

# A Charter for Business



Foreign &  
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Office





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The Foreign and Commonwealth Office

# Foreword from the Foreign Secretary and Lord Green

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» The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has made supporting UK business abroad and attracting investors to the UK a core activity «

From May 2010 onwards the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has made supporting UK business abroad and attracting investors to the UK a core activity, in order to help build Britain's prosperity.

This priority sits alongside the FCO's work to safeguard Britain's national security and support British nationals around the world. Britain's commercial diplomacy is an integral part of foreign policy and is based on our economic interests and values. The FCO works on behalf of the whole of government and draws on the expertise of its UK Trade & Investment teams, the Departments for Business, International Development, Energy and Climate Change and others. The FCO's network is the backbone of the Government's support for UK business internationally.

Our Ambassadors and High Commissioners in the emerging powers and traditional markets alike are leading campaigns to win new business, attract inward investment and champion the reputation of the UK economy, and they



are working to build an environment in which UK business can thrive. Ministers have already led a number of successful trade missions overseas highlighting investment opportunities and contracts worth hundreds of millions of pounds and safeguarding thousands of jobs in the UK.

This 'Charter for Business', which complements the UK Trade and Investment strategy, sets out seven commitments the FCO will make to support UK business abroad.

We are both determined that the FCO makes what it does for business an example of UK diplomatic excellence at its best. Business will be the judge of our success.

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**William Hague MP**

Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

**Lord Green**

Minister of State for Trade and Investment

# The Foreign and Commonwealth Office

## A Charter for Business

1. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is committed to giving the UK's commercial and economic interests strong support within our foreign policy and the UK's bilateral relationships. We will incorporate the views of UK business and draw on the best available economic analysis.
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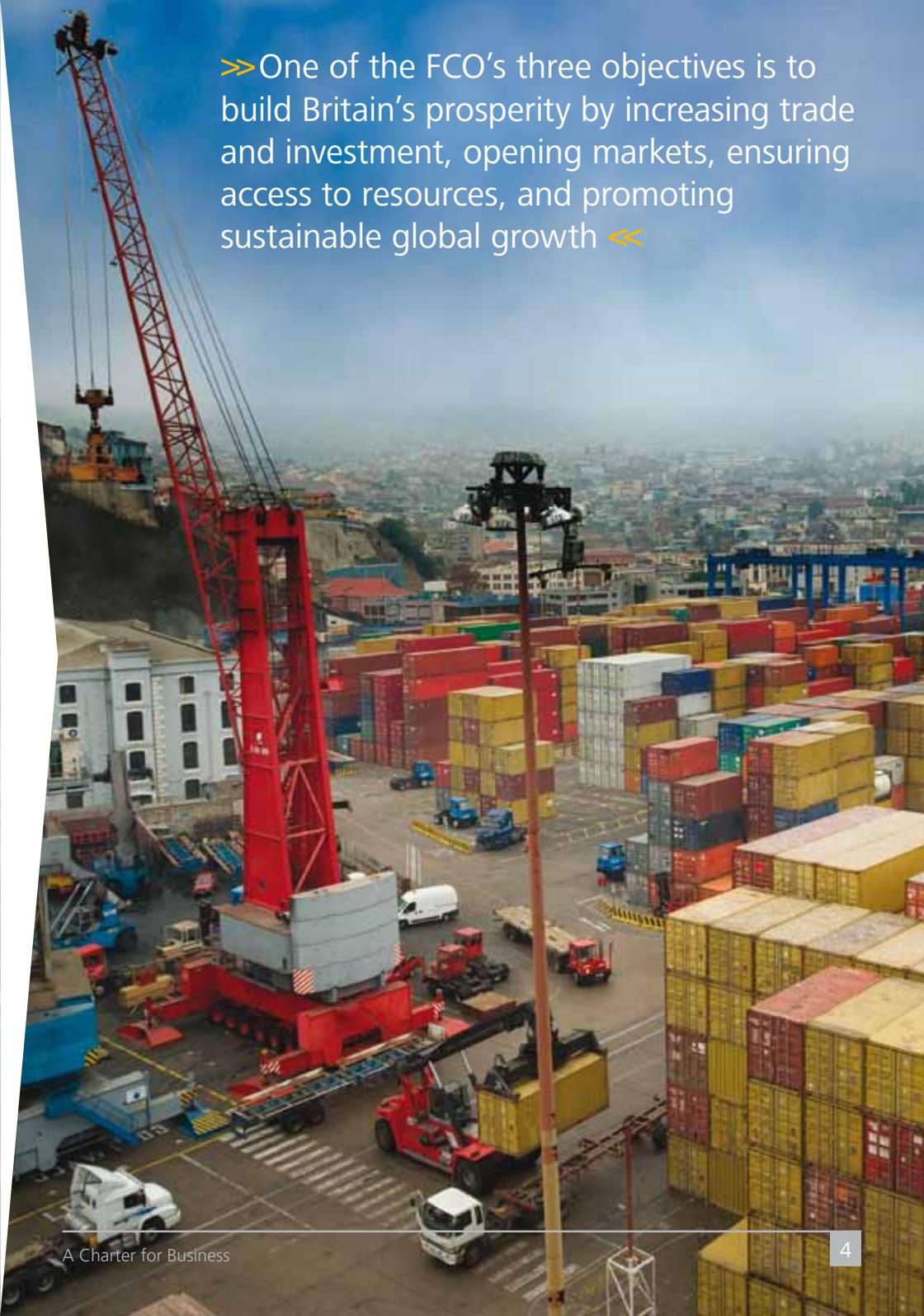
**>> HOW:** One of the FCO's three objectives is to build Britain's prosperity by increasing trade and investment, opening markets, ensuring access to resources, and promoting sustainable global growth.

