Horizon Europe guarantee guidance

17 December 2021

Please direct any questions on the guarantee guidance to eugrantsfunding@ukri.org
Horizon Europe guarantee guidance

On 29 November, the government announced a new scheme that guarantees funding for successful applicants to the first wave of Horizon Europe grant awards regardless of the outcome of the UK’s efforts to associate to Horizon Europe.

The UK government stated that its priority remains association to Horizon Europe, as both the UK and the EU agreed under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement last year, and that it stands ready to formalise UK association. However, ongoing delays in this process have led to uncertainty for researchers, businesses and innovators based in the UK.

The guarantee is a short-term measure intended to address the delays in the formalisation of the UK’s association to Horizon Europe. To provide reassurance, the government has guaranteed funding for the first wave of eligible, successful applicants to Horizon Europe if they are unable to sign their grant agreements with the EU.

Funding overview

The funding will be delivered through UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and this notice provides guidance on eligibility, scope and what you need to do to receive funding if eligible.

As stated in ‘Questions and Answers on the UK’s Participation in Horizon Europe’ (European Commission), UK entities are already eligible to apply ahead of the UK’s formal association to Horizon Europe while the UK is in the process of associating. The UK government continues to encourage UK researchers to take advantage of this opportunity.

However, UKRI and the UK government are aware that successful UK applicants may be unable to access funding from the EU if the formalisation process of the UK’s membership of Horizon Europe has not been completed by the time they are required to sign a grant agreement with the EU.

In this scenario, for the first wave of grant awards (defined below), the UK government has committed to provide funding for all successful eligible UK bids. Funding will be made available in pounds sterling.

The funding guarantee will be delivered by UKRI with payments made quarterly in arrears as standard, with the exception of projects carried out under the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICs) 2021 Business Plans, where UK entities have already incurred costs in 2021. These KICs will be funded through two payments, one on registration of the project and a second payment once assurance checks on final project spend have been completed.
Scope of the guarantee

This guarantee is intended to support the first wave of Horizon Europe awardees for excellent science, research and innovation, in the event that they cannot sign a grant agreement with the European Commission or delegated party, because the UK’s association has not been formalised in time, and therefore cannot receive funding.

Both for mono-beneficiary and multi-beneficiary grants, this funding will be provided for the lifetime of the grant, subject to UKRI terms and conditions. UKRI will open and close a registration window once it is clear that a European Commission grant agreement cannot be signed, during which time eligible, successful UK applicants will be able to obtain a UKRI grant. These windows will be announced for each call.

The list below identifies the calls included under this first wave. This list is defined by those calls for which the last legal date for signing their grant agreement is expected to pass before 30 April 2022.

- 2021 ERC Starting Grant call, ERC-2021-StG
- 2021 EIC Accelerator Open, HORIZON-EIC-2021-ACCELERATOROPEN-01
- 2021 EIC Pathfinder Open, HORIZON-EIC-2021-PATHFINDEROPEN-01
- 2021 EIC Pathfinder Challenge, HORIZON-EIC-2021-PATHFINDERCHALLENGES-01
- 2021 EIC Transition Open, HORIZON-EIC-2021-TRANSITIONOPEN-01
- 2021 EIC Transition Challenge, HORIZON-EIC-2021-TRANSITIONCHALLENGES-01
- 2021 Biodiversity Partnership call, HORIZON-CL6-2021-BIODIV-02

(List version 1.0; 17 December 2021)

The UK government has stated that it will monitor the situation closely and may consider whether it is appropriate to change the scope of the guarantee, in which case, it will provide updated guidance. The government has stated that its priority is to support the UK’s research and development sector and will continue to do this in all future scenarios.

EIT-KICs

The guarantee will also cover the costs of EIT-eligible activities delivered by UK participants of the KICs that would otherwise have been covered by grant funding awarded by EIT. If the UK has not associated before 31 December 2021, the guarantee will apply retrospectively for EIT-eligible activities where relevant costs have been incurred in calendar year 2021.

