

Partners in the Blue Pacific (PBP): joint statement, September 2022

On September 22, 2022, Ministers and representatives of Partners in the Blue Pacific members and observers and Pacific Ministers met to discuss progress in implementing Partners in the Blue Pacific. This follows a briefing by Partners in the Blue Pacific with Members of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) at a senior officials' level.

Australia, Japan, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States welcomed Germany and Canada's increased focus and commitment to genuine partnership with the Pacific and their announcement of intent to join the Partners in the Blue Pacific. Partners reinforced that this inclusive, informal mechanism will be guided by the PIF's 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent and existing Pacific regional architecture. This included ongoing engagement and consultation with the PIF and respect for the concept of Pacific regionalism and related regional mechanisms, sovereignty, transparency, accountability, and we are committed to being led and guided by the Pacific islands.

Partners noted that the Partners in the Blue Pacific aims to support the Pacific region and its priorities more effectively and efficiently. Together and individually, our countries will enhance our existing efforts to support Pacific priorities. Working together with the PIF and in response to the upcoming implementation plan for the 2050 Strategy, we will map existing projects and plan future ones, seeking to drive resources, remove duplication, and close gaps, which will avoid greater burdens and lost opportunities for Pacific governments and Pacific peoples. In parallel, each of our governments will continue to increase the ambition of our individual efforts in the region and in alignment with national and regional goals and priorities.

Six prospective Lines of Effort and initial projects for PBP were discussed, aligned with the thematic areas of the Forum's 2050 Strategy. Participants agreed to further dialogue ahead of finalizing the Lines of Effort. The Lines of Effort discussed were:

- Climate Change Resilience, Adaptation, and Disasters
- Secure and Resilient Technology and Connectivity
- Protection of the Ocean and Environment
- People Centered Development
- Resources and Economic Development
- Political Leadership and Regionalism

Participants discussed some prospective initiatives that could be considered initially under the informal, inclusive Partners in the Blue Pacific. These included: Pacific humanitarian warehousing to preposition humanitarian and emergency supplies as agreed by PIF Ministers at the inaugural Pacific Disaster Risk Reduction Ministers Meeting in Nadi; an annual Pacific cyber

capacity conference; further support to the Pacific Climate Change Centre in Samoa; and support to access climate finance. Participants agreed to further discussion of prospective initiatives in 2022 based on preferred timeframes of the Pacific Islands.

Partners further committed to working with the region to consider additional prospective initiatives for Pacific consultation and consideration, including in areas such as education and scholarships, infrastructure, gender, and countering Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing.

Partners committed to regular and ongoing engagement with Pacific Island governments, the PIF and other Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific (CROP) agencies, and to periodic engagement to review and guide implementation in partnership with the Pacific in alignment with the views of the Pacific Islands.

Partners committed to regular, enduring engagement and consultation with Forum members on Partners in the Blue Pacific to ensure it meets Pacific priorities. Partners reinforced their long-term commitment to the Pacific and to ensuring that this informal, inclusive mechanism delivers practical, tangible results aligned with existing regional architecture and guided by the Pacific at every stage.

Attendees included representatives from Australia, Fiji, French Polynesia, Japan, Kiribati, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Vanuatu, as well as Canada, France, Germany, India, Republic of Korea, the Pacific Islands Forum, and the European Union in their observing capacity.

Nearly £50 million boost for Britain's industrial future

- £49.4 million government funding to help British industry end their reliance on fossil fuels and reduce energy costs
- funding will back the development of fuel switching technology, helping to drive growth by attracting private investment and creating new jobs across the country
- part of the government's plan to support British industry as we transition to a low-carbon economy

Nearly £50 million in government funding is being made available today (23 September 2022) to support the future of British industry.

£49.4 million will be awarded to pioneering projects across the country,

helping drive economic growth through the development of fuel switching technology which will see a wide range of industries, including steel, ceramics, pharmaceuticals and food production, reduce their reliance on fossil fuels and slash energy costs.

