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Science, Innovation  
& Technology

Rt Hon Michelle Donelan MP

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6 April 2023

Dear Greg

## **HORIZON EUROPE ASSOCIATION AND PIONEER – THE GOVERNMENT’S ALTERNATIVE OFFER**

We are discussing association to Horizon Europe with the EU, and hope our negotiations will be successful. That is our preference. But association would need to be on the basis of a good deal for the UK’s researchers, businesses and taxpayers. If we are not able to secure association on fair and appropriate terms, we will implement Pioneer – our bold, ambitious alternative.

The Government is committed to science and research collaboration – that’s why we agreed to participate in Horizon Europe in 2020 under the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA). This is also why I travelled to Brussels this week for an introductory meeting with Research & Innovation Commissioner Mariya Gabriel to set out the UK’s expectations around association to Horizon Europe.

The programme provides a valuable shared platform for collaboration with European counterparts. Unfortunately, despite the UK making every effort to unlock progress, including launching formal consultations last summer, our association has been delayed for two years.

Today the Government is publishing its prospectus on Pioneer, its proposed alternative to Horizon Europe should we be unable to reach an agreement with the EU around association. By publishing now, we are giving UK researchers and businesses the opportunity to provide feedback on these proposed plans, as well as to provide reassurance that the government is fully prepared for all future scenarios.

The Pioneer prospectus sets out our proposals for alternatives to Horizon Europe, developed with input from researchers and businesses across the UK. Pioneer would deliver four interconnected programmes covering offers for Talent, Global, Innovation and R&D infrastructures to boost the UK’s R&D system; supported by the Horizon Europe Guarantee and a transitions package that would ensure there is no gap in

investment flowing to the sector. Because the UK would have been a net contributor to Horizon Europe, UK researchers would be expected to receive more funding from Pioneer than they would have from Horizon had we associated in 2021. My officials and I will continue to engage with and seek further input from researchers and businesses as we develop these proposals.

Regardless of whether we reach an agreement with the EU on association, or whether we launch our proposed alternative, the Government will ensure that UK researchers and businesses continue to benefit from world-leading collaboration opportunities with colleagues from Europe and beyond.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michelle Donelan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent flourish at the end of the name.

Rt Hon Michelle Donelan MP

**Secretary of State Science, Innovation and Technology**