

# Costa Rica and Nicaragua: call for bids to support COVID-19 response

World news story

The British Embassy San Jose is accepting project proposals from institutions and organisations working in the areas of prevention and response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Costa Rica and/or Nicaragua.



Call for Bids to support Covid-19 response in Costa Rica & Nicaragua

## **Background**

The UK Government recognises that the world is facing its largest public health emergency in a generation. Challenges of this nature require a collaborative and coordinated response. The British Embassy in San Jose is committed to working with interested government agencies, civil society organisations, research-based institutions and multilateral partners to support this global effort.

We are particularly interested in short-term projects and one-off activities that aim to deliver concrete and measurable outcomes in the following areas:

1. Preventing the spread and mitigating the impacts of COVID-19
2. Supporting the socio-economic development of groups most affected by the pandemic, such as women, children, migrants and people with disabilities
3. Tackling misinformation around COVID-19
4. Contributing to the global health response, including supporting science-based innovation and the search for new treatments

## **Exceptions**

We are interested in receiving a range of proposals that fit these objectives. However, we are unable to support proposals that include:

- procurement of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), oxygen-related

equipment (e.g. ventilators and respirators), diagnostic tests/materials and COVID-19-related medicines

- purchase of IT and other equipment
- direct cash transfers to vulnerable individuals or families

Project and activity proposals should have sustainable outcomes that clearly identify the change they expect to deliver. Bids should also highlight how they complement work being done at the national level to address the impact of the pandemic.

## **Project and activity bid guidance**

Projects are expected to have a duration of no more than 8 months and to be completed before the end of March 2021, with no expectation of continued funding beyond this period. Activities are one-off interventions that take place at a specific time before the end of March 2021. The maximum funding for projects and activities is US\$20,000.

## **Assessment**

Bids will be assessed against the following criteria:

- alignment with the above mentioned priorities
- outcomes are achievable within the funding period
- project design includes clear monitoring and evaluation procedures, as well as risk and financial accountability procedures
- evidence of sustainability – demonstrating that project benefits continue after the funding ends
- the organisation's safeguarding policies ensure protection of beneficiaries
- feasibility of project delivery under current circumstances
- administration costs for delivering a project should not exceed 10% of the total project budget
- overall value for money
- All projects are expected to have achieved 85% spend by end December 2020.

## **Bidding process**

Proposals must be submitted using the relevant bid form and activity based budget template provided below.

All implementers will be expected to sign a standard FCO contract or grant agreement with the Embassy. The terms of the contract or agreement are not negotiable.

All proposals must be received by midnight on 15 July 2020. Late proposals will not be considered. Proposals must be submitted to

[Denise.Lewis@fco.gov.uk](mailto:Denise.Lewis@fco.gov.uk)

Successful bidders will be notified by 29 July 2020.

## 'Build build build': Prime Minister announces New Deal for Britain

- Prime Minister promises "New Deal" which delivers jobs, skills and infrastructure for Britain
- Speech to set out first step in government plans to "build back better" in the wake of coronavirus, for the benefit of every corner of the country
- Government invests £5bn to accelerate infrastructure projects, fuelling jobs and economic recovery

Prime Minister Boris Johnson will today (Tuesday 30th June) announce a "New Deal" which puts jobs and infrastructure at the centre of the government's economic growth strategy.

In a speech in the West Midlands, the Prime Minister will underline his commitment to 'build, build, build' in order to upgrade Britain's infrastructure and skills to fuel economic recovery across the UK.

The Prime Minister is expected to say:

It sounds positively Rooseveltian. It sounds like a New Deal. All I can say is that if so, then that is how it is meant to sound and to be, because that is what the times demand. A government that is powerful and determined and that puts its arms around people at a time of crisis...

...this is a government that is wholly committed not just to defeating coronavirus but to using this crisis finally to tackle this country's great unresolved challenges of the last three decades.

To build the homes, to fix the NHS, to tackle the skills crisis, to mend the indefensible gap in opportunity and productivity and connectivity between the regions of the UK. To unite and level up.

To that end we will build build build. Build back better, build back greener, build back faster and to do that at the pace that this moment requires.

