

Deloitte.



Attitudes To Trade
Survey 2026

Contents

Executive Summary	03
Section 1: Businesses are adjusting to a period of uncertainty in global trade policy and are increasingly concerned about high tariff barriers.	05
Section 2: Businesses expect Asia Pacific will play a larger role in their supply chains, but many anticipate greater trade barriers with China.	09
Section 3: Businesses are increasingly positive about the UK's approach to trade with the EU.	12
Section 4: Business leaders believe the UK's trade policy is delivering and are optimistic about the UK-India FTA.	15
Conclusions	19

Executive Summary

Global trade is experiencing a period of prolonged disruption, with UK and international businesses facing a fragmented and unpredictable landscape. The era of globalisation is giving way to heightened policy uncertainty and intensifying geopolitical tensions. The tariff measures implemented by the United States have been particularly impactful, driving the average effective US tariff rate from 2.4% in January to 16.8% in November 2025, a shift that is front of mind for business leaders as they plan for the future.

In 2025, the UK government concluded the UK-US Economic Prosperity Deal (EPD), which helped to mitigate some of the tariffs imposed by the new administration and established a platform for further cooperation. Some sectors, such as pharmaceuticals and medical technology (MedTech), saw additional reprieves from US tariffs, with a 0% rate confirmed in December 2025. The government also finalised a landmark Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with India (awaiting ratification), enhancing access to one of the world's fastest-growing markets; and initiated a new dialogue with the European Union, which aims to ease regulatory frictions and restore smoother trade flows. These developments build on the UK's accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), which entered into force in the UK in December 2024.

With that context in mind, for the fourth year running we commissioned professional polling partner Opinium to conduct field research¹ to gauge sentiment towards UK trade policy and to identify key challenges facing UK businesses. The survey exclusively targeted senior decision-makers representing 750 businesses from the UK trading internationally.

One hundred respondents were C-suite representatives of small businesses (10-49 employees); 150 respondents were board level representatives of medium-sized businesses (50-249 employees); 250 respondents were at least senior directors or decision makers at large businesses (250-999 employees); and 250 respondents were at least senior directors or decision makers at large corporates (1000+ employees).



I'm delighted that British businesses support our Trade Strategy and are determined to exploit the opportunities that come from the four trade deals we signed last year. It's all part of delivering real benefits for people in uncertain times and creating economic growth and prosperity for the UK.

– Sir Chris Bryant MP, Minister for Trade



¹ Fieldwork conducted 27 October – 12 November 2025

This year, our findings can be split into four broad themes:

1. Businesses are adjusting to a period of uncertainty in global trade policy and are increasingly concerned about high tariff barriers.

- UK businesses are facing rising costs and uncertainty due to a more volatile global tariff environment, with 56% of businesses now selecting high tariffs as one of the greatest barriers faced when trading with the US, up from 33% in 2024 and 41% in our 2025 survey.
- Businesses are actively adapting, with 48% having explored mitigation strategies such as price increases, market diversification and supply chain reorganisation, highlighting widespread efforts to manage the impact of protectionism.
- Businesses remain cautious in their outlook and are bracing for sustained instability, with 83% of respondents anticipating uncertainty to continue for at least 1-2 years and just 13% of respondents sensing the level of uncertainty seen throughout 2025 is now stabilising.
- The UK-US Economic Prosperity Deal is viewed positively overall, with 70% of respondents believing it to be helpful for their business. Separately, when asked to compare outcomes from recent negotiations, respondents were divided on whether the UK or the EU has secured better terms, with 31% favouring the UK-US EPD and 29% believing the EU deal to be better.

2. Businesses are continuing to embrace global trade and see growing opportunities in Asia Pacific.

- The survey paints a mixed picture of businesses' attitudes towards trade with China. Over half of UK businesses surveyed favour closer trade ties (51%) and expect China to play a greater role in their supply chains (53%) over the next five years. However, 46% of respondents anticipate more trade barriers over the same period.
- Over half of UK businesses (59%) expect to increase exports to CPTPP countries, just one year after the agreement came into force - suggesting strong early confidence in the bloc's potential to open new markets.
- The most valued benefits of CPTPP membership include greater access for trade in services (38%) and supply chain diversification (35%), suggesting businesses consider the agreement to be a practical tool for navigating rising global trade volatility.

3. Businesses are increasingly positive about the government's approach to trade with the EU.

- Most business leaders do not support full UK alignment with EU rules, with just 14% of respondents citing this as a preferred route for the UK to achieve a closer trading relationship with the EU. However, there is strong support (88%) for some degree of alignment, with almost half (48%) of respondents favouring aligning in specific sectors while preserving the UK's regulatory autonomy.
- Businesses are broadly supportive of proposals for closer UK-EU cooperation. Across all businesses surveyed, 68% of respondents said the proposed Common Sanitary and Phytosanitary Area between the UK and EU would be helpful to their business to some degree.
- Business sentiment towards the UK-EU relationship is on an upward trend, with 70% of UK businesses now expecting the relationship to improve, while only 14% anticipate deterioration. Business's outlook on the UK-EU relationship has steadily improved over the last three editions of our survey. In our 2024 Attitudes to Trade Survey, 54% of businesses expected the relationship to improve, increasing to 61% in 2025.

4. Business leaders believe that the UK's trade policy is delivering and are optimistic about the UK-India FTA.

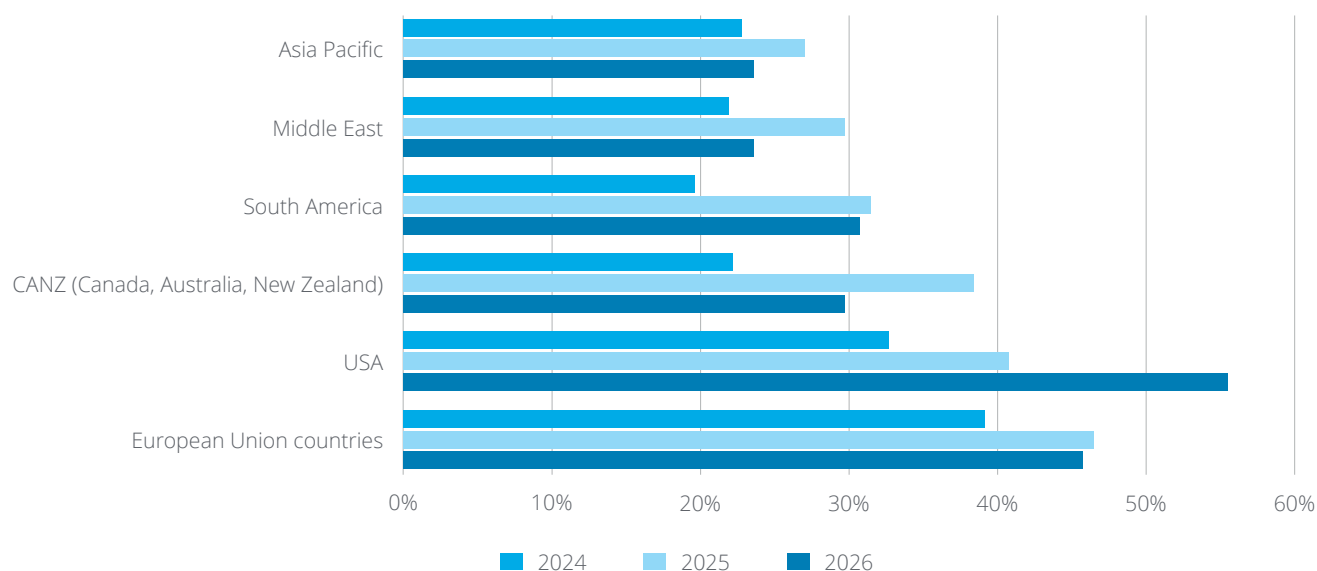
- Two thirds (66%) of businesses trading internationally are now in continuous or regular engagement with the government regarding trade negotiations with other countries. In addition, 63% of business leaders now believe the government is doing a good job of explaining the benefits of trade agreements – reflecting a steady rise in confidence each year since our surveys began, up from just 37% in 2023.
- Support for the UK-India FTA continues to grow, with two thirds of businesses (66%) expecting it to enhance their competitive position. Key opportunities identified include improved services access (38%) and collaboration on digital trade (34%).
- Sentiment toward the UK's expanding network of trade agreements remains positive, as 71% of respondents believe the FTAs negotiated by the UK with countries including Australia, New Zealand, and CPTPP members will contribute to national growth.
- The UK Trade Strategy, announced in June 2025, has proved popular, with over three quarters of respondents (78%) expecting it to be helpful for their business.