Additionally, the guarantee will also cover the costs of EIT-eligible activities delivered by UK participants where these activities have been included in 2022 KIC Business Plans and the costs would otherwise have been covered by grant funding awarded by EIT. For the costs of these activities, access to funding under the guarantee will not be possible until quarter 1 of the 2022-23 UK financial year, but the UK government is committed to covering the EIT-eligible costs of activities if the UK has
not associated to Horizon Europe by then. This part of the guarantee will cover costs incurred in the calendar year 2022 only.

For both 2021 and 2022, the guarantee only replaces grant funding that would have been awarded by EIT. It does not replace funding from non-EIT sources or loans and does not cover activities that involve a ‘success fee’ on completion. In addition, it does not cover funding under arrangements that place share-transfer or other equity conditions on UK partners. For such cases, relevant KICs would need to remove these conditions for funding to be capable of falling within the scope of the guarantee.

**COST Actions**
The UK remains a full member of the European Co-operation on Science and Technology (COST) Association and, subject to its usual rules, UK applicants are eligible to participate and receive funding in its interdisciplinary research networks (COST Actions) irrespective of the UK’s association to Horizon Europe. As a result, UK participants in COST Actions are eligible for reimbursements via COST in the usual way and COST Actions are therefore not covered by this guarantee.

**Eligibility**
Successful UK applicants will be eligible to register with UKRI for the Horizon Europe guarantee if:

- They are a UK-based organisation and a member of a consortium which has received notification of a successful proposal evaluated under a Horizon Europe call under the first wave (as described above) and which meets the required European Commission eligibility criteria to deliver the project.

- They are a UK-based organisation or researcher who has received notification of a successful proposal evaluated under a mono-beneficiary Horizon Europe call under the first wave (as described above).

- They are a researcher who has received notification of a successful proposal evaluated under the ERC Starting Grants call 2021 with a UK host institution.

- They are a UK-based organisation which has carried out a project under a KIC 2021 Business Plan and they have incurred relevant costs during the 2021 calendar year, or they carry out a project included in a KIC 2022 Business Plan and they incur relevant costs during the 2022 calendar year.

- They are ineligible to receive funding from Horizon Europe because they were unable to sign the grant agreement as an applicant from an Associated Country due to the UK’s association status not being formalised in time (as per guidance issued by the European Commission: ‘Questions and Answers on the UK’s Participation in Horizon Europe’) and the last legal date for signing their grant agreement has passed.
If the UK’s association had been formalised in time, they would have been able to sign the grant agreement as an applicant from an Associated Country and would have received funding from Horizon Europe or a delegated party.

The requirements set out elsewhere in this document will also need to be met, and additional terms and conditions will apply, including (without limitation) onboarding checks, award holder reporting requirements and the application of currency exchange rates. These will be made available in due course. Since applications will have been evaluated through the European Commission’s trusted peer review systems no further application quality assessment will be undertaken by UKRI.

What do I need to do to receive funding if eligible?
In order to receive funding through the guarantee, your grant details will need to be submitted to UKRI systems, in order for UKRI to provide you with a UK grant. For most grant types, registration will be via Innovate UK’s Innovation Funding Service (IFS), while funding of ERC Starting Grants will be provided via the Joint Electronic Submissions (Je-S) system. You can prepare now by ensuring your organisation is registered on IFS and/or Je-S and that you know how to access these systems. Further detail of the information required will be provided in due course, and full guidance on the registration process will be published on the UKRI website for each grant type.

Since applications will have been evaluated through the European Commission’s trusted peer review systems no further application quality assessment will be undertaken by UKRI.

For EIT-KICs, UKRI systems will be opened for 2021 grants in February 2022. You will need to provide additional supporting information from your KIC, details of which will be published in the new year along with full applicant guidance. For 2022 grants, UKRI systems will open early in the 2022-23 financial year.

Once registration of an eligible Horizon Europe grant with UKRI is complete, awardees will receive an offer of funding from UKRI. Payments will be made directly to each UK beneficiary organisation.

