

Enhanced Framework Trade Preference Scheme's Letter signed

World news story

UK and Mongolia exchange letters on the UK's Enhanced Framework Trade Preference Scheme



HMA Malone and Deputy Foreign Minister Munkhjin.B

On 5 February, Her Majesty's Ambassador, Philip Malone, exchanged letters with the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia, Munkhjin Batsumber, regarding the UK's Enhanced Framework Trade Preferences Scheme which came into effect on 1 January 2021.

The scheme grants preferential access to the UK market for Mongolia in support of Mongolian economic development. It will enable Mongolian companies to export to the UK with nil or reduced import tariffs on a range of goods. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia welcomed the scheme as supporting increased competitiveness for Mongolian products and providing a platform for increased trade between the UK and Mongolia.

Her Majesty's Ambassador said >This is an important initiative which will enable Mongolian companies to have preferential access to the UK market and will encourage further strengthening of the Mongolian export sector and the modern trade partnership between our two countries". Find more details on the [UK's Generalised Scheme of Preferences](#)

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UKEF overhauls buyer finance support to boost SME exports

- New product ensures UK exporters get paid upfront and their buyers benefit from flexible repayment terms
- Lenders can provide finance to overseas companies buying from the UK, up to the value of £30 million, with Government guaranteeing repayment
- SBLG part of government support for smaller businesses and will help them secure export contracts with overseas buyers

UK Export Finance (UKEF) today launches a new guarantee scheme that will help importers of UK goods and services obtain the financing they need, unlocking trade and boosting exports.

The Standard Buyer Loan Guarantee (SBLG) allows UKEF to guarantee a loan of up to 85% of the contract value with a UK company – typically worth between £1 million to £30 million.

As part of an overhaul to make UKEF's supplier credit support more accessible, this ensures UK businesses get paid upfront to fulfil an export contract while their overseas buyers can repay the loan from their lender over a longer period.

Coronavirus has hit global supply chains hard with overseas buyers struggling to access the capital they need to import goods and services, restricting trade. That's why UKEF is working with a range of new lenders to issue loans backed by SBLG.

This means UKEF's financial support can be accessed more easily, particularly to finance smaller contracts to benefit SMEs, which will help stimulate demand for UK trade and propel economic growth as the country builds back stronger from the pandemic.

Minister for Exports, Graham Stuart, said:

The UK is one of the world's top five exporting nations, supporting well paid jobs in every region and nation across the country. We are determined that this should continue, so this new scheme from our world-leading export finance agency, UKEF, will help our exporters reach buyers they would otherwise miss – and build back stronger from the pandemic.

Northern Irish firm first to benefit

Northern Irish company, CDE Global, provide wet processing equipment for construction and recycling operations, and is among the first to benefit from SBLG's pilot programme.

CDE secured a multi-million pound contract with a Tunisian customer to expand the production capabilities at a silica quarry in Oueslatia. In absence of a financial solution from the commercial market to support extended repayments in Tunisia, CDE contacted UKEF for support who offered a nine-year facility to finance the contract for their buyer. This significantly boosted CDE's turnover and helped support jobs at the firm. [You can find more details about the deal here.](#)

The financing was arranged by AF Capital Partners, which is a new partner for UKEF as part of its initiative to support smaller deals.

CDE's Chief Executive Officer, Marc Jennings, said:

This is the second time we've partnered with UKEF. Its export sales support facilitated the development of a major recycling project in Europe, a very important sector for our future growth.

The finance facility offered by UKEF for this new project, a second silica sand wet processing plant for our customer Sebri Group, is a boost to our business, sustaining engineering manufacturing roles, and the access to finance ensures our customer can continue to invest in the best solution to help them grow.

Andrew Woolfson, Partner at AF Capital Partners, commented:

This scheme allows buyers to make their choice based on the quality of the goods alone. For CDE, it has single-handedly brought an export contract to the UK that was otherwise being awarded to a German competitor. We look forward to being part of a product that can grow UK exports for many years to come.

Background

About UK Export Finance

[UK Export Finance](#) is the UK's export credit agency. It exists to ensure that no viable UK export lacks for finance or insurance from the private market, providing finance and insurance to help exporters win, fulfil and get paid for export contracts.

