

Sustainable Trade Index **2026**

United Kingdom

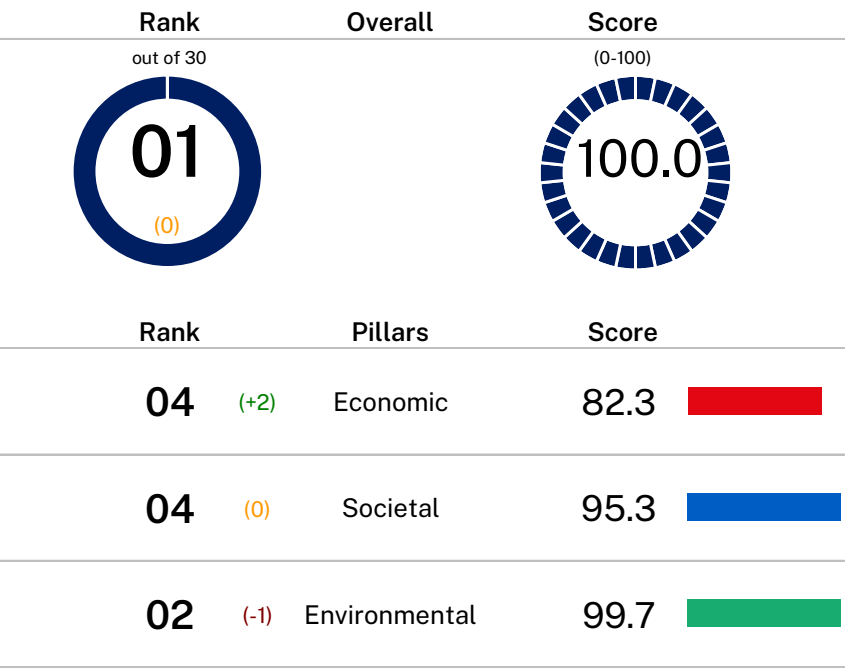


Sustainable Trade Index

The Hinrich-IMD Sustainable Trade Index measures 30 economies’ readiness and capacity to participate in the global trading system in a manner that supports the long-term goals of economic growth, environmental protection, and societal development.

Overall and pillars

United Kingdom



The values in (parentheses) indicate the one year ranking change

Background information

Population, millions (2025)	69.49	Large
Income level, GDP per Capita US\$ (2025)	57,608	High
Membership	CPTPP	

Economic pillar

The Economic pillar measures an economy's ability to ensure and promote economic growth through international trade. In this category, economies receive scores for indicators that demonstrate a link between the trading system and economic growth.

Some indicators capture the quality of trade infrastructure, while others measure the ease of conducting international trade. We measure export diversification by evaluating an economy's bilateral trade destinations and how heavily its exports are concentrated by sector. Furthermore, we consider the technological infrastructure and innovation capabilities of an economy by assessing its emphasis on research and development investments and digital technologies.

