

New £20 million fund to grow UK life sciences manufacturing opens for applications

- Applications open for new £20 million fund to support the manufacture of medicines, diagnostics and MedTech in the UK
- fund will boost the UK offer in life sciences manufacturing, creating economic opportunities and highly skilled jobs across the country
- supports the government's ambitions to build back better, ensuring greater resilience in UK supply chains

Announced last November by the Prime Minister and opening for applications today, the [Medicines and Diagnostics Manufacturing Transformation Fund](#) is designed to boost the country's ability to respond to future pandemics and put UK companies ahead of global competitors.

With two-thirds of life science manufacturing jobs already outside London and the South East, the new £20 million fund will also open up economic and investment opportunities for manufacturers across the whole of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, improving our domestic supply chains and safeguarding and creating hundreds of highly skilled manufacturing jobs.

The UK has one of the strongest and most productive health and life sciences industries globally, with a turnover of £80 billion and supporting 256,000 jobs, underpinned by a powerful research landscape and high-quality science base.

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

This £20 million investment will harness the best in UK manufacturing and fund cutting-edge medical technologies to protect the British public in 2021 and beyond.

This will not only boost the UK's already strong vaccine and medicine portfolio but support top quality, local jobs across the country and put the UK in a formidable position to continue responding to the most pressing global challenges of our time.

Life Sciences Minister Nadhim Zahawi said:

Our life sciences sector is world leading and its incredible response to COVID-19 has reminded us of the crucial importance of the sector to the UK.

I am thrilled to see this fund opening for applications and would encourage companies to make the most of the opportunity to expand

their operations and create good jobs as we build back better from the pandemic.

The pandemic has shown the importance of having a strong domestic medicines and diagnostics manufacturing industry. This new fund has been established to grow and strengthen the UK's capabilities, as well as encouraging companies to deploy new technologies, build new factories and harness new advances, including bioprocessing, data and using greener manufacturing processes.

To date, the UK government has invested over £300 million into manufacturing a successful vaccine, and through the work of the Vaccine Taskforce, established in April 2020, facilities across the UK are working at pace to supply the world's most promising vaccines so far as part of the biggest vaccination programme in NHS history.

Today's announcement forms part of the government's plans to bolster secure and resilient onshore UK manufacturing capacity, ensuring universal and equitable access to safe, efficacious and affordable vaccines, medicines and diagnostics for this and future pandemics, taking advantage of our world-leading genomics expertise.

Find [further information about the fund and how to apply](#).

Army's Solar Farms Support Commitment to Sustainability

To support the government's commitment to meeting Net Zero Carbon Emissions by 2050, the British Army will launch defence's first photovoltaic solar farm at the Defence School of Transport (DST), Leconfield.

The solar array is the first of four pilot sites delivered as part of Project PROMETHEUS to increase renewable energy across the defence estate.

Spanning approximately four hectares, Centrica Business Solutions started construction of the 2.3MW solar farm earlier this year. Thirty employees are working on the project, installing 4,248 Trina Vertex panels, which is predicted to supply the DST with one third of its electricity needs.

Together, the four pilot sites will result in £1-million in efficiency savings and reduce emissions by 2,000 tCO₂e (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent) per year. These cost savings will be reinvested into Army infrastructure and help to reach the Army's ambition of Net Zero by 2045.

Major General David Southall, Director Basing and Infrastructure and the Army's Sustainability Champion said:

The Army remains wholly committed to play its part in meeting the UK's commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. To deliver this, we are working hard to reduce energy demand as well as increase 'green' supply across our estate.

Project PROMETHEUS is an exciting pilot which will showcase renewable energy generation across the Army estate. When operational, we will learn from our four pilot sites and scale-up fast across the wider Army estate to help decarbonise the power we use.

Defence Procurement Minister Jeremy Quin said:

Project Prometheus is an example of how Defence is actioning its all-encompassing approach to reducing carbon emissions and increasing sustainability, announced last week.

The Army, through Prometheus, is showing our commitment to positive green initiatives, driving impressive energy efficiency savings.

