

Decision by the Commission of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership regarding the United Kingdom's Formal Request to Commence the Accession Process

In light of the formal request to commence negotiations on acceding to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (herein after referred to as "CPTPP") received from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (hereinafter referred to as "the United Kingdom") on 1 February, 2021;

Pursuant to Article 5 (Accession), Article 27.2 (Functions of the Commission), Article 27.3 (Decision Making) and Article 27.4 (Rules of Procedure of the Commission) of the CPTPP, and the Accession Process in the Annex to the Decision of 19 January, 2019 CPTPP/COM/2019/D002 (hereinafter referred to as "Accession Process") adopted by the CPTPP Commission (hereinafter referred to as "Commission"); and

Taking note of the United Kingdom's history as a supporter of the rules-based trading system, its experience with high-standard trade and investment rules, and the United Kingdom's affirmation of its intention to comply with the obligations of the CPTPP and deliver the highest standards of market access, as stipulated in the Accession Process;

The Commission decides as follows:

Commencement of the Accession Process

1. Further to Subsection 2.1 (Request to commence accession process) of the Accession Process, the accession process requested by the United Kingdom as an aspirant economy is hereby commenced¹.

Establishment of an Accession Working Group

2. A working group to negotiate the accession of the United Kingdom (hereinafter referred to as "Accession Working Group") is hereby established with the

¹ 1. For greater certainty, this decision is without prejudice to each Party's domestic procedures regarding the accession of the United Kingdom to the CPTPP.

following terms of reference and composition:

Terms of Reference: “Pursuant to Article 5 (Accession) of the CPTPP and Sections 3 and 5 of the Accession Process, (i) to examine the request of the Government of the United Kingdom to accede to the CPTPP, including documentation provided by the United Kingdom to demonstrate its ability to comply with the terms of the CPTPP and any other information from the United Kingdom as requested by the CPTPP Parties; (ii) to conduct negotiations on the United Kingdom’s accession to the CPTPP and, (iii) to submit to the Commission, after finalising negotiations, a written report on terms and conditions for the United Kingdom’s accession to the CPTPP.”

Membership: The Accession Working Group will comprise government representatives from each Party.

Chair: Japan, Vice-Chairs: Australia and Singapore. The responsibilities of the Chair include: coordinating the overall conduct of the Accession Working Group, including its organizational matters; presiding over all meetings of the Accession Working Group; and coordinating the drafting of a written report of the Accession Working Group. The Vice-Chairs will assist the Chair in fulfilling its responsibilities.

3. Pursuant to Article 27.4.4 (Rules of Procedure of the Commission) of the CPTPP and the Accession Process, the Accession Working Group may, as appropriate, establish its rules of procedure and timetable for the conduct of its work.
4. The Accession Working Group may, as appropriate, establish subsidiary groups to carry out its functions.
5. CPTPP Signatories for which the Agreement has yet to enter into force may attend, and participate in the meetings of the Accession Working Group except when the Parties decide otherwise, on the understanding that any decision of the Accession Working Group will be made by the Parties to the CPTPP.
6. While the Accession Working Group does not include government representatives from the United Kingdom, it may invite the United Kingdom to its meetings to negotiate the accession terms and conditions, or for any other reasons.

This decision is effective as of the date of adoption by the Commission, and shall be made publicly available by the Chair of the Commission.