The Prime Minister will announce that we bring forward £5bn of capital investment projects, supporting jobs and the economic recovery, including:

- £1.5bn this year for hospital maintenance, eradicating mental health dormitories, enabling hospital building, and improving A&E capacity. This will improve patient care, make sure NHS hospitals can deliver world-leading services and reduce the risk of coronavirus infections.
- £100m this year for 29 projects in our road network to get Britain moving, from bridge repairs in Sandwell to boosting the quality of the A15 in the Humber region. Plus £10m for development work to unblock the Manchester rail bottleneck, which will begin this year.
- Over £1bn to fund the first 50 projects of a new, ten-year school rebuilding programme, starting from 2020-21. These projects will be confirmed in the Autumn, and construction on the first sites will begin from September 2021.
- £560m and £200m for repairs and upgrades to schools and FE colleges respectively this year.
- £142m for digital upgrades and maintenance to around 100 courts this year, £83m for maintenance of prisons and youth offender facilities, and £60m for temporary prison places, creating thousands of new jobs.
- £900m for a range of 'shovel ready' local growth projects in England over the course of this year and next, as well as £96m to accelerate investment in town centres and high streets through the Towns Fund this year. This will provide all 101 towns selected for town deals with £500k-£1m to spend on projects such as improvements to parks, high streets, and transport.

The Prime Minister will talk about an "infrastructure revolution": building infrastructure, building jobs and building healthcare through a bold programme of national renewal, uniting and levelling up the UK.

He is expected to say:

Too many parts of this country have felt left behind, neglected, unloved, as though someone had taken a strategic decision that their fate did not matter as much as the metropolis.

And so I want you to know that this government not only has a vision to change this country for the better, we have a mission to unite and level up – the mission on which we were elected last year.

Spring Budget 2020 set out ambitious plan to invest in our future prosperity. Today's announcement redoubles government's efforts to get on with this now, in support of economic recovery and jobs right across the country.

To support the ambition to 'build build build', in the Autumn the government will also publish a National Infrastructure Strategy which will set a clear direction on core economic infrastructure, including energy networks, road and rail, flood defences and waste.

The Government also intends to bring forward funding to accelerate infrastructure projects in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland – we will work with the devolved administrations to identify where we can get spades in the ground, build our communities, and create jobs faster for citizens across the United Kingdom. We will carry out a review to look at how best to improve road, rail, air and sea links between our four nations to create a more connected kingdom.

To protect the UK's natural infrastructure, the Prime Minister will recommit to reforest Britain by planting over 75,000 acres of trees every year by 2025. He is also set to pledge £40m to boost local conservation projects and create 3000 jobs, including new Conservation Rangers, and safeguard a further 2000 – training young people and others in the community to protect their local environments. This will go a long way to safeguard the UK's natural carbon stores and wildlife habitats – our meadows, rivers, and local green spaces – which are central to capturing and removing CO2 from the atmosphere, protecting precious biodiversity, and connecting people with nature.

Recognising the crisis has driven job losses across the country, and many people are worried about their jobs and incomes, the Prime Minister will announce action to support jobs and skills in his speech. This government is committed to building an economy that works for working people across the country. While in the long-term the government must set a path to balance the books, the Prime Minister is clear that we will not do so at the expense of investing now in the productive potential of the economy, or at the expense of the resilience of the UK's public services.

The Prime Minister will finish by saying:

If we deliver this plan together, then we will together build our way back to health.

We will not just bounce back, we will bounce forward – stronger and better and more united than ever before.

The Chancellor will provide an update on the economy next week.

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## **[Demand from England and Wales to restore Beeching lines as deadline for proposals closes](#)**

- 50 proposals submitted to build or reopen lines and stations in England and Wales, closed in and around the Beeching cuts

- bids will now be considered by expert panel, taking next step towards improving connectivity for communities
- part of wider £500 million Restoring Your Railway fund to level up the country

Fifty bids to build or reopen lines and stations closed during the Beeching cuts, with the potential to level up regional economies and boost access to jobs and education, have been received across England and Wales, the Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris has announced today (30 June 2020).

MPs and local authorities have bid for a share of the second round of the [Restoring Your Railway 'Ideas Fund'](#), to develop proposals to build or reopen railway lines and stations, including those closed by British Rail chief Dr Richard Beeching from 1963.

Proposals for the restoration of lines and stations to re-connect their communities will now be considered by an expert panel including Network Rail Chair Sir Peter Hendy, with announcements regarding the successful schemes expected by the end of the summer.

