

Government funding boost for life-changing technologies

- Business Secretary and Science Minister both address London Tech Week, annual showcase of the UK's tech sector
- government commits a combined £743.5 million across a variety of innovative projects including a flying climate laboratory, and a giant 'microscope' that can support vaccine discovery
- investment supports government target for R&D to contribute 2.4% to GDP by 2027

The government has today announced a record £743.5 million of investment into the technologies of tomorrow to help secure the UK's place as a global Science Superpower.

The funds, announced at London Tech Week (13-17 June 2022), will support the development of innovations ranging from autonomous vehicles to airborne laboratories as part of wider government efforts to invest in tech, create skilled jobs and grow the economy.

This follows the publication of last year's Innovation Strategy, which made clear that the government intends to put innovation at the centre of everything it does, ensuring the UK is at the forefront of the latest technologies, shoring up the country's competitiveness on the world stage and supporting the economy.

This will lay the foundations for the future of the British people – creating jobs, enhancing industry, and improving the lives of millions by offering skilled jobs for the future right across the country.

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

The incredible work of the Vaccine Taskforce, housed at my department through the pandemic, demonstrated that this country is home to some of the best scientists and innovators in the world.

I'm immensely proud of the work we have done to support ground-breaking research so far, having confirmed £40 billion in funding for R&D over the next 3 years and placing it at the very top of our agenda. London Tech Week itself is testament to that.

And today, we're announcing over £743 million in investment – including in the latest quantum technologies, to ensure Britain has pole position in the global marketplace in a host of new areas.

Speaking at the event today, Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng announced a raft of substantial investments into the very latest technologies.

These include:

- the UKRI [Infrastructure Fund](#) – £481 million in cutting-edge research and innovation infrastructure projects over the next 3 years, some of which are subject to business case
- UKRI's [Accelerating Impact programme](#) – £118 million for the best, brightest and most disruptive ideas emerging from UK universities, to help turn them into innovative businesses and services
- UKRI's ISCF Commercialising Quantum Technologies Challenge – winners will receive £6 million funding across 16 projects to help realise a 'quantum-enabled economy', a key objective of the forthcoming HMG Quantum Strategy

Also speaking at London Tech Week, Science Minister George Freeman announced:

- Innovate UK's [Fast Start competition](#), which will provide a new series of Fast Start grants worth £30 million to back UK start-ups and entrepreneurs to develop new innovative products, processes and services, building the UK's future economy in key sectors from healthcare to climate tech
- the continuation of UKRI's [Future Leader Fellowships](#), for which a further round is planned with £100 million of new funding, supporting the best and brightest people in universities, businesses, and other research environments to commercialise new technologies
- the launch of the UKRI's [Enabling a Responsible AI Ecosystem programme](#), led by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and backed by £8.5 million – the UK's first major research programme on AI ethics of this scale. It will bring together diverse research perspectives – from the humanities to computer science – to help tackle some of the biggest ethical questions posed by AI in order to build public trust, drive adoption and harness the technology's potential in a responsible way

Taken together, these amount to £743.5 million – part of the government's £40 billion R&D investment planned over the next 3 years.

All the innovative projects receiving this investment have the potential to deliver significant benefits to UK society and economy. In many cases they are already doing so, whether via a ground-breaking giant 'microscope' that has supported the discovery of a synthetic vaccine for foot-and-mouth disease, or a flying laboratory that enables scientists to track and evaluate pollution, severe weather, and the effects of climate change.

Addressing an audience of investors, policy makers and industry leaders at the Quantum Computing Summit today, Mr Kwarteng highlighted how the projects being supported by the latest round of UKRI's [Commercialising Quantum Technologies Challenge](#) will support the development of new quantum products, meaning that £153 million will be invested over the lifetime of the programme, helping companies to commercialise quantum technologies.

Speaking at the Digital Catapult's Cyber-Physical Future Forum, Science Minister George Freeman confirmed an additional package of supportive programmes for innovators and entrepreneurs.

Science Minister George Freeman said:

As the entire government focuses on tackling the cost-of-living, it is my firm belief that an innovation-led economy will deliver the jobs, growth and prosperity we need to help us rebuild across the country.

We are living in a time of huge technological change. New technologies are creating new industries at a pace that would have been thought impossible, even 10 years ago. As a responsible government, we must give our researchers and innovators the tools and the wherewithal to flourish.

That's why we're announcing a record £743.5 million package of investment into the technologies of tomorrow, putting entrepreneurs at the heart of our plans to help power our economy while tackling some of the world's greatest challenges, and supporting our ambitions to make the UK a Science Superpower.

He announced a new round of Future Leader Fellowships, worth £100 million, which will support talented researchers and innovators from the UK and around the world to develop and commercialise their work.

The government has also announced the 84 winners of the previous round of Future Leader Fellowship funding, who will be supported by £98 million being awarded to help commercialise technologies with the power to tackle global challenges head-on.

These include a fleet of self-driven satellites able to track and mitigate natural disasters, injectable gels to deliver life-changing tissue-regeneration therapies, and clogging-resistant permeable pavements that mitigate against the impacts of climate change and urbanisation-related flooding.

Minister Freeman also announced a £30 million Fast Start grants scheme, which will be launched to help small and micro businesses to develop new innovations.

He highlighted how a new first-of-its-kind research programme will be backed by £8.5 million government funding to address the biggest ethical issues posed by Artificial Intelligence, to build public trust and ensure the technology's potential can be responsibly harnessed.

Oral statement on Rwanda

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker, and with permission, I would like to make a statement about the Government's world-leading Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda.

The British people have repeatedly voted for controlled immigration and the right to secure borders, Madam Deputy Speaker.

This is a government that acts and hears that message clearly, and we are determined to deliver that.

Last night Madam Deputy Speaker, we aimed to relocate the first people from our country who arrived here through dangerous and illegal means, including by a small boat.

Over the course of this week, many and various claims to prevent relocation have been brought forward.

Now Madam Deputy Speaker, I welcomed the decisions of our domestic courts, the High Court, Court of Appeal, and Supreme Court, to uphold our right to send the flight.

However, following a decision by an out of hours judge in the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg minutes before our flight's departure, the final individuals remaining on the flight had their removal directions paused while their claims were considered.

I want to make something absolutely clear today, Madam Deputy Speaker. The European Court of Human Rights did not rule that the policy or relocations were unlawful, but they prohibited the removal of three of those on last night's flight.

Those prohibitions last for different time periods but are not an absolute bar on their transfer to Rwanda. Anyone who has been ordered to be released by the courts will be tagged while we continue to progress their relocation.

While this decision by the Strasbourg court to intervene was disappointing and surprising given the repeated and considered judgements to the contrary in our domestic courts, we remain committed to this policy.

These repeated legal barriers are, Madam Deputy Speaker, very similar to those that we experience with all other removal flights.

And we believe that we are fully compliant with our domestic and international obligations, and preparations for our future flights and the next flights have already begun. Our domestic courts were of the view that the flight could go ahead.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the case for our partnership with Rwanda bears repeating. We are a generous and welcoming country, as has been shown time

and time again. Over 200,000 people have used safe and legal routes to come to the UK since 2015.

And most recently Madam Deputy Speaker, Britons have opened their hearts and their homes to Afghan nationals and Ukrainian nationals.

But our capacity to help those in need is severely compromised by those who come here illegally and, as we have discussed in this house many, many times who seek to jump the queue because they can afford to pay the people smugglers.

It is illegal.

It is not necessary – because they are coming from other safe countries.

It is not fair – either on those who play by the rules, or on the British taxpayers, who have to foot this bill.

We cannot keep on spending nearly £5 million a day on accommodation including that of hotels.

We cannot accept this intolerable pressure on public services and local communities.

It makes us less safe as a nation – because those who come here illegally do not have the regularised checks or even the regularised status.

And because evil people-smuggling gangs use the proceeds of their ill-gotten gains to fund other appalling crimes that undermine the security of our country.

It is also lethally dangerous for those who are smuggled. People have drowned at sea, suffocated in lorries, and perished crossing territories.

The humane, decent, and moral response to all this is simply not to stand by and let people drown or to be sold into slavery, or to be smuggled, but to stop this.

And with that Madam Deputy Speaker, inaction is not an option – or at least not a morally responsible one.

This is, as I have said repeatedly, a complex, longstanding problem. The global asylum system is broken. And between 80 to 100 million people are now displaced and others are on the move seeking better economic opportunities.

And an international problem requires international solutions.

The UK and Rwanda have shown the way forward by working together.

And this Partnership sends a clear message that illegal entry will not be tolerated Madam Deputy Speaker while offering a practical, humane way forward for those who arrive to the UK by illegal routes.

It has saddened me, Madam Deputy Speaker, to see Rwanda so terribly

misrepresented and traduced in recent weeks.

It is another example of how – all too often – critics not only don't know what they're speaking about but seek to vilify another international country that has a good track record when it comes to refugees and stepping up to international responsibility.

Rwanda, Madam Deputy Speaker, is a safe and secure country with an outstanding track record of supporting asylum seekers.

And indeed, we are proud that we are working together.

Proud that the UK is investing in Rwanda and helping that great country to thrive.

And proud that those who are relocated to Rwanda will have an opportunity to thrive, as well.

They will be given generous support – including language skills, vocational training, and help with starting their own businesses or finding employment.

But of course, I'm afraid Madam Deputy Speaker, that the usual suspects have set out to thwart and even campaign against these efforts and with that, Madam Deputy Speaker, the will of the British people.

