

New government scheme to promote next generation of UK artists around the world

- Known as X-UK, the project will acquire works by exciting British artists to go on display in more than 125 countries
- The collection will work with networks to support standout artists to showcase the best of Britain to the world

Contemporary British artists are set to benefit from a new scheme which will see their work displayed in the country's network of embassies and government buildings around the world.

The Government Art Collection (GAC), which is part of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), is launching a five-year acquisitions project to acquire works from exciting talent and showcase the best of British creativity – promoting further interest in the country's globally renowned creative sector.

GAC will work with the Contemporary Visual Arts Network in England, the Scottish Contemporary Art Network, and networks in Wales and Northern Ireland to identify the next generation of potential artistic stars.

The X-UK project initially ran as a successful pilot scheme in 2020-21 when more than 90 pieces by 45 contemporary visual artists were acquired for the collection. These works are now on display in government buildings around the country and internationally in British embassies and residences including Paris, Ankara, The Holy See in Rome, and 10 Downing Street.

The pilot revealed the impact that an acquisition by the Government Art Collection can have on an artist's career by helping to bring their art to new audiences and raising their profiles.

Glasgow-based artist Alberta Whittle went on to represent Scotland at the 59th Biennale di Venezia in 2022 and currently has pieces on display in the National Galleries of Scotland following the pilot scheme's acquisition of her work.

The acquisition of work by Manish Harijan led to his being granted a global talent visa by the British Council, and Ghanaian-born artist Harold Offeh saw his art join a national collection for the first time in his career.

Arts Minister Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay said:

This fantastic new scheme will shine a light on the UK's brilliant up-and-coming artists and promote our cutting-edge creative industries on the world stage.

The five-year X-UK project aims to be a true reflection of every part of the United Kingdom and will bring some of our most exciting artists to audiences in more than 125 countries.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart said:

As the Edinburgh summer festivals draw to a close, the international appetite for Scottish culture and creativity has never been more apparent. Through the UK Government's extensive global network of embassies and residencies, this fantastic project will showcase the best of Scottish creative talent to the world and help raise the global profile of our outstanding homegrown visual artists.

Secretary of State for Wales, Sir Robert Buckland said:

I'm delighted that the UK Government is supporting contemporary Welsh art. Acquiring pieces by emerging artists for the Government Art Collection immediately provides publicity and recognition and showcases this wonderful work to the world.

Wales has a rich heritage of celebrated artists from Richard Wilson's 18th century landscapes to Gwen John and Sir Kyffin Williams, and it's great to see the new generation of Welsh talent supported and promoted by the X-UK project.

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Shailesh Vara said:

The X-UK project by the Government Art Collection is a wonderful opportunity to showcase the very best of Northern Ireland's artistic talent alongside the rest of the United Kingdom in over 125 countries across the world.

I am excited to see the high calibre of artwork, which will undoubtedly serve as a fantastic springboard for new and emerging artists from Northern Ireland to display their talent on the world stage.

Contemporary visual artist Manish Harijan said:

Coming from the foothills of the Himalayas in Nepal, this is a valuable opportunity that has opened doors for me into the art

world. Connecting with important art networks like CVAN Yorkshire and Humber, who nominated me to the Government Art Collection, has been inspiring, and following the acquisition of my work by the Collection, the British Council granted me a Global Talent visa.

Contemporary visual artist Harold Offeh said:

As a Cambridge-based artist having my work selected for the Government Art Collection was a huge boost. The recognition and validation of my practice has been extremely encouraging, and I'm excited to be part of a national collection for the first time.

The project will also provide a focus for the Government Art Collection's public engagement activity with artists and young creatives during this five-year period. This will include work in 2022-23 with Glynn Vivian Art Gallery in Swansea, the Museum-in-Residence in 10 Downing Street, and work in Bradford during its time as UK City of Culture in 2025-26.

Notes to Editors:

[X-UK acquisitions programme 2022-2027:](#)

- 2022/23 – Wales, East Midlands and West Midlands
- 2023/24 – Scotland, North East
- 2024/25 – Northern Ireland, North West
- 2025/26 – Wales, Yorkshire, East
- 2026/27 – Scotland, South East, South West

Consultation launched on NHS pension changes to boost winter workforce

- The extension would make it easier for skilled professionals returning to the NHS to deliver high-quality care to patients
- Move would help to bolster the workforce ahead of winter so they can continue to bust the Covid backlogs

Retired and partially retired NHS staff could have important NHS pension changes extended to make it easier for them to return to the workforce or to continue supporting the health system over winter, as the government launches a new consultation today (Sunday 28 August 2022).

