As part of a project to expand its Sustainable Technologies Roadmap, Chemistry Innovation engaged four post doctoral researchers on the SWIFT programme to identify the technology needs of downstream sectors.

Working from Chemistry Innovation’s offices in Runcorn, the researchers were presented with a valuable opportunity to gain experience in:
- sector surveys (understanding the size of an opportunity)
- establishing trends and drivers (e.g. legislation and consumer demands)
- identifying sector needs for new technology
- presentation of market information

Under supervision from Chemistry Innovation’s Sustainable Technologies Priority Manager - Dr Mike Pitts, the information generated by the SWIFT researchers was used as part of a comprehensive update to the Roadmap which will go live at the end of March 2008.

Chemistry Innovation also arranged company visits to give the researchers a greater insight into how chemistry and chemical research is conducted outside the University environment.

Currently supported by Nottingham, Cardiff, Birmingham and Manchester Universities, Chemistry Innovation is seeking to encourage wider participation in the programme by other academic institutions and industry - as well as leveraging financial support.

**SWIFT Programme Mission**

*To facilitate the generation of value from knowledge through the development of the commercial and business skills of chemistry and chemical engineering Post Doctoral Research Associates (PDRAs).*

The SWIFT programme aims to provide PDRAs with a range of commercial and business skills and the ability to contribute effectively to the generation and transfer of knowledge/IP to companies through collaborative R&D projects.

**Year 1** - participants receive training in basics of business; interactions between business and universities; the identification, evaluation, protection and exploitation of IP; understanding the market and project management.

**Year 2** - training is supported by a series of short projects followed by a longer term collaborative R&D project with a company.

Key benefits of the SWIFT programme include:
- An improvement in the effectiveness of collaborative R&D projects between universities and chemistry-using industries.
- An improvement in the exploitation of University generated chemical and chemical engineering IP via licensing and spin-outs.
- Providing PDRAs with a wider choice of career options
- Providing industry with a supply of potential recruits with a combination of science/engineering expertise and core business skills.