

Review launched to reduce red tape for UK researchers

- Government launches new independent review into UK research bureaucracy to identify ways to free up researchers to pursue world class research
- led by Professor Adam Tickell, Vice Chancellor, University of Sussex, the review will make recommendations to remove unnecessary red tape in the UK research system
- delivers on the commitment in the UK's ambitious R&D Roadmap to minimise bureaucracy and help cement the UK's status as a science superpower

Removing unnecessary red tape that wastes the time of UK researchers will be the focus of a new independent review into research bureaucracy, launched today (Monday 22 March 2021) by Science Minister Amanda Solloway.

The review, led by Professor Adam Tickell, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sussex, will seek to identify why bureaucracy has increased across the UK's research system. It will provide recommendations to help reduce time-consuming administrative demands, freeing up researchers to pursue world-class research, so that they can generate knowledge, develop and mentor their teams, and make a full contribution to the wider research community.

It will look to identify practical solutions to bureaucratic issues faced by researchers across the UK such as overly complicated grant forms that require in-depth financial knowledge, a lack of clarity over funding available to researchers, and having to provide the same data multiple times in different formats to different funders.

Its recommendations will balance safeguarding the need to demonstrate impact and value for money while supporting the UK research environment, particularly higher education institutions, to be more streamlined, dynamic, diverse and transparent.

Amanda Solloway, Minister for Science, Research and Innovation, said:

The UK is home to some of the world's leading scientists and researchers and their response over the past year to the coronavirus pandemic has shone a light on the vital need for them to be able to carry out their ground-breaking work at pace. Their discoveries have created much needed medical treatments and vaccines which are saving lives across the world.

As we build back better by unleashing innovation, it's crucial that we create a research environment that harnesses this same scientific speed and endeavour. This review will identify how we can free up our brightest minds from unnecessary red tape so they can continue making cutting edge discoveries, while cementing UK's status as a science superpower.

Professor Adam Tickell, University of Sussex, said:

I am very pleased to have been asked to lead this review of such great importance to my colleagues in the sector and to the UK as a whole. I am looking forward to engaging across the research community to get a complete picture of the issues from all perspectives and in coming up with ways to improve the way our systems work. Ultimately, this should translate to making a real difference to the work of our research teams and that will be the true test of whether we have succeeded.

The system-wide review will conclude by early 2022, with interim findings due to be published this autumn. It will involve broad engagement with the whole UK research community, with a particular focus being placed on research undertaken in higher education institutions.

The government's [R&D Roadmap](#), published in July 2020, set out the government's ambitious vision for the future of UK R&D, including the goal of minimising bureaucracy whilst maintaining flexibility, diversity and necessary accountability. This review is the next phase in delivering on that commitment.

It builds on the government's introduction of specific measures in September 2020 by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the National Health Institute for Research (NIHR) and the Office for Students (OfS) to reduce bureaucracy in the university research and teaching system. This included streamlining over 200 UKRI grant schemes and introducing a digital grants application system to speed up the process.

Ottoline Leyser, CEO of UK Research and Innovation, said:

UKRI welcomes this independent and system-wide review to enable a reduction in unnecessary research bureaucracy, wherever it is found. The goal is to free up time for researchers and innovators to devote to their many vital roles at work and outside it.

We are already making strides within our Simpler and Better Funding programme, which aims to make the funding process as user-friendly as possible for applicants, peer reviewers and awardees, as well as those who work with them.

We look forward to supporting BEIS in delivering this review, and working with them to create a research and innovation system that delivers for everyone.

Professor Julia Buckingham, President of Universities UK and Vice-Chancellor of Brunel University London, said:

We very much welcome the opportunity to challenge the parts of the research system which can restrict university staff and students from delivering impactful research.

It is excellent to see that Professor Adam Tickell, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Sussex, will be leading this review and that a system-wide approach to tackling bureaucracy will be used. This approach will drive meaningful change across the sector, promoting diversity and empowering researchers with the time they need to pursue ambitious research.

The outcomes of this review will further increase the attractiveness of UK universities as partners for global collaboration.

View the full [Terms of reference for the review](#).

341st Session of the ILO Governing Body: Joint statement from Canada and the UK

World news story

Canada and UK delivered the joint statement at the 341st session of the ILO Governing Body on 20 March 2021.



