

[ESFA Update: 11 March 2020](#)

[unable to retrieve full-text content] Latest information and actions from the Education and Skills Funding Agency for academies, schools, colleges, local authorities and further education providers

[British High Commissioner celebrates Pakistan's Women Parliamentarians](#)

The British High Commission arranged a forum bringing together eight women parliamentarians – from a range of parties and regions – to discuss and share their stories as political leaders.

The discussion focused around three thematic areas: Gender Inclusivity, Women Leadership and Enabling Environment; and was attended by Senator Ayesha Raza Farooq, Senator Sitara Ayaz, MNA Mehnaz Aziz, MNA Andleeb Abbas, MNA Maleeka Bokhari, MNA Shunila Ruth, MNA Nafisa Shah and MNA Naz Baloch.

The British High Commissioner, Dr Christian Turner, CMG, said:

There is no prosperous future in Pakistan without giving women a voice and choice. I have met many brilliant Pakistani women and I'm impressed by their stories of resilience, hard work and creativity. As the British High Commissioner, I plan to use my time here to promote the UK's commitment to advance gender equality.

I will work to ensure that more women in Pakistan are heard and have voice in decision-making; I will work to get more girls into schools – and support financial inclusion of women, because an equal world is an enabled world.

Note to editors:

The British High Commissioner issued a [video message](#) on International Women's Day which included a pledge to not participate on an all-male panels.

For more information

For updates on the British High Commission, please follow our social media channels:

Contact

British High Commission
Islamabad
tel. 0300 500 5306

Launch of major 'source to sea' natural flood management drive

The collective ambition of multiple organisations across South Yorkshire to respond to the climate and nature emergency was marked with the first batch of planting of what will be 38,000 trees to better protect homes and businesses across the region from flooding.

The November 2019 floods generated huge support to further develop a catchment-based approach to managing the risk of flooding at a landscape scale along the River Don.

By investing in nature based solutions like tree planting, peat restoration and wetland creation, it is possible to help slow the flow of water, reducing flood risk downstream in a way that complements more traditional engineering such as flood defence walls and embankments.

These measures also naturally absorb carbon from the atmosphere, playing an important role in the region reaching net zero emissions, and will contribute to the vision of a Northern Forest across South Yorkshire.

By coming together for the launch of the initiative, partners across the region demonstrated their shared ambitions for collaboration across the catchment, and in doing so, rising to the challenges of the climate and nature emergencies.

Councillors and senior staff from organisations across the region including Environment Agency, Sheffield, Doncaster, Barnsley and Rotherham Councils, Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust, Don Catchment Rivers Trust, Sheffield City Region, the Woodland Trust, Forestry Commission and Moors for the Future were in attendance for the event at Brooks Bank Farm, near Underbank Reservoir, Stocksbridge.

The farm is a 45 acre Yorkshire Water holding at the headwaters of the River Don. The land is coming out of agricultural tenancy and being managed by Yorkshire Water, supported by Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust and the Woodland Trust, to deliver wider environmental outcomes to complement and support their one million trees planted target as part of the Northern Forest initiative.

This work supports the wider River Don catchment natural flood management programme which is in its early stages being led in partnership by the

Environment Agency and Sheffield City Council to slow and store flood waters using nature-based solutions like tree planting and peat restoration to better protect homes and businesses.

Helen Batt, Environment and Business Manager at the Environment Agency said:

The commitment of multiple agencies to work together to reduce and mitigate flood risk, is a powerful component of South Yorkshire's response to the Climate Emergency. No one organisation can do it alone and a collaborative, partnership approach is essential in restoring nature at scale, reducing emissions and responding to the climate emergency.

There has been some fantastic work delivered in partnership across the River Don catchment over the years to help slow the flow of floodwaters using nature based solutions. But to achieve the ambition we all have for South Yorkshire in the face of the climate emergency, a scaled up approach is essential. Our collective ambition is to plant millions of trees, and create or restore hundreds of hectares of wetland and peatland habitat across the Don Catchment to help deliver a region resilient to climate change.

Mayor of the Sheffield City Region, Dan Jarvis, said:

As the world faces a climate emergency, which South Yorkshire felt the full force of during November 2019's floods, we all have a responsibility to care for our planet and protect our environment. I am therefore pleased to support this crucial work.

