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## FOREWORD

2017-18 has been a momentous year for UK research and innovation. The seeds of a more integrated national funding body have been sown, with the launch of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) in April 2018.

Our vision for UKRI, which brings together the seven UK Research Councils, Innovate UK and a new organisation, Research England, builds on the successes of the UK's international research collaborations, including the UK's strong collaborative partnerships with Europe.

The UK Research Office (UKRO) plays an indispensable role in maximising the UK's contributions to EU programmes. Since the creation of UKRO, it has been crucial in offering insights and intelligence to the Research Councils and to UK Government Departments. For the Research Councils, UKRO gives practical support as new EU grant applications are developed and new programmes implemented. For UK Government Departments, UKRO works hard to navigate growing complexities as we plan for the UK's future in EU research and innovation.

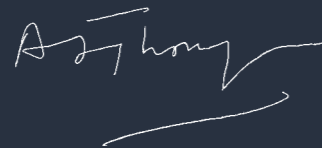
Year on year, the UKRO team go the extra mile for the UK's research sector. From delivering the highest quality National Contact Point helpdesks for the European Research Council and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions, to providing dedicated European Advisor support to researchers and research managers across the UK. The UKRO Portal is highly valued. With 13,500 users, it is the most trusted resource on the latest developments on EU Research, Innovation and Higher Education funding and policies. The sense of continuity and reassurance that UKRO provides at a time of uncertainty and change is crucial and should not be underestimated.

Our European counterparts also look to and rely on UKRO: in part to understand the UK funding landscape and, more recently, in matters relating to Brexit and UK participation in EU programmes. UKRO's achievements are anchored in its strong relationships and leadership within the Brussels networks and its partnerships with important stakeholders and transnational research bodies, such as Science Europe.

It is heartening to see the UK research community's continued success in ground-breaking transnational research initiatives. In the latest figures, the UK has the highest number of participations of any country, drawing over 15% (€3.9bn) of Horizon 2020 funding to date. UKRO's tailored service for the UK research community has been a major factor in securing the UK's continued success.

UKRI's Strategic Prospectus: Building the UKRI Strategy (2018) lays out a vision centred not only on creating a single voice for research and innovation across disciplines but achieving a transformation of research infrastructure, networks and partnerships suited for the 21st century. UKRO's role and activities complement UKRI's international ambitions.

On behalf of the UK research community and across the UKRI family, the UKRO team deserve our special thanks for their dedication, commitment, success and achievements during this past year.



**Professor Andrew Thompson**

International Champion for UK Research and Innovation

Executive Chair of the Arts and Humanities Research Council



## A YEAR IN REVIEW

UKRO was established by the Research Councils to provide information and guidance for funding managers across its member organisations. Next year will mark 35 years of such a presence in Brussels. UKRO members have access to the latest news and impartial advice, enabling them to make informed decisions about applying for funding and engaging in policy developments.

### DEDICATION TO SERVICE

It has been an unprecedentedly busy year and UKRO's achievements result from the dedication, professionalism and motivation of my colleagues. We have proudly delivered our full range of services to support new applications and ongoing projects, provided a platform for research managers to share their expertise and experiences and to engage in the consultations on the next programmes, and enhanced our external liaison activities to clarify recent misconceptions about UK participation in EU programmes.

### COMMUNICATION

Via the UKRO Portal, we reach out to 13,500 users from subscribing organisations and we have been delighted to welcome over 1,200 new users during the past year. UKRO hosts the UK National Contact Points (NCPs) for the European Research Council and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions. NCPs are available to users across the community and have continued to be in strong demand. Externally, and in collaboration with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), we have been providing reassurance through reliable and consistent information on the UK situation through UKRO's Brexit Factsheet and talks to groups in Brussels and beyond. We continue to provide a platform to ensure that questions and concerns from the wider research community form part of the policy discussions that inform the negotiations and advice also play an important role in shaping UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) planning for the UK's future role and participation in Europe.

### COLLABORATION

Collaboration is at the heart of our work. From co-designing the annual business objectives with the UKRO Board to tailoring our briefing visits to meet the needs of our subscribing organisations and holding joint events with our closest stakeholders, UKRO and our users have benefited from these successful and inspiring partnerships. The role of the UKRO Board, which brings together UKRO's sponsors and elected subscriber representatives, is crucially important to the Office's success. During the past year there has been even closer interaction with UKRO's subscriber representatives to facilitate user input to help design the Office's future.



