

# AUKUS, trilateral security partnership: joint op-ed by UK, US and Australia

Malaysia lies at the heart of Southeast Asia, the heart of ASEAN and the heart of the Indo Pacific. Malaysia is a key partner for Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States as we work to achieve a shared vision for the region – one that is open, stable and inclusive, in line with the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific.

Recently our three countries announced an enhanced trilateral security partnership – AUKUS – that will enhance our capacity to develop and share a range of emerging security and defence capabilities. This agreement does not change our ambitions for a peaceful and prosperous region, nor our support for inclusive ASEAN-centred regional architecture. It will strengthen our ability to work with regional partners like Malaysia to forge a secure and stable region and support the rules-based system on which our collective prosperity is built.

It is the sovereign responsibility of every government to pursue the defensive capabilities it needs for its country. As a three-ocean nation dependent on seaborne international trade, Australia requires cutting-edge naval capabilities. For the partnership's first initiative, we embark on a trilateral effort to seek an optimal pathway to support Australia in acquiring nuclear-powered submarines, leveraging expertise from the United States and the United Kingdom, both of whom have operated such submarines safely for more than 60 years. Nuclear-powered submarines will provide Australia with the capability it needs for its own defence and contribute to a durable strategic balance in our region.

While these submarines will be nuclear-powered, they will not carry nuclear weapons. Australia has been clear that it does not and will not seek such weapons. Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States remain steadfast in our support of the nuclear non proliferation regime and Non-Proliferation Treaty. Our commitment to non-proliferation is unchanged and we remain committed to upholding our global leadership in this domain.

This partnership will also enable Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States to deepen cooperation on a range of emerging security and defence capabilities, with an initial focus on cyber, artificial intelligence, quantum technologies, and additional undersea capabilities. Collaboration across these fields will strengthen the ability of each of our three countries to contribute to regional security.

In working together to strengthen our capabilities, Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States are committed to supporting a region that places ASEAN at its centre and which aligns with the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific. All members of AUKUS are ASEAN Dialogue Partners, and all are

committed to complementing and strengthening the existing inclusive ASEAN-led regional architecture. AUKUS will also complement our networks of regional bilateral and minilateral partnerships in promoting regional peace, security, and prosperity.

We want to live in a region where all countries are empowered to engage and prosper in a stable, rules-based environment, including the rules enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. We want to ensure that all nations in the region have the strategic space to make decisions in their sovereign interests. Our collaboration under AUKUS is guided by our commitment to these ideals, and ultimately to ensuring that we are all able to grow and thrive in an open, inclusive and prosperous region.

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## **Call for bids: holistic approaches to address challenges of modern slavery and human trafficking in Romania**

This project is a significant part of a wider portfolio of projects which seeks to support the Romanian government and civil society in reducing the drivers of Serious and Organised Crime (SOC).

Addressing human trafficking and SOC requires international cooperation, as the nature of these crimes is transnational and criminal networks frequently operate across borders. This is a priority policy area for the British Government and the British Embassy Bucharest, as Romania is a source, transit and destination country for MSHT. In 2020 alone, the British referral mechanism registered 368 Romanian victims of trafficking.

The UK's strategy for tackling MSHT crime threats and risk has four pillars: Prevention, Protection, Pursue and Prepare (the four "P"s). Broadly these pillars cover:

- prevention of individuals being drawn into crime, and reduction of vulnerabilities for potential victims
- protection of victims, including in their interactions with the legal system, or from societal stigma and isolation
- pursuing criminals, by improving law enforcement capacity in working on MSHT cases or supporting victims in working with the justice system
- preparing law enforcement, government (including local government) and civil society to handle and identify MSHT cases more effectively

Proposals should incorporate activities under each of the 4 pillars to ensure a holistic approach to tackling MSHT in the counties identified. In due course and depending on the results of this project, the outcomes and lessons may be used to inform further project work in other areas of Romania.

Proposals should focus principally on activities in the counties of Dolj and Olt, and focus on in-depth activities on a local scale. These two counties are some of the most prevalent origin counties in MSHT statistics, so have been chosen for this initial project.

We welcome consortium proposals which bring in expertise from more than one organisation, working together, as we recognise achieving outcomes on all 4 aspects of this project would be difficult for a single organisation.

