

The General Election is a timely opportunity to demonstrate that the UK intends to remain a world leader in research and innovation. As the UK's National Academies, we call on the Conservative Party to recognise the evidence from across the world, which shows the value of research and innovation in driving UK growth and productivity.

UK research and innovation is world class. With less than 1% of the world's population and 3.2% of global R&D expenditure, we produce 15.9% of the world's most highly cited research papers. In the 2016 Global Innovation Index, the UK was ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> overall out of 128 countries. Our research and innovation base is a national asset – delivering economic, social, cultural, and health benefits for UK society, and for people across the world.

In our joint publication '[Open for Business](#)' we outline the need to protect and build on this, by setting a target of 3% of GDP for combined public and private R&D and take steps to deliver this by at least matching public investment to the OECD average of 0.67% of GDP invested into R&D by 2025.

The evidence shows that such investment is of vital benefit to UK growth and productivity. The UK pharmaceutical industry alone generates exports worth £24 billion while the UK creative economy comprises an estimated 2.9 million jobs, or 1 in 11 of all UK jobs. The service sectors represent 79% of the UK's economy, and are core areas of innovation underpinned by research and development.

Through the creation of UK Research and Innovation, the Higher Education and Research Act gives us an opportunity to drive forward a positive and expanded role for research and innovation, by developing a strategy and associated investment framework that can operate on a cross-disciplinary scale and be delivered more coherently, effectively, and efficiently.

Public and private investment in UK research and innovation lags behind many other leading countries, especially our competitors in the OECD. Combined with threats to our ability to continue to attract the best global talent, we are at a turning point. The next Government must send a bold, positive message that the UK is one of the best places in the world to research and innovate and ensure that the world's brightest and best entrepreneurs and researchers - from at home and abroad - can contribute their skills to Britain's success.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Sir Venki Ramakrishnan PRS  
President, Royal Society



Professor Dame Ann Dowling OM DBE FREng FRS  
President, Royal Academy of Engineering



Professor Sir Robert Lechler PMedSci  
President, Academy of Medical Sciences



Lord Stern of Brentford Kt PBA FRS  
President, British Academy