

# 'Tech for Growth' designed to increase financial services access

The UK Department for International Trade (DIT) has today launched its 'Tech for Growth' Programme to enhance the role technology can play in expanding access to financial services, and support future trading opportunities between the UK and emerging economies.

The first year of the programme will be piloted across Africa, where access to financial services remains low. There are further plans for the programme to expand globally across South East Asia and Latin America.

In its first year, 'Tech for Growth' will deliver three pillars of activity:

1. Establish a UK-Africa 'Tech for Growth' community: Designed to expand access to financial services for underserved communities. It will include events across the UK and Africa to promote partnerships between British and African technology and financial services companies.
2. Empower UK-Africa FinTech trade: Highlight commercial opportunities, leverage research, and address barriers that currently inhibit successful scaling of the FinTech sector.
3. Support the growth of future tech markets: Collaborate with African governments and regulators to grow their tech sector, and develop future trading partnerships with the UK.

Gerry Grimstone, UK Minister for Investment said:

Diversifying and increasing trade and investment in sectors such as tech will be crucial for economic recovery from Coronavirus, and Britain has a vital role to play globally.

The UK is home to some of the most innovative tech companies in the world while also being one of the deepest and most globally connected financial centres. It is why we are the top choice for tech firms seeking a base to launch internationally into new markets.

This programme will further deepen our trade relationships with some of the most exciting emerging markets around the world, and lead to solutions that address one of the most prominent global challenges in today's world, financial inclusion.

Emma Wade-Smith OBE, HM Trade Commissioner for Africa said:

Around 60% of adults in sub-Saharan African still do not have access to traditional means of financial services, including banking and insurance. With mobile phone penetration rates having

risen to over 40%, technology can play an increasing role in expanding access to financial services and other sectors.

Tech for Growth will be instrumental in strengthening the partnership between Africa and the UK, driving financial inclusion through technology and innovation.

'Tech for Growth's' research programme will help to overcome the underlying market barriers and frictions to trade, faced by tech companies looking to scale into emerging markets.

This first research output, 'Inclusive Tech: Overcoming barriers to scale in emerging markets' is launched alongside 'Tech for Growth'. Produced in partnership with The Catalyst Fund, a FinTech accelerator supported by UK aid, the report outlines seven barriers currently inhibiting growth in the technology sector across emerging markets.

Maelis Carraro, Director Catalyst Fund said:

Technology has the potential to improve the access, quality and relevance of financial services for underserved populations around the world and dynamic tech startups are at the forefront of this innovation across emerging markets.

However, tech startups in emerging markets face several challenges to scale their solutions, from lack of capital and talent to poor infrastructure and regulatory barriers. Governments and market enablers have an important role to play in helping startups overcome these barriers and enable inclusive growth. This report identifies the key barriers innovators face and offers potential solutions.

For more information contact [techforgrowth@trade.gov.uk](mailto:techforgrowth@trade.gov.uk)

Download the report: Inclusive Tech: [Overcoming barriers to scale in emerging markets](#)

## **The Catalyst Fund**

[The Catalyst Fund](#) is an accelerator for inclusive fintech startups and innovation ecosystems, in emerging markets, supported by UK aid through DFID and JPMorgan Chase & Co. The mission of the Catalyst Fund is to accelerate the development of affordable, accessible, and appropriate digital financial solutions for the world's 3 billion underserved.

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# Charity Commission Annual Public Meeting

News story

Charity Commission Chair, Baroness Stowell, CEO and other directors invite you to the Annual Public Meeting on Thursday 1st October 2020 at 11am.



At the annual public meeting we will report on our work over the past year and update charities on how we are delivering support and services through the current pandemic.

Due to the impact of Covid-19 this year's meeting is a virtual event open to all members of the public and charity representatives.

We will be broadcasting live on our YouTube channel from a location near our Liverpool office.

## **Ask your questions to the Commission.**

To ensure you are still able to ask your questions to Charity Commission directors, we will have a live virtual audience join us during the broadcast.

To take part in this you will need to connect via a Zoom conference call with a stable internet connection – and be comfortable speaking on a live broadcast.

If you are interested in joining our live virtual audience please email [events@charitycommission.gov.uk](mailto:events@charitycommission.gov.uk) spaces are limited, but we will be operating a waiting list for those who are unsuccessful in the first instance.

If you have any questions about the event please contact our events team on [events@charitycommission.gov.uk](mailto:events@charitycommission.gov.uk).

Published 27 July 2020

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## Major new campaign encourages millions to lose weight and cut COVID-19 risk

Public Health England (PHE) launches the Better Health campaign to support people to live healthier lives and reduce their risk of serious illness, including COVID-19.

Growing evidence suggests that being obese or excessively overweight puts people at greater risk of serious illness or death from COVID-19.

Nation urged to work towards a healthier weight with the support of free tools and apps to help people eat better, lose weight and get active.

