

COVID-19 and EU Funding

UKRO webinar update for subscribers

9 June 2020

Inga Benner inga.benner@ukro.ac.uk and
Blazej Thomas blazej.thomas@ukro.ac.uk

About UKRO

Mission

- Maximise UK engagement in EU-funded research, innovation and higher education activities

Our office

- Based in Brussels
- European office of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)
- Delivers subscription-based advisory services for around 140 research organisations in the UK and beyond
- Provides ERC and MSCA National Contact Point services on behalf of the UK Government

Your presenters



Deputy Director, UKRO



Senior European Advisor, UKRO

What will we cover today?

- Brussels state of play/UKRO activities
- **Project implementation issues (update)**
- Calls for proposals (extensions/new calls)
- Wider EU COVID 19 measures & a short outlook on Horizon Europe
- Q&A

Contents

- All participants will be **muted** for the duration of the webinar.
- **A chat function is available and will be monitored.**
- **Please use the formal Q&A function to submit questions.**
- **You can ‘up vote’ your favourite questions.**
- Any unanswered questions can be addressed directly with your UKRO European Advisors after the session.
- **A link to slides** will be posted on the event page after the webinar.

UKRO's activities

Current situation in Brussels and our
services

Situation in Brussels

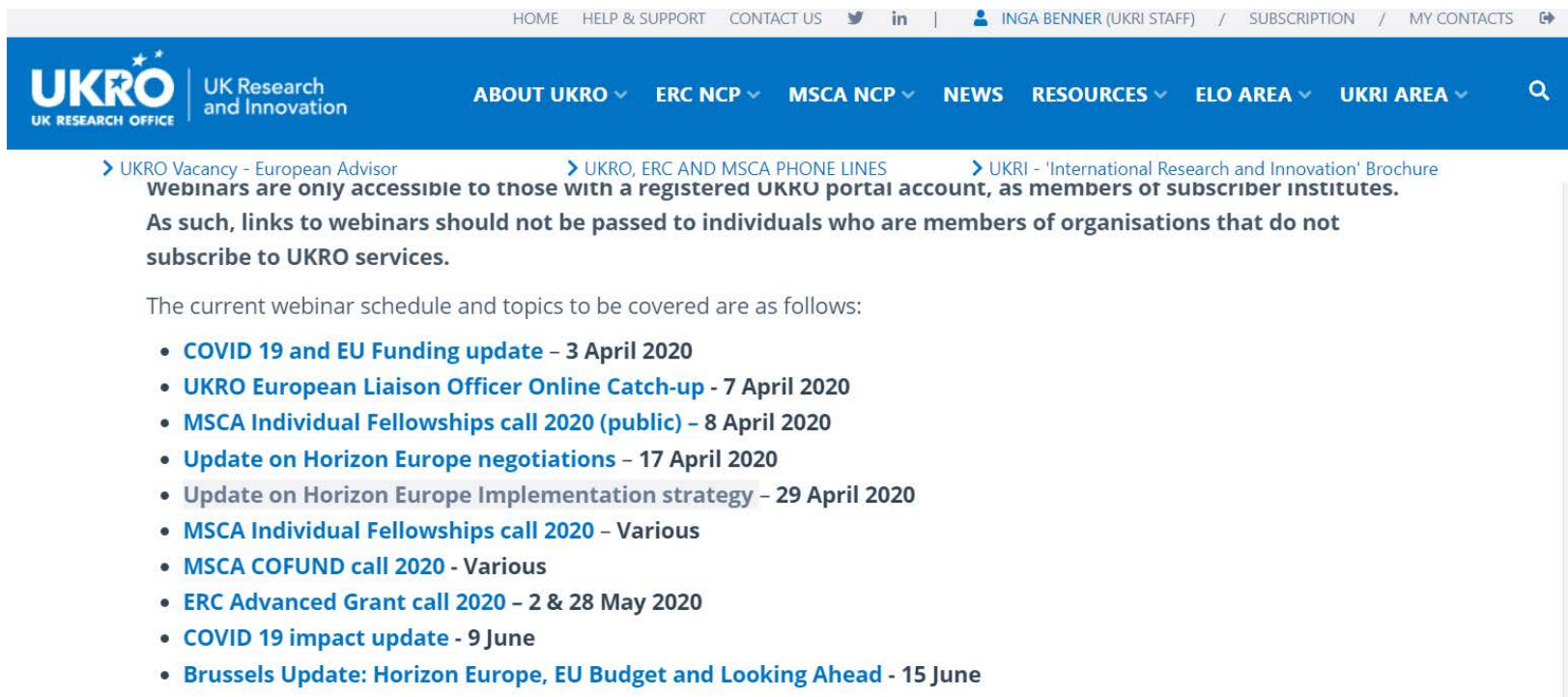
- UKRO is continuing its services in full, though with some adjustments
- Belgium is exiting lockdown using phased approach
- European institutions, stakeholder offices etc. still predominantly working from home as per Belgian Government guidance

UKRO services

- **Stay in touch with your European Advisor:**
 - arrange an online call/UK phone numbers now also available.
 - Email query services continue as normal.
- **UKRO MSCA/ERC NCPs:**
 - Email query service continues and online calls can be arranged.
- **UKRO visit:**
 - UKRO has started delivering “online visits” (with adjusted times and agendas).
 - You can also postpone your visit.

