



TRADE POLICY REVIEW

REPORT BY

UNITED KINGDOM

Pursuant to the Agreement Establishing the Trade Policy Review Mechanism (Annex 3 of the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization), the policy statement by the United Kingdom is attached.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland is pleased to undergo its first Trade Policy Review as an independent Member of the World Trade Organization. The UK is steadfast in its support for the rules-based international trading system, advocating for the central role of the WTO yet recognizing the need for reform at increased pace.

1.2. The UK is a constitutional monarchy made up of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The UK Government in Westminster is responsible for policies which affect just England, as well as overall policy in a number of areas. The devolved governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have their own devolved legislatures with authority over matters that are not reserved to the UK Parliament. These are referred to as "devolved" matters.¹ Where applicable, this report will specify how trade and trade-related policies apply in the devolved legislatures. This UK Government Report reflects the UK's policy as of July 2025.

1.3. Since the last Trade Policy Review as a European Union (EU) member State in 2020, prior to our formal departure, the UK's trade policy has been in active development to support our priorities and economy as an independent trading nation. Domestic changes as well as external challenges have caused the UK to strengthen its approach to a shifting global and economic order.

1.4. The UK Government has recently published a Trade Strategy, which is aimed at achieving long-term sustainable, inclusive, and resilient growth through trade, supported by rigorous economic and geopolitical analysis. It focuses on the ways that trade is changing and how the UK can take a forward-facing approach to upcoming challenges. The Trade Strategy also reflects the government's ambition to improve the UK's trade and investment relationship with international partners, and to support and protect UK businesses.

1.5. The Trade Strategy works with our Industrial Strategy "Backing your business", our plan for small and medium sized businesses.² These three interlocking strategies will work together to set out the government's offer to support growth.

1.6. The UK's modern Industrial Strategy is a comprehensive 10-year plan designed to leverage the nation's strengths and unlock its potential. The strategy aims to create a connected, high-skilled, and economically growing country where opportunities, skills, and wealth are distributed fairly. The government is directing investment towards eight key growth sectors and technologies. This approach is intended to enable British workers to upskill and fill vacancies, while also supporting businesses in scaling up.

2 ECONOMIC AND TRADE ENVIRONMENT

2.1 Macroeconomic performance

2.1. The UK stands as the sixth largest economy in the world, thriving as a notably open and globally connected market – our total trade represents around 60% of GDP in 2024.³ Even as the global trading environment faces challenges, the UK continues to champion a pragmatic and resilient approach to trade, delivering tangible benefits for businesses, workers, and consumers across the country.

2.2. The UK Government is actively tackling long-standing challenges in GDP and productivity growth through a robust strategy centred on stability, investment, and reform. This includes strengthening the fiscal framework, accelerating infrastructure and growth investment, and driving bold structural reforms in areas such as planning and regulation.

¹ By constitutional convention, the UK Parliament does not normally legislate in respect of devolved matters, except with the consent of the relevant devolved legislatures. The UK Government also routinely consults with devolved governments when proposed legislative changes have consequential impacts on devolved law.

² The UK Government's definition of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) includes micro enterprises. The WTO refers to the same concept as Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs).

³ Department for Business and Trade (2025), [The UK's Trade Strategy](#).

2.3. After navigating the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and a brief recession in late 2023, the UK economy showed encouraging signs of recovery in early 2024. Despite a moderation in growth later in the year due to global uncertainties, the economy in 2024 was, on average, 3.6% larger than in 2019 – demonstrating resilience and progress.⁴

2.4. Inflation, as measured by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI), has returned to more stable levels following the economic shocks that led to a peak of 11.1% in October 2022.⁵ Inflation reached a low of 1.7% in September 2024, though has since risen due to temporary factors such as a rise in global energy prices. As of January 2025, CPI has decreased to 3%, reflecting effective policy responses. The labour market has loosened, with a reduction in vacancies accompanied by a rise in the unemployment rate – from 3.9% in Q4 2022 to 4.6% in the three months to April 2025. Productivity (GDP per hour) has grown by only 0.6% in aggregate from 2020 to 2024, although this masks a sharper increase in productivity from 2020 to 2022 and then falling productivity in consecutive years from 2022 to 2024.⁶

2.2 Trends in foreign trade

2.5. The UK's trade economy has evolved significantly since 1997, reflecting broader global shifts and domestic economic transformation. The UK has experienced a trade deficit during this period. While driven by a persistent goods trade deficit, this trend has also been shaped by a gradual rebalancing of the economy through a shift from goods to services. In 1997, UK manufacturing comprised up to 62% of total exports – a figure that has steadily declined to around 48% in 2009 after the financial crisis, around 45% as the UK formally left the EU in 2020, and then to 37% in 2024.⁷ The largest suppliers of inputs for UK exporters in 2020 were the United States (the US, supplying 16.8% of all foreign inputs used in UK exports⁸). The UK has stronger forward linkages with the EU-27 countries, mainly Ireland, Luxemburg and Germany. The EU accounted for two-thirds (66%) of all UK valued added embodied in foreign exports in 2020.⁹

2.6. The UK is the largest global net exporter of financial services, with a surplus of GBP 99.4 billion in 2024.¹⁰ Service exports have grown significantly since 1997 and continue to contribute to economic growth. The UK's services trade surplus was around GBP 21.4 billion in 1997, with exports of GBP 76.2 billion exceeding the GBP 54.8 billion of imports. In 2024, trade surplus was around GBP 193.7 billion – total exports were valued at GBP 507.8 billion compared to imports of just GBP 314.1 billion.¹¹

2.7. The EU and the US are among the top export markets for the UK, with the top five export markets (goods and services) consisting of the US, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands and France. On the contrary, the UK's top import markets (goods and services) are the US, Germany, Netherlands, France and China.

2.3 Foreign direct investment

2.8. The UK is one of the world's most attractive investment destinations, known for its robust legal system, business-friendly regulatory environment, efficient administrative processes, and its commitment to transparency.^{12,13} These factors create an efficient and predictable environment that encourages investor confidence and economic growth.

⁴ Office for National Statistics (2025), [Gross Domestic Product \(GDP\)](#).

⁵ Office for National Statistics (2025), [Consumer price inflation, UK: February 2025](#).

⁶ Office for National Statistics (2025), [Output per hour worked, UK: May 2025](#), Table 5.

⁷ Office for National Statistics (2025), [UK trade: March 2025](#).

⁸ Office for National Statistics (2020), [UK trading partners and trade relationships - Office for National Statistics](#).

⁹ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2023), [OECD Trade in Value Added: 1995 to 2020, experimental statistics, 2023 edition](#).

¹⁰ Office for National Statistics (2025), [UK trade in services: service type by partner country, non-seasonally adjusted](#). Figure includes insurance and pension services.

¹¹ Office for National Statistics (2025), [UK trade: goods and services publication tables](#).

¹² Deloitte (2025), [Deloitte's Q2 CFO Survey | UK rises up the list of attractiveness for investment](#).

¹³ Department for Business and Trade (2025), [Revamped Office for Investment cements UK's position as top investment destination, creating jobs and opportunities](#).

2.9. The UK is ranked in the top 20% in the G20 on many international competitiveness indices. Our competitiveness has been highly successful in attracting foreign direct investment (FDI), the UK's inward FDI stock has more than doubled in less than 10 years from GBP 1.0 trillion in 2014 to GBP 2.1 trillion in 2023.¹⁴ For instance, in 2023 the UK was the leading European country for inward FDI stock and had the third highest inward FDI stock in the world after the US and China. In terms of investment partners, the US had invested GBP 708 billion in the UK in 2023, accounting for 34.1% of UK inward FDI, making the US the largest inward investing country in the UK. The US is also a larger source of UK FDI than the EU (GBP 650 billion). The US (GBP 494 billion) was the leading single country outward destination for UK investment.¹⁵ However, UK companies have invested more in the EU (GBP 797 billion¹⁶).

2.4 Fiscal and monetary policy

2.10. The UK operates a flexible inflation-targeting monetary policy framework, with an operationally independent central bank responsible for maintaining price stability. The UK Government sets a CPI Inflation target of 2%, in order to aim for price stability across the market.

2.11. The Monetary Policy Committee of the Bank of England increased bank rate from 0.1% in December 2021 to a peak of 5.25% in August 2023, in response to high inflation. Since then, it had voted to cut bank rate four times by May 2025, to 4.25%,¹⁷ as there had been progress on disinflation. The Bank commenced the process for reducing the stock of assets held in the Asset Purchase Facility (APF), known as quantitative tightening, in February 2022. By 7 May 2025, the outstanding APF stock was GBP 620 billion down from GBP 895 billion in 2021.¹⁸

2.12. The UK Government's fiscal policy aims to ensure sustainable public finances by strengthening the fiscal framework, including the introduction of new fiscal rules, and making decisions on tax, welfare, and spending. In October 2024, the UK Government announced two new fiscal rules to support economic and fiscal stability. The stability rule requires the current budget to move into balance, meaning day-to-day spending is met by revenues, and government borrowing is only for investment. The investment rule requires net financial debt to fall as a proportion of GDP. These must be met by 2029-2030 until this becomes the third year of the forecast, at which point both rules will target the third year of the rolling forecast period. The Office for budget responsibility confirmed in March 2025 that the Government is on track to meet both rules two years ahead of schedule.

3 THE UK'S TRADE STRATEGY

3.1. The UK Government's Trade Strategy¹⁹ is designed to achieve long-term sustainable, inclusive, and resilient economic growth through trade, underpinned by rigorous economic and geopolitical analysis. It aims to address key questions such as how best to facilitate trade for businesses, building international partnerships through trade mechanisms and determining how the UK should operate in the international context to support and protect businesses. Grounded in reflections of the global challenges, the strategy provides practical tools to support businesses in trading and driving growth, aiming to set us up for success now and 10 years into the future. It interlocks with the UK's Industrial Strategy to drive economic growth and achieve wider objectives, while engaging stakeholders through targeted business consultations.

3.2. Historically, Britain's economic prosperity has been built on trade, creating jobs, higher wages and greater consumer choice. The rise in protectionism and supply chain vulnerabilities necessitates a strategic reset in the UK's approach to international commerce. The Trade Strategy builds on free trade agreements (FTAs) to deploy a wider range of tools, while rejecting the false choice between trading partners and strengthening relationships with the EU, US, China and our other key strategic partners with whom we share mutual objectives and interests, ranging in structure, size and region.

¹⁴ Office for National Statistics (2025), [Foreign direct investment involving UK companies: 2023](#).

¹⁵ Office for National Statistics (2025), [Foreign Direct Investment totals for inwards and outward flows, positions and earnings, 2022 to 2023](#).

¹⁶ Office for National Statistics (2025), [Foreign direct investment involving UK companies: 2023](#).

¹⁷ Bank of England (2025), [Bank Rate history and data](#).

¹⁸ Bank of England (2025), [Asset Purchase Facility Quarterly Report - 2021 Q4](#).

¹⁹ Department for Business and Trade (2025), [The UK's Trade Strategy](#).