The campaign will be targeted at groups most affected by obesity and is supported by a coalition of partners, including those providing weight management services.

A new national campaign is under way to encourage millions of adults to kick start their health and reduce their risk of serious illness, including COVID-19.

The campaign – unveiled as part of the government’s new Obesity Strategy – encourages adults to introduce changes that will help them work towards a healthier weight, with a suite of free tools and apps supporting people to eat better, drink less alcohol and get active. This includes a new app for the free 12-week NHS Weight Loss Plan, helping people make healthier food choices and learn skills to prevent weight gain.

The current evidence does not suggest that having excess weight increases people’s chances of contracting COVID-19. However, data shows that obese people are significantly more likely to become seriously ill and be admitted to intensive care with COVID-19 compared to those with a healthy BMI.

PHE has released a new film explaining how weight gain happens, the impact that it has on our bodies and how it increases the risk of serious diseases. The film helps people know when to act and encourages them to visit the Better Health website to find out about the available support.

Professor Kevin Fenton, London Regional Director at Public Health England:

Gaining weight often happens gradually over time and can be just the odd unhealthy habit mounting up, but extra weight puts pressure on our bodies and reduces our strength to fight off serious diseases, including COVID-19.

COVID-19 has given us a wake-up call to get our health back on track. We know how hard it can be to lose weight and keep it off –

our Better Health campaign aims to make it easier for everyone to introduce changes that will help them maintain a healthy weight. It's never too late, or too early, to make changes that will have a lasting impact on your health.

Many people have used lockdown as an opportunity to change habits and adopt healthier behaviours, yet research has shown over half the population has found it harder to stay healthy during this time. While staying active is important to help people lose weight and keep it off, improving diet is most critical as most people are consuming more calories than they need.

Alongside mass nationwide promotion, the campaign will specifically target areas and groups that are most affected by obesity and excess weight. Evidence shows that Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities are disproportionately affected by obesity as well as COVID-19.

The Better Health campaign is one of a raft of measures that have been revealed as part of the government's new Obesity Strategy.

A range of campaign partners including WW, weight watchers reimagined, Slimming World and GetSlim are offering exclusive discounts to coincide with the launch.

Visit [nhs.uk/betterhealth](https://nhs.uk/betterhealth) for free tools and support to start leading a healthier lifestyle today.

The [Better Health campaign film](#) is available online.

For further information about the campaign please contact [phe-pressoffice@phe.gov.uk](mailto:phe-pressoffice@phe.gov.uk)

## About the Better Health campaign

- the campaign provides access to a range of apps and tools to help people stay in shape and make healthier food choices to prevent future weight gain, including Easy Meals, Food Scanner, Couch to 5K and Active10
- the campaign will include a new 60" TV advert, digital, print and out of home advertising, radio and content across social media
- PR and partnership activity will also take place creating a moment in time for people to get behind the campaign and make a commitment to kick start their health, get active, eat better, drink less alcohol and quit smoking
- over the next few months the campaign will include wider support to help people live healthier lives, with advice on quitting smoking and how people can look after their mental health

## About campaign partners

- WW, weight watchers reimagined is offering one month free on both their

digital only and workshop plus digital 3-month memberships

- Slimming World is offering a £20 discount on any of its online membership packages
- Get Slim, is offering online memberships for as little as 86p per week

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## Rampling from Tripoli: national interest is key to saving Lebanon

In his first official visit outside Beirut post COVID-19 pandemic, British Ambassador Chris Rampling visited Lebanon's second largest city. He held a series of meetings in which he relayed the UK's ongoing support to the people of Tripoli and urged Lebanese leaders to work for the country's national interest to get Lebanon to join a path towards recovery. Ambassador Rampling also announced that the UK's Lebanon Enterprise and Employment Programme (LEEP) programme would work with businesses in Tripoli to support the hiring of ex-convicts and at-risk youth, thereby reducing the risk of reoffending whilst creating jobs and growth for the city.

Ambassador Rampling met Mohammad Abed El Rahman Sabra, owner of Sabra for General Trading and Contracting whose business – supported by the UK funded LEEP initiative – has allowed him to expand and create new jobs. Mohammad's company has been subsidised by the Ministry of Energy and Water and the Lebanese Centre for Energy Conservation because of its high-end energy saving solar panels and water filters which abide by their regulations. The programme is providing up to \$20 million between 2017-2020 to support SMEs across Lebanon grow their businesses and create sustained jobs, and already supports 24 businesses in and around Tripoli.

He visited the 12th Brigade training area, that was funded by the UK and built in a joint venture through MARCH Lebanon NGO's initiative to strengthen civil and military cooperation for peacebuilding in Tripoli. The UK remains a proud partner to the LAF, as it continues to strengthen its military and security relations.

