

# Forestry Commission takes robust action to combat spread of tree disease



Image of resinous cankers on a tree branch. Credit: Forest Research.

The Forestry Commission is urging woodland managers, landowners and the forestry industry to remain vigilant following further findings of *Phytophthora pluvialis* in areas across England.

The UK Chief Plant Health Officer has confirmed findings in the parts of the country following extensive surveillance activities by the Forestry Commission and other parts of the UK Plant Health Service.

*Phytophthora pluvialis* is a fungus-like pathogen known to affect a variety of tree species, including western hemlock, Douglas fir, tanoak and several pine species (in particular radiata pine). It is reported to cause needle cast (where needles turn brown and fall off), shoot dieback, and lesions on the stem, branches, and roots.

*Phytophthora pluvialis* has been detected on mature western hemlock and Douglas-fir trees at the affected sites, and has been confirmed as the direct cause of the observed symptoms.

Forestry Commission, Forest Research and the Animal and Plant Health Agency are continuing to conduct further surveillance and diagnostic analysis to understand more about the pathogen and ensure that any required control measures are swiftly undertaken to stop its spread. This includes extensive ground and aerial surveillance as part of a UK-wide survey, and comprehensive research and modelling to explore factors such as climatic and potential species susceptibility and to help inform the management response. The introduction and extensions of demarcated areas help to prevent the accidental movement of tree pathogens.

**Nicola Spence, the UK's Chief Plant Health Officer, said:**

We are taking robust and swift action against the findings of *Phytophthora pluvialis* at these sites, as part of our well-established biosecurity protocol for tree pests and diseases.

I urge all sectors to support efforts to tackle this pathogen by checking the health of western hemlock and Douglas-fir trees. [Key symptoms](#) to look out for are lesions on the stem, branch or roots. Any sightings should be reported to the Forestry Commission via its [TreeAlert online portal](#).

The Forestry Commission is urging woodland managers, landowners and the forestry industry to remain vigilant following further findings of *Phytophthora pluvialis*.

### **New measures in response to these findings include:**

For behind-the-scenes insight into the ongoing science, surveillance and eradication efforts controlling the spread of *Phytophthora pluvialis*, [read this blog](#).

Further information on [tree pests and diseases, and how to identify them, is available here](#).

Woodland managers are asked to [report any suspect trees via TreeAlert](#).

Published 25 February 2022

Last updated 9 June 2022 [+ show all updates](#)

#### 1. 9 June 2022

Updated the section 'New plant health requirements introduced to combat further spread of the tree pathogen *Phytophthora pluvialis*'

#### 2. 14 April 2022

The Forestry Commission is urging woodland managers, landowners and the forestry industry to remain vigilant following further findings of *Phytophthora pluvialis*.

#### 3. 25 February 2022

First published.

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## [UN Afghanistan pledging summit: chairs](#)

# statement, 14 April 2022

News story

The chairs of the UN Afghanistan pledging summit have written a statement on the outcome of the conference, which was co-hosted by the UK, Germany and Qatar.



Statement by the chairs of the UN Afghanistan pledging summit, co-hosted by the UK, Germany and Qatar.

Today 31 March 2022, we the co-hosts from OCHA, Germany, Qatar and the United Kingdom led the Afghanistan pledging conference for 2022. We were joined by the United Nations Secretary-General Mr. Antonio Guterres, 38 Ministers and Deputy Ministers, as well as distinguished representatives from 115 countries, organisations and International Financial Institutions.

This year the UN launched its largest ever humanitarian appeal recognising the unprecedented scale of the crisis in Afghanistan. More than 24.4 million people require humanitarian assistance to survive. Food security levels have plunged at a rate not seen elsewhere in such a short period, with half the population facing acute hunger, including 9 million people in emergency food insecurity – the highest number globally. Malnutrition is on the rise, and livelihoods have been destroyed. In response, today the international community confirmed its support for the people of Afghanistan at this critical time.

Whilst we have seen a reduction in armed conflict across the country, its legacy still impacts the Afghan population with an estimated 6 million people remaining internally displaced, and the continued risk posed across the country by unexploded ordnance.

