Press release: Trade Policy Minister in Taiwan to champion stronger trade links

- Trade Policy Minister George Hollingbery is in Taipei for 21st meeting of annual trade talks
- Recent meeting saw Taiwan allow its first imports of quality British pork
- Minister Hollingbery agrees joint commitment to further fintech sectors

While in Taipei, the Minister will meet with President Tsai Ing-Wen, the Minister of Economic Affairs Shen Jong-Chin and the Minister of Foreign Affairs Joseph Wu to discuss UK-Taiwan trade relations and opportunities for growth, including financial services.

The annual UK-Taiwan trade talks, chaired by Minister Hollingbery and Taiwan's Vice Minister of Economic Affairs, Wang Mei-Hua, will focus on building stronger trade and investment links and resolving market access issues, and celebrating the recent introduction of British pork products to the Taiwanese market.

The visit will be marked by further development of the already close co-operation between the UK and Taiwan finance sectors, as Minister Hollingbery witnesses the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the British Office in Taipei and the Taiwan Financial Services Roundtable committing to close co-operation and promotion of our fintech sectors.

The Minister will also meet UK businesses in Taiwan including the offshore wind, financial services and pharmaceutical sectors.

Trade Policy Minister, George Hollingbery, said:

"I am delighted to be in Taipei at the 21st annual trade talks with Taiwan, building ever closer links in the world's fastest growing region. Our trade with Taiwan is worth £5.5 billion, supporting jobs and prosperity in both our economies, so it is vital that we ease barriers to trade wherever we can, even before we leave the EU.

"It is my pleasure to witness the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding committing to even closer co-operation in our finance sectors, building on an already productive trading relationship."

Trade with Taiwan

UK-Taiwan bilateral trade rose to £5.5 billion in 2017, making Taiwan the UK's 8th largest trading partner in the Asia Pacific region. The UK is the most popular destination for Taiwanese investors in Europe accounting for 21% of Taiwan's Foreign Direct Investment in the region in 2017. Around 300 UK

firms are present in Taiwan and there are over 180 Taiwanese firms in the UK.

The minister is joined by Her Majesty's Trade Commissioner for Asia Pacific, Natalie Black, who leads DIT across the region to coordinate the UK government's trade and investment promotion and policy works closely with the wider diplomatic network.

Press release: FCO statement on the Hong Kong National Party

FCO spokesman said:

> We are concerned by the decision of the Hong Kong SAR Government to prohibit the HKNP. This is the first time a party has been banned under the Societies Ordinance since the handover.
>
> The UK does not support Hong Kong independence, but Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and its rights and freedoms are central to its way of life, and it is important they are fully respected.

Further information

Published 24 September 2018

News story: Improving how we collect

and document consent

The statement confirms that electronic methods may be used for seeking, confirming and documenting informed consent for participation in research and is supported and endorsed by the UK health departments in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

It also sets out the legal and ethical requirements for eConsent, and joint expectations regarding the use of electronic signatures in Clinical Trials of Investigational Medicinal Products (CTIMPS).

eConsent enables potential research participants to be provided with the information they need to make an informed decision via a tablet, smartphone or digital multimedia. It also enables their informed consent to be documented using electronic signatures.

This approach can supplement the traditional paper-based approach or, where appropriate, replace it.

Using eConsent offers a number of potential benefits, such as:

- improving understanding
- testing and reinforcing participant comprehension
- providing feedback on how consent materials could be improved
- improving patient recruitment process and reducing dropout rates
- enabling process efficiencies

While the statement focuses primarily on clinical trials, the basic principles can be applied to all research conducted within the UK where consent is sought.

Dr Samantha Atkinson, Director Inspection, Enforcement and Standards Division at MHRA, said:

> We are committed to protecting public health, and research and clinical trials form a key part of this commitment.
>
> That’s why we are continuing to innovate and improve the methods by which consent and feedback are sought from potential research participants.
>
> This guidance aims to promote best practice where eConsent is used for clinical trials, ensuring continued provision of key information in a clear way to trial participants.
>
> We continue to support the appropriate implementation of new technologies in clinical research, safeguarding vital and safe health research which benefits us all.

