

Summaries of consultations on future FTAs published

As part of our commitment to a transparent trade policy the Department for International Trade has published summaries of responses to its consultations on trade negotiations with the US, Australia and New Zealand, as well as potential accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

The four consultations attracted 601,121 responses from business, civil society, trade experts and members of the public – 158,720 responses on the US, 146,188 on Australia, 146,245 on New Zealand and 149,968 on CPTPP.

The Department for International Trade has analysed the responses fully, including many detailed responses from individuals and organisations with high levels of knowledge and experience in trade policy. It comes after the department conducted nation-wide market research indicating two thirds of the UK public support free trade agreements, and only 3% are opposed to them.

There was significant support for the opportunity free trade agreements offer to reduce tariffs with key markets, as well as removing wider barriers to trade.

Many respondents said that new free trade agreements could create opportunities to cut red tape, advance digital trade, remove barriers for the services sector, increase mutual recognition of qualifications and allow greater movement of skilled workers.

Many respondents to the consultation on negotiations with the US commented that there is an opportunity for the UK's 'gold standard' intellectual property standards to be adopted by the US.

Through the consultation on negotiations with Australia, respondents identified increased opportunities for digital and financial services.

For New Zealand, various respondents prioritised opportunities in Services, including FinTech, while others recognised the potential in a UK-New Zealand FTA to boost investment, notably in construction and publishing.

Respondents said CPTPP could help facilitate the UK's trade and investment in important markets, expanding the UK's influence in fast growing Asia and Latin America economies. They highlighted CPTPP's value as a 'benchmark' modern trade agreement. Respondents also cited the role CPTPP accession could play in facilitating investment and harmonising regulation, all of which could be a positive driver for UK business growth.

Some respondents, largely associated with civil society and campaign groups, expressed concerns around the potential impact of Free Trade Agreements on the NHS. The International Trade Secretary has consistently made it clear that the NHS will not be privatised, and any future trade agreements will not

change that.

Respondents also highlighted concerns on the impact of potential deals on food standards. The Government recognises these concerns and has been clear it will not compromise the high quality of British food or agricultural standards in any free trading relationship and is committed to maintaining high standards on animal welfare and food safety after the UK leaves the EU.

The Government will continue to engage with stakeholders to understand their concerns and help inform trade policy.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox said:

As we prepare to enter into trade negotiations, we have a golden opportunity to build stronger and deeper ties with some of the world's largest and fastest growing economies delivering great benefits to people across the UK.

This is one of the largest consultations in recent government history, it shows how much we value the public's opinion, and how we're listening.

We are committed to an open and transparent approach to trade negotiations and the British people should be assured that we are listening to the widest range of views. These new trade agreements will work the whole of the UK, and we have been clear as part of this process we will not be lowering food standards and the NHS is not for sale.

These initial consultations will inform the government's overall approach to our future trade relationships. The government is committed to an open and transparent approach as we develop our independent trade policy for the first time in more than 40 years, and we will continue to engage on specific issues as negotiations progress.

The Department for International Trade has been laying the groundwork for these negotiations including through informal discussions with key trading partners, and is laying the groundwork to swiftly open trade negotiations after Brexit. Before negotiations start we will publish our own negotiating objectives and scoping assessment and will ensure that Parliament has the opportunity to consider them.

The Department for International Trade launched four online public consultations on 20 July 2018. All four consultations were open for 14 weeks and closed on 26 October 2018.

Earlier this week (Tuesday 16 July), the department published the results of its Public Attitudes to Trade Tracker, which showed that 66% of the UK public support free trade agreements and only 3% said they are opposed.

Copies of the summaries can be found on gov.uk; [US](#), [Australia](#), [New Zealand](#)

and [CPTPP](#).

This is the first time the UK has consulted on potential future trade agreements with a view to an independent UK trade policy.

The Department has run a series of outreach events seeking views from a broad range of stakeholders. We held twelve townhall and roundtable events across the UK, for over 300 stakeholders from business to civil society. In addition, Minister Hollingbery chaired a webinar (advertised openly on Twitter) to which over 100 people signed up.

The Department for International Trade engages with businesses and civil society through the Strategic Advisory Group (STAG) and Expert Trade Advisory Groups (ETAGs). The STAG is a forum for high level strategic discussion on trade policy matters between government and stakeholders from all parts of the UK. The ETAGs are working-level sector or thematic groups comprised of expert stakeholders who are able to draw on their detailed knowledge and experience to inform our trade policy.

Breakdown of responses numbers and percentages

Raw numbers of responses

Total responses	Campaign responses (INDIVIDUAL)	Individual responses (ONLINE+EMAIL)	Organisation responses (Business, Business Association, Public Sector Bodies and NGOs) – ONLINE+EMAIL	Business ONLY responses (ONLINE+EMAIL)	
US	158,720	152,315	5998	406	234
NZ	146,245	145,905	176	164	41
AUS	146,188	145,905	122	160	39
CPTPP	149,698	149,558	207	202	71

Percentage breakdown

Total responses	Campaign responses (INDIVIDUAL)	Individual responses (ONLINE+EMAIL)	Organisation responses (Business, Business Association, Public Sector Bodies and NGOs) – ONLINE+EMAIL	Business ONLY responses (ONLINE+EMAIL)	
US	95.96%	3.78%	0.26%	0.15%	
NZ	99.77%	0.12%	0.11%	0.03%	
AUS	99.81%	0.08%	0.11%	0.03%	
CPTPP	99.91%	0.14%	0.13%	0.05%	

Breakdown of campaign groups

Campaign Group	Number of Responses	Title of Campaign
38 Degrees (AUS, NZ, US, CPTPP)	145,905 each	Submission to DIT's consultation on future trade deals
Global Justice Now (US)	4,458	US-UK trade deal: Respond to the public consultation
Global Justice Now (CPTPP)	1,334	TPP trade agreement: Respond to the public consultation
War on Want (US)	1,545	Tell Liam Fox What You Think About a US Deal
War on Want (CPTPP)	2,319	Tell Liam Fox What You Think of TPP
Open Rights Group (US)	407	Preserving digital rights in a UK-US trade deal