The Afghan people deserve to live in dignity, peace and security, reflecting the last two decades of their political, economic and social achievements, in particular for women and girls.

We, the co-hosts paid tribute to the tireless efforts of humanitarian aid agencies and workers in Afghanistan who have remained steadfast during these challenging times, delivering critical humanitarian aid through a difficult winter period.

We expressed our gratitude to the distinguished representatives of Afghanistan's civil society, who discussed the humanitarian situation on the ground, with a particular focus on women and children, for their tireless and courageous efforts in supporting the Afghan people.

Today's conference showcased the spirit of global solidarity and our enduring commitment to the people of Afghanistan:

- pledges of \$2.4bn in support of the continued humanitarian response
- in addition, announcements were made by International Financial Institutions, including initiatives of \$405m from the Asian Development Bank in support of basic services and agreement by the World Bank Board to make available \$1.2bn from Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
- there has also been generous support from Afghanistan's neighbours who provide vital in-kind assistance including food supplies, energy and infrastructure, and support for large numbers of refugees who have fled Afghanistan

We, the co-hosts committed to ensuring that humanitarian aid in 2022 is tailored to ensure that the distinct needs of women and girls are addressed in our support

The co-hosts expressed their appreciation to Martin Griffiths for his engagement with the Taliban to seek reassurance of their commitment to humanitarian principles and to continue to respect and facilitate the delivery of independent humanitarian assistance.

The co-hosts expressed their deep concern and disappointment at the Taliban's decision to restrict access to secondary education for girls, despite earlier commitments to do so. They reaffirmed the right to education for all Afghans, including girls, and called on the Taliban to respect the right to education for all, and adhere

to their commitments to reopen schools for all female students. The co-hosts also underscored the importance of the international community engaging in constructive dialogue with the Taliban to make progress on this and other important issues.

[ENDS]

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## [New Deputy Chief Medical Officer for England announced](#)

News story

The Department of Health and Social Care has confirmed that Dr Thomas Waite has been appointed as Deputy Chief Medical Officer for England



Dr Thomas Waite will support Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Professor Chris Whitty as the deputy CMO (DCMO) leading on health protection, replacing Professor Jonathan Van-Tam who stepped down on 31 March 2022. His role will cover emergency response and preparedness, infectious diseases, vaccines and therapeutics.

Dr Waite graduated in Medicine from Cardiff University and holds postgraduate qualifications in public health, medical toxicology and medical education. After his medical and public health training, he held posts in global health, infectious disease and environmental health protection. More recently he was Director of the UK Field Epidemiology Training Programme and helped establish the UK Public Health Rapid Support Team, leading their first overseas deployment to Ethiopia.

Dr Waite helped create and lead the Joint Biosecurity Centre which provided evidence-based, objective analysis to inform local and national decision-

making in response to COVID and has been interim DCMO since May 2021.

Dr Thomas Waite said:

I am delighted to be appointed as the Deputy Chief Medical Officer for Health Protection. I am looking forward to the opportunity of working with teams throughout the country to develop our preparedness for health hazards and emergencies and to protect the health of the public.

Professor Chris Whitty, Chief Medical Officer, said:

Dr Waite has an excellent track record of delivery. His wealth of experience in epidemiology and emergency preparedness will benefit the government's ongoing public health responses as well as help us to prepare for future events.

The CMO acts as the UK government's principal medical adviser, and the professional head of all directors of public health in local government and the medical profession in government.

The CMO is an independent position at permanent secretary level, supported by 3 DCMOs. The role provides public health and clinical advice to ministers in the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and across government.

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## [MHRA approves the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine 'Spikevax' for use in 6 to 11-year olds](#)

News story

Use of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine or 'Spikevax' has been approved for 6 to 11s after meeting the required safety, quality and effectiveness standards



The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has approved an update to the current UK approval of the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine, or 'Spikevax', that allows its use in Great Britain (GB) in 6 to 11 year-olds.

