

# News story: Astana Expo comes to an end after attracting 4 million visitors

- the UK and 114 other countries participated in the Astana 'Future Energy' Expo which ran July to September in Kazakhstan, the first Expo in Central Asia
- the UK, through the Department for International Trade, delivered a business programme focusing on the country's expertise in oil and gas, mining, sustainable energy, finance and infrastructure
- UK Pavilion, awarded Silver Medal in Exhibition Design, had the theme 'We are Energy' exploring new ways to harness the various sources of energy that surround us and secure a greener future

The International Astana Expo in Kazakhstan closed its doors this week bringing an end to the UK's 3-month participation.

The Expo's overarching theme was 'Future Energy', highlighting sustainable energy solutions and innovative technologies that are vital to the environment and future of the planet.

## **UK programme at Astana Expo 2017**

As well as being a visitor destination attracting over half a million visitors, the UK Pavilion was the platform for a 3-month programme of business, cultural and thought leadership events.

This included receiving delegations from leading British businesses and institutions in the mining, oil and gas and financial-professional services sectors, the latter of which was led by the Lord Mayor of the City of London, Andrew Parmley. Delegation members included:

- Shell
- University of Manchester
- London Stock Exchange Group
- Institute of Chartered Accountants

## **Ministerial visits to the UK Pavilion**

International Trade Minister Greg Hands oversaw the signing of an agreement between one of the world's leading hovercraft manufacturers, Southampton-based Griffon Hoverwork and Kazakh state oil company KazMunayGas' subsidiary KMGSS.

The agreement will see a study being carried out on using hovercraft to clear oil spills and support offshore rigs in the Caspian Sea and has the potential to generate contracts worth over £100 million for new hovercraft, supporting at least 70 jobs in the Southampton area.

International Trade Minister, Greg Hands said:

This summer I saw first-hand the outstanding work from the UK team at the Astana Expo, who demonstrated the very best of British creativity and academic excellence. As an international economic department, the Department for International Trade is committed to promoting UK innovation across the globe.

The UK Pavilion showed why we have a bright future as a global trading nation, and helped introduce UK companies to millions in potential business contracts.

The Rt Hon Charles Hendry, Commissioner, UK Pavilion said:

We have been delighted to participate in Astana Expo 2017 which has re-emphasised the important issue of sustainable energy.

Over the last 3 months the UK, through its award-winning Pavilion, has delivered a successful programme of cultural, economic and business events in Astana. Through our involvement we have been able to showcase our strong contribution to building a more sustainable future as well as our expertise in new technologies across the energy sector that makes the UK a business partner of choice.

The UK Pavilion and associated activity has further underlined our commitment to continuing to strengthen UK-Kazakhstan business and diplomatic relationships.

Sir Alan Duncan, Minister for Europe and the Americas, also visited the UK Pavilion to mark the 25th anniversary of UK – Kazakhstan diplomatic relations and to announce UK funding of £74,000 to help Kazakhstan implement its on-going Anti-Corruption strategy.

## **Award-winning design**

The UK Pavilion, supported by the Department for International Trade, was designed by British architect Asif Khan who led a team that included music legend Brian Eno and renowned Professor of Astrophysics, Catherine Heymans of Edinburgh University.

Its interactive design and unique sensory experience was recognised by the Expo's organising body, The Bureau International des Expositions (BIE), which awarded it silver in the Exhibition Design category.

## **Key moments**

The UK's heritage in, and global contribution to culture was celebrated

throughout the Expo beginning with UK 'National Day' on 26 June which was led by HRH the Duke of Gloucester and showcased British creativity.

British fashion was fused with theatre, music with dance, and literature with spoken word, all culminating a diverse and rich cultural programme.

Events included a:

- live reading of Harry Potter and The Philosopher's Stone to mark its 20th anniversary
- performance by the London Contemporary Ballet Theatre
- fashion showcase promoting up and coming UK designers

Scotland took centre stage week commencing 7 August with Economy Minister Keith Brown MSP and representatives from Edinburgh-based Heriot Watt University and the Scottish Qualifications Authority attending to promote the UK as a hub for academic excellence. Whilst there, the Minister hosted a business roundtable with attendees including KazMuanyGas and energy services company Wood Group, headquartered in Scotland.

The UK Pavilion hosted 'Engineering Day' on 22 August in association with the British Chamber of Commerce.

The day provided an opportunity to showcase British capabilities and excellence in manufacturing and engineering technologies and a networking opportunity for British and Kazakhstani companies to build contacts, meet potential partners and distributors to sell their goods and services.

British engineering expertise was on display in the form of the BLOODHOUND, a supersonic car that once finished will reach speeds of over 1,000mph, setting a new world land speed record.

## **Dubai 2020**

Building on the success of the UK's participation at Astana Expo 2017 the government has committed to the next World Expo in Dubai 2020. The Expo's core theme is 'Connecting Minds, Creating the Future', a testament to human ingenuity that will see the site divided into three districts: opportunity, sustainability and mobility.

## **Background**

Astana Expo 2017 is a 'Specialised Expo'. Such Expos were established by the Bureau International des Expositions in 1988. They are global events dedicated to finding solutions to precise challenges of humanity, such as ocean protection (Expo Yeosu 2012) or the future of energy (Expo Astana 2017).

The UK conceived and convened the first of all 'World Expos', the Great Exhibition of 1851 which led to the creation of the cultural quarter in west London which includes the V&A, Natural History Museum and the Royal College of Music.

## Media enquiries