

SIA grant for good causes: case study

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected people in all walks of life, including the private security industry. Some have fallen ill with COVID, unable to work as a result. Others have watched loved ones suffer – and in some cases, die.

Crisis fund

In 2020 the Worshipful Company of Security Professionals took action to support those affected by the pandemic. They created a crisis fund for security operatives, the police and emergency services, and the armed forces.

The fund offers grants of:

- £250 for someone hospitalised due to COVID
- £500 for the family of someone who has died of COVID

People can apply for themselves, and businesses can apply on behalf of their employees (the funds are paid directly to the employee).

By the end of 2021 the crisis fund had helped:

- 13 people hospitalised from COVID
- 12 families who had lost a loved one

Claire Palmer, Chair of the Worshipful Company of Security Professionals Charitable Trust, said:

Research conducted early in the pandemic showed that those working in front line security had been particularly affected by COVID-19. We wanted to do something about that. Whilst the sum granted to individuals is relatively small, to those applying for the grants it is a vital form of support.

Grant for good causes

In March 2021 we granted £9,372.23 to the crisis fund.

The grant came from money we received through the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002. The Act allows us to:

- investigate the financial activity of people who have committed a criminal offence
- confiscate the proceeds of crime through a court-issued confiscation order – this requires that the person pays back any money they have made through their criminal acts

We receive a portion of the money we recover through confiscation orders.

Pete Easterbrook, the SIA's Head of Criminal Investigation, said:

It was really pleasing to support such a worthy cause by investing funds taken away from those involved in crime. The purpose of confiscation under the Proceeds of Crime Act is to ensure that crime does not pay, and it feels like suitable restorative justice to return money to individuals in the private security industry that was originally gained illegally.

Find out more

[Learn about the SIA grant for good causes.](#)

[Visit the Worshipful Company of Security Professionals website.](#)

Italians: the climate crisis is the greatest concern

- Nearly 4 out of 5 Italians consider the climate the main global challenge, while in the 18-24 bracket the ratio rises to 9 out of 10
- Compared to a year ago, the number of those who consider the climate issue as a problem of utmost gravity increases: from 49% to 54%.
- Between the need to improve the environment and increase employment, for the first time concern for the environment outweighs concern for the employment situation, for 54% of Italians
- At 84%, the proportion of Italians in favour of increasing wind and solar power in the energy mix of the future remains high

With the United Nations Climate Change Summit (COP26) organised by the UK in collaboration with Italy now behind us, the second SWG survey commissioned by the British Embassy confirms the green soul of Italians, recording a growing concern compared to a year ago for the devastating effects of the climate crisis.

[Italians and climate change presented online on YouTube – in Italian only](#)

The challenge of climate change

While concern about the spread of infectious diseases has tended to remain stable (from 74% to 72%), concern about climate change has risen from 74% to 79%, with 75% of respondents considering poverty, hunger and lack of drinking water the second most urgent problem. The figure for those who consider climate change to be a problem of the utmost gravity is also growing, for more than 1 Italian in 2 (54% compared to 49% in 2020). Young people (18-24 year-olds) are particularly sensitive, with 89% concerned about climate change. Among the global challenges, in terms of seriousness, the economic situation (58%) and wars (36%) follow.

The role of the individual

The number of people who believe it is important to protect the environment and preserve it from damage caused by pollution remains stable and very high. Nearly 9 out of 10 Italians (85%) would like to see greater involvement by the individual in protecting nature, which is currently considered insufficient.

Global warming

The percentage of those who fear global warming is stable at around 85%, an issue of even greater concern among the unemployed and centre-left voters (91%). The high level of concern leads a clear majority of Italians (8 out of 10) to believe that there is no excessive alarmism about the fate of the planet, with the over-64s (85%) and university graduates (87%) more aware of the risks arising from the current situation.

Environmental protection

Environmental protection is a real necessity for 3 Italians out of 5 (61%, a decrease of 4 percentage points compared to the previous survey). This is especially true for younger people (67%) and university graduates (67%). Only 16% consider protecting the environment as a hope that is not compatible with economic development. To underline the environmentalism of Italians, between improving the environment and increasing employment, for the first time more than half of Italians choose the environment (56% vs. 44%).

