

UK to launch new international space collaborations

Through the Government's new domestic space fund, the National Space Innovation Programme, the UK Space Agency will fund innovative technologies and services to support UK trade, science, and security with major space players like Australia, France, Japan and the United States.

Funding – from £250,000 to £2.5 million – will be given to the best international collaborative projects from UK industry, academia and research organisations.

Science Minister Amanda Solloway said:

The UK's space sector is playing a critical role in tackling some of the world's greatest challenges – from monitoring climate change to providing vital relief for countries affected by natural disasters.

Today's funding will provide the UK's leading space scientists and researchers with an international platform to continue fulfilling the incredible potential of space technology, working collaboratively with our global partners, while boosting UK space exports and creating skilled jobs.

Potential projects cover a huge range of space activities, from tackling space debris with new monitoring technologies to using Earth Observation satellites to track issues like climate change, and space science and satellite applications to provide expert disaster relief assistance.

Alice Bunn, International Director at the UK Space Agency, said:

This funding is an important step to growing the UK space sector's influence on the global stage.

There are over 100 space faring nations across the world now, many of which are looking to collaborate with the UK. This funding enables us to seize those opportunities and develop them, creating high-skilled jobs and boosting our economy.

This funding builds on the UK Space Agency's existing work on the world stage. In June the UK and US governments signed an agreement which paves the way for US companies to operate from UK spaceports and export space launch technology, as the UK aims for the first launches from the early 2020s.

In September 2019 the UK signed an agreement with the Australian Space Agency

to lay the foundations for swift and amicable negotiations for space-related opportunities under any potential future UK-Australia trading arrangements.

The UK Space Agency also runs its successful International Partnership Programme (IPP), a £30 million a year programme, which has grant-funded 43 projects in almost 50 developing countries across Africa, Asia-Pacific and Latin America and built new partnerships between 186 mainly UK-based organisations and 183 international organisations.

The UK space sector is a huge economic success story, growing by over 60% since 2010. The industry already supports £300 billion of UK economic activity through the use of satellite services, and employs more than 40,000 people. There are further opportunities, with the space sector estimating a £60 billion future market in new Earth observation and communication technologies.

Stronger international relationships and the ability to fund new projects are crucial to meeting the Government's increased ambitions for space. New funding will help boost UK space exports, which are already worth £5.5 billion each year, in areas such as satellite platforms, sensing systems and advanced software.

The UK also remains a leading member of the European Space Agency, which is independent of the EU.

[Health and care staff can claim immigration health surcharge reimbursement](#)

- Immigration health surcharge reimbursement scheme opens from today
- Delivers on Prime Minister's commitment to exempt all health and care workers from the surcharge following heroic efforts throughout the pandemic
- Guidance and new online portal available to help health and care workers claim reimbursement

Tens of thousands of international health and care staff who have worked tirelessly to save lives during the pandemic are exempt from the immigration health surcharge (IHS) to pay to use the NHS from today.

Overseas NHS and care workers are now able to claim their reimbursement from the surcharge, fulfilling a pledge made by the Prime Minister in May.

The IHS allows non-European Economic Area nationals to access the NHS on broadly the same basis as UK residents if they are seeking to work, study, or

join family members for more than 6 months.

The government's Tier 2 health and care visa, launched in August, exempted eligible staff from paying the IHS. The new reimbursement scheme goes further to ensure that staff not covered by the visa, but who have worked in the NHS or care sector since 31 March, are able to claim reimbursement for themselves and their dependants, even if they paid the surcharge before this date.

Those eligible can now [apply online](#) and access [guidance on claiming the reimbursement](#), which will be paid in 6-month instalments.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock said:

I am incredibly proud of all the fantastic health and care workers from all over the world we have working in our NHS who provide such an invaluable service, from cleaners to care workers to porters.

We can now deliver on our promise as the reimbursement scheme will benefit those who have given so much this year to protect us all from COVID-19.

This will encourage overseas health and care workers to continue to come and work in the UK and help those already living here to provide first-class care and support for patients.

Applications will be processed by the NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) and UK Visas and Immigration.

The IHS reimbursement scheme will work alongside the [health and care visa](#) announced in July and launched in August this year. Reimbursements for the IHS will be paid in 6-month instalments.

The visa offers a fast-track visa route for eligible health and care professionals and includes an exemption to the surcharge, making it cheaper, quicker and easier for people with the right skills from around the world to come to the UK. This will help grow the workforce to deliver 50,000 more nurses, 6,000 more doctors in general practice, as well as thousands more physiotherapists, pharmacists and other highly skilled practitioners over the next 5 years.

Rebecca Smith, managing director of NHS Employers, part of the NHS confederation, said:

Employers and recent overseas recruits will welcome detail on how the immigration health surcharge reimbursement service will work in practice.