The FCO has created a new Commercial and Economic Diplomacy Department to help deliver this, to work more closely with UK business and liaise with the rest of the FCO to ensure we balance HMG's commercial

and security objectives. The FCO has also created a new Economics Unit at the centre of the FCO, reporting directly to the Permanent-Under-Secretary. The FCO is planning to increase the number of resources dedicated to the prosperity agenda in high growth markets overseas.

Directorates across the FCO are incorporating commercial diplomacy objectives into their work.

>> One of the FCO's three objectives is to build Britain's prosperity by increasing trade and investment, opening markets, ensuring access to resources, and promoting sustainable global growth <<



2. The FCO will use its knowledge of foreign culture, languages and the local political and economic situation to help UK businesses identify and pursue new opportunities, manage risk and build relationships with the right foreign decision-makers, individual companies and potential investors.
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**>> HOW:** UK businesses can draw on the support of FCO staff working in British Embassies and High Commissions in over 170 countries around the world.

Diplomatic staff speak over eighty foreign languages, including Mandarin, Japanese, Korean, Russian, Hindi and Arabic, and two-thirds of the workforce is locally-engaged to ensure HM Government capitalises on local knowledge and insight.

Staff share their political, economic and security analysis in written and oral briefings for UK business and through the joint FCO and UK Trade & Investment service and website.

[www.ukti.gov.uk/export/howwehelp/osibupdatesinfo.html](http://www.ukti.gov.uk/export/howwehelp/osibupdatesinfo.html)

**>>> UK business can draw on the support of FCO staff working in British Embassies and High Commissions in over 170 countries around the world <<<**





3. FCO Ministers and officials will lobby tirelessly on behalf of UK business interests overseas; and use every opportunity to champion the UK's reputation as an outstanding place to invest and do business. The FCO will monitor measures taken by our competitors to attract inward investment and ensure these are fed into policy making in the UK.

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>> Foreign Office Ministers will plan their overseas travel strategically to further UK commercial objectives <<



➤ **HOW:** Over the last year FCO Ministers have made over 100 official overseas visits, meeting their counterparts and other influential politicians, business and community leaders. On many of these visits, as well as in meetings between senior officials, commercial objectives were a key part of the discussion. Foreign Office Ministers will plan their overseas travel strategically to further UK commercial objectives.

In every overseas post, FCO staff undertake press and communications work, which includes building relations with local media, and

communicating the advantages of investing in and trading with the UK. A small London-based team works with the 1700 London-based international media to ensure they understand the UK's economic strengths.

The FCO operates websites in 53 local languages around the world, which attract 10 million visitors every year. These platforms are used to champion the UK's reputation.

[www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/what-we-do/fco-websites](http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/about-us/what-we-do/fco-websites)



International  
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4. FCO Ministers and staff will talk directly with UK business and trade associations to brief them on developments in foreign policy, including issues relating to business and human rights, and to understand at first hand UK business needs and priorities.

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>> **HOW:** Before Ministers travel overseas, the FCO will aim to discuss with UK business representatives the objectives for the visit and will take UK business delegations on relevant visits. Similarly the FCO will help business gain access to important foreign visitors to the UK. The FCO will arrange for UK business leaders to be briefed regularly by the FCO's Permanent Under-Secretary and British Ambassadors and High Commissioners visiting the UK.

>> The FCO will help business gain access to important foreign visitors to the UK <<



5. The FCO will seek to influence international economic policy, trade and investment policy, the EU agenda and the business environment in individual countries in a way which promotes UK business interests.

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**>> HOW:** The UK is a member of numerous international organisations including the EU, WTO, OECD, IMF, UN, NATO, and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. More than 350 FCO staff work in overseas missions to influence the agendas in these organisations. FCO staff in London, Geneva, Brussels and posts around the network are working to help secure ambitious trade and investment agreements, and to promote secure, stable, competitive and sustainable operating environments for UK business.

6. When UK businesses request FCO assistance we will make sure that they are put in touch with the right people, whether in the FCO, UK Trade & Investment or other parts of Government. Where overseas posts have no dedicated UK Trade & Investment team, FCO staff will support UK business with local contact-making and access issues.
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>> **HOW:** Please visit [www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/find-an-embassy](http://www.fco.gov.uk/en/travel-and-living-abroad/find-an-embassy) and [www.ukti.gov.uk/export/unitedkingdom](http://www.ukti.gov.uk/export/unitedkingdom), or call the FCO on 020 7008 1500, and UK Trade & Investment on 020 7215 8000 for more information.

7. The FCO will equip its staff with the necessary skills to be effective in supporting UK business and investment, as a core part of the job of the Diplomatic Service.
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>> **HOW:** The FCO is investing in new commercial diplomacy training for staff, with participation from UK business. By 2012, the vast majority of FCO geographical desk officers will have undertaken this training. The FCO is encouraging its staff, particularly newly appointed British Ambassadors and High Commissioners, to go on secondments and short attachments to UK businesses. The FCO's Permanent Under-Secretary launched a Diplomatic Excellence programme in November 2010 to ensure the FCO continues to develop its world-renowned foreign policy and influencing skills.

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**For more information  
please contact:**

Commercial and Economic  
Diplomacy Department

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
King Charles Street  
London SW1A 2AH

020 7008 1500

[www.fco.gov.uk](http://www.fco.gov.uk)