

4 October 2022

Dear Ms Ghani,

I am writing to congratulate you on your appointment as Science Minister and to highlight some pressing opportunities and concerns on behalf of the Royal Society of Biology (RSB). The RSB is a single unified voice for biology: advising Government and influencing policy; advancing education and professional development; supporting our members and engaging and encouraging public interest in the life sciences. We represent a diverse membership of individuals, learned societies and other organisations.

The role of the biological sciences in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic has clearly demonstrated the vital importance of the sector to both the health of the population and the growth and competitiveness of the UK economy. We must build on this to prepare now for further pandemics and global health emergencies, including the silent pandemic of antimicrobial resistance. Similarly, there is an urgent need to accelerate biological research and development to help provide solutions to the interrelated emergencies of climate change, biodiversity loss, and chemicals and waste pollution, and their potentially devastating impacts on health, security and the economy. Science careers provide a wealth of employment options at all levels and across many sectors, contributing to a strong economy.

The RSB urges you to:

- Engage the research community in the development of evidence-based policy to address these existential threats.
- Continue to press for UK association to Horizon Europe, which provides optimal access to international collaborations and helps to attract the best global talent to support our ongoing growth as a world-leading science power.
- Commit to ongoing ring-fencing of the funding set out in the Autumn 2021 Budget for association to Horizon Europe, or for alternative programmes if necessary.
- Engage now with the research and innovation community on long-term alternatives to Horizon Europe, should they be required, and set out multi-year spending plans and profiles, to give the private sector confidence to invest in UK research and innovation.
- Champion the Government's ambition to boost public and private investment in research and development. We need to see increased investment by the private sector to track the uplift in public expenditure towards £20bn per year by 2024-25.

We would be keen to meet with you to discuss these issues further.

Yours sincerely,



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