

Press release: Trial of improved smart motorway emergency areas continues

The new look emergency areas have bright orange road surfaces to help improve visibility so they are more obvious to drivers on smart motorways. It is also hoped that it will encourage drivers to only use them in emergency situations.

The first of the new emergency areas went live on the M3 near Camberley in Surrey last month. This change is part of a review into the design and spacing of emergency areas on smart motorways.

The first orange emergency area on the M25 is on the anti-clockwise side, between junctions 25 (Waltham Cross) and 24 (Potters Bar). The remaining 22 emergency areas on the M25 will have the distinctive orange colour added between junctions 23 (Hatfield) to 27 (for the M11) and junctions 5 (interchange with M26) and 7 (for the M23) if the trial is successful.

Highways England Chief Executive Jim O'Sullivan said:

We recognise the public concern about smart motorways and we also believe that changes such as these will help drivers have confidence when using them and be clear about where they can stop in an emergency.

That is why we are trialling these highly visible new style emergency areas. The bright orange colouring will make them as easy as possible to spot and should also discourage drivers from using them in non-emergency situations.

This is just one of the ways we are helping drivers to understand smart motorways and their benefits. I hope it helps drivers feel more confident about using a smart motorway. Smart motorways use variable speed limits to manage traffic and tackle frustrating stop-start congestion, new technology to give drivers better information on road conditions ahead and – in smart motorway upgrades delivered since 2004 – convert the hard shoulder into an extra traffic lane. Evidence shows that smart motorways are successfully adding extra capacity, improving journey times and are just as safe as conventional motorways.

The redesigned emergency area supports Highways England's drive to improve awareness of smart motorway driving, including what to do in an emergency and when to use an emergency area. It sits alongside a national TV, radio and social media campaign covering key themes such as not driving in lanes closed by Red X signs, how to stop in an emergency and the importance of carrying out appropriate vehicle checks, like checking fuel levels, before setting out on a journey to avoid unnecessary breakdowns.

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

News story: Response to Daily Telegraph story on new GCSE grades

Today's Daily Telegraph (22 Aug) contains both inaccurate and misleading statements in relation to new GCSEs. The assessment of new GCSEs has been designed to support 9 to 1 grading and we have not 'warned' about their use as suggested. The Ofqual report cited is not a commentary on the new grades and the selected excerpts within the story are taken completely out of context.

Dr Michelle Meadows, Executive Director, Strategy, Risk and Research said: "New GCSEs have been designed from first principles to deliver better differentiation on the new 9 to 1 grading scale. The new GCSE exams and mark schemes have been created to support the increase in the number of grades, with better spread of grade boundaries and reliable assessment."

Press release: New victim and witness rooms to improve court experience

In many courts, traditionally victims and witnesses are asked to wait in sparse, unfriendly surroundings. So HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) has invested £80,000 in victim and witness waiting rooms in five courts across the country – making a number of changes including the addition of children's toys.

Research conducted with court users has shown that small changes such as these can make the court experience less intimidating for some of the 156,000 victims and witnesses who give evidence each year – particularly children and the vulnerable.

The model victim and witness waiting rooms have been established at Nottingham Justice Centre, Manchester Magistrates' Court, Newcastle Crown Court and Aldershot Justice Centre, with work ongoing at Liverpool Crown Court. They will provide a template for courts nationwide.

HMCTS worked closely with stakeholders including the Victim's Commissioner, the Witness Service and court users to identify areas across the estate to develop and analyse the best way to support victims and witnesses through the court process. This work informed how the rooms were developed, and they will now be used as models for further estate changes.

Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales, Baroness Newlove:

I welcome HMCTS' initiative to enhance the victim and witness room facilities across the court estate. I am looking forward to seeing the pilot rooms and very much hope that they will set the standard for victims' facilities in all court rooms across the country. The court process can be a traumatic experience for victims and any attempt to make this environment less impersonal and more comfortable is most definitely a positive step.

I am looking forward to seeing how the remodelled rooms can provide a change for victims and hope they will assist victims and witnesses to have a better experience of the court process.

Gillian Guy, chief executive of Citizens Advice, said:

Giving evidence in court can be a difficult and stressful experience so it is crucial that witnesses are supported to perform their invaluable role.

It's our role as the Witness Service to provide information and support to help people feel as comfortable and confident as possible when giving evidence. We know all too well that even small changes to make waiting areas more comfortable can make big differences to a witness's experience – providing a welcoming space for child witnesses is particularly important.

This is on top of a range of measures the Government has put in place to help reduce the anxiety of attending court, including giving evidence behind a screen and the use of a registered intermediary. In criminal courts the government is driving the increased use of video links – meaning more vulnerable victims can give evidence away from the court room and without having to meet their attacker face to face.

HMCTS is also assessing criminal courts to ensure they are properly equipped for victims and witnesses, and monitoring individuals' experiences of the court system. This will provide a yardstick for key improvements across the estate. A range of work will be carried out in the coming months to improve the information available to victims and witnesses before coming to court – making the often painful process clearer and easier to understand.

