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Response Type:
Normal ResponseCollector:
Web Link
(Web Link)Custom Value:
emptyIP Address:
144.32.90.45Response Started:
Tuesday, August 6, 2013 8:36:52 AMResponse Modified:
Tuesday, August 6, 2013 9:16:55 AM

1. Name:

2. Organisation (if applicable):

University of York

3. Email address:

4. Address:

5. In responding, it would be helpful if you could indicate whether you are responding as

an individual

6. Keeping in touch

Please keep me informed by email of the progress of this review, and other BIS Balance of Competence reviews.

1. 1. Where has EU action had a positive impact for the UK on research, technological development, innovation or space? What evidence is there for this? Has EU action encouraged national action in any areas?

In my opinion the EU has had a very positive impact on UK research and technological development. I have been an academic in a chemistry department since 1993. During that time my research has benefited from EU funding which has provided post-doctoral support to the research group. It has also hosted numerous PDRA and PhD students as visitors to the research laboratory. Links to companies such as Shell and Bruker BioSpin have been developed. These collaborations have resulted in 15 peer-reviewed research publications. They have also provided research contacts that have enabled the subsequent development of an array of projects. The most notable of these has resulted in the filing of 5 patents (1 awarded) and the attraction of over £10M in research support from the Wellcome Trust, the ESRC, the Spanish Government, Bruker BioSpin, Oxford Instruments, GlaxoSmithKline and Astra Zeneca.

2. 2. Where has EU action had a negative impact for the UK in these fields? What evidence is there for this? Has EU action prevented potentially useful national action in any areas?

Not that I am aware.

3. 3. How and where has UK engagement with partner countries or international bodies, both within and outside the EU, been helped or hindered by EU involvement?

EU involvement has significantly aided my research. It provides sufficient funds to enable large scale projects to be conceived and resourced. It enables collaboration with the best scientists in the EU. The resulting networks have achieved more than would be possible within a purely national framework. The one drawback is the need to profile the partners to reflect wide EU participation. This can be detrimental when the UK has particular strength in an area because it precludes the involvement of all these groups as partners. It enables collaboration with the best scientists in the EU. The resulting networks have achieved more than would be possible within a purely national framework. The application process itself and the auditing of a result award are challenging. This can lead to confusion and a reduction in allowed expenditure which means cost recovery can fall short of the expected value.

4. 4. What benefits or difficulties has the objective of a European research area (ERA) delivered for the UK?

see above

5. 5. How has the EU sought to coordinate the policy instruments at its disposal across different policy areas to create an enabling environment for researchers and innovators? How successful has this been?

No Response

1. 6. What could the EU most helpfully do to promote scientific and technological progress and innovation (including in the space sector)? - How could the EU use its existing competence differently to deliver more in your area? - How might a greater or lesser degree of EU competence deliver more in your area? - How could improvements to existing EU activities make them more effective and efficient?

We work lies in the area of catalysis aiming to optimise processes and hence improve their efficiency, lower there cost and reduce environmental impact. We are also working on an area related to clinical contrast agents where we seek to produce the next generation of 'super agents' in order to allow MRI to diagnose disease directly. The EU could potentially improve on delivery by reducing the number of countries, not partners, required for a bid to meet the assessment criteria. It could both reduce the level of support necessary for a company's involvement, and allow companies to receive direct support for staff through research grants. The assessment process is transparent but the feedback limited. Scores for successful grants are incredibly high and one wonders how you can get a score of 94 %. It seems likely therefore that the style of application rather than the scientific content features heavily. This may act to limit opportunities for the best science.

2. 7. Where might future EU level action be detrimental to your work in this area?

Only if not involved

3. 8. Where might action at national rather than EU level be more appropriate / effective?

One route might be to enable scientists to bid for national funds to join EU networks. This would enable new researchers to achieve the necessary track record to be successful in the future, and ensure the UK does not miss out if a large network grant is established without appropriate UK representation.

4. 9. How could EU and national policies and funding streams interact better?

As indicted in (8) above, many large grants are awarded. These reflect a team of researchers and can miss important UK research groups due to limitations in partner demographics. Bidding to a national research council to join such a programme would add value to the EU network while enabling UK participation in it. This would act to allow UK groups to generate a stronger track record while enabling them to develop EU links, and hence facilitate their direct involvement in future follow-on applications.

5. 10. What impact would any future enlargement of the EU have on this area of competence?

There is a risk in diluting the funding but growing the research strengths of these nations will have an impact on future growth. One route would be to ring-fence some funding within a grant to such nations. This could enable for example PhD students to come to the UK as part of their degree and hence benefit from our facilities/training. Over a period of time this would act to improve the research competence of the future partner.

6. 11. Are there any other points you wish to make which are not captured above?

No

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