The ILO Governing Body takes place in Geneva.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I am speaking on behalf of Canada and the United Kingdom.

We thank the Office for the updates on recent developments in Myanmar, and in particular for the information regarding the impact the military coup has had on ILO constituents and the ILO's work in the country.

We unequivocally condemn the military coup and arrests of over 2000 opposition figures, including State Counsellor ASSK and President U Win Myint. We are appalled by the escalating use of force and severe crackdowns on workers seeking to peacefully exercise their right to protest, as well as reports of harassment and intimidation against trade unionists, workers – including civil servants – and employers seeking to exercise their freedom of association. These actions are fundamentally incompatible with democracy, and must be reversed immediately.

Both the UK and Canada have announced targeted sanctions against 9 high-ranking military officials and continue to work in concert with its partners and allies to deliberate a range of additional measures. We stand with the people of Myanmar who expressed clearly last November their desire for a democratic federal union, and call on the Myanmar military to exercise restraint, release those arbitrarily detained, and uphold democratic processes.

Furthermore, we are deeply concerned that all ILO operations and project activities have been disrupted or put on hold as a result of the military coup, and that ILO staff in Yangon are under significant mental and emotional stress.

The longstanding and commendable work of the Liaison Office and ILO Team in Myanmar must be able to continue, with the full participation of the social partners, to implement the important projects under the Decent Work Country Programme and ensure real progress towards compliance with international labour standards, including the elimination of child and forced labour. On forced labour, it is widely known that crises provide fertile ground for unscrupulous recruiters, forced labour and trafficking. The coup is unlikely to be different. We are already witnessing rumours around forced recruitment of civilians as military porters. We urge the military to immediately refrain from undue interference in the ILO's operations and allow the Office and the social partners to undertake their work without threat of intimidation or harm.

With these comments, Canada and the UK support the decision point proposed by the Office.

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Queen's Speech to be held on 11 May

Press release

The State Opening of Parliament will take place on Tuesday 11 May.



The State Opening of Parliament will take place on Tuesday 11 May. The Queen's Speech will set out the Government's agenda for the next session and its plans to build back better from the pandemic and level-up opportunities across the country.

The Queen's Speech will also confirm the continuation of a number of bills carrying over from this parliamentary year, including the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill, the Environment Bill and the Armed Forces Bill. The Government has also already confirmed it will introduce legislation to improve the building safety regulatory regime, reform our asylum system and to repeal the Fixed-term Parliaments Act.

In light of the pandemic it is expected that the State Opening will be adapted, with reduced ceremonial elements and attendees to ensure it is COVID-secure.

The Government, Palace and Parliamentary Authorities, together with Public Health England, are working to develop these plans. The State Opening will involve significantly fewer MPs and peers in attendance, a reduced Royal Procession into the Lords Chamber and no diplomatic or non-parliamentary guests.

As is usual, the current session of Parliament will be prorogued ahead of the Queen's Speech and this time will be used to enable logistical and security preparations for the State Opening of Parliament. The likely date of prorogation will be confirmed in due course.

A No10 spokesperson said:

While we are still in the middle of a pandemic this Queen's Speech will look quite different, but it is important we take forward our plans and deliver policies to improve the lives of people across

the country through a new Parliamentary session.

We are working closely with Public Health England to ensure arrangements are COVID-secure.

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[UK space sector gets £1 million government boost to support international innovation](#)

Projects to remotely probe ice on Mars to help explorers find life below the surface, a system to warn of impacts of flood risks to infrastructure based on research in India and a scheme to design UK imaging technology for a space telescope are among the new international initiatives to receive backing from the UK Space Agency's National Space Innovation Programme (NSIP).

The funding will see UK companies and organisations working with partners such as NASA, and space agencies from Canada, Japan and Italy. NSIP is the first fund dedicated to supporting the UK space sector's innovation through collaborations with international partners designed to contribute to UK science, security and prosperity.

Dr Graham Turnock, Chief Executive of the UK Space Agency, said:

Space technologies are part of almost every aspect of our daily lives. With rapid technological innovation, space offers a broad and growing range of opportunities to support economic activity and protect the environment.

These projects champion the best of British innovation while strengthening our partnerships around the world.

