

[Press release: Minister for Europe statement on the resignation of President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan](#)

On 19 March 2019, President Nursultan Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan announced his resignation after almost 30 years leading the country since its independence. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev has been appointed as interim Head of State until Presidential elections take place, scheduled for December 2020.

The Minister for Europe, Sir Alan Duncan, said:

My best wishes to Nursultan Nazarbayev as he steps down from his position as President of Kazakhstan. As the first President of the country he has shown an enduring commitment to developing a strong and dynamic relationship with the United Kingdom. Mr Nazarbayev created the modern state of Kazakhstan, steering a course of economic modernisation, regional cooperation and international engagement that has brought prosperity to Kazakhstan and the wider region of Central Asia. Under his leadership, Kazakhstan became the first country in Central Asia to be elected to the United Nations Security Council – a notable achievement.

Over the last 30 years, the UK and Kazakhstan have become close partners. Our commercial and trade ties are long established and thriving, and I am proud of the role that the UK has played in helping Kazakhstan establish the region's first International Finance Centre.

Our two countries share a vision of a peaceful and prosperous region underpinned by commitment to reform and modernisation. We will continue to work closely together with Kazakhstan on the basis of these principles. I look forward to working in partnership with President Tokayev to realise our shared ambitions for Kazakhstan's future development.

Further information

[News story: ESFA introduces new](#)

arrangements for related party transactions

From Monday 1 April 2019, we introduce a new policy where academy trusts must declare a related party transaction before they agree it with their supplier. They must also seek approval from ESFA before they agree any related party transactions over £20,000.

New online reporting arrangements aim to give ESFA, Parliament, the tax payer and other interested parties, assurance about the use of public funds.

Eileen Milner, ESFA Chief Executive said:

“Related party transactions offer a legitimate way for academy trusts to work when used following the principles set out in the [Academies Financial Handbook](#). On occasion, they may even help save time and money. But we cannot allow a mis-use of public funds where academy trusts agree to inappropriate related party transactions. It is this behaviour that we need to stamp out through increased transparency and accountability.

“I know this has caused concern for many academy trusts. I want to provide clarity that we are not trying to change the definition or expand the reach of related party transactions in any way. Nor do we want to constrain academy trusts’ ability to make good business decisions. All we seek is extra assurance by introducing a system where academy trusts declare a related party transaction in advance, while continuing to include the transactions in their financial returns.

“In designing the system, we have tried to maintain a balance between scrutiny and autonomy that minimises any additional burden on academy trusts. I’d like to thank all the academy trusts and representative groups for their feedback throughout the policy and design process and with testing the new system.

“From April to September 2019 we will continue to develop the system as we find out more about how related party transactions are used. We will capture the evidence and trends and consider whether our approach is the right one or if it needs to change.

“This is the beginning of a process, not the end. I am grateful to everyone for all the help we’ve had in making sure our funds are spent where they should be – on ensuring our children get the best education they deserve.”

ESFA has published [academy trust related party transactions guidance](#). This has information about what academy trusts need to do before completing the online form.

Press release: Welsh Secretary celebrates 40 years of leading Welsh 'green' business

Alun Cairns hails achievements of ROCKWOOL UK at 40th anniversary reception

Press release: Welsh Secretary celebrates 40 years of leading Welsh 'green' business

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns uses ROCKWOOL UK'S 40th anniversary to highlight the business' history, growth and success during his keynote speech. From a humble beginning in a factory near Bridgend in 1979, ROCKWOOL UK has gone on to produce and export sustainable volcanic rock insulation products to countries across the UK and the world.

Addressing an audience at the company's birthday event, Mr Cairns noted its commitment to clean growth. Using only natural and sustainable volcanic rock for their products, the thriving south Wales business is tackling one of the biggest challenges facing society as set out in the UK Government's modern Industrial Strategy. Discussing the issue of climate change, the Secretary of State welcomed ROCKWOOL UK'S commitment to developing more efficient buildings, reducing household energy bills and boosting economic growth.

Since its inception ROCKWOOL UK has experienced significant growth and now employs nearly 500 staff across the UK, the majority of whom are based in Bridgend. This growth and success has not only created a strong supply chain across south Wales and the south east of England but has also led to the development of a new logistics hub at the Pencoed site, securing an additional 115 jobs within the past year.