Sustainable lifestyles and consumption

Among the choices they are willing to make in the direction of greater environmental sustainability, Italians confirm their propensity to reduce the use of disposable plastic items (67%) while the proportion of those who claim to pay more attention to the choice of household appliances based on their energy class increases (from 60% to 66%). There has been a significant increase in the number of people who have bought a hybrid or electric car in the last twelve months, from 6% to 10%. There has also been a rise in the number of those (from 83% to 85%) who say that the level of CO2 emissions plays a role in their choice of new car to buy and, of these, half indicate the hybrid engine as their preferred solution. It is in the 34-44 age group that this percentage increases to 57%, while the attractiveness of gas cars

and conventional engines decreases. With regard to the adoption of more sustainable lifestyles in the future, the willingness of more than 9 out of 10 Italians to recycle more and reduce waste production and, at the same time, to use fewer disposable items, is confirmed as increasing slightly. Almost 8 out of 10 also say they are more inclined to buy less clothing to reduce their impact on the environment (from 72% to 78%).

The energy mix

The figure from the last survey confirms that 84% of Italians are in favour of increasing the share of renewable energy sources (wind and solar) in the energy mix to meet future needs, while there is a slight increase in those who agree with the need for the country to prepare for future extreme climate events (72%). More than half of respondents (57%) agree with stopping government subsidies for fossil fuels. Familiarity and attitude towards COP26 Nearly 8 in 10 Italians (77%) say they know what COP26, hosted by the UK in Glasgow in partnership with Italy, is all about, with men and over-55s the most aware (86%), compared to just 25% in the previous survey.

Commenting on the survey data, the Chargé d’Affaires, Eleanor Sanders said:

after a year that has seen Italy and the UK working side by side with the G7, G20 and COP26 Presidencies, it is important to note how the sensitivity of Italians, already very high at the end of 2020, to climate and sustainability issues, has increased. In particular, environmental protection and the development of more sustainable and resilient economic growth models and lifestyles are key areas in which our countries have shown they can play a leading role. I am sure that these issues will remain high on our bilateral agenda with Italy in the months and years to come.

New powers granted to research gene editing in plants

New legislation will be put in place to cut unnecessary red tape for gene editing, helping our farmers to grow more resistant, nutritious and productive crops.

The rule changes, made possible by the UK’s departure from the EU, will mean that scientists across England will be able to undertake plant-based research and development, using genetic technologies such as gene editing, more easily.

The rules will apply to plants where gene editing is used to create new

varieties similar to those which could have been produced more slowly through traditional breeding processes and will unlock research opportunities to grow crops which are more nutritious, and which require less pesticide use.

Outside the EU, the UK is able to cut red tape and set better rules and regulations that work in the best interests of British farmers and scientists. The legislation being laid today is the first step towards adopting a more scientific and proportionate approach to the regulation of genetic technologies, which will allow us to further unlock innovation using these technologies.

Harnessing the genetic resources that nature has provided through genetic technologies will create new opportunities for farmers to grow more resilient crops. This will support the development of new and innovative ways to protect the environment, such as significantly reducing, or eliminating the use of pesticides and herbicides – protecting pollinators. Another potential benefit includes making crops more resistant to adverse weather and climate change.

Minister for Agri-Innovation and Climate Adaptation Jo Churchill said:

New genetic technologies could help us tackle some of the biggest challenges of our age – around food security, climate change and biodiversity loss.

Now we have the freedom and opportunity to foster innovation, to improve the environment and help us grow plants that are stronger and more resilient to climate change. I am grateful to the farming and environmental groups that have helped us shape our approach, and I look forward to seeing what we can achieve.

All scientists undertaking research with genetic technologies will have to continue to notify Defra of any research trials. For now, gene edited plants will still be classified as genetically modified organisms and commercial cultivation of these plants, and any food products derived from them, will still need to be authorised in accordance with existing rules.

