

UK statement on the WTO Joint Initiative on E-Commerce

Thank you, Chair.

As this is the first time that I have taken the floor in this Joint Initiative, let me start by thanking you, Japan, and Singapore for the leadership that you have given this vital Initiative since its launch at the WTO's eleventh Ministerial Conference in December 2017. This morning, I will be saying a few more words than is usual in this setting.

The success of the Joint Initiatives is key to the credibility of the WTO and the future direction of the global trading system that depends on it. These Initiatives offer the WTO a dynamic, new and constructive framework for addressing the key trade issues of our time.

E-commerce of course is not a new issue for the WTO. The WTO agreed a Work Programme on E-Commerce in 1998, in the same month that Google was founded, showing great prescience and giving hope that this new organization, the WTO, would play a leading role in the future of the global economy. But it was not to be. Since 1998 the WTO has agreed no new rules on e-commerce. Meanwhile, Google has grown into a company with a market capitalization of \$1.5 trillion and 1.7 billion unique users every day. That's over 20% of the world's population, which is quite some market penetration.

Google is but one of the most highly visible manifestations of the transformation of the global economy since the WTO agreed its Work Programme in 1998. It is also not a particularly helpful one, as it is certainly not representative. The value of worldwide e-commerce transactions totalled US\$27.7 trillion in 2016 and has, on the whole, little to do with Google and everything to do with the way digital technologies are transforming the global trading system and indeed all our economies. Global exports of services, enabled by information and communications technology, have more than doubled between 2005 and 2018. Costs associated with trade in services declined by almost 10% between 2000 and 2017. From banking to retail, and design to education, services which traditionally had to be delivered face-to-face in a fixed location can now be delivered remotely and often much more cheaply to a much wider market. To quote the World Trade Report 2019, the non-tradable has become, in this period, hyper-tradable.

And, of course, the revolution is far from over. Big Data, Artificial Intelligence, and the Internet of Things are likely to transform our economies even more fundamentally than did the Search, Social Media and Online Shopping.

The UK doesn't have its own Google or Amazon. But we have a huge stake in e-commerce and digital trade. Digital businesses in the UK contributed £149 billion to the UK economy in 2018, employing more than 1.5 million people and contributing almost 8% of the UK's gross value added. Telecommunication,

computer and information services are some of the UK's fastest growing service exports. They have more than doubled in the last decade. Our world-leading financial, legal and accounting firms have also been transformed by this ongoing digital revolution. In 2018, nearly 70% of the UK's services exports were delivered remotely, totalling an estimated value of more than £190 billion.

Nor do developing countries have their Google or Amazon, although China is an exception here as in so many other areas. But that does not mean that e-commerce, digital trade and digital economies are not essential for the developing countries in this room; not in some distant developed future, but now. Of the top ten leading ICT manufacturing countries – literally building the digital economy – over half of them are developing economies according to UNCTAD. According to the Harvard Business Review, India and Brazil could emerge along with China among the top ten data economies. And East Africa has played a pioneering role in developing a whole new digital sector, mobile banking, that has opened up access to financial services for individuals and business there, in unprecedented ways.

All this has happened without the WTO, and would not have happened if the wrong sort of rules had been brought in from the start. But it is beyond time for the world to put in place digital rules; not rules that close down the future before it arrives, but rules that unlock the extraordinary economic potential that a truly global digital economy promises.

For all these reasons, the United Kingdom has been a long-standing supporter of this Initiative. In the margins of the WTO's tenth Ministerial Conference, we helped bring together developing countries who made such a powerful case for the WTO to launch e-commerce negotiations. As part of the European Union, we were a leading supporter when the JSI on E-Commerce was launched at the eleventh Ministerial. Now, outside of the EU, we will be working enthusiastically with the EU and others including developing Members to build on the current momentum.

This Initiative is about more than e-commerce. It goes to the credibility of the WTO itself, and its ability to deliver relevant global trade rules fit for the twenty-first century, in the way the GATT did for the twentieth. The United Kingdom will from today be doing all it can, in its own right, to ensure that this Initiative reaches a successful conclusion.

Thank you, Chair.

[£1m fund for innovative waste oils recycling technology revealed](#)

The Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) can today announce £1m funding

for innovative technology to recycle waste aircraft oils and lubricants – saving the Armed Forces money in waste charges whilst delivering environmentally-friendly by-products in the process.

DASA – on behalf of the Royal Air Force – has awarded contracts to three universities and one engineering firm to develop the new technology to turn waste hydrocarbons into recyclable by-products such as water, organic residue for fertilisers, and CO₂.

Announcing the funding to an audience of more than 150 innovators from small and medium-sized businesses attending the inaugural DASA Engagement Day at Cranfield University, Defence Minister James Heapey said:

I am delighted to announce the winners of this important DASA competition who will work with great minds in the RAF to decarbonise our flying activities and help with the battle against climate change.