Ahead of what could be a challenging winter where we expect more people to come forward for checks, these measures will help support and boost the workforce. In this way, we are putting in place preparations that

will put the health system in the strongest possible position to tackle the pressures and bust the Covid backlogs.

Since March 2020, certain retire and return rules in the pension scheme have been suspended to allow retired staff to return to work or increase their working commitments without having the payment of their pension benefits suspended.

The measures are currently set to run until 31 October 2022 and the consultation will gather views from the public and stakeholders on whether to extend the measures to 31 March 2023.

This would allow skilled and experienced staff that have stepped up to support the system to continue working for the NHS throughout the potentially challenging upcoming winter period, easing pressures on the system and helping to tackle the Covid backlogs.

Health and Social Care Secretary Steve Barclay said:

The country is hugely thankful to all the retired staff who returned to support the NHS and the public during the pandemic. This winter will be challenging too and we are putting in place the necessary preparations to support the NHS while it continues to deliver first-rate care to patients.

As part of this we are now consulting on extending temporary changes to the NHS pension scheme, which have so far allowed highly-skilled retired staff to return to the workforce without having their pension benefits affected.

The NHS pension scheme is one of the best available, providing generous retirement benefits for hardworking staff after a lifetime of service looking after the nation's health.

The government is committed to growing and supporting the NHS workforce, with over 4,100 more doctors and 9,600 more nurses compared to last year, and remains on track to deliver on the manifesto commitment to have 50,000 more nurses by 2024, with 29,000 more nurses already. The government has also commissioned NHS England to develop a long term workforce plan to recruit and support staff while they deliver high-quality, safe care to patients.

To prepare for winter, the government is working closely with the NHS at pace to prepare for the pressures ahead, including by increasing capacity, boosting NHS 111 and 999 support with at least 4,800 staff working in 111 and 2,500 in 999 call rooms to meet high demand, tackling delayed discharge and using new innovations such as virtual wards by creating the equivalent of at least 7,000 more beds.

The Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and NHS England recently set out plans to address winter pressures. He has also launched a taskforce to drive up the recruitment of international staff into critical roles across

the system, alongside recruiting and retaining more doctors and nurses, so staff can continue their work of busting the Covid backlogs, having now virtually eliminated waits of over two years as part of the Elective Recovery Plan – backed by record investment.

Matthew Taylor, chief executive of the NHS Confederation (which includes NHS Employers), said:

The NHS will need all of the help it can get this winter and so, we are pleased the Government will be consulting on ways to provide support to the NHS's workforce by encouraging recent and partial retirees back to the frontline.

This is not the only action that it is needed to respond to the rising demand for healthcare services but leaders hope it will help. On behalf of our members, we look forward to providing views in the consultation.

[Alok Sharma, COP26 President, returns to Viet Nam to drive progress on a clean energy transition ahead of COP27](#)

- The COP President will meet with senior ministers and key stakeholders to progress discussions on a Viet Nam Just Energy Transition Partnership
- He will also visit the Mekong River Delta to observe the impact of river bank erosion and sea-level rise and meet with local communities impacted by climate change
- Ahead of attending G20 ministerial meetings in Bali, the COP President will reiterate the urgent need for updated climate commitments from countries before COP27

COP26 President Alok Sharma will travel to Viet Nam from 27-30 August 2022, to meet with key ministers to drive forward discussions on a Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) and to see the impacts of climate change in the country.

The Viet Nam Just Energy Transition Partnership will be a long term political agreement between the Government of Viet Nam and an International Partner

Group (IPG) of countries, comprising the United Kingdom, European Union, France, Germany, Japan, and the United States of America. .

This country-led partnership will support Viet Nam to accelerate its transition away from coal as part of the country's commitment to its 2050 net zero target and their ambitious Power Development Plan (PDP8). The Partnership will be underpinned by clear plans to deliver a just energy transition and catalyse clean energy investment, offering Viet Nam the opportunity to become a world leader in renewable energy.

