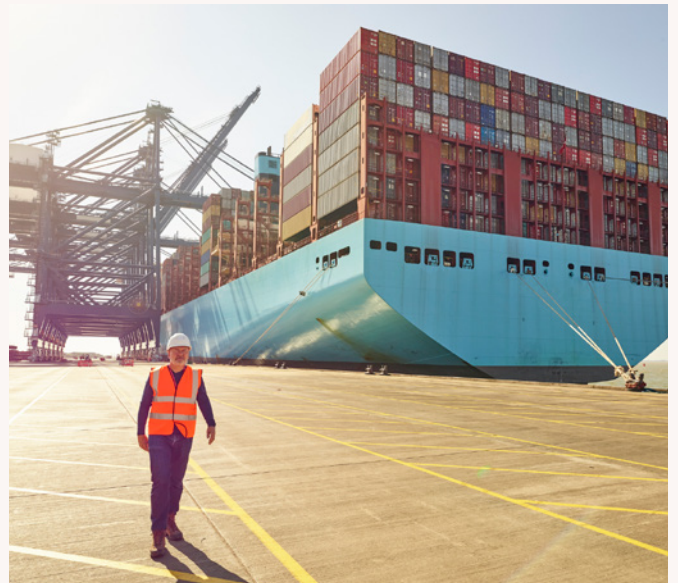HM Government

2025 UK Border Strategy

2025 UK Border Strategy

Presented to Parliament by the Chancellor Duchy of Lancaster and the Minister of State at the Cabinet Office by Command of Her Majesty

Contents

Joint Ministerial foreword

As the United Kingdom prepares to become a sovereign nation once more, the events of 2020 prove how important it is that our border is as efficient, smart and responsive as possible, primed to flex to changing circumstances.

Long-term global shifts in how people and goods move across international borders have been suddenly up-ended by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world economy. It is critical that our border makes the fullest use of advances in technology to manage changes in flow, in order to keep the UK safe and prosperous, while continuing to protect people, animals and the environment.

If the primary responsibility of a government is to keep its citizens safe, a border must also ensure the smooth and predictable movement of people and goods. Historically, there has been a tension between this need for compliance and the need for frictionless passage. Yet we know from other jurisdictions, including Singapore, Australia and New Zealand, that the use of smart legislation, the effective deployment of personnel and critically the powerful advances in technology and data analytics can resolve this tension. Automated processes and AI insights can give industry and government a clearer understanding of exactly who – and what – is moving across the border, in real-time.

This strategy sets out our plans to harness that potential, and fulfil our ambition to have the most effective border in the world.

There are many benefits: lower costs and the fewest possible delays for traders and travellers, and a more secure border that will deter hostile actors and thwart the illicit cross-border movements of people and goods. We want to be sure that the people who come here are those who have a legitimate right to do so – and those who are not conducive to the public good are kept out. In this way, our border will be more resilient and robust in its operation, but at the same time more user-friendly. It will help us realise our global ambitions for trade and tourism.
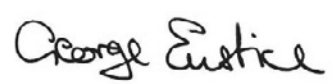
Cooperation and co-design sits at the heart of this border vision. Preparations for the end of the Brexit transition period have highlighted the vital importance of collaboration with the businesses and organisations in the private sector that will deliver critical elements of the border. We are committed to building on the partnership working of the last few years to create a fully joined-up approach to border design, delivery and innovation across the UK.

The 2025 UK Border Strategy is only the beginning of this process. It draws on the wealth of evidence and insight from stakeholders across the UK submitted to our public consultation exercise. Implementing it together, we can be confident that we are on our way to creating the most effective border in the world.

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster

Rt Hon George Eustice MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Rt Hon Priti Patel MP, Home Secretary

Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP, Chief Secretary to the Treasury

Industry foreword

We welcome the ambitious proposals in the 2025 UK Border Strategy which we believe are critical to implement if the UK is to create the most effective border in the world, a border that is highly productive, free flowing, predictable and resilient for all users.

