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## **HSBC UK partners with Imperial College London, University of Birmingham and National Trust to accelerate the UK's transition to net zero**

- *Accelerating cleantech start-ups at Imperial and UoB: 150 UK businesses to participate in structured programmes of support and training over 4 years*
- *Creating carbon rich habitats with National Trust: 2m trees across 2000ha of new woodland habitat, locking in 1.25m tonnes of carbon over 4 years*

HSBC UK has announced philanthropic partnerships with Imperial College London (Imperial), the University of Birmingham (UoB) and National Trust to deliver innovation and nature-based solutions to tackle the climate crisis.

The UK-focused initiatives form part of HSBC's global *Climate Solutions Partnership* with World Resources Institute and WWF announced [earlier today](#), which aims to unlock barriers to finance for companies and projects that tackle climate change to bring them to scale while also delivering for people and nature. The global initiative is backed by \$100m of philanthropic funding from HSBC over five years.

**Ian Stuart, Chief Executive HSBC UK said:** "A challenge as significant as climate change can only be tackled in collaboration, with innovation and nature-based solutions both playing a key part in accelerating the UK's transition to net zero.

"We are excited to welcome Imperial College London, the University of Birmingham and National Trust to the global *Climate Solutions Partnership*, bringing together our combined knowledge, insight and international network to help climate solutions break through systemic barriers and to scale-up."

### ***Business Innovation: supporting cleantech accelerators at Imperial and UoB***

- We will work with Imperial and UoB to support 150 start-ups developing services or technologies with potential for impact on climate change by December 2024. Providing research expertise, intensive coaching to help redesign business and technology models, grant funding and run educational workshops to attract commercial investment for ventures to scale. <sup>3,4</sup>
- Around 35 UK businesses are expected to participate in the accelerator programmes each year, with participants ranging from entrepreneurs with an idea that they want to develop, through to established businesses developing cleantech and companies that need to innovate and make themselves low-carbon in order to stay in business.
- A select number will go on to participate in the global *Climate Solutions Partnership* innovation accelerator, powered by WWF's Impactio platform, which will help further scale climate solutions internationally, supporting business innovations in partnership with leading universities, research institutes, incubators and accelerators.

**Professor Richard Templer, Director of Innovation at the Grantham Institute at Imperial and one of The Greenhouse accelerator programme founders said:**

“We are very excited to be working with HSBC UK to support the growth of young, sustainable, businesses looking to tackle climate change. We will be looking to identify teams with really original or breakthrough ideas that can have real climate impact. We will also closely consider the merits of the founding team, the uniqueness of their idea, scalability, and chances of success.”

**Professor Martin Freer, Director of the Birmingham Energy Institute at the University of Birmingham said:** “In partnership with HSBC UK we can accelerate and expand our support for SMEs across the region. That means helping more businesses to make tangible progress in adopting zero carbon technologies while also growing their business and contributing to the regional economy.”

**Amanda Murphy, Head of Commercial Banking, HSBC UK said:** “Companies, especially start-ups, that are developing cleaner technology often struggle to access the networks, financial backing and business mentoring required to succeed. Our partnership with Imperial College London and the University of Birmingham will support UK innovators who are pioneering new frontiers in climate change solutions, giving them the very best chance to grow and thrive.”

***Nature-based solutions: creating carbon rich habitats with National Trust***

- Two million trees will be planted as part of ambitious plans to increase access to nature, tackle climate change, attract more wildlife and protect landscapes prone to flooding by 2025.
- The aim is to create 2000 hectares of new woodland habitat – an area equivalent to roughly the size of Worcester, and lock in 1.25 million tonnes of carbon – the carbon equivalent of the annual emissions of more than 270,000 cars.
- The four-year project – which is thanks to the largest environmental donation of its kind for the charity – represents a major step in the fight against climate change.

**Hilary McGrady, National Trust Director General said:** “This gift represents a major step in our attempt to try and tackle the effects of climate change and ensures we can plant the trees in the right places to really maximise the impact they will have in locking in carbon.