The government's decision in May to exempt health and social care staff from the fee and reimburse those who have paid it after 31 March this year demonstrated some recognition of the incredible

contribution overseas staff make to the NHS. Now more than ever, we must show our gratitude for all our staff, including those from overseas, who have worked with dedication, fortitude and selflessness to care for our communities in one of the most challenging periods in our history.

Anyone holding a relevant visa, who has worked in health and social care continuously for at least 6 months and paid the IHS will be eligible for a reimbursement.

Applications will be processed by the NHSBSA and UK Visas and Immigration.

Anyone holding a relevant visa, who has worked in health and social care continuously for at least 6 months commencing on or after 31 March 2020 and has paid the IHS may be eligible for a reimbursement. Their dependants may also be eligible for a reimbursement if the IHS has been paid for them. Applicants may only claim a reimbursement if they have paid the IHS in conjunction with a current visa.

Applicants will need to apply for reimbursements on a 6-monthly basis, when they have worked for at least 16 hours per week over the full 6 months. These reimbursements will be processed in 6-month instalments in arrears. This means, for example, if a claimant paid for the IHS in 2019, for a period of 3 years, they will be able to claim 6 months' worth of IHS reimbursement on 1 October 2020. This can be repeated on 31 March 2021 and for any additional 6-month periods, as long as they have met the eligibility criteria for this period. IHS in respect of any period of time or work before 31 March 2020 cannot be reclaimed. The reimbursement scheme is designed for claimants who are in the UK on visas that give them a generic right to work. Examples of this may include:

- a dependant of a UK national or another migrant
- someone on a Tier 4 student visa who can undertake up to 20 hours of work a week during term time
- someone on the Tier 5 youth mobility scheme

[Government to protect small businesses with action on late payments](#)

- Government proposals to give more powers to the Small Business Commissioner (SBC) to help small firms with late payment
- proposed new powers include ordering businesses to pay in good time and issuing fines if they do not, ordering companies to share information on payment practices and the power to launch investigations
- £23.4 billion worth of late payments currently owed to small businesses

in the UK, impacting on cash flow and threatening the survival of small firms during the COVID-19 pandemic

New proposals have been outlined by government to ensure small businesses in the UK are paid on time, Small Business Minister Paul Scully today announced (1 October).

Currently £23.4 billion worth of late invoices are owed to small firms across Britain, impacting on businesses' cash flow and ultimate survival.

Today's proposals, as part of a new consultation launched today, look to give new powers to the Small Business Commissioner including:

- the power to order companies to pay their partners, either as a lump sum or agreed payment plan, when a complaint against them for late payment has been investigated and upheld. Companies which do not do so could face further penalties, including fines. This will give a clear incentive for companies to pay their partners on time
- the power to compel companies to share information during an investigation by the SBC. This will ensure cooperation with SBC investigations and provide more information about company payment practices
- the power to launch investigations into suspected bad payment practice, without the need to have first received a complaint from a small business
- expanding the scope for complaints to the SBC, to allow the Commissioner to investigate complaints about other businesses relating to payment matters in connection with the supply of goods and services
- to review and report on wider business practices outside of payment matters, on instruction of the BEIS Secretary of State. This could be a practices unrelated to payment matters specifically impacting small businesses such as supply problems, or broader issues like barriers to the adoption of payment technology
- the power to claim investigation costs from an investigated company when there are adverse findings against them

The government is seeking to create a culture of prompt payment in UK business. This is essential to enable small businesses to succeed, creating jobs, driving innovation and supporting their community.

Small Business Minister Paul Scully said:

Late payments are a terrible burden for small businesses, not only disrupting their cash flow but posing a threat to their survival in many cases.

We are committed to tackling this problem, supporting small businesses at this critical time for the British economy by helping them to secure payment on time.

I am pleased to open this consultation on expanding the

Commissioner's powers and welcome the views of businesses that have been affected by this issue.

Karen Woolven, owner of Karen Woolven flowers in Greenwich, London, said:

There is more than enough to worry about when running a small business without having to spend hours chasing up invoices for services that have already been delivered. I have experienced late payment multiple times in the recent past and it's a huge problem which causes a lot of unnecessary uncertainty and stress.

The Small Business Commissioner really helped us to resolve a dispute over this and it makes a lot of sense to give them more powers to sort these issues out. I'm glad to see some action to help small businesses like mine, especially at a challenging time like this.

David Nichols, UK Chief Claims Officer at Zurich said:

These are testing times for businesses and now more than ever, meeting payment terms on time is imperative for their survival. We fully support the expansion of the commissioner's powers which will not only help raise awareness of the challenges this creates for businesses, it will also serve to find a resolve far quicker.