**UKRO's success and unique model relies strongly on liaison and networking, but also importantly on collaboration. This year, UKRO has had the privilege to chair the vibrant IGLO (Informal Group of Brussels-Based RTD Liaison Offices) network. In this role, UKRO has organised monthly meetings, facilitated interactions with external speakers, overseen the work of the IGLO working groups and organised a major IGLO networking event in Brussels.**

### DEMYSTIFICATION

Translating EU jargon and explaining the rules and ways of working in Brussels have always been at the core of UKRO's services. This work has been further enhanced this year by the creation of the IGLO practitioner group, an initiative we jointly developed, and now manage, with the German KoWi office. As it says in the name, this network brings together those who implement EU research and innovation funding on the ground – research managers, finance staff and project officers from across Europe.

### SHAPING THE FUTURE

While continuing to deliver stability, we have an exciting phase ahead of us and a brilliant opportunity for us all to work together to shape the future of our Office. On 1 April 2018, UKRO's sponsors, the seven UK Research Councils, joined forces with Innovate UK and Research England to form a new organisation, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). UKRI has a combined budget of over £6 billion and issues 3,900 research and business grants a year. Behind the scenes, UKRO has been working closely with colleagues across UKRI and BEIS to play its part in ensuring a smooth transition to UKRI.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank friends and colleagues from across our networks for their unwavering support, generosity with their time and expertise and for their contribution to the success of the Office.

We look forward to continuing our collaboration and celebrating the 35th anniversary of UKRO with you in early 2019!



**Christina Miller**  
Director of UKRO

## OUR MISSION

UKRO is the UK's leading information and advice provider on European Union funding for research, innovation and higher education.

UKRO is the European office of the UK Research Councils and has been based in Brussels since 1984. It delivers a subscription-based advisory service to the research community in the UK and beyond, and provides National Contact Point (NCP) services on behalf of the UK Government for the European Research Council (ERC) and for the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA).

### UKRO NOW PART OF UKRI

On 1 April 2018, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) was launched. This new organisation brings together the seven UK Research Councils who sponsor UKRO, as well as Innovate UK and the new Research England. UKRO will continue its work under UKRI as before, working alongside UKRI's other international offices in Washington, Delhi and Beijing and in close cooperation with Innovate UK and Research England.