The UK border is dependent on a large number of bodies that are independent of government, working in partnership with government agencies to ensure that it operates smoothly and efficiently, whilst maintaining essential safety and security standards. Our organisations represent many of those firms who facilitate millions of consignments of goods and passengers to move across the border every year. Their work is vital for the UK economy, the livelihoods of people all across the UK, and supports billions of pounds of international trade and tourism.

Over the years our members have invested heavily in innovation and the technological transformation of the border. This investment has ensured it is easier for businesses to trade and for passengers to travel overseas, and makes the UK's border an attractive one over which to do business. We are pleased to see that the 2025 UK Border Strategy sets out how the government will work in partnership with our industry to drive forward a programme of modernisation and innovation to improve the end-to-end passage through all the UK's ports and points of entry for goods and people.

The partnership between our members and government is, as never before, critical for the smooth operation of the border, and we welcome the commitment in this strategy to strive for coordinated design, delivery and performance measurement of the border across the public and private sector.

There is still a great deal of work to do if we are to realise the vision set out in this strategy. There is no time to waste – we look forward to working with the coordinated government agencies to achieve this vital objective.

Karen Dee, Chief Executive, Airport Operators Association

Andrew Miller, Chairman of the AOCC Customs Sub-Committee

Amanda Francis, Chief Executive, Association of International Courier & Express Services
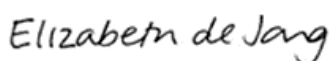
Richard Ballantyne, Chief Executive, British Ports Association

Bob Sanguinetti, Chief Executive, UK Chamber of Shipping

Kevin Richardson, Chief Executive, The Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport UK

Elizabeth de Jong, Director of Policy, Logistics UK

Tim Morris, Chief Executive, UK Major Ports Group

Executive summary

The 2025 UK Border Strategy sets out our vision for the UK border to be the most effective in the world. A border which embraces innovation, simplifies processes for traders and travellers and improves the security and biosecurity of the UK. The purpose of the strategy is to set out:

- our approach to working in partnership with the border industry and users of the border to design, deliver and innovate around the border;

- a long-term Target Operating Model (TOM) for the border that describes the border we are intending to create; and

- the major transformations that government and industry will need to deliver by 2025 and beyond to implement the Target Operating Model.

The six transformations that the strategy proposes to implement across the UK border are to:

1. **Develop a coordinated user-centric government approach to border design and delivery, which works in partnership with industry and enables border innovation.**

2. **Bring together government's collection, assurance and use of border data to provide a comprehensive and holistic view of data at the border.**

3. **Establish resilient 'ports of the future' at border crossing points to make the experience smoother and more secure for passengers and traders, while better protecting the public and environment.**

4. **Use upstream compliance to move processes away from the actual frontier where appropriate, both for passengers and traders.**

5. **Build the capability of staff and the border industry responsible for delivering border processes, particularly in an environment of greater automation; and simplify communication with border users to improve their experience.**

6. **Shape the future development of borders worldwide, to promote the UK's interests and facilitate end-to-end trade and travel.**

To deliver these transformations the strategy sets out a series of cross-cutting, multi-year programmes that we will take forward in partnership with stakeholders. This list of programmes includes: the development of a Single Trade Window, to create a single gateway for all data from traders into government; implementation of an Electronic Travel Authorisation to speed passenger journeys through ports; and a major review of the agencies and checks that occur at the border, to rationalise these wherever possible.

Underpinning this will be a new Design Authority for the border that will bring together all public sector bodies who design and deliver the border across the UK Government and the devolved administrations, with expert insight from industry, to take a coordinated approach to border design going forward.