At the reception Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns said:

As we face one of the biggest universal challenges in climate change, ROCKWOOL UK is seizing the opportunity to lead the way in finding the solutions to these questions.

Using only natural and sustainable volcanic rock for their

products, they are 97% recyclable and deliver energy savings within five months of installation. They are a shining example to businesses across Wales and the Union.

Addressing ROCKWOOL UK employees, supply chain members and key stakeholders, Alun Cairns reminded the audience that the UK Government is working hard to create the right conditions for economic growth through the modern Industrial Strategy which prioritises investment in skills, industries and infrastructure. He highlighted the UK Government's recent £9 million funding for new electric buses in south Wales, which demonstrates the UK Government's commitment to backing clean growth initiatives.

Darryl Matthews, Managing Director of ROCKWOOL UK said:

We are proud to be celebrating our 40th anniversary in the UK. Now more than ever, homes and businesses are looking to address energy efficiency, fire safety, and noise in the built environment with our recyclable volcanic rock insulation. We are growing as a result, with 115 new staff over the last year alone.

We are delighted that the Secretary of State for Wales has been able to join us as we celebrate this occasion in our history and the fantastic social and economic contribution made by businesses all across South Wales.

News story: The wider benefits of space investments for the UK economy

Every £1 of public spending generates £3-4 in value for the recipients in the space industry, with additional wider spillover benefits to the UK economy.

The demanding environment of space means that investments in space generate new knowledge and innovations that extend far beyond the space industry. For example, satellites provide services that enable a wide range of economic activities, supporting industries worth £300 billion to the UK.

The "Spillovers in the space sector report" was carried out by London Economics on behalf of the UK Space Agency. This report reviews the evidence of spillovers in the space industry and assesses the impact of several programmes that have received Agency funding.

The report looks at a number of programmes, including:

Synergistic Air-Breathing Rocket Engine (SABRE)

The UK government committed £60 million of funding to support the development of Reaction Engine's unique SABRE concept. This is underpinned by a pre-cooler heat exchanger that can cool an incoming stream of air from 1000 °C to – 150 °C in one hundredth of a second. This heat exchanger has applications in a number of markets that also have extreme thermal management needs. Examples include: pre-cooling technology for high-performance automotive; industrial heat recuperation; battery cooling systems; and cooling systems for power stations.

ExoMars

A mission to search for life on Mars, with the UK leading the build of the 'Rosalind Franklin' Mars rover. The project developed advanced welding techniques that are now being used to manufacture aluminium cans, saving 12% on raw materials, or £100m in total.

Potential spillovers include the development of buggies for airport transport which could contribute £10m to UK GDP and navigation sensors in areas with no access to satellite positioning and navigation technologies, which could contribute £7.2m to UK GDP.

Space for Smarter Government Programme (SSGP)

This is a UK Space Agency programme that aims to promote the uptake of space products and services in government and the wider public sector. One example is the 'Air Quality Hotspot Mapper' project developed by the University of Leicester and later exploited by its spin-out company, EarthSense.

The spillover benefits included EarthSense data being used to underpin the BBC's free-to-use 'MappAir' service which provides postcode level data on traffic pollution, which was used by 2 million users within the first 48 hours of launching.

EarthSense's air quality data can also be used to reduce emissions and increase the sustainability of logistics activities for companies.

National Space Technology Programme (NSTP)

This is the Agency's national capability programme that provides funding to organisations looking to develop space technologies. The second phase of the programme funded 120 projects, with awards totalling £8.4 million. Funding has supported the progression of R&D from early / proof of concept stage towards the end goal of commercialisation. As a result, 80% of project leads were able to report that their project has been de-risked to some degree.

These case studies highlight the critical role of UK grant funding and how, by solving the difficult design challenges of the space environment, space programmes have an important role to play in improving existing technologies on Earth.

The research also found the positive spillover of space projects are usually seen after 3-5 years, with impacts realised sooner for companies providing downstream services or contract manufacturing services, and longer for companies developing their own products.

The UK Space Agency has also published a report into its Space for Smarter Government Programme (SSGP), which found its projects could support over £40 million in potential annual benefits to the public sector, in terms of operational cost savings (£27.8 million), exceptional cost avoidance (£9.2 million) and catalytic benefits (£4.1 million).

A previous study by London Economics found that the UK gets a £9-16 return to the economy for every £1 of Government investment in the European Space Agency, with £6-12 of this accounted for by spillover benefits to the wider economy.