

Press release: UK aid funds world's biggest educational technology research project

UK aid is joining forces with British universities, researchers and education experts from around the world to create the largest ever education technology research and innovation project.

More than 380 million children worldwide will finish primary schools without being able to read or do basic maths.

One of the major challenges for education technology in parts of Africa and Asia is that while governments and schools buy hardware such as laptops and tablets, there are not many opportunities for teachers to learn how to use the technology to support children's learning, the technology is not in the right language or schools can't maintain or replace the technology.

The new UK aid supported Education Technology (EdTech) hub is bringing together British universities, research companies and education experts to help children, teachers and governments in developing countries get up to speed with the new technology in their classrooms.

The Department for International Development (DFID) is working with the World Bank on the EdTech hub, which aims to create the largest global body of research that looks at how education technology is being used and how this can be improved.

Minister for Africa Harriett Baldwin said:

Educational technology can transform how children learn, but in many developing countries it is often only available in the wrong language or schools do not have the right tools to keep their software in working order.

That's why UK aid is supporting the creation of the EdTech hub to help millions more children receive the quality education they deserve and reach their full potential.

For the first time there will be a substantial amount of practical research available to help teachers and governments around the world choose the right technology for their classrooms.

Senior Director for Education at the World Bank, Jaime Saavedra, said:

Today over half of children in the world are not learning. How can we separate the hope from the hype in harnessing the disruptive

power of new technologies to tackle this global learning crisis?

That is the question that the EdTech hub seeks to answer. The World Bank is pleased to participate in this exciting and potentially game-changing initiative.

The EdTech hub, which will run for eight years, is made up of the University of Cambridge, the Overseas Development Institute, Results for Development, Brink, Jigsaw, Open Development and Education, INJINI, Afrilabs, e-Learning Africa and BRAC.

Expertise from the University of Cambridge will oversee a stream of rigorous research, meanwhile British technology company Brink, will scale promising technology ideas with governments and educators.

Dr Sara Hennessey, from the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge said:

This huge investment and sustained commitment by DFID and partners to improving the educational opportunities for disadvantaged children in key low income regions is extremely welcome.

The University of Cambridge is very pleased to be involved in this pivotally important research programme. Technology use has to be adapted to the cultural context and one-size-fits-all solutions simply don't work. Rather than hoping for the best, we have to carefully review and iterate, generating insights from rigorous research and applying them in practice.

UK aid is already being used to find innovative ways to address the global learning crisis through education technology.

A maths app developed as part of a programme by tech company onebillion and funded by UK aid, is being used in schools in Malawi and the UK to help provide a better education for children. Research has shown attainment of children who used the app was 45% higher for maths and 100% higher for reading.

The new EdTech hub will look at how innovations like onebillion and others can be evaluated, scaled-up and used across developing countries.

The EdTech hub will also:

- Provide evidence and research to help develop new technologies and digital tools for children to use, such as bespoke learning software that has the relevant language for the student.
- provide a global platform for sharing ideas and effective practice for technology companies, investors and decision makers

- Bring innovation to communities, classrooms and ministries with a team that will work directly with users to test and tailor technology.
- Offer technical assistance to help international governments who are keen to build up their knowledge and expertise on how to integrate digital education tools in their countries.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- £20 million of UK aid will go towards the EdTech Hub.
- 50% million of this will go towards low-income-country-based research on EdTech
- 35% on research synthesis, dissemination and supporting governments
- 15% on innovation and horizon scanning
- The EdTech Hub will shortly commence hire of additional staff through global competition, including researcher positions at the University of Cambridge.
- Interested parties can visit <https://edtechhub.org> to register their details for updates

Programme director Susan Nicolai, senior research fellow at ODI, said:

Education is a fundamental right of every child and a key driver of global development. Yet shockingly, if current trends continue, by 2030 just one in ten children in the poorest countries will be on track to gain secondary-level skills.

Education technology, if better understood and used, can be a game changer in supporting learning for some of the poorest and excluded children and young people in the world. The EdTech Hub will connect learning, innovation and expertise to make that happen.

