

First sponsor announced for Global Investment Summit

Barclays is the first sponsor to be confirmed for the Global Investment Summit (GIS) taking place on 19th October, the UK Government has announced today.

Hosted by the Prime Minister and supported by members of the Royal Family, the summit will showcase British innovation, demonstrate commitment to green industries of the future ahead of COP26, and promote UK as the best destination for foreign investment.

British banking giant Barclays will be one of several sponsors to be announced in the lead up to the event. Barclays has an ambition to be a net zero bank by 2050 and committed to £100bn of green financing by 2030 in line with the Government's clean growth agenda.

The announcement comes as the Department for International Trade (DIT) publishes a new report highlighting the UK's foreign investment successes over the past year.

In the last decade Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has created more than 707,000 jobs across the country, and since April 2019 projects supported by DIT have contributed more than £7 billion to the economy.

Foreign investment in the UK created more than 55,000 jobs in the last financial year (20/21), with Scotland and regions like the South West and the East of England seeing the biggest job increases.

Nearly 9 in every 10 of the total new jobs (47,784 out of 55,319) were created with Government support, where DIT has worked directly with the investing companies and provided services to ease their entry into the UK.

International Trade Secretary Liz Truss said:

The UK is the best investment destination in the world offering strong returns in a low-tax, high-skill economy, respected worldwide for its strong rule of law.

Today's report proves that time and time again investors are choosing the UK. Greater investment in our industries of the future will create high-value jobs, boost the economy and level up the country as we build back better.

Now is the time to seize these immense opportunities and our Global

Investment Summit is the springboard that will propel our economy towards a more prosperous, exciting future.

Jes Staley, Group CEO, Barclays, said:

Barclays fully supports the Global Investment Summit and the Government's ambitious drive to boost investments, jobs and growth in the UK's green industries; as one of the first banks to set a net zero target by 2050, not only for our own operations but across our entire financing portfolio, we are accelerating that transition through the way we deploy our financing.

Barclays is helping companies of all sizes to realise their green opportunities, from start-ups to global corporations – backing innovation in new technology, facilitating the build out of low-carbon infrastructure, and empowering clients to make critical decisions along their own journeys towards a low-carbon economy.

The Office for Investment, established in January this year, has already facilitated a number of major inward investment commitments for the UK.

These include:

- Nissan's recent announcement to build a Gigafactory as part of its £1 billion expansion in Sunderland
- Canadian clean energy company General Fusion's commitment to build its nuclear fusion technology plant in Oxfordshire
- Mubadala Investment Company's £1bn agreement to secure more investment into the UK's technology, infrastructure and life sciences sectors.

The Global Investment Summit will build on the success of these investments and is expected to catalyse billions of pounds of investment by attracting hundreds of the world's leading businesses and investment names to the UK.

[Game changing export win for COVID-19 vaccine transporter Reftrade](#)

- Aberdeen-based Reftrade has become the first business in Scotland to secure new UK government backing from UK Export Finance
- Reftrade is set to triple its headcount and expand its business to fulfil £1 million of export orders

A small business which supplies specialist containers to the NHS to store and transport COVID-19 vaccines, has become the first in Scotland to benefit from a major new government export scheme.

Aberdeen-based [Reftrade UK](#), which supplies refrigerated, offshore and hazardous area containers, worked with NHS Scotland to provide specialist equipment to keep batches of AstraZeneca and Moderna vaccines at a set temperature through the vaccine rollout.

Following its success in the UK, Reftrade secured support from UK Export Finance (UKEF) and the Bank of Scotland to finance its international ambitions, which include expanding their pharmaceutical exports and supplying offshore projects with temperature-controlled containers needed for the construction of wind turbine sites.

Reftrade required additional working capital to take advantage of increasing export orders. The Bank of Scotland proposed a structure that would bridge the gap in their increasing cashflow funding requirements, using UKEF's new [General Export Facility](#) (GEF).

Reftrade was the first Scottish company to access funds from GEF, allowing the company to free up valuable working capital and pursue more, higher tier export contracts.

Expanding on its busiest year ever in 2020, Reftrade has over £1 million of export deals in the pipeline. As a result, the company has plans to triple its headcount and relocate to larger premises, creating new highly skilled jobs in Scotland.

