

The Flood Forecasting Centre – thinking globally

As a national centre, the Flood Forecasting Centre (FFC) needs to use the latest forecasting techniques. To remain at the top of its game, it must draw on knowledge and insight that extends beyond the team based in Exeter.

This is one of the reasons why the FFC works with international partners.

Working with the Bureau of Meteorology in Australia

One such organisation is the Bureau of Meteorology in Australia. Through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between them and the Environment Agency, knowledge can be shared. This can open new ways of working to improve services.

The agreement with Australia has highlighted five specific themes to work together on:

- flood forecasting systems
- flood warning and informing
- people, skills, and competency
- performance standards
- organisational performance

The partnership with Australia has already led to some useful insights that could help enhance FFC services. For example, the Bureau has been using Water Coach. This is a scenario-based exercise designed to improve forecasters' skills. The Bureau's Melbourne office can run an exercise remotely with forecasters in different States, so decisions are made in 'real time'.

Australia's Bureau has also gained insights from the FFC about the role of operational hydrometeorologist. Currently, the Bureau uses separate hydrologists and meteorologists. The FFC's success shows how using someone trained in both hydrology and meteorology can pay dividends.

An international benchmark

International collaboration is also now being encouraged by the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO). One example is through its Assessment Guidelines for Early Warning Systems for Flood Forecasting. The WMO is introducing a scoring system to enable countries to assess their own performance on an international scale. The FFC is still working through the WMO's benchmarking assessment guidelines. This will identify:

- FFCs strengths and weaknesses
- how other countries might learn from its experiences

The FFC also sharing its experiences through international conferences. By

developing networks and sharing best practices, it is playing its part in the forecasting community.

Practical partnerships

The FFC is developing relationships with other countries as well as Australia – for example with Holland.

Another factor here is driving collaboration. Any North Sea coastal storm surge that affects England's east coast is also likely to have an impact on Holland.

By working together, the FFC can assess how well its flood models are performing and input into Dutch modelling. In future, the need for international collaboration is only going to become more important. The FFC looks forward to developing its international networks to ensure it can continue to deliver a first-class service.

World-class training to deliver savings and sustainability from major government projects

The government has signed a contract (5 April 2022) to launch the next version of the Major Projects Leadership Academy (MPLA) and Orchestrating Major Projects (OMP) programmes, as part of the continuing drive to transform the delivery of government major projects.

Oxford Saïd Business School has been awarded the contract to update and deliver the Major Projects Leadership Academy, providing mandatory training for major project leaders, and its complementary programme, Orchestrating Major Projects, which provides training for senior officials who sponsor and are accountable for major project delivery.

The contract will see the content of the programmes refreshed to meet the government's future major project challenges, including training on modern construction and digital methods, managing costs and carbon impacts, and delivering government projects better, faster and greener for the benefit of the people of the UK.

Together the programmes, which will welcome participants from summer 2022, are expected to improve standards of major project delivery, while driving savings to provide better value for taxpayers.

Minister for Brexit Opportunities and Government Efficiency Jacob Rees Mogg said:

It is important that we are launching the latest version of the Major Project Leadership Academy (MPLA). This is an example of HM government's determination to build professional expertise and capabilities that will ensure that taxpayers' money is spent well so that infrastructure will be built efficiently.

As we build back better following the pandemic while facing an uncertain world, it is fundamental to our success that projects are managed to the highest standards, commonplace in the commercial world.

Success will boost productivity and enhance economic growth: it is the challenge of our time.

Nick Smallwood, Chief Executive of the Infrastructure and Projects Authority and Head of the Government Project Delivery Function, said:

It is vital that all project professionals and SROs have access to world-class training that enables them to deliver the UK's essential and ambitious projects and programmes – that is why we are investing in the future of our leaders so that they are equipped with the right skills and experience to make a real difference.

The Major Projects Academy is just one example of this and I look forward to continuing to work with Oxford Saïd Business School on the programme.

Dr Paul Chapman, Programme Director of the MPLA and OMP at Oxford Saïd Business School said:

UK government major project leaders are accountable for the most complex and impactful projects that shape the nation's social and economic fabric and deliver benefits that impact the lives of millions.

Oxford Saïd Business School, supported by key subcontractors Atkins Limited and Edgecumbe Consulting Group Limited, looks forward to continuing to work with the Infrastructure and Projects Authority to ensure major project leaders benefit from rigorous insights and personal and professional development that equips them with the right skills to discharge their accountability effectively and with vigour in an ever-changing world.

Over 500 senior leaders from over 50 public sector organisations successfully completed the previous Major Projects Leadership Academy, while more than 70 senior officials have enrolled on the Orchestrating Major Projects programme.

The contract award was made following fair and open competition.

The current Major Projects Leadership Academy programme has been run by Oxford Saïd Business School since 2012. This programme will be refreshed and relaunched in the second quarter of 2022.

The current Orchestrating Major Projects programme has been run by Oxford Saïd Business School since 2016. This programme will be refreshed and relaunched in between the third and fourth quarter of 2022.

[More information on Oxford Saïd Business School can be found on their website.](#)

[“This is Ukraine’s finest hour” – PM to address Ukrainian Parliament](#)

News story

Prime Minister Boris Johnson will address Ukraine’s Parliament today.