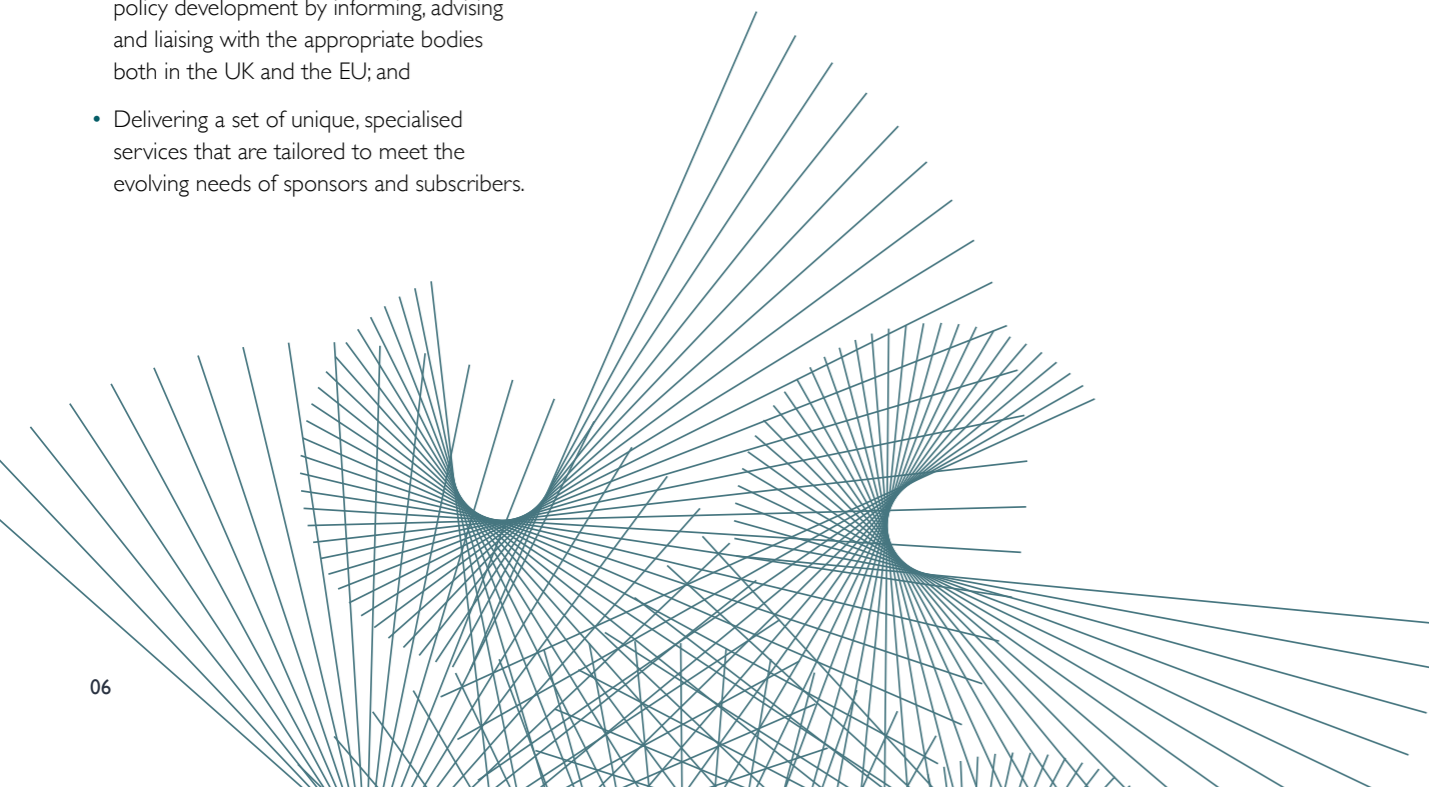
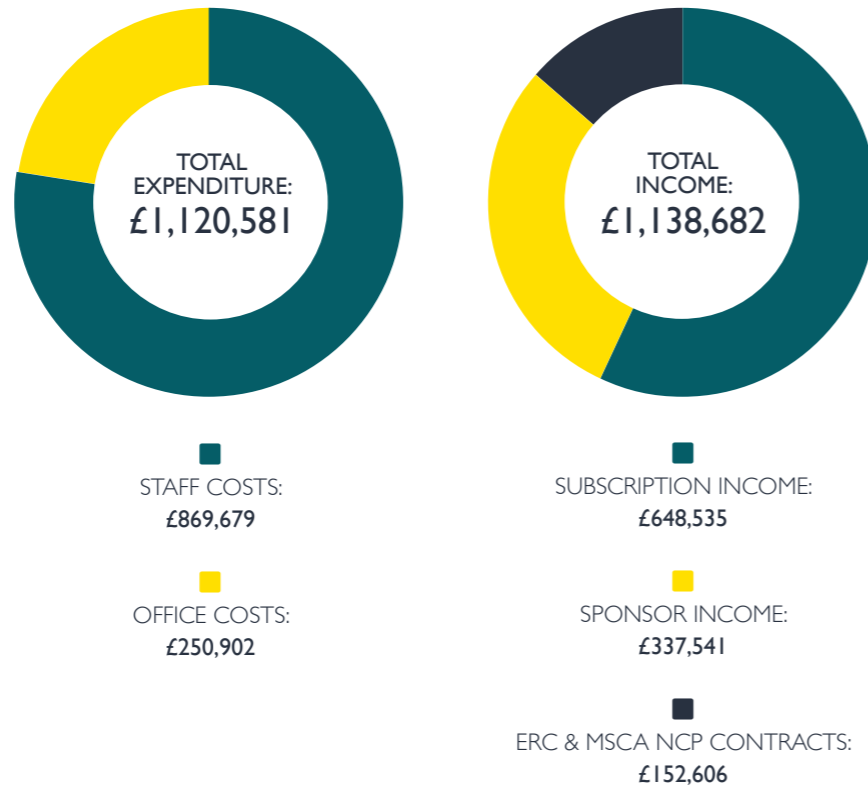
### OUR MISSION

UKRO's mission is to maximise UK engagement in EU-funded research, innovation and higher education activities by:

- Enabling sponsors and subscribers to participate confidently in EU programmes and fully exploit the opportunities available to them;
- Supporting UK input into European research, innovation and higher education policy development by informing, advising and liaising with the appropriate bodies both in the UK and the EU; and
- Delivering a set of unique, specialised services that are tailored to meet the evolving needs of sponsors and subscribers.

