

UK Pavilion showcases British offshore wind expertise to support Taiwan's green future

The British Office Taipei showcased UK expertise across the offshore wind industry with an iconic pavilion at the 'Energy Taiwan' exhibition today, demonstrating support for Taiwan's renewable energy ambitions.

The UK is working closely with all partners, including Taiwan, to inspire global climate action. The UK-Taiwan bilateral collaboration has been stepped up on renewable energy, propelling offshore wind power for generations to come. The UK is committed to sharing expertise on floating offshore wind and multi-use port development as well as skills and workforce planning for the renewable energy sector.

The UK was the first major economy to pass legislation for net zero emissions and has the largest offshore wind capacity in the world. More than thirty UK offshore wind supply chain companies have set up operations in Taiwan, helping to bolster Taiwan's ambitions to achieve 20.5GW in capacity by 2035.

The UK has shown the world that green and growth go hand in hand, and as a result other economies are already following the UK's lead with their own net zero targets. When the UK was confirmed as COP26 President, less than 30% of global GDP was signed up to net zero or carbon neutrality targets. Today, in part again because of UK leadership, that figure is now over 80% – and rising.

John Dennis, Representative of British Office Taipei, said at the opening of UK pavilion today:

The UK is a natural partner to Taiwan in its energy transition. A key priority for the British Office Taipei is supporting Taiwan to harness the opportunities of action on climate change and to help power a new era of renewable energy, including offshore wind. There are now more than 30 British offshore wind companies in Taiwan, delivering the full range of maritime technology and services during construction. UK businesses look forward to accelerating support for Taiwan, driving clean growth and green investments in the sustainable technologies of the future.

Taiwan has recently announced it will bring a net zero emissions target by 2050 into law and will also legislate for a carbon pricing scheme. With the UK's experience and commercial capabilities in the offshore wind supply chain, the UK and Taiwan can work together to cement Taiwan as the Asia Pacific region's leading offshore wind market.

Eight British companies with business operations in Taiwan are exhibiting at

the UK Pavilion, themed around Tower Bridge – an iconic and world-famous British landmark. The companies have been selected to demonstrate the breadth of British expertise including offshore windfarm planning and construction; engineering consultancy; crew transfer vessels; Operations & Maintenance; blade services, floating wind technology; and temporary power and temperature solutions for offshore wind farms.

Welcome to visit UK Pavilion at Energy Taiwan 2021 by 10 December to meet British supply chain businesses and explore future cooperation.

UK Pavilion at Energy Taiwan 2021:

Date: Wednesday – Friday, 8-10 December 2021

Venue: Booth Q0524, Taipei Nangang Exhibition Centre Hall II

Eight UK companies presenting at the UK Pavilion: (in alphabetical order)

Improving Diversity in Recruitment at the Open Innovation Team

The Open Innovation Team has been growing steadily over the past six months, giving us the opportunity to run several recruitment campaigns in order to increase the size of our permanent team. This will result in six new staff members to help with increased demand for our services. We have also concurrently run our PhD placement recruitment cycle for the year ahead.

Diversity helps see policy through a different lens, and can also boost productivity and wellbeing within the team. As a result, we set out to make our recruitment processes fairer to try to increase the diversity within our own team. This is an area we need to work on, so we are proactively thinking about the best way to do this as we look to grow our team further. Here are some of the new processes and initiatives we've been developing:

Updating our PhD recruitment process

We've introduced some new elements to our selection process, which includes asking candidates hypothetical questions which do not rely on prior experience, and allow us to see how they would approach situations. We have also started to collect better data throughout the recruitment process to understand where issues exist.

Using an evidence-based approach

With better access to data we can understand which interventions work, which ones don't, and use this information to further refine and improve our recruitment process. We've already done this for our own PhD recruitment process and are working on accessing data for our permanent staff members. We can then share best practice across the department.

Testing new processes and refining interventions

We sit in the Higher Education and Further Education Group within the Department for Education. The group has removed the use of "behaviours" from recruitment campaigns to try to improve diversity. We're testing this in our current recruitment campaigns and we'll look to implement any findings in future efforts.

