

# UK completes over one million SARS-CoV-2 whole genome sequences

The UK has surpassed one million SARS-CoV-2 genome sequences uploaded to the international Global Initiative on Sharing Avian Influenza Data (GISAID) database, meaning UK represents 24% of all samples uploaded during the pandemic. The GISAID database stores genome sequences from across the world to inform the global pandemic response.

Genomic sequencing provides a better understanding of how the virus is evolving to help inform the global pandemic response. Significant UK discoveries have been made as a result of genomic sequencing throughout the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

These include identifying the Alpha variant, which helped to explain epidemiological changes in data and transmission.

By tracking the Beta variant, which was first identified in South Africa, the UK was able to detect new cases and prevent widespread transmission.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

The UK is a world leader in genomics, and our scientific experts play a vital role in the global community, sharing their knowledge and findings as part of a worldwide effort to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic.

Every single test sequenced helps us to stay ahead of variants and learn more about this virus.

The newly established UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) will be on the frontline protecting the nation from infectious diseases and other public health threats.

Building upon the work of NHS Test and Trace over the course of the pandemic, it is responsible for continuing to develop the UK's whole genome sequencing capability, in partnership with scientific organisations including the Wellcome Sanger Institute and COVID-19 Genomics UK (COG-UK) consortium.

Dr Jenny Harries, Chief Executive of UKHSA, said:

Sequencing one million genomes is a huge achievement and a testament to the UK's scientific strength and expertise. We are hugely grateful to everyone who has worked hard and at incredible speed to make this happen.

Global co-operation is key in the fight against COVID-19 and the

UKHSA is proud to play its part. The UK's genomic sequencing technology is world-leading and we are playing a vital role in informing the global response to the pandemic.

Whole genome sequencing (WGS) is a method for analysing entire genomes and has been used to identify COVID-19 variants from samples taken from infected people.

The UK started to sequence samples from people who had been infected with SARS-CoV-2 in March 2020. These sequences are then uploaded to the international GISAID database. This allows countries to understand what is happening internationally and to take action to help mitigate transmission across borders, as well as to isolate and respond to new variants.

Labs used for genomic sequencing are located across the devolved nations including Glasgow, Milton Keynes, Newport, and Antrim.

New variants are the most serious risk to global recovery from the pandemic, particularly those which have characteristics that make them more transmissible, cause more severe illness or are more likely to evade immune responses developed from vaccination or prior infection. By understanding which variants are emerging and circulating in the UK and around the world, the UK is able to respond early and take steps to help keep people safe.

Through genomic sequencing the UK has so far detected a total of 5 variants of concern and 11 variants under investigation, helping to inform the public health response to the pandemic.

The UK's contribution to GISAID makes it the second largest contributing country and represents around a quarter of all global samples sequenced across the world to date. Through the New Variant Assessment Platform (NVAP), the UK is making its world-leading capability available to other countries to support the global response to the pandemic.

The UK is working with global partners to fill global sequencing capability gaps, either by helping other countries build their sequencing infrastructure or processing samples in the UK if there is no capability within a country.

By using the UK's world class scientific abilities, the UKHSA will play a major role in protecting people from COVID-19 and future emerging health threats at home and abroad.

Professor Sir Mike Stratton, Director of the Wellcome Sanger Institute, said:

Genomic surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 is crucial to tracking the pandemic in real time. Genomic data enable researchers to identify new virus variants, assess their relative abilities to spread and help public health authorities detect and respond to local outbreaks faster.

The genomes also inform the development of new vaccines and vaccine

boosters and, critically, will allow detection of vaccine escape, should it occur.

The completion of over one million SARS-CoV-2 genomes is an extraordinary testament to the monumental efforts of many people, at the Wellcome Sanger Institute, across the whole COG-UK network and elsewhere, who have contributed in multiple and diverse ways.

Professor Sharon Peacock, Executive Director and Chair of COG-UK said:

Since the start of the pandemic, more than 600 members of COG-UK based in the 4 public health agencies, numerous universities and the Wellcome Sanger Institute have worked tirelessly to generate SARS-CoV-2 genomes to support the pandemic and better understand the virus and COVID-19.

This has been underpinned by collaborations with NHS testing labs, Lighthouse Laboratories, NHS Test and Trace and DHSC and the Cloud Infrastructure for Microbial Bioinformatics (CLIMB) database.

We are delighted that, in partnership with UKHSA, one million genome sequences have now been deposited into the GISAID database, enabling pathogen genomics to inform infection control, public health policies and the development of vaccines and therapeutics, along with advancing the understanding of SARS-CoV-2 biology and evolution.

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## [Speakers and new sponsor revealed for Global Investment Summit](#)

Global business leaders and industry heavyweights will join the Prime Minister – who will be making an address – at the UK's Global Investment Summit later this month, the Department for International Trade has announced.

Speakers at the Summit include Said Professor of Vaccinology at Oxford University, Sarah Gilbert, and GlaxoSmithKline CEO Dame Emma Walmsley, who will discuss the UK's leading role in life sciences including the successful vaccine roll-out.

