

Press release: South Africa gets clean energy boost

- the Prime Minister also announces measures to develop scientific expertise and create jobs across Africa through UK-Africa research collaboration
- projects will improve skills in big data, artificial intelligence and clean energy and build economic ties between the UK and Africa

As part of her trip to South Africa to deepen the UK's business, trading, diplomatic and research partnerships with the country, the Prime Minister set out a more than £56 million (\$72 million) contribution through the [Clean Technology Fund](#) to a \$500 million investment in battery storage developed by the World Bank and the African Development Bank in partnership with the government of South Africa, fast-tracking the region's access to clean energy.

Battery storage involves storing electricity so that it can be used later – important in filling in the gaps when it's overcast or no wind. These batteries are a very real alternative to fossil fuels like coal and gas, making energy supply secure.

As part of her 3-day visit, the Prime Minister has also announced new projects that will develop closer research ties to help transform local economies by improving harvesting techniques and developing healthcare technologies.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

Investing in research, developing the skills of tomorrow, and tackling the global threat of climate change are key commitments of this government and are at the core of our modern Industrial Strategy.

Science and innovation has no borders with many of the best discoveries being international partnerships and collaborations. These initiatives will deepen our ties in these important areas with our African partners for years to come.

We know that tackling a future-defining challenge such as climate change requires big, new ideas. In the UK we have made support for clean growth 1 of our 4 [Industrial Strategy Grand Challenges](#) – but this is a challenge shared with our partners across Africa and internationally as the impact of climate change internationally affects us domestically as we know.

This project, the first of its kind in the region, will use an innovative technology to transform the country's energy system, supporting South Africa's long-term commitment to decreasing carbon emissions by developing

bold, new renewable technologies – bringing about a climate revolution whilst also enabling the creation of thousands of jobs for young South Africans.

During her trip to South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya, the Prime Minister announced a new phase of the UK's support to the Development in Africa with Radio Astronomy (DARA) partnership. This new £3.7 million investment will fund training for 35 students to PhD and Masters level. It will see a new generation of radio astronomers develop their skills into other big data areas, helping develop and improve ways of managing land to help with harvests, as well as targeted health service provision so more people across Africa get the right treatments at the right time.

AI and big data is at the heart of the government's modern Industrial Strategy and through the Artificial Intelligence Grand Challenge the government has recognised the potential opportunities that big data and AI could bring to the global economy, increasing productivity and delivering high value jobs.

Young minds across Africa hold the key to discovering brilliant, new solutions to the world's challenges, and to maximising exciting opportunities for both British and African young people. This is why the UK is working with, and supporting the development of, the brightest research, academic and science talent from across Africa. Global Britain's world-class offer in science, innovation and research can take these partnerships to the next level.

Showcasing the UK's expertise in low carbon innovation, the government also today announced the next phase of the UK-Nigeria Climate Finance Accelerator. The initiative matches government, project developers, finance market players from Nigeria, with experts in climate finance and investment in green projects from the City of London. The UK can share expertise with Nigeria on how to invest in green projects, from increasing the country's renewable capacity to improving the resilience of food chains.

Funding has also been granted to nine projects to develop food security through joint research. The work will focus on improving African farming systems and developing sustainable agriculture. Resolving some of the threats to produce include looking to the benefits of grass pea in drought-prone environments and using natural pest regulation to ensure the successful harvest of legumes.

As well as this, the government has committed £1.5 million to a new research fund to help African researchers study the effects of climate change and explore climate issues that are most important to them and their own countries.

Climate change is the most critical challenge facing the next generations – and Africa will be disproportionately affected by climate change, with temperatures likely to rise faster than anywhere else in the world.

That is why, as part of the UK's new and distinctive offer to work alongside, invest in and partner with African nations, the government is bringing in

even more of the UK's world-leading climate experts to build on our existing partnerships – working with African governments to build climate resilience, cut emissions and ultimately, ensure we all meet the international climate commitments made in the historic Paris Agreement.

During the visit, it was also confirmed that the Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation, which encourages ambitious and talented sub-Saharan African engineers to develop solutions to local challenges, will receive further £500,000 funding boost.

Dr Hayaatun Sillem, CEO of the Royal Academy of Engineering, said:

I am delighted by this boost to the Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation, which is now in its fifth year. The additional funding will strengthen the Prize's capacity to support talented engineers in developing local, scalable solutions to real-world challenges, and in contributing to socio-economic progress through their innovation-based businesses. It will particularly help in improving engagement with female engineering innovators, and in building networks of successful sub-Saharan African entrepreneurs to train and mentor the next generation.

News story: Superyacht Tenders & Toys making waves overseas

The Ipswich business was recently listed in the annual Sunday Times Export Track 100 as one of Britain's SMEs with the fastest-growing overseas sales, coming 45th out of the top 100. They export deck equipment, tender boats, submersible, yacht toys and inflatables for superyachts to customers around the world.

Exporting accounts for 98% of the company's annual turnover, which last year totalled £5.4 million, driven primarily by demand from the Netherlands, Germany, Italy and the Middle East.

Recognising the potential for further growth in Middle Eastern markets, the company has just returned from exhibiting at the Dubai International Boat Show, attended by delegates from over 76 countries.

