Brexit implications for UK participation in EU research funding

11 April 2019 update:

EU leaders agreed at yesterday’s emergency EU Summit to give the UK a 6-month extension:

New exit date is 31 October 2019.

Cross-party talks continue re a compromise deal. The Prime Minister still seeks to get a deal before 22 May (to avoid UK being in European Parliament elections). If the PM gets a deal by the May date, the UK would leave with a deal on 1 June.

BUT, if the PM does not get a deal done by 22 May, the extension date for exit is 31 October 2019.

Uncertainty remains with scenarios such as a change of PM, general election, second referendum, revoking Article 50. ‘No deal’ is a risk as the legal default unless a further extension is EC agreed. The UK and EU priority remains to negotiate a deal.

The UK remains eligible for all EU H2020 research funding calls until exit. Government underwrites are also in place for ‘no deal’. Researchers are encouraged to keep applying to all schemes, whatever the Brexit outcome:

If a deal is agreed,

- There will be a ‘transitional phase’ and the UK would remain eligible, as now, for all remaining H2020 calls until the end of the H2020 programme period (31 December 2020).

Underwrites, if there is ‘no deal’:

- The government has guaranteed to underwrite all live and successful Horizon 2020 awards submitted before exit and to fund projects for their duration.
- The government also guarantees a post-EU extension underwrite to fund UK partners who apply under H2020 schemes open to third country participants AFTER exit date.
- Under ‘no deal’ mono-beneficiary schemes, such as most European Research Council grants and Marie Skłodowska-Curie European Fellowships, will not be covered BUT the government is considering national programmes to avoid a funding gap. Researchers are encouraged to still apply for upcoming ERC and Marie Skłodowska-Curie August – October 2019 calls, and are advised to contact the EU Unit as soon as possible.

The government also guarantees to underwrite the UK’s full allocation for structural and investment fund projects, including the European Regional Development Fund, until the end of 2020.

The above and underwrites ensure engagement with Europe and applications for EU research can continue, and should give confidence to QM researchers to bid for funding whatever the outcome.

Under ‘no deal’, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) will manage the H2020 underwrite, transition of projects and payments to UK grantholders.

The EU Unit, JRMO is the key liaison with UKRI regarding provision of grant data to UKRI, and will work with UKRI regarding the administration of any underwrite for QM projects.

For queries please contact: Vicky Byers, EU Section Manager v.byers@qmul.ac.uk 0207 882 7251
Frequently Asked Questions (updated 11/4/19):

Should I still apply for EU H2020 research funding?

The UK remains eligible to apply for EU funding until exit date. After exit, if there is a deal, nothing will change and the UK will be eligible for all H2020 schemes till end of the H2020 programme.

If there is ‘no deal’, the government’s Post-EU underwrite will support UK participation in any future applications to Horizon 2020 calls open to third-country participants submitted after exit till end of the H2020 programme.

For mono-beneficiary schemes, such as European Research Council (ERC) and Marie Skłodowska-Curie European Fellowships please contact Vicky Byers v.byers@qmul.ac.uk for further information.

Researchers are encouraged to continue applying for H2020 funding.

Can I still apply for H2020 research funding if there is no deal?

Yes, under the ‘Post-EU Extended Guarantee’ the government commits to fund successful UK participants under those schemes open to third country participants (ie multi-beneficiary) from exit for their full duration (even if this is beyond 2020). Queen Mary researchers are encouraged to continue to engage with EU partners in consortia bids under eligible schemes (and taking into account consortium minimum eligibility). This guarantee does not cover the mono beneficiary schemes, such as European Research Council (ERC) and MSCA individual fellowships. In a ‘no deal’ scenario, the government is considering equivalent national programmes to avoid funding gap.

What about applying to the ERC and MSCA individual fellowships call deadlines after exit?

Not all H2020 schemes require third country participation including: European Research Council (ERC) grants (Starter, Consolidator and Advanced), some Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) grants (eg European individual fellowships) and the SME instrument.

If there is a deal, nothing will change and the UK will be eligible ERC and MSCA individual fellowship calls till end of the H2020 programme.

Under ‘no deal’, the government is looking at national equivalent schemes to avoid a funding gap but details are not yet published.

You should continue to apply for ERC and MSCA individual fellowship bids

How will existing EU research funded projects be funded after exit?

If a deal is agreed, projects would be funded as before for their duration.

Under ‘no deal’, the government has guaranteed to underwrite live and successful projects post exit for their full duration, even if a submitted project is notified of its success after exit. UKRI will manage any underwrite of Horizon 2020 (and any remaining FP7 projects). UKRI will transition H2020 projects to the UK system and make the contracts and payments. The underwrite covers live and successful individual (including ERC and fellowships) and consortia projects before exit. More detailed UKRI guidance is to follow.

I am an existing ERC or MSCA fellowship grantholder how is my funding affected after exit?

If a deal is agreed, you will receive your funding from the European Commission and there will be no change for the full duration of the grant.
Under no deal, there is the UK government’s underwrite guarantee to fund ERC and MSCA bids submitted pre-Brexit that are successful. Funding will continue for the project full duration and will be paid via the UKRI as part of the underwrite.

**Will the UK be awarded H2020 European Research Council projects if there is ‘no deal’?**

Under ‘no deal’, the mono beneficiary schemes, such as European Research Council (ERC) grants (Starter, Consolidator and Advanced) no third country participation is required. The UK would not be eligible as a third country beneficiary. These schemes would not be covered by the Post-EU Extended Underwrite. The government is likely to set up alternative programmes but details are not yet published. The EU Unit, JRMO will update researchers as soon as further information is known.

**If I am coordinator how will partner payments be made if there is no deal?**

The government and EU are aware that under no deal this is an issue still be resolved and will need to be clarified with the EU in due course. The EU Unit will advise QM coordinators when guidance is provided.

**Under no deal, how will my H2020 project be funded by the underwrite – do I need to register on the UKRI portal?**

Under ‘no deal’, UKRI will manage the underwrite that will be used to fund and pay H2020 and remaining FP7 projects via its portal. The EU Unit is the key liaison with UKRI and has already provided basic grant data for all Queen Mary projects. The portal will remain open after exit so that further successful projects can be registered.

Individual researchers do not need to register on the UKRI portal. All data will be centrally managed by the EU Unit, JRMO.

UKRI will support the transition of grants to the UK re contract, payment and monitoring processes - guidance will be provided. The EU Unit has recently been involved in discussions with UKRI on the practicalities of administering the underwrite. The EU Unit will keep grantholders updated.

**How will my European Regional Development project be funded and after exit and can I apply for further ERDF funding?**

If there is a deal, the UK would continue to participate in the European Regional Development (ERDF) programmes until the end of the 2014-2020 programme period as now.

Under a ‘no-deal’ scenario, the underwrite guarantee also includes structural and investment fund projects, including the European Regional Development Fund, will allow new projects to be funded will continue to sign new projects after EU exit until programme closure.

**Will the UK be eligible for the successor EU research programme, Horizon Europe?**

The government has stated its intention to negotiate access to the successor EU research programme, Horizon Europe (2021-27) as an Associated Country. Both the UK and EU agree on the value of UK participation in European research programmes.

**Further official sources of information:**

- UK Government Overview: UK Participation in Horizon 2020
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