UKRO webinars

- Now delivered on a more frequent basis
- Check UKRO alerts or webinar page for updates



The screenshot shows the UKRO website interface. At the top is a navigation bar with links: HOME, HELP & SUPPORT, CONTACT US, social media icons (Twitter, LinkedIn), a user profile for INGA BENNER (UKRI STAFF), and links for SUBSCRIPTION and MY CONTACTS. Below this is a blue header with the UKRO logo and 'UK Research and Innovation'. A secondary navigation bar contains links: ABOUT UKRO, ERC NCP, MSCA NCP, NEWS, RESOURCES, ELO AREA, and UKRI AREA, along with a search icon. The main content area features three links: UKRO Vacancy - European Advisor, UKRO, ERC AND MSCA PHONE LINES, and UKRI - 'International Research and Innovation' Brochure. A bold notice states: 'Webinars are only accessible to those with a registered UKRO portal account, as members or subscriber institutes. As such, links to webinars should not be passed to individuals who are members of organisations that do not subscribe to UKRO services.' Below this, it says 'The current webinar schedule and topics to be covered are as follows:' followed by a list of 10 webinar topics with their dates.

HOME HELP & SUPPORT CONTACT US | INGA BENNER (UKRI STAFF) / SUBSCRIPTION / MY CONTACTS

UKRO UK Research and Innovation

ABOUT UKRO ▾ ERC NCP ▾ MSCA NCP ▾ NEWS RESOURCES ▾ ELO AREA ▾ UKRI AREA ▾

UKRO Vacancy - European Advisor UKRO, ERC AND MSCA PHONE LINES UKRI - 'International Research and Innovation' Brochure

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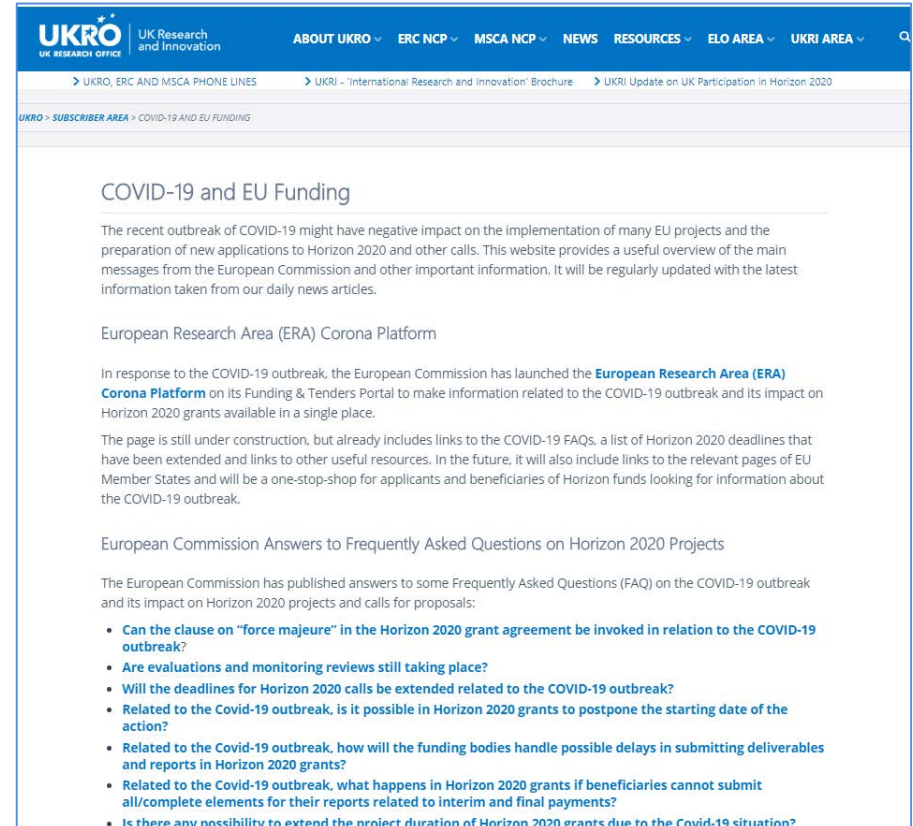
As such, links to webinars should not be passed to individuals who are members of organisations that do not subscribe to UKRO services.