Our vision for the border
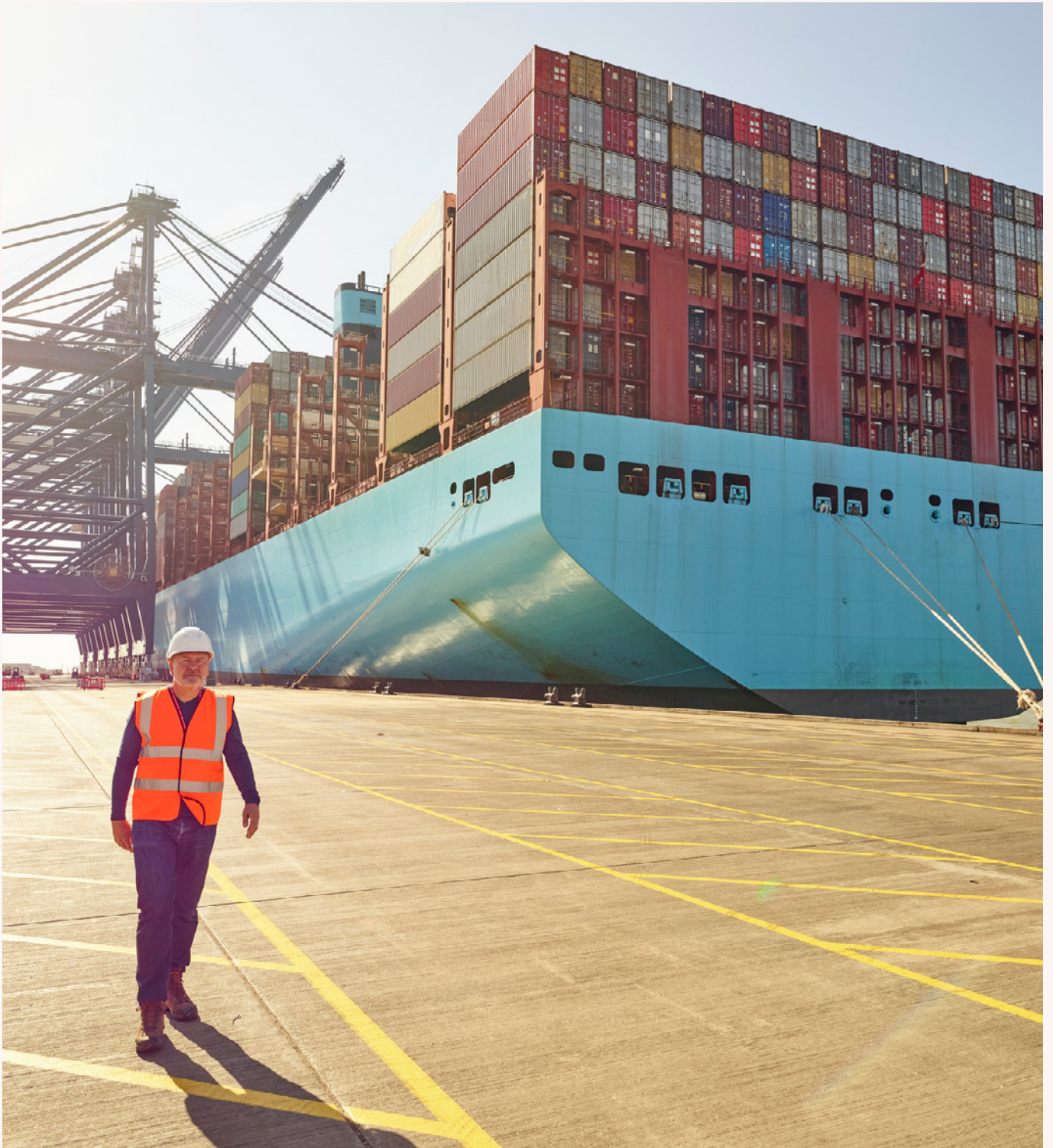
Responding to change

As we look ahead to the future and embark on a new chapter as a fully independent and sovereign United Kingdom, our exit from the European Union provides the country with a unique opportunity to create a border that is fit for the future and benefits all the nations of the UK.

Our border is more than a line on a map. It is a combination of policies, processes and systems delivered by both public and private organisations across more than 270 recognised crossing points and many other smaller entry points across the UK.[1] The smooth operation of these is vital to the UK's economy, safety, biosecurity and ability to combat illegal migration. Concurrently, changing trends in trade, migration and security, as well as major events like the COVID-19 pandemic, mean our border is under more pressure than ever before.

At the end of the transition period we will take full control of our border and so now is the ideal moment to take forward a long-term border strategy. Technology is already being embraced by the private sector to revolutionise supply chains, logistics and passenger movements. Government must keep pace with these advancements at the border. Doing so will increase security, build resilience and lower costs for traders and passengers, thereby driving economic growth.

