

# The UK's Exit from the European Union – UKRO FAQs on UK Participation in EU Funding for Research, Innovation and Higher Education

## What has changed for UK participation since the triggering of Article 50 or the start of the negotiations?

### No immediate changes to UK participation in Horizon 2020

An important message for researchers, university administrators and research organisations and other potential applicants more broadly is that the UK's status in the EU has not yet changed. Article 50 was triggered on 29 March 2017 and the negotiations started on 19 June 2017; in the meantime:

- The UK is still an EU Member State until the date it formally leaves the EU;
- The UK has the same rights and obligations as all other 27 Member States, including the participation in EU funding programmes; and
- Details on how the UK can participate after an exit need to be determined during the negotiations between the UK and the EU.

## What are the implications of the joint report from the UK and the EU negotiators on 8 December 2017?

On 8 December 2017, a **joint report** from the UK Government and the negotiators of the European Union was published. This report covers the financial settlement aspects and it is understood that there is an agreement, in principle, that the UK will continue to pay net contributions until the end of the current EU budget plan in 2020 that were committed to during the UK's membership.

It is important to recognise that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed at the end of the negotiations. It is hoped that the agreement reached so far will form part of a final package that establishes a deep and special partnership between the UK and the EU for the future.

UKRO understands that based on the joint report, and the agreement of the EU to move on to the second phase of the Brexit negotiations on 15 December 2017, **the UK will continue to benefit from EU programmes during the period 2019-2020 post exit**, including from Horizon 2020.

UKRO understands that UK-based individuals and organisations would therefore remain eligible to bid for funding, participate in and lead consortia including for calls in 2019 and 2020. If an agreement is reached, projects approved during this period will be able to continue with an uninterrupted flow of EU funding.

The joint report refers to the UK's participation in EU programmes during the current EU budget period (2014-2020) in paragraph 71:

**"Following withdrawal from the Union, the UK will continue to participate in the Union programmes financed by the MFF 2014-2020 until their closure (excluding participation in financial operations which give rise to a contingent liability for which the UK is not liable as from the date of withdrawal). Entities located in the UK will be entitled to participate in such programmes. Participation in Union programmes will require the UK and UK beneficiaries to respect all relevant Union legal provisions including co-financing. Accordingly, the eligibility to apply to participate in Union programmes and Union funding for UK participants and projects will be unaffected by the UK's withdrawal from the Union for the entire lifetime of such projects. "**

## **What about the UK Government Underwrite Guarantee for Horizon 2020 – is this still valid?**

Yes, the **UK Government Underwrite Guarantee** remains valid. Irrespective of the outcome of the Council meeting on 14-15 December (see previous question on the **joint report**) the official advice remains unchanged:

**"UK businesses and universities should continue to bid for competitive EU funds while we remain a member of the EU and we will work with the Commission to ensure payment when funds are awarded. The Government will underwrite the payment of such awards, even when specific projects continue beyond the UK's departure from the EU."**

HM Treasury issued a **statement** on 13 August 2016 confirming the above and the UK Government set out the parameters of what is covered by the Horizon 2020 underwrite commitment in a **dedicated Q&A**: (updated in October 2017).

- The UK Government guarantees awards where the application is submitted before exit and is subsequently approved. This includes proposals which are informed of their success but, at the point of exit, have not signed a grant agreement, and proposals which have been submitted before exit and that are only informed of their success following exit;
- The UK Government will work with the European Commission to ensure payment when funds are awarded;
- Two stage application processes are also included in the UK Government's underwrite commitment, provided that the proposal for the first stage of the application is submitted before the UK leaves the EU and that the application is subsequently successful;
- UK universities and research organisations should therefore continue to apply for EU funding through mechanisms such as Horizon 2020 while the UK is a member of the EU;
- Universities and research organisations from other EU Member States or countries associated to EU funding programmes are encouraged to, and should feel reassured to, continue to include UK partners.

