

Written evidence submitted by Tessa Burrington (RFA0104)

*What gaps in the current UK research and development system might be addressed by an APRA style approach?*

I would like to say a few words about innovation and the “innovation principle”.

I would hope “innovation” funding does not distort joined up thinking so to speak, so that the developments of new technologies are safe<sup>1</sup>, balanced<sup>2</sup> and ethical<sup>3</sup>.

The precautionary principle may be viewed by some as limiting innovation and another suggested term for the “precautionary principle” might be “the joined up thinking principle”.

I can provide the Committee with more information.

Corporate Europe Observatory

2018

Innovation Principle: trap by corporate lobbies to attack REACH and precautionary principle in EU<sup>4</sup>

Scientists for Global Responsibility<sup>5</sup> state on their website, “Many of the problems facing society today are as a result of the irresponsible use of science, design and technology ...”. The issues discussed on the Scientists for Global Responsibility website are I believe relevant to this Inquiry.

In my submittance to a 5G Inquiry (originally submitted to a Drones Inquiry) I mention Consequence Scanning:

<http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/science-and-technology-committee/uk-telecommunications-infrastructure/written/103333.html>

“This is a way for organisations to consider the potential consequences of their product or service on people and society and provides an opportunity to mitigate or address potential harms or disasters before they happen.”

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<sup>1</sup> <http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/science-and-technology-committee/my-science-inquiry/written/44869.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2014/nov/07/european-research-funding-horizon-2020>

European research funding: it's like Robin Hood in reverse

<https://www.testbiotech.org/en/limits-to-biotech>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.etcgroup.org/mission>

<sup>4</sup> <https://corporateeurope.org/en/pressreleases/2018/12/innovation-principle-trap-corporate-lobbies-attack-reach-and-precautionary>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.sgr.org.uk/pages/why-sgr>

*What can be learned from APRA equivalents in other countries?*

### **Bill Gates**

Examples of discussions about Bill Gates, where food for thought is provided that could generally apply to other funding streams and individual funders:

Guardian book review

“No Such Thing As a Free Gift: The Gates Foundation and the Price of Philanthropy by Linsey McGoey – review

Is his vast charity empire changing the world for the better? Or is Bill Gates playing God?”<sup>6</sup>

AGRA Watch<sup>7</sup>

AGRA Watch is a grassroots, Seattle-based group challenging the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation’s questionable agricultural programs in Africa, including its Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA). The Gates Foundation and AGRA claim to be “pro-poor” and “pro-environment,” but their approach is closely aligned with transnational corporations, such as Monsanto, and foreign policy actors like USAID. They take advantage of food and global climate crises to promote high-tech, market-based, industrial agriculture and generate profits for corporations even while degrading the environment and disempowering farmers. Their programs are a form of philanthrocapitalism based on biopiracy.

### **Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) United States**

Here is a Gene Watch link which links to an external link critique<sup>8</sup> of a United States DARPA Project: Insect Allies

New developments in genetic engineering raise questions about which crops, trees and animals will be treated as genetically modified (GM) for the purposes of regulation.

Industry and investors are seeking to exempt all new genetic engineering techniques (often referred to as "gene editing") from regulation, but civil society groups have major concerns about this. Techniques which are exempt from regulation will not require risk assessments to predict the consequences for the environment, animal welfare, or human health, and such products would be unlabelled.

External Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-7QpuEKsKx4>

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/oct/24/no-such-thing-free-gift-gates-foundation-philanthropy-review>

<sup>7</sup> <https://cagi.org/agra-watch/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.genewatch.org/sub-575432> Please see external link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-7QpuEKsKx4&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR13Xykmia4Zswqyo75cSwgOyLqu8JQm8jOr-vH8AMURhLRWPC8880fKgVw>. <https://www.mpg.de/12318180/darpa-insect-ally>