The COP26 President will also meet with G7 and development partner donors, as well as businesses and private sector stakeholders, to help drive public and private sector engagement and mobilisation of finance as part of the process.

He will join a roundtable with civil society organisations, to hear their views and insights on progress since COP26, the proposed Just Energy Transition Partnership, and the opportunities and challenges presented by Viet Nam's low carbon energy transition.

On his third visit to the country as COP President, Mr Sharma will continue the work of the UK COP Presidency in pressing for updated climate commitments from all countries ahead of COP27 as agreed in the Glasgow Climate Pact. Mr Sharma will urge Viet Nam to bring forward a revised 2030 Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), aligned with its 2050 net zero target.

Mr Sharma will also visit Can Tho in the Mekong River Delta – accompanied by researchers from Can Tho University and Dragon-Mekong Research Institute – to observe the impact of river bank erosion and sea level rise on vulnerable areas. Mr Sharma will hear first-hand accounts from local communities benefiting from a project on urban resilience against flooding and climate change impact.

Alok Sharma, COP26 President, said:

Urgent action is needed to limit global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees and help build prosperous, low-carbon, resilient communities across the planet.

The proposed Just Energy Transition Partnership provides an excellent opportunity for Viet Nam to accelerate its transition away from coal in delivery of its 2050 net zero target. I am pleased to be back in Viet Nam to engage with government ministers, public sector bodies, business leaders, local communities, and civil society to discuss ways we can work together for effective climate action.

A clean, just energy transition not only delivers enhanced climate action, it will help create new jobs, economic growth, clean air

and a resilient, prosperous future.

After his visit to Viet Nam, the COP President will travel to Indonesia to attend the G20 Climate and Environment Ministerial meeting in Bali.

**** ENDS ****

Background notes to editors

- According to the Viet Nam Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE), climate change has contributed to temperature increases of more than 0.5C and a 20cm rise in sea level over the past 50 years. Extreme climate events have also been increasing. Over the last two decades, Viet Nam has reported 226 extreme weather events, which have killed an average of 286 people per year and caused annual economic losses of US \$2 billion.
- Can Tho is the fourth largest city in Viet Nam, and the largest city along the Mekong Delta region in Viet Nam. The area has experienced floods, storms, and droughts with increasing frequency and unpredictability in the last two decades. According to the Viet Nam Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment's (MONRE) 'Climate Change and Sea Level Rise Scenario Report', if the sea level rises by 100cm, about 20% of Can Tho City will become inhospitable.
- The Power Development Plan 8 (PDP8), developed by Viet Nam's Ministry of Industry and Trade (MOIT), is expected to set out Viet Nam's national energy strategy and energy mix for 2021-2030, with a forward vision to 2045.

UK assisting Pakistan in flood relief efforts

World news story

Up to £1.5 million will come from the UK to help the response



UK Government

The UK is providing urgent support to Pakistan after flooding in the south of the country killed at least 900 people. Extreme monsoon rainfall has affected millions, with at least 700,000 homes destroyed.

In response to the disaster, the UK will provide up to £1.5 million for the relief effort. The UN is carrying out a needs assessment over the weekend, and a UN appeal is expected to be launched on Tuesday.

Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for South and Central Asia, North Africa, UN and the Commonwealth and the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, said:

The floods in Pakistan have devastated local communities and the UK is providing up to £1.5 million to help the immediate aftermath. We are witnessing the catastrophe that climate change can cause and how it impacts the most vulnerable.

My thoughts and prayers are with all the victims and their families, and I would like to pay tribute to everyone involved in the relief efforts. We are also working directly with the Pakistan authorities to establish what further assistance and support they require. The UK stands with the people of Pakistan during this time of need.

The UK also provides assistance to Pakistan through international organisations working directly with the victims of the disaster, including

the World Bank and the United Nations.

