

Ploughshare wins government funding for 2 defence technologies

Ploughshare, the company owned by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) that finds new and inspiring uses for government inventions, has won more than £280,000 in grants to develop 2 technologies for the benefit of society.

Ploughshare facilitated successful bids by the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) to the government's new Knowledge Assets Grant Fund. The funds will assist in the development of 2 new technologies – a predictive test for sepsis being developed by Presymptom Health, and a sensor that can detect and identify laser threats from Sentinel Photonics.

The grants, offered by the Knowledge Assets unit in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), are to support the repurposing, commercialisation or expanded use of public sector knowledge assets. This is part of the Government's Knowledge Assets initiative which aims to unlock the value of Knowledge Assets for social, economic and financial benefit to the public with a targeted programme of work and support to organisations across Government.

David English, Dstl Chief Finance Officer, commented:

We're delighted that these science and technology innovations developed by Dstl will be further advanced. These 2 examples are indicative of Dstl's commitment to protect lives through superior technology and innovation, while also supporting UK industry.

In the case of [Presymptom Health](#), Ploughshare supported Dstl in securing up to £100,000 from the fund which it will use to contract Presymptom Health to conduct research and development of AI machine learning software. This software could be used to analyse thousands of blood samples in Dstl's biobank, accumulated over 10 years of research.

Initial trials of the technology, first developed for the MOD for use on the front line and now licensed by Ploughshare to Presymptom Health, suggest it can predict the onset of sepsis in patients up to three days before symptoms appear, enabling clinicians to treat them much sooner and manage them more effectively.

Ploughshare also aided Dstl in its bid for £180,000 relating to its work with [Sentinel Photonics](#), which is developing sophisticated technology to detect and protect against laser threats. The technology, licensed to Sentinel by Ploughshare, was developed for military use to detect and assess the threat levels of lasers deployed against personnel, aircraft and vehicles.

Dstl will use the grant funding to contract Sentinel to explore opportunities for civilian use – for example as a method of detection and threat level

assessment when lasers are shone at commercial aircraft such as air ambulances, or at sporting events. The technology could potentially be installed in public areas to detect lasers, acting as a deterrent against their illegal use.

Hetti Barkworth-Nanton, CEO of Ploughshare, said:

We are delighted to have facilitated Dstl's successful applications so that Presymptom Health and Sentinel Photonics can be among the first to benefit from the Knowledge Assets Grant Fund. This fund was created specifically to test the potential of knowledge assets for expanded or alternative use – directly in line with our mission to enable the commercialisation of government defence research for the benefit of society.

These 2 technologies are at a very exciting stage of development, and the support of BEIS and Dstl will enable them to take the next step towards delivering positive societal impact.

Chris Burgess, Sentinel Photonics CEO, said:

We are grateful for the support of Ploughshare, Dstl and BEIS in securing these funds which will enable us to take a significant step in unlocking the potential for our technology to detect and protect against laser threats to civilians. This grant will give us space and time to hold conversations with relevant organisations while continuing to develop and refine our technology.

Iain Miller, CEO at Presymptom Health, said:

As we continue to explore the potential for our technology to provide early diagnosis of sepsis, which claims the lives of up to 11 million people each year around the world, we are grateful for this grant which could enable us to find new ways of detecting tell-tale markers which are an indication for the disease.

Our development of machine learning technology, with the support of Dstl and enabled by the Knowledge Assets Grant Fund, could greatly increase the rate at which we can analyse samples, enabling us to bring this potentially life-saving test into general use more quickly.

Ploughshare, wholly owned by Dstl, has unique access to a wide range of technologies developed by leading scientists and engineers at the MOD and wider government. Since it was founded in 2005 it has licensed more than 140 innovative technologies and created more than 400 jobs.

The [Knowledge Assets Grant Fund](#), operated out of BEIS, offers grants of up to £250,000 to support the repurposing, commercialisation or expanded use of public sector knowledge assets. This aims to realise the potential of these assets for the benefit of the UK. Later this year, a new dedicated unit in BEIS will launch to support knowledge asset development, including a new funding round for the Knowledge Assets Grant Fund.

For more information see www.ploughshare.co.uk

[Footage shows driver making rude gesture to police after being filmed without a seatbelt and using mobile phone](#)

But what he doesn't realise is the vehicle alongside him is a National Highways unmarked 'supercab' – and there are two police officers inside. When he sees he's being filmed, he makes a rude gesture.