Dr Björn Haßler, Director of Open Development & Education, added:

The most disadvantaged children are often taught by teachers who themselves are disadvantaged, including the lack of educational opportunities. If we want to improve those children's lives, we also have to think about how to support those teachers.

This support cannot rely on the often poor and costly internet connections. Instead, we have to find smart ways of utilising what is available including digital and non-digital approaches.

[Press release: New Chair appointed to the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew Board](#)

Defra Ministers have appointed Dame Amelia Fawcett DBE CVO as Chair of the Board of Trustees of the [Royal Botanic Gardens Kew](#).

Lord Gardiner, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Rural Affairs and Biosecurity, says:

Amelia will bring great energy and enthusiasm to the role of Chair and her extensive experience and connections in the private, public and voluntary sectors will make her a great ambassador for Kew.

I am extremely grateful to the outgoing Chair, Marcus Agius, for his excellent leadership over the past 10 years, and am confident that as he hands over to Amelia in October this year, Kew will go from strength to strength.

I am looking forward to working with Amelia as she leads the organisation and ensures Kew can drive forward its science agenda as an international leader in plant science, while remaining an outstanding visitor attraction, engaging the public, and supporting Defra in delivering the 25 Year Environment Plan.

Dame Amelia's appointment is for three years and will run from 26 October 2019 to 25 October 2022. The appointment has been made in accordance with the Ministerial Governance Code on Public Appointments. All appointments are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process.

Richard Deverell, Director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew says:

I am delighted that Dame Amelia Fawcett has been appointed as Chair of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew and I very much look forward to working with her.

She is a talented and highly experienced Chair who will join us at a time when our work to help meet global challenges has never been more urgent. On behalf of all of us at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew I would like to welcome her warmly to the Board.

Dame Amelia Fawcett DBE CVO, says:

I have long been an admirer of Kew's work and its impact in the UK

and internationally, particularly its work on how a better understanding of plants and fungi will help to solve some of the most critical challenges facing the world today.

It is the greatest honour and privilege to be able to help Kew achieve its inspirational and ambitious plans as an international leader in plant science, conserving global plant and fungal diversity around the world, while remaining an outstanding visitor attraction.

Royal Botanic Gardens Kew is an Executive Non-Departmental Public Body under the National Heritage Act 1983 and is sponsored by Defra. The Board of Trustees comprises a Chair and eleven members. Trustees provide non-executive leadership and support to the executive through regular Board meetings, committees and groups.

There is a requirement for appointees' political activity (if significant) to be made public. Dame Amelia has not declared any significant political activity in the past five years.

Trustees do not receive any direct remuneration for their services, although reasonable travel and subsistence expenses can be reimbursed.

Biographical details

Dame Amelia Fawcett has over 30 years of experience in the banking industry and has been Chair of Kinnevik AB since 2018, Chair of the Standards Board for Alternative Investments since 2011 and is the Lead Independent Director for State Street Corporation (having been a Non Executive Director since 2006). She is owner of Chilcott & Company Ltd, a lavender farm which she founded in Wales in 2014. She has been Chairman of the Prince of Wales Foundation (US) since 2017.

Previous roles include: Her Majesty's Treasury Non Executive Director (2012-18); Chairman of the Prince of Wales's Charitable Foundation (2011-18); Chairman of Guardian Media Group (2009-13); Bank of England Non Executive Director (2004-9); Deputy Chairman, National Portrait Gallery (2003-11). Dame Amelia worked for Morgan Stanley Group in London in various senior management roles from 1987 to 2007. A British and American citizen, Dame Amelia was Born in Boston, USA and started her career as a corporate lawyer in New York and Paris.

Notes to Editors

The Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew is a world-famous scientific organisation, internationally respected for its outstanding collections as well as its scientific expertise in plant diversity, conservation and sustainable development in the UK and around the world. Kew Gardens is a major international and a top London visitor attraction. Kew's 132 hectares of landscaped gardens, and Wakehurst, Kew's Wild Botanic Garden, attract over 2.3 million visits every year. Kew Gardens was made a UNESCO World Heritage

Site in July 2003 and celebrates its 260th anniversary in 2019. Wakehurst is home to Kew's Millennium Seed Bank, the largest wild plant seed bank in the world. Kew receives approximately one third of its funding from Government through the Defra, and research councils. Further funding needed to support Kew's vital work comes from donors, membership and commercial activity including ticket sales.

