

British High Commission in Dhaka announces partnership with Earthshot Prize finalist Solshare

On Monday 18 October 2021, the British High Commissioner to Bangladesh H.E. Robert Chatterton Dickson announced that the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office would provide £300,000 of financial support to Bangladesh-based Solshare, one of the 15 finalists in the inaugural Earthshot Prize competition.

To mark the occasion, the British High Commissioner hosted a celebratory event where guests learned more about Solshare's ground-breaking work to repair our planet, and the finalists received a personal message from HRH Prince William, who congratulated them on their fantastic achievement.

Congratulating Solshare, the High Commissioner said:

"I am pleased to announce that FCD0 is about to provide £300,000 to a partnership between Shakti Foundation and Solshare, to help them scale-up their model of using rooftop solar home systems for peer-to-peer energy exchange networks, enabling poor households to both generate electricity from a renewable source and gain an income by selling their surplus energy to the national grid.

"Together with the business support Solshare will receive from Earthshot, we are confident that this will eventually help improve the lives and livelihoods of millions of Bangladeshis."

Launched by Prince William and The Royal Foundation in October 2020, The Earthshot Prize is the most prestigious global environment prize in history. Inspired by President John F. Kennedy's 'Moonshot', which united millions of people around the goal of reaching the moon, the Earthshot Prize aims to discover, spotlight and scale-up the best solutions to the world's greatest environmental challenges. The Earthshot Prize is centred around five 'Earthshots': Protect and Restore Nature; Clean our Air; Revive our Oceans; Build a Waste-free World; and Fix our Climate. Solshare was one of three finalists in the "Fix our Climate" Category.

The winners in each category were announced on 17 October at a star-studded award ceremony in London, which was broadcast live on BBC1. Prince William opened the ceremony, and Sir David Attenborough gave an address in which he shared his optimism that the world would rise to meet the greatest environmental challenges of our time. Hosted by Clara Amfo and Dermot O'Leary, the ceremony also featured unforgettable performances from globally-renowned artists Ed Sheeran, Coldplay, KSI, Yemi Alade, and Shawn Mendes. The winners of The Earthshot Prize were announced by presenters including The Duchess of Cambridge, David Oyelowo, Emma Thompson, Emma Watson, and Mo Salah.

Each year over the course of the coming decade, The Earthshot Prize will award £1 million each to five winners across each Earthshot category, providing at least 50 solutions to the world's greatest environmental problems by 2030.

All 15 of this year's finalists, including Bangladesh-based Solshare, will receive tailored support from The Earthshot Prize Global Alliance, an unrivalled network of philanthropies, NGOs, and private sector businesses around the world who will help scale their solutions.

Notes to editors

For more information about [The Earthshot Prize](#)

A detailed media pack, including visual assets and background on finalists and winners can be [downloaded](#) here.

About The Earthshot Prize

The Earthshot Prize is the most prestigious environmental prize in history, launched in October 2020 by Prince William and designed and incubated by The Royal Foundation, an organisation which mobilises leaders, businesses and people so that together we can address society's greatest challenges. Led by The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, The Royal Foundation's work is built on world-class research, long-term partnerships, and measurable, scalable impact.

The Earthshot Prize is designed to incentivise change and help to repair our planet over the next ten years. The Prize is backed by The Earthshot Prize Council, a global team of influential individuals, who will be responsible for awarding The Earthshot Prize every year from 2021 until 2030.

The Earthshot Prize is centred around five 'Earthshot' goals: Protect and Restore Nature; Clean our Air; Revive our Oceans; Build a Waste-Free World; and Fix our Climate. Five £1 million prizes will be awarded each year for the next 10 years, providing at least 50 solutions to the world's greatest environmental problems by 2030.

Further information

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Foreign Secretary visits the Gulf to boost economic and security ties, October 2021

She touches down in Saudi Arabia this morning, where she will meet Minister of Foreign Affairs, His Highness Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud to discuss closer cooperation on regional security, development, human rights and counter-terrorism, and how the two nations can build economic links as part of the Kingdom's plan to diversify its economy.

Truss then flies to Qatar to meet His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani.

Top of the agenda will be cooperation on Afghanistan and security in the wider region. She will visit the Park View Compound, a facility housing people who have left Afghanistan in recent weeks.

Qatar has played a critical role in supporting safe passage for those seeking to leave Afghanistan, including over 100 British nationals since the UK's evacuation operation ended in late August.

The latest flight arrived in Doha on Monday carrying 17 British nationals.

Truss will also launch a Strategic Dialogue with Qatar as part of the visit, which will form the basis for deeper cooperation on security, development, trade and investment between the two countries.

The Foreign Secretary sees both Saudi Arabia and Qatar as important partners in deepening the UK's economic, technology and security and defence ties with friends and allies around the world.

