



Department for
International Trade



Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel, Kt
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15th December 2021

Dear Dianne,

Thank you for your letter dated 29 November and your request for more information on the nature of DIT's engagement with devolved administrations (DAs) throughout negotiations.

I welcome your acknowledgement of the engagement we have undertaken so far and understand you want more details on what this means in practice.

As you recognise, international trade is a reserved matter, but modern trade agreements increasingly intersect with areas of devolved competence and implementation in these areas is also a matter for the devolved administrations. We are committed to working closely with the devolved administrations to deliver Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) that both benefit all parts of the UK and respect our current constitutional relationships. DIT has built close ties with colleagues in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland to this end.

Our engagement with DAs takes place at both ministerial and official levels:

- DIT Ministers hold quarterly formal discussions with counterparts in the devolved administrations at the Ministerial Forum for Trade, which provides a formal mechanism for ensuring that the DAs have a strong role in the development of our trade policy and our FTA negotiations. This is in addition of ad-hoc bilateral discussions.
- All of our chapter teams engage the DAs at least every six weeks to provide detailed, technical updates.
- Our Chief Negotiators and their teams meet the DAs weekly to discuss FTA negotiations in granular detail.
- We also invite DA comments on both mandate documents and live legal text in areas that intersect with devolved competence.

The parts of FTAs that relate to agriculture, cover a wide range of chapters, which have different interactions with the devolution settlements. For example, chapters such as Sanitary and Phytosanitary and Technical Barriers to Trade directly relate to matters of

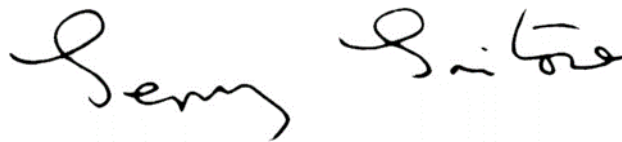
devolved competence whereas chapters such as goods market access do relate to agriculture, but the powers are fully reserved to the UK Government.

That does not mean that we do not recognise the significant and legitimate interest the DAs have in reserved chapters, as these may have knock-on impacts to devolved areas. We do hold regular discussions on these chapters such as Geographical Indicators and Agricultural Market access. We also feel we have a strong understanding of the DAs views in these areas, which are of course considered throughout negotiations.

As we move from New Zealand Agreement in Principle to signature, we will adapt our engagement to ensure concerns and issues specific to DA nations are resolved into the final deal. I would also add that all DIT Ministers have an open-door policy when it comes to the DAs, we will happily meet and discuss any issues they would like to raise with us.

As always, I am always happy to meet with your Committee and my Office is in the process of arranging this.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grimstone', written in a cursive style.

Lord Grimstone of Boscobel, Kt
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