3.3. The Trade Strategy combines promoting open markets where possible while protecting critical interests where necessary, adopting a pragmatic approach of "promote what we can, protect what we must". It reflects extensive engagement with businesses, representative organizations, civil society, and academia.

3.4. Key strategic pillars of the Trade Strategy include strengthening our strategic partnership with the EU to make trading with our largest partner easier; deepening mutually beneficial ties with the US; working effectively with China; collaborating with the UK's international partners on shared values and mutual objectives and through plurilateral collaboration, bilateral and multiparty agreements, including the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP); and advocating for the rules-based international trading system and WTO reform.

3.5. The Trade Strategy leverages a range of flexible policy tools such as sector-specific arrangements, mutual recognition agreements, targeted regulatory cooperation, and commercial diplomacy – in addition to longer term agreements like FTAs. Enhanced business support will help businesses exploit global opportunities. Additionally, the establishment of a new Economic Security Advisory Service and a Supply Chains Centre will provide businesses with necessary support and strengthen the trade defence toolkit. The Strategy also ensures that trade supports wider objectives, including development, responsible business conduct, and the commitment to becoming a clean energy superpower.

4 THE UK'S MODERN INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY

4.1. The UK Government's modern Industrial Strategy²⁰ is a 10-year plan designed to kickstart an era of economic prosperity. The Strategy aims to make it quicker and easier for businesses to invest, provide them with certainty and stability to make long-term decisions and ensure they benefit from the UK's openness to the world. It sits alongside the UK Government's Spending Review, ensuring its priorities are hardwired into government departmental budgets for the rest of the current Parliament, alongside 10-year research & development (R&D) commitments and infrastructure plans.

4.2. The Strategy targets government investment towards eight growth-driving frontier sectors: advanced manufacturing, clean energy industries, creative industries, defence, digital and technologies, financial services, life sciences and professional and business services. These sectors have a track record of growth and global competitiveness and pay their workers almost GBP 8,000 extra, on average, every year.

4.3. The Trade Strategy and the Industrial Strategy are designed to work together to support the UK's growth ambitions. The Industrial Strategy is internationally focused, holding partnership and opportunity at its core supporting our frontier industries to grasp the opportunities and manage the risks. We agreed our first Industrial Strategy partnership with Japan in early 2025 and will further deepen economic cooperation, building on recent trade deals with the US, India, and the EU.

4.4. The Strategy also sets out how we are delivering deep partnerships with mayors and devolved governments, partnering with mayors on their 10-year local growth plans in England and landing transformative investments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The Strategy supports the UK's city regions and clusters by increasing the supply of investible sites through a new GBP 600 million strategic sites accelerator, enhanced regional support from the Office for Investment, National Wealth Fund and British Business Bank.

5 THE UK'S MULTILATERAL AGENDA

5.1 WTO priorities

5.1. The UK is a strong supporter of the WTO and the multilateral trading system. The WTO is vital in providing stability and predictability for businesses and consumers both in the UK and globally. However, we also recognize that the international trade landscape has fundamentally changed, putting increased pressure on the WTO to adapt and evolve so that it is equipped to tackle

²⁰ Department for Business and Trade (2025), [The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy](#).

contemporary trade challenges. This can only be achieved through deep and substantial reform of the system.

5.2. For the UK, this includes legitimizing the plurilateral agenda, addressing contemporary challenges such as the environment and market distorting practices, and achieving a well- and fully functioning dispute settlement system. We particularly welcome meaningful and productive dialogue on industrial policy and market distorting practices to seek to overcome differences. We will continue to collaborate pragmatically with Members to drive forward our shared priorities and progress key negotiations. We have an ambitious trade agenda, and we believe that bilateral, plurilateral, and multilateral trade can and should be mutually reinforcing – this is in all of our interests.

5.2 WTO reform

5.3. The UK will continue working together with Members towards the necessary reform and repositioning of the WTO. Our goal in helping drive meaningful changes is to ensure that this organization remains fit for purpose and continues to provide stability, growth and prosperity through trade.

5.4. The UK firmly believes that plurilateral initiatives can serve as a route to progress key WTO issues where there is an urgent need for new rules to demonstrate the organization's credibility. Plurilateralism has been integral to the WTO since inception. These smaller groupings represent key opportunities to address contemporary challenges in the global economic order as well as to set the agenda to progress on issues which run across the multilateral system.

5.5. The UK is committed to achieving a fully and well-functioning dispute settlement system accessible to all Members. The UK welcomes further discussions on dispute settlement reform with the Membership to achieve that objective. On 26 June 2025 the UK joined the Multi-Party Interim Appeal Arbitration Arrangement (MPIA), demonstrating our commitment to an effective rules-based international trading system.

5.6. Further work is needed to improve how the WTO functions, including improvements to decision-making at all levels of the organization. The UK has been active in tabling proposals to build momentum for wider reform in the WTO. We have cosponsored several papers to make the organization more efficient, accessible and transparent.²¹ These reforms can have a real impact on how Members, especially those with significant capacity constraints, participate in the work of the organization. We need now to work together to deliver impactful reform, which can only occur by engaging the entire Membership. We are and will continue working in partnership with developed and developing Members to make the WTO more transparent, effective and fair for all.

5.3 WTO negotiations and initiatives

5.3.1 Agriculture and food security

5.7. The UK welcomes the role the Agreement on Agriculture plays in creating a stable and predictable agricultural trading system but recognizes updated rules are needed to respond to contemporary global challenges. We remain focused on advancing reform efforts, working closely with WTO Members to break the long-standing impasse in the negotiations and address contemporary issues in agricultural trade such as improving global food security and enabling sustainable agriculture.

5.8. The UK's leadership, working closely with partner countries, led to the "Joint Statement on Open and Predictable Trade in Agricultural and Food Products", which emphasized the importance of open and rules-based trade following the Russian Federation's illegal invasion of Ukraine. This statement informed the Ministerial Declaration on the Emergency Response to Food Insecurity at

²¹ These include: a General Council paper with suggestions to improve the operation of WTO Bodies to revitalize the WTO's negotiation and deliberation function ([WT/GC/W/877/Rev.1](#)); papers contributing to the efficiency of Councils on Trade in Goods ([JOB/CTG/26/Rev.1](#)), Trade in Services ([S/C/W/452](#)), and the Committees for Trade and Development ([WT/COMTD/W/276](#)), Environment ([WT/CTE/W/252](#)), and Market Access ([JOB/MA/163](#)); a paper on administrative processes to enhance clarity and accessibility of information ([JOB/CTG/43/Rev.1](#)) as well as on procedures for the circulation and derestriction of WTO documents ([WT/GC/W/877/Rev.1](#)).

the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12), supporting the organization's work to address contemporary issues in a timely manner. The UK has led efforts to strengthen WTO disciplines on export restrictions on agri-food products, which often impact the most vulnerable WTO Members, including LDCs and Net Food Importing Developing Countries. Ahead of MC13, the UK submitted a paper on Export Restrictions and Prohibitions on Agri-Food Products²² which included concrete ways the WTO could improve disciplines on export restrictions as part of broader agriculture rule reforms and in support of efforts to tackle global food security concerns.

5.9. The UK has been supportive of discussions around the role of trade and the WTO in facilitating sustainable agriculture. The UK was an active participant in the Sustainable Agriculture retreat held this May under the WTO General Council, and UK Agri-Tech presented on two of their international UK agri-technology initiatives in the WTO Committee on Trade and Environment in April this year.

5.3.2 Development and LDC graduation

5.10. The UK has sought to champion developing country interests across WTO negotiations. Most recently we advocated for more flexibility from preference-granting Members to smooth the graduation of least developed countries Members as they grow and their preferential trade terms decline. The UK will continue to support outcomes that advance economic development, including when helping to shape an agenda for MC14.

5.11. The UK has actively supported several Geneva-based initiatives aimed at enhancing the participation of developing countries in the work of the WTO. These include the Trade and Investment Advocacy Fund (TAF2+), the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), and the Advisory Centre on WTO Law. The UK has been a significant contributor, ranking as the second-largest single donor to the EIF and playing a pivotal role in establishing the Interim Facility. Through TAF2+, the UK helps developing countries engage effectively in WTO negotiations and influence positive outcomes at Ministerial Conferences, ensuring that the voices of the poorest and most vulnerable are heard and represented.

5.3.3 Digital

5.12. The UK is a leading voice in digital trade.²³ Multilaterally, we maintained the Moratorium on Customs Duties on Electronic Transmissions, ensuring tariff-free trade in digital content and delivering global certainty to businesses, workers and consumers, especially in developing countries who would be hit hardest were customs duties imposed. We are focused on digital trade that is free of customs duties on digital content.

5.13. Plurilaterally, the UK has actively participated in negotiations under the E-Commerce Joint Initiative, shaping the resulting Agreement on Electronic Commerce and joining it as a founding Member. The Agreement will boost global trade in goods, services and information and help to make trade faster, cheaper, fairer and more secure, opening new growth opportunities. We are committed to giving effect to this Agreement as soon as possible, and to engaging in phase two negotiations in due course to expand its scope and ensure its relevance as technology develops.

5.3.4 Environment

5.14. The Trade Strategy details how the UK considers trade and the WTO to have a key role in tackling challenges of the 21st century, including those pertaining to the environment. The WTO can act as an important forum for progressing trade and environment issues and ensure trade acts as a force for good. As such, the UK actively engages in discussions at the WTO's Committee on Trade and Environment (CTE) given it serves as a key platform for ensuring a synergistic relationship between trade policy and Members efforts to achieve environmental objectives, including those related to biodiversity and nature, and sustainable development.

5.15. The UK also recognizes the economic opportunities presented by the green transition. We estimate the UK low carbon economy could grow by 11% between 2015 and 2030 – four times faster

²² WTO document, [JOB/AG/250/Rev.1](#), 12 January 2024.

²³ Digital trade is especially important for developing countries, as increased participation in digital trade leads to decreased trade costs, greater access to international customers and new growth opportunities.

than the rest of the economy.²⁴ Trade in relevant goods and services is critical to this growth, as well as achieving the UK's legislative commitment to reach net zero by 2050 and clean energy transition. In recognition of this, the Trade Strategy highlights the importance of international cooperation – particularly through the WTO – on trade and environment issues, including to drive initiatives on environmental goods and services.

5.16. The UK has been an active participant in the Trade and Environmental Sustainability Structured Discussions. Within the Environmental Goods and Services Working Group, the UK has led efforts to identify critical goods and services for the global green transition, assess the trade barriers they face, and explore targeted actions. The UK has also contributed to developing best practices in trade-related climate measures and shared experiences in the subsidies and circular economy working groups.

5.17. Additionally, the UK is a co-sponsor of the Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform Initiative, and the Dialogue on Plastics Pollution, ensuring trade is part of the solution and complementary to our international commitment to both the phase-out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies and the global plastics treaty being negotiated through the UN Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee.

5.3.5 Fisheries

5.18. The UK's work, alongside a broad range of Members, was instrumental in securing the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies at MC12. We play an active and constructive role in ongoing negotiations. We have contributed creative proposals seeking to achieve consensus in the second wave of negotiations on further disciplines on those fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing. The UK sees the Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies as an essential part of the global effort to achieve the sustainable development goals and has deposited its instrument of acceptance.

