Executive summary (Performance-based Funding for Public Research in Tertiary Education Institutions: Workshop Proceedings)

Tertiary education institutions (TEIs) are a key pillar of countries' research and innovation systems. As part of the public research system, they play many roles: education, training, skills development, problem solving, creation and diffusion of knowledge, development of new instrumentation, and storage and transmission of knowledge. Expenditure on R&D performed by the higher education sector forms a relatively small component of total R&D spending in OECD countries: an average of 0.4% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2008, equivalent to around 17% of total gross domestic expenditure on R&D. Nevertheless, because TEIs often undertake longer-term, higher-risk research activities at some distance from commercialisation, they make an essential contribution to the knowledge base and complement the research activities undertaken by the private sector.

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