The driver was using a mobile phone and wasn't wearing a seatbelt as he drove along the A1(M).

[View video footage.](#)

The footage, taken on the A1(M) near Wetherby by North Yorkshire Police, captures one of over 26,000 offences recorded by officers in the Operation Tramline HGV cabs since the national safety initiative was launched by National Highways. The driver was issued with a fixed penalty notice for not wearing a seatbelt and using a mobile phone. He was handed six penalty points and a £200 fine.

The cabs are now being used as part of a multi-agency campaign on the A1, running from Monday, 21 March to Friday, 1 April, which aims to reduce the number of incidents on the busy route and highlight the risks of dangerous driving.

Under the banner of Operation Mainline, the campaign takes place along the A1 from Northumberland down to North Yorkshire. Three police forces will be taking part – Northumbria, Durham and North Yorkshire.

In addition to the supercab patrols, vehicle checks will also be carried out at a number of locations by the DVSA and Health and Safety Executive. National Highways Traffic Officers will visit motorway service areas at

Washington, Wetherby and Skelton Lake to offer advice to drivers such as how to carry out basic vehicle maintenance.

National Highways deals with incidents on the A1 every day with 9,675 reported in 2021 including 614 traffic collisions.

Since the launch of Operation Tramline in 2015, more than 26,200 offences have been recorded across England. The most common offences have included:

- not wearing a seatbelt – 7,727
- using a mobile phone – 6,804
- not in proper control of vehicle – 1,927
- speeding – 1,378

In total, 23,971 vehicles were stopped during Operation Tramline between July 2015 and January 2022.

National Highways Regional Director Simon Boyle said:

Safety is our highest priority at National Highways. The Operation Tramline campaigns are an important part of our commitment to tackling dangerous driving and those who take unnecessary risks with their own safety and that of others on the road.

The number of people found not wearing their seatbelt, or using their mobile phone while driving is quite alarming. Through this fortnight of action on the A1 we want to make all of our roads safer by raising awareness and encouraging motorists to consider their driving behaviour.

It's great to be collaborating with our partners in the police on this important campaign.

Superintendent Emma Aldred, Head of Specialist Operations at North Yorkshire Police, said:

As police officers, we see too many people taking serious risks on our roads – and those risks can, and often do, cost lives.

We are pleased to join Northumbria Police and Durham Constabulary in working with National Highways to create a really robust team, in order to target those who break the law on our road network.

This operation has shown remarkable results previously and we know this time will be no different. Officers will be covering the stretch of the A1 24/7 and will not let up in their efforts to target those who have no regards for others on our roads.

Inspector Kevin Salter from Durham and Cleveland Specialist Operations Unit said:

It is important for us to work with neighbouring forces to keep our road networks safe for everyone to use especially as drivers regularly cross force borders. By carrying out these operations together, we are able to engage and educate drivers on a larger scale about the importance of driving safely, and not becoming another statistic. We would much rather engage with road users to prevent incidents that have to deal with the aftermath of a tragic incident.

Sgt Glen Robson, of Northumbria Police's Motor Patrols Department, said:

This operation is a fantastic example of the holistic approach Forces and partners are committed to taking to keep our roads safe for all.

If you are driving whilst on your mobile phone, or distracted by something else in the car, you are more likely to miss potential hazards and cause an accident – and these accidents can cost someone their loved one.

We urge drivers to think before they act, anyone found to breaking the rules of the road will see swift action and face the consequences of their choices.

From their elevated viewpoint in the unmarked HGV cabs, police officers are able to spot people driving dangerously – whatever vehicle they may be in.

Among the incidents witnessed during Operation Tramline have been a driver steering a lorry with his knees while eating lunch on his lap and also using his phone in the East Midlands. While in West Mercia, officers saw a driver eating lasagne with a knife and fork while driving along a motorway.

Surrey Police spotted a HGV driver boiling a kettle on the dashboard and another eating pickled gherkins from a jar with his elbows on the steering wheel.

One driver was caught twice in one day – in the morning and afternoon – using their mobile phone while driving along the A38 in Derbyshire.

Consequences for the drivers range from warnings to fixed penalty notices, court summons or even arrest.

Police forces across the country have been using the supercabs since 2015

DVSA's Head of Enforcement Delivery, Ian Bain said:

DVSA's priority is protecting everyone from unsafe drivers and vehicles.

Partnership operations play a vital role in clamping down on drivers and operators breaking the rules and endangering everyday road users in the North East.