National Chairman of the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) Mike Cherry said:

We know that paying small businesses late is debilitating, and the practice has increased during COVID-19. It deprives small firms of cashflow, holds back growth, undermines productivity and forces many to take out external finance. In thousands of cases a year this causes the closure of small businesses. It is therefore more important than ever to wipe out this poor payment scourge. The proposed new powers would give the Small Business Commissioner some teeth to investigate bad practice more easily and punish it more severely, and it is very welcome to see these plans being put forward for consultation.

According to the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), around 50,000 small companies close each year due to late payments.

With many UK businesses continuing to struggle with the impact of coronavirus, this is now an especially urgent issue.

The Office of the Small Business Commissioner was established in 2017 by the previous government to address the issue of late payments. Since then, the

SBC has claimed £7.5 million owed to small businesses and publicly named 8 companies for poor payment practice.

The consultation opens today and will run until 24 December 2020. Businesses are invited to [share their views here](#).

- Figure for amount estimated to be owed to small businesses comes from Pay UK
- according to the FSB, 62% of small companies in the UK have experienced late payment at some point or other. 10% report a lengthening of payment times as a result of the coronavirus pandemic, and some have seen payments frozen altogether
- the SBC, on behalf of BEIS, also administers the Prompt Payment Code (PPC), a voluntary scheme whereby companies agree to pay their partners within 60 days or else be struck off the Code, pending a mutually agreed action plan to improve payment practices
- the government has recently commenced engagement with Code signatories on plans to strengthen and reform the PPC. As part of this work, we are considering that signatories to the Code commit to pay 95% of invoices from smaller businesses within 30 days.

The consultation is open until 24 December and covers the following:

- extending the scope for complaints to allow the Commissioner to consider complaints from small businesses relating to payment matters in connection with the supply of goods and services to all businesses and make recommendations. If this is taken forward, any of the following powers would apply to complaints from small businesses about businesses of all sizes.
- the power for the Commissioner to carry out a review on the impact and effect of relevant legislation, policies and practices impacting small businesses following an instruction by the Secretary of State. The review need not be limited to payment matters and may consider other issues which affect small businesses ('a new Inquiry Function'). That could be a review of wider business practices, unrelated to payment matters, specifically impacting small businesses, as well as more diverse issues, for example, barriers to the adoption of payment technology.
- the power for the Commissioner to investigate specific instances of suspected poor or unfair payment practices: (i) at his or her own initiative; or (ii) following receipt of a complaint from a third party; in addition to his or her current power to investigate following a complaint from a small business. ('an Expanded Complaints Function').
- the power for the Commissioner to compel the disclosure of information in connection with the investigation or a complaint. This power would ensure businesses co-operate more readily with the Commissioner's investigations.
- the power for the Commissioner to issue a binding monetary award or payment plan in connection complaint where there are adverse findings in relation to the respondent, or else risk facing financial penalties. We envisage this power would compel business to adopt appropriate and fair payment practices, otherwise risk financial penalties. If under the

expanded complaints function an investigation was to make findings that payment(s) is due to a small business and has been unfairly or unreasonably delayed or withheld, the Commissioner would issue a decision notice, which would require compensation to be paid to the relevant small business. The award would seek to put the relevant small business into the position it would have been in had it been paid on time and in full. The award would set the amount(s) of the payment in a specified period and, if applicable, what amount of statutory interest is payable. If the Commissioner considers that the business cannot pay the award in the time specified, they may set out a binding payment plan.

- the power for the Commissioner to claim investigation costs incurred in connection with a complaint where there are adverse findings in relation to the respondent. The Commissioner would only be able to claim investigation costs reasonably incurred in respect of those cases where an adverse finding is made against the business. This power is beneficial as both a deterrent and enforcement measure. It is hoped that businesses would comply more readily with an investigation.

[MAIB safety digest 2/2020 published](#)

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[Call for Bids: Promoting Societal Links between Gaza & West Bank](#)

The British Consulate General, Jerusalem (BCG) is accepting proposals for an 18-month project (November 2020/ March 2022) under its Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF). The overall vision of the project is to limit the societal impact of the current political division between Gaza and West Bank,

by using digital technology to promote a culture of sustainable collaboration that will help any future political reconciliation arrangement take root.

Project Objective:

The project will contribute directly to achieving existing UK Government objectives on the Middle East Peace Process (MEPP), specifically the creation of a sovereign, independent, democratic and viable Palestinian State living in peace and security side by side with Israel based on 1967 borders (the 2 State Solution – 2SS). .