Terms of the guarantee
As set out above, in addition to the provisions of this document, further terms and conditions will apply to the Horizon Europe guarantee, including (without limitation) onboarding checks, award holder reporting requirements and the application of currency exchange rates. These will be made available in due course. UKRI reserves the right to modify any of the terms and conditions of the Horizon Europe guarantee.
Technical questions and answers
Questions regarding the guarantee announcement

1. Should I still apply for Horizon Europe calls that are outside of the scope of the guarantee?
   Yes. As stated in ‘Questions and Answers on the UK’s Participation in Horizon Europe’ (European Commission), UK entities are already eligible to apply ahead of the UK’s formal association to Horizon Europe. The UK government states that it is committed to securing association and continues to encourage UK researchers to take advantage of this opportunity.

2. Are UK participants still able to lead consortia?
The European Commission has published clear guidance that during the application process UK participants should be treated as if the UK were already associated to Horizon Europe. This means that they can apply for funding, and participate in and lead consortia for collaborative projects. If the European Commission formalises the UK’s association before a grant agreement must be signed, then UK participants on that grant will be funded by the European Commission and will be able to fulfil their role as lead or participant as set out in their proposal.

While Horizon Europe regulations generally require a participant to be based in a Member State or an Associated Country in order to lead a project, UK participants in successful consortia should follow the guidance of the European Commission on eligibility, project roles and signing the grant agreement.

3. What happens to projects that have already been submitted by UK participants while they are being treated as an Associated Country if there is an extended delay to the UK formalising their association?
   As stated in ‘Questions and answers on the UK’s participation in Horizon Europe’ (European Commission), UK entities are already eligible to apply ahead of the UK’s formal association to Horizon Europe, and the UK Government expect the European Commission to continue evaluating these applications.

   If UK applicants to the first wave of calls reach a point where they are required to sign the grant agreement before the EU has formalised the UK’s association, then the process to follow would depend on the nature of the European grant applied for:

   **Consortium-style grants**
   For consortium-style grants within the first wave of calls, the guarantee is in place to fund eligible UK participants’ roles in these projects. The European Commission may require a UK partner to change the status of their participation to an ‘Associated Partner’.

   Associated Partners implement action tasks without receiving EU funding and do not sign the grant agreement. While Associated Partners are not required to have a capital or legal link to a specific beneficiary, the other beneficiaries in the consortium take on the responsibility (through consortium agreements or contractual arrangements) to ensure proper implementation of the Associated Partners’
elements of the project, as well as compliance with specific obligations of the grant agreement which are extended to Associated Partners. The UK partner would provide proof of the successful grant to UKRI and undertake the steps outlined in this document, and UKRI would provide the UK partner’s share of the funding under the guarantee.

**Mono-beneficiary-style grants**
For mono-beneficiary-style grants within the first wave of calls, an eligible UK entity would provide proof of success in the evaluation process to UKRI and undertake the steps outlined in this document, and UKRI would provide the entity with funding under the guarantee.

4. **What happens if the European Commission stops evaluating applications for my call?**
While the UK is in the process of concluding its association status, the European Commission allows entities in the UK to apply for Horizon Europe funding as if the UK were an Associated Country, which the European Commission has made clear in ‘Questions and answers on the UK’s participation in Horizon Europe’ (European Commission). It states that: “The first calls for proposals are expected to be published before UK association enters into force. The General Annexes attached to the main Horizon Europe work programme (2020-2021), as well as the ERC and EIC work programmes (to which the General Annexes will apply once the latter are adopted), will ensure that UK applicants are treated as if the UK is an associated country throughout the process, from admissibility and eligibility to evaluation, up until the signature of grant agreements. However, grant agreements can only be signed once the association has come into force.”

5. **If successful UK applicants have to become "Associated Partners" in their project consortium, do they still sign a grant agreement with the European Commission or delegated party?**
Associated Partners implement action tasks without receiving EU funding and do not sign the grant agreement. While Associated Partners are not required to have a capital or legal link to a specific beneficiary, the other beneficiaries in the consortium take on the responsibility (through consortium agreements or contractual arrangements) to ensure proper implementation of the Associated Partners’ elements of the project, as well as compliance with specific obligations of the grant agreement which are extended to Associated Partners.