The Rail Minister announced that 50 proposals have been submitted from right across the country. These include proposals from MPs in the north east to reopen the line at Ferryhill, County Durham, and restore the Consett-Newcastle Connection, to proposals from the south west to transform the Newquay line, reopen Charfield station, and reinstate the Bodmin to Wadebridge railway.

Rail Minister Chris Heaton-Harris said:

Receiving so many bids once again underlines how passionate people are about reconnecting communities.

Local MPs, councillors and community leaders are the greatest champions of their local lines, and I look forward to working with them to ensure the projects with the greatest potential have the support they need.

Improving local transport links is vital as we level up access to opportunities across the country, reconnect communities and kickstart our recovery from Covid-19.

Today's news follows the announcement in May that 10 bids will receive a share of the first round of the Restoring Your Railway 'Ideas Fund'. The schemes were awarded up to £50,000 each to progress plans to improve local connectivity, bringing communities one step closer to better rail connections with the capacity to boost job opportunities and ease congestion.

As part of the Restoring Your Railway Fund, the government also announced the third round of the New Stations Fund, which will invest £20 million in new stations and help restore closed stations to their former glory. The fund has now closed with a decision on successful applicants due in the Autumn.

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## [More firms can now benefit from the Future Fund](#)

- companies which have participated in accelerator programmes now eligible for the popular scheme
- more than 320 early-stage, high-growth firms have so far benefitted from £320 million of support through the Fund
- this surpasses the £250 million initial funding made available by the government

Changes to the scheme's eligibility criteria will mean that UK companies who have participated in highly selective accelerator programmes and were required, as part of that programme, to have parent companies outside of the UK will now be able to apply for investment.

To date, more than 320 companies have benefitted from £320 million of Future Fund support. Under the scheme, early-stage, high-growth businesses from a diverse range of sectors can apply for a convertible loan of between £125,000 and £5 million to help them through the Coronavirus outbreak.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, said:

Our start-ups and innovative firms are one of our great economic strengths. As we begin to bounce back from coronavirus they will help drive our recovery and create new jobs.

This change means that those start-ups who have strived to be the very best, and taken opportunities to grow their business, will be able to benefit from our world-leading Future Fund.

The Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

As we restart our economy, it is crucial that our innovators and risk-takers get all the support they need to flourish.

Our decision to relax this rule recognises the importance of many of the UK's most cutting-edge start-ups as we bounce back from coronavirus.

Initially, £250 million was made available by the government under the Fund, to be matched by private investors, with the Treasury making clear the amount could be increased if needed.

Due to the popularity of the Fund, more funding has been made available, with around £320 million having now been invested. The scale of the scheme will be kept under review.

Accelerator programmes, such as TechStars or Y-Combinator, give businesses access to finance, mentorship and expert networks.

Participants in accelerator programmes are often required to set up a non-UK parent company in order to participate which means some did not meet the Future Fund criteria of having a UK parent company when it opened for applications in May.

### **Further information**

- The Future Fund is backing high-growth, innovative firms across the country through Covid-19. The scheme has already provided £320.6 million of convertible loans to 320 businesses.
- The change announced today covers accelerator alumni only. The government remains committed to using the Future Fund to support economic activity in the UK.
- Companies will still be required to meet the 'substantive economic presence' tests (that half or more employees are UK-based and/or half or more revenues are from UK sales).

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## **Local action to tackle coronavirus**

Mr Speaker, with permission, I would like to make a statement on local action to tackle coronavirus.

The impact of coronavirus has been deeply felt.

And yet thanks to the extraordinary action that this country has taken, it is now in decline at a national level.

The number of positive new cases is now below 1,000 a day and the number of recorded deaths yesterday is 25.

I am pleased to report there were no deaths in Scotland for the fourth consecutive day and that there is currently nobody in intensive care with coronavirus in Northern Ireland.

So we have been able, carefully, to ease the national restrictions.

And alongside the easing of these national restrictions, we have increasingly



taken local action.

In May, we shut Weston Hospital to new admissions after a cluster of cases there.

Earlier this month, we closed 2 GP surgeries in Enfield and a meat processing factory in Kirklees.

And the Welsh Government has closed factories in Anglesey and Wrexham.

We have put in place a system to tie together local and national action, based on insight provided by the Joint Biosecurity Centre, working closely with Public Health England and the NHS.