Minister for Exports, Graham Stuart MP said:

The COVID-19 vaccine rollout has been one of this country's greatest successes stories, and underpinning it are expert UK companies like Reftrade. I am delighted that they have been the first company in Scotland to receive GEF which will help them continue their tremendous growth through international trade.

Martin Baxter, Director at Reftrade said:

Exports currently make up 20% of our overall sales, but thanks to UKEF and the support offered through GEF, we have been able to be more vigorous in our sales approach over the past few months. This has come at a vital time for our business, in which we are looking to expand our international operations, fulfil more export contracts and create vital jobs.

Carol Harvey, Export Finance Manager for Western Scotland, Highlands &

Islands, said:

GEF has given Reftrade – which has played a vital part in helping the UK’s vaccine rollout – the confidence and working capital needed to pursue bigger contracts and accelerate their growth. I look forward to helping more businesses across the UK to reach new heights and go global as we continue to recover from the pandemic.

Colin Walls, Regional Director Trade and Working Capital at Bank of Scotland said:

Refrtrade is a fast-growing business with great trajectory and growth plans. They recognise the huge opportunity offered by exporting through global markets but also the need to ensure that they have the right level of support to negotiate those markets safely and profitably. I am delighted that we have been able to work with UKEF in this way to strengthen Reftrade’s future plans.

About UK Export Finance

[UK Export Finance](#) is the UK’s export credit agency and a government department, working along-side the Department for International Trade as an integral part of its strategy and operations.

Established in 1919, it exists to ensure that no viable UK export should fail for a lack of finance from the private market. It provides finance and insurance to help exporters win, fulfil and get paid for export contracts.

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[£50 million to deliver world-class facilities for T Level students](#)

£50 million will be invested in colleges, schools and sixth forms delivering T levels across England from 2022 to improve and expand teaching spaces and facilities.

The funding will ensure students have world-class facilities when studying for T Levels, helping to transform the provision of technical education to help fill local skills gaps and level up opportunities across the country. Sixty-five building projects will receive a share of the funding, providing thousands of students with industry quality equipment for hands-on experience right from the start of their training, and high-tech classrooms.

T Levels – co-created with over 250 employers including Fujitsu and Amazon – are equivalent to three A levels and uniquely combine classroom study with industry placements, so students gain the skills businesses need allowing them to go straight into the workplace, onto an apprenticeship or further study. New subjects including Health, Science and Onsite Construction will be added from September.

The funding will be used to refurbish buildings and facilities, including upgrading classrooms and creating specialist spaces such as teaching wards, and building or improving laboratories for health and science students.

Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills Gillian Keegan said:

T Levels are a game changer for young people, providing a high-quality technical equivalent to A levels that have been designed hand-in-hand with leading employers so students and businesses can be sure they will get the skills they need to thrive in a high tech economy.

This multi-million pound investment will mean even more students will benefit from world-class facilities, giving them access to brilliant new buildings that will help them get ready for the world of work.

West Suffolk College is one of the providers to receive a share of the investment, to refurbish and create new facilities to deliver Digital T Level courses, including a mixed reality suite to explore uses of coding, and specialist classrooms and collaborative teaching spaces to enable informal learning.

Tameside College will create a health skills ward to support teaching on the Health and Science route, and Birchwood Community High School in Warrington will refurbish spaces to create a new laboratory and other spaces to teach Health and Science.

Dr Paul Phillips, CBE, Principal and Chief Executive of Weston College Group said:

The successful application for the T Level Capital Fund Building and Facilities Improvement Grant has enabled Weston College to transform facilities and develop new opportunities for learners to work with state of the art resources. As we move forward with the government's skills strategy via the White Paper, funding such as this is paramount to realising the highly positive aims and objectives from central government.

David Hughes, Chief Executive of the Association of Colleges said:

T Levels will be available in more than 100 colleges and schools from this September and are a high quality option for young people looking to build a career. I welcome the fact that the government is continuing to invest in up-to-date buildings and facilities for these courses and students.

T Levels form a key part of the government's reforms to revolutionise skills and technical education, providing students with the skills and experience they need to progress into well-paid jobs, further study or an apprenticeship.

