

UK Trade Policy Minister champions stronger trade links in virtual visit to Taiwan

- UK Trade Policy Minister Greg Hands co-hosts the 23rd UK-Taiwan trade talks and moves forward discussions on lamb market access, offshore wind and financial services cooperation.
- Minister Hands welcomes enhanced UK-Taiwan cooperation on bilingual language education and launches new bilateral cooperation on advanced semiconductors

UK Minister for Trade Policy, Greg Hands, led a virtual visit to Taiwan on 21-22 October to further develop the UK-Taiwan trade relationship.

During the talks on 22 October, Minister Hands and Taiwan's Deputy Minister of Economic Affairs, Chen Chern-Chyi, pledged to build stronger trade and investment links and resolve market access issues between our economies and agreed the importance of facilitating trade during the Covid pandemic. The UK secured progress on its lamb market access application, and also made progress on easing barriers in the pharmaceuticals and financial services sectors.

The UK and Taiwan also discussed further cooperation on renewable energy, with a particular focus on the offshore wind sector. The UK is committed to working with all partners including Taiwan to inspire climate action ahead of its COP26 presidency next year. The UK has set out new plans to Build Back Greener by making the UK the world leader in clean wind energy to reach net zero emission by 2050. Taiwan is also making important steps on this path to cleaner energy by developing its offshore wind supply chain and gearing up to boost its offshore wind capacity to 15.7GW by 2035. More than 26 UK businesses have now set up office in Taiwan, with six entering the market this year.

During his virtual visit, Minister Hands also witnessed the signing of a letter of intent committing to closer cooperation on English language education on 21 October and welcomed Taiwan's scholarship announcement for 100 British students to study Mandarin in Taiwan.

The letter of intent between the British Office Taipei and Taiwan's Ministry of Education (MoE) focuses on English language education and assessment collaboration to support Taiwan's ambitions to improve English proficiency and internationalise the education system by 2030. The British Council and Taiwan's Ministry for Education also exchanged contracts to conduct evaluation projects to improve English language proficiency levels of Taiwanese students in high schools and universities.

UK Trade Policy Minister, Greg Hands, said:

I was delighted to co-chair for the third time the 23rd annual UK-Taiwan trade talks today. Taiwan offers huge opportunities for UK businesses to offer their products, services and expertise in a number of fields including offshore wind and financial services. This year's trade talks underlined the growing importance of UK – Taiwan trade and investment relationship in areas including education, science and innovation.

We held productive discussions on a number of issues, including ways in which we can lower market access barriers between our economies. I'm pleased that we've made good progress on market access issues faced by British businesses in a range of sectors including financial services, offshore wind, agriculture and pharmaceuticals.

In response to the volatile economic and trade environment, such as the escalating tension of the US-China trade conflict, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the UK's EU Exit, our government has actively assisted companies in making adjustments. The UK is one of Taiwan's major trading partners. After the UK's EU Exit, the UK will develop its own independent trade policies, which is an opportunity for both Taiwan and the UK to deepen the partnership.

We look forward to strengthening industrial cooperation with the UK, including cooperation on the development of rapid diagnostic tests, offshore wind industry, and the semiconductor field.

The virtual visit also saw the Minister launch the UK-Taiwan International Showcase for Compound Semiconductor Technology with 9 UK businesses pitching to a virtual audience of 200 potential collaborators and investors. Semiconductor technology is vital for emerging tech development and Taiwan has the dominant role in the international supply chain. Taiwan is the UK's key international partner for semiconductor technology collaboration and the UK's Compound Semiconductor Applications Catapult (CSA Catapult) and Taiwan's Industrial Technology Research Institute (ITRI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to further deepen the exchange.

Minister Hands also welcomed a new fund to support UK-Taiwan joint research in social sciences. The Minister said the new initiative between the UK's Economic and Social Research Council and Taiwan's Ministry for Science and Technology would launch on 3 November 2020 with a call for research proposals, with initial funding of £500,000.

UK-Taiwan bilateral trade rose to £7.1 billion in 2019, making Taiwan the UK's 7th largest trading partner in Asia Pacific region. In 2019, Taiwan invested £64.2m in the UK, making the UK Taiwan's most popular investment destination in Europe. More than 300 UK firms are present in Taiwan and there

are over 180 Taiwanese firms in the UK, with TCY Machinery Manufacturing Co., Ltd recently investing £6.5 million in its facilities in Yorkshire, UK to bolster its machine sales and after-sales services.