5.3.6 Gender equality

5.19. The UK is focused on mainstreaming a gender equality perspective in trade, with the goal of achieving gender equality and its economic benefits. As an active participant in the WTO's Informal Working Group on Trade and Gender, previously co-chaired by the UK, we have focused on ensuring inclusivity is considered in trade policy. This included playing an active role in the Compendium of Financial Inclusion Initiatives for Women Entrepreneurs, jointly launched with the Informal Working Group on Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs) at MC13. We hope to collaborate with Members to share best practice, facilitate knowledge-sharing, drive progress on the collection and analysis of gender-disaggregated data and promote the inclusion of gender provisions in trade agreements.

5.3.7 Investment

5.20. The UK has been a strong supporter of the Investment Facilitation for Development Joint Statement Initiative since the beginning and was pleased to mark its conclusion at MC13.²⁵ The IFD Agreement (IFDA) represents many firsts, demonstrating the WTO can deliver for global trade at a crucial time. The IFDA sees the first inclusion of text on Responsible Business Conduct, and the first commitments on measures against corruption and money laundering. The implementation of the IFDA will create a more transparent, efficient, and predictable business climate, facilitating investment flows.

5.21. The UK continues to support the legal incorporation of the IFDA, which will ensure its developmental benefits are realized by boosting cross-border investment and close the funding gap to achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

²⁴ The Climate Change Committee (2017), [UK business opportunities of moving to a low-carbon economy](#).

²⁵ World Trade Organization (2025), [Investment Facilitation for Development Agreement](#).

5.3.8 Market distorting practices and trade remedies

5.22. The UK is a positive advocate for free and fair trade and as part of this, ensuring the ability of all WTO Members to act accordingly in a proportionate manner to address any unfair trading practices.

5.23. The UK is a committed and transparent member of multilateral fora²⁶ and supports the effective functioning of international rules on trade remedies and subsidies. At the WTO, the UK is an active member of the Committee on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures, Committee on Anti-Dumping Practices, and Committee on Safeguards. The UK works towards notifying these committees of UK trade remedy investigations and measures in a timely fashion and openly holds consultations with Members.

5.24. In addition, the UK has actively contributed to technical assistance sessions at the WTO aimed at strengthening the capacity of developing countries on subsidy transparency. We have contributed to the WTO dialogue at the "Member conversations on current economic issues" forum, sharing experiences on the implementation of industrial policy and its implications for international trade, including its interaction with WTO rules such as the SCM Agreement.

5.3.9 MSMEs

5.25. The UK is an active voice in promoting the interests of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) through the MSME Informal Working Group. In this forum, we have delivered several presentations on how Members can consider MSMEs more effectively in trade policy. This most recently included presentations how good regulatory practices are beneficial for MSMEs, and on trade digitalization and the opportunities and challenges it presents, highlighting the importance of including MSMEs in trade digitalization initiatives and its regulatory development. The UK will continue its efforts on sharing best practice and encouraging the inclusion of consideration for MSMEs across the WTO.

5.3.10 Services

5.26. The UK joined the Services Domestic Regulation Joint Initiative declaration in 2021.²⁷ The UK has submitted its certification request accordingly.²⁸ Although the SDR disciplines are not yet in force for the UK under GATS, the UK has confirmed it continues to adhere to the disciplines, pending conclusion of the certification process,²⁹ and has implemented and built on similar commitments through bilateral agreements.

5.27. The UK has actively sought to advance trade in services discussions through the Council for Trade in Services, in line with the 2024 MC13 Abu Dhabi Ministerial Declaration to reinvigorate this work. The UK will work towards continuing such engagement at the WTO.³⁰

5.3.11 TRIPS

5.28. As an expert Member in Intellectual Property (IP), the UK actively engages at TRIPS Council, contributing with robust and evidence-based perspectives to IP discussions. In July 2023, the UK published a paper on IP, voluntary licensing and technology transfer,³¹ which received notable engagement from across the Membership in relation to the role of IP in vaccine access and pandemic preparedness efforts. At the TRIPS Council in March 2025, the UK announced intentions to build on

²⁶ The UK has also been a strong supporter of the OECD's work to improve subsidy transparency and has contributed to the development of updated guidelines on corporate governance and state-owned enterprises.

²⁷ World Trade Organization (2021), [WTO Document WT/L/1129: Declaration on the Conclusion of Negotiations on Services Domestic Regulation](#).

²⁸ WTO Document, [S/C/W/416/Corr.1](#) (restricted), 9 February 2024.

²⁹ WTO Document, [S/L/536](#), 28 February 2024.

³⁰ World Trade Organization (2024), [Abu Dhabi Ministerial Declaration](#).

³¹ UK Mission to the WTO, UN and other international organizations in Geneva (2023), [World Trade Organisation General Council December 2023 UK statements](#), item 15 Technology transfer and Economic Resilience.

these discussions, with an aim of establishing a joint workplan which can provide clear parameters for how technology transfer partnerships be taken forward under TRIPS.

5.4 Other multilateral fora

5.4.1 Commonwealth

5.29. The UK's membership of the Commonwealth affords opportunities to deepen intra-Commonwealth trade and investment. Working together, members and the Commonwealth institutions contribute to reducing non-tariff barriers and building capacity for trade and investment. The UK is an active participant in the Commonwealth Trade Ministers Meeting and the Commonwealth Working Group on Trade and Investment, both of which work to reduce barriers to trade, including through standards and digitalization. The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting announced impactful initiatives, including the Commonwealth Investment Network in 2024, which aims to improve access to finance for small and vulnerable Commonwealth states, and in 2018 the Commonwealth Small States Offices' Trade Advisers based in Geneva, who support the fuller integration of Commonwealth small States into the multilateral trading system.

5.4.2 The Group of Seven (G7)

5.30. The UK created the inaugural G7 Trade Track during its 2021 Presidency as a mechanism to facilitate discussion and collaborate on key issues in multilateral trade. Under our Presidency, the UK set out clear ambitions to tackle market distorting practices, support free and fair trade and support the modernization of trade rules. The Group also agreed ambitious outcomes with the adoption of the G7 Statement on Forced Labour and the G7 Digital Trade Principles. The G7 Trade Track and its thematic discussions continue under subsequent Presidencies. The UK views the G7 as an important forum for discussions on many important themes including economic security, market distorting practices, supply chain resilience, the level playing field, WTO reform and inclusive trade.

5.4.3 The Group of 20 (G20)

5.31. The UK is an active participant in the G20's Trade and Investment Working Group. Representing 75% of global trade,³² the G20 features discussions that reflect its diverse membership's interests, including on key trade and investment issues such as sustainable development, agriculture and food security, digital transformation, MSME integration, and WTO reform. The UK has actively contributed to progressing discussions with Members including on adopting the Principles on Trade and Sustainable Development under Brazil's 2024 G20 Presidency.

5.4.4 Organization for economic co-operation and development (OECD)

5.32. The UK values the OECD's evidence-based analysis and peer learning. This informs policy formation to support global growth and tackle shared global challenges. As vice-chair of the Trade Committee, we support OECD work to build the evidence base of issues including market distorting practices, and associated level playing field issues, supply-chain resilience, services and digital trade, and trade and sustainability. The UK took a leading role on the revised OECD Arrangement on Officially Supported Export Credits, to include enhanced support for climate-friendly transactions.

5.33. In 2023, the UK chaired the Ministerial Council Meeting. The event focused on addressing challenges to our collective economic resilience, innovative technologies to support a clean energy transition, strengthening the OECD's global partnerships, and establishing a long-term commitment to the Indo Pacific Region. At the meeting Ministers agreed the OECD's first trade strategy to promote economic resilience while keeping markets open.

5.4.5 Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

5.34. The UK recognizes the importance of ASEAN as a significant trade bloc and a champion of free trade and open economies. We support ASEAN through our Economic Integration Programme focused on regulatory reform and standards, financial services and open trade. As part of our first

³² United Nations Trade and Development Statistics (2025), [Goods and Services \(BPM6\): Exports and imports of goods and services, annual](#).

Plan of Action with ASEAN, we agreed 181 commitments over a five-year period up to 2026. As of March 2025, we have delivered 171 of those commitments. The UK will now focus alignment to our Industrial and Trade strategies, linking this to ASEAN Vision 2045.

6 TRADE AGREEMENTS

6.1 Negotiated agreements

6.1. A list of concluded FTAs can be found in Annex.³³

6.1.1 EU

6.2. The UK and EU signed the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) on 30 December 2020, which (along with the Withdrawal Agreement governing the UK's departure from the EU) forms the basis for the trading relationship between the UK and EU. The TCA is a comprehensive free trade agreement providing tariff and quota free trade across all goods (subject to Rules of Origin), as well as covering trade in services, public procurement, intellectual property and digital trade. It also covers UK-EU cooperation in areas not usually covered by FTAs, including fisheries, energy cooperation, and social security coordination. The UK and EU agreed a renewed agenda for cooperation on 19 May 2025, including a number of areas where we will look to build on existing arrangements, for example in the areas of SPS, emissions trading, and electricity trading.

6.1.2 Continuity agreements

6.3. Of the UK's agreements, 35 replicate or improve on terms agreed while the UK was in the EU. These agreements provided continuity of the terms of trade when the UK left the EU. In some cases, the UK negotiated further to develop new bilateral agreements that improved the UK's trading relationship with partner countries.

UK – European Economic Area (EEA)/European Free Trade Association (EFTA) Free Trade Agreement (EEA/EFTA FTA)

6.4. The Agreement on Trade in Goods between the UK, Iceland, and Norway came into effect on 1 January 2021. This included provisions on market access, tariffs, tariff rate quotas (TRQs), rules of origin and customs and trade facilitation.

6.5. Negotiations on a more comprehensive agreement, the UK-EEA/EFTA FTA, began in summer 2020. This FTA came into effect with Norway and Liechtenstein on 1 September 2022, and with Iceland on 1 February 2023 and replaced the interim Agreement on Trade in Goods. The Agreement sets out new arrangements on services and investment as well as a range of other areas including digital, climate change, women's economic empowerment and government procurement.

6.6. Due to Liechtenstein's customs union with Switzerland, the UK and Liechtenstein goods trading relationship continues to be governed by the agreement between the UK and Switzerland.

UK – Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)

6.7. The UK-Japan CEPA is a comprehensive trade agreement signed on 23 October 2020 and came into force on 1 January 2021. The Agreement ensured the continuity of the existing UK-Japan trading relationship following the end of the UK's implementation period when withdrawing from the EU, enhancing it further in areas such as e-commerce, financial services and intellectual property.

6.8. The Agreement covers both trade in goods, including provisions on rules of origin, preferential tariffs and quotas, trade in services, investment and electronic commerce. The provisions of the UK-Japan CEPA offer substantial reductions in tariffs and the removal or reduction in non-tariff measures affecting trade in goods and regulatory restrictions applying to services trade.