Indicators

1 Economic Pillar		Rank	Rank +/-	Value	Year	Score and 30 country average
1.01	Consumer price inflation	22	(-6)	3.40	2025	79.01
1.02	Real GDP Growth per capita, % GDP	24	(+2)	1.02	2025	30.78
1.03	Growth in labor force, %	22	(-2)	0.51	2025	49.00
1.04	Foreign direct investment, net inflows, % GDP	13	(+16)	1.91	2025	13.37
1.05	Gross fixed capital formation, % GDP	25	(0)	18.88	2025	23.30
1.06	Tariff & non-tariff barriers	24	(+3)	-	-	54.41
1.06.01	Tariff barriers	22	(0)	-	-	79.53
1.06.01.a	Tariff barriers in force	26	(0)	3,905	2025	41.48
1.06.01.b	New tariff barriers 2025	01	(0)	0	2025	100.00
1.06.01.c	Net percentage of imports affected by new tariff barriers (2025)	02	(+20)	0.000	2025	94.27
1.06.02	Non-tariff barriers	26	(0)	-	-	45.99
1.06.02.a	Non-tariff barriers in force	26	(-1)	18,087	2025	65.17
1.06.02.b	New non-tariff barriers 2025	26	(+1)	2,062	2025	49.86
1.06.02.c	Net percentage of imports affected by new non-tariff barriers (2025)	22	(-1)	0.44	2025	28.88
1.07	Trade liberalization	01	(0)	-	-	100.00
1.07.01	Regional Trade Agreements, number in force	01	(0)	39	2025	100.00
1.07.02	Capital account liberalization, Index	01	(0)	2.28	2023	100.00
1.07.03	Investment Freedom, Index	05	(-1)	70.00	2026	71.43
1.08	Exchange rate stability, parity change from national currency to SDR, 2025/2023	12	(-4)	0.04	2025	92.45
1.09	Domestic credit to private sector, % of GDP	12	(+1)	112.37	2024	47.96
1.10	Foreign trade and payments risk	12	(0)	-	-	51.93
1.10.01	Country credit rating	09	(0)	52.00	2025	85.96
1.10.02	Gross debt, % GDP	26	(0)	102.30	2025	50.83
1.11	Trade costs	02	(+6)	-	-	94.47
1.11.01	Logistics performance indicators	02	(+6)	-	-	97.59
1.11.01.a	Aviation import dwell time (days)	03	(NEW)	0.80	2024	97.66
1.11.01.b	Number of aviation partner economies	02	(NEW)	159.0	2024	96.05
1.11.01.c	Container import dwell time (days)	11	(NEW)	4.20	2024	75.20
1.11.01.d	Number of maritime partner economies	03	(NEW)	93.0	2024	98.98
1.11.01.e	Business-to-business postal delivery time (days)	06	(NEW)	2.20	2024	95.94
1.11.01.f	Number of business-to-business postal partner economies	02	(NEW)	175.5	2024	98.13
1.11.02	Corruption perceptions, index	07	(-1)	70	2025	79.41
1.11.03	Rule of law, index	07	(-1)	78.82	2024	88.57
1.12	Monetary policy intervention	04	(-2)	-	-	70.98
1.12.01	Current account balance, % GDP	04	(0)	-3.10	2025	97.16
1.12.02	Change (1-year) in total reserves (includes gold), % GDP	12	(-2)	0.001	2025	31.48
1.13	Export concentration	04	(+1)	-	-	89.69
1.13.01	Export market concentration, Top 5 as % total	02	(+2)	43.76	2025	92.92
1.13.02	Export product concentration, Top 5 as % total	07	(0)	48.32	2025	82.49
1.14	Exports of goods and services	03	(0)	-	-	60.78
1.14.01	Merchandise exports, US\$ millions	09	(-1)	555,829	2025	34.96
1.14.02	Commercial services exports, US\$ millions	02	(0)	713,396	2025	71.29
1.15	Technological innovation	07	(+1)	-	-	48.48
1.15.01	R&D expenditure, % GDP	06	(-1)	2.68	2023	54.07
1.15.02	Researchers in R&D, per 1,000 inhabitants	-	-	-	-	
1.15.03	Patent applications, per million inhabitants	07	(0)	681.46	2024	15.78
1.15.04	High-technology exports, % of manufactured exports	08	(0)	29.23	2024	37.81
1.15.05	Scientific articles, per million people	06	(0)	1,428.68	2023	45.62
1.16	Technological infrastructure	10	(-2)	-	-	74.38
1.16.01	Fixed internet speed, Mbps	14	(-2)	147.07	2025	43.24
1.16.02	Internet users, % population	07	(-2)	95.47	2024	96.78
1.16.03	Fixed broadband subscriptions (per 100 people)	04	(0)	42.16	2024	88.15
1.16.04	Mobile subscriptions (per 100 people)	15	(+1)	121.64	2024	36.31
1.17	Digital readiness (e-commerce legislations)	01	(NEW)	92.0	2025	100

Societal pillar

Social factors matter in an economy's capacity to trade internationally over the long term. Economies are measured on the environment that encourages and supports the development of human capital, such as the extent of education and labor standards.

This pillar also captures factors that influence public support for trade expansion. These include income inequality, political stability, goods produced by forced and child labor, and the government response to human trafficking.

Indicators

2 Societal Pillar		Rank	Rank +/-	Value	Year	Score and 30 country average	
2.01	Inequality (Gini coefficient)	06	(-3)	32.40	2021	66.18	
2.02	Educational attainment	02	(0)	-	-	86.59	
2.02.01	Mean years of schooling	03	(0)	13.49	2023	95.62	
2.02.02	University education Index	02	(0)	115.47	2026	69.53	
2.02.03	Tertiary enrollment	07	(0)	80.41	2023	63.68	
2.03	Labor standards	08	(-1)	-	-	87.89	
2.03.01	Gender non-discrimination in hiring	01	(0)	100	2024	100.00	
2.03.02	Freedom of association and assembly	09	(-1)	0.68	2025	75.79	
2.04	Political stability and absence of violence	12	(-1)	70.30	2024	70.68	
2.05	Goods produced by forced labor or child labor	05	(0)	-	-	98.71	
2.05.01	Goods produced by forced labor	05	(0)	-	-	97.42	
2.05.01.a	Goods produced by forced labor, number of goods categories	01	(0)	0	2024	100.00	
2.05.01.b	% population in forced labor	05	(0)	0.18	2023	94.45	
2.05.02	Goods produced by child labor, number of goods categories	01	(0)	0	2024	100.00	
2.06	Government response to human trafficking	01	(0)	-	-	100.00	
2.06.01	Government response to human trafficking, Criminalization	04	(0)	7	2025	80.00	
2.06.02	Government response to human trafficking, Strategy	01	(0)	67.95	2023	100.00	
2.06.03	Government response to human trafficking, Action	01	(0)	1	2025	100.00	
2.07	Trade in goods at risk of modern slavery	18	(+4)	-	-	84.05	
2.07.01	Imports of goods at risk of modern slavery, US\$ millions	26	(+1)	15,641	2025	81.15	
2.07.02	Exports of goods at risk of modern slavery, US\$ millions	01	(0)	0.0	2025	100.00	
2.08	Legatum prosperity index	02	(NEW)	79.95	2023	98.59	
2.09	Life expectancy at birth	08	(0)	81.30	2023	78.28	
2.10	Uneven economic development	06	(0)	3.60	2024	79.63	
2.11	Universal Health Coverage Index	04	(0)	88	2023	93.33	
2.12	Equal distribution of resources index	09	(NEW)	0.85	2025	86.21	