In response to the notification on the European Commission's participant portal the UK Government issued an **updated Q&A** to confirm that:

**"UK applicants still have the same rights and obligations as all other EU member states until the UK leaves the EU. The Commission statement simply refers to the existing terms and conditions of the EU research and innovation framework programme agreements. Termination of projects is not automatic or obligatory....";**

**"Article 50.3 of the Model Grant Agreement, which pre-dates the UK's decision to leave the EU, contains a number of possible circumstances under which the Commission would have grounds to directly terminate a project or the participation of a beneficiary. These include the beneficiary being declared bankrupt, the research no longer being relevant and other circumstances which call into question the decision to award the grant."; and**

**"Even if UK partners cannot continue to receive funding from the European Commission because the UK has become a third country, the UK Government has guaranteed funding for successful bids submitted by UK participants before departure, including those that are successful afterwards. Third country participation is routine in Horizon 2020."**

## **What is the advice from the European Commission on UK participation in Horizon 2020?**

**The Commission has confirmed that the status of UK participants in EU funding programmes remains unchanged until the UK leaves the EU**

The European Commission issued a statement in July 2016 to confirm that there is no immediate change to the UK's status regarding Horizon 2020.

The statement said:

**"Until the UK leaves the EU, EU law continues to apply to and within the UK, both when it comes to rights and obligations. This includes the eligibility of UK legal entities to participate and receive funding in Horizon 2020 actions."**

The European Commission included a statement on the Participant Portal in October 2017, reiterating the above message, but also stating that:

**"Until the UK leaves the EU, EU law continues to apply to and within the UK, both when it comes to rights and obligations. This includes the eligibility of UK legal entities to participate and receive funding in Horizon 2020 actions."**

**"Please be aware however that the eligibility criteria must be complied with for the entire duration of the grant. If the United Kingdom withdraws from the EU during the grant period without concluding an agreement with the EU ensuring in particular that British applicants continue to be eligible, you will cease to be eligible to receive EU funding (while continuing, where possible, to participate) or be required to leave the project on the basis of Article 50 of the grant agreement."**

The UK Government has issued an **updated Q&A** (see also above) which confirms that

**“UK applicants still have the same rights and obligations as all other EU member states until the UK leaves the EU. The Commission statement simply refers to the existing terms and conditions of the EU research and innovation framework programme agreements. Termination of projects is not automatic or obligatory.”**

The European Commission also explicitly briefs proposal evaluators in their **guidance**:

**“Experts should not evaluate proposals with UK participants any differently than before.”**

The Commission included a question in the **Participant Portal FAQ**:

**“Should project coordinators of Horizon 2020 proposals dedicate a part of their proposal to addressing the potential risks as a consequence of the UK Referendum?  
No. At this stage, any speculation on the consequences for the Horizon 2020 action of a withdrawal of the UK from the EU will not be taken into account in the evaluation.”**

EU Commissioner for Research and Innovation, Carlos Moedas, strongly encouraged continued UK participation in Horizon 2020 in a **speech in October 2017**:

**“From my side, I have made every effort to reduce the uncertainty caused by Brexit.**

**First, let's look at the facts. While you remain part of the European Union, the Horizon 2020 programme is fully open to you. Please keep taking part. Keep collaborating with your European partners. Keep welcoming researchers from other EU countries into your universities and research teams.**

**Second, I urge you to take part in the preparations of the next EU Framework Programme. Tell us your views. Help us make the next programme even better than Horizon 2020.**

**Third, I welcome the statements by the UK government that the UK would like to continue to take part in those specific policies and programmes which are greatly to the UK and the EU's joint advantage, such as those that promote science, education and culture.”**

## **What about Erasmus+ projects and other programmes?**

The UK Government's underwrite guarantee applies to competitive funding schemes, which, in addition to Horizon 2020, also includes other centrally managed programmes. Separate arrangements were made or are being discussed for decentralised funding schemes (EU funding directly administered by the individual member states, not centrally by the European Commission).