The current webinar schedule and topics to be covered are as follows:

- **COVID 19 and EU Funding update – 3 April 2020**
- **UKRO European Liaison Officer Online Catch-up - 7 April 2020**
- **MSCA Individual Fellowships call 2020 (public) – 8 April 2020**
- **Update on Horizon Europe negotiations – 17 April 2020**
- **Update on Horizon Europe Implementation strategy – 29 April 2020**
- **MSCA Individual Fellowships call 2020 – Various**
- **MSCA COFUND call 2020 - Various**
- **ERC Advanced Grant call 2020 – 2 & 28 May 2020**
- **COVID 19 impact update - 9 June**
- **Brussels Update: Horizon Europe, EU Budget and Looking Ahead - 15 June**

UKRO services

- EU funding questions (COVID):
 - UKRO is gathering information from subscribers
 - Keep subscribers updated on the UKRO Portal with regular articles and a COVID update page:
<https://www.ukro.ac.uk/subscriber/Pages/covid-19.aspx>



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The recent outbreak of COVID-19 might have negative impact on the implementation of many EU projects and the preparation of new applications to Horizon 2020 and other calls. This website provides a useful overview of the main messages from the European Commission and other important information. It will be regularly updated with the latest information taken from our daily news articles.

European Research Area (ERA) Corona Platform

In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the European Commission has launched the **European Research Area (ERA) Corona Platform** on its Funding & Tenders Portal to make information related to the COVID-19 outbreak and its impact on Horizon 2020 grants available in a single place.

The page is still under construction, but already includes links to the COVID-19 FAQs, a list of Horizon 2020 deadlines that have been extended and links to other useful resources. In the future, it will also include links to the relevant pages of EU Member States and will be a one-stop-shop for applicants and beneficiaries of Horizon funds looking for information about the COVID-19 outbreak.

European Commission Answers to Frequently Asked Questions on Horizon 2020 Projects

The European Commission has published answers to some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on the COVID-19 outbreak and its impact on Horizon 2020 projects and calls for proposals:

- Can the clause on "force majeure" in the Horizon 2020 grant agreement be invoked in relation to the COVID-19 outbreak?
- Are evaluations and monitoring reviews still taking place?
- Will the deadlines for Horizon 2020 calls be extended related to the COVID-19 outbreak?
- Related to the Covid-19 outbreak, is it possible in Horizon 2020 grants to postpone the starting date of the action?
- Related to the Covid-19 outbreak, how will the funding bodies handle possible delays in submitting deliverables and reports in Horizon 2020 grants?
- Related to the Covid-19 outbreak, what happens in Horizon 2020 grants if beneficiaries cannot submit all/complete elements for their reports related to interim and final payments?
- Is there any possibility to extend the project duration of Horizon 2020 grants due to the Covid-19 situation?


Horizon 2020 Project implementation

Available advice and answers to FAQs


Research Executive Agency/ERCEA

- Grant management activities continue as normal
- Panel evaluations are currently being organised remotely
- Both will adopt a flexible approach towards projects (force majeure, extensions etc.)
- Projects will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and grantees and fellows should speak to their Project Officer if they require support
- Please share your feedback with UKRO!

UKRO follow-up from April





UK Research and Innovation

ABOUT UKRO ▾ ERC NCP ▾ MSCA NCP ▾ NEWS RESOURCES ▾ ELO AREA ▾ UKRI AREA ▾ 

UKRO, ERC AND MSCA PHONE LINES UKRI - 'International Research and Innovation' Brochure UKRI Update on UK Participation in Horizon 2020

UKRO > SUBSCRIBER AREA > ARTICLES > GENERAL NEWS > ARTICLE

UKRO COVID-19 Webinar Follow-up: Answers to Questions Asked - Q9 Updated!

 22 APRIL 2020 - GENERAL NEWS, RESEARCHER  Print

UKRO would like to provide clarifications on some of the issues raised by participants in its '**COVID-19 and EU Funding**' **webinar**, which took place in early April.

1. What is the difference between project extension and suspension?

The project duration is fixed by the Commission in the grant agreement (Article 3.2 of the Horizon 2020 Model Grant Agreement) and is expressed as a specific number of months, running from the project starting date until its end date. Extension of a project takes place when its duration is prolonged, to ensure that project activities included in Annex 1 can be completed in full.