Consulting with academics

We're in conversation with academics from Essex University, one of our partners, who specialise in diversity in recruitment. We're aiming to use their expertise to directly inform our process; from advertising vacancies, to data analysis, to best interviewing practice.

Joining departmental networks

Members of our team have joined various departmental committees and working groups to help understand the department's wider diversity and inclusion agenda. We're looking forward to sharing our team's lessons to help contribute to this strategy.

We welcome further discussions on this topic, so if you would like to help contribute to the diversity agenda, please get in touch with us via enquiries@openinnovation.gov.uk

[Rope access experts carry out rock maintenance work at Dounreay waste vaults](#)

News story

Rope access experts have been abseiling down 20 metre high rock walls around Dounreay's low level radioactive waste vaults, carrying out rock face maintenance and stabilisation work.



Dounreay operates facilities for the disposal of low-level radioactive waste adjacent to the nuclear licensed site. The shallow engineered concrete vaults constructed below the ground surface are the final resting place for much of the radioactive waste that was produced during the operational life of the site and will be produced by the site's decommissioning and remediation programme.

Contractor CAN Geotechnical and geotechnical designer Golder Associates (UK) Ltd (a member of WSP) have been working with Dounreay to carry out the rock face stabilisation work. The work consists of scaling loose rock, repairing existing rock netting systems, and installing additional rock bolts, netting and catch fences to protect against falling rock from the faces. This will ensure the excavations are safe before an initial phase of backfilling around the low level waste vault begins. The backfilling is an integral part of the disposal process and will be undertaken in tandem with the grouting around the waste containers in the vault.

Backfilling is scheduled to begin in January 2022 and the first stage of grouting around the waste packages is planned for April 2022. This backfill and grouting process represents a significant milestone in the Dounreay waste disposal process towards the ultimate closure of the facilities. Further campaigns are planned as more waste packages are placed in the vaults.

Colin Smith, the CAN site manager, said:

It's really great to be supporting DSRL by providing safe conditions for the ongoing disposal operations. The safety of our abseiling team is also paramount when carrying out the work, and our techniques are all accredited by the Industrial Rope Access Trade Association (IRATA).

It's important we have safe methods to recover from any incident, particularly at height, and we regularly undertake rescue training. We've been undertaking some rescue exercises while working at Dounreay, to practice recovery of injured personnel from up on the rock faces. This has allowed us to keep our training fresh but also to test how we would interact with the Dounreay team if an emergency arose.

[A joint statement on the sunsetting of 2G and 3G networks and public ambition for Open RAN rollout as part of the Telecoms Supply Chain Diversification Strategy](#)

The Government is today announcing, together with UK mobile network operators, a joint ambition for 35% of the UK's mobile network traffic to be carried over open and interoperable Radio Access Network (RAN) architectures by 2030.

Open network architectures will play a key role in enhancing the security and resilience of the networks that we rely on – now more than ever – to keep in touch and do business. Following recent decisions the Government has made around the use of high-risk vendors and the introduction of the Telecommunications Security Act, it is right that the Government now sets out its ambitions to build a more competitive, innovative, and diverse supply base for telecoms.

We recognise that mobile operators are currently taking forward plans to introduce and expand their 5G networks – while also undertaking work to extend coverage to the most rural parts of the UK. Therefore this ambition is not a mandate and instead realising it will require partnership and collaboration between government, mobile operators and the wider telecoms industry.

We understand that in order to reach this ambition, there is more to be done to develop the performance, economics, and security of new RAN solutions so that they become competitive and viable for scale deployments. Therefore, joint activity will include – investment in the research and development, deployment, and adoption of open network technologies, creating the right market environment to foster and encourage innovation, and international partnerships that bring together learning from across the global supply chain.

We welcome the forward steps taken by operators and suppliers to position the UK as a leader in the development of open and interoperable RAN technology – and the government has committed £250m of investment to support and accelerate this programme of work.

This ambition demonstrates the Government's commitment to delivering its

Diversification Strategy and building lasting and sustainable supply for the infrastructure that underpins our entire digital economy. Sunsetting 2G and 3G networks

Finally, following a Diversification Taskforce's recommendation, the Government has worked closely with industry to establish a date by which all public 2G and 3G networks in the UK will have been switched off.

