



Department for
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11 January 2024

Dear Liam,

**Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans Pacific Partnership:
Commencement of a period of public engagement**

I am writing to inform the Committee that the Department for Business and Trade will be seeking views from businesses, individuals and other interested stakeholders on the General Review of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

The UK signed its Accession Protocol to the CPTPP on 16 July 2023 and the Government is now taking the steps needed to ratify the agreement, which is expected to come into force in 2024, subject to parliamentary approval. We remain committed to ensuring that Parliament has extensive time to scrutinise all aspects of the agreement and will continue to work with your Committee to ensure you can conduct your vital scrutiny work.

The General Review

CPTPP is designed to be a living agreement, evolving to maintain its high standards. In reflection of that, the CPTPP text mandates that the agreement should be reviewed within three years of the date of entry into force of this Agreement and at least every five years thereafter. As I updated your committee recently, it has now been agreed amongst CPTPP members that this first General Review of the agreement will begin in 2024, with CPTPP members agreeing the Terms of Reference for the review in San Francisco in November of last year.

Although the General Review will likely begin while the UK is still a non-ratified member of CPTPP, we expect the review process to conclude after the UK is a ratified member, subject to ratification being agreed by Parliament. We are, therefore, ensuring that the UK is fully involved in the review, and it is important that we understand the views of interested stakeholders as we enter that process.

The UK considers that CPTPP is already a well-functioning, high standards agreement. That was the basis on which we applied to join, following one of the largest consultation exercises ever run by the UK Government. We understand that this also remains the view of the other members of the agreement. It is likely, therefore, that any changes to the agreement made through the General Review process will be carefully targeted to areas where all members consider there would be benefits from closing perceived gaps in the agreement, to ensure the agreement remains of the highest possible international standard. Any such changes would require consensus amongst all members.

Public Engagement Period

We want to ensure that stakeholders have the opportunity to express their views. The Government will, therefore, be running a period of public engagement on the General Review. This will run for a 6-week period, with the aim of ensuring that stakeholder views are received before the review process begins. It will focus on seeking views on areas of the CPTPP Agreement that should be kept the same, and those that could be changed or improved in line with the highest standard international trading practices.

The engagement period will be open between Thursday 11 January and Thursday 22 February.

I look forward to keeping you updated with developments on the CPTPP General Review.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Hands', with a horizontal line underneath the name.

The Rt Hon Greg Hands MP
Minister of State for Trade Policy and Minister for London
Department for Business and Trade