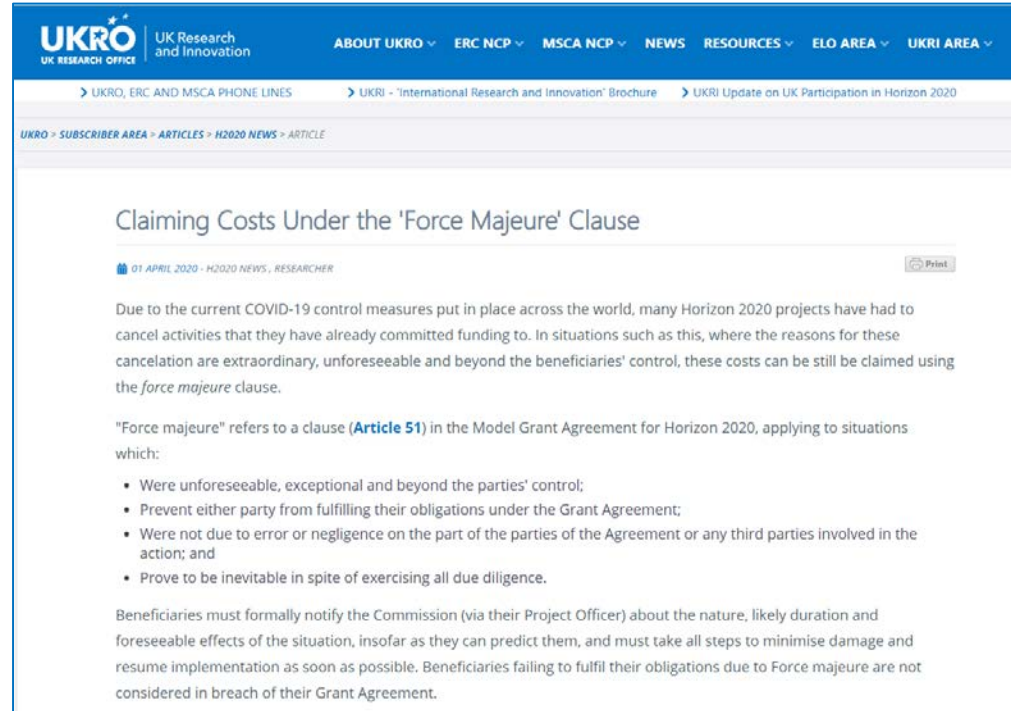
An extension is not an automatic process and requires an amendment of the grant agreement to ensure that all costs

Clarifications are available on:

- **Force majeure**
 - Supporting documentation (new)
- **Flexibility on costs/project implementation**
 - Teleworking and related costs (new)
 - Researchers salaries (actual cost projects) (new)
 - Deliverables and reporting
 - Procurement (new)
 - Lump sum pilot projects (new)
 - Timesheets (new)
- **Project suspension/extension/later start dates/evaluation**
- **Specific advice on MSCA/ERC (partly new)**

Force Majeure

- Situations that are unforeseeable/exceptional/beyond control
- Not due to error/inevitable in spite of exercising due diligence



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- Were unforeseeable, exceptional and beyond the parties' control;
- Prevent either party from fulfilling their obligations under the Grant Agreement;
- Were not due to error or negligence on the part of the parties of the Agreement or any third parties involved in the action; and
- Prove to be inevitable in spite of exercising all due diligence.

The article concludes by stating that beneficiaries must formally notify the Commission (via their Project Officer) about the nature, likely duration and foreseeable effects of the situation, insofar as they can predict them, and must take all steps to minimise damage and resume implementation as soon as possible. Beneficiaries failing to fulfil their obligations due to Force majeure are not considered in breach of their Grant Agreement.

- COVID-19 relevant examples: travel costs, event costs
- Notify the project officer
- Take steps to minimize damage
- Ensure you have documentation of cancellations, refunds, insurance claims for an audit
- **Maximum grant amount cannot be increased**

Force majeure – documentation

- Keep appropriate and sufficient evidence to prove eligibility of cost declared – beneficiaries might have to depart from usual records or supporting documents.
 - **Examples:** Keep all documents to prove eligibility but also proof that necessary steps have been taken to limit any damage (emails to cancel travel arrangements, travel insurance claims).
- **Delays of reports/deliverables - Keep all documents necessary to support the explanations included in their scientific report.**
 - **Examples:** Emails exchanged during teleworking, paper or electronic documents used instead of lab books.

Flexibility on implementation and costs

- **Maximum flexibility** will be given in relation to the action implementation
- Beneficiaries are highly encouraged to **shift their tasks** whenever possible (e.g. postpone lab work where possible and prioritise desk based work)
- Whenever possible beneficiaries are encouraged to work remotely
- **Teleworking costs** will be accepted as eligible under the confinement period even if it is not the beneficiary's usual practice to telework

Teleworking cost during COVID period

- Costs of hours worked for the Horizon 2020 action via teleworking are eligible under the same conditions as hours worked on-site
- For actual cost-based grants, **25 % indirect costs flat rate can be applied on the costs of teleworked hours**
- **Not eligible:** Private costs incurred by the employee for its teleworking activities (e.g. electricity at home, internet connection fee, printer consumables, etc.)
- However, these can be covered by the 25% indirect cost flat rate

