

- b. Engagement on cross-cutting issues, including an Interministerial Standing Committee;
 - c. The Prime Minister and Heads of Devolved Governments Council
10. A standing IGR Secretariat will also be established to provide administrative support and promote the efficient and effective maintenance of relations at each tier and for the handling and resolution of disputes. Further details are outlined in Annex A. The role and functions of each tier are set out below.

Engagement Structures

11. Tier 1 - Portfolio Engagement. All governments will commit to regular portfolio-level engagement on areas of mutual interest. This engagement should take place formally within **Interministerial Groups (IMGs)**, which are expected to cover a number of policy areas and will aim to meet regularly on a quadrilateral basis with established terms of reference. It may be more appropriate in some areas for engagement to be less frequent or in a different format, for example bilaterally, with exact format determined jointly. Further detail is outlined in Annex B.
12. Middle Tiers - An Interministerial Standing Committee (IMSC) should be established to consider issues which cannot be considered at the portfolio-level within the relevant IMG, to bring together strategic considerations affecting many different portfolios and to discuss any cross-cutting international issues. The IMSC should provide oversight of all IMGs and its Terms of Reference will therefore provide a remit to consider issues falling within all policy areas of mutual interests, both domestic and international, if they have a bearing on the wider relationships between the governments. It will meet every other month, according to rotating arrangements, but could meet more or less frequently according to need and if agreed by consensus. The IMSC may also consider issues that have been delegated to it. The IMSC, and supporting officials structures, will also be responsible for ensuring the effectiveness of portfolio-level engagement. Draft terms of reference are included in Annex B.
13. Recognising that international relations is a reserved competence, the importance of engagement on the UK Government's approach to international issues as it affects devolved responsibilities is embedded in the system. The IMSC will consider cross-cutting and wider strategic international issues, with FCDO Ministers invited as necessary. This will be complemented by two internationally focussed IMGs, including the Trade IMG to discuss agreements with the UK's new trading partners, and an IMG for the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement. These forums are in addition to departmental IMGs who will consider international engagement and agreements where devolved competence is being considered. In relation to UK-EU meetings, UK co-chairs will consider attendance as part of the UK delegation. International engagement and agreements that fall outside the remit of the IMSC or a relevant IMG will be led directly by FCDO, either on a bilateral or multilateral basis where necessary.
14. Confidentiality is a material part of all intergovernmental relations, and a necessary condition for engagement. All parties will treat discussions sensitively and not disclose information that breaches the confidential nature of such discussions.
15. If particular issues are identified as needing in-depth and focused consideration by ministers, **time-limited Interministerial Committees (ICs)** will be established by consensus.
16. Building on existing engagement in the Finance Ministers Quadrilateral, a **Finance Interministerial Standing Committee (F:ISC)** will consist of representatives of Her