Climate change is one of the greatest threats we face. Working with scientists and innovators, we are determined to lead the way in decarbonising defence.

The contracts will build on the innovative concept of [recycling waste hydrocarbons utilising microbes](#), which was developed by a small team from 47 Squadron at RAF Brize Norton.

The team proved that waste oils and lubricants generated from servicing the Squadron's C-130 Hercules aircraft could be broken down using microbes by a process called bioprocessing.

The team won the [RAF 100 Engineering Competition in 2018](#) with their concept demonstrator, and the project was selected for further funding to develop the concept for the MOD.

Wg Cdr Nicholas Atkinson, special projects officer at RAF Brize Norton, said:

These innovations should provide a significant improvement in the way the MOD manages waste with the ability to use deployable bioprocessors on military or disaster relief operations.

This technology also has the potential to save money for the military – and the taxpayer – in waste charges, as well as protecting the environment.

DASA associate delivery manager Katy Violet said:

DASA is proud to be working with the RAF on this important work. Innovation isn't just about new kit, it is also about new and novel ways of doing things.

The results from this funding have the potential to transform the way the Armed Forces deal with waste hydrocarbons in a green way while saving money.

As well as being used on military bases, it is intended the technology will be further developed into portable bioprocessing systems for overseas bases and operational deployments. This is the first joint competition run by DASA and the RAF.

DASA – the Ministry of Defence’s innovation hub – finds and funds exploitable technology to give Her Majesty’s Armed Forces and UK security a strategic advantage over adversaries while supporting the nation’s prosperity.

DASA works with scientists from the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl), academia, and industry to rapidly develop these new technologies.

The organisations awarded contracts are:

- The University of Sheffield – nearly £300,000
- North Shields-based SME Northern Engineering Solutions Ltd – in collaboration with Northumbria University – nearly £330,000
- University College London – around £200,000
- Liverpool John Moores University – around £200,000

[Simplified processes provide welcome boost for UK researchers](#)

- Government to trial simplified research grant application processes, helping free up researchers to focus more exclusively on their studies
- unnecessary paperwork and funding applications currently restrict and stifle scientists who are undertaking trailblazing research
- improved methods to apply for funding will create a strong science and innovation environment that supports top talent

Science Minister Chris Skidmore today (11 February 2020) launched a new, simplified process to apply for research funding.

This builds on the Prime Minister’s commitment to cut bureaucracy for

scientists and the launch of a major review into [research bureaucracy and methods](#) earlier this year.

From today the government's overarching research body, [UK Research and Innovation](#) (UKRI), will trial streamlined application processes for researchers – removing the unnecessary requirement to precisely forecast the long-term benefits of projects that often have unpredictable results.

The programmes include a £10 million 'New Horizons' fund to support highly transformational research projects across maths and physical science, and a £10 million 'Pushing the frontiers' fund that will invest in and encourage environmental scientists to pursue adventurous and high risk, high reward projects.

Streamlining the research application process frees up and supports the best researchers and innovators to focus on ground-breaking, ambitious and meaningful research that could cure diseases or improve our transport networks.

The new process complements the government's ambitions to create a UK ARPA, will trial new, novel funding approaches while giving researchers greater freedom to pursue projects and tackle some of the world's greatest challenges, as well as its commitments to significantly boost research and development funding.

Science Minister Chris Skidmore said:

This government is committed to increasing research funding to record levels. But we must revolutionise the way our research system works to make the UK the best place in the world for science and innovation.

Last month, the Prime Minister announced a major review of research bureaucracy and methods. We are now getting on with the job of freeing up our scientists to do what they do best.

Today's announcement to simplify grant application processes will help strengthen the UK's research and innovation environment, establishing the UK as a science superpower.

The review will involve removing unnecessary paperwork like arduous funding applications and will examine research selection processes and research approaches and methods.

As part of this, the government will be consulting with world-leading scientists, researchers, academics and others in the coming weeks on what more can be done.

UKRI is already taking steps to reduce bureaucracy as part of its work to streamline processes to ensure they work for researchers.

Paul Gemmill, Chief Operating Officer of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, who is leading this work across UKRI, said:

We are seeking to ensure that we make the best possible investment decisions and free up those in whom we invest in to focus on their work of creating new knowledge and delivering social, cultural and economic benefits.

We will look for evidence of potential improvements to our processes, then act on this evidence to deliver change.

In addition, the government has asked UKRI to pilot a relaxation to eligibility requirements for the new doctoral studentships to be funded from the [Advanced Maths programme](#) announced on the 27 January. This will help to attract the best mathematicians to the UK to start their career from across the globe.

The government has also asked universities to ensure that maths funds are being spent on maths, not being diverted to other subjects. This will ensure that the government's funding for advanced maths research is delivering real and lasting impact for these important areas of research.

