

Meeting the robots at Dounreay on Innovation Day

News story

We held a celebration of innovation at Dounreay recently, recognising how innovation is part of everything we do at the site to achieve our mission.



[Watch the robots at Dounreay](#)

On the day, we celebrated the many successes we have achieved in our approach to decommissioning. It was a showcase for how we have deployed different techniques and equipment to make our work safer and more efficient.

This included using robotic technology ranging from small tracked remotely operated vehicles to the state of the art 'Spot the dog', a very sophisticated four-legged Boston Dynamics robot, supported by our colleagues from Sellafield.

We were delighted to host many of our friends during the event, in particular a young robot designer, Robbie and his dad, who had made the trip from Ross-shire to see the many different ways the site was working with robots.

Robbie's dad said:

We were amazed by the response from Dounreay to Robbie's request for information on how they use robotics, and it has been a real inspiration for him in so many different ways.

DSRL Innovation Manager, Gordon Tait, said:

Robbie was invited, along with his dad, to be our guest of honour for the day because he had demonstrated his interest in robotics, and we want to encourage youngsters who may become future robot

designers.

Head of Strategic Planning, Craig Brown, added:

Everyone really enjoyed the day; we have a great opportunity to embrace technological advances such as robotics to make our work safer and to enhance our capability.

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[Christian Action \(Enfield\) Housing Association Limited grading under review](#)

Press release

Providers being investigated for an issue regarding their compliance with the Governance and Financial Viability Standard are added to the regulator's GUR list.



The Regulator of Social Housing reports that Christian Action (Enfield) Housing Association Limited has been placed on its gradings under review list today (25 May 2022).

The provider's current published grades are G1/V2. The regulator notifies that a provider's grading is under review when its compliant grade (G1 and G2 for governance, V1 or V2 for viability) is being investigated in relation to an issue which may result in a downgrade to a non-compliant grade (G3 or G4 for governance, V3 or V4 for viability).

We are currently investigating a matter which may impact on Christian Action's compliance with the governance element of the Governance and Viability Standard.

The regulator's [gradings under review list](#) is available on its website.

For press office contact details, see our [Media enquiries page](#).

For general queries, please email enquiries@rsh.gov.uk or call 0300 124 5225.

Notes to editors

1. The GUR lists providers where we are investigating a matter that might result in them being assessed as non-compliant in relation to the regulator's Governance and Financial Viability Standard.
2. The [regulatory standards](#) can be found on the RSH website.
3. The Regulator of Social Housing promotes a viable, efficient and well-governed social housing sector able to deliver homes that meet a range of needs. It does this by undertaking robust economic regulation focusing on governance, financial viability and value for money that maintains lender confidence and protects the taxpayer. It also sets consumer standards and may take action if these standards are breached and there is a significant risk of serious detriment to tenants or potential tenants.

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[NTS plays a key role in international non-proliferation mission](#)

US President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Fumio Kishida of Japan announced the non-proliferation triumph, which was the result of years of cooperation, in Tokyo on Monday, 23 May 2022.

The shipment, which was completed in March 2022, removed all HEU from three Japanese sites:

- University of Tokyo's Yayoi Research Reactor
- Japan Atomic Energy Agency's Deuterium Critical Assembly
- Japan Atomic Energy Agency's Japan Research Reactor 4

The US Department of Energy's National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) worked on the removal with Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, and in close cooperation with the UK's Nuclear

Transport Solutions and Civil Nuclear Constabulary.

[In a statement](#) NNSA Deputy Administrator for Defense Nuclear Nonproliferation Corey Hinderstein said:

“This HEU removal is the result of years of close cooperation and hard work—made all the more challenging by the pandemic and travel restrictions.

“Permanently eliminating nuclear material that could be used in a weapon is just one of the ways NNSA and its international partners help make the world a safer place every day.”

Nuclear Transport Solutions is part of the UK’s Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), a public body responsible for ensuring the safe and efficient clean-up of the UK’s nuclear legacy. It provides solutions to complex nuclear transport and logistics challenges and has used its unique transport capabilities to deliver a number of high-profile international transport projects in support of non-proliferation and global threat reduction efforts.

Seth Kybird, Chief Executive of NTS, said:

“This successful operation represents an important milestone in reducing the risk of nuclear proliferation and was delivered by UK assets and expertise in close collaboration with our US and Japanese partners and the Civil Nuclear Constabulary.

“Our experience in high security nuclear shipments is second to none and we are extremely proud to play such an important role in making the world safer.”

David Peattie, CEO of the NDA, said:

“In NTS we have world-leading capability that not only plays a vital part in the NDA mission to clean up the UK’s earliest nuclear sites, it also provides expertise for globally-important operations such as this one. This is a fantastic achievement for our transport subsidiary NTS and is testament to the expertise it provides as part of its commercial activities in the UK and overseas.”

The HEU was securely transported to the Savannah River Site in Aiken, South Carolina, and the Y-12 National Security Complex in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. It will be downblended to low enriched uranium and/or dispositioned, permanently reducing the risk it could be used to produce an improvised nuclear device.

British Embassy Kuwait invites proposal submissions for the Gulf Strategy Fund 2022 to 2025

Purpose

The Kuwait Programme supports implementation of UK priorities for Kuwait. It supports Kuwait's ambitious 'New Kuwait' Vision 2035 agenda for transforming Kuwait into a trade centre, with a resilient and diverse economy led by the private sector under the umbrella of government institutions, which accentuates social values and identity and supports human resource development.

This call for bids runs in parallel with the FCDO Kuwait Country Business Plan development process, and projects will be expected to align with its strategic direction.

Gulf Strategy Fund projects are not intended to support isolated activities, such as a single visit or training course. Projects must make a clear contribution to strategic objectives and have a clear outcome, such as unlocking wider progress and moving the UK-Kuwait partnership forward in a substantive way. All projects must demonstrate value for money. FCDO defines 'value-for-money' as 'making the best possible use of our all resources to maximise our impact'. In programme work, maximising impact includes having a robust, evidence-based theory of change demonstrating the causal pathway between the intervention and outcomes that support FCDO strategic priorities.

Scope

Bids may build on previous projects carried out in Kuwait or the wider region. The Embassy has also identified areas it wishes to prioritise:

- cyber security
- media freedom
- equality and inclusion
- scientific collaboration
- one health
- education
- anti-corruption and ethics
- youth political participation
- climate change and biodiversity
- economic diversification

However, we also invite bids in other thematic areas. These will be assessed against the same criteria as all other bids.

We also draw your attention to the FCDO MENAD Gender Charter pledge released

in September 2021, which calls to ensure gender equality and inclusion is mainstreamed in any programme design, delivery and across all projects.

The Embassy recognises the challenges of working in a rapidly changing environment, reliant on the schedules and priorities of external actors. This particularly impacts the scheduling of activities and becomes difficult when planning a multi-year programme. We therefore embrace flexible and adaptive approaches as a key component of project effectiveness and value for money.

Funding period

FCDO has made a commitment to GSF for the three-year period (2022-2025), in line with the FCDO funding settlement.

This allows us to think strategically and plan multi-year projects that can have a much greater impact. We therefore encourage bids that demonstrate a long-term, strategic vision and envisage phased implementation and measurable impact.

Recognising the short timeframe and to accommodate projects in different stages of development, projects should not be scheduled to start before 1 August 2022.

However, we expect that there will be no facility to carry funds forward from one financial year to the next. We will commit to multi-year projects, but funding commitments will be made on a year-by-year basis, with budget for subsequent years considered indicative. Funding commitment for subsequent years will be reviewed on submission of new Activity-Based Budgets for each subsequent year of implementation. This process provides an opportunity for Partners to review and adjust their projects and the timing of activities and response to changing circumstances.

Funding level and project range

FCDO is yet to confirm allocations of programme funding for individual countries over this period, but we are working to an indicative budget of £1.5m per year for three years.

To improve efficiency our preference is for small projects to be in the range of £20,000 – £50,000 per year and larger projects will be from £50,000 to £250,000. All projects can be considered, but we advise consolidating project work into similar thematic area, we also recommend flexible project planning that could adjust activity based on available funding.

Parameters

In awarding and overseeing programme funds, the British Embassy in Kuwait is obliged to comply with all Cabinet Office and FCDO rules and guidance, including but not limited to those set out in the [FCDO Programme Operating Framework](#) (ProF). Partners should especially take note of the following requirements:

- all projects must have a single lead implementer, which holds full accountability for the full project budget and outcome. A lead Implementer may in some cases sub-contract project activity to a third party
- the FCD0 can only pay for costs that are incurred after signature by both parties and between the start and end date stated in a funding arrangement or contract
- all project payments are issued in arrears to activities. The British Embassy will not consider requests for advance payments from implementers
- all projects must align with the Paris Agreement and assess climate and environmental impact and risks, taking steps to ensure that no environmental harm is done
- all projects must consider and demonstrate how their interventions will impact gender equality, disability inclusion and those with protected characteristics
- any projects involving paid-for communications activity must receive clearance from the Professional Communications Assurance (PCA) team prior to signing agreements
- any project working on Human Rights, laws, policies, practises or capabilities of justice or security institution will be reviewed under the UK Overseas Security and Justice Assessment (OSJA) guidance prior to signing agreements
- all approved projects will be expected to comply with FCD0 mandated reporting requirements using templates provided, including:
 - monthly project updates and ABB forecasts
 - quarterly monitoring reports
 - project closure report

Process

All submitted bids will be reviewed by the Embassy and assessed against set criteria.

The Embassy will expedite the approval process to the extent possible, but cannot approve projects until formal funding allocation is confirmed.