The 2025 UK Border Strategy sets out our vision to have the world's most effective border, one that enables prosperity and enhances security for a global United Kingdom; ensuring the UK remains bio-secure, protecting plant, animal and human health and that the UK becomes an even more attractive place to travel to or through and with which to do business. Our goal is to help UK businesses take advantage of new trading relationships with the rest of the world, whilst strengthening our ability to target criminal activity, prevent illegal migration and protect the UK's people, businesses, health, and environment.

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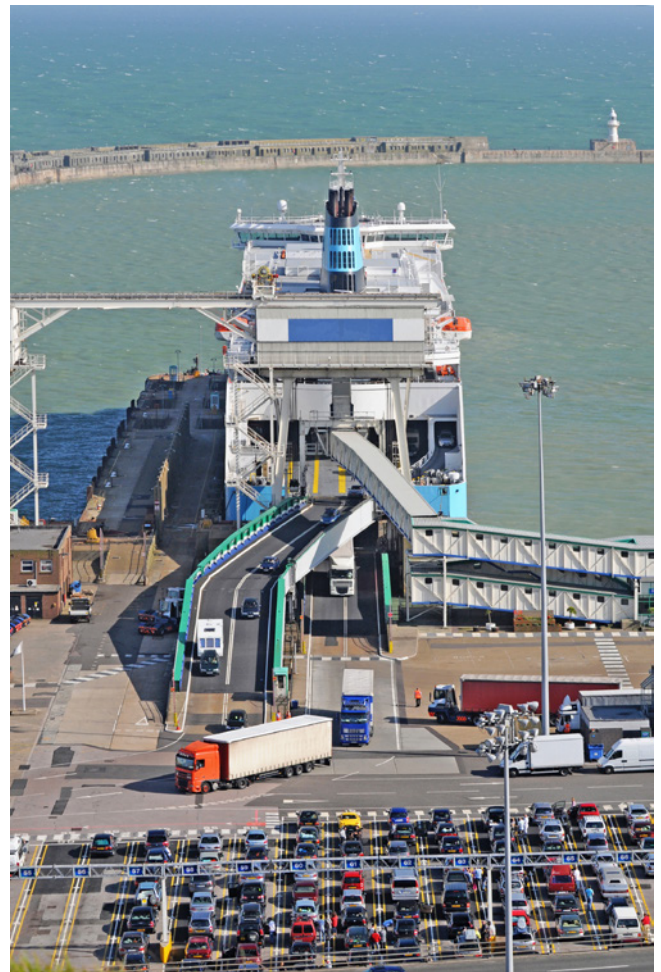
1.   National Audit Office. The UK Border (last accessed 04 December 2020).

The importance of the UK border

Passenger data

21 **million** international sea passengers use UK seaports[2]

255 **million** international passengers pass through UK airports[3]

22 **million** passengers travelled on Eurostar and Le Shuttle[4]

Trade data

383 **million** tonnes of international freight handled by UK seaports[7]

2.5 **million** tonnes of freight handled by UK airports[8] and **1.3** **million** tonnes using the Channel Tunnel through-train freight[9]

The UK total trade was worth **£1,407** **billion**. This was made up of **£718** **billion** in imports and **£689** **billion** in exports[10]

Security and biosecurity data

Over **£9** **billion** of exports of animal and plant products each year which rely on the UK's biosecurity reputation[5]

Over **15,000** firearms and weapons and over **23,000kg** of Class A and B drugs were seized at the border[6]

Border Force protected **£347** **million** tax revenue through detecting goods where excise duty was not declared[6]

Revenue data

£32.8 **billion** of Import VAT[11] and **£3.4** **billion** of customs duty collected by the UK Government at the border[12]