Notes to editors

- The £1.5m of humanitarian funding is an allocation from existing support to Pakistan and will go to the relief efforts in the areas worst-hit by the flooding.
- The UK pledged over £55m to partner with Pakistan to fight climate change, manage water more sustainably and unlock climate investment in November 2021 during the COP26 Conference in Glasgow. Read more [here](#).
- The Global Climate Risk Index report notes that Pakistan has reported 502 deaths and a loss of \$3.772 billion as a result of 173 extreme weather events between 2000 and 2019.
- Pakistan is among the most disaster-prone countries in South Asia and has suffered an estimated US\$18 billion in damages due to disasters during the past decade. This has included: recurrent floods; earthquakes; droughts; and urban shocks (such as heatwaves and dengue). Overall, in Pakistan, 25% of households (49 million people) are estimated to be moderately or severely food insecure, whereas 10% of the households (21 million people) are classified as severely food insecure. The Multi-Dimensional Poverty Index suggests that 36.43 million people are chronically vulnerable.
- Pakistan is the eighth most at risk country globally from the impacts of Climate Change (an improvement from fifth most at-risk country in 2020). This year, Pakistan has and is experiencing consecutive extreme climactic events. The country moved directly from winter into summer temperatures with a number of extreme heat waves, causing rapid glacial flash floods and forest fires.
- During the 2020 floods in Pakistan, the UK announced a £800,000 aid package through the National Disaster Consortium (NDC) and provided immediate relief in rural Sindh where many had lost their homes. It also provided life-saving clean water, sanitation, and shelter to over 55,000 vulnerable people in Pakistan to help them recover from the devastating floods.

Published 27 August 2022

[Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference: Speech by UK Permanent Representative to the Conference on Disarmament](#)

Mr President

In taking the floor, especially under an Argentinian President, I am reminded of Jorge Luis Borges' injunction not to speak unless you can improve the silence. I cannot promise to do that, but I will at least be brief.

We have finally reached the culmination of a seven-year review cycle. Throughout your almost three years as President-designate, and over the last four weeks of sometimes gruelling negotiations, you have guided us with great skill, professionalism, transparency, and good humour, and I thank you very sincerely for that. I know that you have been supported in this by a superb team, including the Chairs of the Main Committees and Subsidiary Bodies, by the Secretariat, led most ably by Mr Tudor, and by your own Argentinian team. Many others have facilitated and brokered discussions between delegations on various issues to prepare the ground for the final document you produced. You and they are all a credit to your services and your countries.

Mr President

That one delegation has prevented us from adopting a substantive consensus outcome document does not negate the four weeks of intensive discussions we have had on all aspects of our Treaty. I recognise that many delegations were disappointed at what was in your text—or perhaps rather what was not in it. But it was an honest attempt—by you and by all of us—to identify areas of agreement, which my delegation was ready to support. I deeply regret that it was unable to garner consensus.

That we were so close to reaching consensus is a tribute not only to how hard you and most delegations here have worked these past four weeks, but actually is also testament to the fact that there remains more that unites us than divides us.

But we cannot escape the fact that there are deep divisions, in this Treaty and in the world. They are only exacerbated by Russia's illegal war against Ukraine. As well as trampling on the values and the Charter that underpin the United Nations, imperilling international peace and security, and plunging the world into a food crisis, Russia's aggression also poses grave challenges to the nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime and to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Many of us have highlighted those challenges consistently throughout this Review Conference, and they have been restated with admirable clarity in the statement delivered earlier by the distinguished Representative of France, with which my delegation fully associates itself. Perhaps it was inevitable that Russia would not allow this Conference to adopt a document that exposed those challenges to the world, even as obliquely as the one you put before us did. But they have been laid bare throughout these four weeks. Just as they have this evening, they try to to blame everyone but themselves for their actions. But while Russia can block the adoption of a document, or filibuster an international conference, they cannot hide from the world's revulsion at their actions.

Mr President

Even if there is no common agreement on the way forward, our obligations under the NPT endure. Our prior commitments, from 1995, 2000 and 2010, remain

valid. We must continue to make progress along this path, even if we have been unable to update the roadmap.

The United Kingdom will do its part. In particular, we look forward to taking forward, with Norway, the initiative on clarifying and applying the principle of irreversibility; to contributing to the working group on strengthening the review process that we have agreed to this evening; and to establishing, with the United States and 30 other partners who have joined so far, the Sustained Dialogue on expanding access to the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies. We also remain committed to working internationally to reduce the risk of nuclear conflict and enhance mutual trust and security—an increasingly urgent task.

Final document or no, the NPT remains, and will remain, the cornerstone of the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation architecture, and makes a vital and integral contribution to international peace and security. The United Kingdom takes its obligations, commitments and responsibilities seriously. My country will continue to play its part in bringing about a safer world for all and achieving the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons.