

Genetic Technology Bill: enabling innovation to boost food security

Legislation to cut red tape and support the development of innovative tech to grow more resistant, more nutritious, and more productive crops will be introduced in Parliament today (Wednesday 25 May).

The Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Bill will remove unnecessary barriers to research into new gene editing technology, which for too long has been held back by the EU's rules around gene editing, which focus on legal interpretation rather than science – hindering the UK's world leading agricultural research institutions. Outside of the EU and free to set rules that work in the best interest of the UK, this Bill will enable the development and marketing of precision bred plants and animals which will drive economic growth and attract investment into agri-food research and innovation in the UK.

Precision breeding technologies, like gene editing, have a range of benefits. They will give UK scientists the power to help farmers and producers develop plant varieties and animals with beneficial traits that could also occur through traditional breeding and natural processes, but in a more efficient and precise way. For example, precision breeding techniques can produce crops with fewer inputs, including pesticides and fertilisers, improving the sustainability, resilience and productivity of the UK's food system. This will reduce costs to farmers and reduce impacts on the environment, as well as potentially increasing disease resistance in plants and animals, and boosting climate change resilience; with water scarcity likely to become a major impact of climate change, it is essential that plant breeding technology is able to keep pace with the challenge.

Precision breeding can also create safer food by removing allergens and preventing the formation of harmful compounds in food. Globally, between 20 per cent and 40 per cent of all crops grown are lost to pests and diseases. Precision breeding has the potential to create plant varieties and animals that have improved resistance to diseases; helping to reduce our reliance on pesticides and antibiotics, reduce impacts on the environment and improve the welfare of animals.

Environment Secretary, George Eustice, said:

Outside the EU we are free to follow the science. These precision technologies allow us to speed up the breeding of plants that have natural resistance to diseases and better use of soil nutrients so we can have higher yields with fewer pesticides and fertilisers.

The UK has some incredible academic centres of excellence and they are poised to lead the way.

Defra's Chief Scientific Adviser, Gideon Henderson, said:

Substantial environmental, health and food security benefits can come from use of genetic technologies to precisely mimic breeding and improve our crops.

The UK is home to some of the world's leading research institutions in this area and these reforms will enable their scientists to use their expertise to make farming more resilient and our food healthier and more sustainable.

This is different to genetic modification (GM) techniques, where genes from one species are introduced to another.

The Government is taking a step-by-step approach by creating legislation for plants first. No changes will be made to the regulation of animals under the GMO regime until a regulatory system is developed to safeguard animal welfare.

Professor Susan Jebb, Chair of the FSA, said:

This legislation recognises the need to update our regulatory frameworks to keep pace with new scientific technologies. Our regulatory system needs to be fit for purpose to unlock the benefits of new genetic technologies for consumers whilst providing confidence that our food standards will be maintained. This includes animal feed as well as the foods we eat directly.

As the independent government department responsible for food standards, the FSA is here to make sure people can trust the food they buy and eat is safe, is what it says it is, and that new technologies do not undermine progress towards a healthier and more sustainable food system. We will continue to gather evidence and represent the interests of consumers in relation to precision breeding techniques as the Bill progresses.

Through our work with stakeholders and Government we will strive for a transparent, proportionate, and science-based process for the regulation and authorisation of foods and animal feed in this fast-moving area.

NFU Vice President David Exwood said:

This science-based legislative change has the potential to offer a number of benefits to UK food production and to the environment and will provide farmers and growers with another tool in the toolbox as we look to overcome the challenges of feeding an ever-growing population while tackling the climate crisis.

Director of Science at the James Hutton Institute in Dundee, Lesley Torrance, said:

These crops are urgently needed to address future food security which is threatened by climate change and pests, and to help reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases from agriculture whilst maintaining crop yields.

The James Hutton Institute uses innovative precision breeding technologies which have the potential to speed the development of new crop varieties in a more reliable way.

We welcome both the focus of the Bill which is on the assessment of the properties of the new crop and not the process used to develop it; and the transparency of this information which will be held on a public register.

[Joint Communiqué: United Kingdom – The State of Qatar](#)

The Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland the Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP and His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, The Amir of the State of Qatar, met in London on 24 May, 2022. The Prime Minister welcomed the 50th Anniversary of the UK-Qatar bilateral relations and celebrated the rich and deep history between both countries.

The leaders affirmed their commitment to strengthening the historic Qatar-UK partnership at a strategic level, and to forge ever closer cooperation to tackle shared global challenges jointly. The leaders welcomed the launch of the annual Qatar-UK Strategic Dialogue, to be co-chaired by the UK Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, and the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar. The Strategic Dialogue will progress areas of further collaboration including regional security, trade and investment, humanitarian and development cooperation, energy, science and innovation, health, and education.

Both leaders announced the Qatar-UK Strategic Investment Partnership.

The leaders welcomed the launch of the UK-Qatar Energy Dialogue, which will deepen the already vital energy and climate change cooperation between their two countries.

The leaders shared their ambition to build on the strong links between the UK and Qatar in education partnerships and joint academic research, including

the intention to agree a Memorandum of Understanding that aims to promote mutual understanding and exchange knowledge and experience.

The United Kingdom has announced that Qatar will be part of the new Electronic Travel Authorisation system starting 2023, making it easier for Qatari visitors to travel to the UK for business and tourism.

World Cup 2022

The leaders looked forward to Qatar's hosting of the 2022 FIFA World Cup, the first to be held in the Arab and Muslim world. The Prime Minister reaffirmed the UK's strong support for Qatar's efforts to deliver a safe and successful tournament, and the two sides committed to close ongoing engagement on tournament preparations.

As part of this, the Prime Minister confirmed the support of UK military capabilities to counter terrorism and malign activity during the tournament. This will include air security capabilities through the Joint Typhoon Squadron, in addition to maritime security capabilities, advanced venue search training, operational planning support, command and control support, and further specialist advice.

Both leaders emphasised the important role that sport has to play in the promotion of equality and respect for human rights. The leaders also discussed the legacy that the tournament can provide, and how it can support the objectives of Qatar's National Vision 2030.

Trade and Investment

The United Kingdom and the State of Qatar share an important trade and investment relationship, with total trade of £4.8 billion in 2021. Qatari investment in the UK economy is estimated to be over £40bn and significantly supports jobs, innovation, levelling up and economic development in both countries. The leaders welcomed the progress made on confirming the viability of Rolls-Royce and Qatar Foundation's strategic partnership to develop two world-class campuses dedicated to launching, investing in and growing climate technology businesses that can accelerate the global energy transition. The leaders also welcomed the progress made on defining the framework for that partnership and looked forward to those discussions being drawn to a successful conclusion and the benefits of the partnership being realised in both countries.

The leaders further discussed opportunities for investment in sectors including renewable energy, technology, education, health care, and life sciences. They reiterated their strong commitment to post-pandemic resilience and growth through green infrastructure and clean technology in Qatar, the UK and beyond.

Following the signing today of the Qatar-UK Strategic Investment Partnership between the United Kingdom's Office for Investment and the Government of the State of Qatar, the State of Qatar is looking for opportunities to invest around £10bn in the United Kingdom over the next five years.

This demonstrates the intention of the State of Qatar to build on the agreement from United Kingdom Prime Minister the Rt Hon Boris Johnson MP and His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, The Amir of the State of Qatar to grow the dynamic partnership between the two countries at a strategic level.

The State of Qatar intends to leverage the opportunities provided by the Qatar-UK Strategic Investment Partnership to explore the deployment of this capital to invest in sectors which are vital for shared prosperity.

The leaders welcomed the joint effort to increase investment flows between the two countries. The new Qatar-UK Strategic Investment Partnership, between the United Kingdom's Office for Investment and the Government of the State of Qatar, represented by the Qatar Investment Authority, will establish a unique two-way relationship to promote investments and innovation in vital sectors for shared prosperity. The Partnership aims to deliver strategic value to Qatar and the UK, aligned with Qatar's National Vision 2030 and the UK's Plan for Growth.

The leaders looked forward to the start of the UK-GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) negotiations for an ambitious UK-GCC Free Trade Agreement, due to commence in 2022. The agreement will reduce trade barriers and facilitate economic cooperation for multiple sectors including life sciences, financial services, healthcare, green tech, and cyber.

Both leaders agreed to continue to seek opportunities to co-invest and support development in third countries to build stronger and more sustainable economic partnerships. Such opportunities would help to facilitate high-quality investment into infrastructure and other areas to support the green transition, working through the opportunities presented by the British Investment Partnership agenda alongside the Qatar Fund For Development (QFFD). Both parties agreed to focus on shared thematic and geographic priorities, such as climate change, building resilience to humanitarian crises, education, women's empowerment, and development, particularly in Somalia and the wider Horn of Africa.