### INCOME AND EXPENDITURE INFORMATION 2017-18

\* UKRO's Annual Budget is agreed by the UKRO Board. The sponsoring Councils underwrite the costs of the Office, therefore any difference between income and actual expenditure is accounted for in the Councils' sponsorship of the next financial year.



## SERVICES AND HIGHLIGHTS

UKRO offers a suite of bespoke services to their sponsors and subscribers and to the wider research community.

### OPEN TO SUBSCRIBERS:

#### UKRO Portal: always up to date with the latest in EU funding and policy

The UKRO Portal provides tailored news articles, which communicate the latest EU funding and policy developments, as well as clear and accessible web pages on the different strands of EU research, innovation and higher education activities. Via the Portal, UKRO also keeps subscribers up-to-date on developments relating to EU research and innovation and the UK's planned exit from the EU.

**The Portal reaches 13,500 users, with over 1,200 new users signing up this year. The office published around 1,000 new articles with over 112,000 downloads. UKRO's Factsheets continue to be popular, with over 10,000 downloads.**

**Portal development is a constant feature – this year the navigation was further streamlined and we have made our search function more powerful, to ensure users can make best use of the vast resources offered.**

#### Enquiry service: individual support and advice, all year round

All UKRO subscribers have a dedicated European Advisor, who provides guidance, information, and advice on EU policies, programmes and funding opportunities.

**Meet our team on page 8.**

#### Annual visit: a tailored event for your institution

Each UK-based subscriber is entitled to an annual visit from their UKRO European Advisor, who provides expert training, information, and/or one-to-one sessions tailored to the requirements of the institution.

**112 UKRO visits were delivered by UKRO's European Advisors this year. In addition, the team spoke at various stakeholder events in Brussels and the UK.**

#### Training and Development Programme: complementing the UKRO visits

UKRO delivers specialist training courses, focus groups and information events, providing in-depth insight into EU programmes.

**Find out more about events organised this year on page 13 – highlights include our series of dedicated events on FP9 and workshops with European Liaison Officers.**

#### Meeting room in Brussels: a venue for your meeting in the centre of the EU quarter

UKRO's meeting room is located within easy walking distance of most European Commission buildings, the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers. It is regularly used by staff from subscribing institutions for, for example, European project meetings. Subscribers can also use 'hot desk' facilities.

**UKRO's meeting room facilities were used by over 800 visitors last year.**

### OPEN TO EVERYONE:

**Annual Conference** for European officers, with the latest information on programmes and policies presented by European Commission staff and other speakers.

**A round-up of the UKRO Conference 2017 is on page 12.**

**UK National Contact Points (NCPs)** for the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) and the European Research Council (ERC), each providing a dedicated helpdesk, website and specialised information and training events.

**It has been a busy year for our NCPs – answering queries and running events – an update on their activities this year is provided on page 14.**

#### Social Media and Brexit Communication

UKRO also provides the following services to the wider public:

- UKRO Brexit Factsheet – updated to always reflect latest developments.
- Updates on Brexit developments and ERC/MSCA NCP helpdesk news on UKRO Twitter and LinkedIn accounts.
- UKRO presentations on Brexit to update on developments and clarify common misconceptions to groups of multipliers and stakeholders in the UK and Brussels.





## THE UKRO TEAM



The UKRO team brings together a wealth of skills and experience from across the research and innovation sector.

 <p><b>CHRISTINA MILLER</b> Director</p> <p>+32 2 286 90 54 christina.miller@bbsrc.ac.uk</p>	 <p><b>INGA BENNER</b> Deputy Director</p> <p>+32 2 289 61 23 inga.benner@bbsrc.ac.uk</p>
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### EUROPEAN ADVISORS

European Advisors provide timely information and impartial advice to UKRO's sponsors and subscribers on EU-funded research, innovation and higher education programmes and the policies. A key part of the role of the European Advisors is to maintain current knowledge of policy developments across the research and innovation spectrum, enriched by liaison activities in Brussels and the UK. These aspects of the role ensure that UKRO is able to provide sponsors and subscribers with early insights and high-quality information on future aspects of EU programmes with relevance for research, innovation and higher education, and practical support for implementation. Each sponsor and subscribing organisation receives support from a dedicated European Advisor.

As well as providing an email and telephone query service, European Advisors work in close collaboration with sponsors and subscribers to formulate and deliver tailored training at annual visits to institutions.