Press release: Suppliers of antidepressants accused of illegal anti-competitive conduct

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has accused competitors King and Auden Mckenzie of sharing out between them the supply of nortriptyline to a large pharmaceutical wholesaler. The CMA has provisionally found that, in 2014, the 2 companies agreed Auden Mckenzie would supply only 10mg nortriptyline tablets and King would supply only 25mg nortriptyline tablets, as well as agreeing to fix the quantities and the prices of supply.

The CMA has also accused the companies King, Alissa and Lexon of exchanging commercially sensitive information, including information about prices, volumes and entry plans, to try to keep Nortriptyline prices high.

Nortriptyline is prescribed by the NHS and relied on by thousands of patients every month to relieve the symptoms of depression. NHS spending on the drug peaked at £38 million in 2015.

In a Statement of Objections issued today, the CMA has provisionally found that King and Auden Mckenzie's conduct, and the subsequent conduct of King, Alissa and Lexon, broke competition law.

Geoff Steadman, Director of Antitrust at the CMA, said:

If pharmaceutical companies get together to restrict competition for the supply of a drug, this can lead to the NHS – and ultimately the UK taxpayer – paying over the odds for what are often essential medical treatments.

We expect drug suppliers to abide by competition law so that the NHS is not denied the opportunity of benefitting from lower prices for medicines.

This is the CMA's provisional finding and the companies now have the chance to make representations to the CMA before it reaches a final decision.

For more information see the [case page](#).

Notes to editors

1. The Chapter I prohibition in the Competition Act 1998 prohibits anti-competitive agreements and concerted practices between businesses which have as their object or effect the prevention, restriction or distortion of competition within the UK. Similarly, Article 101 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) prohibits anti-competitive agreements and concerted practices which may affect trade between EU member states.
2. The CMA may impose a financial penalty on any business found to have infringed these prohibitions of up to 10% of its annual worldwide group turnover. In calculating financial penalties, the CMA takes into account a number of factors including seriousness of the infringement(s), turnover in the relevant market and any mitigating or aggravating factors.
3. A Statement of Objections gives parties notice of a proposed infringement decision under the competition law prohibitions in the Competition Act 1998 or the TFEU. It is a provisional decision only and does not necessarily lead to an infringement decision. Parties have the opportunity to make written and oral representations on the matters set out in the statement of objections. Any such representations will be considered by the CMA before any final decision is made. The final decision will be taken by a case decision group, which is separate from the case investigation team and was not involved in the decision to issue the statement of objections.
4. The Statement of Objections is addressed to Alissa Healthcare Research Limited, Auden Mckenzie (Pharma Division) Limited, Auden Mckenzie Holdings Limited, Accord-UK Limited, King Pharmaceuticals Limited, Praze Consultants Limited and Lexon (UK) Limited.
5. The Statement of Objections is addressed to Accord-UK Limited (formerly named Actavis UK Limited) because the CMA provisionally considers it was the economic successor of Auden Mckenzie (Pharma Division) Limited and should therefore be held liable for that company's direct involvement in the alleged infringement.
6. The Statement of Objections is addressed to Praze Consultants Limited, a consultancy which conducted King's corporate and commercial services, because the CMA provisionally considers that Praze directly participated in both the infringements of competition law alleged against King.

7. All information relating to this case can be found on the CMA [case page](#).
 8. For more information on the CMA see our [homepage](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and like our [Facebook page](#) page. Sign up to our [email alerts](#) to receive updates on Competition Act 1998 and cartels cases.
 9. Media enquiries should be directed to the CMA Press Office at press@cma.gov.uk or 020 3738 6460.
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[News story: Climate change tops agenda at Flood and Coast Conference 2019](#)

Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, opened the fourth Flood and Coast Conference in Telford today with a [speech](#) highlighting how we need to adapt to make our homes, businesses and communities more resilient to climate change.