Energy

The leaders welcomed the launch of the UK – Qatar Energy Dialogue. The Dialogue was chaired by the UK Secretary of State of the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), the Rt Hon Kwasi Kwarteng MP, and by His Excellency the Minister of State for Energy Affairs of the State of Qatar, and CEO and President of Qatar Energy, Mr. Saad Sherida Al-Kaabi. The leaders witnessed the signing of a new energy cooperation MOU between BEIS and Qatar Energy to enhance cooperation on energy security, renewable energy, and decarbonisation. The leaders discussed the need for sustained leadership and coordinated efforts to support global energy market stability and security.

Security, Defence and Counterterrorism:

The leaders reaffirmed the importance of the security, defence, and

counterterrorism partnership and agreed to continue to deepen cooperation. The UK and Qatar reiterated their commitment to address threats and safeguard security in the region. The two leaders also highlighted their strong security partnership, including law enforcement cooperation, countering violent extremism, combating terrorism and illicit financial flows. The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the Global Counter Terrorism Forum, of which the UK and Qatar are founder members.

The leaders agreed on the importance of the UK-Qatar defence relationship. There was a significant UK defence presence at the Doha International Maritime Defence Exhibition and Conference in March 2022, and collaboration continues across all domains. Qatar remains the only partner with which the RAF operates joint squadrons – the Joint Hawk Training Squadron at RAF Leeming, and the Joint Typhoon Squadron at RAF Coningsby – which further strengthens cooperation between the UK and Qatar armed forces and enhances the two countries' abilities to tackle shared security challenges. Both leaders praised the upcoming inclusion of the Joint Typhoon Squadron in Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee celebrations, and the Joint Squadron's deployment to Qatar in autumn 2022 to support the integration and entry into service of the first Qatar Emiri Air Force (QEAF) Typhoon Wing. Both leaders recognised the value of further discussions on expanding future Typhoon cooperation.

Foreign Policy and Regional Issues

The UK and Qatar will continue their partnership to work on promoting global conflict resolution efforts, humanitarian, and development initiatives, and to address the security threats that the world faces from both state and non-state actors. The Prime Minister acknowledged the State of Qatar's active role in peaceful conflict resolution in various regional crises and both leaders underlined their shared commitment to effective multilateralism. The leaders agreed to continue their close cooperation, including on foreign policy, security, development and humanitarian affairs, and reaffirmed their commitment to regional security and stability.

Russia and Ukraine: The leaders reaffirmed their commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders, extending to its territorial waters. Both leaders expressed deep concern over the unfolding humanitarian crisis and reaffirmed their commitment to support Ukraine through the provision of humanitarian aid and called on Russia to provide humanitarian access to besieged regions of Ukraine. They agreed on the importance of energy security and discussed ways to continue working together to ensure the stability of energy markets.

Iran: The two leaders underlined the need for increased international coordination to achieve stability, security and prosperity in the Middle East, acknowledged the role of Qatari diplomacy in these efforts and expressed their support for regional dialogue initiatives, including with Iran. The leaders recognised the potential role of a restored and fully implemented JCPOA in supporting regional stability. Both parties noted that a diplomatic solution remains the best way to ensure Iran's nuclear programme is

exclusively used for peaceful purposes. They urged all parties to seize this opportunity to bring negotiations to a successful conclusion.

Afghanistan: The Prime Minister thanked and expressed deep appreciation to HH the Amir for the State of Qatar's role in repatriating UK citizens and UK-eligible Afghan nationals to the UK, for joining the UK in co-hosting the UN humanitarian pledging conference and for hosting the British diplomatic mission to Afghanistan in Qatar. The Prime Minister welcomed the State of Qatar's role in supporting negotiations on Afghanistan during the last few years.

The two leaders expressed concern about the deteriorating situation in Afghanistan, and reaffirmed their resolve in holding the Taliban to account on the commitments they have made on counter-terrorism, an amnesty against former government figures and security forces and human rights. Both leaders reaffirmed the promotion of the rights of women and girls, and called on the Taliban to ensure women have equal opportunities in education and the workplace, and access to services.

The two leaders stressed the importance of continuing to engage the international community to address the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, and highlighted the responsibility of the international community in participating in the humanitarian efforts towards the Afghan people, including the right to access food and medicine as an integral part of human rights.

East Africa: The UK and Qatar are concerned by the dire humanitarian situation across East Africa, particularly in Somalia and Ethiopia. Tens of millions of people are affected by conflict and drought with crises displacing millions of people from their homes. Both leaders agreed to strengthen collaboration to help address East Africa's pressing humanitarian needs.