## **Objective**

The main objective for this project is to reduce the risk of human trafficking in the counties of Dolj and Olt through prevention activities and campaigns, improving capacity to prosecute criminals, protection of victims and preparing local government, communities and influential actors to identify potential risks and vulnerabilities in the future.

## **Scope of work**

The project should be focused in Dolj and Olt counties and take into account both rural and urban communities. If there is natural crossover into neighbouring counties (e.g. Teleorman, Caraş-Severin), this would also be considered in scope but the project should focus on in-depth in a limited location rather than having national reach.

This project may act as a pilot for future work (depending on the availability of UK funding) so capturing results, monitoring of outcomes and demonstrating ability to replicate or adapt to other regions will be significant factors in the evaluation of bids.

## **Activities**

Activities financed under this project could include\*:

- awareness campaigns delivered through the local media and informal local leaders to discourage vulnerable individuals from becoming involved into human trafficking, whether as perpetrators or victims
- training sessions for informal community leaders or individuals with relevant responsibilities, to empower them to identify signs of modern slavery and report them to the Romanian authorities
- offering trauma-informed care training to local police officers and law enforcement
- improving victim pathway support with Police Officers and Prosecutors, enabling better engagement
- efforts to break myths and stigma around human trafficking victims, in communities, or with authorities
- offering psychological and legal counselling to survivors, supporting their reintegration and preventing re-trafficking
- campaigns or activities targeted at those at risk of becoming involved in criminal activity and promoting positive alternatives to crime
- providing training or resources for professionals in a position to

identify trafficking risks (e.g. airport staff)

- educational activities focused at young people on protecting themselves from human trafficking risks, including recruitment tactics
- financial and technical support to victim support organisations or shelters in the region, aimed at reducing re-trafficking risk or financial dependence

\*This is not an exhaustive list and the British Embassy welcomes innovative proposals from potential implementing partners which suggest additional or alternative activities to deliver the key objectives.

## **Project approach**

Bidders are asked to submit a project proposal which will be approved by the British Embassy Bucharest and will form the basis for project planning. The proposal should set out how the implementing partner(s) will deliver activities to support the objectives set out above with an implementation plan and supporting budget. The British Embassy Bucharest will oversee the project planning and provide the necessary contacts to the implementers.

The project implementer(s) will manage project logistics, including travel plans, lodging, car hiring etc. and is expected to consider the pandemic context and its possible impact on the project implementation when submitting the bid.

The Embassy will provide contact persons and focal points for UK institutions or experts that might be needed in the process. The Embassy can also facilitate providing government expertise from the UK to support activity where appropriate and proportionate. The Embassy can also provide support to ensuring the project reflects UK holistic approaches and methods, and will work implementers on this.

## **How to Bid**

Our process will consist of a one-stage full bid proposal.

For organisations who wish to bid as a consortium we will be looking for a lead organisation who will be the signatory of the grant agreement and accountable for delivery of the whole project. It will be the responsibility of the lead organisation to run the consortium, provide assurance on areas such as due diligence and safeguarding, and agree terms and delivery with consortium members. Organisations who are bidding as a consortium, are required to include and complete the table below in their bidding documentation.

<b>Name of sub-contractor</b>	<b>Percentage of contract value</b>	<b>Description of activities to be delivered</b>
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Please specify in the subject of the email the name of implementing organisation(s) and title of the project. Activity Based Budgets should list the activities needed to deliver the outcomes (results) of the project and all costs should be in Romanian Lei (RON).

## **Reporting**

The reports to be produced during the course of this project are to be delivered in English:

- an Inception Note detailing approach and proposed activities. This should also set out key stakeholders who will be engaged, a proposed schedule of activities, risks, safeguarding approach and any additional details
- a Draft Report
- monthly financial reports
- after a facilitated process of commenting, the Final Report

## **Composition of the project teams**

A Project Director, from the part of BE Bucharest (i.e. Tanya Collingridge, Deputy Head of Mission) and a Project Manager, from the part of BE Bucharest will oversee the project delivery.

Project proposals should demonstrate that the staffing level is appropriate to the aim of the project and that the staff have relevant expertise and experience in Modern Slavery, Human Trafficking, working with Romanian law enforcement, victim support, crime prevention campaigns, as well as a detailed overall knowledge of the Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking threat in Romania.