Foreign Secretary, Liz Truss said:

Closer security and economic ties with Gulf allies will help us deliver jobs and opportunities for people back in the UK and ensure as friends and partners that we are operating from a position of strength in the world.

I want a closer trading and investment relationship with the Gulf and for us to collaborate more closely on issues like intelligence sharing, development, security and defence.

The UK recently fired the starting gun on a free trade deal with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which includes Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

Trade with the GCC is already worth more than £30bn and a free trade deal would boost that further by creating new opportunities for UK exporters and closer two-way investment ties.

[Farming Innovation Programme launched to boost the future of farming](#)

A new long-term funding programme to support farmers, growers, foresters and other businesses to embrace innovative ways to maximise productivity and drive sustainability has opened for applications today, 20 October.

The Farming Innovation Programme, one of the new measures set out in the Government's [Agricultural Transition Plan](#), will support ambitious projects to transform productivity and enhance environmental sustainability in England's agricultural and horticultural sectors, whilst driving the sectors towards net zero.

In partnership with UK Research & Innovation (UKRI), Defra is today making £17.5 million available for the first round of the three funds which make up the Programme. The first fund to open is the 'Industry-led R&D Partnerships Fund', where farmers, growers, foresters and businesses can bid for funding to develop new technologies and practices that will help them overcome challenges and exploit new opportunities in the sector such as the use of artificial intelligence and low-emission machineries to optimise the production process, and the development of climate-resilient crops.

Early next year, Defra will launch the 'Farming Futures R&D Fund', for strategic projects aimed at tackling climate change by reducing the environmental impact of farming. The third of the funds, called 'Projects to Accelerate Adoption Fund', will launch later in 2022 to support farmer-led projects to trial the viability of new innovations on farm.

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Jo Churchill, said:

Innovation is vital to address the challenges facing the agricultural and horticultural sectors. New ideas, technologies and processes will play a key role in helping farmers, growers and businesses to become more productive.

The Farming Innovation Programme will enable the sector to be more environmentally sustainable and resilient, whilst helping it achieve its net zero ambitions. I encourage all eligible businesses and individuals to apply.

The Farming Innovation Programme expands on Defra's partnership with UKRI for the recent [Farming Innovation Pathways competition](#), which saw huge demand from the sector and attracted many high-quality applications to innovate the horticulture and farming industry, when launched earlier this year.

Defra announced today the new projects that have won a share of this £14.5 million Farming Innovation Pathways funding. The awarded projects will contribute to helping businesses and researchers transform food production, meet the growing demand for British food, and help the sector to move towards net zero emissions. Winning applicants are now able to develop their ideas, which include:

- a fruit-scouting robot that monitors the growth-stages of crops, up to determining fruit ripeness, size and optimal picking time, to allow farmers to maximise production and yields
- a model to use soldier flies to create a low-cost, protein-rich animal feed from farm waste, enabling farmers to recover value from otherwise unusable waste. This also promotes circular farming practices in which resources are turned into new products at the end of their life
- a new approach to protect vegetable seeds against parasites and pathogens without the use of pesticides. This would help farmers improve vegetables germination, growth and yield through a combination of techniques such as laser treatment and natural disinfectants
- a fruit and vegetable growing method which harnesses natural daylight to boost the nutritional and flavour characteristics of crops. This would enhance the sustainability, productivity and competitiveness of domestic fruit and vegetable growing, compared to conventional glasshouse production. It will also extend the production season and remove the need for pesticides in production

UKRI Challenge Director for the TFP challenge, Katrina Hayter, said:

As the UK gets ready to host COP26 in November, it is timely that we can unveil so many great projects in the vital area of agriculture that will help meet our net zero goals.

Working closely with farmers in the innovation process means that pressing challenges are identified. Solving these challenges will result in maximising productivity, reducing emissions, and making our farms more resilient and sustainable.

Further information on Defra's new funds is available at the [Future Farming Blog](#) and at the dedicated [UKRI webpage](#).

From October 2021:

- [Research Starter Projects](#) – To help farmers and growers with bold, ambitious early-stage ideas develop them further and build a collaborative team – for those who haven't previously received Innovate

UK funding

- [Feasibility Projects](#) – To test the feasibility of early-stage solutions and to inform decisions on subsequent larger scale R&D projects
- [Small R&D Partnership Projects](#) – To carry out R&D for innovative solutions that have the potential to substantially improve overall productivity, sustainability and resilience of the sector

From Spring 2022:

- Large R&D Partnership Projects – Launching early 2022, this will provide funding for larger-scale R&D and demonstration of solutions that have the potential to substantially improve overall productivity, sustainability and resilience of the sector
- each competition within the R&D Partnership Fund will offer different scales of funding. Project teams will be able to apply for grants towards the total project costs, while providing some of their own match funding.
- the competitions will be open to applications for 5-6 weeks, with different closing dates for each competition.
- video recordings of applicant briefing events are available on the competition pages.
- more information on the new competitions and how to get involved can be found on the [UKRI website](#)
- further information will follow in the coming months on the other funds available in the Programme, including the Farming Futures R&D Fund, and the Projects to Accelerate Adoption Fund

[Lack of progress continues to impact negatively the lives of Israelis and Palestinians](#)

Thank you Mr President, and may I welcome you back to New York. Thank you also to the Special Coordinator for your briefing and to our two civil society briefers Mr Daniel Levy and Dr Hanan Ashrawi for their thought-provoking contributions today.

