

UK government provides financial safety net for Horizon Europe applicants

Successful applicants for Horizon Europe grant awards will be guaranteed funding regardless of the outcome of the UK's efforts to associate to Horizon Europe, under a new scheme announced by the government today (29 November 2021).

While the government's priority remains association to Horizon Europe, as both the UK and the EU agreed under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) last year, ongoing delays by the EU have led to uncertainty for researchers, businesses and innovators based in the UK.

To provide reassurance, the government has guaranteed funding for the first wave of eligible, successful applicants to Horizon Europe, but who have been unable to sign grant agreements with the EU.

The funding will be delivered through UK Research and Innovation, which will publish further details about eligibility, scope and how to apply in the coming weeks.

Science, Research and Innovation Minister George Freeman:

The Horizon programme has been a vital source of fellowships and collaborations for UK researchers over the years, which is why the UK and the EU agreed terms for the UK's participation in the programme under the TCA. The persistent delays from the EU in formalising our association is creating uncertainty in the sector and risks preventing valuable international collaboration on shared global challenges, like climate change.

We are committed to supporting the UK's world-class research sector in international collaborations, and this safety net will give researchers and their partners the certainty they need to continue to pursue their project plans and maintain world-class science.

UKRI International Champion Professor Christopher Smith:

We welcome the government's decision to provide funding to those who have successfully applied to Horizon Europe and will be finalising the processes needed to distribute the funds in the coming weeks.

We are also working with the government to prepare for all possible outcomes to ensure the UK's thriving research and innovation sector

has the support it needs to continue collaborating and delivering world-class R&D.

In the meantime we encourage researchers and innovators across the UK to continue to apply to open Horizon Europe calls.

In December 2020, the UK and EU signed a Joint Declaration on Participation in Union Programmes and Access to Programme Services, setting out the parties' shared commitment for the UK to associate to the agreed EU programmes (Horizon Europe, Euratom R&T and Copernicus) at the earliest opportunity.

The guarantee announced today is a short-term measure intended to cover the first wave of calls until the EU formalises the UK's association, as was agreed under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement. The government remains committed to securing this outcome so that research collaboration can continue, and we stand ready to formalise our association.

As announced at Spending Review 2021, in the event that the UK is unable to associate to Horizon Europe, the funding allocated will instead go to UK government R&D programmes, including those to support international partnerships.

The government looked at the practicalities of handling such a situation in 2020 and developed a detailed set of alternatives plans, which included continued support for international research, innovation collaboration and domestic research support. This work is being refreshed and we remain ready to implement these plans should they become necessary.