

UK funding protects 88 million people from the impacts of climate change

The UK's International Climate Finance (ICF), totalling £11.6 billion over the next five years, helps developing countries limit and manage the impacts of climate change, mitigate further global warming from emissions and avert, minimise and address loss and damage.

The results come ahead of COP26, the UN Climate Change Conference, which the UK will host in Glasgow in November this year. World leaders will come together to agree on action to tackle the urgent threat of global climate change, with the UK making supporting vulnerable communities a priority in its presidency.

International Environment Minister Zac Goldsmith said:

Tackling climate change and protecting vulnerable communities and habitats is truly an international effort. I am proud of the impact that the UK's International Climate Finance is having in developing countries around the world. By lending to climate friendly businesses in Latin America and the Caribbean, or preventing emissions and boosting biodiversity through the restoration of mangroves, forests, and other habitats, the UK is stepping up to tackle the greatest threats we all face.

COP26 represents a unique opportunity for more countries to come forward with ambitious financial commitments and urgent action to reduce emissions and protect and restore the natural world.

Today's figures show that over the last ten years, UK funding has:

- Provided 41 million people with improved access to clean energy, including connections to off-grid renewable energy sources, access to solar lanterns, or clean cookstoves;
- Installed 2,400 MW of clean energy capacity, equivalent to 500 offshore wind turbines, capable of powering 1.8 million UK homes;
- Avoided or reduced 180 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions;
- Leveraged £3.3 billion of private finance and £5.2 billion of public finance for climate change purposes.

Programmes like the Blue Forests initiative in Madagascar see UK funding support local communities, the private sector and government to protect over 20,000Ha of mangroves, as one of the most effective natural carbon stores on earth. This also provides invaluable storm protection and coastal erosion prevention.

UK funding has also supported the KaXu Solar One Concentrated Solar Power project in South Africa to use mirrors to reflect and concentrate the sun's

rays, generating enough energy to power 80,000 households and saving around 315,000 tonnes of CO₂ – the equivalent to taking 66,000 cars off the road.

These results follow a week of climate talks among global leaders at the UN General Assembly in New York, where the UK Prime Minister committed new UK funding for global climate action, including a further boost the UK's contribution to the \$100 billion a year from 2020 goal for developed countries to support developing countries.

Notes to editors:

- The International Climate Finance results can be found [here](#).
- 30% of all investments from CDC, the UK's Development Finance Institution, flowing into climate finance over the next five years, with all new investments Paris Aligned. CDC is expected to invest a minimum of £1.6 billion in climate projects over the next 5 years, further boosting the UK's contribution to the \$100bn global climate finance goal beyond our existing £11.6bn ICF commitment. More information can be found [here](#).
- The Prime Minister also announced that £550million of international climate finance will be allocated to provide technical assistance to developing countries moving to low-carbon technology and to end the use of coal internationally. £350 million of funding will go to the Climate Investment Funds – one of the world's largest multilateral funds working to pilot and scale climate solutions in developing countries.
- A further £200 million of funding will go to UK PACT, the UK's flagship climate technical assistance programme which provides the UK's world-leading expertise to public, private and civil society institutions so that they can help countries develop in a more sustainable way – reducing both emissions and poverty. More information can be found [here](#).
- The results follow yesterday's announcement that the £100m Biodiverse Landscapes Fund, first announced by the Prime Minister at UNGA 2019, will invest in six biodiversity hotspots, including the Western Congo Basin, Lower Mekong and Kavango-Zambezi region of Southern Africa. More information can be found [here](#).

[Rising gas prices – protections for consumers](#)

Households are understandably concerned about the rising cost of wholesale global gas this Autumn and Winter, which is why the government has been clear that protecting consumers is its top priority.

Rising gas prices is a global problem, reflecting an increased demand across the world for gas as economies around the world reopens from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Whether you notice the spike in gas prices will depend on when you negotiated your energy tariff and who your supplier is, as many energy suppliers purchase much of their wholesale supplies many months in advance, giving protection to them and their customers from short-term price rises.