 <p><b>JON BROOKES</b> European Advisor</p> <p>+32 2 286 90 52 jon.brookes@bbsrc.ac.uk</p>	 <p><b>MAŁGORZATA CZERWIEC</b> European Advisor</p> <p>+32 2 286 90 55 malgorzata.czerwiec@bbsrc.ac.uk</p>
 <p><b>ANDREAS KONTOGEOORGOS</b> European Advisor</p> <p>+32 2 286 90 53 andreas.kontogeorgos@bbsrc.ac.uk</p>	 <p><b>SARAH ASHWOOD</b> European Advisor</p> <p>+32 2 286 90 56 sarah.ashwood@bbsrc.ac.uk</p>
 <p><b>ANDREW MACDONELL</b> European Advisor</p> <p>+32 2 289 61 25 andrew.macdonell@bbsrc.ac.uk</p>	 <p><b>VERA BARRON</b> European Advisor</p> <p>+32 2 286 90 50 vera.barron@bbsrc.ac.uk</p>
 <p><b>BŁAZEJ THOMAS</b> European Advisor</p> <p>+32 2 286 90 57 blazej.thomas@bbsrc.ac.uk</p>	



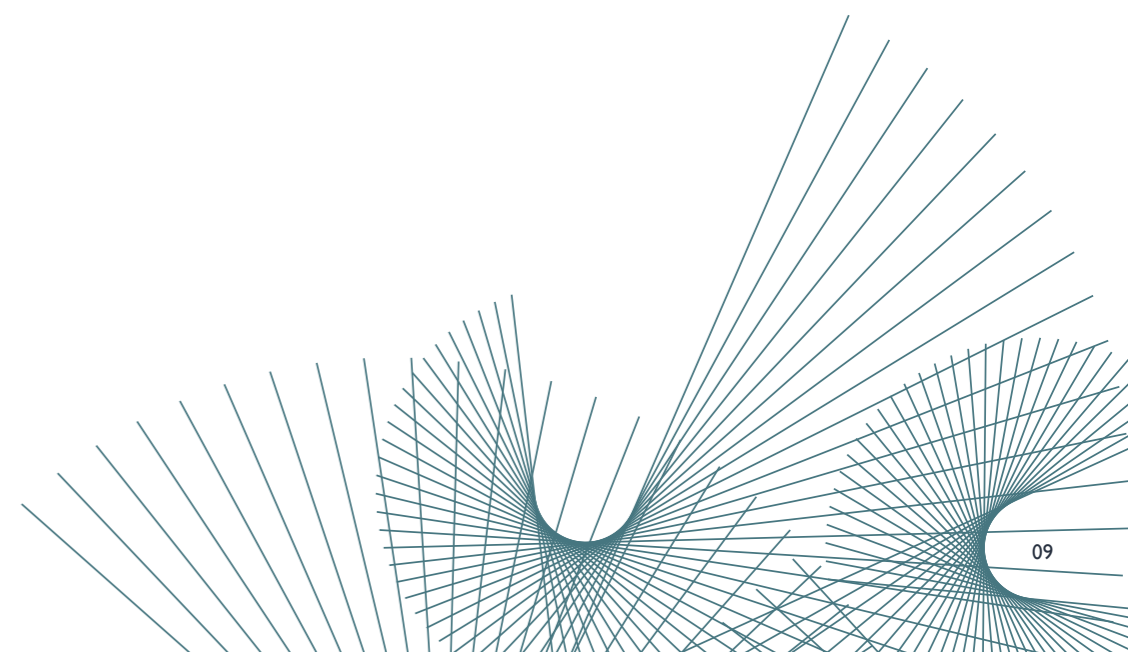
'The team prides itself on being approachable, helpful and productive, in order to provide optimal support to UKRO subscribers, sponsors and partner organisations.'

### OFFICE MANAGEMENT

UKRO's information systems and administration team is responsible for the delivery of the UKRO Portal, event management and internal office administration.

The office operates a busy meeting room and hot desk facility. Both of these are available to sponsors and subscribers, free of charge. In case of any questions about the UKRO Portal, events and training sessions organised by UKRO, or our meeting facilities, please contact the UKRO office: [ukro@bbsrc.ac.uk](mailto:ukro@bbsrc.ac.uk)

 <p><b>CINDY MERTENS</b> IS Manager</p> <p>+32 2 286 90 51 cindy.mertens@bbsrc.ac.uk</p>	 <p><b>MARTA HERNÁNDEZ RAMÓN</b> Administrative Assistant</p> <p>+32 2 289 61 20 marta.ramon@bbsrc.ac.uk</p>
 <p><b>SOPHIE NEWLANDS</b> Office Manager</p> <p>+32 2 289 61 24 sophie.newlands@bbsrc.ac.uk</p>	 <p><b>NASHWAN SALMAN</b> IT &amp; Administrative Assistant</p> <p>+32 2 286 90 58 nashwan.salman@bbsrc.ac.uk</p>



## SPONSORS AND SUBSCRIBERS

UKRO is a facility for the UK research community operated on a membership basis and as a partnership between seven sponsors and subscribing organisations.

