

Royal Society of Chemistry response to the Senedd Cymru Finance Committee's inquiry on Post-EU funding arrangements

1. About the RSC

- 1.1 With about 50,000 members in 120 countries and a knowledge business that spans the globe, the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) is the UK's professional body for chemical scientists, supporting and representing our members and bringing together chemical scientists from all over the world. Our members include those working in large multinational companies and small to medium enterprises, researchers and students in universities, teachers and regulators.
- 1.2 We welcome the opportunity to respond to this consultation. If you have any questions or would like us to elaborate further, _____.

2. Summary

- 2.1 This consultation response is focused on funding schemes related to research and innovation. European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) have provided vital support to the Welsh research and innovation landscape including chemistry research.
- 2.2 Our main recommendations are set out as follows:

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) must support research and innovation to secure sustainable regional growth.

Any shortfall in research and innovation regional development funding in Wales or other UK nations and regions compared to funding levels before EU exit which is not met by UKSPF should be replaced from other funds to ensure that the UK research and innovation landscape does not suffer.

4.4 In recent announcements, the UK Government has confirmed that the UKSPF will be allocated £2.6 billion for the three years until 2025¹¹. This means that EU funding levels (approximately £1.5 billion per year) will not be matched until 2024–25. The UK Government has also indicated that the Levelling Up Fund will include some development funding, however, like UKSPF, there is little emphasis on research and innovation¹² so it seems unlikely that it will fill the shortfall.

4.5 As the Welsh research and innovation landscape benefitted substantially from ESIF and it looks like UKSPF and other regional funds will not match what was previously received, Wales stands to lose vital research and innovation funding. This loss of funding needs to be addressed to ensure Wales's research and innovation landscape does not suffer.

5. The UK must associate to Horizon Europe

5.1

5.2 Science is an international endeavour and collaborative in nature. It can offer the widest benefits to society when researchers from

different countries, disciplines or sectors. The case study¹⁵ below illustrates the intangible benefits of EU collaboration¹⁶.

One example of chemistry research that illustrates the intangible benefits of EU collaboration is the [ALG-AD project](#) led by Dr Carole Llewellyn at Swansea University, funded by ERDF. In Europe, excess farm waste is increasingly being broken down through a process that produces a biogas suitable as a renewable energy source. Alongside this, the process produces a digestate by-product for which ideally uses should be identified. The ALG-AD project brings together scientists and engineers from across North West Europe to develop solutions that use algae to turn this by-product into feed for livestock. Carole told us that multidisciplinary, multi-partner collaboration is essential to the project's success and that there is no way the UK could be developing this sort of project without expertise and input of their EU partners.

¹⁵ Case study 3 - see https://www.rsc.org/globalassets/04-campaigning-outreach/policy/international-funding-and-collaborations/rsc_alg-ad_casestudy_2018.pdf

¹⁶ Note that the case study is an example of ERDF, rather than Horizon 2020, funding. However, it does illustrate the type of intangible benefits that come with association to the European programmes more generally.