This next step in the UK's technological revolution will free up spectrum for 5G and beyond, creating exciting possibilities for our everyday lives and business. The move is also a key step in wider Government measures on introducing new vendors to the UK mobile networks, contributing to nationwide security and resilience.

Establishing this date is necessary to provide much needed clarity as to the likely commercial longevity of these technologies and will enable users to confidently plan for their future. Transitioning away from these technologies will improve network efficiency.

The mobile network operators have confirmed that they do not intend to offer 2G and 3G mobile networks past 2033 at the latest. We welcome that some individual operators will switch off their networks, particularly their 3G networks, earlier than this date, and will announce their own plans about when and how they intend to do this.

The Government welcomes the responsible switch off of these networks, and will continue to work with network operators to ensure a smooth transition that meets the needs of business users and consumers, including vulnerable groups.

[New measures to boost UK telecoms security](#)

- Forms part of UK's £50 million package to boost innovation in mobile network technology
- The measures are a key step in providing nationwide security and resilience
- Comes as Nadine Dorries travels to the US to discuss future cooperation on telecoms, tech and data with US counterparts

2G and 3G mobile networks [will be phased out](#) of use in the UK by 2033 as part of measures to increase the security of telecoms supply chains and to support a smooth transition to faster mobile networks.

Digital Secretary Nadine Dorries announced the ambition, alongside £50 million of telecoms research and development projects, ahead of her first

visit to the United States where she will meet with US Secretary for Commerce Gina Raimondo.

The leaders will renew their commitment to diversifying the global telecoms supply chain and discuss shared ambitions and co-operation on transatlantic data policy. The Digital Secretary will meet with several senior ministers and officials on the four-day visit to Washington DC and New York to build cooperation on her digital and tech priorities.

The announcement follows the UK's decision to ban Huawei equipment from 5G networks and the recent introduction of the [Telecommunications Security Act](#). It forms part of the government's [£250 million strategy](#) to build a more competitive, innovative and diverse supply chain for telecoms, to reduce the world's over-reliance on a few equipment makers. The UK and the US are united in their mission to resolve this global issue.

The government has agreed (see notes to editors) with the UK mobile network operators (MNOs) Vodafone, EE, Virgin Media O2 and Three that 2033 will be the date by which all public 2G and 3G networks in the UK will be switched off.

The plans will free up spectrum – the radio waves used for sending and receiving information – to allow for the mass rollout of 5G and other future networks such as 6G which will help create huge possibilities for people's lives. These technologies will help power driverless vehicles and drones, immersive virtual and augmented reality experiences, as well as innovations in tech to achieve Net Zero and improve healthcare. The hyper-fast speeds of 5G will also revolutionise internet accessibility on the go.

The government's £200 million [5G Testbeds and Trials programme](#) is already seeing next-generation networks transform industries – from smart farming to immersive reality experiences to enhancing the UK's top tourist destinations and 5G buoys helping coastguards save lives at sea.

Digital Secretary Nadine Dorries said:

5G technology is already revolutionising people's lives and businesses – connecting people across the UK with faster mobile data and making businesses more productive.

Today we are announcing a further £50 million to put the UK at the forefront of mobile connectivity and to make sure our telecoms networks are safe and secure now and in the future.

We can only do this through stronger international collaboration and I will be meeting with our US allies today as we strengthen our ties on technology.

In the next step in the tech revolution, the government and MNOs are also announcing new plans to boost innovation and accelerate the rollout of a new wireless communication technology known as Open Radio Access Networks (Open

RAN), which enables mobile networks to be built using a variety of different equipment suppliers.

Open networks can feature components from multiple suppliers within one mast site or allow for components to be exchanged or used as replacements at masts that, until now, have been kitted out by a single supplier.

The new plans include a joint ambition for 35 per cent of the UK's mobile network traffic to be carried over Open RAN by 2030, £36 million in funding for fifteen projects to trial the technology across Scotland, Wales and England, and a £15 million cash injection for the SONIC prototype testing facility for next-generation telecoms tech.

Nadine Dorries will also meet with Director of the White House Office for Science and Tech Policy Dr Eric Lander today. They will discuss strengthening ambitions for the US-UK Technology Partnership which aims to foster collaboration on shared challenges across a range of issues including online safety, data and digital competition.

