

News story: British businesses back the Jordanian economy

- Commercial agreements between UK businesses (Jaguar Land Rover, Strathclyde University, Lyndon Water, and the Creative Group) and the Jordanian government will create close to 650 jobs in Jordan
- These deals were announced at today's (Thursday 28 February) Growth and Opportunity – the London Initiative 2019 international conference to support investment, growth and jobs for Jordan.
- The Department for International Trade has also launched a new partnership to improve the investment climate in Jordan and the UK's export credit agency has doubled its capacity for Jordan. Jaguar Land Rover, Lyndon Water Limited, Strathclyde University and the Creative Group are helping to boost opportunities and jobs for young people in the country that has provided vital support to Syrian refugees during the conflict.

The UK is using its global leadership, expertise and influence to convene the Jordan: Growth & Opportunity conference in London on 28 February 2019. It will rally the international community and private sector to create an attractive environment for investment in Jordan, underpinned by reform.

Strengthening Jordan's economy, ensuring jobs, growth and opportunity for everyone, including women and young people, is vital to securing its long-term stability and prosperity.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox MP said:

The UK is an ambitious trading nation. These commercial agreements demonstrate the already close trade and investment links between the UK and Jordan, supporting HM King Abdullah II's ambitious vision for reform and long-term, sustainable growth.

We see Jordan as an effective long-term partner in tackling regional instability, providing a safe, stable haven for refugees to remain in their region and countering extremism and terrorism. UK businesses are demonstrating their support by investing and working with the Jordanian government to create a prosperous future together.

The five commercial agreements include:

- Jaguar Land Rover is investing in the creation of the first regional Apprenticeship Training Academy for high-skilled car mechanics. This brand-new facility could eventually train 48 high-skilled mechanics per year.

- Lyndon Water Limited is introducing new techniques to remove salt from brackish water to farm fish and grow plants in water, this will create up to 200 jobs.
- To help train pharmacists, Strathclyde University will be launching a joint PhD programme in Jordan with the Middle East University (MEU).
- The Creative Group has signed two memorandums of understanding with the Jordanian government in Aqaba for a new recreation centre and a 500,000 square metre international sports city, together they will create 400 jobs.

To strengthen commercial relationships, boost trade between the two countries and unlock investment into Jordan, the UK government and Government of Jordan will also launch a new partnership to improve the investment climate in Jordan.

The UK's Department for International Trade will place a trade and investment expert in the Jordanian Embassy to support Jordanian companies looking to export or invest in the UK and British companies hoping to invest or export to Jordan.

The Department will also be providing direct support to His Excellency the Minister for Investment and the Minister of Industry, Trade and Supply on their economic transformation programme, with a particular focus on trade and investment.

This unique partnership will increase bilateral trade between the two countries and help create jobs and ensure economic stability.

UK Export Finance, the UK's Export Credit agency, has doubled its capacity for Jordan to £1.25billion. This additional support will help UK exporters and their Jordanian buyers access finance for projects in the country.

The UK-Jordan trade relationship is already worth more than £370 million a year [latest figures, for the four quarters to the end of Q3 2018.]

This follows the Prime Minister's visit to Jordan in 2017, where she made a new and ambitious offer of partnership to support and strengthen Jordan's resilience in the long-term, which the whole of government is behind.

Strathclyde University

This deal is a 3 + 2 articulation agreement between University of Strathclyde and Middle East University Jordan (MEU) to provide high-quality and recognised training for the next generation of Jordanian pharmacists in all aspects of pharmacy. Students will spend three years at MEU and then two years at the University of Strathclyde. The teaching at MEU in Year 2 and 3 will follow SIPBS curriculum. It is hoped that MEU will launch the program for recruitment for the September 2019 intake.

