

[News story: UK-China partnerships against antimicrobial resistance get funding](#)

On the day that the UK Government publishes its strategy to tackle antimicrobial resistance (AMR), the UK's innovation agency, Innovate UK is announcing winners of two research competitions to address the issue of infections resistant to antibiotics both in humans and in animals.

On behalf of the [Department of Health and Social Care \(DHSC\)](#), Innovate UK has completed two research competitions that will award £20 million of research funding for AMR research. This includes a bilateral research competition between DHSC's Global AMR Innovation Fund (GAMRIF) and the [Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology \(MoST\)](#), and a competition as part of the Small Business Research Initiative (SBRI).

GAMRIF's UK-China research competition supports new innovations to address antimicrobial infections in both humans and animals, which together constitute a significant threat to human health. Successful projects are a partnership of UK companies and research organisations, with Chinese companies and research organisations. £10 million of UK aid funding has now been awarded to UK partners, with MoST providing funding for the Chinese partners who will receive up to a total of 60 million RMB.

These partnerships will enable novel research to be conducted that neither country could carry out alone within the same time frame.

In total, 14 projects were selected and will run over the next three years. These projects include a diverse range of innovations, such as novel diagnostics, therapeutics, and animal feed, as well as opportunities from traditional Chinese medicine for treating or preventing infectious bacterial disease.

The results of this research will have global implications including in China and across emerging and developing countries.

Among these projects, are a collaboration between [The Vaccine Group](#), based in Plymouth and the [Shanghai Veterinary Research Institute \(SHVRI\)](#), [Chinese Academy of Agricultural Science \(CAAS\)](#), which plans to use a bovine virus as a safe, inexpensive, single dose vaccine to control *Streptococcus suis* infection in domestic pigs. Also working with SHVRI, CAAS is [GAMA Healthcare Ltd](#) in Watford, who have collaboratively proposed to develop a non-antibiotic treatment of multi-drug resistant organisms in poultry.

Professor Dame Sally Davies, England's Chief Medical Officer, said:

Drug resistant infections claim hundreds of thousands of lives across the globe. An innovative and international response is vital

– this latest collaboration between the UK and China guarantees much needed research to address the complex and world-wide issue of AMR

Dr Kath Mackay, Interim Director – Ageing Society, Health & Nutrition, Innovate UK said:

Antimicrobial resistance is one of the biggest global challenges in healthcare. It has been estimated that the AMR threat could lead to 10 million extra deaths a year and cost the global economy up to £75 trillion by 2050.

This partnership between China and the UK's world-leading bio-industry is a vital contribution to tackling this issue through international co-operation.

A further £10 million has been awarded to UK organisations as part of the SBRI to develop solutions to AMR in humans. This competition focuses on two strands of research; new therapies and infection prevention and control.

Of the 13 projects selected across business and academia, 9 are led by small and medium enterprises who will translate AMR research into industry.

Winners include a project from Surrey-based Clean Blue Ltd that will develop an anti-infective medical device. [Medisieve](#), based in London, has also received funding to use magnetic blood filtration to treat antibiotic resistant bacterial sepsis.

[Press release: MHRA recalls more blood pressure and heart medication from pharmacies as a precaution](#)

Today's recall affects 3 batches of Irbesartan 150mg and 300mg tablets which reached the UK market, supplied by Macleods Pharma UK. Information on which batches are affected can be found [here](#).

The pharmacy-level recall is being undertaken as a precaution as testing revealed possible N nitrosodiethylamine (NDEA) contamination.

There is no evidence at present that the impurity has caused any harm to patients and not all Irbesartan products are affected. People should continue to take their medication and should speak to a doctor or pharmacist if they have any concerns.

[Earlier this month](#), MHRA advised pharmacies to recall all affected batches of Irbesartan containing medicines made by Actavis.

In 2018, the Agency twice recalled batches of Valsartan to pharmacy level in 2018. Valsartan containing medicines from Dexcel and Actavis (now Accord) were recalled in [July](#) and batches of Valsartan containing medicines made by Mylan and Teva, were also recalled to pharmacy level [in November](#).

The initial recall occurred after an impurity, N-nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA), was identified as part of the manufacturing process in a Valsartan active substance manufactured at one facility based in China. A second impurity, NDEA, was later discovered.

The MHRA continues to thoroughly investigate the issue alongside the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and the European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines (EDQM). We will continue to monitor the situation in the UK and consider what actions are necessary to protect public health.

Dr Sam Atkinson, MHRA's Director of the Inspection, Enforcement and Standards Division, said:

Our most important concern is the safety of the medicines you take.

As today shows, we continue to investigate potential contamination of sartan containing medicines such as Irbesartan. We will continue to act and provide updates when appropriate.

Currently, there is no evidence that medicines containing NDMA or NDEA have caused any harm to patients.

Because of the risk associated with suddenly stopping high blood pressure medication, continue to take your medicines as prescribed by your doctor.