The below anticipated areas of work are recommended:

a) Creating links between West Bank and Gaza Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), incubators, or private sector through creative joint initiatives which might include:

- Using the technology sector to enable business, productivity and economic growth through facilitating innovation and partnerships between West Bank and Gazan organizations
- Establishment of innovative national tech-hub where youth in Gaza and WB can jointly work on locally designed solutions to environmental, economic, or social problems in OPTs.
- Catalyze the growth of the digital sector in the West Bank and Gaza, and make it a pillar of societal reconciliation, economic growth and peaceful change in the region
- Promote trade exchange, inclusive economic and educational opportunities to reach marginalized communities, youth, and women.

b) Scope of joint initiatives should include advocacy and lobbying aspects that can help to solve and tackle social, development, economic or other domestic issues in Opts.

c) Capacity building for targeted beneficiaries and CSOs; creating a capable and active CSOs that spans both the West Bank and Gaza, who are able to lead change effectively in their communities and eventually have a measurable impact on policy debate – particularly domestic – in the OPTs.

Summary of requirements

a) The call of bid is opened to International organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations, private sector and public institutions.

b) Bidders should have presence and previous experience working in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs), with in-depth knowledge of the local context, including HMG political sensitivities.

c) Bidders should consider sub-contracting with local CSOs or private sector organisations, using appropriate selection criteria.

d) Technical know-how and organisational capacity to deliver such a project. Bidders should have previously received a direct fund of at least \$200.000 for a one year spend.

e) Projects in this framework are not allowed to generate a profit for the delivery partner. For-profit delivery organizations will be asked to provide proof of compliance with this requirement.

f) Suppliers should pay particular attention to relevant UK legislation on aid divergence; and proscribed organizations.

g) The British Consulate retains the right to create a reserve list of bids that meet its technical criteria, which may subsequently be used to select additional proposals.

Required Submissions

a) Bidders should submit the standard [Project Proposal Form](#) (MS Word Document, 72.7KB) and the [Activity Based Budget](#) (MS Excel Spreadsheet, 28.9KB) for the entire project period. We will not consider proposals submitted in other formats

b) Budget must be Activity Based Budgets (ABB), including monthly breakdown, of a maximum ceiling of £725,000 over two years divided as follow:

- FY November2020/March2021: £225,000
- FY April 2021/ March2022 £500,000

c) All costs should be listed in GBP (not ILS).

d) Amendment notification: We have decided to remove the limit of the overhead and administrative costs in the budget. Bidders are required instead to differentiate in the Annual Budget between their (a) administrative (e.g. administrative staff salaries), (b) project (e.g. implementing staff costs, travel, M&E costs etc) and (c) overhead costs (e.g. fixed office cost such as bills). Please explain clearly what you have included in each category.

e) 2-pages CV or resume of key personnel who are proposed for the project

f) Official registration of the organization

g) 1- Page clarifying a clear plan for addressing any issues with engagement between sub-contractors as well as with the British Consulate, including a clear proposal for regular reporting and meetings.

Bidding process

a) Proposals should be sent to dalya.abuomar@fcdo.gov.uk by 17 October 4:00 pm OPTs Time. In subject line please indicate the name of the bidder and title of the bid "Gaza & West Bank Linkages." Proposals should not be more than 13 pages, with minimum font size 11. If you have not received a confirmation email within 24 hours, please get in touch with us.

b) Questions relating to the call for proposals should be submitted by 2 October and answers will be published on UK in Jerusalem Website by 6 October.

c) The British Consulate reserves the right to carry out due diligence of potential grantees as part of the selection process. Due to the volume of bids expected, we will not be able to provide feedback on unsuccessful bids.

Evaluation criteria

Successful bids must demonstrate strong strategic relevance to the project outcome and objective, and have a clear focus on delivering change and sustainability. Proposals will be evaluated against the following criteria:

a) Strategic fit to project objective – to what extent the proposal is clear, coherent, realistic and how appropriate is the work plan of activities in order to achieve expected results.

b) Quality of project – the strength of the Theory of Change, and the monitoring and evaluation framework.

c) Value for money – what measures (effectiveness, efficiency, economy and equity) have been optimized and how.

d) Expertise- Evidence of understanding of the context; ability to manage and deliver a successful project that includes dissemination activities and engagement across society, and an existing network of relevant connections. If staff members and sub-contractors possess sufficient knowledge and experience of the project area.

e) Gender-sensitive approach – If gender implications of the project have been identified and how the project will take account of gender-related differences; ensuring the project does no harm to any particular gender group or gender context.

f) Sustainability- how the project outcomes will continue to have impact beyond the lifetime of the project.

g) Risk management – the extent to which the proposal identifies serious risks, together with a management strategy.

NOTE: This must include detailed information on how the project would deliver its activities and outcomes under:

- Different COVID-19 scenarios – including full or partial lockdown, and restrictions on local/international travel, for part or all of the project period. This would impact both project activities, and the need for a local project team presence.
- Different political scenarios – including annexation scenarios and other potential sources of instability.

[Questions and Answers](#) (MS Word Document, 28.2KB) related to the Gaza and West

Bank Linkages Project