Levelling up and attracting greener and more sustainable investment will also be on the agenda, which will see the Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng, NatWest Group plc CEO Alison Rose, Metro Mayors and Macquarie Group CEO Shemara Wikramanayake taking part in discussions about the opportunities for

greener investment up and down the country. The UK's expertise in generating tech unicorns will also be discussed in a conversation with Poppy Gustafsson, CEO of Darktrace plc.

Director-General World Trade Organisation Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala and International Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan will address trade and investment's role in shaping a more sustainable future for all, while Foreign Secretary Liz Truss will also address delegates to close the summit.

The Summit will bring together investors from priority markets all around the world, with some 87% of attendees hailing from outside the UK, including 32% from the US and 11% from CPTPP nations.

Accenture, the global professional services company that specialises in strategy, consulting and technology services, has also been announced as the latest sponsor for the summit. The firm has pledged to create both financial value and sustainable impact through technology, with a goal to deliver net-zero by 2025, a 1.5 degree science-based-target and 100% renewable electricity by 2023.

Ahead of the Summit, International Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

We welcome our latest sponsor Accenture, and our speakers who represent the innovation, agility and forward-thinking that sets the UK business community apart, making us the best place to start and grow a business.

These titans of enterprise showcase how the UK is using investment to cement itself as a science and tech superpower, and a pioneer of green technology ahead of COP26.

Dambisa Moyo, Global Economist, co-principal Versaca Investments, will be master of ceremonies for the summit and highlighted the role of the summit in driving investment into the UK:

Investment – particularly, smart investment in climate action – will, no doubt, play a critical role in supporting economic growth, enhancing living standards, and driving human progress around the world.

As the world economy emerges from the ravages of the global pandemic, the Global Investment Summit in London brings together many of the world's most important CEOs, business leaders, and investors with the explicit goal to find and fund climate action.

I am delighted to participate in this gathering, and these concerted efforts to deliver solutions to one of the greatest challenges our lifetime.

Peter Lacy, Accenture's global Sustainability Services lead and chief responsibility officer, said:

Accenture is proud to partner with the UK Government on the Global Investment Summit and help shine a spotlight on the many exciting opportunities in the UK. With COP26 just weeks away, the UK is in a unique position to not just lead the global conversation, but also the action and innovation needed on climate change.

Time is rapidly running out to deliver on our collective climate change commitments, but it is not too late to deliver the 50% decarbonisation required by 2030, and net-zero by 2050. So it is critical that events such as this take place to drive investment that will allow business to do what it does best – which is to compete in a race to the top by innovating new markets, products, and services that deliver for shareholders and stakeholders.

The role of green finance will also be discussed with Group CEO of Aviva Amanda Blanc, BlackRock Chairman and CEO Larry Fink, JP Morgan Chase & Co Chairman and CEO Jamie Dimon and Barclays CEO Jes Staley all speaking at the event.

The Summit comes two weeks ahead of COP26 and will convene global business leaders – and crucial partners in achieving Net Zero globally – to look at green growth and highlight the significant inward investment opportunities in the UK in support of the [Prime Minister's 10 Point Plan](#).

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## **Foreign Secretary statement on UN Human Rights Council resolution**

Press release

The Foreign Secretary has issued a statement following the UK's decision to call a vote on the resolution relating to racism, xenophobia and other intolerance at the most recent session of the UN Human Rights Council.



The Foreign Secretary Liz Truss has issued a statement following a vote at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva.

This follows a statement delivered by the UK's Permanent Representative in Geneva, Simon Manley, on behalf of the UK and Australia. The statement was a response to the resolution titled 'From rhetoric to reality: a global call for concrete action against racism, xenophobia and related intolerance'.

The UK called for a vote on the resolution to take place, and subsequently joined nine other Council Members in voting against the resolution as tabled.

The Foreign Secretary said:

The UK remains steadfast in its commitment to tackling racism around the world.

The resolution presented the Human Rights Council today contains a number of references to the Durban Conference, from which the UK has repeatedly disassociated itself due to historic concerns over antisemitism.

Discrimination and intolerance has no place in society and we encourage countries to uphold their human rights obligations.

The joint statement by the UK and Australia can be read [here](#)

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## [Participate in a women's leadership mentoring programme in Nepal](#)

The British Embassy in Kathmandu believes that building and promoting supportive relationships is key to empowering women and girls. So, on this

International Day of the Girl Child 2021, we are calling all young women in Nepal to apply to be a part of a year-long mentoring programme run by a group of embassies and development agencies led by women.

Successful candidates will have the opportunity to be mentored by female ambassadors and heads of agencies in Kathmandu, to help enhance your leadership skills.