Approved projects will then begin the mobilisation process before beginning

implementation, including:

- securing any required approvals (e.g. PCA, OSJAs, Due Diligence etc.)
- any competitive process (if required to select commercial implementers)
- preparation and signing of agreements

Appraisal criteria

Criteria	Explanation	Weighting
Strategic Fit:	Project alignment with FCDO objectives and wider Embassy programme design.	25%
Value For Money:	Maximising impact of activity through robust Theory of Change design identifying the relation between planned activity and desired outcomes.	25%
Feasibility:	Realistic objectives within the planned timeframe, appetite within Kuwaiti/UK stakeholders.	15%
Risk:	Risk assessments for projects should be comprehensive and realistic including viable mitigation measures to reduce likelihood and impact of any reputational or financial risks to the FCDO and the UK.	15%
Cross-Cutting:	All projects should consider gender equality, inclusion and climate impact of all activities and support the Embassy's objectives to raise awareness and encourage positive change.	10%
Capability:	Implementer proven record of delivery in the context (or similar) of the proposed project.	10%

Bids submission

An approved bid submission will consist of:

Please return completed pairs of documents to Kuwait.Programme@fcdo.gov.uk along with a confirmation of the type of contract that would be required (Grant Agreement or Memorandum of Understanding).

The British Embassy Kuwait Call for Bids will be open from 29 May to 23 June 2022.

The PPF template is identical to programming template except for sections that have been adapted for multi-year projects.

The ABB template has been adapted to accommodate projects for up to three years duration. For the first year, implementers need to calculate budget on a monthly basis. Subsequent years are budgeted on a quarterly basis initially, and will be refined and re-approved in advance of each financial year.

The Grant Agreements and Memorandums of Understanding are standard FCDO contracts and the Embassy will not enter into negotiation around contracts

beyond the very limited areas where it may use pre-approved alterations.

Copies of contract templates are available on request to Kuwait.Programme@fcdo.gov.uk.

The Embassy is not able to write bids on an implementer's behalf, but the Programme team is available to provide support in developing a proposal or policy alignment. The team will also be running group workshops during the Call for Bids period on FCDO programming and processes, to register your interest in these sessions and any other questions relating to projects please contact the embassy programme team through Kuwait.Programme@fcdo.gov.uk.

British Embassy Kuwait Programme Team at Kuwait.Programme@fcdo.gov.uk

A free and independent press are vital to countering disinformation and propaganda

Thank you, Madam President, and thank you very much to Ireland for convening this meeting, and to our briefers for their powerful testimonies.

An independent media is essential to a free society, and yet many journalists are paying a heavy price to protect that freedom. Too many have paid the ultimate price with their lives.

This year, 36 journalists have been killed, most recently, as we've heard, Al Jazeera reporter Shireen Abu Aqleh. The Security Council united to condemn her killing, and spoke clearly on the need for a fair and impartial investigation.

Shireen's work underscores the bravery required by journalists to shine a light on corruption and abuses of power. Journalists speak up for the voiceless by exposing the truth, but they often face intimidation and attacks simply for doing so.

As Joshua Melvin said earlier, Russia's invasion of Ukraine is a war of aggression. But Russia has also made it a war of disinformation.

Hours, days and even weeks after Russian tanks rolled into Ukrainian soil, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov was telling us, 'there is no war'.

And, a law was recently passed, which means journalists face 15 years in prison if they deviate from Putin's narrative over the Ukraine invasion.

Without a free, independent press, disinformation can win. Propaganda can

win.

Thankfully, journalists have shown us the truth about the war crimes being committed – and the process towards accountability has begun.

At least nine journalists and media workers have already lost their lives in Russia's illegal war. For example, Russian journalist Oksana Baulina, who was killed by her own country's army shelling of Kyiv, while reporting on the damage caused by that very shelling. And Ukrainian journalist Vira Hyrych, who was killed by a Russian air strike on Kyiv, during the Secretary-General's visit.

We are indebted to all of them.

With disinformation rising steeply, the UK continues to champion media freedom to enable access to independent and factual information.

Three years ago – with Canada – we launched the Media Freedom Coalition to advocate for journalists, and to help news outlets not just survive, but thrive. As a Coalition, we have spoken out on dozens of occasions, condemning repression in China and Myanmar, Belarus and Egypt, to name just a few.

We have supported UNESCO in establishing the Global Media Defence Fund, which in the past three years has supported more than 3000 journalists, almost 500 lawyers and over 120 civil society organisations, helping them resist those who threaten individual journalists and journalism. Through the Fund's Crisis Response Mechanism, UNESCO are supporting reporters on the frontline in Ukraine with safety equipment, training and support to displaced journalists.

The threats to journalists and their work are plain to see. The Security Council should call out attacks on journalists, and work to mitigate the risks they face. Impunity cannot prevail: those who attack journalists must be held to account.

Thank you, Madam President.