The legislation follows the launch of the [Government's response to the gene editing consultation](#) last year. The government will never compromise high safety, environmental and welfare standards, and the new rules do not mean that environmental or research standards will be lowered.

Chief Scientific Adviser, Professor Gideon Henderson, said:

Gene editing is a powerful tool that will help us make plant breeding more efficient and precise by mimicking natural processes that currently take many years to complete.

With the new rules now formally in place, scientists will be able to assess new crops in real-world conditions more easily. This will

increase our ability to harness the potential of gene editing to efficiently help grow plants that are more nutritious, beneficial to the environment, more resilient to climate change, and resistant to disease and pests.

This announcement comes alongside the Government's wider commitment to supporting farmers and landowners, rewarding them for actions and practices which benefit the environment and support sustainable food production, while driving progress towards net zero and protecting nature. The new legislation will also advance the UK's ambition to become a global science superpower by 2030, and puts the UK in a world-leading position to showcase sustainable climate-friendly farming.

Director of The John Innes Centre, Professor Dale Sanders FRS said:

At the John Innes Centre we use gene editing to understand and develop crops which are more nutritious and resilient to climate change and diseases. Gene editing is a powerful technique that will play a critical role in helping us address the global challenges of climate change and food security while at the same time ensuring biodiversity.

Gene editing provides an opportunity to revolutionise our food systems. However to benefit fully, we have to address the way we regulate this technology. Defra's announcement today is step in the right direction, that will allow researchers to run more field trials of gene-edited crops. I am therefore pleased to see the Government acting to bring these changes in.

To make the most of these discoveries, we need to translate our science to benefits for consumers by making products available on supermarket shelves. I look forward to working with Defra as it continues its wider review of regulations around genetic technologies. Getting this right will be essential if we are to fully benefit from this innovative technology.

Case studies:

Gene editing differs from genetic modification, as it allows beneficial traits to be produced without DNA from other species. Instead, the technology enables breeders and scientists to follow processes that mimic natural breeding.

Examples of the potential of gene editing across applications, outcome areas and geographies include:

- Sugar beet resistant to Virus Yellows, which is a group of viruses spread by aphids and controlled using a range of pesticides. These viruses can cause yield losses up to 50%, presenting costs to farmers and reductions in food production. Over the past four years, a UKRI

funded study has identified several promising sources of genetic resistance. Precision breeding techniques such as gene editing can rapidly accelerate the time taken to transfer this genetic and other sources of resistance into commercial varieties. Using gene editing to give resistance to Virus Yellows would reduce the need for pesticides and will help protect crops against the virus, helping to protect the environment, increase food production and reduce costs to farmers.

Prof. Mark Stevens, Head of Science at the British Beet Research Organisations says:

Virus yellows is currently a difficult breeding target because it is a complex of three viruses, so any methods to identify and accelerate the development of commercially viable virus resistant varieties would be widely welcomed by the UK sugar beet industry.

- Gene edited wheat, grown without asparagine – a probable cancer-causing compound formed when heating products such as potatoes, cereals or coffee. In the first gene edited wheat trial in Europe, researchers at Rothamsted Research are testing a wheat that has been gene edited to have lower levels of the amino acid asparagine.

Prof. Nigel Halford, who leads this trial at Rothamsted Research says:

The use of gene editing could help reduce the risk of acrylamide formation when wheat products are baked and toasted. This has potential benefits for public health and the manufacturing of food products.

- Climate-resilient wheat. Developing wheat that is resilient to climate change will help to increase food production from a crop that 2.5 billion people globally are dependent on. Researchers at the John Innes Centre have used gene editing techniques to help identify and explain the key gene, ZIP4, in wheat which is responsible for maintaining 50% of yield in this global crop. This discovery presents an exciting new opportunity to breed high-yield, elite wheat varieties using a novel mutation of the gene, while also allowing the introduction of critically important traits such as resilience [to rising climate temperatures] and disease resistance.

Professor Graham Moore, John Innes Centre said:

Our research priority is now to identify variations of the ZIP4 gene which maintain fertility under different temperature regimes. We aim to identify variants of the gene with effects that give wheat yield resilience to climate change.