Section 1:

Businesses are adjusting to a period of uncertainty in global trade policy and are increasingly concerned about high tariff barriers.

The global tariff landscape has become significantly more volatile over the last year. For UK businesses, this unpredictability has been particularly acute in relation to the US. In April 2025, the US announced a new 'reciprocal' 10% baseline tariff on most imports from the UK. This measure formed part of a broader recalibration of US trade policy, which also introduced increased sector-specific tariffs on strategic goods including steel, aluminium and vehicles.

% of businesses citing tariffs, duties and other taxes as one of the biggest barriers commonly experienced in each region



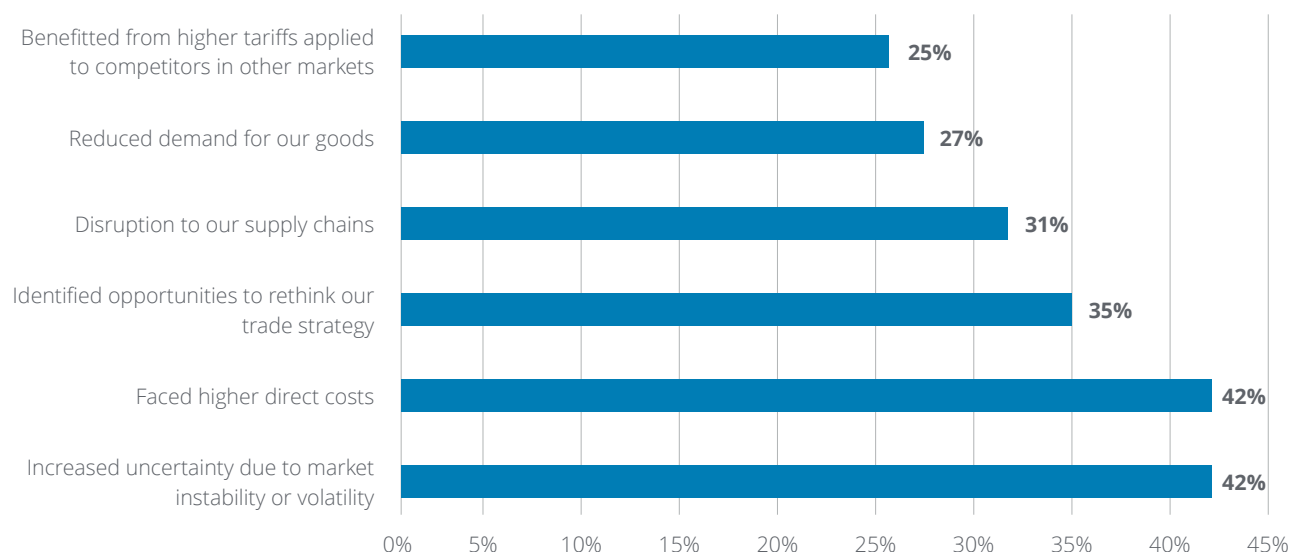
We asked respondents about the range of trade barriers they commonly experience in world markets. In the US, EU, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, respondents selected "high tariffs, duties and other taxes" as the most commonly encountered trade barrier. Notably this year, 56% of respondents selected this response regarding the US, up from 41% in the previous year's results.

We also observed a sharp decline in the number of businesses identifying high tariffs in Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. This potentially reflects the fact that, at the time of our previous survey, UK-Canada trade negotiations had stalled. By contrast, the slight reduction in respondents citing "high tariffs" in the Middle East and Asia Pacific may signal optimism around recent progress in trade talks, including the UK's accession to CPTPP and ongoing negotiations for a free trade agreement with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).

Given the heightened global tariff environment observed throughout 2025 and the possibility of continued tariff volatility in 2026, we asked respondents to provide insight on disruptions faced by their businesses due to tariffs and how they have responded.

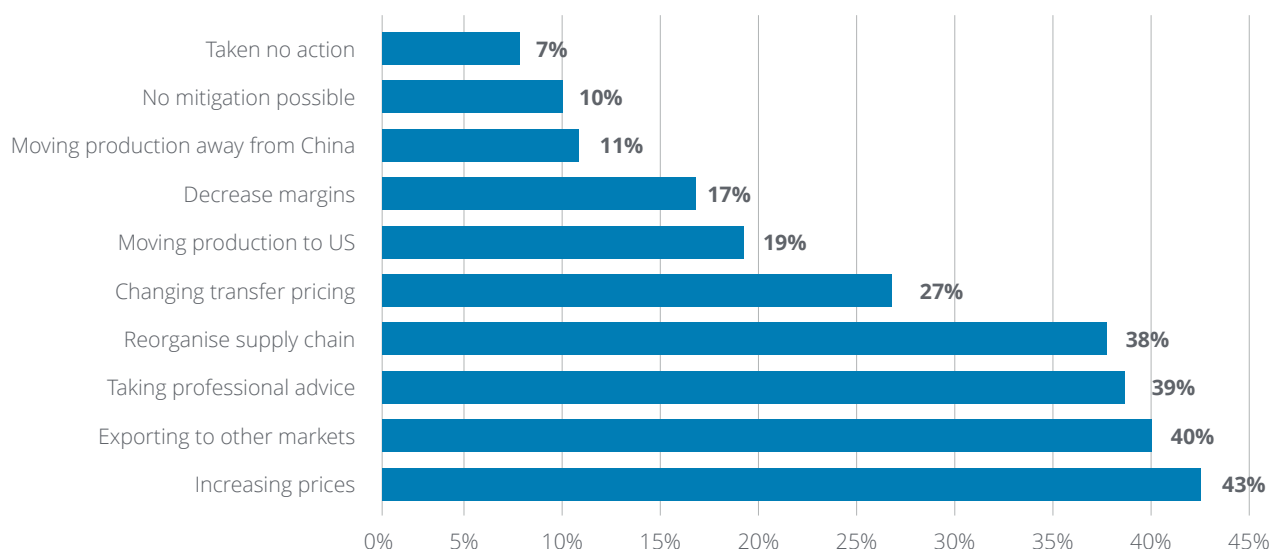


Since the US introduced its new tariff regime, which (if any) of the following impacts has your business experienced?



Notably, 42% of respondents cited increased uncertainty due to market volatility, matched by an equal percentage facing higher direct costs. Additionally, 27% reported a decline in demand for their goods. However, 25% of businesses found a benefit from tariffs imposed on competitors in other markets.

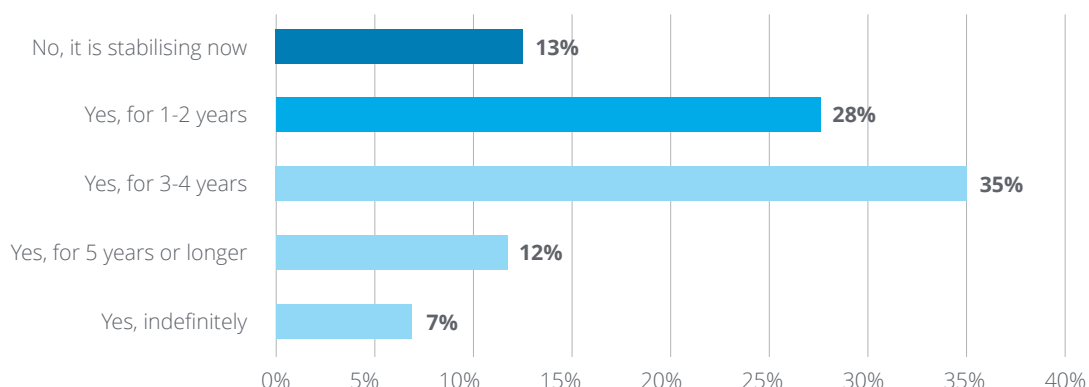
Given new trade tariffs have been imposed by the US and other countries, what strategies has your business implemented to mitigate for the impact?



In response to the global shift in tariffs, businesses have explored a range of mitigation strategies to navigate the new economic landscape. The most common approach implemented has been increasing prices, chosen by 43% of respondents, followed closely by efforts to diversify through exporting to other markets (40%). Supply chain reorganisation (38%) and adjustments to transfer pricing (27%) also featured prominently. Some businesses have opted for structural changes, such as relocating production to the US (19%) or away from China (11%), but these have been less popular, likely due to the high cost and long implementation time associated with these strategies.

