

Press release: First-ever UK-US Science and Technology Agreement paves the way for closer research collaborations

- Science Minister Jo Johnson has today signed a UK-US Science and Technology Agreement
- First project under the agreement includes £65 million UK investment to increase our knowledge on the origin and structure of the universe

Science Minister Jo Johnson has today (Wednesday 20 September) signed a UK-US Science and Technology Agreement with US Acting Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs Judith G Garber, marking the first umbrella agreement between the United States and United Kingdom.

The treaty outlines a commitment to collaborate on world-class science and innovation, building on existing successful research co-operation in recognition of the value of open data to further scientific research and strengthen our economies.

The government has been clear in its commitment to collaborate with countries around the world in science, research and innovation and is investing record levels of funding to maintain the UK's strengths in these key areas through its Industrial Strategy.

On signing the agreement, Science Minister, Jo Johnson said:

The UK is known as a nation of science and technical progress, with research and development being at the core of our Industrial Strategy. By working with our key allies, we are maintaining our position as a global leader in research for years to come.

Our continued collaboration with the US on science and innovation benefits both nations and this agreement will enable us to share our expertise to enhance our understanding of many important topics that have the potential to be world changing.

The first major project of the UK-US Science and Technology Agreement is UK investment in the Long Baseline Neutrino Facility (LBNF) and Deep Underground Neutrino Experiment (DUNE), for which the government has confirmed £65 million funding.

Under construction in the United States, the major international LBNF/DUNE project aims to answer some of the most important questions in science and advance our understanding of the origin and structure of the universe. One

aspect of study is the behaviour of particles called neutrinos and their antimatter counterparts, antineutrinos. This could provide insight as to why we live in a matter-dominated universe and inform the debate on why the universe survived the Big Bang.

The UK is a major scientific contributor to the DUNE collaboration, with 14 UK universities and two Science and Technology Facilities Council laboratories providing essential expertise and components to the experiment and facility. This £65 million investment makes the UK the largest country investor in the project outside of the United States. UK involvement in the project will also provide opportunities for UK industry to build capability in new and developing technologies, for example, in precision engineering, cryogenics and accelerator-based applications.

Building on the UK-US partnership, the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Smithsonian Institution are extending a successful history of partnerships by developing a new collaboration based at the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History and focused on increasing the use of digital research skills in museums. Enhancing these skills will benefit areas such as data analysis, curating, accessibility of collections and also further audience engagement, all focused on achieving best practice in digital scholarship and the application of digital technologies at research led museums.

Accompanying Jo Johnson on the visit to the US, Chief Executive Designate at UK Research and Innovation, Sir Mark Walport said:

Research and innovation are global endeavours. Agreements like the one signed today by the United Kingdom and the United States set the framework for the great discoveries of the future, whether that be furthering our understanding of neutrinos or improving the accessibility of museum collections.

Agreements like this also send a clear signal that UK researchers are outward looking and ready to work with the best talent wherever that may be. UK Research and Innovation is looking forward to extending partnerships in science and innovation around the world.

The President of the United States and the Prime Minister agreed in January to deliver an ambitious agenda to strengthen UK-US cooperation. This agreement is an important step forward in fulfilling that ambition.