

Collaboration on Science and Innovation

| A Future Partnership



Collaboration on Science and Innovation – A Future Partnership Paper

The paper sets out the UK Government's proposals for future collaboration with the EU on science and innovation.

Northern Ireland has benefited significantly from participation in EU research and innovation programmes and initiatives over the past 20 years or so, this is therefore of particular importance to the NI economy.

Future Agreement

The headline message from the paper is the UK Government's ambition to 'build on its uniquely close relationship with the EU, so that collaboration on science and innovation is not only maintained but strengthened'. It calls for the creation of a science and innovation agreement with the EU to provide a framework for future cooperation. It is proposed that the agreement should be broad in scope and make room for new areas of research.

Examples are provided of non EU countries participating in EU science and innovation programmes, e.g. Eureka, to illustrate the types of involvement which the UK may have in the future. Reference is made to access to the Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Framework Programmes by non EU countries with an acknowledgement that such access involves financial contributions. In the short term, the Government restated its commitment to underwrite Horizon 2020 bids whilst the UK is still an EU member. This provides a degree of certainty to businesses and research organisations who are already involved in, or who are looking to engage in, the Horizon 2020 programme.

Skills

The paper also touches on access to high level skills to support innovation and researcher mobility. It sets out an aspiration for the UK to remain a hub for international talent. Agreement is sought on a continued system for the mutual recognition of professional qualifications and on measures to facilitate the movement of researchers across Europe, including individuals from outside of the EU. A new Immigration Bill is set to be published later in the autumn by the UK Government which should flesh out the proposed arrangements in greater detail.

Agencies and Bodies

The final section of the paper considers cooperation with EU agencies and other bodies. A desire is expressed to continue to work closely with bodies such as the European Medicines Agency and for non EU access to European Reference Networks and related partnerships and consortia. Again, precedents are cited of

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EU/non EU cooperation with countries such as Switzerland and Norway which could provide a basis for a UK/EU agreement.

Summary

The paper represents the starting point in a process of reaching agreement on UK/EU collaboration on science and innovation. The overall principles suggest a desire to maintain and build on current arrangements as much as possible. Whilst examples and precedents are presented through the paper, it does not go as far as setting out very detailed proposals for the EU to consider.

How quickly a comprehensive agreement can be reached, and the ultimate scope of that agreement, therefore remains unclear at this point. Further briefing can be provided as the negotiations between the EU and the UK progress.

Full paper: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/collaboration-on-science-and-innovation-a-future-partnership-paper>