It would be wrong to issue a running commentary over ongoing cases, but Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to say this.

This government will not be deterred from doing the right thing.

We will not be put off by the inevitable legal, last-minute challenges, nor will we allow mobs, Madam Deputy Speaker, to block removals.

We will not stand idly by and let organised crime gangs – who are despicable in their nature and their conduct, evil people – treat human beings as cargo.

We will not accept that we have no right to control our borders, Madam Deputy Speaker.

We will do everything necessary to keep this country safe.

And we will continue our long and proud tradition of helping those in genuine need.

Now many of us have met refugees – both abroad and on British soil and listened to the stories that are quite frankly, chilling and heart-breaking.

But of course, it suits the benches opposite to pretend that this side of the House doesn't care. But Madam Deputy Speaker, as you referred to in the earlier point of order, on this side of the House, such accusations are a grotesque slur.

And let me tell you Madam Deputy Speaker, what is truly chilling is listening to opponents going on about how awful this policy is while offering no

practical solutions, while lives are being lost.

Helping develop safe and legal routes to this country for those who really need them is absolutely at the heart of this government's work.

And having overseen efforts to bring to the UK thousands of people in absolute need, including from Hong Kong, Syria, Afghanistan, and Ukraine.

I am the first to say that controlled immigration is good for our country, outstanding for this country – including that by refugees.

But Madam Deputy Speaker, we simply have to focus our support on those who most need it the most.

And not those who have picked the UK as a destination over a safe country like France.

And it is no use pretending that they are fleeing persecution when they are travelling from a safe country.

Because our capacity to help is not infinite, and public support for the asylum system will be fatally undermined if we do not act.

The critics of the Migration and Economic Development Partnership have no alternative proposal to deal with uncontrolled immigration.

That is irresponsible and utterly indifferent to those who we seek to help and support.

Now Madam Deputy Speaker, I have always said that I will look at all proposals to reduce illegal migration and illegal entry into our country, and even those that the opposite benches might prepare to put forward, but we still wait for them.

However fundamentally they don't think there is a problem and that's why they don't have a solution, because they still stand for open borders – pure and simple.

Meanwhile, this government wants to get on with delivering not just what the British people want but reforming our systems so yes, they are firm but equally Madam Deputy Speaker, so they are fair to those who pay for them and fair to those who need our help and support.

[Sellafield Ltd secures project management assessor status](#)

News story

Accredited assessor status means Sellafield Ltd is leading the global standard for project managers.



Sellafield Ltd is one of the first companies in the world to be acknowledged as an “accredited assessor” for project managers through the Association for Project Management (APM).

Following the establishment of our project academy, this landmark achievement means we can now develop our project professionals from entry level apprentices, through the APM’s PMQ (project management qualification), and Accredited Project Management Level 1 certification, all the way through to chartership status.

Sellafield Ltd currently has 68 chartered project professionals working in the organisation. Now that we have our own capability to perform chartership assessments, on average this figure is set to increase by 10 per year.

The standard was achieved after 2 years of work by a committed team of volunteers, a pilot assessment; including candidates, assessors and mentors, and an extended external assessment process.

Andy Sharples, Sellafield Ltd Project Director said:

A very small number of organisations have achieved this status from the APM, which reflects how we’re leading the global standard for project management career pathways and development.

We have fantastic opportunities available in projects, and this accreditation from the APM further strengthens our position within industry – both for individuals who would like to work with us and for organisations we’re working alongside.

Getting the ‘accredited assessor’ status means we are now amongst the first in the UK and globally, acknowledged as delivering training and experience at Project Management Level 2 certification to this global standard, established by Royal Charter.

Andrew Tyson, Head of Project Management capability, Sellafield Ltd said

This is an outstanding achievement for Sellafield Ltd – the team have worked tirelessly to achieve this status. Our career pathway offers support at every stage – from entry as Project Management Degree Apprentices through to chartered project professionals for our most experienced colleagues.

This is a really exciting time to be working in projects at Sellafield Ltd, as we take the next step to developing and growing our own project professionals.

Published 15 June 2022

[Vaccine Taskforce to merge with UK Health Security Agency and OLS](#)

- Core functions of the Vaccine Taskforce will move to the UK Health Security Agency, with the onshoring programme joining the Office for Life Sciences, in the autumn
- The move will ensure the innovative approaches, skills and operating model that have been such a key part of the UK's pandemic response are retained

The core functions of the Vaccine Taskforce (VTF) will merge with the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and the Office for Life Sciences (OLS) in the autumn, the government has announced.

The VTF was set up in 2020 to meet the unprecedented challenge posed by Covid with the objective of securing effective vaccines for the UK as quickly as possible. The VTF was successful in securing the earliest access to the Oxford/Astra Zeneca and Pfizer/BioNTech vaccines, allowing the UK to be the first country in the world to deploy an approved Covid vaccine.