Researcher salaries – actual cost grants

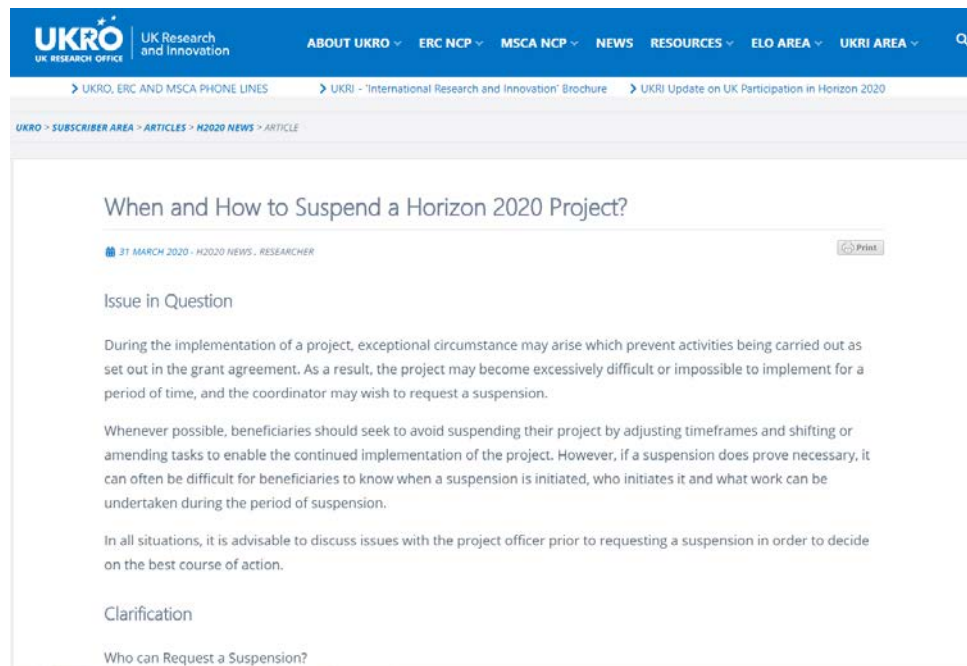
- **Rule remains:** Horizon 2020 grants can only provide EU funding for the hours actually worked in the action
- Option of treating unproductive time as “**special absence**”
- **Only available to beneficiaries using the “individual annual productive hours”** (Option 2)
- Option allows to **remove the unproductive period** of confinement from the calculation of the annual productive hours, which results in a higher hourly rate

Researcher salaries – actual cost grants

- Possible to switch from the other two options (1720/standard hours) in ongoing financial year
- **However:** need to switch from monthly to annual calculation + approach needs to be applied to all H2020 personnel costs for all grants in current financial year

Project suspension

- Exceptional circumstances arise (beyond control) which prevent activities being carried out as set out in the grant agreement
- Coordinator can request a suspension
- COVID-19 relevant examples: essential lab facilities cannot be accessed, essential staff cannot work on the project.
- Notify and discuss with the project officer
- **Costs become ineligible during the suspension**
- **Maximum grant amount cannot be increased**



Project extension

- Beneficiaries can request an amendment for an **extension of up to 6 months** of initial project duration due to the COVID-19 situation
- Commission states that requests will be handled favorably and in a speedy manner
- Longer extensions on case-by-case assessment
- **Maximum grant amount cannot be increased**

Deliverables and reporting

- Full flexibility on scheduled due dates for **deliverables, milestones and reports** (where performance was impacted by the confinement measures)
- Flexibility regarding the completeness of reports submitted in relation to **interim payments**
- Beneficiaries must still submit scientific and financial reports but **can submit a shorter narrative part of their scientific report**
- The scientific report can for example only cover a key explanation of work performed (e.g. key achievements; explanations on difficulties to perform tasks due to this situation, etc.)
- The remaining documents can be submitted at the next reporting period.

Deliverables and reporting – Final payments

- Funding bodies will make the final payment even if the beneficiaries are unable to submit the Certificate on Financial Statements ('CFS')
 - (but capped at the threshold required for CFS of EUR 324.999) – complementary payment of the balance once CFS is submitted.
- For other delays of a final report, coordinators can request an extension for up to 6 months.

Specific advice on MSCA

Specific advice on MSCA

- Periods in which a researcher was absent for 30 consecutive days or less (for reasons other than normal annual leave) can still be charged to the action and the costs will be eligible.
- Research, training and networking unit costs should be used primarily for the research, training and networking activities but **beneficiaries may allocate some of these amounts to help maintaining the salary of the researchers that are prevented from implementing the action due to the COVID-19 situation.**

Specific advice on MSCA

- Beneficiaries have the same flexibility on deciding how to spend the **institutional unit costs** in order to complete their research
- Only condition: Research, Training and Networking costs must be spent in support of the implementation of the project

Clarification on the Duration of MSCA IF Project Suspensions

- UKRO sought clarification from EC Research Executive Agency (REA) on maximum duration of a suspension for MSCA IFs
- Total duration of all suspensions can exceed 30% of the duration of the fellowship (if the reason for this extended leave is linked to COVID-19)
- So a COVID related suspension will not impact on other suspensions
- Suspensions need to be discussed and agreed with the project officer!