Amanda Hunn, Joint Head Policy at HRA, said:

> Our joint statement clarifies HRA and MHRA expectations with regards to the use of electronic methods for seeking, confirming and documenting informed consent for participation in research.
>
> The use of eConsent has the potential to improve participants' understanding of what is involved in taking part in research and to make recruitment and consent procedures more efficient.
>
> This clarification forms part of our ongoing work to encourage researchers to take a more proportionate approach to the process of seeking consent from research participants and will support them in implementing eConsent procedures.

News story: Collaborative decommissioning research TRANSCENDS the individual approach

The research will span 40 projects lasting up to 4 years each, helping to build the next generation of nuclear experts as well as developing technical solutions.

Building on a core grant of £4.6 million from the Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), AWE, Cavendish Nuclear, Low Level Waste Repository Ltd, National Nuclear Laboratory, Radioactive Waste Management Ltd, Sellafield Ltd and TUV SUD Nuclear Technologies are all supporting the programme through direct funding and/or supervisory expertise, use of facilities and researcher training, resulting in the total funding pot of more than £9 million.

Those working on the projects will include a mixture of PhD students and Post-Doctoral Researchers, each with academic and industrial supervisors, the latter being technical experts from within industry to ensure maximum 2-way knowledge transfer.

Known as TRANSCEND (Transformative Science and Engineering for Nuclear Decommissioning), the work builds on 2 previous programmes, DIAMOND and DISTINCTIVE, the former having concluded in 2013, with the latter due to finish in early 2019.

The consortium of 11 universities will be led by the University of Leeds and includes:

- Imperial College London
- Lancaster University
- Queen’s University Belfast
- University of Birmingham
- University of Bristol
- University of Leeds
- University of Manchester
- University of Sheffield
- University of Southampton
- University of Strathclyde
- University of Surrey

The research topics to be explored by the TRANSCEND consortium align with the NDA’s key themes of:

- Integrated waste management
- Site decommissioning and remediation
- Spent fuel
- Nuclear materials

TRANSCEND’s work will build on the significant progress made in these areas by the DISTINCTIVE consortium, contributing to tackling the UK’s nuclear legacy.

NDA Research Manager Dr Rick Short said:

> Our industry benefits hugely when high-level academic research is focused at some of the challenges we face in decommissioning our nuclear legacy. We welcome this collaboration and look forward to seeing the progress that these important projects will deliver. Equally valuable will be the development of knowledge and expertise for the participants – we hope their skills with be with us for many years ahead.

Jon Martin, Head of Research at RWM, said:

> Research is critical to exploring and understanding all aspects of the science associated with a future geological disposal facility that will be required to keep radioactive waste safe for many thousands of years. We welcome the news that the TRANSCEND collaboration has received approval and look forward to working in partnership with the many world-class research institutions and industry representatives involved.

NNL’s Science Ambassador, Gareth Headdock, said:

> As a national research lab, NNL will provide the key integrating interface between those carrying out the research and those needing

> solutions, to ensure they are aligned. This is primarily through the provision of industrial supervision and access to the world-leading facilities in our Central Laboratory on the Sellafield site.
>
> We know that to achieve transformational developments in the way we approach waste management and decommissioning, we need to think differently, disrupt the established ways of working and collaborate with others like never before.

Geoff Randall, Senior Scientist at Sellafield Ltd, said:

> The previous programmes have led directly to the development of new equipment like Acoustic Back Scattering technology that is being installed in a settling tank for Pile Fuel Storage Pond sludge removal. We've also been able to accelerate hazard reduction, partly as a result of fundamental research into Magnox Swarf Storage Silo materials, and prepare the next generation of engineers and scientist to face our challenges. We are pleased to be part of this exciting new programme.