If you have any concerns about your medicine, please speak to your doctor or pharmacist.

Notes to editor

1. [In July, MHRA advised pharmacies](#) to recall affected batches of Valsartan containing medicines made by Mylan and Teva as a precautionary measure. 2. [In November, we advised pharmacies](#) to recall batches of valsartan from Dexcel and Actavis as a precautionary measure. 3. Earlier this January, MHRA advised pharmacies to recall all affected batches of Irbesartan containing medicines made by Actavis as a precautionary measure. More information [here](#). 4. Find out more about our [Yellow Card Scheme](#).

Press release: UK Hydrographic Office welcomes Maritime 2050 strategy

The UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) has welcomed the publication of the UK government's 'Maritime 2050' strategy paper, which sets out the vision for the future of the UK maritime sector.

The strategy, which has been developed in consultation with agencies including the UKHO and the wider public and private sectors, sets out a series of detailed recommendations to help the UK maintain its position as a leading global maritime nation. These recommendations span themes including the environment, international trade, security and resilience, infrastructure, people and technology.

A focus on the positive impact that smart shipping and use of autonomous vessels could have on the environment, as well as safety and efficiency across the maritime industry, forms a key part of the paper. In recognition of these benefits, the strategy supports collaboration between the UKHO, Maritime & Coastguard Agency, industry experts and the wider government to develop navigation and safety data requirements that enable the use of these technologies in the future.

The strategy also recognises the value of marine geospatial data in unlocking economic potential for maritime-related industries, with further recommendations to not only fully map the seabed in the UK's Exclusive Economic Zone (spanning 6,805,586 sq. km) to modern standards, but also play a key role in international efforts to chart the world's seabed. This aim will be key to helping government and the wider industry improve our understanding of how we can protect and sustainably benefit from the global marine environment.

Commenting on the Maritime 2050 paper, Cathrine Armour, Director of Customer Division, said:

The UK Hydrographic Office welcomes the publication of Maritime 2050, which sets out a compelling vision for the future of the UK maritime sector. The UK has the world's fifth largest Exclusive Economic Zone and the better we understand our oceans, the better placed we will be to ensure its prosperity whilst capitalising on the opportunities that exist.

As the government's hydrographic and marine geospatial data experts, we are proud of the part we play in mapping the UK's seabed and enabling the future of maritime navigation. At the same time, we can only meet the ambitions of Maritime 2050 through a collaborative approach that brings together the expertise and insights of all our partners across government, industry and academia. We look forward to working closely with these partners to

fulfil these goals.

You can read the strategy in full here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/maritime-2050-navigating-the-future>

[Press release: More funding to help town centres and high streets thrive](#)

Communities across the country can bid for up to £50,000 to help make local areas more attractive for business, High Streets Minister Jake Berry MP has today (24 January 2019) confirmed.

The latest round of the £500,000 British Improvement Districts (BIDs) Loan Fund will support business owners and local leaders to set-up a BID, which allow communities to come together to deliver additional local services and upgrade commercial areas for the benefit of business.

From Altrincham to Watford, Business Improvement Districts serve as a tried and tested model of how local business can work together to realise the potential of towns and high streets by engaging strategically with local authorities, developers and communities.

High Streets Minister Jake Berry MP said:

BIDs have a proven track record of upgrading commercial areas to enable business owners and entrepreneurs in our town centres and high streets to thrive.

Whether through promoting longer opening hours, more security for shops or pedestrianised shopping districts, BIDs are a go-to vehicle through which you can reimagine your high street or town centre.

Those on the ground know what works. Our Loan Fund is designed to provide them with the means to drive regeneration forward and meet local needs.

British BIDs, a BIDs sector body, hold the contract of managing and operating the fund until September 2020.

Professor Christopher Turner, British Bids Chief Executive said:

Business Improvement Districts have been shown to be hugely successful in regenerating town centres.

There are now over 300 BIDs across the UK and the Loan Fund that the government set up has been vital in helping key BIDs to emerge.

Thus far 29 loans of between £10,000 and £50,000 have been allocated through the British BIDs application process, and BIDs have been able to use this loan funding to develop their proposals and support the ballot process.

Case study: Altrincham BIDs

In July 2014, the Altrincham BID was awarded £40,000 from the 3rd round of the BIDs Loan Fund, which supported it to overcome prohibitive start-up costs during development.

The BID was launched in April 2016 and supported Altrincham town leaders to take forward an ambitious plan to transform their historic market hall into a food and culture hub at the centre of the town.

This bold vision paid off, turning around a shop vacancy rate of 30%, one of the highest shop vacancy rates in the UK.

Last year the town scooped the prize for England's best high street at the 2018 Great British High Street Awards. Altrincham was recognised for its "ongoing events throughout the year to drive footfall to the local high street", which the town's Business Improvement District Altrincham Unlimited has done much to lead.