The VTF has also played a critical role in supporting efforts to distribute vaccines globally. The UK was one of COVAX's earliest and largest donors, helping the organisation to deliver of 1.5 billion doses worldwide to date.

The vaccine programme is well established, and contracts are in place with manufacturers to continue to support the UK's vaccination programmes for this year and next, including access to reformulated vaccines. People should continue to come forward for their Covid vaccines and booster doses when eligible.

From October, the vaccine supply responsibilities of the VTF will move to the UKHSA to establish a permanent function. Staff from the VTF will become part of a new directorate within UKHSA to ensure a smooth transition and embed learnings from the VTF.

Responsibility for the VTF onshoring programme will move to the Office for Life Sciences, a joint unit of the Department of Health and Social Care and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

The VTF has performed exceptionally during the pandemic, securing early access to the most promising Covid vaccines which allowed the UK to be the first country in the world to begin its life-saving vaccination programme. The wall of defence built by vaccines is allowing us to live with Covid without restrictions and get back to doing the things we love.

From autumn, the VTF and UKHSA will work as one unit to ensure we are prepared for all future health threats and they will build on the success of the Covid vaccination programme to improve our other life-saving immunisation programmes.

Director General of the Vaccine Taskforce Madelaine McTernan CB said:

The VTF has demonstrated how working in partnership across Government, industry and academia can deliver incredible results. I am very proud of what the VTF has delivered over the last two years, both here in the UK and internationally, thanks to the hard work and will to win of a great many people.

Chief Executive of the UKHSA, Dame Jenny Harries said:

This is a real investment by Government in UKHSA and a strong recognition of the excellent science and new thinking encapsulated in our organisation – a very exciting opportunity for us all and one which helps us realise new ambitions as a global scientific leader. With its innovative way of working and close links with academia and industry, the Vaccine Taskforce functions joining us will be a tremendous asset – complementing our excellent vaccines and immunisation work.

We look forward to welcoming our colleagues and the invaluable expertise they will bring. Embedding their unique approach will help us realise our future ambitions around science and innovation, and crucially strengthen our pandemic preparedness and build resilience to future health threats.

[British Embassy Zagreb invites bids for Impact Fund 2022 to 2023](#)

The British Embassy Zagreb is now inviting organisations to submit project proposals. Project proposals which strengthen and nurture relationships between Croatian and UK-based organisations and individuals will have an advantage (in all thematic areas).

Theme

The call will focus on organisations, projects and activities, which demonstrate the following thematic areas:

Shared Values: Action on regional and global challenges

Projects which demonstrate results in promoting and defending the UK-Croatian shared values of democracy and human rights. Applications in this strand will need to demonstrate relevance to the current global political and socio-economic challenges including, but not limited to: disinformation, countering malign threats to European security; and the rights of vulnerable groups in society. A special emphasis should be on activities which generate change, or which have a wider social impact.

Prosperity: Trade and Innovation Partnerships

Projects which demonstrate results in nurturing long-term innovation, science and technology, and education partnerships, with a special emphasis on UK-Croatia cooperation in these areas.

Projects which support trade links between the UK and Croatia, promote partnerships between business organisations and encourage the flow of bilateral imports and exports. Projects which deliver results on tackling climate change, with a focus on renewable forms of energy and promoting green growth.

Activity bid guidance

The British Embassy aims to support projects with activities taking place between 15 July 2022 and 28 February 2023, with no expectation of continued funding beyond the stated period. Maximum activity budget limit: HRK 100,000.

Project bids will be assessed against the following criteria:

- alignment with thematic priorities and likelihood of achieving a real-world impact
- outcomes that are achievable within the funding period and offer value for money

- activity design that includes clear evaluation procedures and measures of impact
- activity design that includes risk and financial accountability procedures
- the organisation's safeguarding policies ensure protection of beneficiaries, especially vulnerable individuals and children

Bidding process

The deadline for submitting proposals is 11:59pm local time 27 June 2022. Late proposals will not be considered.

Transparency

In order to avoid preferential treatment of applicants, the British Embassy will not answer any questions related to specific bids or eligibility of specific activities. Interested parties with questions regarding the process of bidding or technical details are encouraged to send an email to projects@britishembassy.hr by 20 June 2022.

Additional information and documentation

All project implementers will be expected to sign a standard contract or grant agreement with the Embassy provided by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO). The terms of the contract or agreement are not negotiable.

All projects are expected to have achieved 85% spend by end December 2022. Proposed budgets must reflect this requirement. In view of the current epidemiological situation all events/activities must adhere to Croatia's current National Civil Protection Directorate guidelines.

Contact details for enquiries: projects@britishembassy.hr