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2. Department for Transport. Sea Passenger statistics (last accessed 26 November 2020).
3. Civil Aviation Authority. EU and Other International Terminal Passenger Traffic, 2019 (last accessed 26 November 2020).
4. Department for Transport. Channel Tunnel to and from Europe (RAI0108) (last accessed 26 November 2020).
5. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs analysis of HMRC trade data, including all products covered by OCR.
6. Border Force. Border Force Transparency Data: November 2020 (last accessed 26 November 2020).
7. Department for Transport. UK Port Freight Statistics: 2019 (last accessed 26 November 2020).
8. Civil Aviation Authority. Freight, 2019 (last accessed 26 November 2020).
9. Department for Transport. Channel Tunnel to and from Europe (RAI0108) (last accessed 26 November 2020).
10. Department for International Trade. UK Trade in Numbers (last accessed 26 November 2020).
11. HM Revenue and Customs. VAT annual and quarterly receipts: Import VAT 2018–19 (last accessed 26 November 2020).
12. HM Revenue and Customs Tax Receipts UK: Customs duty 2018–19 (last accessed 26 November 2020).

Strategic objectives and outcomes

To deliver our vision of the world's most effective border we have developed four strategic objectives. Each objective is underpinned by strategic outcomes that we are seeking to achieve. These objectives and outcomes received strong support from stakeholders through the 2025 UK Border Strategy Public Consultation which we conducted over the summer of 2020, however we have further refined them following the feedback shared with us.

Over 170 stakeholders provided replies through this online public consultation exercise, and over 200 stakeholders attended workshops to discuss the future of the border. Respondents provided insight from across the border industry, including businesses, ports and travel organisations across all regions and nations of the UK, and represented businesses of all sizes.

To what extent respondents to the 2025 UK Border Strategy Public Consultation agreed with the draft strategic objectives and outcomes

Strategic Objectives

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Strategic Outcomes

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree
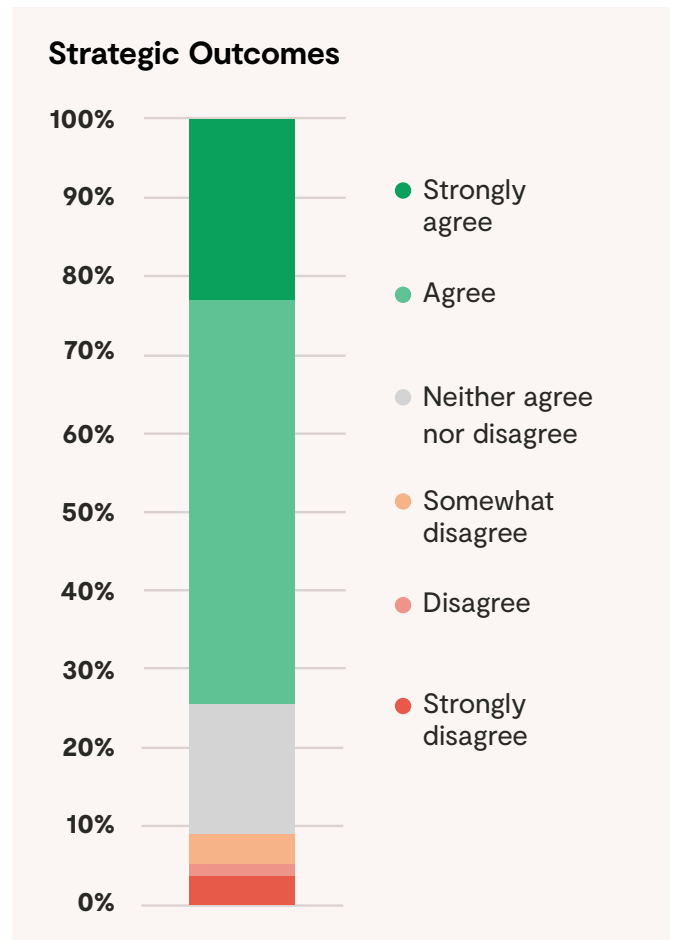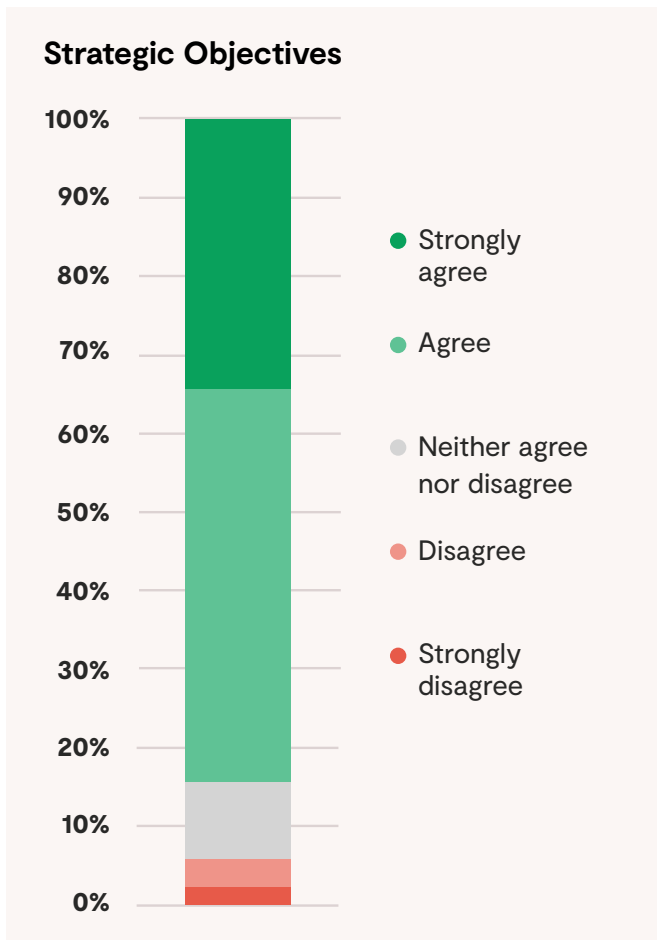
Strategic objectives

