

Horizon 2020 funding if there's no Brexit deal

Summary

If there is 'no deal', the government has taken steps to provide continued support for research and innovation.

Detail

Find out how the government plans to support UK researchers, universities and businesses who benefit from Horizon 2020 funding if the UK leaves the EU with no agreement.

A scenario in which the UK leaves the EU without agreement (a 'no deal' scenario) remains unlikely given the mutual interests of the UK and the EU in securing a negotiated outcome.

Negotiations are progressing well and both we and the EU continue to work hard to seek a positive deal. However, it's our duty as a responsible government to prepare for all eventualities, including 'no deal', until we can be certain of the outcome of those negotiations.

For two years, the government has been implementing a significant programme of work to ensure the UK will be ready from day 1 in all scenarios, including a potential 'no deal' outcome in March 2019.

It has always been the case that as we get nearer to March 2019, preparations for a 'no deal' scenario would have to be accelerated. Such an acceleration does not reflect an increased likelihood of a 'no deal' outcome. Rather it is about ensuring our plans are in place in the unlikely scenario that they need to be relied upon.

This series of technical notices sets out information to allow businesses and citizens to understand what they would need to do in a 'no deal' scenario, so they can make informed plans and preparations.

This guidance is part of that series.

Also included is an overarching framing notice explaining the government's overarching approach to preparing the UK for this outcome in order to minimise disruption and ensure a smooth and orderly exit in all scenarios.

We are working with the devolved administrations on technical notices and we will continue to do so as plans develop.

Purpose

This notice provides information on the Horizon 2020 underwrite guarantee, the extension to the guarantee and how our plans to support UK research and innovation will work in practice. It is aimed at UK organisations, such as universities and businesses, who are in receipt of Horizon 2020 funding or who are bidding for such funding. It will also be of interest to EU organisations who work with UK participants on Horizon 2020 projects.

Before 29 March 2019

Horizon 2020 is an EU Research and Innovation programme which provides about €80 billion of funding available over 7 years (2014 to 2020); the UK has secured €4.6 billion of funding to date (14.3% of the total). The UK is currently a net contributor to the EU budget.

Horizon 2020 couples research and innovation, focusing on excellent science, industrial leadership and tackling societal challenges. The UK and EU's intention is that the eligibility of UK researchers and businesses to participate in Horizon 2020 will remain unchanged for the remaining duration of the programme. This has been agreed as part of the Financial Settlement which was signed-off by both UK and European Commission negotiators in a draft Withdrawal Agreement and welcomed by the other 27 EU countries at March European Council.

After 29 March 2019 if there's 'no deal'

In the unlikely event of a 'no deal' scenario, the UK's departure from the EU would mean UK organisations may be unable to access funding for Horizon 2020 projects after exit day. However, the Chancellor announced in [August](#) and [October](#) 2016 that the government will guarantee funding for competitively bid for EU projects submitted before we leave the EU, including Horizon 2020 projects. This guarantee will cover all successful bids submitted by UK participants before the UK exits the EU, for the full duration of the projects.

The guarantee does not cover funding for organisations from other countries who are in consortia with UK participants – only the funding for UK participants is in scope. We are aware of some cases where UK participants lead a consortium and are responsible for distributing funding to the other participants; the UK government is seeking to discuss how this could best be addressed in a 'no deal' scenario with the European Commission. These discussions would also need to include consideration of projects where the UK's change in status from member state to third country could lead to concerns about ongoing compliance with Horizon 2020 rules (for example, where a consortium no longer meets the threshold for member state and/or associated country participants).

In July 2018, the Chief Secretary laid a [written ministerial statement \(HCWS926\) extending this guarantee](#) to provide further stability for UK organisations in a 'no deal' scenario. The guarantee now additionally covers funding for successful bids where UK organisations are able to participate as a third country in competitive EU grant programmes. This extension runs from exit day until the end of 2020.

In the unlikely event of a 'no deal' scenario, we therefore intend that UK researchers and businesses would be able to apply to and participate in all those Horizon 2020 calls open to third country participants from the date of exit, with funding provided via the extended guarantee. Third country participation is a well-established part of Horizon 2020 - entities from third countries currently participate in and lead consortia in a wide range of collaborative programmes. The government is seeking discussions with the European Commission to agree the details of our continued participation as a third country.

Third country participation does not extend to some Horizon 2020 calls; these include European Research Council (ERC) grants, some Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) and the SME instrument. The government is considering what other measures may be necessary to support UK research and innovation in the event that the guarantee and the extension are required.

Looking beyond 2020, the UK remains committed to ongoing collaboration in research and innovation and wants to work with the EU on a mutually beneficial outcome. The government set out its plan for the [future relationship between the UK and the EU in its White Paper](#), which includes the proposal to form a cooperative accord with the EU on science and innovation.

At the same time, the government is signalling our commitment to the future of our country and the world through our goal to increase UK research and development spending to 2.4% of GDP by 2027.

The government is also working in partnership with UK Research and Innovation to develop a new International Research and Innovation Strategy. The Strategy will further set out our desire to build on the UK's long tradition of international collaborations in research and innovation across all fields and our openness to international talent.

Implications

The UK is providing funding through the underwrite guarantee and extension to support UK participants to continue to take part in Horizon 2020 projects, subject to eligibility for participation in the project. The government is seeking discussions with the European Commission to agree the precise details of eligibility. The government is also considering what other measures may be necessary to support UK research and innovation in a 'no deal' scenario.

Actions for businesses and other stakeholders

For all UK recipients

UK Research & Innovation (UKRI) will be developing systems to ensure payments to beneficiaries of Horizon 2020 funding can continue. Current UK recipients of Horizon 2020 funding will soon be invited to provide initial data about project(s) on a portal hosted on GOV.UK. The portal is designed to ensure that UKRI has information about projects and participants in order to deliver the underwrite guarantee if required. UKRI will use the contact details provided by current recipients to inform them of the next steps in the process.

The portal will remain open after the UK leaves the EU so that UK applicants can continue to register as and when they are informed that their bid has been successful. More information on the portal is available on the [UKRI webpage](#).

For EU Citizens and Organisations

Organisations in member states who are part of a consortium with UK participants do not need to register on the portal. The government will ensure that details of UK systems and processes are shared before you need to take action. These measures are intended to deliver continuity for both UK participants, and their research partners in the EU.

Further information

More information can be found at the [Horizon 2020 Q&A](#). This provides more detail on the underwrite guarantee, the extension to the guarantee and how the UK will continue to support research and innovation after exit day.

This notice is meant for guidance only. You should consider whether you need separate professional advice before making specific preparations.

It is part of the government's ongoing programme of planning for all possible outcomes. We expect to negotiate a successful deal with the EU.