- PM will address Ukraine’s Parliament today via live videolink, the first world leader to address the Verkhovna Rada since the conflict began
- The Government will announce a new £300m package of defensive military aid for Ukraine and send specialised civilian protection vehicles
- PM is expected to say this is Ukraine’s ‘finest hour’ and the UK is ‘proud to be among their friends’

The Prime Minister is expected to hail Ukraine’s resistance against tyranny as an exemplar for the world in a live address to the country’s Parliament, the Verkhovna Rada, today.

As the British embassy reopens in Kyiv, the Prime Minister will say the United Kingdom is “proud to be among Ukraine’s friends” when he speaks to parliamentarians via videolink.

Ministers updated Parliament last week on plans to send sophisticated land Brimstone missiles and STORMER air defence vehicles to Ukraine. The Prime Minister will today set out a new package of military aid today worth £300 million, to support Ukraine's ongoing defence against Russia's illegal invasion. The package includes electronic warfare equipment, a counter battery radar system, GPS jamming equipment and thousands of night vision devices.

The UK will also send in the coming weeks heavy lift systems to provide logistical support to isolated forces, and more than a dozen new specialised Toyota Landcruisers to help protect civilian officials in Eastern Ukraine and evacuate civilians from frontline areas, following a request from the Ukrainian government.

The Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected to say:

When my country faced the threat of invasion during the Second World War, our parliament – like yours – continued to meet throughout the conflict, and the British people showed such unity and resolve that we remember our time of greatest peril as our finest hour.

This is Ukraine's finest hour, an epic chapter in your national story that will be remembered and recounted for generations to come.

Your children and grandchildren will say that Ukrainians taught the world that the brute force of an aggressor counts for nothing against the moral force of a people determined to be free.

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[Lord Mayor of the City of London to visit Chile](#)

The highest representative of London's financial district, Vincent Keaveny, will be visiting Santiago from 3 to 4 May. His programme includes meetings with government officials, financial associations and representatives of the Chilean business world, with the aim of strengthening trade links between the City of London and Chile.

The Lord Mayor will be visiting Chile and Brazil on his trip.

In Chile, his visit will focus on bilateral collaboration in the areas of

green finance, open banking, fintech and inclusion in financial services, as well as explaining the UK's role in financial services and innovation.

Events in which the Lord Mayor will participate include a meeting with the Fintech Association about women in fintech and a public-private roundtable on green finance led by the Ministry of Finance.

The Lord Mayor is expected to lead discussions on the challenges and opportunities in open banking regulation, presenting the UK strategy and sharing practices on how the UK experience can help create a dynamic yet secure ecosystem in Chile.

Another of the topics to be discussed will be the potential of the UK as a market for Chilean fintech companies in a position to scale-up internationally, as well as highlighting the collaboration between public authorities.

The Lord Mayor will speak with the Minister of Finance, Mario Marcel, to discuss Chile's development in the field of green finance and plans to diversify the Chilean financial system. He will also participate in a meeting with the Corporate Leaders Group for Climate Action (CLG) and discuss progress on sustainability and innovation with the Santiago Stock Exchange.

In a meeting with the Chairman and board members of InBest Chile, Lord Mayor will discuss opportunities for further meetings in 2022, including a new edition of the successful Chile Day in London event.

The Lord Mayor is an international ambassador for the UK's financial and professional services sector and head the City of London Corporation, the governing body for London's financial district. He helps to support and promote the UK's financial sector, as well as supporting financial relationships with key global markets.

Lord Mayor of the City of London, Vincent Keaveny said:

I am delighted to be visiting Chile to strengthen our long and historic relationship. I'm here to reinforce these ties between our two nations, which is why I will be meeting senior business leaders and Government Ministers including speaking with Finance Minister, Mario Marcel. There are great scope for close collaboration in financial services, notably across banking, digital, fintech and green finance.

Chile is already powering ahead to become the leading Latin American country for foreign investment into renewable energy. By working together, British expertise and innovation in sustainable finance can help the Chilean financial services sector to unlock the huge opportunities offered by the green transition.

Further information

If you want to know more about this visit, please contact [the Communications Office](#).

For more information about the activities of the British Embassy in Santiago, follow us on:

Queen's Birthday Party at the British Embassy in Argentina

The British Embassy in Argentina celebrated the Birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at the British Ambassador's Residence. The celebration was attended by more than 800 guests, including national and provincial government officials, legislators from various parties, businessmen, diplomats, academics, artists, journalists and civil society members.

During her speech, the British Ambassador to Argentina, Kirsty Hayes, reviewed some of the milestones of Elizabeth II's reign. The event also marked the celebration of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee, as last February she became the first British monarch to celebrate 70 years on the throne.

The Ambassador also highlighted some of the areas of bilateral collaboration between the UK and Argentina. She concluded: "I am optimistic about Argentina's future, and you should know that you will always have a partner in the UK to support your growth. We have many projects ahead and many opportunities to benefit from cooperation, as we have already seen with vaccines, but the same could be said for so many other areas, from trade to tourism, education, technology or environmental protection".

For the first time, the local celebration of the Queen's Birthday was certified carbon neutral. This action will finance the planting of native trees in the Lanín National Park.

During the event, guests sang the national anthems of Argentina and the UK performed by the Salvation Army band. In addition, the band Mr. Kite paid tribute to the Beatles with a selection of covers of the Liverpool-born rock band. And DJ Maxi Martina, host of Selector – the British Council's weekly radio programme – played a selection of the best British music of all time.

The event was supported by a number of British companies who had the opportunity to showcase their products and services bearing the UK hallmark of excellence.