UK kickstarts talks to join £9 trillion global trade bloc

The UK is kicking off its first negotiation meeting with all 11 members of CPTPP – a major trans-Pacific bloc which includes Canada, Japan, Mexico and Australia.

While other members have previously met to discuss the UK's application, the first UK-attended meeting of the CPTPP's UK Accession Working Group begins virtually in the early hours of Tuesday 28 September. These talks will kick off a series of negotiations on the UK's accession to the trading partnership.

CPTPP had a combined GDP of £9 trillion in 2019, and is home to 500 million people including some of the world's biggest and fastest-growing economies across Asia-Pacific and the Americas.

Joining the partnership could mean tariff-free trade for 99.9% of our exports, including food and drink, and cars, while also creating new opportunities for modern industries like tech and services, ultimately supporting and creating high-value jobs across the UK.

International Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

> This is a big milestone on our path to joining CPTPP, which will allow us to forge stronger links both with old friends and some of the world's fastest-growing economies.
>
> Joining this high-standards partnership will provide real opportunities for UK exporters and service providers and help our innovators open up new, diverse markets. Seizing opportunities like this is exactly what Global Britain is about and will help bring high-quality jobs and prosperity to every region of our country.

These initial talks will focus on how the UK meets the standards set out in the CPTPP agreement. The deal is one of the world's most advanced in both digital and services trade, which plays to the UK's strengths as the world's second-largest services exporter.

At the same time new Trade Minister Penny Mordaunt is visiting two CPTPP countries – Chile and Peru – on her first official visit as Minister of State.

She will meet Chile's Minister of Agriculture Maria Emilia Undurraga, and her Peruvian counterpart Roberto Sánchez as well as businesses from the region.

Her talks will focus on the benefits of the UK joining the dynamic trading bloc as well as opportunities for expanding bilateral trade with the two countries.

Trade Minister Penny Mordaunt said:

> Chile and Peru are important strategic trade partners for the UK, and I will be using the visit to explore deeper trade and investment ties with both countries. As we kick off negotiations to join CPTPP, there is no better time for British businesses to take advantage of the growing export opportunities in this dynamic part of the world.

£3.8 million in contracts awarded to mitigate the radar risk of windfarms

Funded through the BEIS Net Zero Innovation Portfolio and delivered by MOD, the Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) with the support of the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) have awarded contracts worth £3.8 million for Phase 2 of Windfarm Mitigation for UK Air Defence, a competition which aims to develop technologies that reduce the impact of offshore windfarms on Air Defence (AD) surveillance.

Offshore wind will play a key role in delivering the net zero ambition by 2050, with a government commitment to scale it up to 40GW by the end of the decade. To achieve net zero targets, the UK will need additional offshore windfarms around the UK.

The Windfarm Mitigation for UK Air Defence competition was run behalf of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and undertaken in partnership with the Royal Air Force (RAF),to seek ideas from industry and academia to reduce the adverse impact that windfarms can have on AD and Air Traffic Control (ATC) surveillance systems.

Technologies that were submitted during the competition include:

- alternative technologies that could reduce radar clutter caused by offshore windfarms
- improvements to the probability of intruder detection
- the capability to fill or remove gaps in radar coverage
- alternatives to radar
- solutions to the cumulative effect of windfarm development
- metasurfaces applied to, or alterations to the design of, the wind turbines

- alterations to the initial radar signal or radar station or processing of the return

Wing Commander Kevin Walton, Co-Chair of the Ministry of Defence/Offshore Wind Industry Council Air Defence Mitigation Task Force said:

“Offshore wind will play a major role in achieving our Net Zero Targets. The technology being developed in this competition will help the UK achieve its renewable energy targets without compromising the surveillance of UK airspace.

“In addition, the technology being developed will help boost UK prosperity, entrepreneurs and innovators by investing in innovative technologies.

“Phase 2 of this competition develops on the Phase 1 activities and moves further to identify operational systems that will help enable the coexistence of offshore windfarms and the UK’s Air Defence and ATC surveillance systems.”

Aviation and windfarms working together

Seven projects led from six organisations have been awarded Phase 2 funding to fast-track their innovative solutions. The organisations are:

Advanced Material Development Ltd

Phase 2 Funding: £392,605

Their solution introduces advanced nano-scale Radar Absorbing Material (nRAM) at the manufacturing stage of offshore windfarms, ensuring RF absorption is integrated into the base materials of offshore windfarms.