“This is much more than just tree planting. By creating these woodlands, we hope to see further benefits by allowing the landscape to regenerate naturally and without the need for so much intervention by way of tree planting in the future. Nature has a way of healing, if we can just give it a chance.”

**Michaela Wright, Head of Corporate Sustainability, HSBC UK said:** “Nature-based solutions can provide a third of the global climate mitigation needed by 2030, protecting nature as well as meeting people’s needs.

“Our ambition is to leverage our financial expertise with the knowledge and experience of our global partners to open the door for National Trust to explore new areas of agroforestry management and how nature-based solutions are being scaled and implemented to tackle the climate crisis internationally.”

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<https://www.about.hsbc.co.uk/news-and-media>

**Notes to editors:**

1. The *Climate Solutions Partnership* forms part of [HSBC's ambitious global climate strategy](#), announced in October 2020. HSBC aims to align its provision of finance to net zero by 2050 or sooner, in line with the Paris Agreement goals, and expects to provide between \$US750 billion and US\$1 trillion of finance and investment by 2030 to support its customers in the net zero transition.
2. **HSBC UK**  
HSBC UK serves around 14.5 million customers across the UK, supported by 32,000 colleagues. HSBC UK offers a complete range of retail banking and wealth management to personal and private banking customers, as well as commercial banking for small to medium businesses and large corporates.  
**HSBC Holdings plc**  
HSBC Holdings plc, the parent company of HSBC, is headquartered in London. HSBC serves customers worldwide from offices in 64 countries and territories in its geographical regions: Europe, Asia, North America, Latin America, and Middle East and North Africa. With assets of \$2,959bn at 31 March 2021, HSBC is one of the world's largest banking and financial services organisations.
3. **About Imperial College London**  
Imperial College London is one of the world's leading universities. The College's 20,000 students and 8,000 staff are working to solve to the biggest challenges in science, medicine, engineering and business.  
Imperial is the world's fifth most international university, according to Times Higher Education, with academic ties to more than 150 countries. Reuters named the College as the UK's most innovative university because of its exceptional entrepreneurial culture and ties to industry.  
The Greenhouse is part of a new centre for climate change innovation, a major joint initiative between Imperial and the Royal Institution, based at the Royal Institution's central London headquarters, and announced in March 2021. The centre will bring businesses, entrepreneurs, policy makers, academics and the public together around climate change innovation, creating a focus for London-based innovators to implement global change through pioneering, practical solutions.
4. **About the University of Birmingham**  
The University of Birmingham is ranked amongst the world's top 100 institutions. Its work brings people from across the world to Birmingham, including researchers, teachers and more than 6,500 international students from over 150 countries.  
The BEI, part of the University of Birmingham, was established to shape the development of future energy solutions. It collaborates with industry, academia and policy-makers to support clean and smart energy developments.

## **5. About the National Trust**

The National Trust is a conservation charity founded in 1895 by three people: Octavia Hill, Sir Robert Hunter and Hardwicke Rawnsley, who saw the importance of the nation's heritage and open spaces and wanted to preserve them for everyone to enjoy. Today, across England, Wales and Northern Ireland, we continue to look after places so people and nature can thrive.

The challenges of the coronavirus pandemic have shown this is more important than ever. From finding fresh air and open skies to tracking a bee's flight to a flower; from finding beauty in an exquisite painting or discovering the hidden history of a country house nearby - the places we care for enrich people's lives.

Entirely independent of Government, the National Trust looks after more than 250,000 hectares of countryside, 780 miles of coastline and 500 historic properties, gardens and nature reserves.

The National Trust is for everyone - we were founded for the benefit of the whole nation. We receive on average more than 26.9 million visits each year to the places we care for that have an entry fee, and an estimated 100 million visits to the outdoor places that are free of charge. Paying visitors, together with our 5.6 million members and more than 53,000 volunteers, support our work to care for nature, beauty, history. For everyone, for ever.

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