

Friday 5 June 2009

Changes to the machinery of Government

The Government has today created a new Department for Business, Innovation and Skills whose key role will be to build Britain's capabilities to compete in the global economy. The Department will be created by merging BERR and DIUS.

This will create a single department committed to building Britain's future economic strengths. To compete in a global economy and create the jobs of the future Britain requires a regulatory environment that encourages enterprise, skilled people, innovation, and world-class science and research.

The merger of BERR and DIUS brings together the parts of the government with key expertise in these areas. It combines BERR's strengths in shaping the enterprise environment, analysing the strengths and needs of the various parts of British industry, building strategies for industrial strength and expertise in better regulation with DIUS's expertise in maintaining world class universities, expanding access to higher education, investing in the UK's science base and shaping skills policy and innovation through bodies such as the Technology Strategy Board. It also puts the UK's Further Education system and universities closer to the heart of government thinking about building now for the upturn.

The new department is the institutional realisation of the approach to promoting UK competitiveness and productivity as set out in the New Industries, New Jobs paper of April 2009, produced jointly by BERR and DIUS.

The new department will:

- Advocate the needs of business across government, especially of UK small businesses;
- Promote an enterprise environment that is good for business and good for consumers;
- Design tailored policies for sectors of the UK economy that represent key future strengths and where government policy can add to the dynamics of the market;
- Assess the changing skills needs of the UK economy, especially the intermediate and high skills vital in a global economy and design policies to meet them through public and privately funded life long training;
- Invest in the development of a higher education system committed to widening participation, equipping people with the skills and knowledge to compete in a global economy and securing and enhancing Britain's existing world class research base;
- Continue to invest in the UK's world class science base and develop strategies for commercialising more of that science;
- Continue to invest in skills through the Further Education system to help people through the downturn and to prepare Britain for the future;

- Deliver on the government's ambitious objectives to expand the number of apprenticeships;
- Encourage innovation in the UK;
- Defend a sound regulatory environment that encourages enterprise and skills;
- Collaborate with the RDAs in building economic growth in the English regions;
- Work with the EU in shaping European regulation and European policies that affect the openness of the single market and the competitiveness of European and British companies
- Continue to work to expand UK exports and encourage inward investment to the UK.