Principal Investigator for the DISTINCTIVE and TRANSCEND programmes, Professor Michael Fairweather of the University of Leeds, said:

> This research consortium represents an important activity in reinforcing the industry-academia links that have grown significantly in recent years, and provides key support to underpin an academic skill base in this crucial area for the UK. The world-leading team of academic experts provides both depth and breadth across all areas of current research need, and the strong support of our key industry partners validates the usefulness of the research programme we will undertake.

News story: Collaborative decommissioning research TRANSCENDS the individual approach

The research will span 40 projects lasting up to 4 years each, helping to build the next generation of nuclear experts as well as developing technical solutions.

Building on a core grant of £4.6 million from the Engineering & Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), AWE, Cavendish Nuclear, Low Level Waste Repository Ltd, National Nuclear Laboratory, Radioactive Waste Management Ltd, Sellafield Ltd and TUV SUD Nuclear Technologies are all supporting the programme through direct funding and/or supervisory expertise, use of facilities and researcher training, resulting in the total funding pot of more than £9 million.

Those working on the projects will include a mixture of PhD students and Post-Doctoral Researchers, each with academic and industrial supervisors, the latter being technical experts from within industry to ensure maximum 2-way knowledge transfer.

Known as TRANSCEND (Transformative Science and Engineering for Nuclear Decommissioning), the work builds on 2 previous programmes, DIAMOND and DISTINCTIVE, the former having concluded in 2013, with the latter due to finish in early 2019.

The consortium of 11 universities will be led by the University of Leeds and includes:

- Imperial College London
- Lancaster University
- Queen's University Belfast
- University of Birmingham
- University of Bristol
- University of Leeds
- University of Manchester
- University of Sheffield
- University of Southampton
- University of Strathclyde
- University of Surrey

The research topics to be explored by the TRANSCEND consortium align with the NDA's key themes of:

- Integrated waste management
- Site decommissioning and remediation
- Spent fuel
- Nuclear materials

TRANSCEND's work will build on the significant progress made in these areas by the DISTINCTIVE consortium, contributing to tackling the UK's nuclear legacy.

NDA Research Manager Dr Rick Short said:

> Our industry benefits hugely when high-level academic research is focused at some of the challenges we face in decommissioning our nuclear legacy. We welcome this collaboration and look forward to seeing the progress that these important projects will deliver. Equally valuable will be the development of knowledge and expertise

> for the participants – we hope their skills with be with us for many years ahead.

Jon Martin, Head of Research at RWM, said:

> Research is critical to exploring and understanding all aspects of the science associated with a future geological disposal facility that will be required to keep radioactive waste safe for many thousands of years. We welcome the news that the TRANSCEND collaboration has received approval and look forward to working in partnership with the many world-class research institutions and industry representatives involved.

NNL's Science Ambassador, Gareth Headdock, said:

> As a national research lab, NNL will provide the key integrating interface between those carrying out the research and those needing solutions, to ensure they are aligned. This is primarily through the provision of industrial supervision and access to the world-leading facilities in our Central Laboratory on the Sellafield site.
>
> We know that to achieve transformational developments in the way we approach waste management and decommissioning, we need to think differently, disrupt the established ways of working and collaborate with others like never before.

Geoff Randall, Senior Scientist at Sellafield Ltd, said:

> The previous programmes have led directly to the development of new equipment like Acoustic Back Scattering technology that is being installed in a settling tank for Pile Fuel Storage Pond sludge removal. We've also been able to accelerate hazard reduction, partly as a result of fundamental research into Magnox Swarf Storage Silo materials, and prepare the next generation of engineers and scientist to face our challenges. We are pleased to be part of this exciting new programme.

Principal Investigator for the DISTINCTIVE and TRANSCEND programmes, Professor Michael Fairweather of the University of Leeds, said:

> This research consortium represents an important activity in reinforcing the industry-academia links that have grown significantly in recent years, and provides key support to underpin an academic skill base in this crucial area for the UK. The world-leading team of academic experts provides both depth and breadth

across all areas of current research need, and the strong support of our key industry partners validates the usefulness of the research programme we will undertake.