UKRO is sponsored by the following seven UKRI Councils:

- Arts and Humanities Research Council
- Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council
- Economic and Social Research Council
- Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council
- Medical Research Council
- Natural Environment Research Council
- Science and Technology Facilities Council

The office is jointly funded by Research Council sponsorship and subscriptions from its member organisations. It also receives funding from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to deliver the UK Horizon 2020 National Contact Point helpdesks for the European Research Council and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions.

### UKRO GOVERNANCE

The unique partnership between UKRO, its subscribers, and its sponsors, is reflected in the governance model. The UKRO Board brings together representatives from the seven Research Councils, a representative from Universities UK and three elected subscriber representatives.



We would like to say thank you to all UKRO Board members for their support and commitment to the success of the Office throughout 2017-18.

### SUBSCRIBER REPRESENTATIVES

Subscriber Representatives shape the services provided by the UKRO Office. They have an integral role in strategic planning, management of the Office and the recruitment of staff to UKRO. UKRO would like to thank our outgoing subscriber representatives, Philippa Shelton and Xavier Rodde, for their exceptional support and dedication to the subscriber representative role. Two new subscriber representatives will be elected at the 2018 UKRO Conference.

UKRO's elected subscriber representatives in 2017-18 were:

Ross Hanley, University of Glasgow

✉ [ross.hanley@glasgow.ac.uk](mailto:ross.hanley@glasgow.ac.uk)

Xavier Rodde, University of Birmingham

✉ [x.rodde@bham.ac.uk](mailto:x.rodde@bham.ac.uk)

Philippa Shelton, University of the West of England

✉ [philippa.shelton@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:philippa.shelton@uwe.ac.uk)

### UKRO SUBSCRIBERS 2017-18

#### A

University of Aberdeen  
University of Abertay Dundee  
Aberystwyth University  
Anglia Ruskin University  
Universiteit Antwerpen  
The Arctic University of Norway  
University of the Arts London  
Aston University

#### B

Babraham Institute  
Bangor University  
Bar-Ilan University  
University of Bath  
University of Bedfordshire  
University of Bergen  
University of Birmingham  
Birmingham City University  
Birkbeck, University of London  
Bournemouth University  
University of Bradford  
University of Brighton  
University of Bristol  
British Academy  
Brunel University  
Vrije Universiteit Brussel

#### C

University of Cambridge  
Cardiff Metropolitan University  
Cardiff University  
University of Central Lancashire  
University of Chester  
City University of London  
Coventry University  
Cranfield University  
University of Cyprus

#### D

De Montfort University  
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
University of Derby  
University of Dundee  
Durham University

#### E

Earlham Institute  
University of East Anglia  
University of East London  
Edge Hill University  
University of Edinburgh  
Edinburgh Napier University  
University of Essex

The European Bioinformatics Institute  
University of Exeter

#### F

Fera Science Ltd  
Fisheries Research Services  
The Francis Crick Institute

#### G

Universiteit Gent  
University of Glasgow  
Glasgow Caledonian University  
Goldsmiths College, University of London  
University of Greenwich

#### H

Universiteit Hasselt  
University of Helsinki  
Heriot-Watt University  
University of Hertfordshire  
Higher Education Funding Council for England  
University of Huddersfield  
University of Hull

#### I

Imperial College London  
Institute of Cancer Research  
ISERD - The Israeli Directorate for EU FP

#### J

The James Hutton Institute  
John Innes Centre

#### K

Keele University  
University of Kent  
King's College London  
Kingston University

#### L

Lancaster University  
University of Leeds  
Leeds Beckett University  
University of Leicester  
KU Leuven  
University of Limerick  
University of Lincoln  
University of Liverpool  
Liverpool John Moores University  
Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine  
London Business School  
London School of Economics and Political Science  
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine

London South Bank University  
Loughborough University

#### M

University of Manchester  
Manchester Metropolitan University  
Moredun Research Institute  
Middlesex University London