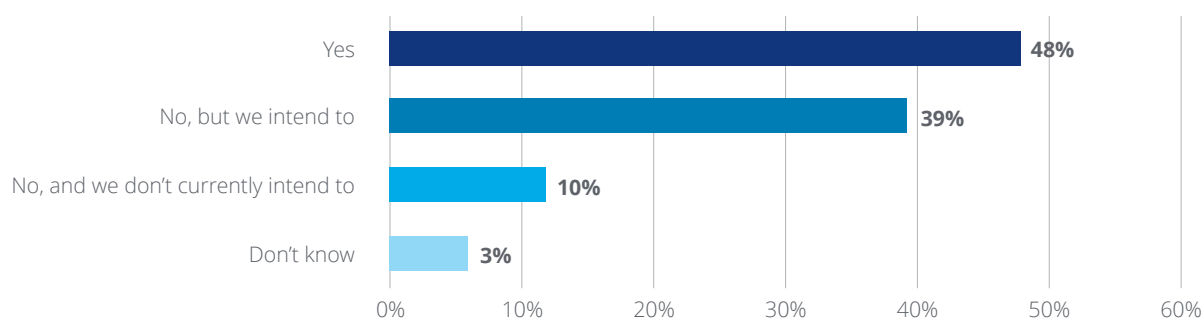
The range of strategies being utilised by businesses demonstrated that there is no 'one size fits all' approach to mitigating tariff impacts, with businesses needing to examine the specific characteristics of their operations and supply chains to identify the most appropriate course of action.

Do you expect the current level of uncertainty in the global trade environment to continue, and if so, for how long?



When asked whether they expect the current level of uncertainty in the global trade environment to persist, 28% of business leaders predicted it will continue for one – two years, with 35% selecting three – four years. Another 12% believe uncertainty will continue for five years or longer, while 7% believe it will remain indefinitely. Aggregating the responses across the different duration categories, 83% of businesses expect the current level of uncertainty to continue for at least one – two years. As only 13% of respondents believe conditions are starting to stabilise, it appears businesses are preparing for a sustained period of instability in global trade heading into 2026.

Has your business explored strategies to mitigate for the possible imposition of new global trade tariffs?

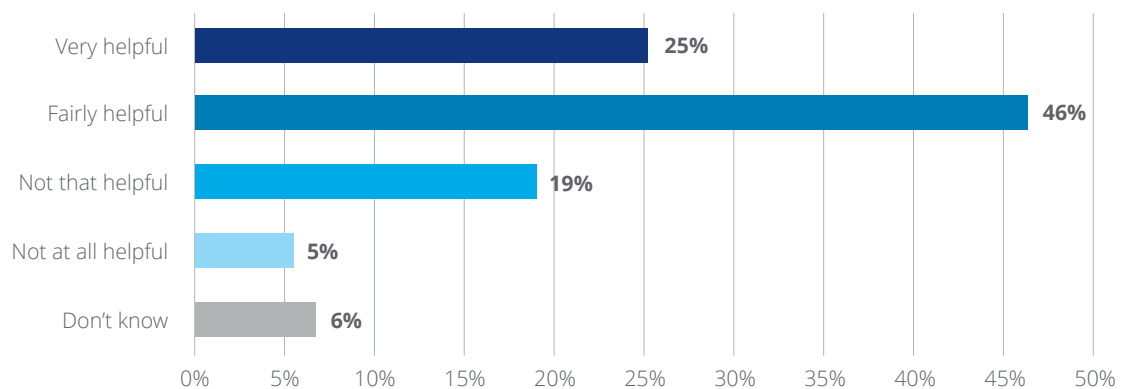


Against this backdrop of prolonged uncertainty, firms are not remaining passive, with nearly half (48%) having already explored strategies to mitigate the possible imposition of new tariffs, while a further 39% intend to do so.



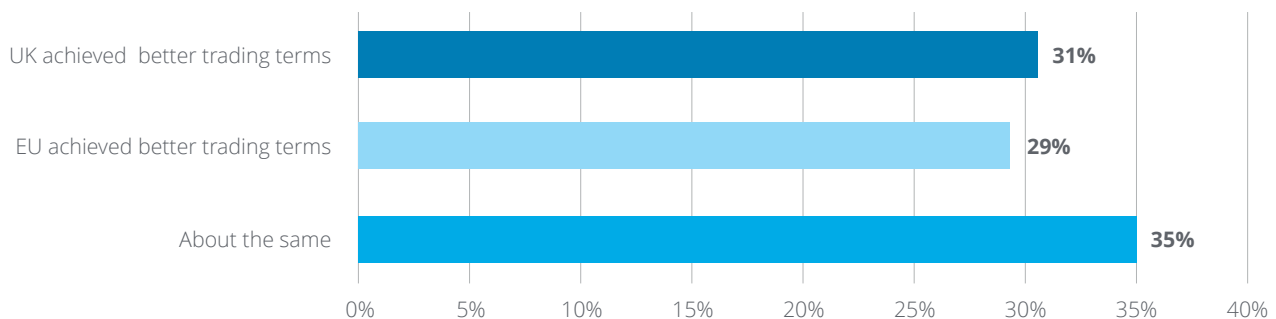


How helpful has the US-UK Economic Prosperity Deal been to your business?



The UK-US Economic Prosperity Deal (EPD) provided some targeted tariff relief, including for the automotive, aerospace and metals sectors. However, the EPD did not remove the 10% baseline tariff applied to most UK goods imported to the US, with many sectors continuing to face higher tariffs than they did at the start of 2025. As a result, the benefits have been limited for those industries still paying duties, whereas sectors such as aerospace and automotive, which did secure tariff reductions, have seen more direct gains. Despite this, respondents were positive about the EPD, with a quarter reporting the deal to be “very helpful” for their business and a further 46% calling the deal “fairly helpful”.

The EU also secured a trade deal with the US this year. In your view, did the UK or EU achieve better trading terms with the US?



Subsequently, other trading partners have secured trade deals with the US, locking in differentiated tariff rates. The EU and US signed the Framework on an Agreement on Reciprocal, Fair, and Balanced Trade in August 2025. Within this, the US agreed to apply either a baseline tariff rate of 15% or the applicable Most Favoured Nation tariff rate, whichever is highest, to most goods imported from the EU. The EU-origin goods covered by this arrangement will therefore not face a uniform tariff rate, resulting in a more nuanced tariff structure than that contained within the UK-US EPD.

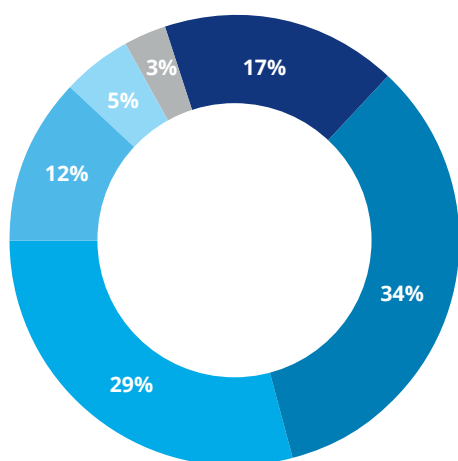
When asked whether the UK or the EU secured better terms with the US, 31% of respondents believe the UK achieved better terms and the largest group, at 35%, feel the terms were about the same. This suggests a relatively balanced perception, with no clear consensus that either side gained a significant advantage.

Section 2:

Businesses expect Asia Pacific will play a larger role in their supply chains, but many anticipate greater trade barriers with China.

Building on the findings of how businesses have navigated a turbulent 2025, we explored how UK businesses view trading relations with the Asia Pacific region.

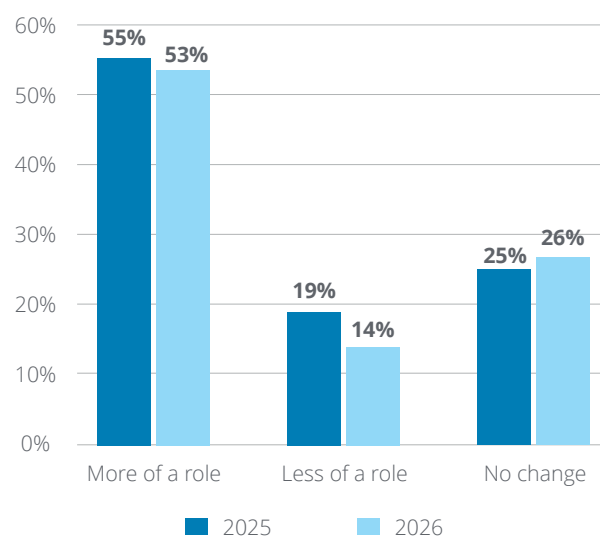
The UK's trade relationship with China should be...



■ Much closer
 ■ Somewhat closer
 ■ About the same
■ Somewhat more distant
 ■ Much more distant
 ■ Don't know

A majority of British businesses favour maintaining or strengthening trade ties with China. In total, 51% believe the relationship should be either “much closer” or “somewhat closer,” while only 17% think it should become more distant. The fact that nearly a third of respondents prefer the relationship to stay “about the same” potentially reflects a pragmatic approach, recognising China’s importance as a trading partner while remaining cautious amid geopolitical tensions.

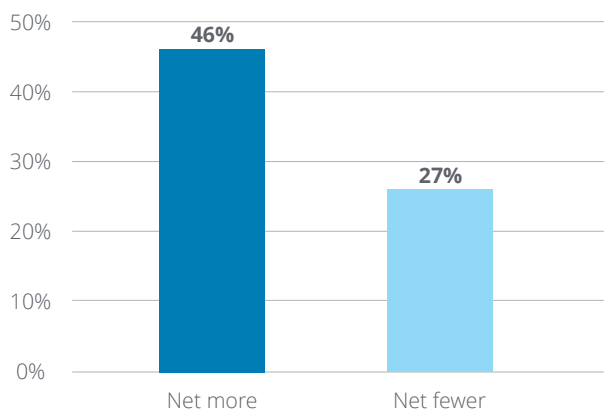
How do you anticipate the role of China changing in your supply chains over the next five years?



However, any caution about the UK-China relationship has not translated into dampened expectations of China’s role in supply chains, with just over half (53%) of respondents anticipating China to have a greater role in their supply chains over the next five years. This comes as the UK government has taken steps to stabilise relations with China, including high-level meetings and renewed economic dialogue. For instance, in late 2024, Prime Minister Keir Starmer met President Xi Jinping (the first such meeting in six years) and in 2025, the UK-China Economic and Financial Dialogue resumed, focusing on trade, investment, and financial cooperation.²

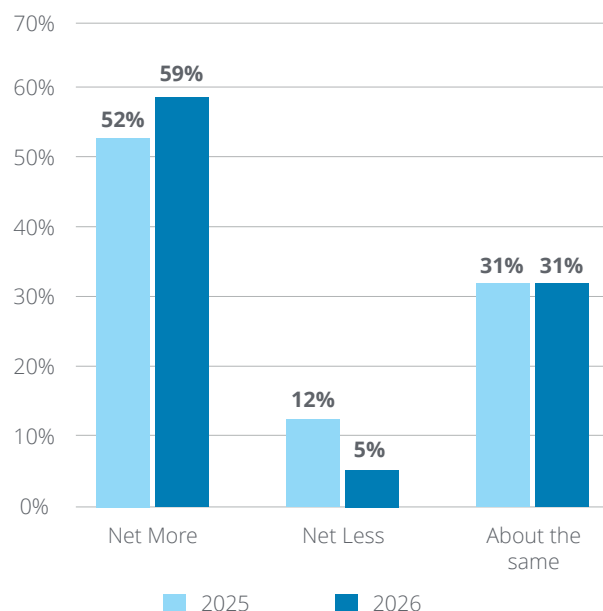
² 2025 UK-China Economic and Financial Dialogue: fact sheet, HM Treasury

Do you expect more or fewer trade barriers with China over the next five years?



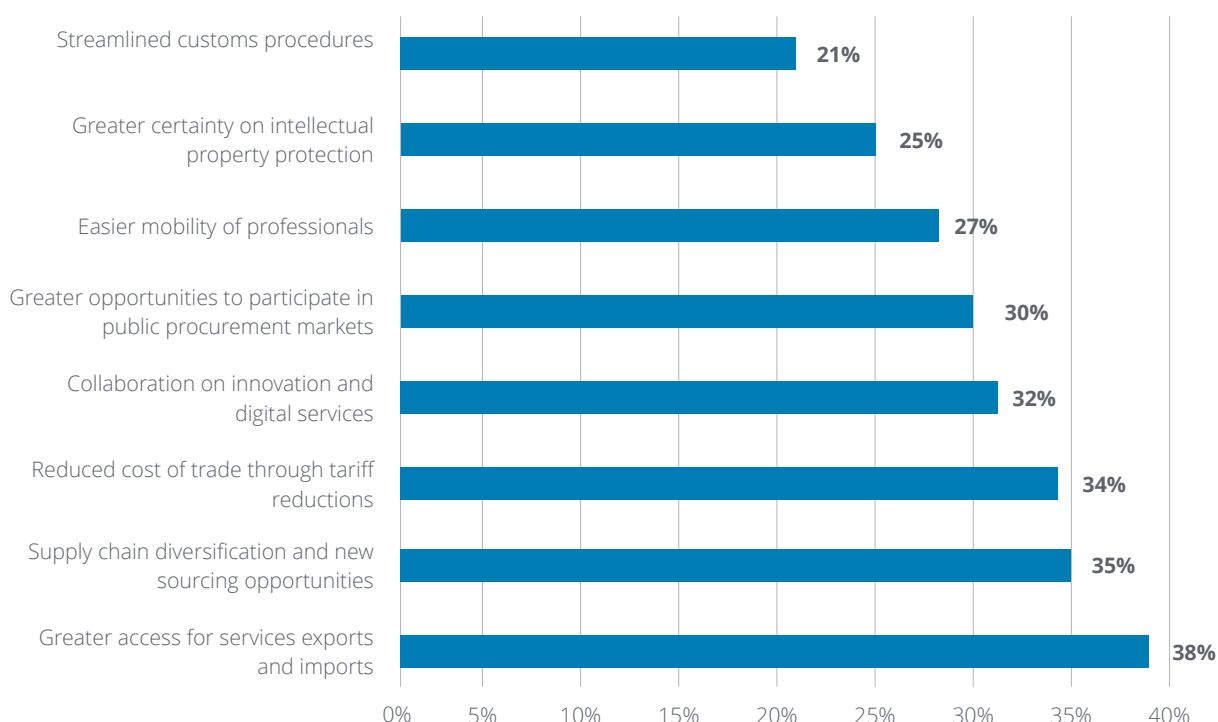
Despite recent diplomatic efforts to improve UK-China relations, nearly half of respondents (46%) expect more trade barriers with China over the next five years, compared to just 27% who anticipate fewer. This suggests that while businesses broadly support maintaining or strengthening ties, they remain aware of potential geopolitical risks.

Do you expect your business to export more or less to CPTPP countries over the next five years?



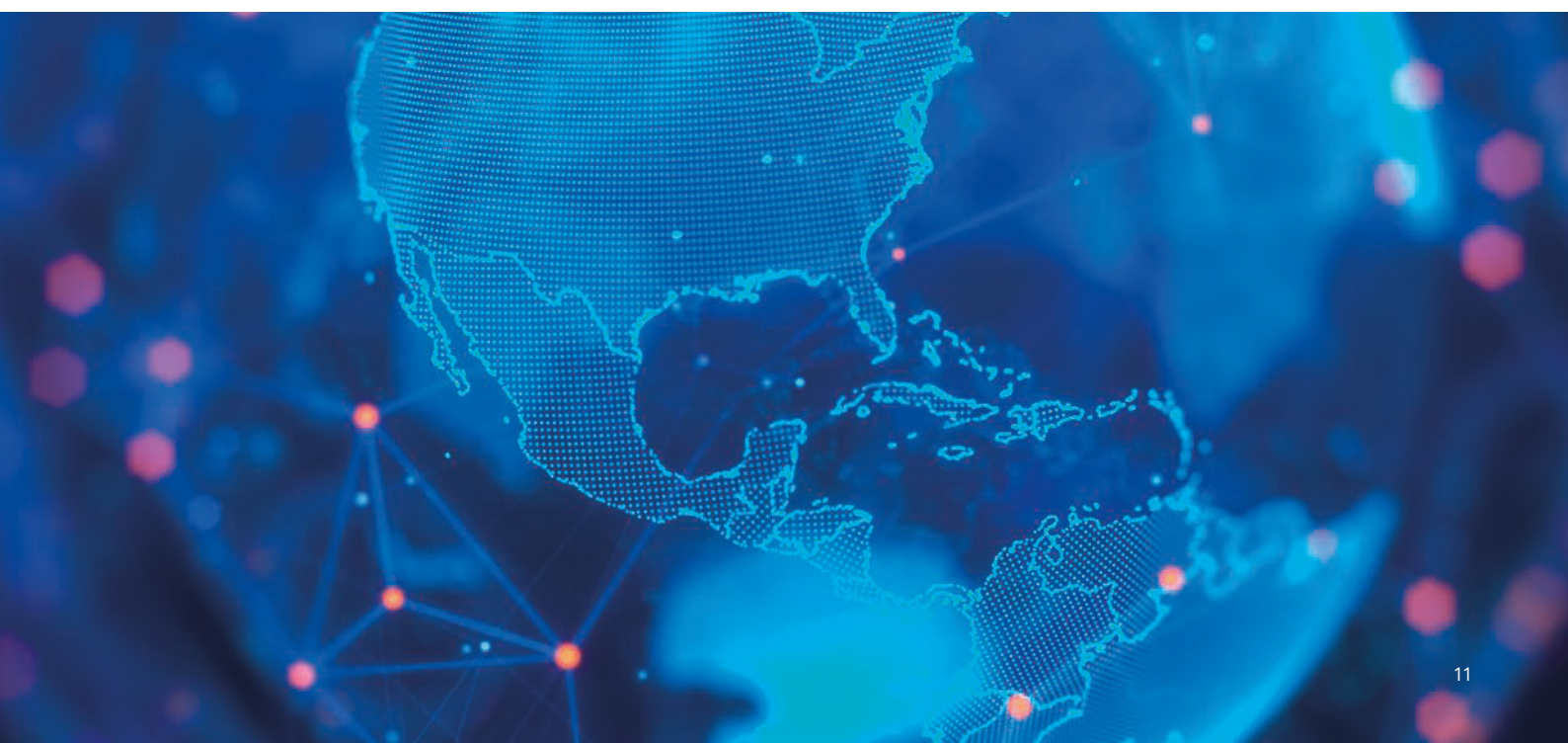
The UK formally joined the CPTPP in December 2024, joining a free trade area with a combined GDP of £12 trillion. To determine how businesses expect the UK's accession to deliver benefits, we asked business leaders whether they expect to export more to CPTPP countries over the next five years. A majority of respondents (59%) stated that they anticipate growth in exports to CPTPP members, an increase from the 52% recorded in our last survey, while those anticipating less trade fell from 12% to just 5%. This upward trend suggests growing confidence in the agreement's potential to open new markets and support UK export growth.

What are the primary opportunities you foresee for your business coming from CPTPP?



To explore sentiment in more detail, we also asked what opportunities UK businesses have identified within the CPTPP trade area. The most commonly cited benefit, “greater access for services exports and imports” (38%), highlights the UK’s strength in sectors like finance, legal, and digital services and reflects optimism about tapping into fast-growing Asia-Pacific markets. “Supply chain diversification” (35%) and “reduced cost of trade through tariff reductions” (34%) also rank highly, suggesting that businesses see CPTPP as a practical tool for reducing reliance on more volatile trade corridors.

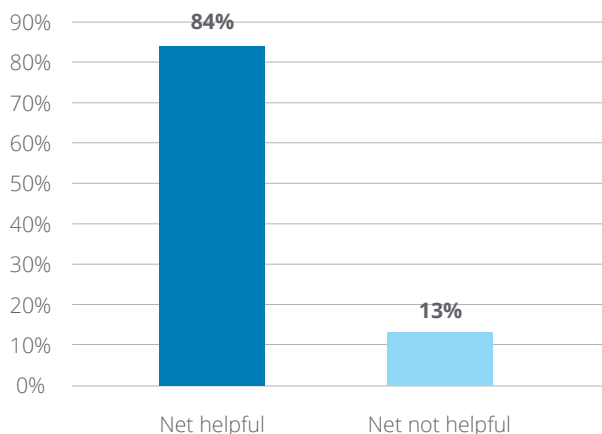
In a global environment marked by rising protectionism and geopolitical uncertainty, the CPTPP trade area stands out as an example of liberalisation and multilateral cooperation. While the benefits may take time to fully materialise, the early signals suggest that UK businesses view CPTPP as a welcome counterbalance to an otherwise challenging global trade landscape.



Section 3:

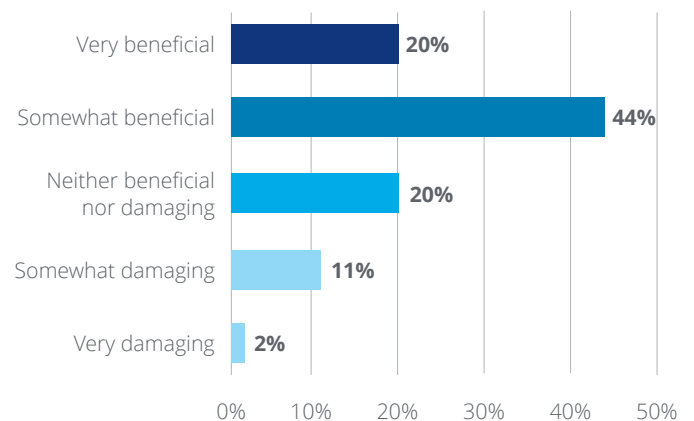
Businesses are increasingly positive about the UK's approach to trade with the EU.

In May the government agreed a "Common Understanding" with the EU. How helpful, if at all, do you anticipate this being to your business?



Launched in 2024, the government's EU "reset" aims to foster a closer, more cooperative relationship with the EU while respecting key national boundaries, such as remaining outside the Single Market and Customs Union. The initiative includes steps such as agreeing a veterinary agreement to ease border checks, providing greater support for touring artists, mutual recognition of professional qualifications and alignment with the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) to ensure smoother trade in carbon-intensive goods.

Do you anticipate the new UK government's trade policy towards Europe being beneficial or damaging for your business over the next five years?



British businesses appear broadly optimistic about the government's approach to trade with the EU, with 64% of respondents anticipating it as beneficial to their business over the next five years.

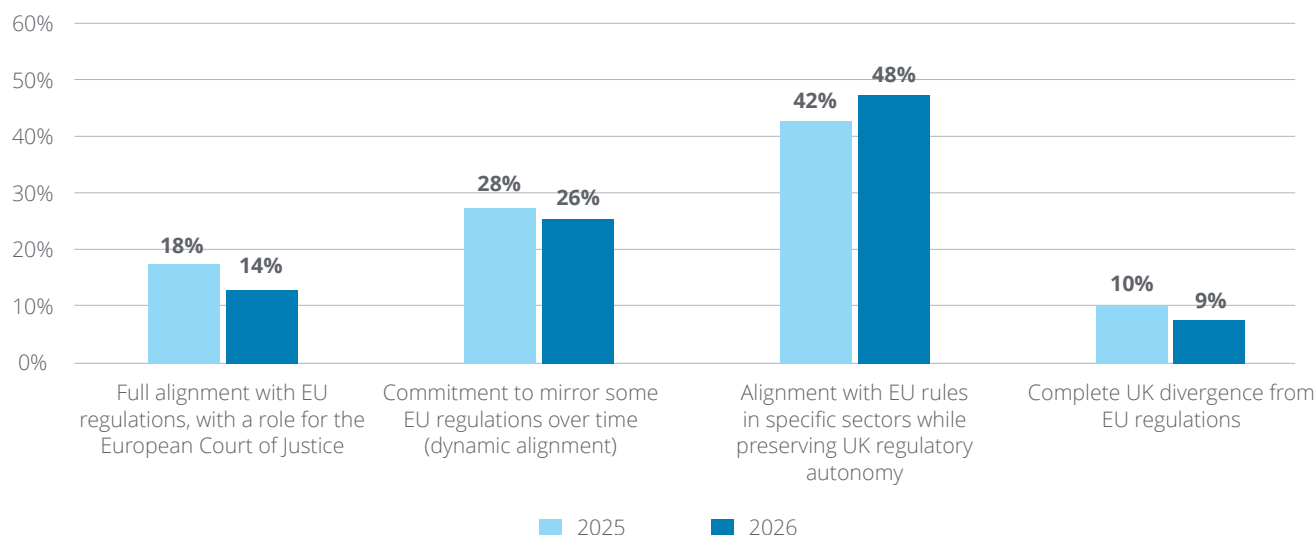
The government's approach, focused on easing post-Brexit frictions and rebuilding trust, is seen to offer businesses greater predictability and smoother access to the UK's largest trading partner.



British businesses appear broadly optimistic about the government's approach to trade with the EU, with 64% of respondents anticipating it as beneficial to their business over the next five years.



To what extent do you think the UK should agree to follow EU rules in order to achieve a closer trading relationship?



The survey responses show growing support among UK businesses for a middle-ground approach to EU regulation, specifically, alignment in targeted sectors while maintaining overall regulatory autonomy, with this preference rising from 42% in our 2025 Attitudes to Trade Survey to 48% in this 2026 survey. While this is popular, negotiating sector by sector may prove difficult and time consuming, as the EU is resistant to dividing the integrity of the single market.

It is striking that post-Brexit, a significant number of business leaders are reluctant to return to the position of full alignment with EU rules, given that this would represent the closest terms of trade to EU membership. Businesses may now have adapted to the post-Brexit regulatory context and find themselves reluctant to invite further change.

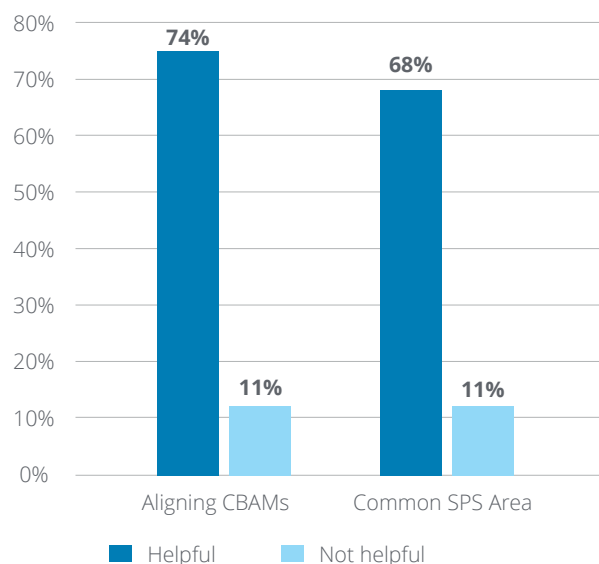
Rather than pursuing full alignment or rejoining the single market and customs union, the government's current approach favours pragmatic cooperation in areas like CBAM and SPS, where regulatory convergence can ease trade frictions without compromising sovereignty. This appears to be in step with businesses' current thinking.



Businesses may now have adapted to the post-Brexit regulatory context and find themselves reluctant to invite further change.



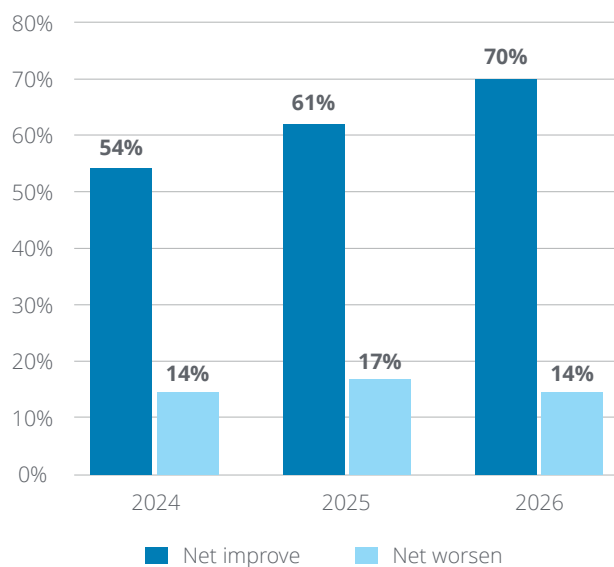
The government has proposed aligning the UK's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM)/ SPS rules with the EU's equivalent. How Helpful is this to you business?



By deepening collaboration across trade, security and migration, the "reset" opens new avenues for investment and growth. The government believes that the two measures above could add nearly £9 billion to the UK economy by 2040³. While this is a meaningful figure, the benefits are expected to be concentrated in a limited number of sectors, making it unlikely to directly help businesses in other parts of the economy.

³ PM secures new agreement with EU to benefit British people, Cabinet Office, 19 May 2025

Do you anticipate the UK's trading relationship with Europe to improve or worsen over the next five years?



Business sentiment toward the UK's trading relationship with Europe over the medium term is becoming increasingly optimistic, with 70% of respondents expecting an improvement, up from 54% in 2024. Only 14% of respondents in this year's survey anticipate a deterioration to some extent.

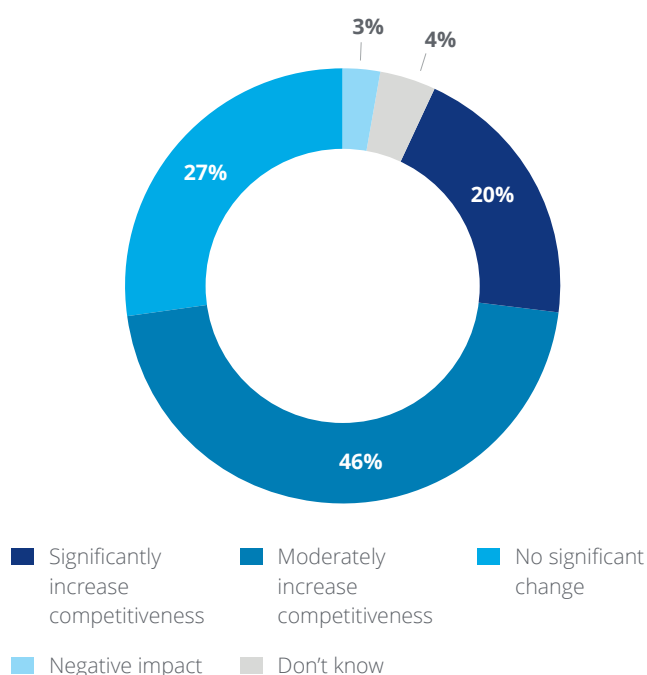
This growing confidence likely reflects expectations surrounding the EU "reset" being pursued by the government. However, this optimism is not uniform across industries. 80% of businesses in the technology, media and telecoms sector anticipated the trading relationship with the EU to improve, similar to the figure recorded last year (82%), whereas only 52% of education, life sciences and healthcare businesses expected an improvement. The proportion of energy, resources, and industrials businesses that anticipate an improved trading relationship grew from 55% last year to 66%, which could be due to closer alignment on the UK and EU Emission Trading Systems.

Section 4:

Business leaders believe the UK's trade policy is delivering and are optimistic about the UK-India FTA.

In the year since our last survey, the UK and India have concluded a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), finalised in May 2025 after several rounds of negotiation. The FTA is intended to reduce tariffs, improve market access and encourage stronger investment flows.⁴ While India currently accounts for a relatively small share of UK trade, the agreement reflects a broader effort to diversify trading relationships and engage more deeply with high-growth economies outside Europe.

How do you think the UK-India FTA will affect the competitiveness of your goods and services?



The text of the UK-India FTA was published in July 2025 and with businesses now having had time to digest its contents, two thirds of respondents (66%) expect the deal to either significantly or moderately enhance their competitive position. This is a slight improvement from last year's survey, (before the FTA was finalised) when 58% of respondents anticipated the FTA to have a beneficial impact for their businesses.

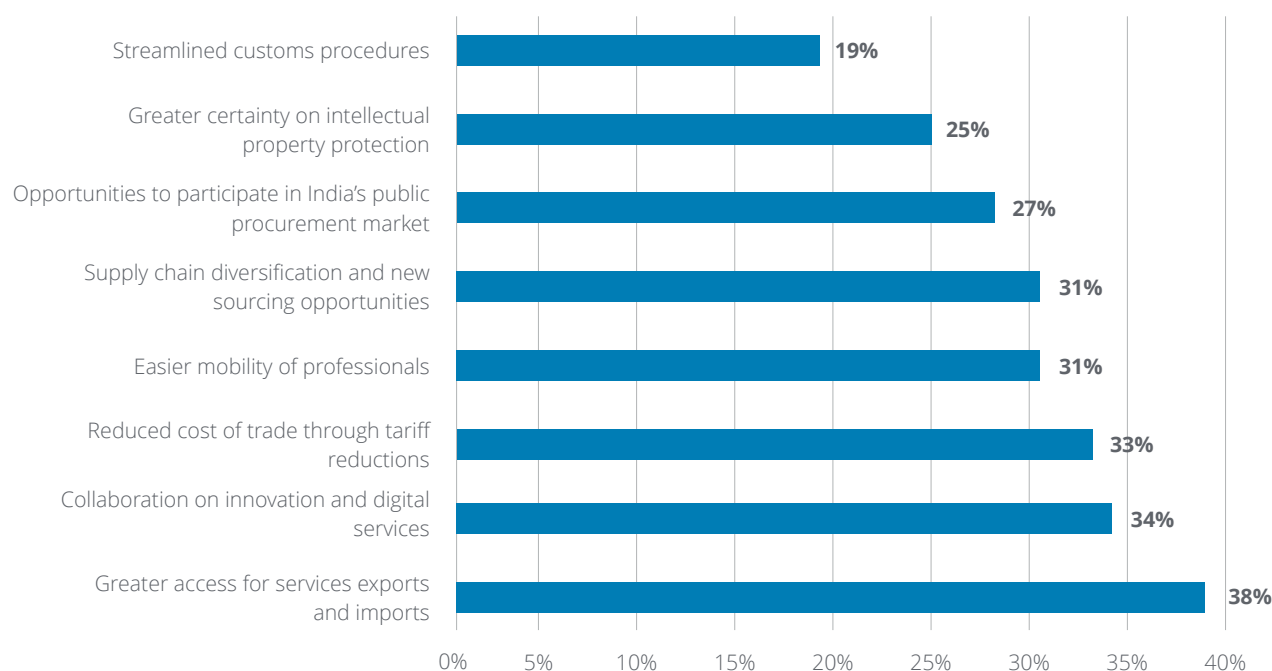
ee

two thirds of respondents (66%) expect the deal to either significantly or moderately enhance their competitive position.

aa

⁴ Prime Minister embarks on first major trade mission to India, Prime Minister's Office, 7 October 2025

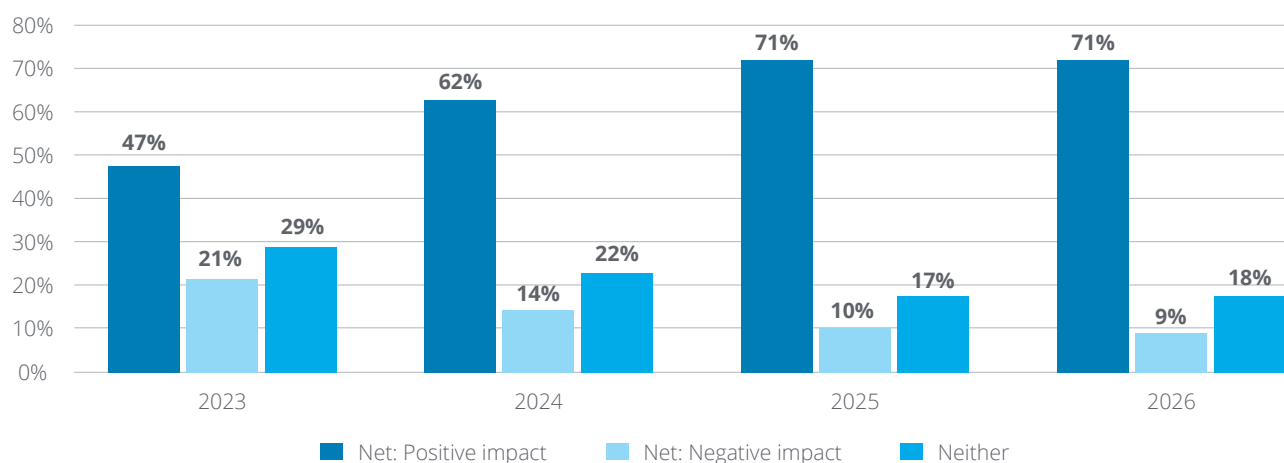
What are the primary opportunities you foresee for your business arising from the UK-India Free Trade Agreement?



Looking into the opportunities for businesses arising from the UK-India FTA, respondents most frequently highlighted greater access for services imports and exports (38%) and collaboration on innovation and digital services (34%) as the primary opportunities. Given the UK's global strength in services trade and its desire to tap into India's expanding economy and technology ecosystem, the FTA could support businesses in identifying and realising opportunities to improve UK-India trade.

A central pillar of the UK-India FTA is tariff reduction. India has historically maintained some of the highest tariff rates among major economies. The FTA, however, delivers significant tariff reductions, with India eliminating tariffs on 85% of tariff lines for the UK within a decade. Respondents highly ranked the reduced cost of trade through tariff reductions (33%) and supply chain diversification (31%) as opportunities for their businesses, indicating that UK businesses see India as a valuable partner for sourcing and exporting goods.

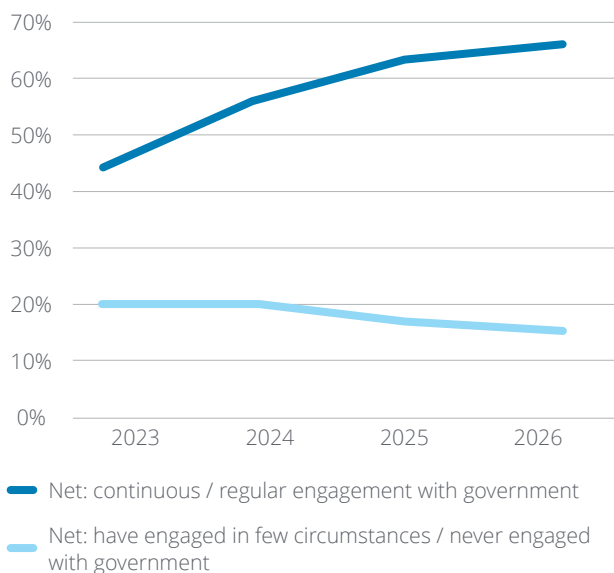
Thinking about the next decade, do you think the free trade agreements negotiated by the UK government will have a positive or negative impact on growth?



The UK-India FTA is the latest in a growing portfolio of UK trade deals, building on agreements already secured with Australia, New Zealand and members of CPTPP, as well as continuity agreements established post-Brexit. As the UK continues to expand its network of FTAs, 71% of business leaders believe these deals will have a positive impact on the country's economic growth over the next decade.

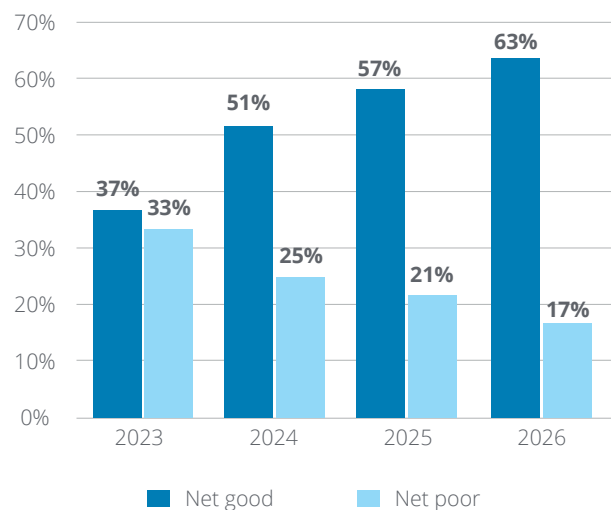


How engaged would you say your business is when it comes to communicating with government about trade negotiations with other countries?



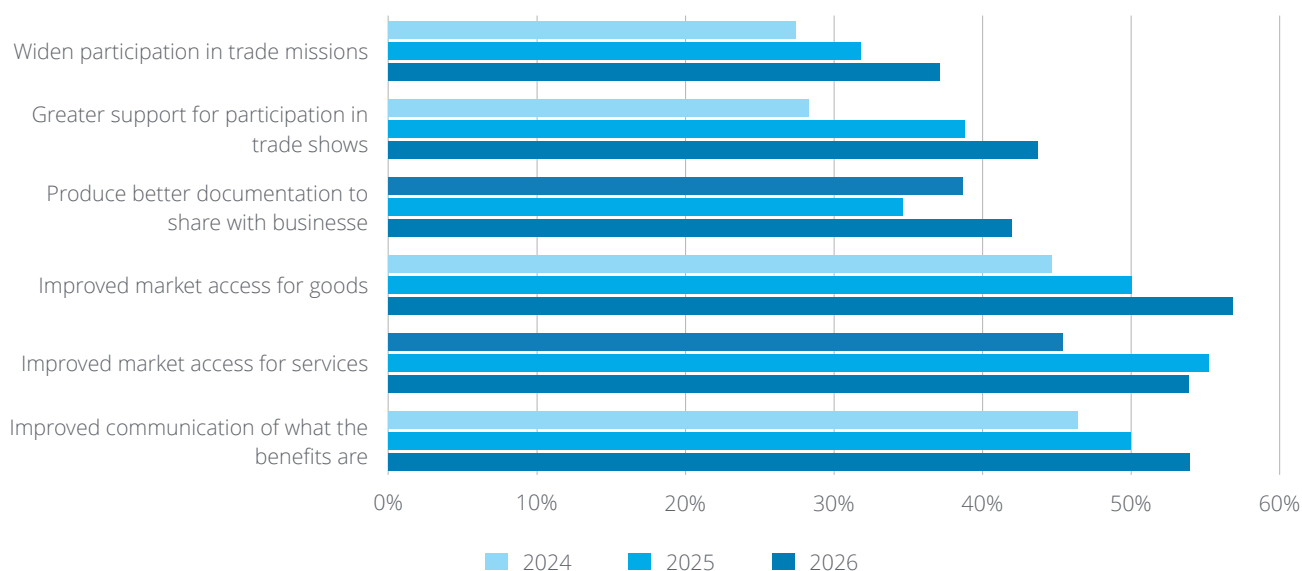
The growth in the proportion of business leaders anticipating the UK's trade agreements to have a positive impact on their business has coincided with an increase in the number of business leaders reporting that they are in continuous or regular engagement with the government on trade negotiations with other countries (66%). The same percentage of respondents reported that they are in continuous or regular engagement with the government regarding government support programmes or advice on exporting. This figure is up from 63% in our 2025 Attitudes to Trade Survey and 59% in the 2024 edition, indicating UK businesses are increasingly turning to the government for clear guidance on realising opportunities in overseas markets.

How well has the government communicated the benefits of free trade agreements to you and your business?



Continuing a consistent trend since 2023, business leaders are increasingly positive about how well the UK government is communicating the benefits of free trade agreements. 63% of respondents believe the government is doing a good job of communicating the benefits of trade agreements to businesses, up from 57% in our 2025 Attitudes to Trade Survey and a significant improvement from our first Attitudes to Trade Survey in 2023 (37%).

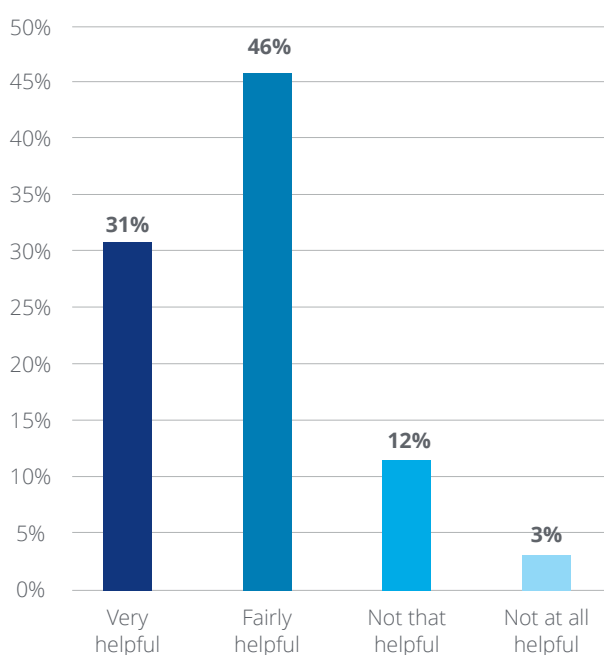
What could the government do to enable businesses to take greater advantage of the benefits provided by trade negotiation programs ?



Improved market access for goods (57%) and services (54%) were highlighted as the greatest factors for enabling businesses to take greater advantage of the benefits provided by the trade negotiation programme.

However, 54% of businesses also highlighted that improved communication of the benefits of the UK's trade negotiation programme would enable them to take greater advantage of the benefits conferred. While this may seem at odds with the finding that government communication on FTAs has improved, it may reflect an increased demand for detailed guidance on how businesses can practically take advantage of FTAs, particularly as businesses are paying closer attention to trade agreements as they become more commercially significant.

How helpful, if at all, do you think the government's new Trade Strategy will be to your business?



The UK government launched its new Trade Strategy in June 2025, shortly after publishing the UK's Modern Industrial Strategy⁵, reflecting broader policy focus on linking trade with domestic growth priorities. The Trade Strategy set an ambition for the UK to become the "most connected nation in the world" and emphasises the role of trade policy in supporting the transition to net zero, the development of critical technologies and the growth of high-value sectors such as advanced manufacturing, clean energy, life sciences and digital services.⁶ The response to the UK's Trade Strategy was positive, with a combined 78% of respondents identifying it as helpful to their business.



The response to the UK's Trade Strategy was positive, with a combined 78% of respondents identifying it as helpful to their business.



⁵ The UK's Modern Industrial Strategy, Department for Business and Trade, 23 June 2025

⁶ UK Trade Strategy, Department for Business and Trade, 26 June 2025

Conclusions

Higher global trade barriers have buffeted businesses in 2025

UK businesses were impacted by the resurgence of global tariffs in 2025, particularly the US decision to impose a 10% baseline tariff on most UK imports. This has led to notable disruption, with 42% of businesses reporting increased uncertainty and an equal share facing higher direct costs. Despite these challenges, businesses are actively responding: 48% have explored mitigation strategies, and another 39% plan to do so. Common responses include raising prices (43%), diversifying export markets (40%), and reorganising supply chains (38%). These figures reflect a determined effort to adapt to a more protectionist global trade environment, as most businesses expect uncertainty to persist for several years.

Businesses have seen UK trade policy deliver

British businesses are seeing trade policy begin to deliver meaningful results, with a series of recent agreements and initiatives unlocking new opportunities across key markets. The UK-India Free Trade Agreement, finalised in May 2025, has boosted confidence, with 66% of businesses expecting it to enhance their competitiveness through improved services access and tariff reductions. Membership of CPTPP is also gaining traction, with 59% of businesses anticipating increased exports to member countries, up from 52% the previous year. In Europe, the government's "reset" has helped stabilise relations, with 64% viewing it as beneficial, while the Economic Prosperity Deal with the US is proving popular, backed by 60% of respondents. These developments reflect a growing belief that UK trade policy is aligning with business priorities and delivering practical benefits.

Businesses anticipate an expansion of Asian trade

British businesses increasingly foresee opportunities in Asia, driven by both the stabilisation of UK-China relations and the implementation of CPTPP. With 51% favouring closer ties with China and over half (53%) expecting it to play a greater role in their supply chains, businesses are positioning themselves to engage more deeply with the region. At the same time, rising confidence in CPTPP signals a broader appetite for tapping into high-growth Asia-Pacific markets. Whether through services, supply chain diversification or tariff reductions, UK businesses appear to be looking eastward for resilience, expansion, and long-term opportunity.

Businesses support the government's approach towards trade with the EU

British businesses increasingly support the government's EU "reset", viewing it as a commercially pragmatic and realistic step toward rebuilding trust and reducing post-Brexit friction. Interestingly, support for full alignment was less popular, possibly because many firms are wary of facing the costs and disruptions of another transition widespread process.

The strong support for targeted regulatory alignment and the growing optimism about future EU trade relations reflects a clear appetite for stability and cooperation. However, while measures like CBAM alignment and SPS agreements are welcome and may ease trade in carbon-intensive and agri-food sectors, their impact will be sector-specific.

Government communication on trade agreements improves significantly

There is growing engagement between government and business on trade, with 66% of businesses now in regular contact on trade negotiations and support programmes. Furthermore, 63% of respondents said that the government is doing a good job of explaining the benefits of trade agreements, up from just 37% in 2023. These results paint a positive picture of the UK government's role in helping to boost UK trade; however, businesses did point to areas where further government support could help them make the most of trade opportunities, including improving market access for goods and services, offering more targeted export support and helping businesses navigate complex overseas regulations.



Contact our trade specialists



Amanda Tickel

Partner, Head of Tax and Trade Policy

Tel: 020 7303 3812

Email: ajtickel@deloitte.co.uk



James Caldecourt

Director, Head of International Trade

Tel: 020 7303 6794

Email: jcaldecourt@deloitte.co.uk



Henry Morris

Manager, Tax & Trade Policy Group

Tel: 0121 696 8821

Email: henmorris@deloitte.co.uk



Ciaran Bridges

Associate Director, Tax and Trade Policy Group

Tel: 020 8071 5051

Email: ciaranbridges@deloitte.co.uk





This publication has been written in general terms and we recommend that you obtain professional advice before acting or refraining from action on any of the contents of this publication. Deloitte LLP accepts no liability for any loss occasioned to any person acting or refraining from action as a result of any material in this publication.

Deloitte LLP is a limited liability partnership registered in England and Wales with registered number OC303675 and its registered office at 1 New Street Square, London EC4A 3HQ, United Kingdom.

Deloitte LLP is the United Kingdom affiliate of Deloitte NSE LLP, a member firm of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited, a UK private company limited by guarantee ("DTTL"). DTTL and each of its member firms are legally separate and independent entities. DTTL and Deloitte NSE LLP do not provide services to clients. [Please click here to learn more about our global network of member firms.](#)

© 2026 Deloitte LLP. All rights reserved.

Designed by CoRe Creative Services. RITM2310533