- Mildew resistant tomatoes. Powdery mildew disease is one of the main reasons why UK tomato growers spray fungicides on their crops. Thanks to the work of researchers at The Sainsbury Laboratory, a new resistant variant called Tomelo was created using gene editing. The edited tomato offers the opportunity to dramatically reduce these chemical inputs and benefit farmers and the environment. It took less than 10 months to generate this resistant line and can be introduced to locally adapted varieties quickly, demonstrating the ability of genetic technologies to make the breeding process more efficient and precise.

Professor Nick Talbot FRS, Executive Director of The Sainsbury Laboratory in Norwich, said:

Genome editing provides the opportunity to achieve the outcomes of plant breeding—which has been so successful in controlling diseases and improving yields—but in a much more precise manner. In this way, we can aim to produce nutritious crops requiring much lower agrochemical inputs and with greater resilience.

- Disease resistant bananas. This 4th largest food crop is increasingly vulnerable to disease and is reliant on costly chemical pesticides. A new variant of Panama disease (TR4) has emerged and is threatening global banana production, because there are no effective means to control it or its spread. Tropic Biosciences has used precise gene editing to develop TR4-resistant banana plants which will be a like-for-like replacement for the plants currently used for production around the world.

Gilad Gershon, Tropic Biosciences CEO said:

Our use of gene editing will enable more resilient banana production that is less reliant on chemical pesticides, creating benefits for growers, suppliers and consumers without changing the quality and taste of the fruit we all love.

Gene editing explainer videos:

[How gene editing can benefit us](#)

Kingston boater fined for illegal moorings

The owner of 2 boats has been fined £800 and ordered to pay costs of almost

£21,000 for obstructing a busy part of the River Thames.

Alistair Trotman broke safety byelaws when mooring the barges he rented out as accommodation at one of the busiest sections of the river, at Molesey Lock in Surrey.

The Environment Agency took the 55-year-old to court for compromising the safe passage of other boats through the lock. Trotman kept Kupe and Rhythm of River, each 25 metres long, in the same spot next to Environment Agency land for months.

Boats moored permanently without the consent of the landowner can only remain stationary on the non-tidal Thames for up to 24 hours – and mustn't cause an obstruction to other traffic.

Staines magistrates' court last year convicted Trotman, who lives on board Kupe, at Kingston upon Thames, of berthing the boats for longer than legally allowed. He was also guilty of ignoring orders from the Thames harbour master to move them.

Colin Chiverton, environment manager for the River Thames at the Environment Agency, said:

Trotman showed contempt for the rules. He moored both boats illegally in the same place for many months, disregarding harbour master directions. Most boats using our locks do so lawfully and continue along the river. Trotman's £800 fine and nearly £21,000 costs, instead of the taxpayer footing the legal bill, show the result of not doing so.

The Environment Agency also maintains some limited short-stay public moorings along almost 150 miles of the non-tidal River Thames to encourage pleasure boating and enable secure berthing at set locations.

We urge all Thames boat-owners to consider the size and type of vessel they use and how to comply with mooring requirements.

The court heard evidence from Environment Agency officers that Trotman's inconsiderate actions exposed other boats and their crews to obstruction and possible danger.

Trotman refused to accept he was in the wrong at any point between October 2018 and the following March. He didn't move the boats from the Environment Agency lay-by at Molesey, failing to accept they were blocking the channel into the lock.

District judge Susan Cooper ruled in favour of the harbour master's evidence the boats "were likely to affect the navigation of other vessels" in a stretch of water narrowed by Trotman's actions.

Trotman did move Rhythm of River a few metres from its original position after being warned legal action was a possibility, but he was still in breach of the harbour master notices issued against both boats.

When Trotman refused the agency's instructions to move the boats in March 2019, waterways officers towed them away from Molesey Lock, Kupe with Trotman inside. He refused to come out to talk to agency staff, who had tried to contact him through documents posted on the vessels, phone calls and letters.

Powered and unpowered boats on the river shouldn't obstruct other traffic or interfere with land next to the river. The Environment Agency maintains more than 600 miles of inland waterways across England, keeping them open and safe for thousands of river-lovers.