Mr President, I'd like to start by welcoming the increased engagement between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority over recent months. We are confident this dialogue will continue, and it is our hope that it will deliver tangible results to tackle immediate and long-term threats to peace and stability. The parties have our full support in this.

The United Kingdom also welcomes the increased calm in Gaza, and recent steps taken by Israel to reduce constraints on access for goods and people into and out of the strip. We now ask Israel to set out a full and transparent plan to

improve movement and access in Gaza, in line with International Humanitarian Law, to allow for reconstruction and development to advance.

A number of positive signals notwithstanding, we continue to see negative trends in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. As we have heard, rates of demolitions and evictions of Palestinians from their homes have continued to rise, and this year may see the worst rate of demolitions in five years. We urge the Government of Israel to ensure that Palestinian families living in the Occupied Territories can remain safely in their homes.

Violence in the West Bank, including settler attacks against Palestinian people and property, is also on the rise. The shocking attack on the Palestinian village of Umm Mufaqqarah, in the South Hebron Hills, on 28 September resulted in a three-year-old Palestinian child being hospitalised. We call on Israel to provide appropriate protection to the Palestinian civilian population, to ensure all such incidents are investigated thoroughly, and for those responsible to be brought to justice. We welcome the Government of Israel's commitment to addressing settler violence and Foreign Minister Lapid's condemnation of the Umm Mufaqqarah attack.

We are also concerned about the Israeli Security Forces' use of excessive force. We continue to urge Israel to uphold the principles of necessity and proportionality when defending its legitimate security interests.

The Palestinian Authority's (PA) dire fiscal situation carries the risk that it is unable to pay salaries or its suppliers in full from next month onwards. Rapid action is needed to improve the situation. The UK will continue to work with the PA to help it implement necessary reforms, and we urge our international partners to do the same.

Lastly Mr President, as we celebrated the International Day of the Girl Child last week, we were reminded of the impressive educational attainment rates for girls across the Occupied Palestinian Territories. We must celebrate this success and ensure that the vital provision of education, including to girls, is protected from the threat of instability.

In conclusion, the lack of progress in the Middle East Peace Process continues to impact negatively the lives of everyday Israelis and Palestinians, and the ongoing conflict is in need of a just and lasting resolution. We continue to urge all parties to renew their commitment to peacebuilding, and to work to deliver it. The UK continues to believe that a two-state solution offers the only meaningful prospect for durable peace.

Prime Minister's automotive

roundtable: 19 October 2021

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson met with representatives of the automotive sector to discuss the UK's electric vehicle revolution.



The Prime Minister met with representatives for leading British and global companies in the automotive sector this afternoon (19 October 2021) to discuss the UK's electric vehicle revolution.

The Prime Minister set out the UK's world-leading commitment to phase out the sale of new petrol and diesel cars by 2030, with growing numbers of electric vehicles coming on the market and more chargepoints being rolled out across the country. He also welcomed company investments in the UK this year and industry commitments to a zero-emission future.

They discussed how to accelerate the revolution further, support the industry with the transition to a cleaner future including in battery technology, and build public confidence further in good charging infrastructure. They also spoke about creating and supporting high-quality jobs and reskilling the automotive workforce.

They agreed to work together in developing and delivering the UK's ambitious plans.

New funding commitments made in the government's [Net Zero Strategy](#) today include an extra £350 million to support the electrification of UK vehicles and their supply chains, as part of our £1 billion commitment. Also, a further £620 million for targeted electric vehicle grants and infrastructure has been set out, with a focus on local on-street residential charge points. This brings total investment in EV grants and infrastructure to £2.5 billion since the 2020 Spending Review.

Plans to put thousands more zero-emission cars and vans onto UK roads through a zero-emission vehicle mandate has also been confirmed today.

Companies from across the supply chain and industry represented included:

- Nissan
- Stellantis
- BMW
- Ford
- Toyota
- Arrival
- JLR
- InstaVolt
- Pod Point
- BP
- Bosch
- Envision
- BYD
- Geely

The UK Business Secretary, Transport Secretary, Trade Secretary and Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury also joined the roundtable.

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