³³ Annex: List of the UK's concluded Free Trade Agreements

Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs)

6.9. The UK has eight EPAs covering 33 developing countries – Eastern and Southern Africa, Caribbean (CARIFORUM) States, Southern African Customs Union and Mozambique (SACUM), Pacific States, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana and Kenya. These are development-focused FTAs.

6.10. Comoros signed the Eastern and Southern Africa Economic Partnership Agreement but have not yet entered the agreement into force. Comoros has duty-free quota-free access to the UK market through the Developing Countries Trading Scheme.

6.1.3 New bilateral FTAs

UK – Australia Free Trade Agreement

6.11. The FTA between the UK and Australia was the first to be negotiated by the UK from scratch since leaving the EU. It was signed on 16 and 17 December 2021 and entered into force on 31 May 2023.³⁴

6.12. The Agreement contains commitments to create new export opportunities, reduce input costs for business and strengthen trade diversification. It includes provisions on tariff concessions, rules of origin, technical barriers to trade, government procurement, environment, trade in services and investment, and on temporary entry for businesspersons.

UK – New Zealand Free Trade Agreement

6.13. The FTA between the UK and New Zealand was the second the UK negotiated from scratch since leaving the EU. The Agreement was signed on 28 February 2022 and entered into force on 31 May 2023.³⁵

6.14. The Agreement reduces barriers to trade between the UK and New Zealand. There are TRQs on some goods while tariffs are being phased out. The Agreement also contains provisions on the recognition of professional qualifications which aim to support professionals as they seek to gain recognition of their professional qualification between the UK and New Zealand. This supports professionals and service providers, in both nations, gain access to the other market.

India

6.15. On 6 May 2025, the UK and India announced a new FTA. This comprehensive deal is expected to increase bilateral trade by GBP 25.5 billion and increase UK GDP by GBP 4.8 billion.³⁶ The deal contains commitments to reduce tariffs on goods with provisions on customs and digital procedures to ensure easier access to the Indian market and reductions to the duties on UK imports from India. The Agreement was signed in July 2025, and, subject to the fulfilment of both countries' governmental requirements, it will enter into force. We will coordinate with India on WTO notification in due course.

6.1.4 Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)

6.16. The UK officially joined the CPTPP on 15 December 2024, and this is now in force with Japan, Singapore, Chile, New Zealand, Viet Nam, Peru, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam and Australia, as they have ratified the terms of the UK's accession. The deal will come into force with Canada and Mexico 60 days after they each ratify.³⁷

6.17. CPTPP is one of the largest free trade areas in the world, accounting for 14% of global GDP (according to 2025 data). Through CPTPP, the UK has secured free trade deals with Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam for the first time and will also see gains over and above many of the bilateral agreements that we already have with CPTPP Parties. The UK aims to work towards the growth of

³⁴ It was then notified to the WTO by the Parties on 22 June 2023.

³⁵ It was notified to the WTO by the Parties on 22 June 2023.

³⁶ Department for Business and Trade (2025), [UK-India trade deal: conclusion summary](#).

³⁷ It was notified to the WTO by the UK on 10 December 2024.

CPTPP and welcomes the progress made on Costa Rica's accession process. Following the Ministerial Meeting in Jeju, Republic of Korea, we affirmed our commitment to advancing discussions on other accession requests in a timely manner. The UK is actively engaging in the first general review of the CPTPP Agreement, which looks at how CPTPP has been implemented, how it is being utilized, and where it could potentially be updated or added to. We also welcome further work on future CPTPP dialogues with the EU (and ASEAN) as soon as possible in 2025.

6.2 Ongoing negotiations

Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

6.18. The UK and GCC launched negotiations on 22 June 2022. Negotiations resumed under the new UK Government in September 2024. Since then, negotiations are progressing at pace, with the priority being to get the right deal for both sides. The focus from both sides is on achieving a modern and commercially meaningful agreement.

Türkiye

6.19. The UK and Türkiye launched negotiations in March 2024 to secure an upgraded services-focused FTA. The first round of negotiations took place in summer 2025. The UK's existing FTA with Türkiye was rolled over from EU membership. It provides tariff-free trade on many goods, but it does not contain provisions on digital and services trade.

Switzerland

6.20. The UK and Switzerland launched negotiations in May 2023 on an enhanced FTA focusing on service, digital and investment, and provides long-term certainty on UK business travel to Switzerland. The latest round of talks held was in June 2025.

Republic of Korea

6.21. The UK and the Republic of Korea launched negotiations on 22 November 2023 on an enhanced FTA which secures current market access and upgrades the existing trade deal in areas which stand to benefit from modernization. Areas of focus include a new digital trade chapter to better support goods and services trade and updated Rules of Origin which reflect existing and future supply chains. The latest round of talks was held in July 2025. The existing UK-Republic of Korea FTA came into effect in 2021 and enabled trade continuity between the UK and Republic of Korea after EU exit. It replicates the provisions outlined in the 2011 EU – Republic of Korea FTA.

US economic relationship

6.22. In May 2025, the UK concluded the General Terms for an Economic Prosperity Deal (EPD) with the US, becoming the first country to secure such an agreement following President Trump's inauguration. In June 2025, the UK and US announced concrete progress towards the implementation of the General Terms, ensuring that businesses feel the benefits of the deal as soon as possible.

6.23. The General Terms are only the first step in our negotiations with the US, and we are continuing negotiations on a wider economic deal,³⁸ which is intended to cover a range of tariff reductions. This deal will also look at increasing digital trade, enhancing access for our world-leading services industries, and improving supply chains. We will coordinate with the US on WTO notification at an appropriate time following the conclusion of negotiations. In addition to this wider economic deal, we are pursuing a transformative technology partnership with the US, through which our science-rich nations will collaborate in key areas of advanced technology.

6.3 Inactive negotiations

6.24. Over the trade policy review period, the UK has commenced FTA negotiations with Canada, Mexico, and Israel, respectively, all of which were subsequently paused. The UK also reached an

³⁸ As of 14 July 2025.

advanced stage in FTA negotiations with Greenland which have been under review since the UK general election.

6.4 Other bilateral agreements

6.4.1 Digital agreements

6.25. The UK has signed two Digital Trade Agreements, with Singapore and Ukraine respectively:

- The UK-Singapore Digital Economy Agreement came into force in June 2022; and
- The UK-Ukraine Digital Trade Agreement came into force in September 2024.

6.26. These Agreements contain commitments which allow businesses and consumers to benefit from open digital markets, including guaranteed tariff-free flow of digital content, the free flow of trusted data, guaranteed protections for personal data and intellectual property and cheaper trade through the adoption of digital trading systems. The UK is also ideally positioned to aid Ukraine's post-conflict transition to a digital economy, with over half of our services exports to Ukraine already digitally delivered. As announced in our Trade Strategy, we have now initiated dialogues with Brazil, Thailand, Kenya, and Malaysia, among others, to explore negotiating new bilateral digital trading agreements. Further, we are actively exploring the possibility of acceding to the Digital Economy Partnership Agreement (DEPA), if it's in our national interest, whose membership is currently New Zealand, Chile, Singapore, and the Republic of Korea.

6.4.2 Mutual recognition agreements

6.27. On services, UK regulators have signed several mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) since 2020, with regulatory bodies in member countries, pertaining to the recognition of professional qualifications (RPQ). These include agreements with sub-federal bodies in the US in the engineering and architecture professions, Australia and New Zealand in the audit and architecture professions, and Canada in the architecture profession.

6.28. The UK Government has signed agreements with Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein (the EEA EFTA States)³⁹ and Switzerland⁴⁰ which require parties to establish a system for RPQ. Both agreements have now entered into force.⁴¹ By working closely with regulators in high value professional and business services (PBS) sectors,⁴² we will seek to identify and secure RPQ agreements with key partners in Europe, the US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, India and the Middle East.

6.29. On goods, Conformity Assessment MRAs play an important role in facilitating international trade. The UK currently has nine MRAs on conformity assessment. Five of these MRAs are stand-alone agreements with Australia, New Zealand, Switzerland, and two MRAs with the USA. The other four MRAs on conformity assessment are part of UK bilateral FTAs with Canada, Israel, Japan, and Switzerland.

6.30. As announced in the Trade Strategy, the UK will pursue more Conformity Assessment MRAs, with a special focus on those countries and fields with most potential to boost growth – such as Brazil and Thailand – and the priority sectors identified in the Industrial Strategy.

6.4.3 Non-legally binding instruments

6.31. The UK also has a number of non-legally binding trade policy arrangements that take the form of a Memoranda of Understandings (MoU) or Enhanced Trade Partnerships (ETPs). ETPs focus on a limited number of sectors or policy areas, committing partners to work together more closely to

³⁹ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (2021), [Free Trade Agreement between Iceland, the Principality of Liechtenstein and the Kingdom of Norway and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland \[MS No.3/2021\]](#).

⁴⁰ Department for Business and Trade (2025), [Agreement between the Swiss Confederation \(Switzerland\) and the UK on the Recognition of Professional Qualifications](#).

⁴¹ RPQ MRAs are regulator led.

⁴² Including engineering, architecture, accountancy and legal services, and regulated sectors including veterinary medicine and healthcare.

resolve specific market access issues and move to agreeing legally binding arrangements (e.g. MRAs) or provide support to businesses. The UK has negotiated ETPs with Chinese Taipei, Nigeria, Thailand and India. The UK has also signed nine state-level MoU arrangements so far – with the States of Indiana, North Carolina, South Carolina, Oklahoma, Utah, Washington, Florida, Texas and Colorado.

7 SECURE AND RESILIENT TRADE

7.1. The UK believes in the principles of free and fair trade, whilst also recognizing the importance of protecting British businesses from unfair trade practices through the use of our trade defence tools, including trade remedies.

7.2. The UK trade remedies system is underpinned by international best practice, with a focus on proportionality, transparency, impartiality, and efficiency. The UK has a strong track record of promptly notifying the WTO and Members when making decisions on trade remedy measures and offering opportunities for consultation with Members on key decisions. A central part of this system is the Trade Remedies Authority (TRA), an independent body responsible for providing objective, unbiased expert advice to Ministers and carrying out investigations according to WTO rules and the UK's legal framework.

7.3. The UK also recognizes that the global trading environment is changing, with challenges emerging that extend beyond traditional definitions of unfair trading practices. In response, we intend to create new powers to address these threats, while continuing to engage in international forums in support of free and fair trade. This will include measures to make our trade remedies system more accessible, agile, assertive and accountable. We will also seek views on the potential for new powers to respond to deliberate economic pressure.

7.4. The Trade Strategy sets out how the UK is preparing to withstand an increasingly challenging international context and respond to future geoeconomic shocks and economic security threats to maintain long-term sustainable growth.

7.5. The UK is establishing a new Supply Chain Centre that will lead the Government's work, in tandem with business, to build the resilience of the supply chains critical to the UK's security and prosperity, helping to secure our ability to withstand future disruptions.

7.6. The UK will also establish an Economic Security Advisory Service to streamline the Government's approach to partnering with industry on economic security issues. This will connect government expertise and guidance with priority growth businesses to protect UK capabilities and competitiveness against economic security risks and threats.