#### N

National Institute for Biological Standards and Control (NIBSC)  
Natural History Museum  
Newcastle University  
Northumbria University  
Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)  
University of Nottingham  
Nottingham Trent University

#### O

The Open University  
University of Oslo  
University of Oulu  
University of Oxford  
Oxford Brookes University

#### P

Pirbright Institute  
Plymouth University  
University of Portsmouth  
Public Health England

#### Q

Quadram Institute Bioscience  
Queen Mary University of London  
Queen's University Belfast

#### R

University of Roehampton  
Rothamsted Research  
Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh  
Royal College of Art  
Royal Holloway, University of London  
The Royal Society  
Royal Veterinary College  
Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew  
University of Reading

#### S

University of Salford  
School of Oriental and African Studies  
Scottish Government Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services Division  
Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)  
University of Sheffield

Sheffield Hallam University  
University of Southampton  
University of South Wales  
University of St Andrews  
St George's, University of London

Staffordshire University  
University of Stavanger  
University of Stirling  
University of Strathclyde  
University of Surrey  
University of Sussex  
Swansea University

#### T

University of Teesside

#### U

University College London  
University of Ulster  
Universities UK

#### W

University of Wales Trinity Saint David  
University of Warwick  
Weizmann Institute of Science  
Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute  
University of the West of England  
University of West London  
University of the West of Scotland  
University of Westminster  
University of Wolverhampton

#### Y

University of York



## UKRO CONFERENCE

The UKRO Conference 2017 took place on Thursday 22 to Friday 23 June at the Centre for Life in Newcastle-upon-Tyne.

The 2017 UKRO Conference programme was co-designed with subscribers and sponsors and covered the full range of EU research, innovation and higher education policy, plus practical sessions on Horizon 2020 finances. Audience participation was facilitated by the use of an interactive conference tool.

Marnix Surgeon from DG Research and Innovation of the European Commission set the scene with his opening keynote presentation on 'Horizon 2020 Interim Evaluation and Beyond', which gave an overview of the interim evaluation of Horizon 2020 and early insights into the preparations for the next EU Research and Innovation Framework Programme (FP9).

The conference also included a special session jointly organised with the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), following on from previous sessions at the 2016 UKRO Conference and the UKRO European Liaison Officer (ELO) catch-up with BEIS in Birmingham in January 2017. The aim of the catch-up sessions was to provide a platform for ELOs to voice their concerns, ask questions and make suggestions to BEIS

on Brexit-related EU research, innovation and higher education issues. The session also included a short survey on Sli.do with different questions and polls to seek the views from the maximum number of participants. Early results were discussed during the session, and the polls were kept open throughout the conference.

It was also an excellent opportunity to celebrate the anniversaries of three of the most well-known EU programmes. Special anniversary sessions were held to mark 10 years of the European Research Council, 20 years of the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions and 30 years of the Erasmus programme.

The event concluded with what would turn out to be an audience favourite - a panel discussion on 'Open to the World - Engaging with Horizon 2020'. Experts from Norway, Switzerland and Canada shared insights and experience on their journey and involvement with the Framework Programme, followed by a lively discussion.

The event would not have been possible without the invaluable support received from

Newcastle University. UKRO would like to thank all speakers, delegates, and colleagues at Newcastle University, for making it a successful and enjoyable conference.



The UKRO Conference 2018 will take place on 21-22 June at the National Oceanographic Centre (NOC) in Southampton.



## TRAINING AND SUBSCRIBER ENGAGEMENT

In addition to annual visits to subscriber and sponsor organisations, where individual European Advisors work with key contacts to create a 'tailor-made' programme, UKRO has organised a variety of supplementary training opportunities and platforms to exchange experiences.

### STAYING ON TOP OF HORIZON 2020 IMPLEMENTATION

With a number of changes to the legal and financial framework for Horizon 2020 coming into force in 2017, UKRO organised a focus group meeting in June in Newcastle and update sessions in Edinburgh and London in September, with a focus on post-award project implementation issues.

### ENGAGEMENT WITH FP9

2017 also saw the start of preparations for the successor framework programme to Horizon 2020, provisionally referred to as Framework Programme Nine (FP9). UKRO monitored the developments and early conversations closely and raised awareness of the process by delivering a number of FP9 workshops for stakeholders in the UK.