Saab Technologies UK Ltd

Phase 2 Funding: £599,692

To incorporate Machine Learning (ML) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) techniques into air defence radar, providing a trusted air surveillance picture in noisy and cluttered environments.

Trelleborg Applied Technologies

Phase 2 Funding: £600,000

Their solution is to deliver Frame (Full Radar Absorbing Materials and Equipment) to mitigate wind turbine radar interference.

Thales UK Ltd (Project 1)

Phase 2 Funding: £481,019

To design and demonstrate multistatic, staring radar systems using a validated synthetic environment, to provide continuous all-weather air surveillance in and around windfarms.

Thales UK Ltd (Project 2)

Phase 2 Funding: £599,970

A solution to synchronise two remote Holographic radars to demonstrate synchronised multi-static staring radar (MSAR), to reduce the impact of windfarm clutter and enhance detection and tracking performance.

LiveLink Aerospace

Phase 2 Funding: £505,938

A solution involving multiple low-cost, multi-role, passive sensors on the nacelles of wind turbines that can transform the turbines from being a radar disrupter, to becoming the eyes and ears of an advanced air defence.

TWI Limited

Phase 2 Funding: £600,000

A solution to develop a novel metasurface manufacturing method for the mitigation of radar clutter caused by windfarms.

Ensuring the UK can continue to defend its airspace and the safe flight of aircraft

These solutions will help ensure the continued development of vital wind turbine sites, without impacting military AD and ATC.

What happened in Phase 1?

This follows on from Windfarm Mitigation for UK Air Defence: Phase 1, where £2 million worth of contracts were awarded to Thales, QinetiQ, Saab, TWI and Plextek DTS to fast-track their ideas for technologies that could mitigate the impact of windfarms on the UK’s AD radar system.

Phase 1 identified and advanced multiple promising routes for windfarm radar mitigation, such as new radar signal processing methods or radar absorbing treatments and applying metamaterials to control the radar signature of wind turbines. Additional findings recommended a hybrid approach, involving changes to both radar and turbine design to solve the problem in the long term. Phase 2 studies aim to clarify this further. Read more about it here.

Business Department to consult on

[revised undertakings from Sepura Plc and Hytera Communications Corporation]

News story

Business Department to consult on revised undertakings from Sepura Plc and Hytera Communications Corporation

The Business Department is to consult on revised undertakings offered by Sepura Plc and Hytera Communications Corporation to mitigate national security risks.

Previously, in 2017, the government issued a Public Interest Intervention Notice in relation to the proposed acquisition of Sepura by Hytera. Following a public consultation, the then Secretary of State accepted undertakings made by the companies to mitigate concerns relating to Sepura's supply of products to Airwave, a network used by emergency services in the UK.

Airwave is set to be replaced in this role by the Emergency Services Network – which Sepura also supplies products and repair services for. It is therefore necessary to revise the original undertakings made by Sepura and Hytera to continue mitigating any notional adverse effects of Hytera's ownership.

The [proposed undertakings are now out for public consultation] until midday on 14 October, in accordance with the process set out in the Enterprise Act 2002.

The decision to consult follows further advice from the Home Office.

No decision whether to accept the undertakings will be taken by the Secretary of State until the consultation has concluded and the representations have been carefully considered.

The Secretary of State's decision is made in a quasi-judicial capacity, which means that the Secretary of State must act, and be seen to act, in a scrupulously fair and impartial manner.

Published 28 September 2021

[Government takes over running of LSER services in response to over £25 million breach of franchise agreement]

- Government's Operator of Last Resort to take over running of London & South Eastern Railway (LSER) services from 17 October.
- Decision follows an investigation which identifies over £25 million of taxpayer money was not declared by LSER, amounting to a significant breach of the franchise agreement, undermining trust.
- OLR will prioritise punctual and reliable services for passengers and delivery of crucial reforms set out in the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail.
- • Fares, tickets and services unchanged for passengers and no impact on frontline jobs.

The government will take over running services on Southeastern from 17 October 2021, after a serious breach of the franchise agreement's "good faith" obligation in relation to financial matters was identified, Transport Secretary Grant Shapps has announced today (27 September 2021).