The National Agency for Erasmus+ state that:

**“The UK Government has stated publicly that the United Kingdom is committed to continuing full participation in the Erasmus+ programme up until we leave the European Union. It will underwrite successful bids for Erasmus+ that are submitted while the UK is still a Member State, even if they are not approved until after we leave, and/or payments continue beyond the point of exit.**

**Practical details regarding how this will be implemented will be discussed with the Department for Education (the UK’s Erasmus+ National Authority) over the coming months. In the meantime the Government encourages UK applicants to continue to apply for funding until we leave the EU.**

**Successful Erasmus+ applicants in 2017 will be awarded funding for the full duration of their projects, and all beneficiaries should continue their projects with their partners as usual through to completion.**

**UK organisations wishing to apply for funding in 2018 should prepare for participation as usual ahead of the 2018 application deadlines.”**

Further information on Erasmus+ is available on the website of the National Agency ([www.erasmusplus.org.uk/article-50-update-0](http://www.erasmusplus.org.uk/article-50-update-0)).

## You are not from the UK and have concerns over including UK partners?

The UK Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy created a special inbox for queries and to report issues.

Are you from another EU member state or associated country and your organisation or researchers you work with are concerned over including UK partners, for example in Horizon 2020 proposals?

The UK Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy created a special inbox ([research@beis.gov.uk](mailto:research@beis.gov.uk)) for queries and to report issues concerning Horizon 2020 partnering and projects. Researchers and research organisations from outside the UK can contact the inbox in the same way that UK entities can.

## You are coming to Brussels with a group and looking for an update for your researchers/research managers?

UKRO can provide an update on the UK situation at your Brussels event

Are you planning to visit Brussels with a group of researchers, your university management or research administrators?

You can contact UKRO if you would like to receive an update on the UK status concerning EU funding in research, innovation and higher education during your visit. If you are interested in arranging for an UKRO staff member to speak to your group, please contact [ukro@bbsrc.ac.uk](mailto:ukro@bbsrc.ac.uk) with details on the event you are planning.

## Where can I find official resources?

The [joint report](#) from the UK Government and the negotiators of the European Union was published on 8 December 2017 – paragraph 71 refers to the UK’s participation in EU programmes.

The Horizon 2020 Underwrite Q&A provides more detailed information on the parameters of what is covered by the guarantee. Jo Johnson, Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation, confirmed the Horizon 2020 underwrite guarantee in [his speech on 18 July 2017](#). A dedicated [Horizon 2020 Underwrite Q&A](#) is also available.

UK Government statements and speeches by the Prime Minister relating to the UK exit of the EU are published on the website of the [Department for Exiting the EU \(DexEU\)](#).

In her [speech on 17 January 2017](#), the Prime Minister laid out the UK Government's plan for exiting the EU. This speech included 12 priorities, one of which is on research and innovation. Further detail is available in [the Government's white paper on exiting the EU](#), in particular in chapter 10 covering research and innovation.

The UK Government has issued a paper on future science and innovation on 6 September 2017. ["Collaboration on science and innovation – a future partnership paper"](#) forms part of a series setting out key issues for a future partnership between the UK and the EU. The paper states that:

**"The UK will seek to agree a far-reaching science and innovation agreement with the EU that establishes a framework for future collaboration."**

It explores a number of areas, including the Framework Programmes, nuclear research and the EU space programmes as well as defence research.

The European Commission also maintains a [website on the Taskforce on Article 50 negotiations with the United Kingdom](#).

## Other resources and statements

Research Councils UK (RCUK) released a [statement welcoming the UK Government's commitment on Horizon 2020](#), on 1 August 2017:

**"The success of UK research is dependent on our best researchers collaborating with partners and sharing facilities across international boundaries. Clarification of the status of UK applicants to Horizon 2020 funding will allow UK researchers and their partners to continue to bid with confidence. RCUK and our office in Brussels, the UK Research Office (UKRO), continue to work closely with the research community, partners and Government to ensure that the concerns and needs of UK researchers are represented and are considered in the negotiation of a future relationship with the EU."**