The first three T Levels in Design, Surveying and Planning for Construction, Digital Production, Design and Development and Education and Childcare were introduced in September 2020. A further seven are rolling out from this September in subjects including Health, Science and Onsite Construction, with subjects including Finance, Media and Legal introduced from 2022 and 2023.

Today's announcement builds on the £133 million made available to support providers delivering T Levels in 2020 and 2021, including funding given to all new T Level providers to purchase specialist equipment so students have access to the equipment they will use when they get a job. Further funding is expected to be awarded later in the year.

[Landmark consultation launched on the reintroduction of beavers in England](#)

Plans to release beavers into the wild in England have been set out in a consultation launching today (Wednesday 25 August) – marking a cautious step towards further reintroductions and establishing native beaver populations.

Beavers can play a hugely significant role in helping to restore nature to England. Widely referred to as 'ecosystem engineers', they create dams from trees, mud and rocks, which raise water levels, creating pools and wetland habitats which support the recovery of a wide range of native species.

Under the Government's proposals, applications for licences to release beavers into the wild would need to meet certain criteria, including demonstrating positive stakeholder engagement and local buy in, and proof that a comprehensive assessment has been undertaken of the impacts on surrounding land, the water environment, infrastructures, habitats, and protected species. Projects must also ensure that support for landowners and river users is put in place.

The consultation follows a successful reintroduction in Devon – [the River Otter beavers reintroduction trial](#) – which over five-years brought a wealth

of benefits to the local area and ecology, including enhancing the environment at a local wildlife site, creating wetland habitat, and reducing flood risk for housing downstream.

The 12-week consultation is seeking views on:

- Potential future releases into the wild
- Current and future releases into enclosures
- Mitigation and management of beaver activity or impacts in the wild, including the River Otter population and all other existing wild living beaver populations

Plans to give beavers legal protection in England are also being announced today, to support their recovery. This will make it an offence to deliberately capture, kill, disturb or injure beavers, or damage breeding sites or resting places.

Secretary of State George Eustice said:

We are committed to providing opportunities to reintroduce formerly native species, such as beavers, where the benefits for the environment, people and the economy are clear.

Today marks a significant milestone for the reintroduction of beavers in the wild, with the launch of the Government's consultation on our national approach and management of beavers in England.

But we also understand that there are implications for landowners, so we are taking a cautious approach to ensure that all potential impacts are carefully considered.

Chair of Natural England, Tony Juniper, said:

The launch of Defra's consultation today marks an important and positive moment for the future of these wonderful animals in England. Beavers are not only fascinating creatures in their own right, but are also ecosystem engineers that will play a key role in restoring and linking habitats, in the process bringing many environmental benefits, like we have seen in the highly successful River Otter trial in Devon – hugely positive transformations, including the creation of wetland habitat, improving water quality and smoothing flood peaks.

I encourage everyone to respond, so that the way we shape the future of wild Beavers reflects as many perspectives as possible.

Decisions on the reintroduction of formerly native species in England are made based on the principles set out in the Government's [code of best](#)

[practice for reintroductions](#), which was published in May this year. Future beaver reintroductions will be subject to a licence from Natural England.

Today's announcement contributes to delivering against the 25 Year Environment Plan commitment to provide opportunities for the reintroduction of formerly native species – provided there are clear environmental, social and economic benefits.

Responses to the consultation will be used to inform decisions on the approach to further releases of beavers into the wild in England. A summary of responses will be published in early 2022.

Today's announcement is part of the Government's commitments aimed at tackling the twin threat of biodiversity and climate change.

The Government's Environment Bill will deliver the most ambitious environmental programme of any country on earth and drive forward action to protect nature and improve biodiversity, including through a target for species abundance for 2030, aiming to halt the decline of nature.

The consultation will be live on gov.uk at 9:30am, Wednesday 25 August.

- Beavers were once native to Britain but were hunted to extinction in Britain around 400 years ago.
- The scope of this consultation covers beavers in England. Wildlife policy is devolved so decisions about reintroductions of species in Scotland and Wales are made by the Scottish Parliament or the Welsh Parliament.
- A partner pack is available for download.

[Press release: Landmark consultation launched on the reintroduction of beavers in England](#)

Consultation launched to seek views on the cautious release and management of beavers into the wild