This approval takes into account the extension to use in children aged 6 to 11 years already approved by the European Medicines Agency on 2 March 2022, as the original GB licence for Spikevax in adults was approved by relying on the EU decision.

Spikevax is authorised in children aged 6 to 11 in Northern Ireland under the update granted by the European Medicines Agency on 2 March.

**Dr June Raine, MHRA Chief Executive, said:**

I am pleased to confirm that that the COVID-19 vaccine made by Moderna, 'Spikevax', has now been authorised in Great Britain in 6 to 11 year olds. The vaccine is safe and effective in this age group.

We have in place a comprehensive surveillance strategy for monitoring the safety of all UK-approved COVID-19 vaccines and this surveillance includes those aged 6 to 11.

It is for the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) to advise in due course on whether 6 to 11s should be offered vaccination with the COVID-19 vaccine made by Moderna as part of the deployment programme.

## Notes to editors

- The Spikevax vaccine was authorised [in adults aged 18 years and over](#) on 8 January 2021, and for those [aged 12-17](#) on 17 August 2021
- No important new side effects were identified in those aged 12-17 and the safety data in children were comparable with those seen in young adults. As in young adults, the majority of adverse events were mild to moderate and relating to reactogenicity, such as a sore arm or tiredness.
- More information can be found in the [Spikevax Product Information](#)

- The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency is responsible for regulating all medicines, vaccines and medical devices in the UK. All MHRA's work is underpinned by robust and fact-based judgements to ensure that the benefits outweigh any risks.

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## [Call for project proposals: Conflict Stability and Security Fund \(CSSF\) in Kosovo](#)

The British Embassy Pristina invites consortiums of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to submit proposals to become implementers of our Conflict Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) 2022 to 2025 project 'Support civil society to increase public oversight and accountability of Kosovo public institutions'. Only applications that comply with all the requirements will be considered. The deadline for submitting proposals is 15 May 2022.

### **Background**

Kosovo's public institutions remain inefficient and lack capacities to deliver good quality services and works. While Kosovo has undertaken many reforms since its independence, it still ranks the second lowest among Western Balkan countries in all 2020 World Bank's Worldwide Governance Indicators. Limited progress has also been made in increasing transparency and accountability of public institutions, regarding recruitment processes, public procurement, provision of grants and subsidies, licenses and tariffs and management of publicly owned enterprises (POEs). This situation allowed the decisions to be made to serve specific interests rather than the needs of the citizens.

The British Embassy Pristina seeks to work with Kosovo civil society organisations to address these weak governance practices in public institutions and enterprises, prevalence of nepotism in the recruitment of senior public officials, corruption in public procurement, mismanagement of POEs, and bribes and pocketing from grants and subsidies as well as unlawful awarding of licenses.

### **Objectives**

The overall objective of this intervention is to increase civil society oversight of Kosovo government institutions, agencies, and publicly owned enterprises.



The oversight will be focused on areas vulnerable to malfeasance including all of the following target areas:

- 1) Recruitment processes
- 2) Public procurement practices, including contract management
- 3) Granting of licenses, permits, and tariffs
- 4) Distribution of grants and subsidies
- 5) POE governance and performance

Identified irregularities should be brought to the attention of relevant authorities for rectification, and if not addressed exposed to the public. Good examples of governance and transparency should be promoted. The projects must have strong and innovative communications to showcase the results of monitoring, and impact from continuous evaluation of impact of proposed activities.

## **Scope**

This project will be delivered by a consortium of local NGOs. The consortium shall consist of 2 or more NGOs with demonstrated experience and expertise in the targeted areas, and in which they can deliver best. One NGO shall serve as a lead project implementer for all of the components, ensuring achievement of project outcomes and serving as a contact point for the British Embassy Pristina throughout the entire duration of the project.

Project proposals must be clear and concise, supported by a clear Theory of Change, and achievable and measurable outcomes and outputs. In line with adaptive programming, the proposal should remain flexible and open to change, based on needs on the ground.