Business and Energy Minister Lord Callanan said:

We're investing nearly £50 million to back British industry, making sure they're fit for the future and helping end their dependency on expensive fossil fuels.

Developing fuel switching technology will make this possible, accelerating the transition to cleaner fuels across our economy, and driving down costs for businesses.

Industrial fuel switching shifts industrial energy use from high carbon to low carbon fuels, with the aim of decarbonising industry in line with the UK's target of reaching Net Zero by 2050 while boosting economic growth, jobs and prosperity.

Fossil fuels (including coal, gas and oil) made up around [55% of industrial energy consumption in 2019](#). As set out in the [Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy](#), to decarbonise industry in line with net zero, it is expected that industrial emissions need to fall by around 2 thirds by 2035 and at least 90% by 2050.

Investing in this technology will make it easier and more cost-effective for industry to be powered by cleaner fuels like hydrogen and renewable electricity, instead of fossil fuels. The funding announced today, available through Phase 2 of the £55 million [Industrial Fuel Switching competition](#), will support the development of new fuel switching technology in the UK, helping to attract private investment into the country and supporting new green jobs.

Supporting British industry to end their dependency on fossil fuels is a vital part of the government's plans to boost domestic energy resilience, alongside accelerating renewables and scaling up nuclear.

Under Phase 2 of the Industrial Fuel Switching competition, fuel switching projects can apply for a share of £49.4 million government funding. This follows Phase 1 of the competition, which saw £5.6 million awarded in May 2022 to [21 projects](#) for early-stage feasibility studies into their project designs.

Previous winners under Phase 1 included:

- projects helping the ceramics, food production and steel sectors become powered by hydrogen instead of natural gas
- technology to develop heat pumps for food and pharmaceutical businesses
- studies exploring switching glass making facilities from natural gas to gasified waste and biomass

- The Industrial Fuel Switching competition is funded through the BEIS £1 billion [Net Zero Innovation Portfolio](#)
- the competition supports innovation in the development of pre-commercial fuel switch and fuel switch enabling technology for the industrial sector, to help industry switch from high to lower carbon fuels
- funding will be awarded through Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI) contracts, providing 100% funding for projects developing pre-commercial solutions

There are 2 phases to the competition:

- Phase 1 – Feasibility: funding for feasibility studies into fuel switch and fuel switch enabling solutions, with £50,000 to £300,000 available per application
- Phase 2 – Demonstration: funding for projects to demonstrate fuel switch and fuel switch enabling solutions, with £1 million to £6 million available per project
- funding is divided into 3 Lots:
 - fuel switch and fuel switch enabling technologies for hydrogen
 - fuel switch and fuel switch enabling technologies for electrification
 - fuel switch and fuel switch enabling technologies for biomass, wastes, and other net zero compatible fuels
- Phase 2 (Demonstration Projects) is open to all applicants, whether or not they took part in Phase 1

[Government announces closure of Office of Tax Simplification](#)

News story

The Chancellor announced on 23 September as part of the fiscal event that the Office of Tax Simplification will be closed.



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The Chancellor's statement is part of [The Growth Plan 2022](#). As the Office of Tax Simplification is a statutory body, this closure will take effect when the next Finance Bill receives Royal Assent.

The Office expects to publish its report on the taxation of [Property Income](#) in October. The Office will continue to gather evidence on its [Hybrid and distance working review](#).

Please direct press enquiries to the Treasury Press Office 020 7270 5238.

Published 23 September 2022

[Statement for the Interactive Dialogue with the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi](#)

World news story

The UK delivered a statement on the findings of the Commission of Inquiry on Burundi.



UK Government

Thank you, Mr President.

The United Kingdom thanks the Special Rapporteur for the first full report since his appointment. We welcome the government of Burundi's stated commitment to improving the human rights situation. However, we are concerned by the Special Rapporteur's assessment that the human rights situation in Burundi has not changed substantively.

