

EASAC statement on the SET-Plan

The Strategic Energy Technology Plan¹ (SET-Plan) is an important component of European Union strategies to deliver its ambitious targets for decarbonising energy supply in Europe. This short statement from the European Academies Science Advisory Council (EASAC: www.easac.eu) is intended as a contribution to the debate ensuing from the Communication from the Commission on 'Energy Technologies and Innovation' in May 2013² which includes the aim to reinvigorate the SET-Plan to meet the evolving challenges of sustainable energy provision in Europe.

The SET-Plan has made considerable progress since its inception in enabling the integration of the energy research, development and demonstration activities of EU member states and increasing collaboration between researchers across Europe. However, as recognised in the recent communication, there is room for improvement, particularly given the changed economic context since the SET-Plan was initiated in 2007. EASAC hopes that the following key points will be taken into account in the current revamping of the SET-Plan:

- The goals of the SET-Plan should be clear, focus on enabling the achievement of the EU's energy strategy targets, and appropriately framed in relation to other EU policies and strategies. They should firmly position energy research and innovation in the EU within the competitive global economy.
- Stronger leadership of the SET-Plan is needed, capable of prioritising EU support to energy research and innovation, integrating activities, and establishing a portfolio of technology developments with an appropriate spread of risks.
- For the prioritised projects, sufficient resources should be allocated from appropriate funding sources (for example, Horizon 2020, Structural Funds, NER300 etc.) so as to be competitive on the world stage. The benchmark should always be the best globally.

¹ European Commission, 2007. *A European Strategic Energy Technology Plan (SET-plan): 'Towards a low carbon future'*. COM(2007) 723 Final. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0723:FIN:EN:PDF>

² European Commission, 2013. *Energy Technologies and Innovation*. COM(2013) 253 final. http://ec.europa.eu/energy/technology/strategy/doc/comm_2013_0253_en.pdf

- An appropriate balance between collaboration and competition needs to be achieved. Care must be taken in the arrangements for distribution of funding in Horizon 2020 to ensure that research groups outside of the European Energy Research Alliance and European Industrial Initiatives are not disadvantaged.
- More effort should be devoted to transport, demand side issues and energy efficiency, heat services (domestic and industrial), systems issues (which should inform R&D on energy storage), skills development, quality management and upstream basic science.

It is noted that a number of these points have already been picked up in the recent Communication on Energy Technologies and Innovation, and EASAC would encourage the Commission to take them on board to ensure that the SET-Plan delivers the technologies necessary to achieve Europe's energy ambitions.