Analysis is based on 3 levels of spread.

Individual cases are identified and managed by NHS Test and Trace.

When many cases are found in 1 setting, be it a care home for instance, a factory, or a hospital, that is classified as a cluster, and that will be dealt with largely by the local Director of Public Health, who has statutory powers to close individual organisations.

When Public Health England or the new JBC identifies clusters that are linked to one another, that is defined as an outbreak and a range of local and national actions may be needed.

Decisions are taken through our Local Action Committee Command structure. It works as follows.

If PHE or the JBC spots a problem that needs attention or the local Director of Public Health reports up a problem through the Regional Health Protection Teams, then the outbreak is assessed at the daily Local Action Committee Bronze meeting.

Issues of concern are raised to the Local Action Committee Silver meeting, which is chaired by the Chief Medical Officer.

And problems requiring ministerial attention are then raised to the Local Action Committee Gold meeting.

Yesterday, I chaired an emergency Local Action Committee Gold meeting specifically to deal with the outbreak in Leicester.

Unfortunately, while cases in most parts of the country have fallen since the peak, in Leicester they have continued to rise.

The 7-day infection rate in Leicester is 135 cases per 100,000 people, which is 3 times higher than the next highest city.

Leicester accounts for around 10% of all positive cases in the country over the past week.

And admissions to hospital are between 6 and 10 per day rather than around 1

a day at other trusts.

Over the past fortnight, we have already taken action to protect people in Leicester.

We deployed 4 mobile testing units and extra capacity at the regional test site.

We provided thousands of home testing kits and extra public health capacity to boost the local team.

This afternoon, I held a further meeting with local leaders, with Public Health England, the JBC, the Local Resilience Forum and my clinical advisers, followed by a meeting of the cross-government Covid Operations Committee, chaired by the Prime Minister.

We have agreed further measures to tackle the outbreak in Leicester.

First, in addition to the mobile testing units that I mentioned earlier, we will send further testing capability, including opening a walk-in centre.

Anyone in Leicester with symptoms must come forward for a test.

Second, we will give extra funding to Leicester and Leicestershire councils to support them to enhance their communications and ensure those communications are translated into all locally relevant languages.

Third, through the councils, we will ensure support is available for those who have to self-isolate.

Fourth, we will work with the workplaces that have seen clusters of cases to implement more stringently the COVID-secure workplaces.

Given the growing outbreak in Leicester, we cannot recommend that the easing of the national lockdown, set to take place on the 4 July, happens in Leicester.

Having taken clinical advice on the actions necessary, and discussed them with the local team in Leicester and Leicestershire, we have made some difficult but important decisions.

We have decided that from tomorrow non-essential retail will have to close.

And, as children have been particularly impacted by this outbreak, schools will also need to close from Thursday, staying open for vulnerable children and children of critical workers as they did throughout

Unfortunately, the clinical advice is that the relaxation of shielding measures due on the 6 July cannot now take place in Leicester.

We recommend to people in Leicester, stay at home as much as you can and we recommend against all but essential travel to, from and within Leicester.

We will monitor closely adherence to social distancing rules and will take

further steps if that is what's necessary.

The more people following the rules, the faster we will get control of this virus and get Leicester back to normal.

We will keep all of these local measures under review and we will not keep them in place any longer than is necessary.

We will review whether we can release any measures in 2 weeks' time.

These Leicester-specific measures will apply not just to the city of Leicester, but also to the surrounding conurbation, including for example, Oadby, Birstall and Glenfield.

I know that this is a worrying time for people living in Leicester and I want you to know that you have our full support.

We do not take these decisions lightly, but with the interests of the people of Leicester in our hearts.

I want everyone in Leicester to know that we have taken every one of these decisions to protect them from this terrible virus.

We must control this virus. We must keep people safe.

These actions are also profoundly in the national interest too because it's in everyone's interests that we control the virus as locally as possible.

Local action like this is an important tool in our armoury to deal with outbreaks while we get the country back on its feet.

Mr Speaker, we said that we do whatever it takes to defeat this virus.

And we said that local action would be an increasingly important part of our plan.

The virus thrives on social contact, and we know that reducing social contact controls its spread.

So precise and targeted actions like these will give the virus nowhere to hide and help us defeat this invisible killer.

I commend this statement to the House.