8 SHAPING THE NEXT GENERATION OF AGREEMENTS

8.1. Since our departure from the EU, the UK has pursued an ambitious and innovative FTA programme. We have used our independent trade policy to pioneer new approaches to FTA design, embedding forward-looking provisions that reflect contemporary priorities. We have taken a leading role in shaping modern, inclusive and forward-looking trade agreements that reflect our values and global ambitions. Through a series of innovative provisions and strategic partnerships, we are contributing to setting new standards for increasingly innovative trade agreements.

8.2. Having assessed the full suite of our trade tools, we believe we can further boost growth by deploying a wider range of trade policy tools to seize opportunities that promise growth in the short to medium term, like digital trade agreements and sector-specific arrangements, while continuing to lay the groundwork for impactful partnerships in the long term, such as the new UK-India FTA.

8.3. The UK's status as one of the world's most innovative economies⁴³ provides the foundation for translating world-class research into commercial success that drives economic growth. The UK-Australia FTA features the world's first Innovation Chapter. These chapters drive forward our international collaboration, supporting the UK's ambition to support the growth of key sectors such as clean energy, quantum technologies, and life sciences, allowing us to stay ahead in rapidly

⁴³ World Intellectual Property Organization (2024), [Global Innovation Index 2024 Rankings](#).

changing sectors, securing economic stability, and vital to green industry growth. The UK will pursue innovation provisions in trade agreements with strategic partners with an ambition to deliver agreements which capitalize on these opportunities, ensuring they are adaptable as new technologies emerge, and our global trade relationships and economies grow.

8.4. Recognized as a digital trade frontrunner, the UK has also negotiated comprehensive digital trade provisions in five FTAs and signed standalone digital agreements with Singapore and Ukraine. These agreements remove barriers, protect consumers, and modernize trade systems. For example, trade digitalization pilots conducted under the UK-Singapore Digital Economy Agreement framework have already demonstrated significant business benefits, such as 40% reduction in trade processing time, 89% reduction in paperwork, and 67% improvement in staff productivity.⁴⁴ Most agreements negotiated since leaving the EU either reference intellectual property or have an extensive chapter on it. The UK continues to lead globally in IP enforcement and supports UK businesses through its international IP service and expanding attaché network.

8.5. The UK has embedded robust trade and labour chapters in its FTAs since 2015, including in its accession to the CPTPP. These provisions reaffirm international labour standards and, where possible, go further to protect workers' rights globally. We will continue to strengthen workers' rights through future FTAs. In addition, we are implementing labour provisions in FTAs in force including trade and sustainable development chapters with certain partners.

8.6. The UK is also a world leader for inclusion of anti-corruption provisions in FTAs. Anti-corruption provisions in a trade deal provide measures to tackle corruption, to ensure free and fair global trade and competition. Such provisions are becoming an increasingly common part of comprehensive trade agreements around the world, as the explicit links to trade have become clearer.⁴⁵ The UK has agreed content on anti-corruption in our UK-Australia, UK-New Zealand and UK-India FTAs. Anti-corruption content is also found in CPTPP to which we are a Party.

8.7. The UK believes in promoting gender equality and women's economic empowerment around the world. We have secured trade and gender equality provisions with EFTA states of Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. Our bilateral FTAs also contain dedicated chapters to advance gender equality and women's economic empowerment with Australia, India, Japan and New Zealand. FTA chapters establish ongoing cooperation to break down barriers to trade for women. Specific provisions may include cooperation to promote women-led businesses accessing markets, technology, financial services, business and leadership networks, as well as information exchange. These chapters complement other provisions across these agreements on non-discrimination in the workplace, supporting women in digital trade, and women-owned MSMEs. Cooperation commitments to advance gender equality in trade are also found in CPTPP, which we are now a Party. We will continue to pursue provisions that advance gender equality in future FTAs.

8.8. Promoting open and fair competition for UK exporters in overseas markets provides greater certainty about the regulatory landscape they will encounter there. The UK's FTAs reinforce and build on rules around subsidies, state-owned enterprises and competition, promoting healthy competition, innovation, and a competitive environment that attracts investments and reduces barriers to trade. In addition to FTAs, ETPs also include provisions on competition and consumer protection, subsidies and State-Owned Enterprises which help to promote the importance of a competitive environment between the UK and its trading partners. The UK has agreed content on State-owned enterprises and subsidies with Australia, India, Japan, New Zealand and through acceding to the CPTPP.

8.9. The UK seeks comprehensive environmental provisions in its trade agreements, including commitments to adhere to environmental laws and to reaffirm commitments to Multilateral Environmental Agreements – including the Paris Agreement. Additionally, these trade agreements include provisions which support action and cooperation across a range of thematic areas such as climate change, forestry, biodiversity, fisheries, transition to clean energy, environmental goods and services and more. The UK has agreed such provisions with Australia, Japan, EEA EFTA, New Zealand and through acceding to CPTPP.

⁴⁴ British Chamber of Commerce Singapore (2024), [The UK-Southeast Asia Trade Digitalisation Pilots](#).

⁴⁵ OECD (2017), [Global Trade Without Corruption: Fighting the Hidden Tariff](#).

9 HELPING BUSINESSES REALIZE TRADE BENEFITS

9.1. The UK Government engages a broad range of stakeholders to support the formulation of our trade policy and negotiating interests. We seek business views, along with those of civil society, academia, and the public, through formal and informal engagement. Businesses can respond to public consultations or share views directly with negotiating teams. Regular ministerial and senior official forums are held to speak to stakeholders throughout negotiations, and insight groups connect policy officials with industry experts at the technical level. Engagement mechanisms are chosen based on the particular negotiation or policy objectives. Many engagements are held under confidentiality agreements to maximize the value of the conversations for both government and business. These mechanisms ensure policy development and negotiations are informed by real-world impacts, aiming to benefit industry and drive economic growth.

9.2. To help businesses fully realize the benefits of FTAs, the UK Government works in close partnership with industry and representative bodies. Practical tools such as country market guides on [business.gov.uk](https://www.business.gov.uk) and targeted engagement programmes – including trade shows and training sessions – support MSMEs. We have developed over 140 pieces of tailored guidance for businesses on the CPTPP and the Australia and New Zealand FTAs. Additionally, the UK Export Academy offers a free training programme to help UK businesses grow and export, featuring FTA-focused webinars and region-specific insights. Ongoing engagement with businesses ensures we gather feedback on FTA implementation, identify trade facilitation and market access barriers, and share valuable market intelligence.

9.3. The UK's export credit agency, UK Export Finance (UKEF),⁴⁶ aims to ensure that no viable UK export fails due to a lack of finance or insurance.⁴⁷ In 2023-2024, UKEF provided over GBP 8.8 billion in support to 650 businesses of all sizes, helping to sustain up to 41,000 jobs across the UK and contributing up to GBP 3.3 billion to the national economy.⁴⁸ This support strengthens supply chains, boosts international competitiveness, and underpins the UK's global trade ambitions. The government has increased UKEF's capacity by GBP 20 billion to GBP 80 billion, which will be used to support and drive export-led growth across the UK, including through a Small Export Builder insurance product to support more small firms win business and increase sales overseas.⁴⁹

9.4. The UK facilitates inward investment through expert business support and accessible information. The "Invest in the UK" website offers comprehensive guidance for international investors, allowing them to explore opportunities across sectors and regions, and access tailored advice via its digital platform. The platform provides practical resources such as guidance on setting up bank accounts, visas, funding, grants, relevant events, and sector-specific incentives. It also connects investors with UK suppliers, trade associations, and the Investment Support Directory – an online resource for businesses seeking to establish or expand in the UK.

10 CHAMPIONING UK SERVICES AND DIGITAL TRADE

10.1 Services

10.1. The UK recognizes that trade in services plays an important role in promoting economic growth, supporting development, and tackling global challenges. The UK engages in and supports efforts at the WTO to enhance international rules for trade in services and services trade liberalization.

10.2. The UK services sector is diverse across the full range of services covered by the GATS and including core strengths. Building on these strengths is a central part of our Industrial Strategy. Services industries like creative industries, digital and technologies sectors, financial services and professional and business services are growth-driving sectors, as set out in the Industrial Strategy.

⁴⁶ UK Export Finance is the trading name for the Export Credit Guarantee Department, the statutory department established under the Export and Investment Guarantee Act 1991 to provide export credit support to UK businesses.

⁴⁷ UK Export Finance support is non-subsidized and in line with international rules.

⁴⁸ UK Export Finance (2024), [UK Export Finance Annual Report and Accounts 2023 to 2024](#).

⁴⁹ Department for Business and Trade (2025), "[Backing your business: Our plan for small and medium sized businesses](#)".

The UK is the second largest exporter of services globally.⁵⁰ Moreover, the UK economy is open to the world. According to the OECD's Services Trade Restrictiveness Index, the UK was the second most open economy for services trade in 2024.⁵¹

10.3. Domestically, services are a significant driver of our economy, contributing around 81% of total UK economic output (gross value added) in 2024⁵² and employing over 28 million people (approximately 83% of total employment).⁵³ The UK is a world leading centre for financial and insurance services (which contributed almost 9% of the UK's gross value added in 2024, totalling GBP 214 billion).⁵⁴

10.4. The UK has trade agreements with over 70 partners,⁵⁵ many of whom the UK has engaged with to maintain and pursue ambitious commitments that support services trade. This can be seen through recently negotiated agreements alongside the UK's accession to the CPTPP. These objectives were achieved by prioritizing certainty and transparency, promoting competitiveness and supporting the movement of professionals to provide services internationally. The UK has also negotiated more innovative, bespoke treaties like the Berne Financial Services Agreement which uses outcomes-based mutual recognition of the UK and Switzerland's supervisory and regulatory regimes to unlock unprecedented new market access in financial services and facilitate cross-border trade.

10.5. The UK will continue working with international partners on services, through bilateral and multilateral fora, to deliver co-operative and growth-led policy solutions. The UK seeks to focus dialogues with partners on specific sectors of the economy, for example through financial dialogues and sector-specific working groups like the US-UK Financial Regulatory Working Group.

10.6. The UK actively engages in multilateral fora more broadly, including the Financial Stability Board (FSB). As a global financial centre, the UK takes a leading role at the FSB, with the Governor of the Bank of England serving as the FSB Chair.

10.7. The UK is a world leader in professional and business services, a sector that plays a key role in providing crucial advice and support services that boosts growth, facilitates trade and enables investment. Liberalization in legal services help the UK and its trade partners' markets to be commercially attractive and competitive business-friendly hubs. The UK's trade agenda works to support the success of its diverse PBS sector, including encouraging the recognition of professional qualifications, promoting profession-led regulatory dialogues, and supporting lawyers' rights to practise foreign and international law under their home titles.

10.8. The UK is a world leader in telecommunications trade with exports of telecommunication services amounting to around GBP 7.2 billion in 2024;⁵⁶ the UK was also the largest exporting country of telecommunications services in the world in 2023.⁵⁷

10.9. The UK has published its approach to the forthcoming Financial Services Sector Strategy. One of its core policy pillars is to maintain the UK's success as a global financial hub, through strong trade arrangements and international leadership in financial services.⁵⁸

⁵⁰ International Trade Centre (2025), [ITC Trade Map](#).