MEPP: Both leaders outlined support for direct dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis, and underlined their commitment to a peaceful two-state solution as the only way to achieve a just and lasting peace. The leaders emphasised the need to address the underlying causes of the conflict. The two leaders also emphasised the need to adhere to the well-established principles of international law, along with the respect for Security Council resolutions and international treaties. The two leaders stressed the importance of the need to respect the Historic Status Quo at the Holy Sites in Jerusalem and urged all side to refrain from any kind of provocation. The two leaders condemned the killing of Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh in Jenin on 11 May 2022 and reiterated the call by the UN Security Council on 13 May 2022 for an immediate, thorough, transparent, fair and impartial investigation.

Media Integrity

Both leaders agreed on the importance and value of promoting and protecting media freedom and highlighted their commitment to ensuring journalists worldwide can practice their profession safely and openly. The leaders agreed

to continue to cooperate in fighting disinformation alongside other nations and international organisations around the world.

In forging their dynamic partnership, the UK and Qatar remain committed to ever-deepening dialogue and long-term cooperation. His Highness Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani congratulated the Prime Minister and the citizens of the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth nations in their celebration of Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee.

[PM hails £10 billion Qatari 'vote of confidence' in the UK](#)

[Prime Minister Boris Johnson meets meets Amir of Qatar Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani at 10 Downing Street](#)

- The PM hosted the Amir of Qatar today to develop our historic partnership and agree new joint work on trade, energy and defence
- Strategic Investment Partnership will see Qatar invest up to £10 billion in key industries across the UK, creating jobs and growth
- UK and Qatar agreed to work together improve the stability of energy supply chains and support security at the 2022 World Cup

The Prime Minister welcomed the Amir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al Thani, to Downing Street today [Tuesday] for discussions on driving economic growth and addressing global challenges together.

The UK and Qatar signed a new Strategic Investment Partnership (SIP) which will see Qatar invest up to £10 billion over the next five years in key sectors of the UK economy, including fintech, zero emissions vehicles, life sciences and cyber security. The investment is expected to create high-quality jobs in new industries across the country.

The Prime Minister and the Amir also had a wide-ranging discussion on geopolitical issues. They were united in their condemnation of Russia's aggression in Ukraine and discussed issues of regional security, including relations with Iran.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

Today's announcement of up to £10bn in new investment from our Qatari friends is another vote of confidence in the UK's brilliant businesses and cutting-edge industry. The new UK-Qatar Strategic Investment Partnership will create quality job opportunities across the country in key sectors, delivering on our vision of economic

growth through trade and investment.

Qatar is a valued partner for the UK, supported by Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad's leadership. We had a rich discussion on the issues that matter to both of our countries, including boosting the economy, ensuring regional stability and improving energy security following Russia's appalling invasion of Ukraine.

UK-Qatar trade was worth £4.8 billion last year and Qatari investment in the UK economy is already estimated to be worth over £40 billion, supporting jobs and growth across the country.

Minister for Investment Lord Grimstone said:

It is excellent news that Qatar is targeting up to £10 billion investment into the UK through our new Strategic Investment Partnership.

Not only will it boost local economies and support jobs, but it supports our green economy and decarbonisation – crucial in meeting our Net Zero targets. It also strengthens our relationship with Qatar ahead of our UK-Gulf Cooperation Council trade negotiations.

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng also signed an MoU on energy cooperation with Qatar's Minister of State for Energy Affairs at Downing Street. Qatar is a major energy supplier for the UK, providing 40% of our liquefied natural gas – the new MoU commits us to work together to boost innovation and collaboration, supporting the security of global energy supplies.

UK Secretary of State for Business and Energy, Kwasi Kwarteng, said:

I am delighted to further the UK's energy cooperation with the State of Qatar as we work to stabilise international energy markets and boost energy security in the context of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine.

Qatar is already a valued trading partner, recently investing in the future of British low-carbon nuclear technology through the Rolls Royce consortium developing small modular reactors. Today's meeting will deepen our relationship even further, reinforcing the UK's energy security and delivering cleaner and affordable energy in the years ahead.

The Prime Minister and Amir discussed the upcoming 2022 Qatar World Cup this winter, and the UK committed significant new military and counter-terrorism support for the safe running of the event. A joint UK-Qatar Typhoon Squadron will provide additional air security, and the Ministry of Defence with advanced venue search training and operational planning support.

