

Press release: Minister for the Middle East comments on the situation in Kirkuk

I call on all parties to maintain calm and take steps to de-escalate tensions in Kirkuk, avoiding any provocative statements or actions. It is essential that efforts in Iraq are focused on the defeat of Daesh, stabilisation of liberated areas and on enabling those displaced to return to their homes.

The UK supports the development of sustainable governance arrangements for Kirkuk and all disputed areas which are representative of, and responsive to, all Iraq's communities, in line with the Iraqi Constitution. We believe in a stable, democratic and unified Iraq, one that is able to provide the security, jobs and services that all Iraqis want and deserve. We stand ready to assist Iraq as it works to deliver this future for its people.

Press release: Flood warning service improvements go live for winter

People who live near the River Foss in York will now be able to benefit from an improved flood warning service from Wednesday, October 18.

After the Boxing Day 2015 floods, one of the recommendations of the York Flood Inquiry report was for the Environment Agency to conduct a review of the flood warnings on the River Ouse and Foss.

The Environment Agency commissioned consultants to review all flood warnings in the city.

Along the River Ouse catchment, the review found the existing service meets the needs of the community.

However, the River Foss flood warnings underwent a thorough review and changes have been made.

A new rain monitoring station is being installed upstream on the Foss in the village of Yearsley, 20 miles north of York, as well as a river level monitoring station near Strensall.

These two monitoring stations will automatically feed information into the Environment Agency's systems and forecasts for the River Foss, supporting a better understanding of the amount of water flowing down the river towards

York.

This will help the Environment Agency's flood duty officers to issue flood warnings with more confidence and more accurate information included within the warning messages.

The River Foss catchment area within the City of York boundary previously had six flood warnings, covering the Foss, Tang Hall Beck and Osbaldwick Beck.

As part of the improvements this will increase to ten and include warnings for South Beck and Westfield Beck.

Zoë Pattinson, Environment Agency flood risk officer, said:

Along the River Foss corridor, there is one long warning that is for the properties most at risk from river flooding, and a wider warning that covers the properties at lower risk of flooding.

The Environment Agency also worked with members the River Foss Society in redesigning the flood warning boundaries and trigger levels.

The Foss Society and local residents have provided valuable input into the review of the flood warning service for the River Foss community.

She continued:

Local community input is important because it gives us an insight from those who have seen how the river and catchment behaves in heavy rainfall. It also helps raise awareness of our flood warning service.

John Millett, chairman of the River Foss Society, said:

The River Foss Society supports and fully endorses the work the Environment Agency is doing to improve the flood warnings that are being introduced to protect the City of York and neighbouring areas and their residents and businesses along both the River Ouse and the River Foss corridors.

People who are already signed up the flood warning service will automatically be transferred to the new relevant flood warning area that covers their property. If you want to register to receive free Environment Agency flood warnings then you can either at [flood warnings](#) or call on Floodline 0345 988 1188.

[News story: Suppliers invited to contribute to advanced materials consultation](#)

The consultation will provide a way for traditional and non-traditional suppliers and users of advanced materials to feedback to the programme.

Established in April 2017, the MSA programme is one of the MOD's Chief Scientific Advisor's research programmes run by the [Defence Science Technology Laboratory](#). It aims to exploit global developments in materials science, across the academic and industrial sectors for UK Defence and Security to maintain strategic and operational technological advantage, and to save money for the lifecycle of the projects.

The first phase of this consultation will identify:

- the technical barriers linked with the development and insertion of advanced materials technologies on defence equipment;
- exploitation opportunities directly through industry into defence platforms
- innovative technologies or approaches that could be developed in the future S&T programme

The consultation is not a request for bids from the supplier base to direct fund mature technologies or products.

How will the information be used?

Information provided under this consultation will be used to shape future research activity which will be openly competed in accordance with competition rules. This could include, for example, through the identification of technical barriers that are common across the supply base where interventions may have maximum impact, or opportunities for collaboration.

The identification of exploitation and future technology insertion opportunities will ensure research requirements are incorporated into future competitions to maximise the chance of exploitation via industry into military equipment.

How will the information generated be protected?

All data will be protected in accordance with the [civil service code](#).

Who is this consultation aimed at?

This consultation is open to all sectors and supplier types but engagement with equipment manufacturers in particular is sought. For example:

- defence primes
- wider industry
- SMEs
- research and development centres of excellence
- research technology organisations
- academia

What are the timescales for the consultation?

Submission of expression of Interest to participate in consultation no later than 31 October 2017; requests to participate after this date will not be accepted. However, additional phases may take place in 2018 when new participants would be permitted; these will be advertised.

- active consultation will take place during November – January 2018
- outputs will be consolidated in February 2018

How can I take part?

Parties wishing to participate in this consultation are requested to email MSAProgramme@dstl.gov.uk , using the subject line 'MSA Consultation opt in' and including the following information in the message body:

- organisation name (mandatory)
- point of contact name, email, phone number and address (mandatory)
- organisation type (e.g. prime, SME, other industry, academia, other – please describe) (mandatory)
- organisation information (optional e.g. area of interest etc.)
- for data protection reasons, the email must state that you wish to opt in to the MSA Industrial Consultation – Phase 1
- please also state if you wish to opt in to the MSA mailing list to receive updates on the wider programme (future events etc.)

After the 31 October, the consultation will be run using electronic methods of communication. This may include a webinar and questionnaire; further details will be provided after the 31 October once the number of participants is established.

How can I find out more about the MSA programme?

The MSA programme aims to be a hub for defence materials research. Even if you do not wish to participate in the consultation, but would like to opt in to the MSA mailing list to receive information on future events and opportunities please email MSAProgramme@dstl.gov.uk, using the subject line 'MSA Mailing list only' stating clearly that you wish to opt in to the MSA mailing list.

[News story: Pharmacovigilance system: Eudravigilance Downtime](#)

Following on from the EMA notification stating that the Eudravigilance Veterinary Production system will be unavailable from 8 November to 21 November 2017; VMD would like to remind you of what has been agreed with the EMA.

EVWeb Users

During the downtime period, no reports should be submitted via EVWeb.

Do not use paper reports, all reports must be kept and reported electronically within the week following the downtime, from 9am on 22 November to 29 November 2017.

During the downtime period, if any urgent safety issues are identified, you should contact us directly by phone 01932 338427 or Adverse.Events@vmd.defra.gsi.gov.uk

Gateway Users

During the downtime period, EMA has stated that gateway to gateway transmission, between MAHs and NCAs will continue to operate as normal, and it is only transmission to the EMA which will not operate.

Therefore during this period, we would request that all MAHs using the gateway system continue to submit reports to the VMD, and VMD will continue to send reports to you. However, we recommend that each MAH send 1 or 2 reports at the start of the downtime, and then contact us by phone or email to confirm that the reports have been successfully received before submitting any further reports, to ensure that the system is working as expected.

If you have any questions, please contact the VMD Pharmacovigilance team on 01932 338427 or Adverse.Events@vmd.defra.gsi.gov.uk.

Further information is available from [EMA](#).

[Press release: New £1.3 billion](#)

property portfolio to drive investment in Northern Ireland

The Department for International Trade (DIT) and [Invest Northern Ireland](#) will today (18 October) launch a portfolio of exciting property investment opportunities worth more than £1.3 billion in Northern Ireland.

The 7 projects will be unveiled at the MIPIM UK property conference being held in London this week and will include opportunities for UK and international investors in a range of sectors.

The portfolio includes Belfast projects such as the £365 million development in the Titanic Quarter offering film production facilities, 2,000 residential units and offices as well as the opportunity to play a part in the comprehensive regeneration of the city's train station at Weavers Cross.

The launch of the portfolio comes against a backdrop of positive indicators for Northern Ireland with recent research by CBRE identifying Belfast as the third fastest growing office market in the world. The combination of a young population, high quality education and thriving tourism is clearly an attractive offer for international investors with 75% of the 900 overseas companies in Northern Ireland choosing to reinvest in the country.

Minister Garnier will launch the portfolio at MIPIM this afternoon and Minister for Trade and Export Promotion, Rona Fairhead will open the HMG stand earlier in the day. The conference will run until Thursday with the HMG stand showcasing new projects that are ripe for inward investment.

Minister for Investment, Mark Garnier, said:

There has never been a better time to invest in Northern Ireland and these projects give investors the opportunity to do just that.

As an international economic department our message is loud and clear: the UK is open for business, and we can help find the right investment for you.

Steve Harper, Invest NI's Executive Director for International Business, said:

We are delighted to be able to showcase Northern Ireland's strong proposition and the genuine commercial opportunities which are currently ripe for investment in conjunction with the Department for International Trade.

The 7 projects in the portfolio are:

- Titanic Quarter: further phases of development to include studios and post-production facilities as well as offices and residential
- Weavers Cross: potential for phased development of offices, residential, hotel and retail
- Sirocco Quays: mixed use development of offices, hotel, residential, retail and leisure
- One Bankmore Square: grade A offices with full planning permission
- 21-2 Corporation Street: £92 million development including hotel, offices and residential
- Norwich Union House: c. 17,000 sq m of offices, hotel and retail in the city centre
- Baptist Church: grade A offices close to the proposed new transport hub

The portfolio has been put together by the DIT's Capital Investment team which leads the government's drive to attract and support international investment into large scale property, regeneration, infrastructure and energy projects across the UK, working in collaboration with Invest NI, Northern Ireland's regional economic development agency.

During the most recent financial year, DIT's Capital Investment Team was involved in more than £13 billion of capital investment in British infrastructure and real estate, with 14% of global commercial property investment transactions occurring in the UK during the first half of this year, second only to the USA.

Contact the DIT Media and Digital Team on 020 7008 3333.

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