In his roundtable meeting with Tripoli MPs and business leaders hosted by former PM Najib Mikati, Ambassador Rampling voiced his grave concern towards the deteriorating economic crisis that has resulted in severe humanitarian and socio-economic repercussions not only on the people of Tripoli but across the whole of Lebanon. He urged Lebanese leaders to put Lebanon's national interest above everything for the country's recovery, reiterating the UK's long-standing and continued support to Lebanon, but reflecting that international community could not by itself insulate the Lebanese people from the crisis and that it was up to Lebanon's politicians to act.

Ambassador Rampling laid a wreath in the Commonwealth war graves cemetery in Tripoli to commemorate the 358 sailors who died on 22 June 1893 (127 years ago) in the accidental sinking of the battleship HMS Victoria. The wreck of HMS Victoria stands vertically, with her bows embedded in the seabed, just offshore from Tripoli and is a protected war grave, the final resting place of all who were trapped on board.

At the end of his visit Ambassador Rampling said:

I held very important meetings including with Tripoli's MPs. Discussions focused on the impact Lebanon's ailing economy has had on people's lives not just in Tripoli but across the whole country. It was excellent therefore to announce a new package of economic support for the city through LEEP. '

For many years the UK has been supporting Tripoli's most vulnerable communities through our programmes. Over the past year the UK's investment in Tripoli alone reached over \$5 million, in support of delivering better public services, economic opportunities, security and promoting social stability to the most vulnerable. But this is not enough to help Lebanon get back on the path towards recovery.

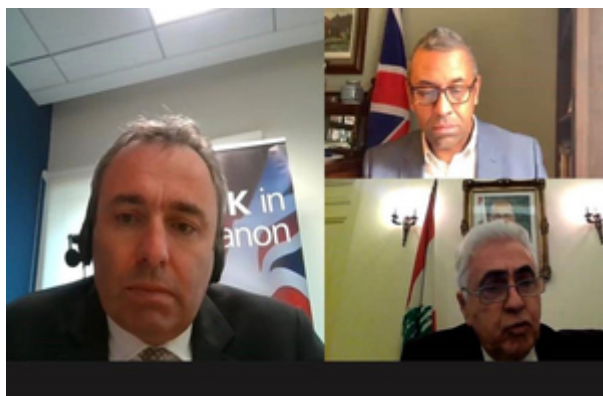
The UK has been a long-standing partner to Lebanon and will continue to do so. But today, more than ever, Lebanon's leaders must act and put the country's national interest above everything to put Lebanon back on the path towards recovery. The government must crack on with reforms that they have been talking about for a long time. There no longer is time and the only alternative to doing these things is to watch the country deteriorate, and that is no alternative for anyone.

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## **Cleverly ends visit to Lebanon: Economic reforms a must**

World news story

UK Minister James Cleverly for the Middle East: Lebanon can have a bright future, but it must take urgent and drastic action to avoid economic catastrophe.



UK Minister for Middle East Cleverly with Ambassador Chris Rampling and Lebanese Foreign Minister Hitti

UK Minister for the Middle East James Cleverly held a virtual visit to Lebanon, where he discussed shared economic and security goals.

The Minister heard how the coronavirus pandemic and economic crisis is impacting the livelihoods of the Lebanese people, and how UK aid is supporting the most vulnerable.

The visit was an opportunity to see first-hand how the UK's longstanding partnership with Lebanon is implemented through the education, security, humanitarian sectors, and creating economic opportunities that totalled over \$200 million in 2019. Minister Cleverly highlighted the UK's leading role in finding a coronavirus vaccine, following the Global Vaccine Summit in June, raising \$8.8 billion to support the global fight against the virus. The UK's response also saw over \$2 million provided to help tackle coronavirus in Lebanon.

Speaking about the visit, Minister Cleverly said:

I was deeply impressed by the passion and drive of the Lebanese people I met. I am confident that this country can have a bright future, but it must take urgent and drastic action now to avoid economic catastrophe.

The UK is helping to tackle coronavirus in the country, which in turn will help stop future waves of the disease. This pandemic has already caused the death of so many around the world, but together we can stop it. No one is safe until we are all safe.

During his day-long virtual visit, Minister Cleverly met Prime Minister Hassan Diab and Foreign Minister Hitti to underline the seriousness of the economic situation and the consequences if no progress is made. Minister Cleverly also highlighted the importance of Lebanon's disassociation policy.

At a briefing on the UK border security project – which is helping to keep



Lebanese borders safe – he heard from Lebanese Army officers how UK support is playing a key role in bolstering regional security.

With partners from various UK-initiated programmes, Minister Cleverly heard about the humanitarian and education-related challenges across Lebanon and how UK Aid is supporting vulnerable and host communities. Joined by British Council's Young Mediterranean Voices' from various regions, Minister Cleverly participated in a lively debate on education and future opportunities for young Lebanese people. In a roundtable discussion with independent experts, he heard about the challenges facing Lebanon's economy and the road to recovery. The session included videos from beneficiaries and partners who shared their personal stories on how the economic crisis is affecting them.

Published 27 July 2020