Creative Group

The Creative Group (CG) have signed an memorandum of understanding to be the

master lease holder and main contractor for the design and development of the Aqaba International Sports City, which is a 500,000 sq meter site next to King Hussain Airport. The site will showcase 10 sports and become a warm-weather training hub for the region. It is estimated that the project will create over 300 jobs. The MoU was signed in September 2018 and discussions are on-going. The group has also signed a memorandum of understanding with the Jordanian government to establish a cinema and shopping complex in Aqaba. The group has a 10 year master lease on the site and are now trying to find a local operator to run the facility. The MoU was signed in September 2018 and CG have now received a copy of the final contract. This project has a huge economic local impact as it also provides valuable entertainment facilities. The company estimates that the site will create over 100 full and part time jobs for local Jordanians. The property has already been built and is ready to move in.

Jaguar Land Rover

Jaguar Land Rover is investing in the creation of the first regional Training Academy for high-end car mechanics. The new facility could eventually train 48 level 2 mechanics per year where level 2 mechanics constitute 70% of a dealerships workforce. It will not only fill a large labour/market gap for the region, it will also do so in a way that benefits both Jordanians and refugees. While the local Jordanian dealership (Mahmoudia Motors) is investing in the real estate, the equipment and the cost associated to trainees, JLR global is financing the four Master Trainers to run the facility.

Lyndon Water Limited

Lyndon Water Limited will be implementing a project in the south of Jordan that will integrate phyto-desalination of brackish water with Aquaculture and Aquaponic production. First phase of the project will cover 300 hectares, and create 140-200 jobs, producing water, Aquaponics and Aquaculture products (combining fish farming and growing plants without soil).

Press release: Threat of legal action leads to payment of fine over Humber incident

On the 14th June 2018, the Master of a Russian oil tanker was fined a total of £25761.99 at Hull Magistrates Court for breaching the International Safety Management (ISM) Code in a prosecution brought by the Maritime & Coastguard Agency (MCA).

The Russian-registered 85m long tanker Tecoil Polaris arrived at Humber Port on the evening of June 5 2018 to load lubricating oil. Concerns were raised about the master and crew's competency as the vessel approached and berthed at Immingham Docks, Humber.

As a result the vessel was inspected by MCA Inspectors on the morning of 6 June 2018. They found a catalogue of deficiencies in navigation and safety equipment, together with significant non-compliance with the ISM Code. The vessel was subsequently detained and its safety certificate cancelled.

The Master of the vessel was subsequently prosecuted to an offence of breaching the ISM Code. Captain Vitaliy Trofimov pleaded guilty to the offence. He was fined £1400 and ordered to pay £24,361.99 in costs. The court ordered that fines and costs were to be paid within 56 days but a follow-up hearing about non-payment was due to be held today (28 February) at Hull Magistrates Court.

However, all fines and costs were paid in full by 3.30pm on 27 February avoiding the potential seizure of the vessel in settlement of the debt.

Captain Andrew Phillips, enforcement officer with the Maritime & Coastguard Agency said: 'This sends out a clear message: if you don't pay your fines and costs, we will come after you and we will – if we have to – use the law to seize your vessel or other assets to cover it.'

[News story: Foreign Secretary travels to the Gulf to boost momentum on Yemen peace process](#)

The Foreign Secretary's visit is part of sustained UK diplomacy to bolster the Yemen peace process. The Foreign Secretary's discussions will build on the meeting of Quad – UAE, Saudi Arabia, UK and US – foreign ministers he chaired on 13 February and come after the Prime Minister's recent announcement of £200million of new UK aid for Yemen.

The UK is putting its weight behind the efforts of the UN Special Envoy Martin Griffiths to accelerate implementation of the actions agreed at the Stockholm peace talks. For the third time in three months the Foreign Secretary will engage senior Government of Yemen figures, Houthi leaders and politicians in Oman and Saudi Arabia to press for the progress that Yemen badly needs.

Ahead of the visit the Foreign Secretary said:

I will travel to Saudi Arabia, Oman and the United Arab Emirates later this week to add further impetus to the peace process in Yemen.

My aim is to build on the UN-backed agreement reached in Stockholm in December. The peace process has allowed a sustained reduction in fighting in Hodeidah. But more needs to be done. In my discussions with the Houthis and the Government of Yemen I will urge all sides to accelerate the redeployments they agreed at Stockholm and ensure the flow of humanitarian relief.

Moving these forces away from the ports is necessary to prevent a return to fighting, prepare the road for the next round of peace talks and ensure desperately needed humanitarian aid is able to reach those who need it most.

In wider meetings with his counterparts in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates the Foreign Secretary will reinforce the UK's continued commitment to regional security, prosperity and human rights issues. In Saudi Arabia, the Foreign Secretary will also address a global conference on patient safety. In Oman, the Foreign Secretary will agree a new Joint Declaration to accelerate UK-Omani partnership.

Press release: UK aid to equip young Jordanians with skills for modern workforce

The UK will equip young Jordanians with English language and job skills such as leadership, critical thinking, and problem solving, to help them better compete in the global economy, International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt announced today (28 February).

With 68% of Jordanians being under 30 years old and 40% of those aged 15 to 24 unemployed, there is a risk of a generation of young people being locked out of up and coming sectors.

The UK has pledged to support Jordan's plans to reform its economy and boost jobs for its young population.

Today's package, announced in London at 'Jordan: Growth and Opportunity, The London Initiative', will support a series of programmes by the UK Government, through UK aid, and the British Council aimed at upskilling both Jordanians and Syrian refugees. This will help them to gain employment in growing sectors such as IT, renewable energy, logistics and tourism.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

Jordan is a country rich in human talent. But while much of its workforce is young and highly educated, many still lack the specific skills to work in booming sectors such as IT and renewable energy.

UK aid will provide young Jordanians with the essential skills needed to join the workforce, strengthen the economy and help their country become self-sufficient. This includes helping them to learn English, a powerful tool in the world of international business.

This is Global Britain at its best, using British expertise to pass on skills to Jordan's workforce, making it an even more attractive place for British businesses to invest, and giving the UK a stronger, more prosperous ally in the Middle East.

The package demonstrates a cross-government approach to supporting Jordan with expertise and funding from a range of departments and institutions, including:

- a DFID programme, Skills for Development which is still under design, will assist 200,000 young people to gain English and workplace skills, improve training for 6,000 English language teachers and increase access to English learning materials;
- British Council projects to give marginalised communities access to English Language courses through community centres, launch an online learning platform to teach English for the workplace and provide 5,000 apprenticeships and internships to help young Jordanians enter the workplace;
- build a partnership between the Prince's Trust and Jordan's Crown Prince Foundation;
- further DFID support to UNICEF to address the urgent needs of children not enrolled in any kind of education, and improve the quality of education received; and
- a new partnership between the Government of UK and Jordan, which will help drive up education standards, develop a strategy for better use of technology in schools, and help evaluate Jordan's school inspections.

In her speech at the conference, the International Development Secretary will also acknowledge the tremendous generosity Jordan has shown by hosting 670,000 registered Syrian refugees, despite facing its own economic

challenges. To help lessen the burden, and bolster international efforts, the UK will support 22,000 Syrian refugees by providing cash to buy food, clothes and other essentials.

Notes to editors

- The UK is using its global leadership, expertise and influence to convene the Jordan: Growth & Opportunity conference in London on 28 February 2019. It will rally the international community and private sector to create an attractive environment for investment in Jordan, underpinned by reform.
- Ensuring that Jordan is a beacon of stability in the Middle East, a gateway to trade in the region and a steadfast ally on the front line of conflict is a win for everyone, including the UK.
- The Skills for Development programme will provide up to £25 million from the Department for International Development over five years to equip young people in Jordan with much needed English language and modern workplace skills such as critical thinking and problem solving.
- The UNICEF uplift package will provide an extra £3.35 million to address the urgent needs of out of school children and improve the quality of education, supporting vulnerable Syrian and Jordanian young people.
- The British Council will fund up to £250,000 for industry driven education and training for higher education and technical education as well as £400,000 in UK Aid towards helping marginalised and displaced young people access English language learning to improve their learning outcomes. This will include providing specially designed training and resources for 500 teachers and 40 community centre leaders. The British Council will also provide up to £80,000 for a series of 3 “Massive Open Online Courses” and an additional £16,000 in UK aid for content costs.
- DFID will provide £50 million additional humanitarian support to Jordan over three years, the vast majority of which will support cash transfers to 22,000 Syrian refugees.
- DFID has also allocated existing funding for Jordan that will train 10,000 vulnerable Jordanians and Syrian refugees in vocational skills to work in growing sectors such as ICT, renewable energy and tourism.
- The Government of Jordan and UK education partnership brings together the Department for Education, Ofsted, the Department for International Development and the Department for International Trade as part of a new package of up to £6.48m of peer-to-peer support from the UK government, funded by the cross-government Conflict, Security and Stabilisation Fund (CSSF).