6. **For calls open to Third Countries, will UK participants funded through the guarantee be required to provide the European Commission with reports against deliverables in the grant agreement?**
If the EU has not formalised the UK’s association at the point where the grant agreement must be signed, then the status of the UK participants on the grant would change to ‘Associated Partner’. Associated Partners implement action tasks without receiving EU funding and do not sign the grant agreement, meaning that they have no direct obligation to provide reports against deliverables. The beneficiaries in the consortium will have responsibility for submitting deliverables to the EU, and depending on the tasks to be delivered by the Associated Partner, would agree the
Associated Partner’s expected contribution to reporting through consortium agreements or contractual arrangements.

7. What will happen to awards where the eligibility of the consortium is compromised in the event that the UK is unable to associate to Horizon?
The minimum eligibility requirements for a consortium, including the number of Member State or Associated Country participants, are conditions set out by the European Commission in the legal agreements of Horizon Europe and specific to the type of call. The eligibility of any individual consortium is therefore a decision for the European Commission to make, and projects should follow guidance from the European Commission.

8. How can UK participants in successful projects submit their funding request to UKRI?
Procedures will vary depending on the call and will make use of existing systems and processes used by UKRI. For most grant types, registration will be via Innovate UK’s Innovation Funding Service (IFS). Funding of ERC Starting Grants will be provided via the Joint Electronic Submissions (Je-S) system. Further detail of this process and the application information required will be provided in due course, and full applicant guidance will be published on the UKRI website for each grant type.

9. What do I need to do to prepare?
In order to receive funding through the guarantee, grant details will need to be submitted to UKRI systems. For most grant types, registration will be via Innovate UK’s Innovation Funding Service (IFS). Funding of ERC Starting Grants will be provided via the Joint Electronic Submissions (Je-S) system. Further detail of this process and the application information required will be provided in due course, and full applicant guidance will be published on the UKRI website for each grant type.

10. Will proposals submitted to UKRI be re-evaluated/reassessed?
Since applications will have been evaluated through the European Commission’s trusted peer review systems, no further application quality assessment will be undertaken by UKRI. Organisational validation and due diligence checks will be carried out in line with UKRI business as usual processes.

11. How will grant payments via UKRI be made?
Grants will be funded in pounds sterling by profiled payments based on UKRI standard processes. UKRI will typically make payments quarterly in arrears.

12. I have a Horizon Europe application under consideration where the outcome is expected in February. What should I do?
No action is needed at present. UKRI and the UK government are aware that results are expected early in the new year for calls including Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) Postdoctoral Fellowships, ERC Consolidator Grants and a large number of collaborative calls.
The UK government states that it is committed to and stands ready to formalise its association as soon as possible. The guarantee is a short-term measure intended to address the delays in the formalisation of the UK’s association to Horizon Europe.

The UK government will monitor the situation closely and it may consider whether it is appropriate to change the scope of the guarantee, in which case, it will provide updated guidance. The government has stated that its priority is to support the UK’s research and development sector and will continue to do this in all future scenarios.

13. What happens to my grant if the UK formally associates to Horizon Europe after the UKRI guarantee has been applied to my project?

UK participants who have received a UKRI grant under the guarantee will remain on the UKRI grant for the lifetime of the grant, subject to UKRI terms and conditions.

Questions for specific elements of the programme
14. Are ERC Starting Grants within scope of the guarantee?

Yes, eligible successful UK applicants to the 2021 ERC Starting Grants call are included within the first wave of Horizon Europe calls and thus covered by the Horizon Europe Guarantee. If the awardee is unable to proceed with signing the grant agreement for their ERC award, proof of success in the ERC evaluation process will need to be submitted to UKRI, which will provide funding under the guarantee.

15. Are EIC Accelerator and single applicant EIC Transition awards within scope for the guarantee?

Yes, eligible successful UK applicants to the initial rounds of the EIC Accelerator and EIC Transition calls are included within the first wave of Horizon Europe calls and thus covered by the Horizon Europe guarantee. If the awardee is unable to proceed with signing the grant agreement for their EIC award, proof of success in the EC evaluation process will need to be submitted to UKRI which will provide funding under the guarantee.