The project will be delivered in 3 phases:

- 1) inception phase
- 2) implementation phase
- 3) exit phase

Each phase shall be dependent on the success of the previous phase. The duration of the inception phase will be 2 months, unless agreed otherwise and will serve to refine and agree the final version of the Theory of Change; Results Framework and Monitoring, Reporting, Evaluation and Learning (MREL) approach; Activity Based Budget, and Exit Phase necessary documents.

## **Budget**

The indicative (nearly) 3-year budget for this call for project proposals is £560,000, distributed among components of the project. Budgets must be

Activity Based Budgets (ABB), with specified costs in GBP, and staff fees commensurate with Kosovo NGO market rates.

You can spend up to 5% of the annual budget on MREL related activities. You should budget one independent/external evaluation at the end of each financial year.

Administrative costs (project management and finance rates, utilities, internal communications, stationery, bank charges etc.) must not exceed 10% of the total project budget. This budget shall not be used to cover academic courses or research, the purchase of IT or other equipment.

The annual budget should be spent according to the following targets:

- Q1: 20 to 30%
- Q2: 50 to 60%
- Q3: 80%
- Q4: 100%

By the end of December of each financial year, the annual budget must be spent 80%. Accordingly, project design and delivery of activities should be aligned with these targets. The budget should be detailed for the first year, and contain a general estimate of the costs for the following year(s). Any eventual auditing costs for the entire project (all 3 years) should be incorporated in the budget of the third year.

As part of due diligence in the selection process, the British Embassy Pristina reserves the right to seek references from other partners on potential grantees.

## Timeframe

The duration for the implementation of this project is expected to be 2 years and 10 months. The project is anticipated to commence on 1 June 2022 and end on 31 March 2025.

## Submitting applications

Bidders should fill in the standard [Project proposal questions](#) (ODT, 12.8 KB) in English and include a breakdown of project costs in the [Activity-based budget template](#) (ODS, 15 KB) by 15 May 2022. Proposals submitted in other formats will not be considered.

The proposals should also include:

- [Results framework](#) (ODS, 16.9 KB)
- list of NGOs in the consortium, indicating the lead NGO
- CVs of the key personnel, indicating the positions and role they will have in the project and the percentage of their engagement in the project
- the 2021 Auditor Report for organisations of the consortium
- consortium NGOs' board approved salary ranges for staff

- information on any funding by other donors for similar activity that they currently have or are in the process of receiving during the implementation of the project

Proposals should be emailed to the British Embassy Pristina at: [britishembassy.pristina@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:britishembassy.pristina@fcdo.gov.uk) indicating project bid and name of the lead organisation in the subject field.

Bidding is competitive and only selected consortium of NGOs will receive funding.

## **Evaluation criteria**

Successful bids must demonstrate strong strategic relevance to the areas of project focus and have a clear focus on delivering change and sustainability.

### **Technical compliance criteria:**

- 1) Submission of the application within deadline
- 2) Proposal submitted by a consortium of NGOs
- 3) Consortium organisations' and/or proposed teams' experience in focus areas
- 4) All requested information submitted
- 5) Project design is gender mainstreamed and ensures sustainability
- 6) Project activities are climate and environment sensitive, i.e. 'Paris aligned'

### **Bids will be evaluated based on the following criteria:**

- 1) Methodology and approach (3 points)
- 2) Coherent and concise theory of change, supported by a robust MREL approach (3 points)
- 3) Integration of innovative public communication activities into the proposal (2 points)
- 4) Activity based budget and value for money (1 point)
- 5) Consortium's staff expertise and experience in the thematic area (1 point)

## **Indicative timeline**

These dates are indicative and may be subject to change.

- |               |  |
|---------------|--|
| 13 April 2022 | Call for proposals published   |
| 26 April 2022 | Online open information/clarification session with interested bidders on MS Teams. <a href="#">Join the session at 1pm to 2:30pm</a> |

15 May 2022	Deadline for submission of applications
16 to 20 May 2022	Evaluation window and announcement of results
27 May 2022	Address of possible comments by the winning consortium
31 May 2022	Signing of the grant agreement
1 June 2022	Project implementation starts