We also regret that many of the recommendations Burundi accepted at its third Universal Periodic Review in 2018, particularly establishing an independent judiciary, are yet to be implemented fully. We call on the Government to make progress urgently in this regard ahead of Burundi's fourth Review next year.

Mr President,

The findings of this report make clear that ongoing scrutiny by this Council remains absolutely necessary. We respectfully urge the Government to reconsider its stance of not engaging with the mandates established by the Council or allowing the Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights to operate in Burundi. Accepting scrutiny and taking advantage of the opportunities this re-engagement would offer can help Burundi deliver on its commitment to ensure its people benefit from the full enjoyment of all human rights.

Mr Zongo,

We would welcome your advice on how the international community can best make clear the benefits of a decision by the Burundian Government to re-engage with this Council.

Thank you

Published 23 September 2022

Fertility clinics' compliance with consumer law: findings published

- CMA secures changes from fertility clinics to improve consumer law compliance, following guidance and a review of practices
- CMA and ASA send open letter to all UK clinics to promote compliance across the sector and ensure patients are not misled
- CMA will work with the sector to explore a standard approach for what is included in the headline package price for a single cycle of IVF

In February 2020, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) [raised concerns about some practices by fertility clinics](#), such as providing unclear price information and advertising misleading success rates. It also identified a general lack of awareness that consumer law applies in the sector. To help combat this, the CMA published guidance in June 2021 to make clear clinics' legal obligations to treat patients fairly, and a video and guide to help IVF patients understand their consumer rights.

Following publication of guidance, the CMA committed to review compliance, and the findings of this review – which looked at clinics providing around 40% of self-funded IVF cycles in the UK – have been published today.

The report sets out that:

- compliance issues were found with the majority of clinics reviewed, albeit in some cases the concerns were relatively minor
- the provision of accurate, clear and transparent information upfront is critical for patients, particularly regarding prices and success rates
- the way in which patients fund their treatment varies widely, from using their savings, gifts from parents, loans from siblings, personal loans, credit cards, inheritance, or redundancy pay-outs to re-mortgaging their house – or often a combination of these
- most patients buying fertility treatment for the first time carry out a shortlisting process, primarily online using clinic websites, and mainly factoring in clinics' location, prices and success rates
- significant differences exist between what clinics include in their package for a single cycle of IVF making it very difficult for patients to compare prices when shortlisting clinics

The CMA has written to certain clinics to highlight specific issues such as failing to provide key price information, advertising misleading success rate

claims (including making unsubstantiated superiority claims) and failing to provide important information about treatment add-ons.

All clinics contacted by the CMA following the review have now made changes to their practices to benefit patients. The CMA welcomes their constructive response and calls on all clinics to review their practices and ensure they comply with the law.

As part of its next steps, the CMA plans to hold roundtable discussions with clinics and the sector – including the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) – to explore the feasibility of developing a standard approach for what is included in the headline package price for a single cycle of IVF so patients can meaningfully compare clinics.

In addition, the CMA and the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) have published a [joint open letter](#) to ensure clinics comply with consumer law. If they fail to comply the CMA could take enforcement action.

Louise Strong, Director, Consumer Protection at the CMA, said:

Buying fertility treatment can be stressful and is very expensive, with each cycle costing several thousand pounds. It's crucial that people have all the information they need upfront when they are comparing options so they can make decisions that are right for them, so it's encouraging to see positive changes from clinics as a result of our work.

But clinics cannot be complacent. All clinics must get up to speed now to ensure they are on the right side of the law or risk action from the CMA.

Further information on the CMA's IVF work is available on the [Self-funded IVF consumer law guidance case page](#), including the findings report with recommendations.

1. Media queries should be directed to: press@cma.gov.uk or 020 3738 6460.
2. The [Advertising Standards Authority's enforcement notice](#) issued in June 2021 relates to the way information is displayed on clinics' own websites. The enforcement notice instructs clinics to review their advertising to ensure compliance with the Advertising Code or face enforcement action.