

AusBiotech response to the Department of Industry, Science and Resources request for information regarding possible association with Horizon Europe

As the national peak body representing Australia's life sciences sector, AusBiotech supports the proposal for Australia's association with Horizon Europe. In particular, we support enhanced participation under Pillar II, and its focus on 'Health, Biotech, Agriculture and Bioeconomy'.

The EU is a significant R&D collaborator, as well as an important trade and investment partner for Australia's life sciences sector. Indeed, some AusBiotech members are already participating in Horizon Europe projects with Australia being a third-party country. This has proven to be highly beneficial. However, this would be amplified by Australia's association with Horizon Europe and would result in a significant uplift of research resources and scientific effort with a major region of the world, which has an internal market comprising 460 million people and 26 million businesses worth €18 trillion.

Our members have expressed a strong desire for Australia's association with Horizon Europe for a variety of reasons, including:

- Opportunities for greater regulatory alignment and collaboration to improve access to health technologies across both the EU and Australian markets.
- Stronger, more strategic partnerships that would enable Australian participation in moonshot projects.
- Access to a larger and more diverse pool of collaborative R&D funding, which is especially important for smaller Australian biotech companies seeking opportunities to grow their businesses.
- Opportunities for reciprocal access to infrastructure, facilities, and capabilities.

Further to the above, association with Horizon Europe would provide access to capabilities with limited availability in Australia (e.g. manufacturing) and boost the development of technologies that will underpin ongoing national economic resilience, productivity, and security.

Specifically for the life sciences sector, Australia's Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and the EU's European Medicines Agency (EMA) have a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that provides streamlined opportunities for improved access to medicines in both jurisdictions. Notwithstanding the regulatory MoU, there is scope for stronger collaboration with the EU - and Horizon Europe. Indeed, upgrading Australia's engagement with Horizon Europe would enable more strategic, scaled collaboration.

As Australia navigates an increasingly complex global and regional economic environment, there is a need for robust co-operation between like-minded nations to build a resilient, innovative biotechnology ecosystem that benefits the health of people everywhere. Trusted, diverse and reliable international partnerships, including with the EU, are vital for life sciences companies to be able to conduct advanced, high impact research.

For Australia, association with Horizon Europe presents an opportunity to help create an environment that maximises the value of our domestic life sciences sector as a critical driver of future health, economic prosperity and productivity. Having a closer affiliation with Horizon Europe has the potential to help achieve these goals by providing Australia opportunities for a

greater say in shaping the direction, objectives and outcomes of Horizon Europe projects. Further, association with Horizon Europe would improve access for Australian innovators to world-class networks, funding, and partnerships, and ultimately, accelerate patient access to new health technologies.

AusBiotech notes and supports the submission by Medicines Australia to the Department of Industry, Science and Resources consultation regarding possible association to Horizon Europe and its focus on collaboration with European partners, and the benefits to Australian innovators, particularly SMEs. We also note and support the submission by the Association of Australian Medical Research Institutes (AAMRI) which focuses on the need for equitable access to Horizon Europe, including larger, mission-driven funding pools, for all Australian researchers.

AusBiotech commends the Department of Industry, Science and Resources for consulting with stakeholders to gauge the level of interest and support for Australia's possible association with Horizon Europe. We would welcome the opportunity to discuss this important topic further and look forward to the Australia Government progressing Australia's association with Horizon Europe.