

Future Frameworks for international collaboration on research and innovation: Sir Adrian Smith Review

Terms of Reference

The Secretary of State for BEIS has commissioned Professor Sir Adrian Smith to provide independent advice on the design of potential future UK funding schemes for international, innovation and curiosity-driven blue-skies research, in the context of the UK's future ambitions for international collaboration on research and innovation. This document outlines the terms of reference for this work.

The global landscape for science and innovation is changing, and access to knowledge, markets, skills and partners now takes place on a global basis. Global Research and Development (R&D) capacity is expanding and non-Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries account for a growing share of global R&D, both in terms of researchers and investment. Better understanding is needed on whether the UK's current funding mechanisms, resources and bilateral and multilateral partnerships will be fit for purpose when set against the projected trends in international research and innovation, and against new technology and industry roadmaps and the forecast social, economic and environmental trends.

The UK's participation in Horizon 2020, the current European Union (EU) Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, has benefited the UK's science, research and innovation landscape. It provides opportunities for UK entities to collaborate with EU and international counterparts and funding for multiple elements including innovation, international collaborations and partnerships, and curiosity-driven 'excellence' based research. Horizon Europe is the successor to Horizon 2020 and will run from 2021 to 2027. The UK remains committed to ongoing collaboration in research and innovation with partners across Europe. To this end the UK would like the option to associate to Horizon Europe and is continuing to actively shape the development of that programme. However, we are also exploring in parallel credible and ambitious alternatives to deliver positive outcomes for science, research and innovation in the event that the UK chooses not to associate.

Purpose

Professor Sir Adrian Smith has been invited to provide independent advice on how funding future international collaboration, from curiosity-driven 'discovery' funding through to innovation, can best be designed to positively impact science, research and innovation in the UK, and to support the Government's strategic objectives, including the Industrial Strategy and its commitment to 2.4% of GDP invested in R&D by 2027.

In the immediate term, Professor Sir Adrian will be asked to advise on the design and delivery of elements of the potential alternatives to Horizon Europe association. This will include the Discovery Fund, which aims to provide a UK alternative to the curiosity-driven and excellence-focused elements of Horizon Europe.

On the Discovery Fund Professor Sir Adrian Smith will be asked to consider:

- The design of UK alternative funds i.e. the scale, scope and any international elements of proposed funds, and how they could complement the current UK funding landscape;
- The delivery of UK alternative funds i.e. how strategic direction could be determined, how proposals could be reviewed.

On international collaboration, Professor Sir Adrian Smith will be asked to consider:

- How funding mechanisms, resources, and international partnerships can remain fit for purpose for our global ambition to support the International Research and Innovation Strategy, which will be published in the coming months.
- How international collaboration can best support the Government's Industrial Strategy and 2.4% target.

Professor Sir Adrian's advice will help inform the upcoming spending review (as announced in the Spring Statement) and longer-term value-for-money considerations on international collaboration for research and innovation.

Professor Sir Adrian will have the independence to engage with relevant stakeholders and seek expert advice as he sees fit.

Time Scale

It is anticipated interim findings will be presented to BEIS ministers in the Summer of 2019.

Reporting

Professor Sir Adrian Smith will report to the Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation. Professor Sir Adrian will provide an update on progress on a regular (monthly) basis, to BEIS officials. A summary of his interim findings will be published by BEIS.