⁵¹ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2025), [Services Trade Restrictiveness Index: Policy Trends up to 2025](#).

⁵² Office for National Statistics (2025), [GDP output approach – low-level aggregates](#).

⁵³ Office for National Statistics (2025), [Labour Force Survey – EMP13: Employment by industry](#) (stat refers to service' s sectors G-T, as defined by the Office for National Statistics).

⁵⁴ Office for National Statistics (2025), [GDP output approach – low-level aggregates](#).

⁵⁵ Annex: List of the UK's concluded Free Trade Agreements

⁵⁶ Office for National Statistics (2025), [UK trade in services: service type by partner country, non-seasonally adjusted](#).

⁵⁷ United Nations Trade and Development Statistics (2024), [Services \(BPM6\): Exports and imports by service category, trade-partner](#).

⁵⁸ HM Treasury (2024), [Financial Services Growth and Competitiveness Strategy: Call for Evidence](#), page 16.

10.2 Digital trade

10.10. Digital trade is an important driver of UK growth. Experimental estimates published by the OECD suggest that it accounted for over half (55%) of UK exports, around GBP 280 billion, in 2020.⁵⁹ The OECD identified the UK as a leader in digital trade, with its digital shares of exports nearly twice the OECD and EU averages.⁶⁰

10.11. The UK's digital trade provisions are far-reaching and comprehensive, and have addressed barriers in digital markets, supported consumers, provided safeguards for businesses and advanced the digitalization of trading systems, processes and documents.

10.12. Digital trade has also been an important focus of the UK's multilateral trade policy at the WTO, G7, G20, UNCTAD and Commonwealth. Under the UK's G7 Presidency in 2021, the G7 agreed a groundbreaking set of Digital Trade Principles. The Principles cover open digital markets, data free flow with trust, safeguards for workers, consumers and businesses, digital trading systems and fair and inclusive global governance. Further detail on our work at the WTO is included under Chapter 5.

11 TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT

11.1 Preferential market access

11.1. The UK recognizes that export-led growth is a proven route for partners to develop their economies and lift themselves out of poverty. Our Trade Strategy outlines our commitment to deepen our growth and investment partnerships with the Global South to support mutual long-term growth, security and stability for the UK and for partners. The UK provides preferential market access for goods from over 90 developing countries through the Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS) and our network of 8 EPAs. During the period under review, we have worked to implement the EPAs and launched the DCTS on 19 June 2023

11.2. The value of goods imports from DCTS countries to the UK, on a country-of-origin basis, was GBP 28.6 billion in 2024. This excludes imports that enter through special processing (for example, inward or outward processing).⁶¹ It is simpler and more generous than the previous UK Generalized Scheme of Preferences, including simplifying and liberalizing rules of origin for LDCs, and removing the requirement to ratify international conventions to access Enhanced Preferences. It also removes tariffs on over 150 goods for countries eligible for Enhanced Preferences.

11.3. The UK is further liberalizing rules of origin for developing countries in the DCTS. We will encourage intra-regional trade and supply chain diversification by creating a new regional cumulation group in Africa and merging and expanding regional cumulation groups in Asia. We will liberalize rules in early 2026 for garments for Low and Lower middle-income countries so they can source more from non-DCTS countries and still benefit from reduced tariffs.

11.4. Services trade offers a direct route for developing economies to diversify their exports away from a limited range of products and commodities, boosting resilience by reducing exposure to commodity price volatility. The UK will improve communication of UK preferential market access for LDCs, explore if there is potential to deepen trade in services support and engagement in Africa and actively engage and advance WTO services and development initiatives.

11.5. The UK is looking at how it can take a more strategic and proactive approach to stimulating imports from developing countries in sectors where there is demand and need from British companies. Once identified, the UK will develop initiatives to support exports, though marketing and matchmaking support and sharing information on how to access UK markets.

⁵⁹ Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2024), [Working Paper: Making the most out of digital trade in the United Kingdom](#). Digital trade is defined as trade that is either digitally ordered or digitally delivered.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ HM Revenue and Customs (2025), [Import data by preference data](#).

11.2 Aid for trade

11.6. The UK provides Aid for Trade (AFT) to business and governments to support export-led growth from and between developing countries. Between 2017 and 2023, the UK spent GBP 10.2 billion on AFT.⁶² An internal portfolio review identified over 30 programmes engaged in providing AFT, including the UK's ongoing support for and ownership of TradeMark Africa (formally TradeMark East Africa).⁶³ In October 2024 the Prime Minister announced plans for a Trade Centre of Expertise which will provide expert technical assistance on trade barriers, export promotion and global trading issues to developing country businesses and governments. As part of this work, the UK announced a contribution to the WTO/World Bank's Trade in Services for Development Programme. Following the decision to reduce Official Development Assistance (ODA) to 0.3% of gross national income, the UK is reviewing the scope and scale of its medium-term Aid for Trade portfolio to ensure continued impact and strategic alignment.

12 PROMOTING AN OPEN AND MODERN TRADING SYSTEM

12.1 Innovation

12.1. The UK Government is continuing to build on its existing strengths in innovation through protected funding for Research and Development. Along with implementing the world's first Innovation Chapter in an FTA, the inaugural UK-Australia Strategic Innovation Dialogue has encouraged commercialization and trade collaboration in offshore wind technologies, future batteries, and future health. The policy session with Australia on standards and interoperability of AI in connected and autonomous vehicles provides just one example of the UK's efforts to promote frictionless trade and encourage widespread adoption of AI-enabled products and services. Alongside our focus on maximizing the opportunities of AI and driving growth, the UK is committed to working internationally to develop secure and responsible AI.

12.2. The UK Government launched the Regulatory Innovation Office as a lever to support economic growth through the commercialization of innovation by reducing regulatory barriers for technologies. The Welsh Government is actively supporting participation in international networks as part of its Innovation Strategy for Wales, ensuring Wales is a leading, innovation-based economy. In Scotland, the Scottish Government is collaborating with partners to achieve the goals of its National Innovation Strategy and establish Scotland as a leading start-up nation. In Northern Ireland, the industry-led matrix panel is advising the Northern Ireland Government and informing academia and industry on the commercial exploitation of research and development and science and technology. Looking ahead, the UK is continuing its pioneering programme of negotiating Innovation provisions within trade agreements. The UK's international Science and Technology Network, a 130-strong team based in 65 locations worldwide, is unlocking further economic growth through enhanced international collaboration in the development of breakthrough technologies.

12.2 Intellectual property (IP)

12.3. The UK's approach to IP in trade is aimed at promoting innovation. Our IP framework is highly regarded globally.⁶⁴ The framework is designed to make it easier for businesses to register and enforce their IP, balancing the rights of creators, inventors and investors with those who need to use products and services based on IP, including consumer and wider citizen interests.

12.4. The UK will continue to consider where and how we can best deploy our resources, given global and domestic changes, in relation to IP. This will involve further developing the UK's IP framework to keep pace with societal change to support creativity and innovation, such as considering how to support innovation through AI while remunerating rights holders fairly. The UK will continue working to ensure quality IP chapters with future and ongoing FTA negotiating partners to provide certainty to businesses and promote innovation for all.

⁶² Statistics on International Development (2023), [Final UK ODA spend 2023](#).

⁶³ Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (2025), [TradeMark East Africa - Strategy 2 \(Regional\)](#).

⁶⁴ World Economic Forum (2019), [The Global Competitiveness Index 4.0 2019 dataset](#).

12.3 Trade facilitation

12.5. The UK has undertaken large-scale development and reform of its customs regime following our withdrawal from the EU in 2020. The UK customs regime plays a vital role in facilitating trade, spurring economic growth, maintaining security and implementing controls to efficiently collect border revenue. This approach to the border is underpinned by a targeted risk and intelligence-led approach.

12.6. The UK has invested in several projects to support innovation and digitalized trade across customs processes and systems, working alongside industry. A new Customs Declaration Service allows for the submission of all export and import documents electronically, as well as enhanced online support services to assist traders in calculating duties, identifying any suitable suspensions or reductions and understanding relevant controls. The UK is further developing this support, including by evaluating the use of AI to bring together customs guidance, data, and declaration requirements specific to our customers' trade and journey. This will especially benefit small businesses by identifying the full range of relevant customs facilitations and international arrangements relevant to their business.

12.7. Our longer-term ambition is to iteratively embed innovation in customs processes and systems, supporting digitalized trade and supply chains, whilst ensuring we are controlling the right goods in the right ways. On 28 April 2025, the UK Government announced a package of measures which simplify customs processes, improve the customer experience and promote compliance as part of the Tax Update Spring 2025: Simplification, Administration and Reform.⁶⁵ Measures include increasing access to special procedures through authorization by declaration, announcing pilots with industry and international partners to drive forward trade and customs digitalization, implementing simplifications and improvements to temporary admission, and engagement on transit improvements.

13 SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE TRADE

13.1 Animal welfare

13.1. The UK recognizes that, in accordance with WTO rules, animal welfare is a legitimate policy objective that can be pursued by WTO Members in the context of their trade policies. In this context, our strong regulatory framework ensures that animal welfare is embedded in our agriculture, food systems, and broader trade policies, reflecting our belief that responsible trade must not undermine the welfare of animals and can be used to improve animal welfare standards. The UK and its devolved governments are committed to upholding high animal welfare standards. The UK is committed to encourage the use and development of ambitious international standards. We recognize that animals are sentient beings. We also recognize the connection between the improved welfare of animals, the improved health of animals and sustainable food production systems.

13.2 Environment

13.2. The Trade Strategy recognizes the important role trade can play in supporting environmental objectives; including through actions such as the removal of trade barriers for green goods and services and efforts to ensure trading frameworks are responsive to the green transition. The UK has agreed significant levels of mutual tariff liberalization and seeks provisions which support trade in remanufactured goods or goods destined for alteration and repair.⁶⁶ These measures can support a global circular economy while also reducing the costs of trade in environmental goods and services which drive the global green transition.

13.3. Looking ahead, the UK will explore new and deeper clean energy cooperation with markets⁶⁷, such as Brazil, the Philippines, and Mexico, influential in our clean energy industries. On critical minerals, we will continue to explore collaboration with key partners such as the EU, US and the

⁶⁵ HM Revenue and Customs (2025), [Tax update spring 2025: simplification, administration and reform summary](#).

⁶⁶ The UK has agreed an environmental goods list under the UK-New Zealand free trade agreement which provides a list of 293 HS2017 six-digit subheadings associated with 324 product categories providing, directly or indirectly, environmental benefits

⁶⁷ UK Board of Trade (2021), [Board of Trade report](#), page 38, section on UK approach to Green Trade.