The three further pilots at Duke of Gloucester Barracks, South Cerney, Gloucestershire; Rock Barracks, Suffolk; and Baker Barracks on Thorney Island, Sussex are scheduled for delivery by Summer 2021, with the aspiration to deliver a further circa 80 solar farms across the army estate in the next seven years.

Jorge Pikunic, Managing Director of Centrica Business Solutions, said:

We are proud to support the army launch what is an ambitious sustainability programme. It is incumbent on organisations big and small to show leadership in meeting net zero, and the army is doing just that.

Large scale solar projects like this can create significant cost and carbon savings, helping customers accelerate their transition to a sustainable future.

Project PROMETHEUS is one of several sustainable initiatives employed by the

army to support the UK Net Zero legislation. Other ongoing projects include:

- Project TAURUS: A solar carport at British Army Headquarters with electric car charging ports and battery storage. A second phase is planned for six further solar carports across all regions
- Project KELPIE: A pilot for thermal battery storage
- buildings Efficiency Management Systems (BEMS): To improve sub-metering across the estate
- near Zero Energy Buildings (NZEB): To enhance the energy efficiency of Single living accommodation (SLA)
- Project ROMULUS: The development of an information system to detail each building and facilities' carbon footprint. This system, or "digital twin," collects and collates data on how the infrastructure operates which is then used to drive real-world decisions
- Project MARKER: A habitat creation scheme and a natural capital research project with Exeter University.

[New watchdog to boost online competition launches](#)

- Digital Markets Unit begins work marking major milestone for online market reform
- Digital Sec asks it to look at relationships between platforms and content providers
- Move aims to spur development of digital services and lower prices for consumers

The Digital Markets Unit (DMU), based in the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), will oversee plans to give consumers more choice and control over their data, promote online competition and crack down on unfair practices which can often leave businesses and consumers with less choice and more expensive goods and services.

Online platforms bring huge benefits for businesses and society. They make work easier and quicker and help people stay in touch. But there is a consensus that the concentration of power among a small number of firms is curtailing growth and having negative impacts on consumers and businesses which rely on them.

In November 2020 the government announced a new unit would be set up to enforce a new pro-competition regime to cover platforms with considerable market power – known as strategic market status. The new unit has today kicked off its first work programme as it launches in 'shadow' non statutory form ahead of legislation granting its full powers.

The government has asked it to begin looking at how codes of conduct could

work in practice to govern the relationship between digital platforms and groups such as small businesses which rely on them to advertise or use their services to reach their customers. It will take a sector neutral approach in examining the role of platforms across a range of digital markets, with a view to promoting competition

The Digital Secretary has asked it to work with the communications regulator Ofcom to look specifically at how a code would govern the relationships between platforms and content providers such as news publishers, including to ensure they are as fair and reasonable as possible.

This would pave the way for the future rules of the road and is alongside the wider work being done by the government, following the Cairncross Review and the package of support through the pandemic, to boost the sustainability of the press.

Digital Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

Today is a major milestone in the path to creating the world's most competitive online markets, with consumers, entrepreneurs and content publishers at their heart.

The Digital Markets Unit has launched and I've asked it to begin by looking at the relationships between platforms and content providers, and platforms and digital advertisers.

This will pave the way for the development of new digital services and lower prices, give consumers more choice and control over their data, and support our news industry, which is vital to freedom of expression and our democratic values.

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said

This is a significant step towards our goal of improving consumer choice and delivering better services at lower prices.

The UK has built an enviable reputation as a global tech hub and we want that to continue – but I'm clear that the system needs to be fair for our smaller businesses, new entrepreneurs and the wider British public.

Our new, unashamedly pro-competition regime will help to curb the dominance of tech giants, unleash a wave of innovation throughout the market and ensure smaller firms aren't pushed out.

Andrea Coscelli, Chief Executive of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), said:

People shopping on the internet and sharing information online

should be able to enjoy the choice, secure data and fair prices that come with a dynamic and competitive industry.

Today is another step towards creating a level playing field in digital markets. The DMU will be a world-leading hub of expertise in this area and when given the powers it needs, I am confident it will play a key role in helping innovation thrive and securing better outcomes for customers.

The government will consult on the design of the new pro-competition regime this year and legislate to put the DMU on a statutory footing as soon as Parliamentary time allows.