Further information

There is up to £95,000 available for this latest round of funding, which we estimate will be able to provide funding for up to 4 prospective BIDs. Successful applicants to the fund can receive up to £50,000. The average received by successful applicants has been £33,000.

Expressions of Interest in the Loan Fund are to be received by 8 March 2019, with completed applications by 10 May 2019.

For more information, please visit our [BIDs Loan Fund page](#) and the [British BIDs website](#).

To register your interest and receive an application form, please contact bidloanfund@britishbids.info.

Key ways the government has backed the high street in 2018:

- the Budget saw business rates relief cut small retailers' bills by a third, building on over £10 billion of business rates support since 2016
- the government appointed an independent expert panel, headed by Sir John

- Timpson to diagnose and respond to the challenges facing the high street
- in response to recommendations from the expert panel, the government has announced a £675 million [Future High Streets Fund](#) to help improve infrastructure and access to high streets, put historic buildings back to use and make town centres fit for the future
 - the [Open Doors scheme](#) will see empty shops being opened up to community groups offering services to the most vulnerable in our communities
 - the [Great British High Street Awards](#) was a hotly contested competition to find Britain's best high street, and the huge response highlighted retailers and community groups across the country working in innovative ways keep town centres vibrant and strong
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[Speech: Antimicrobial resistance needs an urgent global response](#)

The purpose of the World Economic Forum is to bring together world leaders and big business to solve the world's most difficult problems.

One of these problems is antimicrobial resistance, where the world has come together over the last 5 years, but so much progress needs to be made, to stop an otherwise terrible future.

As health secretary responsible for one of the most advanced healthcare systems in the world, I could not look my children in the eyes unless I knew I was doing all in my power to solve this great threat. When we have time to act. But the urgency is now.

Each and every one of us benefits from antibiotics, but we all too easily take them for granted, and I shudder at the thought of a world in which their power is diminished.

Antimicrobial resistance is as big a danger to humanity as climate change or warfare. That's why we need an urgent global response.

The UK has taken a global lead by setting out a 20-year AMR vision explaining the steps we must take nationally and internationally to rise to this challenge. It fits into a pattern of work across the world to keep this driving forward.

The plan incorporates 3 things we all need to do: prevention, innovation, and collaboration.

First: preventing infections is vital. We have today set a target in the UK of cutting resistant infections by 10% within the next 5 years.

We're going to cut antibiotic use by a further 15% within 5 years by only

using antibiotics when absolutely necessary. Everybody can play a part in only using antibiotics when they're really ill.

And we're going to work with the livestock industry to build on the amazing 40% reduction in antibiotic usage in just 5 years – 71% in chicken farming, while increasing productivity by 11%.

We're going to do it through immunisation, better infection control and working with doctors, vets, farmers and patients to prevent unnecessary prescription of antibiotics.

Second: innovation. There hasn't been a single, new class of antibiotic since the 1980s.

No new innovation in the most basic bedrock of every health service in the world – shocking. And deeply troubling.

Any health secretary or minister, who doesn't lie awake at night worrying about that last pack of antibiotics, must have a prescription to some seriously strong sleeping pills.

We know the reasons why. Compared to expensive new cancer or heart drugs, putting time and money into developing new antibiotics is commercially unattractive for pharmaceutical companies.

And under the traditional model of revenue linked to volume, there is an added disincentive for pharmaceutical companies with a product that must be conserved.

So we need a new model, one that works with, and incentivises the pharmaceutical industry.

And this is where the NHS, because of its unique position, can take a global lead in pioneering a new payment system, one that reflects the true value of antibiotics to society.

At the heart of it is changing the way we think of antibiotics from a medical product to a medical service.

It's a service that we all rely on: patients, doctors, and pharmaceutical companies.

So within 6 months, the NHS is going to start work on paying for the service, and security, of having access to critical antibiotics when we need them, rather than hoping there's a product we can buy in the future.

We're going to be more of a Spotify subscriber than a vinyl record shopper.

We will pay upfront so pharmaceutical companies know that it's worthwhile for them to invest the estimated £1 billion it costs to develop a new drug.

We will work with the industry to develop the next generation of antibiotics, ones that are available and accessible to all.

But the only way this system can incentivise innovation globally, is if it is expanded globally.

Which brings me to my third and final point: collaboration.

I am proud of the work the UK has done to secure antimicrobial resistance on the global agenda. We're playing our part both at home and on the world stage.

Because we recognise that none of us can stand alone against AMR. It won't be solved by one nation, no single action or intervention.

It is a fight that requires continued collaboration, across borders, now and in the future.

I've been meeting health ministers from across the world here to agree further action, and next week the UN inter-agency co-ordination group are publishing their draft recommendations on the next steps needed to tackle AMR.

Hopefully that will take us one step closer.

It is a challenge, I believe, we can rise to if every step forward, we push ourselves further. Together, I'm convinced that with a proper plan we can achieve that goal.