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IoD WELCOMES DTI'S PLAN TO BOOST BRITISH BUSINESS

The Department of Trade and Industry's commitment to science in its five-year programme, published today, as part of its plan to help British Business has been broadly welcomed by the Institute of Directors (IoD).

The commitment to spend £3.3 billion of the DTI's £5.6 billion budget by 2008 is just what IoD members have been calling for. The IoD also welcomes the DTI's commitment to reduce the cost of regulation by £1 billion and introduce two common commencement dates. However, there is still much more to do since the cost of regulation has increased since 1997. Additionally, with half of regulations coming from the EU, it is imperative that the Government, with our help, staunches the flow of regulation at its source.

Commenting on the DTI's plans, IoD Director General, Miles Templeman, said:

"The DTI's approach shows that it has been listening to some of the concerns of business. I particularly welcome the boost to science.

"The programme rightly recognises that to compete in the modern world, British business needs an educated workforce. All the more reason for the Government to focus on raising standards of literacy and numeracy in schools, without getting side tracked by the Tomlinson proposals. It is a national scandal that over 5 million adults cannot read, write or add up properly.

"The programme covers a lot of areas that business will welcome but doesn't have any clear strategy on the issue of nuclear power and rising energy costs.

"We are pleased that the Government recognises the need to liberalise the service sector in the European Union but it needs to make that vision a reality. Freeing up services to competition will be an advantage to British businesses."