The unit will work closely with the CMA enforcement teams already taking action to address practices by digital firms, which harm competition and lead to poor outcomes for consumers and businesses. This includes taking enforcement action against Google and Apple, and scrutinising mergers involving Facebook and eBay.

The government has also today published an outline of the new unit's function and role for its first year of operation. It includes working alongside business, the government and academia to compile the necessary evidence, knowledge and expertise so that once the new pro-competition regulatory regime is in place it can begin operation as quickly as possible.

As countries around the world grapple with these issues, the unit will coordinate with international partners so the UK remains a global leader in shaping the debate in this area.

The UK is already discussing its approach to digital competition with international partners through bilateral engagement and as part of its G7 presidency. The Digital Secretary will host a meeting of digital and tech ministers in April as he seeks to build consensus for coordination on better information sharing and joining up regulatory and policy approaches.

The Digital Markets Unit will work closely with important regulators including the Information Commissioner's Office, Ofcom and the Financial Conduct Authority so that consumers and businesses are comprehensively protected and the new regime is coherent and effective.

It will be led by Will Hayter, who takes over following his work at the Cabinet Office supporting the UK's transition out of the EU.

The work being announced today will inform future legislation in this area and follows the CMA's [market study](#) into online platforms and digital advertising.

Notes to editors

- The CMA is continuing to take tough action to address practices by digital firms which harm competition and lead to poor outcomes for consumers and businesses, including enforcement action taken against

- [Google](#) and [Apple](#), and scrutinising mergers involving [Facebook](#) and [eBay](#).
- The CMA is working with the ICO, FCA and Ofcom to [coordinate regulation](#) of digital firms. This work will help inform the DMU's approach going forward.
 - The CMA recently set out its [strategy](#) for protecting consumers and promoting competition in digital markets, which prioritises the establishment of the DMU within the CMA.
 - Will Hayter will take over the role as interim head of the DMU in early May.
 - Last month the Digital Secretary set out his [ten tech priorities](#) including plans to fuel a new era of startups and scaleups by opening up the market to new and innovative tech companies, championing a new age of digital trade and to lead global efforts to boost digital competition, while protecting the freedom of the press.
 - The digital sector contributed nearly £150 billion to the UK economy in 2018 – driving opportunity, productivity and creativity in every corner of the UK.
 - The CMA market study says Google has significant market power in the general search market and in search advertising, and Facebook has significant market power in the social media market and in display advertising
 - Around £14 billion was spent on digital advertising in the UK in 2019, around 80 per cent of which was spent on Google and Facebook, and the CMA notes the number of adverts that consumers are exposed to on digital platforms is increasing.
 - Facebook's average revenue per user has increased from under £5 in 2011 to more than £50 in 2019 and its average revenue per user is now more than ten times higher than competitors.
 - In the UK, Google's prices for search advertising on desktop and mobile were 30 to 40 per cent higher than Bing's, its main competitor in 2019.

The CMA also provides evidence that a lack of competition in these markets leads to harms to consumers and businesses through:

1. Reduced innovation.
2. Higher prices for goods and services.
3. Reduced quality.
4. Lack of consumer control.
5. Broader social harm.

[Integrating defence, development and diplomatic efforts to bring](#)

sustainable peace in Mali

Thank you, Mr President. I would like to thank the Under-Secretary General Lacroix for his briefing, and although he is absent today, I would like to extend my thanks also to SRSG Annadif. MINUSMA and the wider international community have benefited from his leadership and guidance. We wish him luck in his next role and welcome the appointment of Mr. El-Ghassim Wane.

Mr President, I'd like to focus my remarks on two priorities for action. First, the issue of impunity for human rights abuses and violations remains a concern. The attack against the MINUSMA camp in Aguelhok in Kidal region on Friday, which killed four Chadian peacekeepers and injured another twenty-four, underlines the complex and challenging circumstances in which MINUSMA operates. And on behalf of the United Kingdom, I pay tribute to those peacekeepers who have made the ultimate sacrifice and given their lives for peace and security in Mali. I offer my deep condolences to their families and friends and to the mission and I wish those who are injured a speedy recovery.

