

[News story: HiLight Semiconductor: new technology to increase broadband speed](#)

Global broadband networks are under increasing strain due to bandwidth-intensive applications such as cloud computing, video streaming and the Internet of Things. Experts fear this could lead to demand for data outpacing supply.

According to the [EU Fibre to the Home Council](#), “fast broadband infrastructure is now a determining factor in ensuring the economic fortunes of cities and regions”. Although modern fibre optic cable can provide almost unlimited bandwidth, the current interface technology is expensive and restricts speeds to 1 or 2.5Gbps, which is then often shared with at least 20 users.

[HiLight Semiconductor](#) has developed a new patented integrated circuit (IC) that provides an innovative solution to the problem – an approach that is simple yet flexible. HiLight provides software to control the IC but systems providers can change it if needed. HiLight believes the new IC offers the lowest operating power, at low cost, allowing speeds of up to 10Gbps, both upstream and downstream.

The company demonstrated the solution at 2 trade shows recently – in Shenzhen, China, and in San Diego, California.

Next-generation services is one of the challenges of the [Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund](#) – part of the government’s [Industrial Strategy](#). Part of the challenge asks companies like HiLight Semiconductor to apply for funding to ensure UK service sectors are at the forefront of developing and using innovation.

Find out more about the [next-generation services challenge](#).

Innovating ahead of market demand

So far, HiLight Semiconductor has exported more than 50 million integrated circuits worldwide. Independent analysts, [Ovum](#), expects the 10G ‘fibre to the home’ market to add over 50 million more units each year within the next 5 years.

Gary Steele, Executive Chairman of HiLight Semiconductor, explains his company’s approach:

Communications infrastructure can be a relatively slow-moving industry, but it has a very long lifetime too. We took our time to look at analyst reports and speak to customers and worked out ways we could speed up our customers’ production lines, for example, by

maximising the number of components integrated on our IC. The telecoms industry wants low-power, robust designs that work totally reliably over the extremes of outside temperatures and over many years of continuous operation.

When we started out, very few people knew about the inner workings of broadband, but now you see optical fibre in TV adverts and people are more aware of the Internet of Things. They certainly know about 4G and perhaps 5G phones. Our integrated circuits help provide the backbones that can support all this data, video, cloud computing and all the new services that seem to arrive as soon as more – and lower cost – capacity becomes available.

A fast-growing business

HiLight Semiconductor recently came 6th in the [Syndicatoroom's Top 100 of Britain's fastest-growing businesses](#).

In the last year, the company has created more than 15 new high-level engineering jobs and the total number of employees will soon reach 60.

[See how other businesses have benefited from Innovate UK funding and support.](#)

[Apply for innovation funding.](#)

Speech: Trade and tariffs: Brexit and beyond

Thank you. And thanks to DWF and Hume Brophy for hosting us this morning.

Trade policy is all about playing to your strengths – it's called comparative advantage for a reason. So I think it's particularly apt that we're being hosted by a purveyor of one of our finest exports – legal services. Especially one based in Manchester.

The work of the Department for International Trade

As you've heard, I'm the Minister for Trade Policy.

In crude terms, that makes me minister for trade agreements, as well as things like trade preferences for developing countries, agreeing WTO schedules, and establishing our own independent trade remedies regime, so we can protect industry against dumping and other unfair practices.

Today I've been asked to talk about our priorities in some of those areas.

But before I start I should emphasise that my department, the Department for International Trade, has a range of other priorities: things like encouraging small businesses to export, securing foreign direct investment from firms overseas, and providing export finance.

People often assume that DIT is a purely Brexit department, but this kind of bread-and-butter work is equally important and has been going on since long before the referendum: [UK Export Finance](#) is actually the world's oldest export credit agency.

What Brexit has done is give this work renewed emphasis, which is why we now have a dedicated Department for International Trade, so that all trade-related work is done under one roof, and so trade has its own voice at the Cabinet table for the first time in over 30 years.

To give one example: UK Export Finance can now give support in over 60 currencies. We'll also be launching a new Exports Strategy in the coming months.

A lot of that support is about helping us export more to the EU, and I've made numerous trips across Europe to promote UK exporters and the UK as an investment destination.

Our negotiations with the EU

I think that's an important reminder that we shouldn't see European trade purely through the prism of Brexit negotiations – trade isn't all about trade agreements.

Nonetheless, I will touch on those negotiations.

As the Prime Minister has said, the government wants a deep, comprehensive and unique free trade agreement with the EU.

We want that because we value EU trade.

When I talk about the opportunities that lie outside the Customs Union, people often accuse me of ignoring the opportunity right on our doorstep. But I can assure you that the government is fully cognisant of that.

The EU takes two fifths of our exports; they're a developed market of half a billion people starting 20 miles from Dover.

That will always be important – it's simply that I don't see this as an either/or choice.

As a British MP, born in New York with a German wife, I've always seen the choice between Britishness, globalism and Europeanism as a false trichotomy, and so it is here.

By leaving the Customs Union, we will have the ability to sign new trade

agreements. But I believe we will also get a good deal with the EU.

By the Commission's own estimates, trade with the UK are worth over EUR 800 Billion to the EU27. On the day we leave, we will immediately become the EU's second-largest trading partner, only slightly behind the US, and well ahead of third-placed China. It is strongly in the EU's interests to sign a deal.

Yes, in relative terms the trading relationship is worth even more to us than it is to them. But it's not a zero-sum game.

And in technical terms this is more straightforward than most trade agreements: this will be the only trade agreement in history where the 2 sides start from a position of already being aligned.

Our priorities for non-EU trade

So I think we will get a strong, mutually-beneficial trade agreement with the EU. But what of trade agreements outside the EU – what of our priorities and our progress there?

We can split this out into our overall aims, how we're achieving those aims, and how we're prioritising them.

Our overall aim is to ensure continuity and certainty for UK businesses, by transitioning the 40 or so trade agreements the EU has in place with third countries.

We will also take advantage of the great opportunities outside the Customs Union – the IMF has predicted that 90% of global growth will be outside the EU in the coming years – by agreeing new trade deals.

We're already making strong progress towards achieving these aims. Last month's draft text on the withdrawal agreement included the ability for the UK to negotiate and sign new trade agreements during the implementation period.

And although we can't do that yet – we're bound by the EU's principle of sincere cooperation – we're laying the groundwork.

We're laying the groundwork domestically. I am currently taking the [Trade Bill](#) through Parliament, which will, amongst other things, give us the power in domestic law to transition the EU's existing third-party trade agreements.

And we're laying the groundwork with our trading partners: we have set up trade working groups with 21 countries.

As for prioritising trade agreements: as you would expect, this is a holistic process; we look at things like the ease of achieving a deal and the size and compatibility of the other country's economy.

But there's no algorithm that will tell you what to do.

Our world-leading services

As you would expect, whoever we discuss trade with services are important.

Services make up 44% of our exports. That's equates to a higher-proportion of GDP than for any G7 country and makes us the world's second-largest services exporter; second only to the US.

And if anything that underestimates the importance of service exports: when you look at value-add – taking into account re-exports – services are worth around two-thirds.

That's led right here, by the financial, professional and business services of the City of London: a sector close to my heart, given the time I spent on trading floors here before I went into politics, and the number of my Chelsea and Fulham constituents who work here.

Given our hosts, I specifically want to mention our 'Legal Services are GREAT' campaign, launched in October in Singapore.

This is spreading the word worldwide about our legal system's predictability, commercial adaptability and certainty; our judges' integrity and experience; and the depth and breadth of expertise that has made to UK such an exceptional global legal hub.

We want to protect our services trade as we leave the EU. But we also want to do much more. Trade in services has historically resisted liberalisation much more than trade in goods.

The UK: a voice for free trade

So trade policy post-Brexit will be about much more than individual trade deals. It will also be about Britain becoming a voice for free trade, at the World Trade Organization and other international fora.

We are currently working to ensure we have our own WTO tariff schedules. We're already a member in our own right, but we're currently covered by the EU's schedules, so we've taken the decision to replicate these for the time being, partly so business has maximum certainty.

We're already a World Trade Organization member in our own right. But not one with our own voice, as the EU speaks for all member states.

The IMF estimated that we were the world's fifth largest economy at the end of last year, and in today's world, where there's so many forces in favour of protectionism, it is to everyone's benefit to have a nation of Britain's stature making the case for free trade.

News story: Alvegesic vet. 10 mg/ml Solution for injection for Horses, Dogs and Cats – Product defect recall alert

We wish to make wholesalers and veterinarians aware that Alvetra u. Werfft GmbH has issued a batch recall of Alvegesic vet. 10 mg/ml Solution for injection for Horses, Dogs and Cats (Vm 32802/4000) due to contamination during production.

The following batch is affected:

- Product: Alvegesic vet. 10mg/ml, 10mI – Batch No. P00545 EXPIRY: 03-2019

For further information regarding the recall, please contact Mette Thulstrup Bruhn: mette.bruhn@dechra.com

Press release: Lord Chancellor announces drive to increase judicial diversity

- government to fund new judicial education programme
- support from Judiciary, Judicial College and legal professional bodies
- online education platform for potential candidates
- targeted support for underrepresented groups

Talented people from all backgrounds across the legal profession will be given greater support to apply to become a judge, Lord Chancellor David Gauke announced today (25 April 2018).

A new online learning platform will enable candidates from all legal backgrounds to develop their understanding of the role and skills required of a judge, and how their legal experience has prepared them for judicial office, prior to making an application.

The Pre-Application Judicial Education (PAJE) programme is a joint initiative from the Judicial Diversity Forum, which is made up of MOJ, Judiciary, Judicial Appointments Commission, Bar Council, Law Society and Chartered Institute of Legal Executives and coordinates action to remove barriers to candidates from underrepresented groups applying to be judges.

Additional, targeted support will be available to those applicants from groups that are underrepresented in the judiciary via discussion sessions led by judges. This will give potential candidates insight into the realities of the role and offer an opportunity to address any perceptions they may have on barriers to judicial office.