In keeping the boats in place and failing to comply with the harbour master's 2 notices to move the boats, Trotman breached the Thames Navigation Licensing and General Byelaws 1993 and the Thames Conservancy Act 1932, both once for each barge. He was fined £200 for each of the 4 offences.

At Staines magistrates' court on 19 January 2022, Trotman was ordered to pay the Environment Agency's costs of £20,591.40 and a victim surcharge of £80.

Foreign Secretary: The Northern Ireland Protocol must be changed to protect the hard-won peace

Northern Ireland has so much to be proud of. Businesses here set the standard in the industries of the future such as fintech. Clean innovation is thriving, whether it is in building the world's largest offshore tidal generator or the world's first hydrogen-powered buses. Smash hit shows like Game of Thrones are filmed across Northern Ireland, demonstrating its unique cultural influence.

Such achievements rest upon the peace and prosperity sustained through the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, which established power-sharing on the parity of esteem to all parts of the community. However, the Northern Ireland Protocol is putting that hard-won progress at risk by upsetting the delicate balance which is fundamental to the Agreement.

My priority is to protect peace and stability in Northern Ireland. That is why on taking charge of our negotiations with the European Union, I invited my EU counterpart Maroš Šefčovič for talks aimed at sorting out the situation as soon as possible. After cordial and constructive discussions at Chevening last week, we agreed to intensify our work.

The core purpose of the Protocol is to protect the peace process and the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement) in all its dimensions: East-West, North-South and within Northern Ireland. But it is failing on its own terms – having lost the consent of the Unionist community over fears their identity – along with the integrity of our country – are under threat. They point to a fundamental truth: that Northern Ireland's prosperity is overwhelmingly tied to the place it has in the UK internal market.

This is crucial for the future of Northern Ireland. The UK and EU agreed under the Withdrawal Agreement to support the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement in all its aspects. It is unsustainable to prioritise one strand over all the others by treating Northern Ireland as if it is in the Single Market and part of the EU, when we all know it is not. The core principles on which the Protocol was built remain as relevant as ever: protecting the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement, respecting the integrity of the United Kingdom while providing adequate protections for the EU's Single Market. We are spending over £500 million on trader support services and new IT systems to make it work.

But our extensive efforts are not able to solve the countless problems emerging because it is clear that there are intrinsic faults with the current arrangements which need to be fixed. Needless paperwork has put hundreds of businesses off trading within the United Kingdom. Rules are frustrating efforts to bring everything into Northern Ireland from beloved family pets to critical medicines.

Any UK Government of any party would have the same duty to fix these pressing problems. They will only get worse if we leave the situation to fester or insist the answer lies in implementing the Protocol's rules more tightly. The latest polling shows that the vast majority of people – 78% – in Northern Ireland agree the Protocol needs to change.

Our proposal is pragmatic and common-sense: only goods actually going to the European Union should face checks and processes. We remain happy to keep checking those that do to ensure there is no need for a hard border North-South. This approach works because fundamentally it respects both unions: the UK and the EU. That principle is why we need to ensure people in Northern Ireland can benefit fully from the same economic decisions as the rest of the UK – respecting their fundamental democratic right to have a say on who should set and spend their taxes. This democratic deficit is also why we must end the role of the European Court of Justice as the final arbiter of disputes and revert to the same rules as found in other international treaties.

I remain determined to find a solution. After this week's round of renewed talks, I am looking forward to meeting Vice-President Šefčovič on Monday to review progress.

We need to find a resolution one way or another. I am willing to do whatever is needed to preserve peace and stability in Northern Ireland, which includes taking legitimate safeguard measures if necessary, as the Protocol allows.

For a solution to stand the test of time, it needs to fix the Protocol comprehensively rather than rely on piecemeal solutions to problems as they arise. As fellow believers in liberty and democracy, I believe the UK and EU can bridge the gaps and deliver for Northern Ireland.

Just as all sides rose to challenge of securing peace, let us step up and work with the same conviction, clarity of purpose, and innovative thinking. There is a deal to be done, and a shared responsibility to make it happen.

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