Questions on Furlough scheme and Horizon 2020

- Answer received regarding MSCA ITN fellows
- REA confirmed contracts for Early-Stage Researchers (ESR) employed on a MSCA Innovative Training Network (ITN) project need to be suspended if these fellows are furloughed.
- **Researchers would need to agree to suspension, temporary suspension of the salary/replacement through furlough scheme and project is extended.**

Specific advice on ERC grants

Specific advice on ERC - teleworking

- Telework arrangements are particularly recommended for Principal Investigators that are currently blocked from returning to the EU or Associated Countries (including the UK).
- ERCEA should be notified in this case.
- Arrangements need to be take for the supervision of the team.

Specific advice on ERC - teleworking

- Teleworked time for PIs may in this case count as time spent on the ERC project and in the EU or the Associated Countries (including the UK) for the purpose of the PI's time commitments.
- Time records for the PIs should be kept even if no personnel costs are charged for him/her to the project.

Specific advice on ERC – time commitment obligation

- Time-commitments obligation for PIs remain the same
- **Must be fulfilled for the overall action duration** (not annually or per reporting period).
- So it might be possible to compensate over the duration of the project.
- Suspension or extension of the project is also an option.
- Extension will be treated favourably and swiftly.

Other considerations

Other FAQs related to COVID-19

- All **evaluations** are carried out remotely using video or web-conference facilities
- **Postponing a project start date**
 - Possible for grant agreements about to be signed and already signed but where the work as not started.
 - Will delay pre-financing payment

Re-directing project work to help tackle COVID-19?

- In principle, amendments should not change the project fundamentally (as it was awarded)
- Commission will assess reorienting of projects on a case-by case basis, and such amendments could exceptionally be granted
- UKRO understands an additional €50 million will be made available to support existing clinical trial projects (details still to be confirmed)

Upcoming calls /deadlines

2nd H2020 COVID call

- Launched on 19 May 2020
- €122 million of additional funding
- Deadline 11 June 2020
- [SC1-PHE-CORONAVIRUS-2020-2A](#) - Repurposing of manufacturing for vital medical supplies and equipment
- [SC1-PHE-CORONAVIRUS-2020-2B](#) - Medical technologies, Digital tools and Artificial Intelligence (AI) analytics to improve surveillance and care at high Technology Readiness Levels (TRL)
- [SC1-PHE-CORONAVIRUS-2020-2C](#) - Behavioural, social and economic impacts of the outbreak response
- [SC1-PHE-CORONAVIRUS-2020-2D](#) - Pan-European COVID-19 cohorts
- [SC1-PHE-CORONAVIRUS-2020-2E](#) - Networking of existing EU and international cohorts of relevance to COVID-19

