

New national flagship to promote British businesses around the world

- Ship will be the first of its kind constructed in the UK, creating jobs and reinvigorating the shipbuilding industry
- Once built, the flagship will host trade events and promote UK interests around the world

British businesses will be given a new global platform to promote their products through a new national flagship announced by the Prime Minister today.

The ship, the first of its kind to be built and commissioned by the UK, will boost British trade and drive investment into our economy. The vessel will be used to host high level trade negotiations and trade shows and will sail all over the world promoting British interests.

A typical six month itinerary for the flagship might include docking at a port in a country where a British Prime Ministerial visit is taking place to accommodate parallel discussions between British and local businesses, hosting trade fairs to sell British products to an emerging market and providing the venue for an international ministerial summit or major trade negotiations between the UK and another government.

The ship, the name of which will be announced in due course, will be the first national flagship since 1997 when the HMY Britannia was decommissioned. However, its role will be distinct from that of any previous national flagship, reflecting the UK's new status as an independent trading nation and helping us to seize the opportunities that status presents.

As well as being a resource for British firms looking to export globally, the ship will also be a tangible manifestation of British ingenuity and shipbuilding expertise. The Government's intention is to build the ship in the UK. This will create jobs, help drive a renaissance in the UK's shipbuilding industry and showcase the best of British engineering around the world.

The Prime Minister said:

This new national flagship will be the first vessel of its kind in the world, reflecting the UK's burgeoning status as a great, independent maritime trading nation.

Every aspect of the ship, from its build to the businesses it showcases on board, will represent and promote the best of British – a clear and powerful symbol of our commitment to be an active player on the world stage.

As well as promoting trade, it is expected that the flagship will play an important role in achieving the UK's foreign policy and security objectives, including by hosting summits and other diplomatic talks.

Construction of the ship is expected to begin as soon as next year and the ship will enter service within the next four years. The tendering process for the design and construction of the ship will launch shortly, with an emphasis on building a vessel which reflects British design expertise and the latest innovations in green technology.

The ship will be crewed by the Royal Navy and is expected to be in service for around 30 years.

Costs for the construction and operation of the ship will be confirmed following the completion of a competitive tendering process.