Now in its fourth year, the annual event brings together experts from across the globe to share ideas and opportunities to work together to tackle the risk of flooding and coastal erosion.

This year's Flood & Coast Conference starts today at the Telford International Centre and runs until Thursday 20 June. Registration and the full event programme can be found at on the [Flood & Coast website](#)

Other topics including infrastructure resilience, partnership working, community collaboration and incident response will also be debated at the 3 day event.

Speakers this year include the Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, Sir James Bevan, the Chief Scientist of the Met Office, Professor Stephen Belcher, and Natalia Moudrak, Director Climate Resilience at the Intact Centre on Climate Adaptation.

Other speakers include Julie Foley, Director for the FCERM Strategy & National Adaptation at The Environment Agency who will be looking at the three key themes that will help us become more resilient to climate change.

John Curtin, Executive Director of Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management said

"Our thoughts are with the residents of Wainfleet today. We need to agree approaches at our Flood and Coast Conference that make our communities more

resilient to extreme weather now and for generations to come.”

“There’s two and a half weeks left to share your views as part of the consultation on our long term strategy on the future of flood and coastal erosion risk management in England. We want to hear from everyone so that we can develop the best possible plan for the future.”

Experts from the UK and across the globe will discuss their experiences so we can learn from each other and improve how we manage flood risk and coastal erosion in the UK.

Hannah Bartram, Chief Operating Officer at the Association of Directors of Environment, Economy, Planning & Transport (ADEPT) said

“ADEPT is looking forward to Flood & Coast 2019 – a great opportunity to talk about the Environment Agency’s draft FCERM strategy, particularly given increased awareness of climate change over recent months.

“We welcome the focus on developing climate resilient places and future proofing infrastructure. ADEPT local authority members are focused on building the expertise, partnerships and engagement needed to plan much further into the future”.

The Flood & Coast Conference is a great chance to network – bringing together a rich concentration of flooding and coastal erosion experts with a diverse mix of backgrounds – commercial companies, product manufacturers, public organisations, community representatives and academics.

Bringing these people together in a shared space provides a fantastic opportunity to explore how we can work together to reduce flood risk and manage coastal erosion more effectively in the UK.

More than 200 speakers will talk at the event, and 80 exhibitors will showcase the latest in flood risk management technology and innovation.

Terry Fuller, Chief Executive of CIWEM said:

“This year, perhaps more than ever before, we can positively influence the way that we manage flood and erosion risk.

“The Government’s 25 year Environment Plan sets an ambitious scene and we have the opportunity to create a strategy for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England that is world leading. Flood and Coast provides a unique and well timed forum for discussion and above all for us to think big and be bold.”

You can access the FCERM Strategy consultation [here](#).

News story: Illumina's takeover of PacBio raises competition concerns

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has been investigating the proposed \$1.2 billion merger of Illumina, Inc. (Illumina) and Pacific Biosciences of California, Inc (PacBio). The companies are both global suppliers of DNA sequencing systems to organisations across the world, including UK universities, laboratories and research institutes. DNA sequencing systems are used to study genetic variation in humans and other species for purposes such as advanced disease research and drug development.

After completing its initial Phase 1 investigation, the CMA has concerns that the deal could remove potentially the most significant competitive threat to Illumina. Illumina is by far the largest supplier of DNA sequencing systems, both in the UK and worldwide, and the merging businesses are already close competitors. PacBio has also recently released a new, innovative system for DNA sequencing (the "Sequel II" instrument), which means that it is well-positioned to offer stronger competition to Illumina in the future.

Aside from the merging parties, there are limited alternatives available for customers at present. While some suppliers plan to enter the market in future, it is not clear when they will enter or how competitive their technology will be.

The CMA is therefore concerned that Illumina could face insufficient competition after acquiring PacBio and that the deal could result in more expensive or lower quality products and less innovation in the market.

If the merging businesses are unable to address the CMA's concerns, the deal will be referred for an in-depth Phase 2 investigation, to be carried out by a group of independent CMA panel members.

For more information, visit the [Illumina, Inc. / Pacific Biosciences of California, Inc. merger inquiry](#) page.