16. Are EIC Pathfinder awards and multi-beneficiary EIC Transition awards within scope for the guarantee?

Yes, funding for eligible UK applicants involved in eligible consortia successfully evaluated under the first EIC Pathfinder or EIC Transition calls, who are unable to proceed with signing a grant agreement with the European Commission, is within scope for the guarantee. Proof of success in the EC evaluation process will need to be submitted to UKRI which will provide funding under the guarantee to enable continued participation in the project.

17. I was unable to sign a grant agreement and/or receive funds for an approved EIT-KIC project during 2021 and have incurred costs ‘at risk’.

How quickly will I receive the guarantee funding?

You will be able to register your project and provide supporting documents in February 2022. Once your claim has been validated you will receive a payment of 50% of your claim upfront. Once you have completed reporting to your KIC and they have verified your incurred costs, you will be able to submit this verification to UKRI.
to receive the balance of your claim. Full details of how to claim will be available in early 2022.

18. Can I apply to be part of EIT-KIC 2022 Business Plans?
If there is a continued delay to the EU formalising UK association to Horizon Europe, eligible UK participants intending to be involved in the EIT-KICs 2022 Business Plans will be covered by the guarantee to participate, provided that Third Country participation is allowed.

This covers the costs of EIT-eligible activities delivered by UK participants where these activities have been included in 2022 KIC Business Plans and the costs would otherwise have been covered by grant funding awarded by EIT. For the costs of these activities, access to funding under the guarantee will not be possible until quarter 1 of the 2022-23 UK financial year, but the UK government is committed to covering the EIT-eligible costs of activities if the UK has not associated to Horizon Europe by then. This part of the guarantee will cover costs incurred in the calendar year 2022 only.

19. I am participating in a multi-year EIT-KIC project, how will guarantee funding be administered?
In line with EIT-KIC processes, the guarantee will cover costs by calendar year. For costs that were incurred during 2021, you will be able to register your project along with supporting documents in UKRI systems in February. For costs incurred in 2022, you will be able to register your project in the first quarter of the 2022-23 financial year. The guarantee does not extend to costs incurred in 2023. Full details of how to claim will be published in early 2022.

20. I received ‘exceptional status’ from EIT for my participation in an EIT-KIC project. Do I need to claim anything under the guarantee?
No, the guarantee only covers projects that have not been able to receive funding from the EU. You should continue with your project as normal and receive funds from EIT.

General definitions
21. What is an ‘Associated Country’?
An Associated Country is a country that is not a Member State of the EU, but has a formal agreement with the EU detailing the terms of its association to a European framework programme. Sixteen countries associated to Horizon 2020, and it is likely a similar number will associate to Horizon Europe. Entities from associated countries are eligible to participate in most elements of the programme under the same conditions as entities from Member States, with a few limited exceptions.

22. What is a ‘Third Country’ and ‘Third Country participation’?
All countries that are neither an EU Member State nor an Associated Country are referred to as non-associated ‘Third Countries’. Non-associated Third Countries have no agreements to associate to the EU Framework Programme. Participants from non-associated Third Countries are able to participate in some areas of the programme, predominantly in collaborative calls as Associated Partners, although
they are not generally eligible to receive funding from the programme unless this is explicitly mentioned as an exception in the call documentation.

23. **What is an 'Associated Partner'?**
Associated Partners implement action tasks without receiving EU funding. They cannot lead a consortium, and do not sign the grant agreement. One example of this is where legal entities participate in a Horizon Europe grant but are not based in a Member State or Associated Country. While Associated Partners are not required to have a capital or legal link to a specific beneficiary, the other beneficiaries in the consortium take on the responsibility (through consortium agreements or contractual arrangements) to ensure proper implementation of the Associated Partners’ elements of the project, as well as compliance with specific obligations of the grant agreement that are extended to Associated Partners.