The government is working closely with energy stakeholders to discuss the impact of the increased wholesale gas prices, but consumers should not worry about their energy supply.

No matter who your supplier is you can rest assured that even if they leave the market, there is an established process in place to ensure that your electricity and gas will stay on. It means the energy regulator Ofgem will find another supplier to provide you with energy and your credit balance will move with you.

If this happens, you are advised to not try and switch to a new supplier until you are contacted by whoever Ofgem appoints to take over your account. You will have a new arrangement with your new supplier but can speak to them about negotiating a new fixed rate tariff.

The [Energy Price Cap](#) is a safety net. It is in place to protect millions of customers in England, Wales and Scotland from the sudden increases in global gas prices this winter.

We are also supporting low income and fuel poor households with energy bills in a number of ways, including:

- the [Warm Home Discount](#), providing eligible households with a one-off £140 discount on their energy bill for winter 2021 to 2022. Customers should contact their supplier to ask for it. As long as you qualify, even if you are moved to a new supplier, they are expected to still provide you with this discount. This will rise to £150 from next year and help an extra 780,000 pensioners and low-income families, with the money being paid automatically
- [Winter Fuel Payments](#), worth between £100 and £300 are paid automatically to those in receipt of State Pension or other social security benefit (not including Housing Benefit, Council Tax Reduction, Child Benefit or Universal Credit)
- [Cold Weather Payments](#), which is a £25 payment for vulnerable households on qualifying benefits when the weather has been, or is forecasted to be, unusually cold. It is paid to eligible households for each 7-day period of very cold weather between 1 November and 31 March

If you are in financial distress during this time you can also talk to your energy supplier, who will be able to discuss personal circumstances and consider options to help, including reassessing, reducing or pausing payments. [Emergency measures](#) have been agreed between government and energy suppliers to support those most in need during the disruption caused by COVID-19, and this agreement remains in place this winter.

For support with your rights on energy, more information is available from [Ofgem](#) here. For further advice, consumers can also contact [Citizens Advice](#).

Defence Secretary speech at the Type 31 steel cut ceremony

Thank you all for inviting me here today, I'm really pleased and honoured to be here today. To be precise, I'm not actually going to be cutting the steel, I'm going to press the button to cut the steel on HMS Venturer – which will be the first of our Type 31s

One of five such vessels that form the aptly named "Inspiration" class, HMS Venturer will be state-of-the-art – armed with Sea Ceptor missiles and a 4D radar system.

It will be agile – ranging some 10,000 miles and able to do everything from detecting submarines and intercepting illegal activity to gathering intelligence and providing humanitarian support.

And it will be flexible – adapting to the ever-evolving threats of tomorrow.

But today we're not just marking a milestone in the life of a single ship.

Today is actually about a glimpse of the future of our fleet.

By 2028 HMS Venturer will be joined by HMS Active, HMS Formidable HMS Bulldog and HMS Campbeltown.

Together these frigates will form the fulcrum of a formidable future force made up of: destroyers, new autonomous Mine-Hunting Capability, new Fleet Solid Support Ships, multi-role ocean surveillance and Bay Class Support Ships, and the next generation nuclear submarines and our two magnificent carriers.

In an age of systemic competition, this future fleet will be more persistent, more pro-active and more present overseas as well as a dependable partner in the defence of our global common values.

Today is also about showing how Defence is levelling-up across our nation.

With five vessels to be built by Babcock, the construction of the fleet will directly support 1,250 highly skilled jobs here in Scotland.

It will deliver for the whole of our United Kingdom – sustaining a further 1,250 jobs within the wider UK supply chain.

And by creating 150 new technical apprenticeships and constructing cutting-edge facilities – such as the great Assembly Hall I'll be formally opening in a minute – this programme will generate the talent that keeps our shipbuilding engine ticking over for decades

Finally, today is about sparking a revival of our nation's great shipbuilding traditions. Scottish shipyards have a proud industrial heritage, if not the proudest in global shipbuilding. In recent years, through assembling mighty vessels like HMS Queen Elizabeth, they've burnished their reputation still more. But with its unique modular design supporting different configurations, this vessel will ensure the made-in-Scotland stamp is sought by allied navies right across the world.