She will also speak at a reception at the UK Ambassador's Residence in Washington attended by a selection of digital, tech and cyber stakeholders from the US administration, think tanks, Congress and UK government. She will promote the upcoming UK National Cyber Strategy which will strengthen the country's collective security and defend a free, open, peaceful and secure cyberspace.

Further information

Sunsetting 2G and 3G

A current barrier for new suppliers entering the UK's 5G market is that they must, as it stands, offer 2G or 3G services because they are required by all four domestic mobile operators. Setting out a timeline for winding down these services follows recommendations from the [Diversification Taskforce](#) and will allow new suppliers to enter the market by giving them certainty on when they can start work building 5G networks across Britain.

There are wider benefits including reducing the power needed to run multiple networks, being able to reuse spectrum and retiring old kit. It also makes running networks simpler as operators do not have to handle the challenges which arise from managing up to four networks, and even more as we move towards 6G.

Some individual operators will switch off their networks, particularly their 3G networks, earlier than 2033, and will announce their own plans on timing. The number of consumers using 2G and 3G who will need to upgrade is expected to be very low by 2033, and operators have committed to help customers transition to newer network technologies.

Hamish MacLeod, Director of Mobile UK, said:

Mobile UK and its members welcome the government's statement.

Switching off 2G and 3G will enable operators to transition fully to more energy efficient and high capacity networks to the benefit of customers. We are also working with government and wider industry to support the maturity of new RAN solutions to open up further opportunities for innovation and new services in the future.

Future RAN Competition

It comes as the government reveals the winners of its £36 million competition to fund innovative R&D projects across the UK to develop open RAN technology.

The 15 winning consortiums in the Future Radio Access Network Competition (FRANC)will develop technical solutions – such as radio transmitters, signal processing equipment, power management systems and the software – required to roll out open RAN solutions across the UK quickly and attract new home-grown telecoms suppliers to the 5G supply chain.

In a boost to levelling up, the investment will be spread across the UK , including Glasgow, Cardiff, Cambridge, Newcastle, Newport, Slough and Ebbw Vale.

Matthew Evans, Director of Markets at techUK, said:

Today's announcement of the successful FRANC bids is testament to the role our tech and telecoms sector can play in preparing and empowering the UK's networks for future prosperity and security. It is a clear indication of the talent, expertise and innovation the UK can offer the global telecoms market.

While more can be done to accelerate the commercialisation of UK innovation in advanced connectivity, opportunities like FRANC show the willingness of our tech companies, SMEs and academic community in helping deliver the long-term aspirations of secure, resilient, open and disaggregated networks.

SONIC Labs

The government is also announcing a cash injection of up to £15 million for [SONIC Labs](#) – a test facility based in London and Brighton and run by Digital Catapult with the support of Ofcom to enable telecoms suppliers to test their early stage products in real-world mobile network settings.

SONIC Labs opened in June 2021 with an investment of £1 million. The extra £15 million will be invested so the Lab can expand its programme of testing and international engagement. The new FRANC winners are expected to work closely with the labs.

Joe Butler, Chief Technology Officer at Digital Catapult, said:

Diversification and interoperability are key themes driving UK capabilities in advanced digital technology and we are pleased to expand Sonic Labs' role in delivering fast, secure and reliable connectivity.

We look forward to expanding access early next year to our testbed network to companies looking to experiment with and test new products and services. Today's announcement will help us reach more businesses to prepare them for the digital future.

ENDS

Notes to editors

- Last week both the UK and US endorsed the Prague Proposals on Telecommunications Supplier Diversity, which highlight the importance of working together on research and development with international partners to achieve open and interoperable networks.
- The MNOs are currently taking forward plans to introduce and expand their 5G networks as well working to extend 4G coverage to the most rural parts of the UK. Therefore the 35 per cent ambition is not a mandate and the government will continue to actively support operators and the wider telecoms industry to develop the technologies needed to meet this ambition.
- The investment figures in SONIC and FRANC are subject to the signing of grant funding agreements.
- Full details on the individual FRANC winners have been published [online](#).