An investigation conducted by the Department for Transport has identified evidence that since October 2014 LSER has not declared over £25 million of historic taxpayer funding which should have been returned.

Money has been recovered and further investigations are being conducted by the owning group into all related historic contract issues with LSER. Following these investigations, the government will consider further options for enforcement action.

On the basis of the available evidence, we consider this to be a significant breach of the good faith obligation within the franchise agreement and will not be extending a further contract to LSER. The government believes it is essential that there is public trust in operators, who should prioritise the very best for passengers. Given the government's commitment to protecting taxpayers' interests, this decision makes clear we will hold private sector operators to the highest standards, and take swift, effective and meaningful action against those who fall short.

Passengers can also be reassured that there will be no changes to fares, tickets or services.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps, said:

> There is clear, compelling and serious evidence that for years, LSER have breached the trust that is absolutely fundamental to the success of our railways. When trust is broken, we will act decisively.

> The decision to take control of services makes unequivocally clear that we will not accept anything less from the private sector than a total commitment to their passengers and absolute transparency with taxpayer support.

> Under the new operator, we will prioritise the punctual, reliable services passengers deserve, rebuild trust in this network, and the delivery of the reforms set out in our Plan for Rail – to build a modern railway that meets the needs of a nation.

Transferring the running of services to the government’s in-house Operator of Last Resort (OLR) will ensure passengers see no interruption to their services. The organisation is run by experienced railway managers, who already own and oversee London North Eastern Railway and Northern.

Today’s decision will also have no impact upon the exceptional frontline staff of LSER, who have been at the frontline of delivering services throughout the Covid pandemic. The decision is no reflection on their professionalism and dedication and will not affect jobs.

The Transport Secretary has tasked the expert leadership of the OLR to focus on the delivery of punctual and reliable services, on an affordable and sustainable railway, by rapidly progressing the reforms established by the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail. In future, we will move the services back into the private sector on a new Passenger Services Contract, allowing private sector investment and innovation to lead the way in delivering a regional railway that works for its passengers.

The government will also continue to deliver tangible improvements across the network, including:

- completing the roll out of the Class 707 trains onto Metro routes to provide more spacious, comfortable journeys
- investing in passenger improvements on the existing fleet of trains
- improved security across the network

Further details on the new Operator of Last Resort will be set out in due course.

Call for bids: preparing online clinical nursing skills training material in Indonesia

World news story

British Embassy Jakarta is inviting proposals for development of online training material for clinical nursing skills development.

Health and Education are both key elements of the relationship between UK and the Republic of Indonesia and we work across a wide range of fields in this partnership. The British Embassy Jakarta has started work on nursing with the Indonesian Ministry of Health. We carried out a review of the Bachelor of Applied Nursing curriculum as run by the Ministry's 37 Polytechnics, spread across the country.

One of the recommendations was that they should develop online approved training materials (e.g. video), which could be used by students for continuous professional development. The Ministry and Polytechnics are very keen to do this, especially as their practical training has been hampered by COVID-19 restrictions. Previously, they used to have theory, simulation, demonstration (25 students in the room with the patient), and clinical practice. However, the demonstration and practice is now much harder. They are giving lectures over Zoom, but there is no videos/online simulation to help the students.

Scope of work

Work with a team from the Centre for Human Resources for Health and polytechnics to build their capacity to define and develop online training in clinical practice, covering how to:

- identify suitable type of delivery
- identify priority skills
- monitor the effectiveness of the delivery; and possibly
- identify additional topics, such as how to interact with patients

online/not face-to-face

Delivery date

The project must be completed by 15 March 2022.

Budget

The budget for this project is £25,000 in this Financial Year, inclusive of all expenses and any surcharges or tax. We hope to be able to build on this pilot project in the next Financial Year.

Assessment criteria

The EOI will be assessed against the following criteria:

- alignment with objectives
- outcomes achievable within the funding period
- the relevant experience and competency possessed by the project lead and other personnel who will work on the project, including details of previous experience and clear project design
- organisation’s safeguarding policies ensuring the protection of beneficiaries
- feasibility of project delivery (COVID-19 restrictions, interpretation etc)
- overall value for money

How to submit proposals

See also:

Published 28 September 2021