[Hong Kong BN\(0\) visa: UK government](#)

launch digital process

News story

App comes as thousands of people apply to the BN(0) visa route.



From today (Tuesday 23 February), applicants for the Hong Kong BN(0) visa with certain biometric passports will be able to apply from a smartphone app to scan their passport.

[Applications can be made](#) within the UK or overseas and will enable BN(0), HKSAR or EEA biometric passport holders to submit their biometrics and validate their identity using the app. The BN(0), HKSAR document holders will be the first non-EEA citizens to be able to use this system.

The launch of the app comes after the UK government delivered on its commitment to open a new visa for Hong Kong BN(0) status holders with the BN(0) visa, which launched on 31 January.

The BN(0) visa is already a success, with thousands of BN(0) status holders and their family members already applying to live, work and study in the UK under this visa.

The commitment was made following the Chinese government's imposition of the national security law in Hong Kong last year, in breach of its commitments under international law.

Future Borders and Immigration Minister Kevin Foster said:

I am pleased we have not only managed to launch this new route, enabling those with BN(0) status and their households to settle in the UK, but have now enhanced it with this new wholly digital application process.

This process marks a major step forward in our move to digitise the UK's Immigration system, with it allowing the first group of non-EEA nationals to complete the process of applying for a visa from home.

In instances where the chip checker is unable to read a passport, applicants are being urged to try another passport if they hold one.

Those who are unable to scan their passport chip will need to finalise their application through attending an appointment at a Visa Application Centre.

The UK committed to this visa following the imposition of the national security law imposed by the Chinese government in June 2020, in a clear breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration. The 1984 declaration is a legally binding treaty which commits to ensure the rights and freedoms of the people of Hong Kong and maintain Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy.

Application process

- From February 23, those eligible can apply online and use the "[UK Immigration: ID Check](#)" smartphone app for iPhone or Android to scan their biometric passport instead of attending a visa application centre. The app is due to go live at 9am GMT / 5pm Hong Kong time.
- We are aware through testing that there may be some documents where the app cannot read the chip. Testing suggests that this is mainly an issue with Hong Kong SAR passports issued before Summer 2019. We are continuing to test the technology against these passports.
- If applicants have a valid BN(0) passport we advise them to use this for their application when using the app. Once an application is complete and successful, individuals can travel to the UK using any valid passport – they do not have to use the passport they applied with.
- If applicants do not have a valid BN(0) passport but are BN(0) status holders, they can apply for a BN(0) passport before application. A BN(0) passport application costs £106 and currently takes approximately 4-6 weeks to process.
- If applicants are unable to scan their passport chip, they will need to finalise their application through attending an appointment at a Visa Application Centre if in Hong Kong or at a UKVCAS location if in the UK. It is not possible to switch the passport used to apply mid-application.
- Applicants who attend an appointment at a Visa Application Centre to enrol their biometric fingerprints will receive a visa vignette sticker in their passport. Applicants must travel to the UK within 90 days of the date of the vignette placed in their passport, or if they change their travel plans later they will need to apply for a vignette change with an associated fee.
- For applicants with a HKSAR passport who are experiencing issues,

support is available via our customer guidance: [“UK Immigration: ID Check” smartphone app](#)

- Thousands of BN(0) status holders and their family members have applied for the new visa since it launched on 31 January. This is in addition to the approximately 9,000 BN(0) status holders and their dependants that have been granted Leave Outside the Rules at the border between 15 July to 16 February 2021. Specific numbers on BN(0) visa applications will be published in the quarterly immigration statistics in due course.
- If you are a BN(0) status holder, or a BN(0) family member, and are already in the UK, you do not need to apply straightaway unless your existing visa (e.g. visit visa, study visa) or Leave Outside the Rules is shortly expiring.

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[Prime Minister to chair UNSC session on climate and security: 22 February 2021](#)

- PM chairing a UN Security Council (UNSC) session on climate and security – the first time a British PM has chaired the UNSC since 1992
- Sir David Attenborough will also address the Council to warn of the risks from climate change and call for action
- UK holds the presidency of the UNSC this month and will host the COP26 climate summit in November

The Prime Minister will warn the UN Security Council today [Tuesday] that unless we take urgent action to tackle climate change, the world risks worsening conflict, displacement and insecurity.

