nature and extent of the return on investment from supporting research and innovation?
3. To what extent does international experience demonstrate useful lessons for improving the integration of central economic ministry policy stances with research and innovation policy conducted within other departments?
4. To what extent are current central economic ministry perspectives toward transparency and accountability in public funding at a general level applicable to Compact-based funding for universities?

Latest details regarding speakers, venues, agenda, and resource materials are available on the workshop website <http://repp.anu.edu.au/ripp/economicministries>

To contribute to the debate around policy review on this topic and the other five research and innovation policy dialogue topics in the workshop series, contact the Research and Innovation Policy Project.

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<http://repp.anu.edu.au/ripp>