Environmental pillar

The Environmental pillar measures the extent to which an economy's trade supports sustainable resources. The factors include measurements of non-renewable natural resources in trade and the management of externalities that arise from economic growth and participation in the global trading system.

While an economy's capacity to participate in the global trading system is dependent on economic development, achieving sustainable trade requires prudent stewardship of natural resources and limiting externalities in an economy's economic calculus to promote its overall environmental capital. The indicators chosen in this section measure an economy's environmental capital and include indicators for air and water pollution. In terms of future impact, we measure national environmental standards, carbon emissions, and share of natural resources in exports.

Indicators

3 Environmental Pillar		Rank	Rank +/-	Value	Year	Score and 30 country average
3.01	Air pollution, PM2.5 micrograms per cubic metre	06	(0)	9.46	2025	95.15
3.02	Deforestation, Index	09	(-2)	0.0069	2024	36.35
3.03	% of wastewater treated	05	(0)	97.19	2024	96.97
3.04	Energy intensity (Energy use (kg of oil equivalent) per \$1,000 GDP)	04	(-2)	39.36	2024	85.89
3.05	Ecological footprint	14	(+3)	3.41	2025	57.56
3.06	Renewable energy, %	21	(-3)	12.20	2021	19.40
3.07	Environmental standards in trade, count	01	(0)	-	-	100.00
3.07.01	Convention: Hazardous Wastes	01	(0)	2	2025	100.00
3.07.02	Convention: Prevention of Marine Pollution	01	(0)	2	2025	100.00
3.07.03	Convention: Protection of the Ozone Layer (Vienna)	01	(0)	2	2025	100.00
3.07.04	Convention on Climate Change (Kyoto)	01	(0)	2	2025	100.00
3.07.05	The International Timber Agreement	01	(0)	2	2025	100.00
3.07.06	Convention: International Trade in Endangered Species	01	(0)	2	2025	100.00
3.07.07	Convention: Prior Informed Consent - Hazardous Chemicals (Rotterdam)	01	(0)	2	2025	100.00
3.08	Transfer emissions, million tonnes carbon	02	(0)	-48.93	2023	67.47
3.09	Share of natural resources in trade, %	20	(-2)	33.19	2025	58.94
3.10	Carbon	06	(-3)	-	-	94.52
3.10.1	Carbon pricing	01	(0)	2	2025	100.00
3.10.2	CO2 emissions per capita	17	(-1)	4.25	2024	81.16

About us

Global trade has helped lift hundreds of millions of people around the world out of poverty. It is a powerful driver of economic growth and job creation. Yet its benefits are not self-sustaining. Without responsible stewardship, trade can widen income inequalities, disrupt labor markets, and impose significant environmental costs. Sustainable trade means striking a durable balance by expanding the economic opportunities that open markets generate while ensuring those gains are broadly shared and maintained. This requires sound public policy, responsible business leadership, and evidence-based frameworks to guide decision-making.

The Hinrich Foundation and the IMD World Competitiveness Center have combined their expertise to build the Hinrich-IMD Sustainable Trade Index, a framework for policy makers, business executives, and civil society leaders to understand and advance sustainable global trade.

hinrich foundation
advancing sustainable global trade

The Hinrich Foundation is an independent Asia-based philanthropic organization dedicated to advancing mutually beneficial and sustainable global trade.

We believe that mutually beneficial and sustainable global trade is a powerful force for shared prosperity, technological progress, sustainability and peaceful international cooperation. Our work is grounded in rigorous fact-based research and the development of innovative trade education programs.

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IMD / World Competitiveness
Center

IMD is an independent academic institution with close ties to business and a strong focus on impact. Challenging what is and inspiring what could be, it develops leaders who transform organizations for a more prosperous, sustainable, and inclusive world. Through its Executive Education, MBA, Executive MBA, and advisory work IMD helps leaders and policymakers navigate complexity and change.

The IMD World Competitiveness Center is dedicated to the advancement of knowledge on world competitiveness and offers benchmarking services for countries and companies using the latest data. The Center has pioneered research on how nations and enterprises compete to lay the foundations for future prosperity.

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