Deadlines

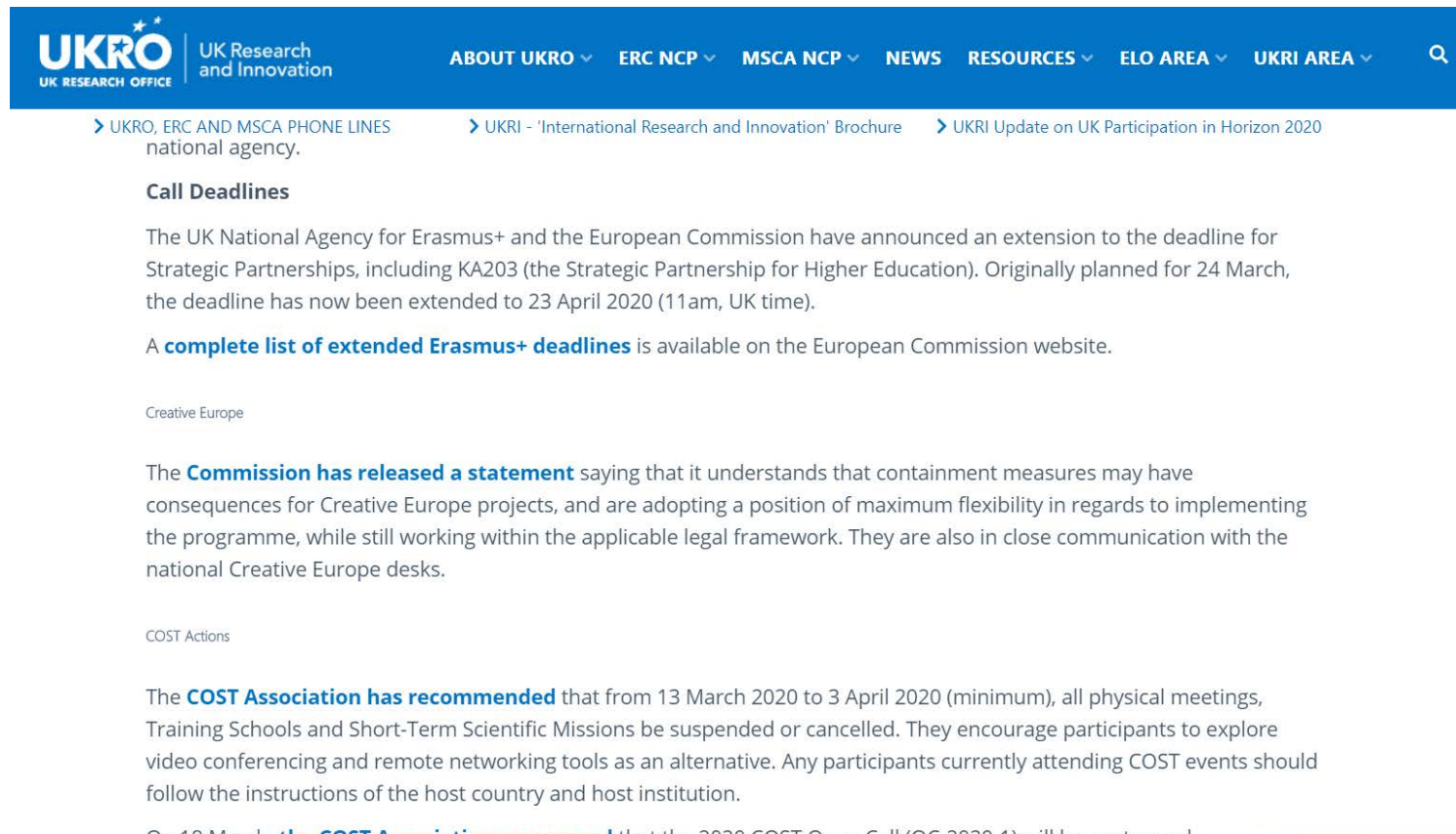
Current deadlines (postponed due to COVID-19)

17 June 2020	H2020-DT-2018-2020; FETPROACT-09-2020; FETHPC-04-2020; H2020-ICT-2018-20.
18 June 2020	H2020-SC1-DTH-2018-2020; H2020-SC1-FA-DTS-2018-2020
19 June 2020	H2020-NMBP-TR-IND-2018-2020
25 June 2020	SESAR-VLD2-01-2020; SESAR-VLD2-02-2020; SESAR-VLD2-03-2020; SESAR-VLD2-04-2020; SESAR-WAVE3-01-2020; SESAR-WAVE3-02-2020; SESAR-WAVE3-03-2020; SESAR-WAVE3-04-2020; SESAR-WAVE3-05-2020; SESAR-WAVE3-06-2020; SESAR-WAVE3-07-2020.
July	
2 July 2020	H2020-FETFLAG-2018-2020
November	
19 November 2020	H2020-JTI-IMI2-2020-20-two-stage (stage 2)

All deadlines are at 17:00 CET (Brussels time) and are provided by UKRO for information only. For legally binding information on call deadlines, please, visit the [Funding and Tenders Portal](#).

What about other EU programmes?

- Information and links available on our [UKRO COVID-19 pages](#)



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UKRO
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UK Research and Innovation

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▸ UKRO, ERC AND MSCA PHONE LINES national agency. ▸ UKRI - 'International Research and Innovation' Brochure ▸ UKRI Update on UK Participation in Horizon 2020

Call Deadlines

The UK National Agency for Erasmus+ and the European Commission have announced an extension to the deadline for Strategic Partnerships, including KA203 (the Strategic Partnership for Higher Education). Originally planned for 24 March, the deadline has now been extended to 23 April 2020 (11am, UK time).

A [complete list of extended Erasmus+ deadlines](#) is available on the European Commission website.

Creative Europe

The [Commission has released a statement](#) saying that it understands that containment measures may have consequences for Creative Europe projects, and are adopting a position of maximum flexibility in regards to implementing the programme, while still working within the applicable legal framework. They are also in close communication with the national Creative Europe desks.

COST Actions

The [COST Association has recommended](#) that from 13 March 2020 to 3 April 2020 (minimum), all physical meetings, Training Schools and Short-Term Scientific Missions be suspended or cancelled. They encourage participants to explore video conferencing and remote networking tools as an alternative. Any participants currently attending COST events should follow the instructions of the host country and host institution.

On 10 March, the [COST Association announced](#) that the 2020 COST Open Call (OC 2020-1) will be postponed.