Vision for the 2025 Border
To have the world's most effective border that creates prosperity and enhances security for a global United Kingdom

Government's Mission for the 2025 Border
To protect the public and encourage legitimate trade and travel for businesses and passengers

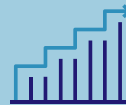| A UK border that...	Strategic outcomes
Promotes UK growth and prosperity by facilitating international trade from businesses of all sizes, while effectively collecting the revenue owed	— Improve the end-to-end user experience for moving legitimate goods into and out of the UK for businesses of all sizes — Improve trader perception of the UK border and the UK's performance in international measures of border effectiveness to promote the UK as a top destination for international trade and increase investment — Improve the collection of revenue owed at the border and close the tax gap
Detects, deters and disrupts serious and organised crime, terrorism, harm and threats to biosecurity, on land and at sea, in order to protect the UK's people, businesses, health, and environment	— Improve the UK's ability to detect threats before they reach the border to allow effective interventions before travel to the UK and at the UK border — Reduce vulnerabilities at the border and within the UK's territorial waters to prevent high-risk individuals and goods from entering the country — Improve the UK border's reputation for integrity so that it deters those who seek to do us harm from attempting to commit cross-border crimes and enhances public confidence — Reduce the successful flow of illicit and mis-declared commodities across the UK border — Identify and contain threats to biosecurity and public health pre-arrival and at the point of arrival to the UK
Facilitates the movement of people that benefits the UK, while preventing abuse of the migration system, and safeguarding vulnerable people	— Improve the end-to-end user experience for legitimate passengers to promote the UK as a top destination for tourism and business passengers — Discourage and detect individuals who attempt to abuse or circumvent the UK's migration system — Safeguard vulnerable individuals and reduce the risk to life to those attempting to cross the border illegally
Is resilient, innovative and able to respond in an agile manner to major events and changing trends	— Improve the resilience of international supply chains and minimise the risk of disruption at UK ports — Improve government and industry's ability to forecast flow and identify national security, public health, biosecurity and environmental threats at the border and intervene more effectively in emergencies — Increase the innovation capacity of the border industry and UK ports, including enhancing innovation in port-based industries to attract high value added companies — Improve the agility and expertise of frontline staff to improve border efficiency

Measuring success

The 2025 UK Border Strategy Public Consultation reinforced the importance of demonstrating progress towards our vision through the use of clear and consistent Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

Effective KPIs will allow us to measure the progress towards delivering the strategy and the impacts this will generate in matters important to the UK. Through a balanced scorecard approach they will improve our ability to assess the impact of programmes of change and help us deliver the best value for money for the public. Government has identified six preliminary priority indicators against which we will track the success of this strategy.