Development of the programme will be funded by the MOJ, with Forum partners contributing to further running costs.

PAJE is the first initiative delivered jointly by all members of the Judicial Diversity Forum and partners will continue to work together on actions to drive diversity.

Lord Chancellor, David Gauke said:

Becoming a judge is a crucial form of public service at the very heart of our society.

From my time as a solicitor I know there are excellent candidates from right across the legal profession, and we want to make it easier for people from all backgrounds to aspire to these roles.

We have seen improvement in diversity in recent years, and it is clear that widening the talent pool from which judges are drawn can only make our world-renowned justice system even stronger.

Lord Chief Justice, Lord Burnett of Maldon said:

I am committed to working to further improve judicial diversity. This programme of work is an important opportunity to offer practical assistance to underrepresented groups.

I hope that this scheme, which the judiciary and particularly the Judicial College is taking a leading role in devising and delivering, will widen the pool of applicants to ensure that the best candidates, from a wide range of backgrounds, apply for judicial posts.

Lord Kakkar, Chairman of the Judicial Appointments Commission and the Judicial Diversity Forum, said:

The Commission warmly welcomes this initiative which will give candidates from the widest range of backgrounds the opportunity to better understand, prepare and develop themselves for a future judicial role.

We look forward to reporting on its impact in future years and hope that it will encourage talented candidates from underrepresented groups to consider applying for judicial appointment at the right

stage in their career.

The online education programme will be available from early 2019, with the discussion groups to follow and MOJ will work with partners to increase awareness amongst practising legal professionals.

The initiative builds on our £1 billion investment to reform our courts service, to modernise processes and improving the environment and working conditions for those who work within it, including judges.

Notes to editors

1. MOJ funding will amount to an estimate of £152,000 over three years. The total cost of the programme will be approximately £300,000 including contributory costs from partners.
2. Places on the discussion sessions will be available by application, details will be available in early 2019. Preference will be given to applicants from underrepresented groups; women lawyers, BAME lawyers, lawyers with disabilities and those from a non-barrister professional background (including solicitors and chartered legal executives).
3. For more information contact the MOJ press office on 02033340185

[News story: HMRC calls on online marketplaces to sign agreement tackling VAT fraud](#)

HMRC is today (25 April 2018) asking all online marketplaces operating in the UK to sign [an agreement](#) to help tackle online VAT fraud and errors taking place on their platforms.

Online marketplaces have transformed the way people shop and helped millions of businesses to sell their products and services.

These platforms have a responsibility to ensure their sellers understand the tax rules and prevent fraud from happening on their watch.

To assist HMRC in tackling online VAT fraud and error, the agreement asks online marketplaces to commit to:

- educating online sellers from the UK and abroad about their VAT obligations in the UK either via their own help and support or by directing them to [HMRC's GOV.UK guidance](#)
- responding swiftly when notified by HMRC that sellers are not playing by the VAT rules, and setting up a system to take appropriate action
- finding a suitable and lawful way to provide HMRC with information about their sellers, when requested

HMRC will publish the list of all online marketplaces that sign up to this agreement. If an online marketplace that signs the agreement fails to meet the commitments, HMRC will remove them from the list.

Mel Stride, the Financial Secretary to the Treasury, said:

The growth of online marketplaces has helped many businesses to sell more products across the UK and has contributed greatly to the economy.

However, there is a small minority of sellers not paying their fair share of tax, and we're committed to working with marketplaces on multiple levels to tackle tax evasion.

Jon Thompson, HMRC's Chief Executive, said:

The UK has already led the way in holding online marketplaces accountable for VAT fraud committed on their platforms.

The agreement goes even further to tackle this issue, with online marketplaces committing to helping their sellers understand their tax responsibilities and ensuring we have the information we need to take action against those who do not play by the rules.

This agreement builds on world-leading powers, known by the term joint and several liability (JSL) rules, which hold online marketplaces accountable for VAT fraud committed by sellers on their platforms.

These were first introduced in September 2016 and were strengthened further in March 2018 – they have already gone a long way to ensure businesses selling goods to the UK online pay the VAT that is due.

Further information

HMRC will update the list of signatories regularly.

See measures announced in [Autumn Budget 2017](#) and in [Budget 2016](#).

If you're an online marketplace operator, see [the checks you need to make on sellers](#).

HMRC estimates that the tax loss from VAT fraud and error on online marketplaces was between £1 billion and £1.5 billion in 2016 to 2017.

HMRC has opened about 2,100 investigations into non-compliant overseas businesses selling via online marketplaces in the period since Royal Assent of the JSL measures in September 2016 (up to 31 January 2018). This resulted in it issuing around 1,300 JSL notices to online marketplaces by 31 January.

There is considerable evidence that the measures have been effective in tackling online VAT fraud and error. This includes about 27,550 applications to register for VAT from overseas online retail businesses since the measures were announced in March 2016 (up to 31 January 2018). This compares with about 1,650 for 2015.