

Business Innovation Forum (BIF) Meeting 1 – 26/01/2022

Introduction

- The chair of the Business Innovation Forum (BIF) thanked members for joining the group's inaugural meeting.
- The Minister for Science, Research and Innovation, George Freeman MP, set out BEIS' ambitions for the forum.
- Members introduced themselves.

BIF Terms of Reference

- The Terms of Reference were ratified.

Horizon

- The UK stands ready to formalise our association to Horizon Europe. However, given the delays, the Government is preparing for all scenarios, including putting in place a programme of UK schemes if the UK cannot associate and what these should prioritise to support innovation objectives.
- Members shared views on the programme and potential alternatives:
 - Association with Horizon Europe is the preferable option.
 - Should the UK not be able to associate, the UK must be ready to rapidly implement alternatives.
 - Horizon Europe affords unique opportunities to collaborate with international partners and these should be a priority for UK alternatives. New links between specific locations may offer more relevant opportunities and therefore be an advantage of a UK alternative to Horizon.
 - UK alternatives should seek to maintain the level of collaboration between business and academia.
 - Whether the UK associates or not, the outcome and its implications for the UK should be clearly and effectively communicated with UK organisations.

Closing remarks

- The next BIF meeting is being organised for March and subsequent meetings will take place quarterly. It is hoped these meetings will take place in person.
- Strategic prioritisation is essential for the forum going forward. Key areas for the BIF to focus on could include the use of procurement as a lever to drive innovation; attracting and retaining inward investment in the form of R&D; and, supporting levelling up priorities.
- The chair thanked members for joining and welcomed members sharing further thoughts on priority topics for the forum with the secretariat after the meeting.
- Members to contact BEIS with suggested priority topics for the forum.