DVSA examiners' knowledge and expertise play a central role in identifying and preventing dangerous vehicles from operating on our roads.

We hope this joint action will remind operators of their responsibility to maintain road safety.

Nina Day from HSE's Transport Sector, said:

Employers must ensure that drivers, other workers, and members of the public are kept safe when vehicles are used for work. There are legal requirements for employers to have robust procedures in place to manage vehicle safety, including ensuring suitable procedures are in place, providing workers with appropriate training and equipment, maintaining equipment and vehicles, and supporting drivers when they raise concerns.

HSE works closely with our partner agencies to help vehicle operators and load consignors understand their legal responsibilities and effectively manage risk.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the National Highways customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the National Highways press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Royal recognition for Dyfed cadets](#)

Able Cadet Adam Hughes of Tenby Sea Cadet Corps; Able Cadet Maisie Millichip of Fishguard Sea Cadet Corps; Cadet Flight Sergeant Bethany Valentine of No. 3 Welsh Wing RAF Air Cadets and Cadet Corporal Martha Ashcroft of No. 3 Welsh Wing RAF Air Cadets were appointed by Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Dyfed, Miss Sara Edwards at an awards ceremony on Thursday, March 10.

The four were selected for the prestigious Lord-Lieutenant's cadet role, which will last for one year, after being put forward for nomination by cadet

group leaders and the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association for Wales.

The role includes attendance with Miss Edwards, who acts as the Queen's representative, at a number of official engagements, including Remembrance events, Royal visits and parades.

Miss Edwards said,

The Cadet Forces are wonderful organisations, in which the mixture of military training, youth and community work as well as civilian qualifications all help to prepare our young people to become responsible adult members of society and to give them confidence and a can do spirit.

The four cadets for 2022 will follow in the footsteps of Petty Officer Cadet Chris Harries of Fishguard Sea Cadet Corps; Petty Officer Cadet Alfie Anderson of Milford Haven Sea Cadet Corps; Leading Cadet Matthew Coburn of Tenby Sea Cadets; Cadet Warrant Officer Sarah Greenshields of No. 3 Welsh Wing RAF Air Cadets and Cadet Warrant Officer Josh Richards also of No 3 Welsh Wing RAF Air Cadets.

Miss Edwards also praised the work of the Cadet Force Adult Volunteers – six of whom received special recognition for their outstanding service and devotion to duty and were awarded the Lord-Lieutenant's Certificate of Merit during the ceremony.

The six adults were Colour Sergeant Nigel Phillips of Wales University Officers' Training Corps; Sergeant Major Instructor Thomas Thomas of Dyfed and Glamorgan Army Cadet Force; Flight Lieutenant Kristian Butler of No. 3 Welsh Wing RAF Air Cadets; Sergeant Owen Phillips of No. 3 Welsh Wing RAF Air Cadets; Mrs Rosemary Fitzgerald of Swansea Sea Cadet Corps and Mrs Tina Bushell-Friel of No. 3 Welsh Wing RAF Air Cadets.

There are nearly 5,000 Cadets in Wales who gain skills and qualifications through working with local communities, charities and taking part in a variety of practical activities. The cadet syllabus is delivered by 1,500 volunteering adult Instructors and civilian assistants, who give up their spare time on weeknights and weekends.

The virtual awards event was organised and broadcast by the Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Association (RFCA) for Wales – an organisation that has supported the Armed Forces for over 100 years.

New efficiency drive to cut £5.5 billion of government waste

- The Prime Minister and the Chancellor order new crackdown on cross-Whitehall waste to drive efficiency, effectiveness, and economy across government
- The drive will be spearheaded by a new Chancellor-chaired “Efficiency and Value for Money Committee” that will cut £5.5 billion worth of waste – with savings used to fund vital public services
- As part of the crackdown, the annual NHS efficiency target will be doubled to 2.2% and “quangos” will be expected to find at least £800m which will be pumped back into public services

At the request of the Prime Minister, the Chancellor, Rishi Sunak will spearhead a new drive on efficiency, effectiveness and economy in government spending to ensure departments are delivering the highest quality services at the best value.

The crackdown will be driven by a new Chancellor-chaired Efficiency and Value for Money Committee that will ensure the 5% efficiency target set at the 2021 Spending Review is met across Whitehall and scrutinise strategies to prevent fraud and error. The move will save a total of £5.5 billion with the money being pumped directly back into vital public services.

As part of the renewed drive, the Chancellor said the NHS efficiency commitment will double to 2.2% a year – freeing up £4.75 billion to fund NHS priority areas over the next three years.