Republic of Korea⁶⁸, whilst building on our existing critical mineral partnerships including with Australia, Canada, Japan, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

13.4. This approach to trade policy aligns with the UK's ambitious agenda both domestically and internationally, in responding to the triple planetary crisis of climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. The UK's Climate Change Act 2008 marked a significant milestone in global climate action, and made the UK the first nation to establish a legally binding framework for the UK's net-zero target for 2050.⁶⁹

13.5. At COP 29, the UK announced an ambitious new target to reduce emissions by at least 81% on 1990 levels by 2035^{70,71} and launched the Global Clean Power Alliance – uniting countries to speed up the clean energy transition globally, establishing new partnerships and funding to help speed up the global clean energy transition, tackle illegal deforestation and support indigenous people. The UK reaffirmed its commitment to GBP 11.6 billion of climate finance by 2025-26 and announced the launch of the new CIF Capital Market Mechanism on the London Stock Exchange – supporting London's position as the green finance capital of the world.

13.6. Key to achieving the UK's ambitious net zero targets is ensuring the clean energy transition. Making the UK a clean energy superpower to accelerate net zero by 2050 is one of the Prime Minister's five defining missions.⁷² In December 2024, the Prime Minister published his Plan for Change, setting out several milestones for a mission-led government to reach by the end of the current Parliament. The UK has already achieved considerable progress in securing home-grown energy. This includes announcing Great British Energy, which will be a new, publicly owned, clean energy company, and put the UK on track to at least 95% low carbon generation by 2030, whilst accelerating the UK to net zero.⁷³

13.7. The UK also published the Clean Power 2030 Action Plan in December 2024, which sets out a detailed plan for transitioning to an electricity system that produces at least 95% of Great Britain's generation from clean sources. The Contracts for Difference Scheme is one of the UK's flagship energy policies and the Government's main mechanism for supporting new low-carbon electricity generation projects in Great Britain. It guarantees a set price per MWh of electricity for 15 years, indexed to inflation. Coal accounted for around 40% of the UK's electricity supply as recently as 2012. This dropped to 2% in 2019 and 0% from October 2024,⁷⁴ making the UK the first G7 economy to phase out coal. Both policies have significantly contributed to the UK's strides towards the clean energy transition.

13.8. Multilaterally, the UK has been a long-standing supporter of efforts to promote fossil fuel subsidy reform, including through the G7, G20 and UNFCCC. At COP29 the UK joined the Coalition on Phasing Out Fossil Fuel Incentives Including Subsidies (COFFIS). Joining the COFFIS signals the UK's continued commitment to the international phase-out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies and increased transparency and in-line with its COFFIS commitments, the UK will release an inventory of its incentives and fossil fuel subsidies.

13.9. Alongside its clean energy agenda, the UK also has an ambitious wider decarbonization agenda. In 2023, industrial emissions accounted for 17% of total UK greenhouse gas (GHG)

⁶⁸ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2023), [Clean Energy Partnership between the UK and the Republic of Korea](#).

⁶⁹ Of the devolved governments, Scotland has set its own target to be a net-zero economy by 2045. Wales aims to reach net zero in its public sector by 2030 and overall by 2050. Northern Ireland aims to reduce its government emissions by 30% by 2030.

⁷⁰ In 2023, industrial emissions accounted for 17% of total UK greenhouse gas emissions and had reduced by 60% compared to 1990 levels. Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2025), [Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener](#); [BEIS 2021 Net Zero Strategy Charts and Tables](#).

⁷¹ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2025), [Final UK greenhouse gas emissions statistics: 1990 to 2023](#).

⁷² In the UK, environment policy is a devolved competency and UK wide initiatives are achieved through coordination between UK Government and the devolved governments of the Northern Ireland Assembly, Scottish Government and Welsh Government respectively.

⁷³ [Great British Energy](#) will be a publicly owned energy company designed to drive clean energy deployment and boost energy independence.

⁷⁴ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2024), [Electricity statistics](#).

emissions and had reduced by 60% compared to 1990 levels.⁷⁵ To help achieve the industrial decarbonization required to meet its domestic and international climate commitments, the UK will introduce a Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM). The CBAM is an environmental measure aimed at tackling carbon leakage and supporting the integrity of decarbonization⁷⁶ in the aluminium, cement, fertilizer, hydrogen and iron and steel sectors. The measure will help incentivize industrial decarbonization by ensuring that a carbon price, comparable to what would be paid if the good had been produced in the UK under the UK's carbon pricing regime, is paid on imports. This means that UK decarbonization contributes to a real reduction in global emissions rather than see a displacement of emissions overseas. The UK plans to adjust the CBAM liability to account for explicit carbon prices incurred overseas.

13.10. The UK is committed to ensuring that the design of its CBAM fully aligns with WTO trade obligations and is underpinned by a transparent approach. This includes extensive consultations with UK and international industry stakeholders, NGOs, and trade partners, as well as hosting multiple information sessions at the WTO.

13.11. The UK continues to support an international solution to carbon leakage. While implementing its own CBAM, it is also working closely with global partners – through the WTO, the Climate Club, and the OECD Inclusive Forum on Climate Mitigation Approaches – to develop a coordinated and effective approach to carbon leakage mitigation.

13.12. The UK is also committed to halting and reversing biodiversity loss by 2030. As a Party to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, the UK has published a revised National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan and National Targets that commit us to achieving all 23 targets of the Global Biodiversity Framework at home. The UK will continue working multilaterally and in partnership with tropical forest countries to halt and reverse deforestation by 2030, including through co-chairing the Forest and Climate Leaders Partnership and the Forest, Agriculture and Commodity Trade Dialogue.

13.13. Agriculture transition is an important part of the UK's approach to delivering its environmental goals. Trade and trade policy can play a key role in incentivizing the adoption of sustainable agricultural practices, and to reduce barriers to goods and services critical to sustainable agriculture. For example, the UK uses its bilateral free trade agreements to set out its commitment to strengthening and implementing policies which promote sustainable agriculture in trade and seeks mutual commitments from trading partners. The UK has also led on agri-technology transfer initiatives through British International Investment and Innovate UK which support sustainable and resilient food systems internationally. In terms of domestic agricultural support measures, agriculture is a devolved competence and the UK and its devolved governments are developing and implementing sustainable agriculture approaches at their own pace, reflecting our different priorities and needs.⁷⁷ We share good practice and evidence of what works to help achieve our shared objectives of making farming more sustainable. We endeavour to ensure our agricultural support schemes are non or minimally trade distorting.

13.14. In the transport sector, the UK has been proactive with measures to achieve net zero and reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This includes those published under the UK Maritime Decarbonization Strategy (March 2025)⁷⁹ which aligns with the highest ambitions set out in the 2023 IMO GHG Strategy. In aviation, the UK has introduced its Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) Mandate

⁷⁵ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2023), [Net Zero Government Initiative: UK roadmap to net zero government emissions](#).

⁷⁶ Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (2025), [Final UK greenhouse gas emissions statistics:1990 to 2023](#).

⁷⁷ Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (2020), [Agricultural Transition Plan 2021 to 2024](#), Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes and grants, replace direct, area-based payments with incentives that promote sustainable agriculture by rewarding farmers for actions that benefit the environment, and funding to improve productivity through innovation and technology.

⁷⁸ Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (2023), [Future Agricultural Policy Decisions for Northern Ireland](#); Welsh Government (2022), [Sustainable Farming Scheme: outline proposals for 2025](#); Scottish Government (2025), [Agricultural Reform Route Map](#).

⁷⁹ Department for Transport (2025), [Maritime decarbonisation strategy](#).

which requires SAF to make at least 2% of the UK's overall aviation fuel mix in 2025, growing year-on-year to 10% by 2030 and 22% by 2040.⁸⁰

13.15. The UK is engaged in delivering for nature by restoring and protecting the natural world, which is achieved in collaboration with the UK's devolved governments and their respective legislation and strategies. In England, under the Environment Act 2021,⁸¹ the UK Government is obligated to publish environmental improvement plans, each setting out priorities for achieving environmental outcomes.⁸²

13.16. There are untapped opportunities to achieve positive economic, environmental and social outcomes through the adoption of a more circular and sustainable economic model. The UK is committed to transition to a circular economy domestically and to support the transition globally. The UK Government (for England), Scottish Government and Northern Ireland are developing Circular Economy (CE) Strategies, with Wales' CE Strategy already published. A recent example of actions already taken include legislation jointly implemented by the UK and devolved governments to ban single use vapes which came into force on 1 June 2025.

13.3 Trade and inclusion

13.17. The UK's trade policy aims to break down barriers to gender equality in trade, and creates opportunities for women as business owners, entrepreneurs and workers. In 2019, the UK founded the Investing in Women Code, an initiative to improve women entrepreneurs' access to tools, resources and finance, barriers faced by women-led businesses looking to trade. The UK's Invest in Women Taskforce, launched in March 2024, has raised GBP 255 million for its "Women Backing Women" Fund to invest in women-powered businesses.⁸³ The Taskforce's Ecosystem Working Group is increasing the number of women founders and has established the "Invest in Women Hub" to provide women entrepreneurs with information on funding options, networks, and expertise. The Department for Business and Trade also provides training programmes designed for women in trade, such as seminars and trade missions. In addition to our work in FTAs, the UK's new Trade Centre of Expertise will support firms in developing countries. This includes to export in sectors with a high percentage of women workers and support women-led businesses. In addition to FTAs, the UK funds the SheTrades Commonwealth+ Programme, under which the ITC also developed SheTrades Outlook – an innovative tool that helps stakeholders and policymakers assess, monitor, and improve the policy ecosystem for women's participation in international trade. To date, 61 developing and developed countries have onboarded the tool, including the UK in 2023.⁸⁴

13.18. Gender equality is largely a devolved matter in the UK. The devolved governments in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland have the authority to legislate on gender equality issues within their regions. The Scottish Government commissioned research on the gender export gap and is working with enterprise agencies to implement recommendations from the report.⁸⁵ The Welsh Government completed research on the experiences, barriers, and opportunities in international trade for women. Insights from this research are being used to offer practical guidance to women entrepreneurs and tailor support programmes to address their specific needs. The devolved governments are also responsible for developing and implementing domestic policies to support women exporters in areas such as education, skills development, and childcare provision. The Scottish Government is taking forward recommendations from the Pathways: Women in Entrepreneurship Report to address under-participation of women in entrepreneurship, including providing financial support through the Pathways Fund.⁸⁶ This includes providing financial support to early-stage women-led businesses in Scotland.

13.19. The UK is also working to reduce barriers for businesses owned by persons with a disability and ethnic minorities. In December 2024, the UK announced the Disability Finance Code for

⁸⁰ Department for Transport (2024), [Sustainable Aviation Fuel \(SAF\) Mandate](#).

⁸¹ The Environment Act 2021 also applies in Northern Ireland.

⁸² Wales has introduced similar legislation, such the [Environment Act \(2016\)](#), and is currently progressing further legislation to enact environment commitments. Scotland has also published an Environment Strategy that creates an overarching framework for Scotland's existing environmental strategies and plans, including the [Climate Change Plan](#) (2020).

⁸³ Invest in Women Taskforce (2025), [Funding female powered businesses](#).

⁸⁴ SheTrades Outlook (2025), [Overall assessment for United Kingdom](#).

⁸⁵ Scottish Government (2025), [Gender Export Gap in Scotland: Research](#).

⁸⁶ Scottish Government (2024), [Pathways Fund](#).

