

UK science and fight against COVID-19

The UK's world-class science, research and innovation institutions are working around the clock to understand and tackle the COVID19 pandemic – both domestically and around the world. It is doing this by supporting vaccine trials in British labs and by collaborating with international partners to ensure a COVID-19-free world for all.

Leading a united global push

On the 4th of June, the UK will host the Gavi Global Vaccine Summit 2020. The event aims to unite countries in committing to global health security and ensuring that communities around the world have equitable access to vaccines. Earlier UK aid for Gavi is already underway in vaccinating 76 million children and saving 1.4 million lives from vaccine-preventable diseases by 2020 and we have now pledged an additional £1.4 billion a year for the next five years. This makes us the single largest donor to the Alliance that has already vaccinated over 700 million children globally.

This is but the latest initiative in a series of UK's science-led international collaborations, embodying what Prime Minister Boris Johnson has referred to as 'humanity against the virus'.

In April, the government launched the UK Vaccine Taskforce and pledged £250 million towards international efforts to develop a vaccine. A further £14 million was committed to 21 new research projects to develop treatments and vaccines. In addition, the UK co-hosted the International Coronavirus Global Response event on 4 May that raised £6 billion for R&D towards COVID-19 vaccines, testing and treatment.

More recently, the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) launched the Hygiene Hub, a free online platform backed by £500k of UK aid that will support governments in developing countries by strengthening their health and education systems to prevent future pandemics.

UK-Singapore collaborations in COVID-19 treatment

The LSHTM is also collaborating with the Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health at the National University of Singapore on COVID-19 modelling studies. This is one in a number of UK-Singapore joint research projects on COVID-19 treatments that build on the strong alliances between our universities and labs. Another collaboration was between researchers in the Nanyang Technological University Singapore and the University of Oxford who published a report on primary care handling of COVID-19 that fed into NICE telemedicine for medical practitioners around the world.

Extending beyond Singapore, the UK's Wellcome Trust is supporting a serological survey of COVID-19 risk in Singapore, Hong Kong and Thailand.



The UK stands with the world, fighting COVID-19 together

Delivering key collaborations across the region

The UK's Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) and Newton Fund Agile COVID-19 Response call for 19 research projects in Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Philippines, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. In a several Newton Fund calls in Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand have been re-focused to address public health impacts on local communities, such as the Newton funded project CONI (COVID-19 Network Investment Alliance) in Thailand, which uses genomic technology to investigate and monitor COVID-19 infection in the country.

The UK has also recently launched the Global Effort on COVID-19 (GECO) Health Research call that is delivering priority areas in the WHO COVID-19 Roadmap and is especially targeting low and middle income countries, including in the Southeast Asian region.

Funding COVID R&D in the UK

Back in the UK, the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) has been at the forefront of supporting domestic COVID-19 treatment, diagnostic and vaccines. It has made available £25 million through the UKRI/NHS response call for COVID-19 research, and an additional £42.5 million to support clinical testing of vaccines at the University of Oxford and Imperial College London.

With government funding, the University of Oxford and AstraZeneca are collaborating on a potential recombinant adenovirus vaccine aimed at preventing COVID-19 infection from SARS-CoV-2. Human trials have now begun. Simultaneously, government support has enabled clinical trials of 40,000 health care workers. The University is also racing to study the effectiveness of anti-malaria treatment on the COVID-19 virus.

A recent £93 million boost in funding will accelerate the establishment of a specialist Vaccines Manufacturing and Innovation Centre (under construction in Oxfordshire, south central England) in mid-2021, on a fast-track schedule.

Putting science at the heart of recovery

The cure for COVID-19 is yet a way off but the achievements of our researchers, back home in the UK and in labs around the world, give us reason to stay resolutely optimistic.

With government support led by science and innovative businesses and academia working hand-in-hand, the UK is fully committed to ensure that not only will we find a solution together, but that when we do, it will be accessible to anyone who needs it, no matter where they are.

/Public Release. View in full [here](#).

Tags: Asia, Cambodia, Government, Imperial College London, Indonesia, Laos, London, Malaysia, National Institute of Technological University, National University of Singapore, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, UK, UK, Vietnam, WHO