These savings will be made through a range of programmes including the digitisation of diagnostic and front-line services, which has been shown to reduce cost per admission by up to 13%, improving the efficiency of surgical hubs and developing digital tools to cut time spend by NHS staff on admin tasks.

Surgical hubs improve efficiency by separating emergency and elective care, so more patients can be seen in a given amount of time, improving value for money without impacting patient safety.

This increased efficiency target will ensure that the record funding settlement of £188.9 billion a year by 2024-25 for the Department for Health and Social Care is delivering the best possible value for money for the taxpayer, the money saved will be used to fund front line NHS priorities.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak said:

During these challenging times it's vital that every single penny of taxpayers hard-earned cash is being spent well.

The current level of waste across government is simply not acceptable – which is why we're doubling down on wasteful spending and launching an efficiency drive to make £5.5 billion worth of savings.

That money will then be pumped directly into the world class public services that the British people deserve. The crackdown will also see a review of Government Arm's Length Bodies or "Quangos" who will be expected to save at least £800m from their budgets.

The Arm's Length Body Review will see savings come from better use of property, reduced reliance on consultants, increased digitisation and greater use of shared services, as well as the use of benchmarking to drive efficiencies.

The Treasury will also launch a new Innovation Challenge to crowdsource ideas from civil servants on how government can reduce waste and improve public services, with winners selected this Summer and best ideas becoming Government policy.

This new Committee comes ahead of the Chancellor's Spring Statement on Wednesday 23rd March where the Chancellor will update Parliament on his plan for the economy in response to the OBR's latest economic forecasts.

Further information

- The £4.75 billion worth of savings agreed with the Department of Health and Social Care will come into effect financial year 2022/23. The Arm's Length Bodies Review will be launched in April 2022, with a target to identify at least £800 million worth of savings.
- At October's Budget and Spending Review, the Chancellor set out a plan to invest in stronger public services, with total departmental spending growing by £150 billion a year in cash terms by 2024-25.
- The Efficiency and Value for Money Committee will be announced to Cabinet on Monday 21st March and deputy co-chaired by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury and the Minister for Brexit Opportunities and Government efficiency.
- The first meeting will take place the week commencing 28th

- A 2015 Innovation Challenge received 22,000 responses with 16 measures implemented.

[British Embassy Doha invites proposal submissions for the Gulf Strategy Fund 2022 to 2025](#)

Recognising the short timeframe and to accommodate projects in different stages of development, projects should not be scheduled to start before 1 July 2022.

Scope and purpose

The Qatar Gulf Strategy Fund Programme supports implementation of FCDO priorities for Qatar identified in the Middle East and North Africa Directorate (MENAD) strategy. It supports Qatar's ambitious 'National Vision 2030' agenda for modernisation, economic diversification and climate action, while enhancing mutual prosperity by promoting inward investment and creating opportunities for UK companies, especially in the education, climate, culture, tourism, sport and finance sectors.

This call for proposals runs in parallel with the Qatar Country Business Plan development process, and projects will be expected to align with strategic direction.

GSF funding is not intended to support isolated activities, such as a single visit or trade mission. Projects must make a clear contribution to strategic objectives and have a clear outcome, such as unlocking wider progress and moving the UK-Qatar partnership forward in a substantive way. All projects must demonstrate value for money. FCDO defines 'value-for-money' as, 'making the best possible use of our all resources to maximise our impact'. In programme work, maximising impact includes having a robust, evidence-based theory of change demonstrating the causal pathway between the intervention and outcomes that support FCDO strategic priorities.

Proposals may build on the work of current GSF projects in the sectors of climate and biodiversity, education, health, culture, sport, tourism, finance, justice and security, but we also invite concepts in other thematic areas.

We also draw your attention to the MENAD Gender Charter pledge released in September 2021, which calls on Posts to carry out specific and targeted work on gender equality and inclusion, and to ensure gender equality and inclusion is mainstreamed in any programme design and delivery.

BED recognises the challenges of working in a rapidly changing environment, reliant on the schedules and priorities of external actors. This particularly impacts the scheduling of activities and becomes difficult when planning a multi-year programme. We therefore embrace flexible and adaptive approaches as a key component of project effectiveness and value for money.

Funding level and multi-year funding

FCDO is yet to confirm allocations of GSF funding for individual countries over this period, but we are working to an indicative budget of £1 million per year for three years. To improve efficiency our preference is for larger projects in the range of £20,000 – £250,000 per year. Smaller projects can be considered, but we recommend consolidating them with other work in a similar thematic area.