[News story: Mars rover gets work-out](#)

controlled from more than 6,000 miles away

Experts at the European Space Agency's centre in Oxfordshire completed a series of tests across nearly 6,900 miles (11,000 km) in order to see how the Mars rover reacts to commands across large distances.

When on the surface of Mars, the rover will need to be controlled when it is up to 250 million miles from Earth.

The trials team used a new model called 'Charlie' to test hardware, software and to practice science operations for the future European Space Agency (ESA) ExoMars rover, which will look for life on Mars in 2021. The Atacama desert was chosen because it is the closest we can get to a Martian-like environment.

Credit: ExoFit PanCam team.

Science Minister Chris Skidmore said:

This testing is an inspiring scientific achievement and essential to prepare the scientists and engineers involved for not only this mission to the Red Planet but for future endeavours.

The mission showcases the very best of the UK's space sector and is a testament to the strengths of our international science collaborations. It also exemplifies our ambitious modern Industrial Strategy which aims to make the UK the world's most innovative economy by creating opportunities for business through science.

The European Centre for Space Applications and Telecommunications (ECSAT) at Harwell hosts the new Remote Control Centre, where scientists and engineers are learning how to operate the rover and receive information from its instruments.

The remote control centre at ECSAT, Harwell.

The testing, which will continue until 1 March, is a more complex trial following on from a previous successful test-drive in Spain's Tabernas Desert in October, which was controlled from the Science and Technology Facilities Council's Harwell Mission Operations Centre. The scientists and engineers are gaining experience in science operations and learning how to teleoperate the rover in the field.

ESA's human and robotic exploration director, David Parker, explained that:

we call these tests 'ExoFit' – meaning ExoMars-like Field Testing.

The results will help us prepare the real Rosalind Franklin rover for the challenge of safe operation far across the Solar System.

More than 60 people from different organisations are involved, including the UK Space Agency, Airbus Defence and Space and the Open University. The team in Chile set up the rover, which is equipped with several cameras and proxy instruments for science, such as spectrometers and a drill, in an area of scientific interest and challenging from a locomotion point of view.

The rover will traverse areas with obstacles and slopes. Scientists will try to understand the geological history of the area and look for biomarkers using only the data sent by the rover. Scientists will have just a few hours to plan the next day activities.

Credit: ExoFit PanCam team.

Marie-Claire Perkinson, Head of Exploration and Robotics at Airbus said:

Doing field trials in a Mars like environment is the best way to prove that our rover and its instruments and systems all work as they should. They also help the teams iron out any problems to ensure that when we finally go to Mars, we know that everything will work first time and we can concentrate on the search for life.

ExoFit is a project managed and implemented by Airbus Defence and Space. It is funded by ESA's human and robotic exploration programme, which includes work in Low Earth Orbit aboard the International Space Station as well as missions to the Moon and Mars.

The first part of ExoMars, the [Trace Gas Orbiter](#), is already operational around Mars, delivering stunning images of the Red Planet as well as relaying data from NASA's InSight lander and Curiosity rover.

The future ExoMars rover will be the first of its kind to travel across the Martian surface and drill down to determine if evidence of life is buried underground, protected from the Sun's radiation that bombards the surface of the Red Planet. Last month the Science Minister, along with British ESA astronaut Tim Peake, revealed the rover will be named Rosalind Franklin, after the UK scientist and co-discoverer of the structure of DNA, following a public competition.

ECSAT, in Harwell, is home to ESA's Analogue Curation Facility which is supporting future planetary exploration.. Under ESA contract, Airbus Stevenage is also studying a sample fetch rover, which could retrieve samples left by NASA's Mars 2020 rover as part of a future joint NASA/ESA Mars Sample Return campaign.