In fact, T31's innovative design – known as Arrowhead 140 – has already attracted international plaudits with an export contract signed with the Secretary of State for Defence of Indonesia at DSEI only last week – an export before we've even finished our ship.

In other words, the first warship competition for over a decade is already delivering. Coupled with our competition to build a new National Flagship as well as our forthcoming refreshed National Shipbuilding Strategy, we are sending a powerful signal of our ambition to be a nation of shipping exporters – and shipbuilding exporters as well.

So today is a great day not just for Babcock's designers, builders and apprentices. It is a great day for the Royal Navy. And it is a great day for Global Britain.

Seven ships have borne the name HMS Venturer including a 14-gun cutter, a 10-gun schooner and a motor minesweeper. Perhaps the most famous Venturer of them all was a V-class submarine that, during World War 2, became the only submarine in history to sink another while both were submerged.

Today's warship has a very different form and function. But, come 2023 when HMS Venturer slips its bonds and enters the water, I have no doubt it will emulate the trailblazing successes of its forebears and write its own glorious chapter in our nation's famous maritime history.

[Tech jobs increase in Edinburgh and Glasgow as sector thrives](#)

- A new report on opportunities in the UK's fast-growing tech sector shows Scotland is a hotspot
- 30% of available vacancies in Edinburgh are in the tech sector, the highest of any UK city
- Roles requiring coding or software skills can command higher than median salaries in the Scottish capital, but so do non-technical roles with digital tech companies
- Glasgow is the third most attractive city in the UK to live in when tech salary is compared to cost of living
- 28% of all available vacancies in Glasgow are in tech

- Scottish tech start-ups and scaleups have raised £446m in venture capital funding so far this year, a record amount so far for the country

Scotland's tech scene is booming according to figures released today that show tech roles in Glasgow and Edinburgh have increased by more than a quarter in the past two years, demonstrating some of the highest growth in the whole of the UK.

According to data analysed by smarter job search engine Adzuna for the UK's Digital Economy Council and Tech Nation, IT-related vacancies now make up 13% of all UK job vacancies. In Edinburgh and Glasgow, tech jobs make up an even higher proportion of roles – up 30% and 28% respectively – as companies seek to find talented staff to help them expand and grow following the Covid-19 pandemic. Strong employee demand for jobs isn't only confined to the tech sector, with general vacancies increasing by 11.2% on average in Scotland month on month throughout 2021 to 46,990 in June.

Digital secretary Nadine Dorries said:

Scottish tech is booming right now with more roles than many other parts of the country available. It's fantastic to see how confidence in UK tech is translating into exciting opportunities nationwide. This government is dedicated to supporting people with the skills they need to excel in this dynamic industry.

High tech salaries

Scottish tech start-ups and scaleups collectively employ 135,000 people, the third-highest in the UK after the South East and London. The strength of the sector in Scotland is also translating into high salary offers. Edinburgh boasts some of the highest salaries for the UK tech industry. The median digital tech salary in the city is £41,250, second only to London's top range of £55,000. Technical and non-technical staff can both excel in the city, with the average salary for roles including IT system architects and project managers higher in Edinburgh than across the UK.

Meanwhile, Glasgow is ranked third in the UK for the cost of living versus salary for tech roles. The median digital tech salary in Glasgow is £38,500 compared to £29,000 for all industries, and around 33% of all tech jobs in the city are in non-technical roles.

Record investment levels

2021 is proving to be a record year for venture capital investment across the UK. Tech companies have raised £13.5 billion in the first half of this year, overtaking 2020's investment of £11 billion. In Scotland, tech companies have raised £446 million, the highest number so far.