FCDO has made a commitment to GSF for the three-year period 2022-2025, in line with the FCDO funding settlement. This allows us to think strategically and plan multi-year projects that can have a much greater impact. We therefore encourage concepts that demonstrate a long-term, strategic vision and envisage phased implementation and measurable impact.

However, we anticipate that there will be no facility to carry funds forward from one financial year to the next. While we will commit to multi-year projects, funding commitments will be made on a year-by-year basis, with budget for subsequent years considered indicative. Funding commitment for subsequent years will be made on submission of a fresh ABB for each subsequent year of implementation. This process provides an opportunity for Partners to review and adjust their projects and the timing of activities and response to changing circumstances.

Parameters

In awarding and overseeing programme funds BED is obliged to comply with all Cabinet Office and FCDO rules and guidance, including but not limited to those set out in the FCDO Programme Operating Framework (PrOF). Partners should especially take note of the following requirements:

- all project proposals must have a single lead implementer, which holds full accountability for the full project budget. A lead Implementer may in some cases sub-contract project activity to a third party
- FCDO can only pay for costs that are incurred after signature and between the start and end date stated in a funding arrangement or contract. Project start-dates must post-date signature on the relevant MoU, Grant Agreement (GA) or Contract, and no costs may be incurred by projects prior to signing by both parties
- no payment can be made in advance of need. BED will not consider any request from an implementing partner for advance payments
- all new programmes and the projects must align with the Paris Agreement and assess climate and environmental impact and risks, taking steps to ensure that no environmental harm is done
- all programmes must consider and demonstrate how their interventions

will impact gender equality, disability inclusion and those with protected characteristics

- all projects involving paid-for communications activity must receive clearance from the Professional Communications Assurance (PCA) team prior to signing a GA / MoU / Contract
- all approved projects will be expected to comply with FCDO mandated reporting requirements using templates provided, including: (i) Monthly ABB forecasts; (ii) Quarterly Monitoring Reports and (iii) Project closure report
- all projects activities must be completed within the financial year for which the funding is approved. Projects should plan to complete activities by February or very-early March to allow for financial processing to be concluded before the end of each financial year

Process

Proposals will be appraised according to the appraisal criteria below, and submitted to the Qatar Country Programme Board for consideration. BED will expedite the approval process to the extent possible, but cannot approve projects until formal funding allocation is confirmed by FCDO.

Approved projects will then begin the mobilisation process before beginning implementation, including:

- securing any required approvals (e.g. PCA)
- due diligence assessments if required
- preparation and signing of GA / MoU
- competitive bid process (if required) to select commercial providers

Appraisal criteria

Criteria	Explanation	Weighting
Strategic fit	Alignment with relevant MENA Business Plan and Qatar Country Business Plan objectives	25%
Value for Money	FCDO defines 'value-for-money' as, 'making the best possible use of our all resources to maximise our impact'. In programme work, maximising impact includes having a robust, evidence-based theory of change demonstrating the causal pathway between the intervention and outcomes that support FCDO strategic priorities.	25%
Feasibility	Are project objectives realistic in the timeframe? Are stakeholders (Especially within Qatar Government) supportive?	15%
Risk	Is the risk assessment comprehensive and realistic? Are mitigation measures viable? Are any risks (reputational, financial) to FCDO and UK Government within an acceptable range?	15%
Consideration of cross-cutting issues	Are cross-cutting issues, especially gender, climate and disability inclusion, dealt with adequately? Proactively?	10%

Criteria	Explanation	Weighting
Capability of the implementing organisation	Does the organisation have a proven record of performance delivering in this context or similar contexts?	10%

How to submit proposals

The Project Proposal form template is identical to last year's GSF template except the budget and output / activities sections have been adapted for multi-year projects.

The Activity Based Budget template has been adapted to accommodate projects for up to three years duration. For the first year, partners need to calculate budget on a monthly basis. Subsequent years are budgeted on a quarterly basis initially, and will be refined and re-approved in advance of each financial year.

Submit the relevant FCDO contract, Grant Agreement (GA) or Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) template for your organisation's internal review processes (request the appropriate template from the Embassy if you don't have a copy). British Embassy Doha will not enter into negotiation on these beyond the limited areas that we are authorised to approve at Post. If you do not have a copy of these templates, please get in touch as above to request one.

Contact

For any queries or clarification, contact:

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