Proposals should also allocate at least 10% of the budget for monitoring and evaluation.

## **Timing and scope of input**

The bidding round is an open and competitive process, assessed by the British Embassy in Bucharest. Results will be issued in October. Once a bid is approved, a Grant Agreement will be signed with the successful bidders. In the documents section you will find an example of a Grant Agreement. Your organisation will be expected to sign the contract within one week of the funds being awarded. Failure to do so will result in the funds being re-allocated. The implementing organisation will be required to submit report updates and a final evaluation of the project.

There are no pre-payments. Reimbursements will be completed once activities have taken place and all receipts submitted. Implementing organisations will request repayments using an invoice (including receipts and a financial report of spend) and the repayments will be carried out during those dates agreed upon in the respective contract.

The budget should be presented in Romanian Lei. All payments will be made in RON to a bank account held in Romania.

Please send any questions regarding the call for bids to [rsvp.bucharest@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:rsvp.bucharest@fcdo.gov.uk) and [andrada.petrache@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:andrada.petrache@fcdo.gov.uk).

It is expected that the project will be carried out from end October 2021 to end February 2022. However, this project has the potential to be financed again in FY22-23 subject to results and availability of funding.

The crucial milestones will be the submission of the Draft report (February 2022) and the Final report (March 2022).

## **Budget**

Grant applications must include an estimated budget of up to 848,750 RON. Depending on the quality of the proposals, the British Embassy reserves the right not to grant all or part of the available funds. The Embassy also reserves the right to award a grant of less than the amount requested by the applicants. In such a case, applicants will be asked to increase the amount that they co-finance, to propose other co-financing means or to decrease the total costs without altering the substance of the proposal.

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## **British Army opens first solar farm**

Completed earlier this month and the size of almost eight football pitches, the solar farm is based at The Defence School of Transport (DST), Leconfield, and forms part of the British Army's £200 million Project Prometheus investment which is designed to see the Army using renewable energy

Built by Centrica Business Solutions, the solar farm is made up of over 4,000 solar panels and is the first of four pilot sites to officially open. Across all four sites, the project estimates £1 million in efficiency savings and 2,000 tCO<sub>2</sub>e (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent) annually, with saving costs due to be reinvested into essential Army infrastructure.

### **Minister for Defence Procurement, Jeremy Quin said:**

This multi-million pound investment reaffirms our commitment to Net Zero 2050 and developing a more sustainable service. Significant investment will result in a more efficient and environmentally-friendly estate.

Spanning approximately four hectares and with a peak capacity of 2.3Mega Watts, the solar panelled farm is projected to save 700 tonnes of carbon

emissions and cut electricity bills by one third annually at DST.

A majority of the energy generated will be used onsite at DST to provide support to personnel based there. This may include powering accommodation, offices, hangars, classrooms and the gymnasium, whilst any surplus will be exported to the grid.

Outlined in the recent Defence Command Paper, innovation and green initiatives will be at the forefront of a future Army, of which Project Prometheus forms a part. This is further supported by the £24 billion increase in spending over four years, as announced by the Prime Minister last November.

**The Director of Basing and Infrastructure, Major General David Southall said:**

Our first operational solar farm at Leconfield marks a key milestone in the Army's go-green agenda; it showcases our firm commitment to tackle the effects of climate change, harnessing renewable energy to power our estate.

Leconfield is the first of four pilot sites to open this year; each builds on our knowledge and expertise, enabling us to upscale and deliver a total of 80 solar farms across the Army Estate within the decade; we continue to Think Big – Start Small – Scale Fast.

To help reduce greenhouse emissions across Defence, the Army is investing the £200 million into its solar farms over the next 10 years. The initiative is designed to support the UK Government reach its target of net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

Managing Director of Centrica Business Solutions, Greg McKenna said:

It's been a privilege to work alongside the Army to deliver its first major solar scheme here at DST Leconfield.

It will require a monumental effort to reach Net Zero, but by showing leadership on sustainability and carbon reduction, the Army has put in place a template which the rest of the public sector and industry can replicate.

Construction for the three additional pilot sites is already under way with the Duke of Gloucester Barracks in Gloucestershire, Rock Barracks in Suffolk and Baker Barracks on Thorney Island, Sussex, due to open next year. 3Ti have been awarded the contract to deliver the construction of these sites.