Fintech and health tech continue to be the biggest sectors for fundraising in the UK, and it's no different in Scotland. The biggest fundraising round in 2021 so far was for the Kirkcaldy-based fintech Paysend, which raised £90.5m

in Series B funding. Amphista Therapeutics, a biotech company based in Motherwell, also raised £38 million earlier this year. Both companies are considered to be futurecorns – high-growth tech companies that are expected to be worth \$1 billion or more in the next few years.

Scotland has created three unicorn tech companies so far, Skyscanner, FanDuel and Interactive Investor. Interactive Investor, the consumer investment platform, is expected to IPO later this year following in the footsteps of other UK tech companies such as Deliveroo, Darktrace and Wise that have listed on public markets in 2021.

Skills to succeed in tech

Software developers are consistently one of the most in-demand roles from companies across the industry. Developers in Edinburgh and Glasgow can command an average salary of £45,000, which can increase to £55,000 for more senior positions. The main skills employees look for in software developers include mathematical aptitude, problem-solving skills, programming languages, accuracy and attention to detail.

Data scientists also play an essential role in organisations thanks to their ability to extract, analyse and interpret large amounts of data and turn them into insights. The top data science skills that employers are looking for in Scotland include machine learning, analytics, artificial intelligence, statistics and experience with Python. Data scientists have seen their average advertised salary increase by 31% over the past two years.

There is an increasing demand for senior-level employees across all areas of Scottish tech. For instance, 89% of available roles for IT System Architects are all for senior positions. System architects divide large and complex computer systems to fulfil requirements and often have higher design responsibilities than software developers, with key skills in demand including architecture, data management, and experience with Amazon Web Services (AWS). As this work is so critical to organisations, the median advertised salary for a system architect starts at £37,500 for a junior position and rises to £70,000 for a senior role.

The UK government is investing heavily into ensuring people across the country have the skills they need to succeed in the digital sector as part of a £2.5 billion National Skills Fund. This includes £43 million to expand Skills Bootcamps. The Bootcamps are providing training to people in areas such as coding, data science and digital marketing to help them advance in their current role or switch to a new profession.

Dr George Windsor, Head of Insights at Tech Nation said:

Edinburgh is proving to be one of the fastest-growing tech cities in the UK, with a higher number of opportunities and salaries compared to other cities. Glasgow is also making a name for itself as a destination for tech workers, with some of the best cost of living standards compared to the median tech salary of the whole

UK. With scaling companies in sectors such as fintech and health tech, Scotland's tech sector is only expected to grow in the next few years.

Andrew Hunter, co-founder of Adzuna, said:

There has been an explosion in demand for skilled tech talent in Edinburgh and Glasgow over the past few months with companies across all industries increasing their hiring for specialist tech roles from software developers to systems architects. Non-tech roles that are important for the delivery of tech products have also been increasing, with project managers in particular able to command high salaries in Edinburgh. We look forward to seeing how this trend develops as businesses continue to recover from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

UN Human Rights Council 48: UK statement for the interactive dialogue with UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria

Thank you, Madam President,

The UK strongly supports the work of the Commission of Inquiry, and we thank it for its continued reporting. As the Commission has concluded, the human rights situation has worsened for many Syrians over the past year. We condemn all violations and abuses that have taken place. It is however the Syrian regime and its allies that bear the primary responsibility for this devastation, and they must be held accountable.

The UK is deeply concerned about the situation in Dara'a, where over 50,000 civilians have been besieged and under heavy bombardment now for two months. The siege has caused the deaths of civilians, including children, and the forced displacement of thousands more.

It is appalling that civilians are contending with shortages of fuel, cooking gas, water, and bread. The regime is intentionally restricting water and electricity. We urge all parties to ensure immediate and unrestricted humanitarian access to all those in need.

It is clear from the reporting that violence continues across the country and there has been a recent escalation in attacks, which has resulted in needless civilian deaths. The UK calls for urgent de-escalation of all violence.

Commissioners,

The human rights situation across the whole of Syria remains deplorable. To which specific thematic issues do you intend to focus next?