The first workshop took place in May 2017 and was hosted jointly by UKRO and Innovate UK. A joint UKRO-Universities UK International (UUKi) workshop was organised in October in London for European Liaison Officers, to facilitate their engagement in the shaping of FP9. The aim of both sessions was to hold constructive discussions amongst research managers from different UK universities, research organisations and business regarding their views on FP9, and how best to engage with FP9 development. A supplementary workshop also took place

in July 2017, specifically for Research Council colleagues in Swindon.

A series of meetings were also organised jointly with STFC in the context of the move to UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) – with a focus on supporting the transfer of EU projects to a new legal entity. This project included the design and delivery of two 'Harmonisation of Accounting Practices' workshops held in Swindon, in November 2017 and January 2018.

### SUPPORTING EUROPEAN LIAISON OFFICERS

Following the success of last year's 'catch-up' workshop for European Liaison Officers in Birmingham in January 2017, a further ELO session was repeated in February 2018. The aim of the second event was to bring together representatives from across research institutes to evaluate the continued impact of the outcome of the EU referendum. Discussions took place regarding the communication around UK participation in EU programmes, and sharing experiences on institutional developments. A senior representative from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) provided an update and was on site to listen to the first-hand concerns and find out about approaches, experiences and suggestions from the audience.

UKRO also held its popular 'New ELO Workshop' in November 2017. This event gives those who are new to their role in EU funding a firm basis upon which to develop their understanding of the EU and its funding programmes. It also provides an opportunity to establish first contact with the EU institutions and an important networking opportunity with peers. UKRO would like to thank all external speakers and subscribing organisations their active contributions and to everyone who hosted UKRO's events.



**"The New ELO course is definitely one I would recommend. I came to it with about four months of EU experience, but there were varying degrees of experience in the group. It was a great introduction to the programme, with opportunities to ask more detailed and specific questions as well. I've since been in touch with one of the members of the group to share further information, which shows that the networking during the two days is also valuable. And of course, meeting the UKRO team, who advise us so well, is also very beneficial. I know there's still a lot to learn, but I feel more confident as a result of the course, both in terms of my current understanding and the people to go to when I need further help"**

Victoria Bainbridge, Newcastle University





## NATIONAL CONTACT POINTS

UKRO is contracted by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) to run the UK National Contact Point (NCP) service for the European Research Council (ERC) and the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) in Horizon 2020.

The role of the NCPs is to inform and advise UK applicants on the funding schemes and to support grant management. UKRO provides an efficient, pro-active service and responds to queries by telephone or email.



**"Our research strategy for EU Funding leans heavily on the ERC and Marie Curie schemes. We offer bespoke support to our applicants, so both use and promote the UKRO NCP functions. They always have time for the most random of queries, or requests for statistics, and the speed and accuracy of responses mean that proposal progress is never hindered. Hosting UKRO events helps to embed the schemes in researchers' minds and also provides them with a direct route to expert advice from a team with valuable links to the Commission. Our success rates at Leeds are very good and part of this is certainly down to UKRO's fantastic support over the last 12 months!"**

Ben Williams, University of Leeds

### MSCA NCP

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#### MSCA NCP HIGHLIGHTS

##### Helpdesk activities in 2017-2018

- Answered approximately 1,820 queries.
- Delivered six information events across the UK for around 380 participants.
- Attended the MSCA Programme Committee meetings alongside BEIS.

##### UK Success in 2017 MSCA Calls

- The UK was awarded the highest number of successful Individual Fellowships – 328 or 24.3% of all grants.
- The UK will coordinate 13 RISE projects (joint highest ranking with Spain) representing 16.3% of all awards.
- The UK also had the second highest number of successful partner organisations in the MSCA ITN scheme – 143 (compared to Germany – 176). Furthermore, 31 projects were coordinated by UK organisations.
- Two UK submissions to the COFUND Programme (One Fellowship and One Doctoral) were successful.

### ERC NCP

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#### ERC NCP HIGHLIGHTS

##### Helpdesk activities in 2017-2018

- Answered approximately 1,380 queries.
- Held eight information and proposal writing events around the UK for over 690 participants.
- Attended the ERC Programme Committee meetings alongside BEIS.

##### UK success in 2017 ERC Calls

- The UK had the highest number of Starting Grants, with 79 (14% of all awards).
- The UK had the highest number of Consolidator Grants, with 60 (14% of all awards).
- The UK had the highest number of Advanced Grants, with 66 (25% of all awards).
- The UK had the highest number of Proof of Concept Grants, with 27 (17% of all awards).





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