## What we are offering

The successful applicants will be mentored by one of the following mentors:

- British Ambassador to Nepal, Her Excellency Nicola Pollitt
- Australian Ambassador to Nepal, Her Excellency Felicity Volk
- EU Ambassador to Nepal, Her Excellency Nona Duprez
- Swiss Ambassador to Nepal, Her Excellency Elisabeth von Capeller
- Head of USAID, Sepideh Keyvanshad
- Country Director of British Council Nepal, Shahida MacDougall
- United Nations Resident Coordinator, Sara Beysolow Nyanti
- UNICEF Representative for Nepal, Elke Wisch
- Resident Representative of UNDP, Ayshanie Medagangoda-Labe

For the successful candidates, the programme will include:

1. Six personalised mentoring sessions with your mentor focused on skills that are essential for development of leadership and career growth. You will be encouraged to talk about your priorities, including setting career goals, planning, networking, communications, and your personal brand.
2. Opportunities for networking. You will be invited to join relevant events and meetings hosted by one or more of the embassies taking part, to enable you to participate in discussions on pertinent issues and build a useful network.
3. A day of 'job-shadowing' with senior officials from the embassies and agencies. If conditions permit, you will have the opportunity to shadow senior officials, including the ambassador/head of agency, to observe their daily work routines. We will plan a full day's schedule for you.
4. Events that bring together all of you with all the mentors on or around International Women's Day to celebrate women's leadership.

All events, sessions and shadowing opportunities will be subject to COVID-19 conditions and may take place virtually or in small groups, depending on conditions at the time.

## How to participate

Please apply by sending us a 1-minute video (maximum) of yourself by uploading it to WeTransfer, YouTube or on Google Drive and send the link to [kathmandu.reception@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:kathmandu.reception@fcdo.gov.uk) explaining why you want to participate in this leadership mentoring programme and what you think the other countries and development agencies can do to empower youth in Nepal.

Please shoot the video in landscape or horizontal mode. Avoid having a busy background when recording and too much ambient noise. The video should be well lit and clearly show the participant. We encourage you to be creative with format and style of recording. Avoid sharing large files.

A selection committee of staff from the embassies, led by one or more ambassadors or heads, will review applications and select the best to take part in the scheme. We will be looking for:

- enthusiasm
- creativity
- an understanding of how you will benefit from this opportunity
- a clear idea of how you will use what you learn

## What you need to know

If successful, you will be part of the first ever mentee cohort of 2021 to 2022. We will prepare a whole year's schedule for you. But mentoring needs candidates to be proactive if it's to succeed. You will have to make time for planning and reflecting, to take part in discussion sessions that will focus on agreed themes every 2 months, and for networking opportunities.

We particularly welcome applications from girls belonging to minority or marginalised communities.

## Rules of the contest

1. The video, up to 60 seconds length, should be submitted as a link, such as via WeTransfer, YouTube or Google Drive and emailed to [kathmandu.reception@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:kathmandu.reception@fcdo.gov.uk) with the subject line 'Application: Leadership Mentoring Programme 2021'. The deadline for submissions is Tuesday 16 November 2021 23:59 NPT.
2. If you have any queries, contact us at [kathmandu.reception@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:kathmandu.reception@fcdo.gov.uk) with the subject line 'Query: Leadership Mentoring Programme 2021'.
3. The video can be either in Nepali or in English.
4. When submitting your video, include your full name, age, place of residence and contact number(s) in a covering email.



5. Participation in the contest is open to women aged 18 to 30 residing in Nepal for the duration of the contest. Family members of staff at any of the embassies or organisations are regrettably not eligible to apply for this opportunity.
6. Submissions, including the personal data of those not selected, will be removed after the announcement of the winners.
7. The winners, to be selected by a special selection committee of staff from participating embassies/organisations, led by the British Ambassador Nicola Pollitt, will be announced by Tuesday 7 December 2021.
8. With agreement from applicants, winning videos may be shared on the social media channels of the British Embassy Kathmandu or on those of other participating organisations.
9. The work of the selection committee will remain confidential, and the decision may not be appealed.
10. Submissions shall be disqualified if they are found to be plagiarised or been submitted by those not eligible. Appropriate credit should be given to any other sources of the content.
11. The winners will be contacted by the organisers with logistic details and arrangements. The programme of sessions, events and opportunities will be determined by the organisers and shared with the successful mentees.
12. If the winners (and a chaperone, if required) need to travel from outside of Kathmandu to participate in the scheme, the organisers will cover reasonable travel expenses.
13. You should be prepared to bring a valid ID card displaying your photo and age/date of birth, on your arrival at any events.

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## **Cessna FRA150L, G-CIIR, anniversary statement**

News story

## Loss of control after takeoff, Troutbeck Airfield, Cumbria, 11 October 2020



This statement provides an update on the AAIB investigation into the accident involving Cessna FRA150L, G-CIIR, at Troutbeck Airfield, Cumbria on 11 October 2020. Control of the aircraft was lost a few seconds after the aircraft took off and the aircraft struck the ground. The pilot was fatally injured.

The investigation is complete and the report is going through the consultation process. It is expected that the final report will be published before the end of 2021.

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