The £1bn investment will ensure that HMCTS are providing targeted care to those who need it – by reducing unnecessary stress for victims and the most

vulnerable, and lessening the emotional turmoil experienced through crime. That £1bn is made up of £855 million to modernise and digitise the courts, and £240 million to deliver a fully connected criminal courtroom.

More modern and robust technology will be put in place in courts, such as Wi-Fi, modern telephony and screens for sharing evidence. This transformation of the estate will create a user-focused and modern justice system which supports the most vulnerable.

[Open consultation: Proposed catch limits for September 2017](#)

Updated: Figures updated

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) sets monthly catch limits for quota species to ensure the UK stays within the overall limit set by the EU. These limits apply to all under 10 meter vessels and the over 10 meter vessels that are not in a co-operative (Producer Organisation).

Please contact the MMO if you have any comment to make about the suggested catch limits which will be put into force on 1 September 2017.

Comments to be received no later than 5pm Wednesday 28 August 2017.

Email FMT.consultation.response@marinemanagement.gov.uk

Telephone 0208 0 269 097

[World news story: Call for bids: Peru Project Funding Opportunity Now Open!](#)

British and local private organisations are invited to submit proposals for projects in Peru. Deadline: 3 September 2017.

Overview

Increasing access to clean energy, especially in remote areas, as well as reducing carbon emissions in line with Paris Agreement commitments are key economic development challenges in Peru. The UK has shown global leadership

on this and wants to do more in Peru.

According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), Peru is the third most vulnerable country to climate change in the world. To-date, the country has faced numerous effects, including melting of around 40% of its glaciers and intensification of natural disasters. This has affected, and will continue to affect, the Peruvian economy and we aim to support Peruvian government to build sustainable, clean and inclusive growth driven by UK expertise, leadership and technology.

What We're Looking For

- The British Embassy looks to fund practical and high-impact projects that help to:
 1. Increase access to clean energy, especially in rural areas;
 2. Reduce Peru's reliance on fossil fuels, maximising Peru's potential to be a leading clean energy producer (solar, wind, hydro and others);
 3. Support the promotion of low carbon energy technologies and related support, management and infrastructure;
 4. Support the creation of policy, regulatory and legislative frameworks conducive to transition to a low carbon economy;
 5. Investigate and resolve operational obstacles to renewable energy projects (community stakeholders, environmental permits/ regulations, project financing, etc.);
 6. Increase the sustainability of extractives industries; and/or
 7. Help Peru meet its Paris Agreement commitments.
- Project bids should demonstrate clearly how they will make a difference – research and reports are important, but we're looking to fund initiatives that lead to real world changes and improvements.
- We would welcome co-funding opportunities, where the addition of UK skills and expertise could make a difference to larger, on-going initiatives.
- All bids should have a clear link to the UK, whether that be using UK experience, knowledge, technology or best practice.

How To Bid

Project proposals will be up to £25,000. All activity must be completed, and impact demonstrated, by the end of the UK financial year on 31 March 2018. Interested implementers will prepare the full bid and the activity based budget (ABB) according to the authorized forms. The full bid in word format and ABB in excel format should be submitted in English via email with the title 'Peru GBF: project title-name of implementer' to the email address: BEProjectsPeru@fco.gov.uk. The deadline for submission is 3 September 2017. Implementers will be advised by email if the proposal has been accepted.

What to Include in the Bid Form?

- Overview of project
- How the project fits with the above priorities.
- How the project will lead to transformational change (outline impact and main changes that the project will impulse)
- Rationale for project – Including why the project should take place now
- Why UK is the partner of choice for such project? This might be due to profiling UK commercial or policy expertise, replicating/adapting a British policy, experience of British implementer, link to highest UK policy priority.
- Support from Peruvian Government: evidence that relevant Peruvian Government Ministry (or Ministries) have been consulted and are supportive of the proposal and its alignment with their own growth plans. Or if not, the bid should explain how the project has sufficient buy-in from the necessary stakeholders to deliver the expected outcomes.
- Communication Strategy, including stakeholders, beneficiary organizations and relevant public communications strategy actions.
- Sustainability once the project has been completed
- Demonstrate with supporting evidence that relevant Country Government Ministry (ies) have been consulted and are supportive of the proposal. Or if they have not, the bid should explain how the project has sufficient buy-in from the necessary stakeholders to deliver the expected outcomes
- Demonstrate that UK and local partnerships are already established.

About Budget

Project proposals must be presented along with a detailed project budget. FCO Project Management Procedures require the delivery of the budget using the Activity Based Budget form. Budgets should list the activities needed to deliver the outcomes (results) of the project. Outcomes should be aimed at promoting transformational change.

85% of the total budget must be spent before December 2017.

Indicative timetable (subject to change)

Dates	Activities
3 September 2017	Deadline to submit proposals
11 September 2017	British Embassy Lima notification to implementers (by email) announcing results

Dates**Activities**

25 September 2017 Contracts and financial arrangements completed

Documents for Downloading

- [Proposal Form](#)
(MS Word Document, 224KB)
- [Activity Based Budget \(ABB\)](#)
(MS Excel Spreadsheet, 83KB)
- [Value for money and budgeting guidance](#)
(MS Word Document, 32.9KB)