

Two British Council projects win Newton Prize in Thailand



Newton Prize 2017

Winning British Council projects in Thailand

[Winning British Council project in Vietnam](#)

Winners with Deputy Prime Minister, Dr Prajin Juntong, the Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific, Mark Field, and Ambassador Brian Davidson. © Katie Clark, Newton Fund

A British Council **Institutional Links** project which has solved around 100 undiagnosed cases of rare genetic diseases in children has been crowned the Newton Prize winner for Thailand. A second Chairman's Award for Thailand has also been presented to a British Council Institutional Links project that has established a UK-Thai network in shrimp health focused on knowledge exchange and capacity building, and challenging disease control in aquaculture. Each project will receive £200,000 to further their research.

The Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Mark Field, the British Ambassador to Thailand, Brian Davidson and the Deputy Prime Minister, H.E. ACM Dr. Prajin Juntong, presented the awards in Bangkok today (Wednesday 22 November).

More than 50 people attended the event at the Ambassador's Residence at the British Embassy in Bangkok including researchers, representatives of the Thai government and Thai delivery partners to announce the winning projects and celebrate all shortlisted project for the Newton Prize. It also celebrates three years of the Newton Fund in Thailand and its growing success in research and innovation collaboration between the UK and Thailand.

The Newton Prize was awarded to the lead researchers for the winning project, Professor Vorasuk Shotelersuk from the Centre of Excellence for Medical Genetics at Chulalongkorn University. Professor Philip Beales from UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health is the UK partner for the project.

Professor Philip Beales said: "This unique funding opportunity has made a huge difference to dozens of Thai families who have been searching for

causes of their child's illness for several years. Furthermore, it has catapulted genetics services in Bangkok to serve thousands more children and their families."

Dr Kallaya Sritunyalucksana from the Shrimp-pathogen interaction (SPI) Laboratory at BIOTIC was presented with a Chairman's Award for Thailand for her work with her UK partner, Professor Grant Stentiford from the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas).

Professor Stentiford said: "Decentralising diagnostics for use by the farmer at the 'pond side' will revolutionise the fight against disease in global aquaculture. Reporting that data via smartphone apps will minimise onward spread and contribute to greater food security from this sector."

The UK-Thailand Research and Innovation Partnership Fund is the first formal research and innovation partnership programme between the UK and Thai Governments. Both countries have agreed five priority areas of mutual interest: health and life sciences; agri-technology; future cities; environment and energy; and digital innovation and creativity. To date, there have been a total of 18 Newton programmes which are divided into three categories: people, research and translation. The UK and Thailand will jointly invest at least Bt 1,200 million from 2014 to 2021.

To find out more about the Newton Prize, please visit our [website](#).

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