Entrepreneurship, which aims to boost access to finance for persons with a disability. We are also conducting work on access to finance for ethnic minority businesses. This includes ministerial roundtables and creating an Ethnic Minority Toolkit to support policymakers in their work with ethnic minority businesses. The Welsh Government is researching the challenges and opportunities faced by entrepreneurs from specific underrepresented groups – including ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, young entrepreneurs and LGBTQ+ individuals respectively – in international trade, aiming to improve their access to global markets through targeted support and resources.

13.4 Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs)

13.20. MSMEs⁸⁷ are the lifeblood of the UK's economy (99.8% of all UK businesses and 60% of UK employment).⁸⁸ The UK therefore remains focused on the vital task of supporting MSMEs to trade with other countries. The UK and devolved governments undertake numerous support activities to ensure that MSMEs can access the help they need. We work with businesses and business representative organizations to raise awareness of the UK's new FTAs and the economic benefits they provide. The UK has country market guides for businesses on business.gov.uk, as well as MSME engagement programmes with MSMEs through events such as trade shows and training sessions. We also support MSMEs through our Export Support Service. The UK Export Academy provides a free training programme for UK businesses looking to grow and export. Additionally, the UK has currently agreed SME chapters in FTAs. This reflects a shared commitment to supporting these businesses to trade internationally.

13.21. Across the UK, we have over 400 Export Champions who share their experience of trading internationally. UK Export Finance provides loans, guarantees, and insurance, and plans to support over 1,000 SMEs a year by 2029. In 2023-2024, 88% of businesses supported by UKEF were SMEs.⁸⁹ Additionally, Help to Grow supports MSME business leaders to access the practical support they need to enhance productivity and growth. Similarly, the Scottish Government works with agencies such as Scottish Enterprise and Scottish Development International and networks such as GlobalScot to help MSMEs internationalize to promote export growth. The Welsh Government has its own comprehensive export support programme offering advice and support for any company in Wales looking to access export markets and has a network of international offices that support this. The UK Trade Partnerships Programme, an Aid-for-Trade programme, also empowers MSMEs globally to boost trade with the UK and the EU through trade promotion and capacity-building. The UK will shortly be publishing a strategy setting out how it will support small businesses, including how the UK encourages MSMEs to export.

13.22. The UK Government has recently published "Backing your business", the most comprehensive package of support for small and medium sized businesses in a generation. The UK's 5.5 million SMEs are the beating heart of our growth mission and the backbone of our economy, and this landmark plan is aimed at unleashing their full potential.

13.23. The strategy announced the Business Growth Service, a new national service to be launched as part of the Five-Point Plan to make it easier and quicker for businesses across the UK to get the help, support and advice they need to start, scale and succeed. It will be the nationally recognised brand for business support in the UK, integrated with locally led delivery through Growth Hubs in England and a new digital service.

13.5 Trade and labour

13.24. The UK Government engages with trading partners and civil society to discuss labour issues and advance common interests. Our Domestic Advisory Group, for example, provides a forum for civil society stakeholders to support the implementation of labour provisions within UK trade agreements.

⁸⁷ Domestically referred to as SMEs.

⁸⁸ Department for Business and Trade (2024), [Business Population Estimates \(2024\)](#).

⁸⁹ UK Export Finance (2024), [UK Export Finance annual report and accounts 2023/24](#).

13.25. Across the UK, we are committed to the promotion of universal human rights.⁹⁰⁹¹ This includes our commitment to eradicate forced labour in global supply chains, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 8.7, and commitments made through the G7. This was reflected in the ambitious modern slavery provisions negotiated in the Australia and New Zealand bilateral FTAs.

13.26. The UK will continue to play a leading role in supporting workers' rights through its participation in a variety of multilateral forums, including addressing all forms of forced or compulsory labour in line with the relevant principles of the International Labour Organization's (ILO) Tripartite Declaration of Principles concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy (MNE Declaration) and our obligations under the ILO's Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work as well as within G20, G7 and UN forums. The UK also attends the OECD Responsible Business Conduct Working Group meetings where issues on labour rights are often raised within the context of the OECD Guidelines.

13.27. Domestically, under Section 54 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015, commercial businesses who operate in the UK and have a turnover of GBP 36 million or more are required to report annually on the steps they have taken to prevent modern slavery in their operations and supply chains. All UK businesses should conduct voluntary due diligence to respect human rights throughout their operations and supply chain relationships in line with the OECD Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct and UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs). More broadly domestic legislation such as the Welsh Government's Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 places a duty on public bodies to carry out sustainable development, which should involve taking steps to create a more equal Wales.⁹² The Scottish Government's Guidance on human rights due diligence recommends how it and its executive agencies and non-departmental public bodies should undertake due diligence, before entering into an "investment relationship" with companies.⁹³

13.28. The UK operates a national contact point to promote the OECD Guidelines and provide a non-judicial grievance mechanism for complaints of non-observance by UK businesses. This year, the FCDO will also be carrying out a national baseline assessment on the implementation of the UNGPs. This will contribute to the evidence base to inform the UK's approach to tackling business-related human rights abuses, including labour abuses in global supply chains. In the Trade Strategy, the UK Government launched a review of its approach to responsible business conduct policy. The review will focus on the global supply chains of businesses operating in the UK. It will harness the insights and expertise of businesses, investors, trade unions, academia, civil society and our trading partners.

13.29. The Government's Plan to Make Work Pay sets out an ambitious agenda to ensure employment rights are fit for a modern economy, empower working people and contribute to economic growth. The first phase of delivering this Plan is through the Employment Rights Bill. Alongside the new Industrial Strategy, the Employment Rights Bill will support the Government's mission to increase productivity and create the right conditions for long-term sustainable, inclusive, and secure economic growth.

⁹⁰ The Welsh Government is committed to including provisions in trade agreements that enforce labour provisions. Welsh Government (2024), [The Welsh Government's approach to trade policy](#).

⁹¹ The Scottish Government's position is that human rights should be a central consideration in trade policy. Scottish Government (2021), [Scotland's Vision for Trade](#).

⁹² Legislation.gov.uk (2015), [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

⁹³ Scottish Government (2025), [Guidance on due diligence: human rights](#).

Annex Table: List of the UK's concluded Free Trade Agreements^a

RTA name	Entry into force ^b	Coverage ^c	GATT/WTO notification	
			Year	WTO provision
UNITED KINGDOM				
United Kingdom - Albania	3 May 2021	G & S	2021	GATT Art. XXIV & GATS Art. V
United Kingdom - Australia	31 May 2023	G & S	2023	GATT Art. XXIV & GATS Art. V
United Kingdom - Cameroon	9 July 2021	G	2020	GATT Art. XXIV
United Kingdom - Canada	G: 1 January 2021 S: 1 April 2021	G S	2020 2021	GATT Art. XXIV GATS Art. V
United Kingdom - CARIFORUM States	1 January 2021 (Suriname: 14 April 2024)	G & S	2020	GATT Art. XXIV & GATS Art. V
United Kingdom - Central America	1 January 2021	G & S	2020	GATT Art. XXIV & GATS Art. V
United Kingdom - Chile	1 January 2021	G & S	2020	GATT Art. XXIV & GATS Art. V
United Kingdom - Colombia, Ecuador and Peru	Peru: 1 January 2021; Ecuador: 31 December 2020; Colombia: 28 June 2022	G & S	2020	GATT Art. XXIV & GATS Art. V
United Kingdom - Côte d'Ivoire	1 January 2021	G	2020	GATT Art. XXIV
United Kingdom - Eastern and Southern Africa States	1 January 2021, Madagascar: 1 August 2024	G	2020	GATT Art. XXIV
United Kingdom - Egypt	1 January 2021	G	2020	GATT Art. XXIV
United Kingdom - Faroe Islands	1 January 2021	G	2020	GATT Art. XXIV
United Kingdom - Georgia	1 January 2021	G & S	2020	GATT Art. XXIV & GATS Art. V
United Kingdom - Ghana	5 March 2021	G	2021	GATT Art. XXIV
United Kingdom - Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway	Norway and Liechtenstein: 1 September 2022; Iceland: 1 February 2023	G & S	2021	GATT Art. XXIV & GATS Art. V
United Kingdom - Israel	1 January 2021	G	2020	GATT Art. XXIV
United Kingdom - Japan	1 January 2021	G & S	2020	GATT Art. XXIV & GATS Art. V
United Kingdom - Jordan	1 May 2021	G	2021	GATT Art. XXIV
United Kingdom - Kenya	22 March 2021	G	2020	GATT Art. XXIV
United Kingdom - Kosovo ^d	1 January 2021	G&S	2020	GATT Art. XXIV
United Kingdom - Lebanon	1 January2021	G	2020	GATT Art. XXIV
United Kingdom - Mexico	1 June 2021	G & S	2021	GATT Art. XXIV & GATS Art. V
United Kingdom - Morocco	1 January 2021	G	2020	GATT Art. XXIV
United Kingdom - New Zealand	31 May 2023	G & S	2023	GATT Art. XXIV & GATS Art. V
United Kingdom - North Macedonia	1 January 2021	G & S	2020	GATT Art. XXIV & GATS Art. V
United Kingdom - Pacific States	1 January 2021	G	2020	GATT Art. XXIV
United Kingdom - Pacific States - Accession of Samoa	31 March 2022	G	2020	GATT Art. XXIV
United Kingdom - Pacific States - Accession of Solomon Islands	31 March 2022	G	2020	GATT Art. XXIV
United Kingdom - Palestinian Authority	1 January 2021	G	2020	GATT Art. XXIV
United Kingdom - Republic of Korea	1 January 2021	G & S	2020	GATT Art. XXIV & GATS Art. V
United Kingdom - Republic of Moldova	1 January 2021	G & S	2020	GATT Art. XXIV & GATS Art. V
United Kingdom - SACU and Mozambique	1 January 2021	G	2021	GATT Art. XXIV
United Kingdom - Serbia	15 July 2021	G & S	2021	GATT Art. XXIV & GATS Art. V
United Kingdom - Singapore	11 February 2021	G & S	2020	GATT Art. XXIV & GATS Art. V
United Kingdom - Switzerland - Liechtenstein	1 January 2021	G	2020	GATT Art. XXIV
United Kingdom - Tunisia	1 January 2021	G	2020	GATT Art. XXIV
United Kingdom - Türkiye	1 January 2021	G	2020	GATT Art. XXIV
United Kingdom - Ukraine	1 January 2021	G & S	2020	GATT Art. XXIV & GATS Art. V
United Kingdom - Viet Nam	1 January 2021	G & S	2020	GATT Art. XXIV & GATS Art. V
Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) – Accession of the United Kingdom	15 December 2024	G & S	2024	GATT Art. XXIV & GATS Art. V
European Union - United Kingdom	1 January 2021	G & S	2021	GATT Art. XXIV & GATS Art. V

a Further information on these Agreements and on specific dates of entry into force/provisional applications may be found in the [WTO Database on RTAs](#).

b Dates of the first entry into force/provisional application for at least one of the Parties.

c G stands for trade in goods and S for trade in services.

d Reference to Kosovo in this table shall be understood to be in the context of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).