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HORIZON EUROPE GUARANTEE EXTENSION ANNOUNCEMENT FOR THE UK'S R&D SECTOR

I am very aware that the EU's delays to formalising our association to Horizon Europe have led to uncertainty for researchers, businesses and innovators based in the UK, and have been jeopardising important research collaborations between the UK and European partners. I understand the impact this is having on UK stakeholders' ability to forward plan and that some have taken the difficult decision not to participate in Horizon Europe in the interim.

Fifteen months on from agreeing UK association, this risks having a seriously damaging impact on UK research which the UK Government is determined to prevent by providing and now extending, our UK funding guarantee for successful UK Horizon applications.

As you will know, the UK's association to Horizon Europe was agreed as part of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) with the EU in December 2020. The Joint Declaration on Participation in Union Programmes and Access to Programme Services sets out the parties' shared commitment for the UK to associate to the agreed EU programmes (Horizon Europe, Euratom R&T, Fusion for Energy and Copernicus) at the earliest opportunity. We continue to call on the EU to formalise our association as soon as possible, now more than ever we should be working together. Delays are to the detriment of researchers and institutions on all sides, and it remains my priority to secure association as soon as possible.

Supporting the UK's research and development sector through this period of uncertainty has been our top priority, and in November last year I was pleased to be able to provide reassurance to the sector with the announcement of the guarantee to support the first wave of successful applicants to Horizon Europe. In addition, we are proactively raising ongoing issues with the European Commission, pressing them to ensure that UK entities can apply to calls as if the UK were associated up to the point of grant signing, as agreed in the TCA, and to address any cases where this has not happened.

Today I am pleased to be able to announce an **extension** to the guarantee to a second wave of eligible, successful applicants to ensure that important international collaborations can continue and to provide reassurance for future collaborations. Details regarding the updated scope and terms of the guarantee are on the [UKRI website](#).

This guarantee covers all eligible, current applications to calls where researchers expect to sign grant agreements this year. This measure protects UK researchers whether we associate to Horizon Europe or not. We cannot wait forever. This guarantee is designed to provide seamless continuity so that if we do not associate, funding under this guarantee will provide stability for the UK sector whilst our longer-term alternative international research programme is put in place.

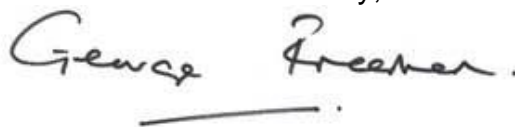
Given the ongoing delay to our association it is only right and responsible that we are prepared for all outcomes, and to ensure we deliver what is in the best interest of the UK sector. Whilst the guarantee is an important means of protecting the UK sector, it is only a short-term measure.

In the 2021 Spending Review the government made an important ringfenced commitment that *“in the event that the UK is unable to associate to Horizon Europe, the funding allocated to Horizon association will go to UK government R&D programmes, including those to support new international partnerships”*. This Spending Review delivers the largest ever R&D budget committed to BEIS or its predecessors, increasing Government investment in R&D from £15bn p.a. to £20bn p.a. by 2024/25.

Over the last few months I and officials have consulted widely with the research community to ensure we understand your priorities and canvass your thinking on what any UK global research programme should offer. If the UK is unable to associate to Horizon Europe soon and in time to make full use of the opportunities it offers, we are committed to introducing a comprehensive alternative programme of international science, research and innovation collaborations, building on those outlined in the R&D Roadmap. These will focus on both immediate stability for the sector, with short-term mitigations including this guarantee of funding for successful Horizon applicants, and a bold and ambitious longer-term offer that delivers many of the benefits of Horizon association, and additional benefits, through wider global participation, and even stronger industry and SME engagement. This will include a strong and attractive offer to encourage talented individuals to build their careers here, developing the skills and workforce the UK needs. I intend to set out further details of what these plans entail in the coming months.

To reiterate, the government’s position remains, as it has always been, to associate to Horizon, Copernicus and Euratom. We continue to hope that will be possible soon. But we must prepare for all eventualities and ensure the UK research community has a strong offer of both interim and long-term funding. Today’s guarantee extension provides a vital next step to give our research community that vital reassurance.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George Freeman". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a short horizontal line.

GEORGE FREEMAN MP
Minister for Science, Research and Innovation