The International element of NSIP aims to increase UK exporting potential, strengthen research partnerships around the world that complement our existing activities through the European Space Agency, and develop key space technologies and capabilities important to the UK's security interests.

The UK space sector is a major economic success story, growing by over 60% since 2010. The UK remains a leading member of the European Space Agency, which is independent of the EU. ESA membership allows the UK to cooperate in world-leading science on a global scale, enabling UK scientists and

researchers access to a range of international R&D programmes.

The new funding for these international projects follows over £7 million awarded to 21 UK organisations in December 2020. These were the first projects to receive funding from the national element of NSIP.

Mars Ice Mapper SAR Antenna Feasibility Study, Oxford Space Systems, Oxford, £160,000

Consortium partner: Canadian Space Agency

Oxford Space Systems (OSS) will conduct a feasibility study into a large deployable antenna for a potential radar-mapping mission led by NASA, the Canadian Space Agency, the Italian Space Agency and the Japanese Space Agency.

The mission, called International Mars Ice Mapper, proposes to map shallow sub-surface ice on the Martian landscape and remotely sense up to 10 metres below it, providing essential data on both available water for explorers and places of interest in the search for life.

The OSS team will analyse and study the early-stage design necessary to implement a 6-metre dish to be the front end of the envisioned L-band Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) for the mission, taking advantage of Canadian experience of the Radarsat series of satellites.

InRange Launch Vehicle Telemetry Service, Inmarsat, London, £258,000

Consortium partners: Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI), Japan; Safran Data Systems, France; Haigh-Farr Inc., USA.

Inmarsat will use its existing global L-band geostationary satellite communications network to develop an in-orbit data relay solution. The concept, named "InRange", will enable launch vehicles to reduce launch providers' dependency on traditional, expensive ground-based technology.

This innovative new capability will provide a UK solution for cost effective, flexible launch range service to launch providers and sites. Inmarsat has collaborated with partners in Japan, France and the US to develop the L-band transmitter and antenna configuration for the launch vehicle.

The UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), Long Term Sustainability Guidelines: Promoting Space Sustainability, £85,000

UNOOSA will support international efforts to promote space sustainability by identifying examples of the sustainable use of outer space through a series of events and outreach efforts. This project will also inform future UNOOSA capacity-building efforts to promote the future sustainability of outer space. It will encourage all actors to implement the UN's LTS Guidelines for the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities to the fullest extent

possible.

Impact-based Flood Forecasting for India, HR Wallingford, Oxfordshire, £265,000

Consortium partners: Sayers and Partners (SPL), D-Orbit UK, Dr. Steven Reece – The Information Group, Oxford University

HR Wallingford will build upon UK Met Office-funded research carried out in India, which uses Earth observation (EO) data to estimate risks to building and agriculture from weather related hazards. The project aims to provide an impact-based flood forecasting framework. The system will be capable of being linked to any existing or future flood-flow forecasting system, to forecast flood risk in terms of expected loss of life, injuries to people, building collapse, infrastructure disruption or economic damage. This phase will look at the 2020 flooding of the Koshi River, in the state of Bihar, as a case study.

HR Wallingford will be collaborating with the Central Water and Power Research Station (CWPRS), the National Institute of Hydrology (NIH), Roorkee and the National Centre of Coastal Research (NCCR), India.

Enhancing UK EMCCD camera technology for space applications: from UK involvement in the Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope to future global projects, The Open University, £279,000

Consortium partners: NASA JPL, U R Rao Satellite Centre (ISRO), Teledyne e2v (Te2v), XCAM Ltd., Grey Consultants.

Open University will build upon its Centre for Electronic Imaging's (CEI) previous involvement in the design of bespoke sensors for the Nancy Grace Roman Space Telescope by working with NASA's JPL to further develop the new UK imaging technology for the mission. The aim is to demonstrate the potential for enhanced performance with this new UK technology as a flagship for space applications. The team will also work with the U R Rao Satellite Centre of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to explore uses of the new technology for their DISHA satellite mission. This project will demonstrate the new sensor technology in flight-like conditions alongside running new analysis and optimisation techniques.

[UN Human Rights Council 46: Enhanced Interactive Dialogue on the Democratic](#)

Republic of Congo

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