

The Indo-Pacific tilt: a framework

The Indo-Pacific region matters to the UK: it is critical to our economy, our security and our global ambition to support open societies. At least 1.7 million British citizens live across the region and our trading relationships continue to grow. In the decades to come it will be the crucible for many of the most pressing global challenges – from climate and biodiversity to maritime security and geopolitical competition linked to rules and norms.

The UK needs to engage more deeply:

- **For economic opportunities** – the Indo-Pacific is the world's growth engine: home to half the world's people; 40% of global GDP; some of the fastest-growing economies; at the forefront of new global trade arrangements; leading and adopting digital and technological innovation and standards; investing strongly in renewables and green tech; and vital to our goals for investment and resilient supply chains. The Indo-Pacific already accounts for 17.5% of UK global trade and 10% of inward FDI and we will work to build this further, including through new trade agreements, dialogues and deeper partnerships in science, technology and data.
- **For our security** – the region is at the centre of intensifying geopolitical competition with multiple potential flashpoints: from unresolved territorial disputes; to nuclear proliferation and miscalculation; to climate change and non-state threats from terrorism and SOC. It is on the frontline of new security challenges, including in cyberspace. Much of the UK's trade with Asia depends on shipping that goes through a range of Indo-Pacific choke points. Preserving freedom of navigation is therefore essential to the UK's national interests. We already work closely with regional partners and will do more through persistent engagement by our armed forces and our wider security capacity-building.

- **For our values** – we need to deepen and expand our partnerships to promote open societies and to uphold the international rules and norms that underpin free trade, security and stability. We remain committed to development in a region that is home to one-third of the world's poorest people. We will work closely with like-minded bilateral and multilateral partners, including on global priorities such as girls' education and tackling climate change.

Our goal: we will be the European partner with the broadest and most integrated presence in the Indo-Pacific – committed for the long term, with closer and deeper partnerships, bilaterally and multilaterally.

Our role: we will lead where we are best placed to do so and we will partner and support others as necessary to pursue our goals. This will include both sustaining and supporting bilateral and multilateral partnerships in the region, such as the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA), and working with organisations such as ASEAN and the Pacific Island Forum. We will also look for ways to work more closely with European partners, including France and Germany. We will be an open and liberal trade partner, do business with reliability and integrity, and build on our deep expertise and engagement in international peace and security issues.

Our actions: this ambition will be delivered through prioritised cross-government engagement, focused on nine areas:

- Concluding and implementing new bilateral trade agreements with Australia and New Zealand, and agreeing an Enhanced Trade Partnership with India as a stepping stone towards a comprehensive trade deal, in addition to new trade dialogues and reviews with partners across the region.
- Acceding to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership to secure increased trade and investment opportunities, and to diversify our trading links and supply chains, embedding open trade and integration.
- Strengthening supply chain resilience of critical goods and raw materials, including medical supplies.
- Becoming an ASEAN Dialogue Partner to work together on global challenges, support ASEAN's central role in regional stability and prosperity and enable sustainable development in South East Asia.
- Strengthening defence and security cooperation, including in maritime security, building on our overseas military bases and existing contribution in the Indo-Pacific, enhancing our engagement and exercising with our FPDA partners, and increasing our engagement with regional security groupings.
- Cooperating and building capacity on cyber security.
- Tackling climate change, using both adaptation and mitigation activity to support a transition to clean, resilient and sustainable growth in the Indo-Pacific through influence with major and growing emitters and the most

vulnerable countries, linked directly to our wider COP26 strategy.

- Our force for good agenda, promoting open societies and protecting public goods through conflict prevention, strong rule of law, respect for human rights and media freedoms, girls' education and humanitarian response. We will also continue to deepen our people-to-people links, including through bilateral cultural seasons with Japan, Australia and India.
- Using our ODA more strategically, in support of many of these objectives. We will continue to support partner countries in the region to combat extreme poverty. Where countries can finance their development, we will move gradually from offering grants to providing UK expertise and returnable capital to address regional challenges in our mutual interest. This will include support to high-quality infrastructure.

Deepening cooperation in S&T with partners across the region will be central to our overall partnership with the Indo-Pacific, underpinning our future success across all these areas.

Our presence: the UK has already invested significantly in this region with a network of 52 posts, four of which have been opened since 2018. A new FCDO Director General responsible for the Indo-Pacific was appointed in 2020, as was a dedicated Ambassador to ASEAN in 2019. Since 2018, we have had regional Trade Commissioners based in Singapore, Mumbai and Shanghai. During 2020, we agreed new trade deals with Japan, Singapore and Vietnam. We have a long-standing naval presence in the Gulf and Indian Ocean through Operation Kipion. Naval visits and defence diplomacy across the wider Indo-Pacific grew in 2019.