Last year I harnessed the support of 120 cross-party MPs to grow the Northern Forest. By planting 50 million trees, the Forest will help habitats thrive, a woodland culture to flourish, contribute to tackling climate change and reduce the risk of flooding.

It's great to see these new trees being planted as part of the Northern Forest, improving the environment for wildlife and helping to protect communities from further flooding.

Richard Emmott, Head of Corporate Affairs at Yorkshire Water said:

This tree-planting project has taken place on Yorkshire Water land and is an excellent example of partnership working which is happening all over Yorkshire. As the second biggest landowner in Yorkshire, we are working with other landowners, local authorities and third sector organisations to coordinate our approach to the problems that effective land management can help tackle – such as flooding and the climate emergency. We are keen to be ambitious with these partnerships.

As well as planting one million trees by 2030, we are also involved in peat restoration schemes across our uplands, and we are looking at innovative ways that natural flood management schemes in catchment areas can help reduce flooding issues.

Roy Mosley, Head of Conservation at Sheffield and Rotherham Wildlife Trust said:

We have been working cooperatively with partners for many years on nature-based approaches to natural flood management. Through the Sheffield Lakeland programme, funded by the Heritage Fund, we are delivering a Working with Water project that is supporting farmers in the uplands to make interventions to slow flows and protect and improve vital wildlife habitats. Further downstream, working with EA and RMBC we developed and delivered the award-winning natural flood storage area – Centenary Riverside. This Local Nature Reserve (LNR) protects an economic development zone from flooding and supports a host of wildlife including wetland birds and butterflies.

Richard O’Callaghan, Regional External Affairs Officer at the Woodland Trust said:

The work that is going on here in the River Don catchment is an excellent example of partnership working to achieve landscape-scale environmental improvements for nature and people alike. This is what the Northern Forest is all about – we know that the right trees in the right place can provide multiple benefits and yet the North of England has tree cover well below the national average. By working together with landowners, public bodies and organisations who share our vision, we can ensure that trees play their full role in combating the crises in climate and biodiversity as well as making the North a better place to live, work and raise a family.

[Cuba programme fund 2020 – 2021: call for bids](#)

Official Development Assistance funds of the

British government

Deadline: April 19, 2020

The British Embassy in Havana invites interested organisations to submit project proposals to be implemented during the British financial year 2020-21 (April 2020 to March 2021) to support cooperation between the United Kingdom and Cuba in priority areas for both countries.

This support is channelled through small-scale project interventions (up to £10,000), but with potential for greater impact. It is important to take into account that the project funds will be allocated depending on their availability and according to high quality activities that deliver good value for money.

Priorities in Cuba

The British Embassy in Havana is interested in financing innovative projects, with tangible objectives and measurable policy outcomes. We remind applicants that it is not possible to finance pure academic research projects.

Proposals should be related to one of the following policy areas:

- financial and professional services, central banking
- global health threats, biotech and life sciences
- higher education and English Language teaching
- energy (including renewable energy) strategy and technology
- public policy, administration and governance, including public procurement
- Cuban economic model, challenges and solutions
- creative industries
- climate change

The Embassy might consider other proposals that do not fully fit into these priority policy areas if related to the general objectives of the Embassy's work. These will be assessed case by case.

Considerations to take into account

- project activities must be fully implemented before the end of the financial year in March 2021
- 85% of the total Embassy allocation must be implemented by mid-December 2020. Therefore, capacity to deliver before that date would be an asset
- payments will be made through quarterly refunds. It should be made clear in the project proposals in the case that the implementer does not have the financial capacity to deliver the project, in full or in part. Exceptions related to advance payments are not guaranteed
- administration costs must not exceed the 10% of the total project budget
- proposals that are co-financed by other donors are welcome. This information must also be specified at the time of submitting the proposal

- each institution can submit up to 3 proposals
- funds cannot be used for capital purchases; this includes infrastructure, cars, furniture, computer equipment, amongst others. Nor for flight tickets above economy class

Eligibility criteria

To be eligible, your organization or agency must be a legal entity, a not-for-profit commercial company, a registered non-governmental organization (NGO) or government, or an academic or research institution, while proving:

- previous experience in project management and administration
- previous experience working with international agencies or organizations would be considered an asset
- proof of legal registration
- sufficient technical, financial, human and logistical capacity to complete the project proposal

How to bid

The application process must include the following forms:

- project proposal form under £10,000
- a detailed budget breakdown (Activity Based Budget, ABB spreadsheet) of the specific activities to be developed by the project (financial breakdown) on a monthly basis

Project proposals will not be considered if they are not submitted together with the detailed ABB supporting how the budget will be spent and demonstrating an efficient use of financial resources. The ABB should include as much detail as possible.

