

Preface: Comments from Bill Macdonald CEO of ScotCHEM – these are his comments and they may not necessarily represent the views of the departments that ScotCHEM represents

Dear Sir/Madam

I'm sure the individual Universities within the ScotCHEM Federation of Chemistry Departments will respond for each institution. As the CEO of ScotCHEM I would like to make a few high level comments that largely address question f) about how can the SFC support Universities etc to make their full contribution to an education led economic recovery.

If I look at the funded landscape in Scottish Innovation Ecosystem (The Innovation Centres , The Research and Innovation Organisations, The Centres and Hubs from the City Challenge, The Pools, The Catapults etc), I see a complicated landscape that is not “joined up” and there is I believe a significant opportunity to create synergy, to achieve more with scarce public resources, by having a more strategic approach on bringing together and aligning the ecosystem with where the opportunities lie. The Pools can act as the glue within the Ecosystem by aligning and bringing the Scottish academic research base across departments and across disciplines to create a critical mass to support the areas of growth. The Pools are attempting to do this but it feels like a bottom up exercise rather than a top down led initiative on Economic Growth with a roadmap clearly showing how the various organisation fit together.

The Pools system in Scotland appears to be fairly unique if we are compared internationally. The Pools acting to bring together critical masses of scientist and engineers from across the Scottish Universities in "Centres of Excellence" (either virtual or formal) and aligning these with the Scottish Innovation Ecosystem will allow Scotlands academic base to “punch above its weight” internationally.

I would welcome a Government led strategic initiative to pull the Innovation Ecosystem together, with the SFC charged with ensuring that the academic base aligns and underpins it.

I am happy to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely
Bill MacDonald

Prof Bill A MacDonald
CEO ScotCHEM