

UK pledges £544 million to find coronavirus vaccine

The UK government has pledged an additional £210 million of support to accelerate work to find a coronavirus vaccine, in an announcement following a virtual summit of G20 leaders.

The UK has now pledged £544 million in total which makes it the biggest contributor to Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) – the international coalition to find a vaccine.

Announcing the additional funding, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

While our brilliant doctors and nurses fight coronavirus at home, this record British funding will help to find a vaccine for the entire world. UK medics and researchers are at the forefront of this pioneering work.

Acting High Commissioner to India Jan Thompson said:

This important announcement demonstrates the UK's continued commitment to finding a coronavirus vaccine alongside our key international partners. We already have a strong record of research collaboration with India; at a time like this, international collaboration is more important than ever.

The additional package of funding will go towards producing rapid tests for coronavirus and testing and developing medicines to treat the disease, for use in the UK and around the world. Quickly identifying those with coronavirus and having the means to treat those most affected will be pivotal in bringing down the number of people killed.

Further information

The new UK funding consists of:

£210 million to help develop a vaccine. This new funding for the CEPI is in addition to the £40 million already given to the organisation. It will help scientists and researchers continue to lead global efforts to develop a workable coronavirus vaccine, including at the University of Oxford.

£40 million to develop affordable treatments for coronavirus patients. This will support the Therapeutic Accelerator, a fund for the rapid development of anti-retrovirals or immunotherapies against coronavirus which is already backed by the UK-based Wellcome Trust, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Mastercard. It aims to make 10 million treatments available in the coming

months globally, including in the UK.

£23 million to further develop easily-manufactured testing devices. This is additional funding for the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics, a partnership between academic organisations and pharmaceutical companies which will build rapid testing technology like the new prototype test developed by the Mologic lab in Bedford, which is currently funded by the UK.

UK-India joint research on vaccines:

Rotavirus causes half a million infant deaths from diarrhoea every year. Through an innovative trilateral global research partnership between India, UK and developing country researchers, new trailblazing research is being carried out to test the rotavirus vaccine to improve vaccine performance in immunisation programmes across India and Africa. This is an excellent example of collaboration between the UK and India on research and innovation to address global challenges, in turn bringing benefits to the UK, India and developing countries and contributing to global public goods.

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