In the light of this attack and the other significant attacks against peacekeepers earlier this year, I want also to reiterate what I said in January: these crimes should not go unpunished and those who perpetrate them should be aware that they may constitute war crimes. While recent prosecution orders and investigations are positive steps, we urge the Malian authorities to ensure transparency and accountability for such acts. As the Secretary-General's report points out, justice is necessary in order to achieve sustainable peace and help build trust between the state and its people.

Second, the need for an inclusive political process based on consultations and dialogue will foster a sense of ownership among all parties to the peace agreement.

The recent meetings of the Monitoring Committee of Kidal, as well as efforts by the transitional government to initiate dialogue with political parties, were encouraging developments. However, with less than a year to go until the end of the transitional period, progress on the implementation of the peace agreement has been limited. We hope to see accelerated progress and concrete achievements in line with the roadmap agreed in December.

Finally, I'd like to thank the Secretary-General for sharing the roadmap for MINUSMA's transition. It contains some important guiding principles, including the need for government-led reform. As we prepare for MINUSMA's mandate renewal in June, we will draw on this roadmap and from the experience of our own deployment to MINUSMA, to understand how the mission can best support the Malian government to assume increasing responsibility for the security tasks currently carried out by the mission.

Mr President, the UK remains committed to supporting MINUSMA's core objectives. We're contributing to stabilisation efforts that will help reduce violent conflict. We're supporting projects aimed at increasing the

meaningful participation of women both in the peace process and in wider conflict resolution mechanisms. We're providing international humanitarian law training to Malian forces and supporting the G5 Sahel Joint Forces engagement with communities. We're helping protect civilians through our humanitarian aid and by working through OCHA to strengthen civilian military coordination. We will continue working closely with our Malian and international partners to coordinate efforts.

By working together and integrating our defence, development and diplomatic efforts, we stand the best chance to deliver our shared vision of long-term peace and stability in Mali and the region.

Thank you, Mr President.

[G7 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting chaired by Chancellor agrees ambitious climate agenda in UK's COP Presidency year](#)

News story

The Chancellor chaired a meeting with G7 counterparts today where they agreed an ambitious green agenda ahead of COP26, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity COP15 and beyond.



- G7 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors discuss their role in driving forward the transition of their economies and financial systems to net zero
- Chancellor highlights the need for G7 to raise its climate finance ambition to support the \$100 billion target
- Chancellor calls for improved climate-related financial disclosures and international transparency to tackle illicit finance from illegal

wildlife trade

This is the first of a series of discussions that Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors will have on these topics during the UK's G7 Presidency this year.

Hosting the meeting alongside Governor of the Bank of England Andrew Bailey, the Chancellor highlighted the importance of the G7 progressing plans for achieving their net zero commitments, as well as the G7 exchanging views on the policy implications of the transition on growth, jobs and competitiveness. Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors discussed the key roles of their ministries and central banks in the transition to net zero, and how climate policies complement and amplify the role of the private sector in financing climate action.

During the meeting the Chancellor emphasised the need for the G7 to raise its ambition on increasing the quantity and quality of climate finance in support of the \$100 billion target through public, private and multilateral sources. He pressed for further ambition on climate and environment policies including improved climate-related financial disclosures, support for the development of international sustainability-related financial reporting standards and stronger beneficial ownership transparency to improve law enforcement's ability to tackle the illicit finance generated by the illegal wildlife trade and other illicit threats to nature.

Today's meeting was the first of a series that the Chancellor will be holding with global counterparts this week. Tomorrow he will call on the G20 to focus its efforts on taking collective action to tackle climate change and support the IMF in integrating climate change across its activities as well as encouraging Multilateral Development Banks to be Paris-aligned. On Thursday he will discuss further support for vulnerable countries and a new allocation of IMF Special Drawing Rights.

The Chancellor also attended and spoke at the Coalition of Finance Ministers for Climate Action meeting where Finance Ministers discussed promoting strong recovery and growth while accelerating the transition to low carbon, climate risk management and decarbonisation policies.

Further information

- the G7 consists of the United Kingdom, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United States and the EU
- alongside other developed countries, the UK has committed to jointly mobilise \$100 billion per year in climate finance to developing countries from public and private sources

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