**Proposal for a win-win**

**Flexing of the March 31st Deadlines**

**due to coronavirus**

Wednesday 18th March 2020

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Every science organisation, and indeed any UK organisation that is awarded funding by the Government, has to be clear which financial year the money will be spent in. The deadline being March 31st. By this date all activities must be delivered each year to claim the grant or funds.

For most organisations, this means that one or two years ago, we have agreed our list of deliverables up to March 31st 2020, and March 31 2021.

The March 31st deadline includes all science grants from the Research Councils through UKRI, all contracts and grants from the UK Space Agency and funding from many other departments.

The Government, in this time of need, could achieve a huge win-win, with no additional funding required, by simply flexing this deadline.

**I would propose the following two measures:**

1. Flexing the March 31 2020 deadline by two weeks, or until 30 April, to give everyone time to deliver the final parts of their grants and contracts in light of the extreme disruption, and then simply invoice what is already agreed and committed. In many cases it will only be a matter of days extra that are needed.
2. Flexing the March 31 2021 deadline by 6 months until September 2021, to give everyone time to reschedule all the research, development, meetings, actions and delivery scheduled in this April, May, June, July in order to achieve what we have agreed by the March 31 2021 deadline. Noting of course that we also have next winter to get through too.

**The win-win**

This would be a huge advantage to all of us delivering these grants and contracts nationally. It would enormously take the pressure off in these coming two weeks, and the coming 5 months, as we together work out this new world. It would also allow our businesses and charities to focus on business continuity planning over the coming weeks and months so they are still trading in four months, rather than focussing on the imminent funding deadlines so as not to lose their vital funding.

The excellent part, is that there is no significant cost, and it would also save enormous amounts of time of Government civil servants and other busy government appointees including UKRI staff, who will otherwise have to re-check and re-schedule every grant and contract they have ever issued that covers between now and a year’s time (March 31st 2021). Not to mention the legal costs and implications of cancelling and changing contracts.

What I propose also covers all University research labs and NHS Trusts, who now, more than ever, need to truly be focusing on more important things.

Many Thanks