All required documents should be sent to the email address: ukincubaprojects@fco.gov.uk with the subject 'Project proposal form' and including, in the email's body, a brief reference to the organization and the project title.

Only the proposals approved by the Embassy Programme Board will be considered for implementation.

Date	Action
19 April	Deadline for submission of proposals
6 May	Notification to all participating institutions about the success of the submitted proposals, accepted and approved for moving forward to the implementation stage

If approved, additional information will be requested to ensure the due diligence process, and finally a contract or financing agreement will be signed with the British Embassy in Havana.

Documents for downloading

1. [Proposal Form – under £10k](#) (MS Word Document, 288KB)
 2. [Activity Based Budget tem](#) (MS Excel Spreadsheet, 29.6KB)
-

Charity operating in high-risk areas 'reckless' with charity's money

Former trustees of the charity ANO ([registered charity 1155123](#)) were responsible for misconduct and/or mismanagement in the administration of their charity over a period of years the Charity Commission has found. One former trustee has been disqualified.

The charitable objects of ANO are to relieve suffering via financial provision and medical aid in Leicestershire, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malawi and Turkey.

In 2016 a then trustee of the charity was stopped at Manchester Airport carrying £19,300 in cash, most of which they said was for 'purchasing aid' in Turkey for the benefit of Syrian refugees. The funds were seized by the police.

Subsequent engagement with the charity found another incident of cash couriership, a practice discouraged by the Commission due to the risks associated with it. Other concerns identified at the time included funds being transferred to the personal bank accounts of trustees and employees, and a failure to declare money in excess of €10,000 when leaving the European Union.

The Commission opened an inquiry in April 2017, finding the charity's due diligence, risk assessment and monitoring of how funds were applied and accounted for was inadequate.

For example, a project run by the charity, which was operating on the Turkish/Syrian border was planned without acceptable due diligence on the partner organisation or sufficient risk assessment for the trustee travelling to a high-risk area.

Due diligence on another of the charity's partners, in Somalia, was similarly inadequate as was the monitoring of a project with that partner. The project in Somalia relied on videos and photographs of individuals receiving sums of cash, but without sufficient information on how this was spent, who received money or how beneficiaries were identified.

Other findings included that:

- The charity had been poorly managed. One trustee was responsible for much of its work overseas
- The former trustees failed to demonstrate they had followed their own policies or procedures on due diligence or monitoring end use of funds.
- One former trustee received a wage from the charity between November 2016 and January 2017, in breach of the governing document. Once identified by the Commission this amount was paid back.
- The trustees, at different times, did not manage conflicts of interest and/or loyalty adequately, for example a van was purchased from a company which one of the then trustees had an interest in, but this was not declared or managed in accordance with charity law.
- The relationship between the charity and a private business of one of the then trustees was not transparent and not properly managed by the trustees at that time.
- The charity was heavily reliant upon cash transactions for its day to day business.

Overall, the conduct of the former trustees fell below the behaviours and standards expected of trustees which placed the charity and its assets at risk.

Tim Hopkins, Assistant Director of Investigations, Monitoring and Enforcement at the Charity Commission, said:

Our inquiry found that the former trustees were reckless with charity funds. Former trustees failed to carry out adequate due diligence on overseas operations and partners, operating in high-risk areas without adequate risk assessment, and cash couriers, a practice discouraged by the Commission. The reckless conduct of one former trustee warranted further action and they have rightly been disqualified.

The charity now has a new trustee board who are working with the Commission to improve governance and financial management at the charity. The Commission will continue to monitor its progress and compliance with an order directing certain actions be taken.

The Commission disqualified a former trustee of the charity from acting as a trustee of all charities in England and Wales and from senior management functions for a period of 3 years. This decision was challenged at tribunal, but upheld. The disqualification order took effect on 31 December 2019.

The full report is available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Ends.

Notes to Editors:

1. Funds seized by the police in 2016 were returned to the charity in January 2018.