Other updates

Horizon 2020 and COVID-19

COVID-19 calls/ongoing projects

- SC1 emergency funding:
 - 18 projects shortlisted in epidemiology, modelling, diagnostics, treatment and vaccines
- IMI 2 fast track call on COVID-19 (€45 million) closed on 31 March
 - 144 proposals received, 8 projects selected
 - 5 focus on diagnostics, 3 on treatments
 - 6 UK organisations involved

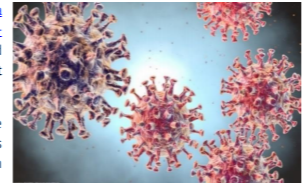


New research projects on Coronavirus (March 2020)

Outcome of emergency funding action for coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 outbreak: 18 new projects

On 30 January 2020, the European Commission launched a [request for expressions of interest entitled "SC1-PHE-CORONAVIRUS-2020: Advancing knowledge for the clinical and public health response to the \[COVID-19\] epidemic"](#) with a budget of €10 million subsequently increased up to €48.5 million.

Such rapid reaction is made possible by the standing budget line for emergency research funds that the Commission maintains as part of the **Horizon 2020** annual work programmes for Health research.



[This enabled 17 projects to be short-listed for funding as the EC announced on 6 March 2020](#), to which an 18th project was added in late March¹. In total, the 18 projects involve 140 research teams from across the EU and beyond who will work on:

- **Improving epidemiology and public health, including our preparedness and response to outbreaks.** These projects will help develop better monitoring systems in order to effectively prevent and control the spread of the virus, as well as contribute to the assessment of social dynamics.
- **Rapid point-of-care diagnostic tests.** Increased efforts will concentrate on enabling front-line health workers to make the diagnosis more quickly and more accurately, which will in turn reduce the risk of further spread of the virus.
- **New treatments**, in which a dual approach will be adopted. Firstly, accelerating the development of new treatments currently in the pipeline (including therapeutic peptides, monoclonal antibodies and broad-spectrum antivirals), and secondly, screening and identifying molecules that could work against the virus, using advanced modelling and computing techniques.
- **Development of new vaccines.** The research will focus on developing a prophylactic vaccine and a therapeutic vaccine, which will be used for prevention and treatment respectively.

The projects are listed below. Disclaimer: For each project, funding and composition of the consortium is subject to final European Commission decision and signature of Horizon 2020 Grant Agreement.

EU COVID recovery plans

- EU Factsheet and Recovery Plan published
- Core of the proposal is “Next Generation EU”
- Kick-starting recovery
- Strong focus on R&I
- Plans to reinforce Horizon Europe

THE ROLE OF RESEARCH AND INNOVATION IN EUROPE'S RECOVERY

28 May 2020

"Our renewed commitment to modernize our economies, making them greener, more digital and more resilient, will ensure that we come out stronger from this crisis. Research and innovation are vital to ensure a sustainable recovery for all."

Mariya Gabriel, Commissioner for Innovation, Research, Culture, Education and Youth

INVESTMENTS IN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION ARE KEY FOR A SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE RECOVERY

R&I are critical levers to ensure a sustainable and inclusive recovery, while boosting the resilience of our production sectors, the competitiveness of our economies and the transformation of our socio-economic systems. There are a number of key strategic areas where R&I initiatives can assist the recovery, and assist in the short term.

€13.5 billion proposed increase of Horizon Europe budget through Next Generation EU, a €750 billion recovery plan

The budget increase will be used to provide European support for health and climate-related research and innovation activities. The additional budget will go to:

- Horizon Europe's **Health cluster** to tackle challenges such as the coronavirus pandemic, the extension of clinical trials, innovative protective measures, virology, vaccines, treatments and diagnostics, and the translation of research findings into public health policy measures.
- Horizon Europe's **Climate Energy and Mobility cluster** and the **Digital Industry and Space cluster** to scale up R&I resources in climate-related domains and to ensure that European enterprises have access to the technologies and data they need. This will strengthen support for the competitiveness of EU industry in related economic sectors and promote a recovery consistent with the **European Green Deal's** goals.
- The **European Innovation Council (EIC)** to provide additional means for emerging and breakthrough innovations by small and medium-sized enterprises, start-ups, and midcaps. The EIC has a huge potential to support the recovery and the EU's ambitions on digitalisation and climate.

Impact on future EU programmes

State of play

COVID-19 impact on progress

- Work on Horizon Europe has picked up again
 - Meetings on clusters since May
 - Strategic Plan taking shape
 - Mission Boards planning to submit their initial findings to European Commission
- Planning for the EU R&I days in September continues.
- For more updates: Join our next UKRO webinar on Horizon Europe and the EU Budget on 15 June!

Your questions

(please use the Q&A function, not the chat 😊)

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