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) will trial new streamlined application processes. The pilot calls, led by UKRI's [Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council](#) (EPSRC) and [Natural Environment Research Council](#) (NERC), underline the organisation's commitment to strengthen best practice and explore innovative new approaches.

UKRI will make it a priority to ensure its systems and processes free researchers and innovators to focus on their work while also supporting us to make the best funding decisions.

UKRI is exploring ways to reduce administration for applicants and will identify and pilot new approaches designed to improve the experience of applicants.

[5-year ban for property boss after abusing client's funds](#)

The investigation into Jane Hipkin Russell's conduct began after the residential sales and lettings agency she was a sole director of was placed into liquidation in August 2018 following difficult trading conditions.

Investigators from the Insolvency Service looked at the causes of why Jonathan Waters Estate Agents Limited collapsed and found that Jane Russell,

from Frinton-on-Sea, Essex, had failed to comply with legislation requiring all tenants deposits to be placed in a recognised scheme.

Jane Russell worked for the Ipswich-based estate agents for many years before she acquired the company in September 2014.

After the company entered into liquidation, investigators discovered the company had no record of 11 tenants' deposits totalling £12,000 that had been received between March and August 2018, while tenants' deposits received between April 2017 and August 2018, totalling £20,000, hadn't been paid into a government-backed statutory deposit protection scheme.

The company had also collected just over £7,000 of rent from tenants between March and August 2018. This should have been paid over to the tenants' landlords but had instead been spent in the general running costs of the business.

Due to Jane Russell's actions, the estate agents caused in total just over £28,000 worth of losses to tenants and landlords, with the money generally being spent on the running costs of the business.

On 24 January 2020, the Secretary of State accepted a disqualification undertaking from Jane Russell. The ban is effective from 14 February 2020 after which Jane Russell is banned for 5 years from acting as a director or directly or indirectly becoming involved, without the permission of the court, in the promotion, formation or management of a company.

Rob Sheils, Senior Investigator for the Insolvency Service, said:

A fundamental part of Jane Russell's role was being responsible for safeguarding money on behalf of her tenants and landlords, something she failed to do prior to the company falling into liquidation.

This disqualification should serve as a deterrent to other directors who safeguard money from doing likewise.

Jane Hipkin Russell is from Frinton-on-Sea, Essex, and her date of birth is June 1968

JONATHAN WATERS ESTATE AGENTS LIMITED (Company Reg no. 04437082)

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings. [Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a range of restrictions.](#)

[Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct.](#)

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

British Embassy Quito calls for bids for its Bilateral Cooperation Fund 2020-21



British Embassy
Quito

The BEQ will run a competitive bidding process in order to ensure we use our allocation for high quality projects that deliver maximum impact and value for money.

The project funds are designated to support links between the UK and Ecuador in several priority areas through small-scale, high-impact project interventions (up to USD 15,000).

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

- environment and climate change
- gender-based violence prevention, gender inclusion and women's and girls' empowerment
- human rights, media freedom
- anti-corruption and transparency
- crisis preparedness

Who may bid?

In order to be eligible, your organisation or agency must be a legal entity, commercial company, a registered non governmental (NGO) or governmental organisation, and must demonstrate:

- proof of legal registration
- previous experience in delivering and managing projects
- preferably previous experience working with international agencies/organisations
- the capacity to deliver at least 85% of the proposed project activity by mid-December 2020

How to bid?

Proposals should be presented by 9 March 2020, using the Concept Bid form (attached below).

Each institution may submit up to a maximum of 2 proposals.

Only short-listed applicants will be asked to submit a full Project Proposal Form and an Activity Based Budget by 22 May.

*The Embassy will only contact and follow up with short-listed applicants and will send them the relevant directions directly. If you have not been contacted by 11 May, your organisation unfortunately wasn't selected for the next round.

Please send all project documents to BritishEmbassy.Quito@fco.gov.uk

In the subject line of the email, please indicate "BEQ Projects NAME OF ORGANISATION" and include the project title. Please send one email per proposal.

Date	Activity
11 February	Call for bids
9 March	Deadline for Project implementers to send Concept Bid forms
11 March – 11 May	Embassy's Projects Board to revise and sift eligible proposals
11 May	Follow-up with pre-selected candidates. We will only contact those organisations that have moved to the next phase of the process.
22 May	Deadline for candidates to send the Project Proposal Form and the Activity Based Budget.
15 June	Final results will be informed to the selected organisations.

Bid guidance

- projects are funded for delivery during a single financial year, running from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021, with no expectation of continued funding beyond this period
- concept notes must outline how budgets are to be spent, with a clear consideration of providing value for money
- project proposals must include a communications strategy on how the project will be visible in country

Attached documents

*Documents are in English but could be filled and sent in Spanish.

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1. 12 May 2020

Updated dates

2. 11 May 2020

Updated dates

3. 23 April 2020

Updated version. Change of dates.

4. 11 February 2020

Added translation