He is chairing a virtual session of the Council to call on members to help the most vulnerable countries adapt to the impact of climate change and take steps to cut global emissions to net zero by 2050. It is the first time a British Prime Minister has chaired the UNSC in nearly 30 years and the first leader-level discussion on climate at the Security Council.

Sir David Attenborough will also speak to the 15 members of the UNSC by video, before UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres and Sudanese climate activist Nisreen Elsam brief the Security Council live.

The impacts of climate change are already being felt around the world, with the effects of rising temperatures and extreme weather forcing population movements and creating competition over increasingly scarce natural resources. Of the 20 countries ranked most vulnerable to rising global temperatures, 12 are already in conflict.

Ahead of chairing the UN Security Council session, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

The UNSC is tasked with confronting the gravest threats to global peace and security, and that's exactly what climate change represents.

From the communities uprooted by extreme weather and hunger, to warlords capitalising on the scramble for resources – a warming planet is driving insecurity.

Unlike many issues the Council deals with, this is one we know exactly how to address. By helping vulnerable countries adapt to climate change and cutting global emissions to net zero, we will protect not only the bountiful biodiversity of our planet, but its prosperity and security.

Sir David Attenborough, British Broadcaster and Natural Historian said:

If we bring emissions down with sufficient vigour we may yet avoid the tipping points that will make runaway climate change unstoppable. In November this year, at COP26 in Glasgow, we may have our last opportunity to make the necessary step-change.

If we objectively view climate change and the loss of nature as world-wide security threats – as indeed, they are – then we may yet act proportionately and in time.

The UK has led the way on climate action, committing in law to reach net zero by 2050 and pledging to cut greenhouse gas emissions by at least 68 per cent by 2030 – the steepest reduction of any major economy.

We have also pledged to spend £11.6 billion on international climate finance over the next five years, including on efforts to mitigate the impacts of climate change on vulnerable and fragile countries.

In the last few years, the UK helped pastoralists in the Sahel deal with the impact of drought; strengthened natural resource management in the Darfur region of Sudan; and supported 200 communities in Somalia to build resilience to climate shocks.

The Prime Minister is addressing the UN Security Council today as part of the UK's month-long presidency. The UK will also host a high-level Climate & Development Ministerial event on the 31st March with representatives from the countries most vulnerable to climate change around the world, as well as major donors and international institutions.

[Facilitating democratic processes and tackling human rights challenges in Haiti– UK Statement at the Security Council](#)

- UK expresses concern for “political gridlock” in Haiti and urges cooperation on democratic processes
- UK condemns human rights violations in Haiti and urges international community and UN to tackle challenges

Remarks by Ambassador Jonathan Allen at the Security Council briefing on Haiti, 22 February 2021

The United Kingdom welcomes the work of BINUH and SRSG La Lime, not least your efforts to ensure a more integrated UN response to Haiti's multifaceted challenges.

At the same time, we remain deeply concerned by the political, social and humanitarian landscape, and the entrenchment of the problems faced by the Haitian population.

The persistent political gridlock is deeply troubling. In what should be a year of democratic renewal for the Haitian people, we call upon all political actors to work together to find common ground in order to build the right conditions for the successful conduct of democratic processes.

In this context, we welcome the commitment of BINUH to supporting and facilitating democratic processes in 2021, working closely with key Haitian institutions. We echo the calls made in the Secretary-General's report encouraging the national authorities to spare no effort in surmounting the

logistical challenges to elections, particularly the registration of citizens.

We share the Secretary-General's concern about the deteriorating human rights situation, particularly the worrying increase in kidnappings and gang related violence. I echo the concerns of my colleagues over recent reports of kidnapping of citizens of the Dominican Republic. Any impunity for perpetrators of human rights abuses risks undermining the stability of the country, and puts Haitian lives at risk.

We remain worried by the humanitarian situation, particularly the acute vulnerability of women and children, compounded by the economic and health threats presented by COVID-19. We encourage all actors to work in cooperation with the international community and the United Nations to tackle these challenges for the benefit of the Haitian people.