

The global political context in which these risks and opportunities sit also continues to evolve. The UK is committed to promoting global peace, security and stability, and is a leading supporter of the international rules-based system. Our commitment to our extensive co-operation with international partners remains steadfast and we will continue to help ensure that the global community is able to respond to changing risks and identify opportunities. The UK is leaving the European Union (EU) and while our future relationship with the EU is still to be determined, we are not leaving Europe. We will want the strongest possible links with our European neighbours, as well as our close friends in North America, the Commonwealth and other important partners around the world.

A UK Biological Security Strategy

This document sets out our strategy for meeting these challenges and exploiting the opportunities – some of this will be achievable within this Parliament, while some will only be achievable in the longer term. Alongside this strategy we must be conscious of a range of other relevant national and international programmes, strategies and future work programmes. These include the vision set out in the 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review, our Global Health Security and UK Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy, and our counter terrorism strategy CONTEST, the National Counter-Proliferation Strategy to 2020, the UK Influenza Preparedness Strategy, the Strategy for UK Life Sciences, the Vision and high level Strategy for UK Animal and Plant Health Research to 2020 and Beyond, and the Strategy for Agricultural Technologies and the Department for International Development's (DFID's) 2016 Research Review.

This strategy does not seek to duplicate or replace the work set out in those other documents (many of which focus on specific areas within this landscape in more detail), but rather to set out an overarching narrative for how the cross-Government effort fits together, and to highlight those areas where we will seek to do more collectively.

B. Main assumptions to 2020 and beyond

Alongside the broader strategic context set out in the previous section, there are a number of specific assumptions that inform our response to significant biological risks (including those risks highlighted in the 2015 NSRA). These are:

- The world will continue to become more physically interconnected through travel and migration – affecting both natural health security and deliberate threats. This will lead to challenges, but there will also be increased opportunities and capacities for strengthened global surveillance and early response.
- Advances in medical technology, genetic engineering and biotechnology will hold significant potential for UK prosperity and growth, as well as having a positive impact on our security by allowing us to address risks in new ways. However, such technology will also become more available to state and non-state actors, who may misuse it to endanger our security.

For natural biological risks

- Increasing international travel, trade and urbanisation will increase the potential for new infectious diseases to spread beyond the areas of the world in which they were once contained (such as the spread of Dengue over the last 60 years), and to do so rapidly. In many cases, such as Ebola, diseases originating with animals will affect humans.
- Unless the appropriate actions are implemented both nationally and internationally, we will see the increasing emergence and spread of antimicrobial resistance (AMR), which can lead to drug-resistant infections in both humans and animals, and will have a massive impact on both human health and the global economy.