The Prime Minister also confirmed that the UK will ensure Qatari nationals can access the UK's new Electronic Travel Authorisation system from early 2023, facilitating easier travel for business visitors and tourists.

Political progress will be vital in alleviating the economic and humanitarian suffering of the Sudanese people

Thank you, Madam President. Thank you also to SRSR Perthes for his briefing and for the continued work that he and his team are doing in the most difficult circumstances. I would also like to welcome our new Sudanese colleague, and the participation of the Sudanese delegation in this meeting.

I would like to make three points in response to what we have just heard today.

Firstly, the United Kingdom regrets the lack of progress in resolving the political crisis created by the 25 October coup. We deplore the killing of almost 100 protesters since October, and urge an immediate end to the violence.

We fully support the joint efforts of UNITAMS, the AU and IGAD to facilitate a Sudanese-led process to resolve the political crisis.

For this process to be successful, the Sudanese military needs to make progress on confidence-building measures, including the release of all political detainees, an end to excessive use of force against protesters and the lifting of the state of emergency.

We urge all Sudanese stakeholders to engage in good faith with the tripartite process, and to make the compromises needed to realise the Sudanese people's legitimate demands for freedom, peace and justice.

Secondly, Madam President, I want to emphasise that this is not a matter that only concerns Sudan's political elites. Political progress will be vital in alleviating the economic hardship and humanitarian suffering of the Sudanese people.

Restoration of a credible, civilian-led government will create the conditions for much-needed economic reforms and for international support, including debt relief, to resume.

As the political crisis drags on, the scale and intensity of the violence across Sudan, including Darfur, has also increased.

We welcome efforts made by the signatories of the Juba Peace Agreement to stand up to the Joint Security Keeping Force, and their efforts, with UNITAMS' support, to operationalise the Permanent Ceasefire Committee in Darfur. But further steps are urgently needed to fully implement the JPA and address the root causes of conflict, if Darfur is to achieve sustainable peace.

Thirdly, I want to emphasise that UNITAMS has the full support of the United Kingdom in its efforts to implement all of its mandated tasks. We look forward to working with Council members to renew the mandate in the coming weeks.

The mandate should reflect the realities in Sudan, and enable UNITAMS to provide the support that Sudan requires. UNITAMS can only provide that support in partnership with Sudan. We therefore call on the Sudanese authorities to return to a civilian-led transition to ensure the right structures and interlocutors are in place for a productive and sustainable partnership.

Madam President, to conclude, this Council has committed to support the Sudanese people in their journey to democracy and ending conflict after decades of misrule and violence. The United Kingdom will continue to uphold this commitment and urges full support for the joint UN-AU-IGAD process as the best means to deliver this.

Thank you.

Secretary of State for Work and Pensions attends G7 Labour and Employment Ministerial meeting in Germany

The meeting, which took place on Tuesday 24 May 2022, sought to build on the UK G7 agenda from 2021, which focussed on building back better, greener and more inclusively.

This year delegates focussed on structural change to the labour market in the context of decarbonisation, digitalisation and demographic change.

The Secretary of State outlined the UK's commitment to achieving net zero by 2050, and delivering on the commitments made at COP26, including by greening pension scheme investments.

Work and Pensions Secretary Thérèse Coffey, said:

Moving away from high carbon jobs to green jobs is a crucial part of achieving our net zero goals. The creation of high-quality jobs in sustainable sectors, ensures the opportunities are well paid.

I very much support the sharing of knowledge and expertise with counterparts across the globe and welcome the opportunity to build on the UK's G7 Presidency of 2021. It's essential we work together to grow the economy to address the cost of living.

The UK published the Net Zero Strategy in 2021, committing to help businesses and consumers move to clean power, leveraging up to £90 billion of private investment by 2030, and reduce emissions across the economy by at least 68% by 2030 and 78% by 2035.

Through moving to green jobs or greening existing sectors, the government will support 190,000 green jobs across the UK by 2025 and a total of 440,000 net zero jobs, contributing to our goal to support two million green jobs by 2030.

The meeting closed with all delegates adopting a [communique](#), agreeing concrete actions and joint steps towards a just transition and the creation of decent, high-quality work for a green economy.

To further promote continuity and to prioritize coordinated action across the G7 on critical labour, social and employment issues, delegates also established a standing Employment Working Group within the G7 with the aim to convene as ministers on an annual basis.

Japan will take over the G7 presidency in 2023.

Media enquiries for this press release – 0115 965 8781

Follow DWP on: