

[News story: Scottish GDP figures](#)

Responding to the [Scottish GDP figures](#) published this morning, Secretary of State for Scotland David Mundell said:

It is good to see that Scotland's economy is growing – especially in the manufacturing sector – however, over the year, Scotland's economy has lagged behind the UK's.

The UK Government is investing to boost economic growth through its ambitious modern industrial strategy, and direct investment into Scotland's cities and regions through growth and city deals. The Scottish Government needs to work with us and use its extensive powers to make sure that it is supporting productivity and growth in Scotland.

[Press release: China lifts ban on exports of British beef](#)

China has today lifted its longstanding ban on exports of beef from the UK, in a landmark move for British producers estimated to be worth £250 million in the first five years alone.

More than 20 years after the Chinese government first imposed a ban on British beef in the wake of the BSE outbreak, today's milestone is the culmination of several years of site inspections and negotiations between UK and Chinese government officials.

China is currently the UK's eighth largest export market for agri-food, with over £560 million worth of food and drink bought by Chinese consumers last year.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

This is fantastic news for our world-class food and farming industry and shows we can be a truly outward looking Britain outside the European Union. It is the result of painstaking and collaborative work by industry and the Defra team over many years.

Today's milestone will help to unlock UK agriculture's full potential and is a major step to forging new trading relationships around the globe.

The Government, and its team of trade specialists, continues to encourage and support UK businesses as they consider launching into overseas markets or expanding their current global customer base.

Food exports from the UK continue to soar with [record exports](#) of over £22 billion in 2017. Our food and drink businesses are now selling their products to 217 markets.

Today's announcement will allow official market access negotiations to begin, a process which typically takes around three years.

It follows the Prime Minister's trade mission to China earlier this year, where she agreed new measures to improve market access to China.

It also follows a successful inspection visit in April 2018 hosted by Defra and the Animal Plant Health Agency, the Food Standards Agency, Food Standards Scotland, DAERA, the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board and the UK Export Certification Partnership.

AHDB International Market Development Director Dr Phil Hadley said:

We are delighted that China has lifted the ban on UK beef. This marks an important milestone in growing our meat exports to this all-important market.

Today's news follows years of collaboration between AHDB, government and industry to make this a reality and we now look forward to seeing UK beef exported to the country for the first time in over 20 years. We will now begin the work on the export protocols and approvals to allow commercial shipments to begin.

[News story: Support for game-changing ideas: apply for an innovation loan](#)

Innovate UK has up to £10 million in innovation loans to support game-changing ideas being developed by small and medium-sized businesses in the UK.

The loans are for highly innovative late-stage projects in any area of technology or the economy that can demonstrate a clear route to commercialisation and economic impact.

They will be made available through Innovate UK Loans Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Innovate UK.

Innovate UK has already offered £8 million in loans to businesses developing solutions for the UK's urban infrastructure, energy and transport challenges. [Find out more.](#)

Projects must show significant economic impact

Projects must lead to innovative products, processes or services that are significantly ahead of others in the field.

They must have a clear business plan and demonstrate that they will deliver significant economic impact and return on investment as soon as possible after project completion.

The competition will fund a variety of projects across different technologies and markets.

About the innovation loans programme

Innovation loan competitions are being run as part of a 2-year pilot programme.

The programme recognises that innovations need different types of funding support. It offers flexible, low-interest loans for innovation projects that are nearer to market than those that typically receive grant funding.

It is aimed at innovative micro, small and medium-sized businesses that can manage a loan but struggle to access finance from commercial lenders or schemes backed by the British Business Bank.

This is the fourth of 5 loan competitions. A total of £50 million will be made available.

Competition information

- the loan competition opens on 2 July 2018, and the deadline for registration is midday on 29 August 2018
- you could get an innovation loan of between £100,000 and £1 million
- your project must be late-stage experimental development and last up to 5 years
- up to 100% of your eligible project costs are available
- only single, UK-based SMEs can apply

[Press release: UK support for Ukraine](#)

reform

Boris Johnson discussed the contribution at the [Ukraine Reform Conference](#) – a year after the UK hosted the inaugural summit in London.

Since then, Ukraine has made great strides in tackling corruption and improving transparency across Ukrainian institutions, and important progress on decentralisation and healthcare reform.

The Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

“With Russia continuing its efforts to destabilise Ukraine, and the occupation of Crimea ongoing, Britain must help to lead the way on ensuring Ukraine has a bright, stable and prosperous future

“That’s why we continue to provide support, which will help Ukraine to build on the progress it has made since 2014 and on key reforms since the inaugural London Reform Conference last year

“We do all this because it is essential for Ukraine’s future security and prosperity, and because it is essential for upholding our European values, our security and our prosperity.”

The funding will provide practical support to strengthen Ukraine’s sovereignty and resilience, and ensure the reform momentum continues. It includes help for projects in Ukraine to bolster further reform across the country’s institutions, eliminate corruption, and increase independent oversight of state organisations.

The UK is already doing pioneering work in Ukraine to help tackle Russian disinformation. This includes support to Ukraine’s public broadcaster, a project to help Ukrainian schools to build resilience against disinformation, and funding for an NGO network across Europe to debunk fake media stories.

The Foreign Secretary also held talks with Danish foreign minister Anders Samuelsen while in Copenhagen.

NOTES:

Funding includes:

- £13.4 million on conflict, security and stability projects to bolster Ukrainian defence reform, promote peace-building, eliminate corruption and increase civilian oversight
- £11 million to support reform in Ukraine through the Good Governance Fund with a wide range of programmes to help Ukraine drive forward governance, economic and political reform. Through this, we are supporting key institutions like the Business Ombudsman and the National Anti-Corruption Bureau.
- £6 million in humanitarian aid.

- £5 million this year to help Ukraine counter Russian disinformation.

Further information

[Press release: PM celebrates Queen's Young Leaders at Downing Street reception](#)

The remarkable achievements of 61 young global leaders were celebrated on Monday (25 June) at a Downing Street reception hosted by Prime Minister Theresa May.

Hailing from 38 Commonwealth countries including Ghana, Malawi, New Zealand, Canada and Dominica, the inspirational group of young people, aged between 18 and 29, have all completed the Queen's Young Leaders Programme which aims to celebrate and support young people who are leading the way in transforming their local communities.

They spoke to the Prime Minister about their pioneering work across a broad range of fields including healthcare, women's rights and equality, STEM and climate change, and Theresa May reiterated her continuing commitment to the Commonwealth and to delivering a fairer, more sustainable, and more prosperous future.

Among the leaders were 21 year-old Ghanaian Derick Omari, founder of Tech Era, a programme which introduces underprivileged children in Ghana to technology; 24 year-old Malawian Chikondi Mlozi, whose counselling service Youth Net helps to free girls from forced marriages; 20 year-old New Zealander Ezekial Raui, who set up a peer-support programme offering information to young people about mental health in their local area; and 19 year-old Dominican Lakeyia Joseph, who was named Dominica's Youth Champion last year for her work to promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

The inspirational young people I met this week show what a powerful force for good our Commonwealth can be.

I was delighted to hear about the wonderful work these future leaders are doing, serving their communities, helping others and improving the life chances of other young people.

The UK is committed to a fairer, more sustainable and more prosperous Commonwealth, and at the heart of that vision must be

its young people.

That's why the voices of youth representatives were given such a high priority when the Heads of Governments met earlier this year; and why I will continue to ensure young people take centre stage as we shape the Commonwealth of the future.

Schools Minister Nick Gibb said:

The common thread which binds together all the young people I've met is a deep desire to help others. There is a strand of altruism that runs through all of them and I hope they build on the opportunities they've been given, and go on to inspire a new generation of young leaders.