



## Department for International Trade

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Angus Brendan MacNeil MP  
International Trade Committee  
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Dear Angus,

### **UK begins negotiations to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP)**

I am writing to inform you that the UK will shortly begin negotiations to join the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

Joining CPTPP puts the UK at the heart of a dynamic group of countries, as the world economy increasingly centres on the Pacific Region and almost two-thirds of the world's middle classes expected to be in Asia by 2030. As these economies grow, it is even more important that the UK is in a free trade agreement with them, allowing us to benefit from this economic expansion.

CPTPP would hitch the UK to some of the world's biggest economies of the present and future - populated by half a billion people and with a joint GDP of £9 trillion in 2019. Our exports to these countries are set to increase by £37 billion, a 65% rise by 2030, and a deal would open new markets for our services industries and lower tariffs on goods like cars and whisky.

Further, with CPTPP countries set to account for 25% of global import demand for meat by the end of the decade, joining would support farmers selling high-quality produce like beef and lamb into fast-growing markets such as Mexico.

CPTPP is particularly advanced in both digital and services trade, which plays to the UK's strengths as the world's second-largest services exporter. An agreement would make it simpler for the UK to sell services digitally and cheaper and easier for tech firms to expand abroad.

It makes business travel easier between member countries and goes further in areas of key UK interest, with advanced provisions which facilitate digital trade, plus modern rules on data which would help the UK's cutting-edge tech sector to consolidate its global appeal and open up new financial and professional services markets.

The more economies that join, the greater the gains for the United Kingdom. CPTPP is designed to expand further – the Philippines, Thailand, Taiwan and the Republic of Korea have all expressed interest in joining – and that is why we want a seat at the table now. As the first new member, we can help shape its future development.

Importantly, the agreement has strong rules against unfair trade practices and the UK's membership would strengthen the international consensus in favour of free and fair trade. CPTPP already has high environmental, labour and other standards, and commits members to protect the minimum wage, freedom of association, the elimination of forced and child labour, and crucially, enforce their own laws in these areas. Partnership members then hold each other accountable for meeting these rules. The agreement further affirms the UK's right to regulate in our national self-interest, rather than forcing harmonisation on its members.

NHS services and the prices it pays for drugs will remain protected and will not be up for negotiation. There will be no changes to our intellectual property regime that would lead to increased medicine prices for the NHS.

Lastly, joining CPTPP creates an opportunity to help level-up the UK. Partnership countries accounted for £110 billion-worth of trade from across the UK in 2019, including £2.5 billion worth of exports from the East Midlands, £2 billion from Scotland and £1.9 billion from the North West. UK negotiating teams will be working over the coming months to ensure a good deal for businesses, producers and consumers across Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

I look forward to discussing this agreement with you further in due course and am attaching a list of the top ten benefits of joining CPTPP.

Best wishes,



**THE RT HON ELIZABETH TRUSS MP**  
Secretary of State for International Trade  
& President of the Board of Trade



# Top 10 benefits of Trans-Pacific Partnership

- 1. Tariff free trade on 99.9% of exports**

Membership means 99.9% of all the goods we export to the Partnership will have tariffs scrapped, opening new opportunities for goods such as cars, whisky distillers and machinery to half a billion consumers.
- 2. New opportunities for UK farmers**

Trans-Pacific Partnership countries will account for 25% of world import demand for meat by the end of the decade – joining will support our farmers selling top quality beef and lamb to a huge and expanding market.
- 3. Stronger supply chains**

The Trans-Pacific Partnership is made up of reliable partners that follow the rules. This means UK firms can build stronger and cheaper supply chains, leaving the UK less exposed in the future to the sort of disruption posed by the Covid pandemic.
- 4. Hitching Britain to fast-growing markets**

The Trans-Pacific Partnership already boasts some of the world's biggest economies, in a £9tn free trade area, and it is set to grow further with economies such as Philippines, Taiwan, South Korea and Thailand potential future members. Our exports to the Partnership are set to increase by £37 billion, a 65% rise, by 2030 – and joining will give us the opportunity to grow further still.
- 5. Major boost for UK service industries**

UK professionals such as lawyers, accountants and architects will be able to seize new opportunities through simplified visa rules, recognition of qualifications and reduced red tape. Business travellers and tourists could benefit from better roaming rates.
- 6. Cementing UK as global financial centre**

Banks and financial services in London and Edinburgh will benefit from reduced barriers. Banks like Standard Chartered, which operates in six of the 11 member countries, back membership because it will boost trade.
- 7. Boost for tech start-ups & digital traders**

The Partnership is particularly advanced in digital and services, which plays to Britain's strength as the world's second largest services exporter. An agreement would make it easier for UK firms to sell services digitally, and for tech firms to expand without having to set up shop overseas. Deliveroo backs membership, as it will help digital trade in markets like Australia and Singapore.
- 8. No strings attached**

We will be joining a free trade partnership that commits countries to enforcing their own laws, not forced harmonisation. Unlike being a member of the EU, we will retain control of our borders, money and laws.
- 9. Strong workers' rights & environmental standards**

The Partnership has strong rules to support workers' rights – members must protect minimum wages and recognise trades unions. It also defends environmental standards.
- 10. Taking a stand against unfair trade**

The Partnership has strong rules against unfair trade practices like favouring state-owned enterprises, discriminating against foreign investors and forcing companies to hand over private information. The UK's membership would strengthen the international consensus against unfair practices.