

A proposal to society

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Photo: Jaap Oldenkamp

'We have to demonstrate our impact explicitly'

Once every four years TNO draws up a Strategic Plan. This document contains its tangible aims for the respective period and is the basis on which the government determines whether or not TNO is heading in the right direction to help deal with prevailing social issues. Government funding in turn depends on the demand-driven programmes of the various ministerial departments in which TNO is able to participate. Funding of any kind cannot, of course, be regarded as self-evident; it has to be earned, all the more so given that only a third of our income derives from government monies and two-thirds from assignments we carry out for our customers in the open market.

This coming strategy period covers 2011 to 2014. In effect, this means that the plans for those four years have to be on the governmental desks during the first quarter of next year so that our intentions can be judged in 2010 and account taken of them in the budgets that will be drawn up for 2011 and beyond.

With the Strategic Plan needing to be ready at the end of this year, there is plenty of hustle and bustle at TNO currently as we prepare our new 'proposal to society'. One of the keys here is to consider how the current plan is being implemented. In other words, we are asking ourselves to what extent the targets set in the Strategic Plan for 2007-2010 are being met.

In many respects, I think we can be fairly pleased with what we have achieved so far. Mind you, there are a few aspects that have not lived up to our expectations. Let me give you an example. Yes, our work does have an impact on society, government and industry but, then again, we don't believe we have adequately succeeded in making our own opinions demonstrably clear. Our customers know what we have in house and know what our input can mean for them in terms of innovation, product and process optimisation, strategic advice, etc, but the significance of this – or the added value of TNO – for society as such does not always come to the fore. In our new Strategic Plan we want to be more explicit than before about where we will be focusing our efforts in the future. To this end, we will be making a strong effort to touch base with many of our stakeholders in the second half of this year to ensure that we really are working on the things that matter, and that this is evident to the world around us.

Society wants to know what added value we bring. Quite rightly so. We are convinced of the impact we have but we also realise that we have to clearly demonstrate that because no-one should simply take us at our word. More than ever, this has become a key focal issue for us. So, why wait – let's get started by taking a good, hard look at this *TNO magazine*, shall we?

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