The firm, which has been exporting since it started operating 6 years ago, also serves customers cruising around the popular yachting destinations of the Caribbean, Mediterranean and the United States.

At the start of its exporting journey, Superyacht Tenders & Toys received

support from Department for International Trade (DIT) advisers dedicated to helping East of England-based businesses to export. They worked with the firm to identify export opportunities and establish relationships with overseas markets.

In 2017, the company was awarded the Queen's Award for Enterprise in recognition of its contribution to international trade.

James Bond style deep flight submarine (c) SYTT

DIT's [Exporting is GREAT](#) campaign aims to help more businesses explore new markets overseas. The campaign is currently showcasing a range of UK businesses, from a range of sectors and regions, to inspire and support firms up and down the country to export.

Josh Richardson, co-founder and managing director of Superyacht Tenders & Toys, said:

We really felt the benefit of DIT's expertise when we began to research new markets abroad. The contacts they provided and their market insight was invaluable.

There are a number of hurdles that a new exporting business needs to consider, including customs and import regulations, and sourcing trusted contacts and distributors. However, having a partner like DIT, who has both experience and insight, can help make the whole process much smoother and before you know it you could be jumping on a plane to meet a buyer in a new market overseas that's excited about what your business can offer. If we can do it, others can too.

Co-founder and Managing Director, Josh Richardson (pictured middle) (c) SYTT

Alan Pain, Regional Director, East of England, Department for International Trade, said:

Superyacht Tenders & Toys is a brilliant example of a local businesses that has made a name for itself through its exporting success.

The firm has capitalised on the huge demand for British goods and products overseas, particularly in the Middle East, which was the destination for more than £1.13 billion worth of exports from East Anglian firms in the year to September 2017.

We know that there are businesses across the East of England that could benefit from the profitability and diversification that exporting brings, but that see challenges to international trade.

DIT has a network of 36 International Trade Advisers on the ground

across the region and in Embassies around the world to help get your products overseas. I would encourage anyone who is interested in exporting to get in touch. The support is out there.

Online support, find a buyer, and export readiness tools are available at great.gov.uk, where thousands of live export opportunities are also promoted.

Press release: Official opening of Hexham flood defence

A new £65,000 flood embankment which protects homes in Hexham from flooding has been officially opened.

Storm Desmond saw flooding to 15 properties at Tyne Green, Hexham, on 5 December 2015.

Properties flooded as a result of water from the River Tyne flowing through an underpass beneath the Newcastle-Carlisle railway line near to Tyne Green Golf Course.

The Environment Agency prioritises delivery of new and improved flood defences using government funding over a rolling six year programme, to schemes which provide the greatest benefits to protect properties from flooding.

Due to the small number of properties that would benefit, against the cost of delivering a flood scheme at Tyne Green, the Environment Agency had been unable to deliver new flood defences in the area.

The new flood bank has been uniquely funded by residents who pooled individual government grants made available to them following flooding over the winter period of 2015/16.

The Environment Agency and Northumberland County Council worked closely with Tyne Green residents, Northumbrian Water and Network Rail to provide a creative solution.

The new bank was officially opened by local resident Joan McDonald – who contributed to the scheme – and Hexham MP Guy Opperman at an event on Tuesday 28 August.



L-R Tyne Green resident Keith Hutton, Coun. Nick Oliver from Northumberland County Council, Hexham MP Guy Opperman and Environment Agency Area Director Oliver Harmar.

Real success for residents

MP Guy Opperman said:

This is great news! I am delighted that a pragmatic team effort has produced a real success for the Tyne Green residents. I want this collaborative working to be the prototype for future flood defence projects in Tynedale.

Tyne Green resident Keith Hutton added:

I am pleased to have been involved in this project alongside so many others, and on behalf of everyone, I would like to extend a huge thank you to Guy Opperman, our MP, for his steadfast support in getting all the agencies together, something we could not have done single-handedly.

Special credit should also go to Chris Hood, from the Environment Agency and Aaron McNeil from Northumberland County Council. They recognised the opportunity and worked hard alongside our community to deliver this scheme.

Finally, Network Rail and Northumbrian Water have been a huge support to this lengthy project and I think we all recognise that going forward, this flood defence, which has been funded in such a unique way, gives our community a real peace of mind.

The flood embankment, built by Breheny Civil Engineering, has been designed to protect against a flood event similar to that experienced by Tyne Green residents during Storm Desmond.

Thanks to residents

Chris Hood, Project Manager for the Environment Agency, said:

I'm delighted we've been able to build this flood defence which is great news for the residents of Tyne Green. I'd like to thank them for their continued support and patience while we worked with our partners to find the best and most cost-effective solution.

Councillor Glen Sanderson, Cabinet member for Environment and Local Services with Northumberland County Council, added:

This is another fine example of agencies working with local communities to find innovative solutions to improve their areas and prevent flooding events damaging their homes in the future. Storm Desmond had a massive impact on communities in Tynedale and this work should help provide peace of mind for the future.

The Environment Agency is urging people to 'Prepare, Act, Survive' by [visiting the Floods Destroy website](#) and do three things to prepare for flooding.

- check your postcode and find out if you are at risk of flooding
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