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# Teesside project secures investment to boost Net Zero ambitions

A pioneering Environment Agency partnership project has been successful in securing funding to boost ambitions for the new [Teesworks Freeport](#) to become the first UK Net Zero Carbon industrial cluster.

Environmental regulators will work in partnership with operators and developers in the Tees Valley to co-design systems that support the sustainable economic growth in the new Freeport.

The Teesworks Greener Freeport project has been made possible by a £175,000 grant from the Regulators' Pioneer Fund launched by The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

It will investigate how permitting can be used as a positive tool to reduce emissions to air and water as part of the overall ambition to facilitate the development of the first UK Net Zero Carbon industrial cluster.

## **Project is 'unique opportunity'**

Environment Agency Project Lead Eddie Halstead is working closely with Natural England on the project. He said:

The Tees estuary has a complex ecosystem that hosts the largest UK Freeport as well as being a highly protected environment.

This project presents a unique opportunity to test the interface of two key pillars of the post EU exit policy – the levelling up agenda and the forthcoming environmental bill.

It will achieve mutual benefit for low carbon business and operators and environmental regulators, and produce learning that can be replicated for emerging Freeports across the UK.

Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen added:

This project is fantastic news that will boost our Freeport's clean energy credentials and support our ambitions to become the UK's clean energy and renewables powerhouse.

It means that we're not only leading the way in getting the UK to net zero by 2050 with projects such as Net Zero Teesside, but also doing it the right way.



This great project will also help inform best practice for other emerging Freeports, once again putting our region at the forefront of innovation and ahead of the game in Freeport development.

### **£3.7m Regulators' Pioneer Fund**

The £3.7million Regulators' Pioneer Fund enables UK regulators and local authorities to help create a UK regulatory environment that unleashes innovation and makes the UK the best place to start and grow a business. In all 21 projects received money from the fund.

It is hoped that it will incentivise companies toward greener manufacturing processes and business operations helping to tackle climate change.

The Regulators' Pioneer Fund is part of wider government work on regulation. This includes the recent Reforming the Framework for Better Regulation consultation, and the Better Regulation Committee, chaired by the Chancellor, which is driving an ambitious reform agenda to ensure the UK's regulatory framework is fit for purpose and delivers the Government's strategic objectives in its 25 Year Environment Plan.

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## **Krishnan Guru-Murthy reappointed to the board of Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew**

Krishnan Guru-Murthy's second term will run from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2024.

The reappointment has been made in accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments published by the Cabinet Office. All appointments are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process.

### **Biographical details**

Krishnan Guru-Murthy presents Channel 4 News and Unreported World, the foreign affairs documentary series. Before that he worked for the BBC on news, entertainment, youth and children's programming. He has spent thirty years reporting and presenting from around Britain and the world.

Krishnan is also patron of the charity Duchenne UK, which raises money for medical research. He lives in Kew with his wife Lisa and their two children.

## Notes

Trustees do not receive any direct remuneration for their services, although reasonable travel and subsistence expenses can be reimbursed.

There is a requirement for appointees' political activity (if significant) to be declared. Krishnan has declared that he has not taken part in any significant political activity in the past five years.

### **About Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew**

The [Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew](#) is a world-famous scientific organisation, internationally respected for its outstanding collections as well as for its scientific expertise in plant and fungal diversity, conservation and sustainable development in the UK and around the world.

Kew Gardens is a major international and a top London visitor attraction. Kew Gardens' 132 hectares of landscaped gardens, and Wakehurst, its wild botanic garden in Sussex, attract over 2.5 million visits every year. Kew Gardens was made a UNESCO World Heritage site in July 2003 and celebrated its 260th anniversary in 2019. Wakehurst is home to Kew's Millennium Seed Bank, the largest wild plant seed bank in the world, as well as over 500 acres of designed landscapes, wild woodlands, ornamental gardens and a nature reserve.

The Kew Madagascar Conservation Centre is Kew's third research centre and only overseas office. RBG Kew receives approximately one third of its funding from Government through the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and research councils. Further funding needed to support RBG Kew's vital work comes from donors, membership and commercial activity including ticket sales.