To this end, through the 2025 UK Border Strategy we aim to track the following indicators of border efficiency:

- minimise the average cost to import and export legitimate goods, including obtaining all necessary documentation;

- minimise the average time for all required documentary and physical checks to be conducted on legitimate goods and for them to be cleared;

- reduce the number of times on average that government collects the same data from traders during the import and export process;

- increase the proportion of positive interventions at the border as a result of intelligence and risk-based targeting;

- increase the proportion of passengers crossing the border within performance target times; and

- minimise the duration that critical border systems are unavailable due to unplanned system outages.

We will develop an evaluation framework for the border and the relevant data streams to measure indicators from the point at which the staged implementation of controls for EU trade is complete in 2021, given that there will be significant changes to border processes next year. To ensure that businesses and the public can track progress towards our objectives and delivery of this strategy, once we have established the baseline, the government intends to publish an annual report setting out progress against the 2025 Strategy and the indicators.

Delivering in partnership

Partnership with industry

Private sector organisations are integral to the operation of the border and much of the border operating environment is jointly delivered by industry and government. Carriers move people and goods across the UK border, and port and airport operators manage the points of entry for ships, planes and trains arriving into the UK. Together, with intermediaries and the professional services industry, they manage flows of people and trade, collect data on goods and passengers, and interface with government systems. They also provide physical space for border agencies, such as Border Force, to operate.

A key aim of this strategy is to provide the border industry with clarity about government's Target Operating Model for the border, giving them the ability to make long-term investment decisions and innovate around the border. The development of this strategy has drawn heavily on the expertise and input shared by the border industry, trade associations and passenger groups. Insight provided through the public consultation, departmental stakeholder forums and a series of deep-dive workshops has been invaluable to ensuring that this strategy is user-centric and can be delivered in partnership with the border industry.

Partnership across government

Respondents to the consultation stressed the importance of better collaboration across public bodies when designing and delivering the border. We recognise that government needs to operate as one at the local, regional and national level to improve the user experience at the border and deliver value for money. This is a core theme running throughout this strategy.

The 2025 UK Border Strategy has been developed as a cross-departmental project involving all government bodies responsible for design and delivery of the border. The strategy builds upon existing departmental work, such as the points-based immigration system, the 2050 Maritime Strategy and the Export Strategy, as well as the work already underway to prepare for the end of the transition period.

Going forward, this strategy will guide the strategic design and delivery of the border by all border agencies. It will guide policy development, shape the priorities of operational commands, and will guide investment choices over the coming years to deliver the Target Operating Model for the border. For example, work in Border Force is already underway to use this strategy to develop their organisational priorities and to ensure that planning and investment choices over the coming years fully support the vision set out within this strategy.

Partnership with the devolved administrations

This strategy sets out our ambition and commitments to transform the whole of the UK's external border. Import and export controls are generally reserved, but the areas of food safety, the protection of human, animal and plant health, and the environment are devolved. The devolved administrations have responsibilities in relation to various provisions in these areas. We have worked closely with the Northern Ireland Executive, the Scottish Government and the Welsh Government to formulate this strategy.

We will continue to work in partnership with the devolved administrations to deliver this strategy and they will form part of the new governance structure that we will put in place to ensure coordinated delivery of the border.

We recognise the unique circumstances of Northern Ireland. The Ireland and Northern Ireland Protocol guarantees that there will be no infrastructure, checks or controls on the movement of people or goods crossing between Ireland and Northern Ireland. It also secures Northern Ireland's place in the UK customs territory. The 2025 UK Border Strategy is designed to support the operation of the Protocol. Where components of the strategy, for example new technologies to enable the movement of goods, could support the future approach to the requirements of the Protocol these will be explored, as appropriate, in partnership with the Northern Ireland Executive. The future of the Protocol will depend on the consent of the people of Northern Ireland and the utility of the components of this strategy would be assessed in this context.

The Common Travel Area (CTA) is an administrative arrangement which facilitates the free movement of individuals between the UK, Ireland, and the Crown Dependencies (Isle of Man, Bailiwick of Guernsey and Bailiwick of Jersey). This arrangement will be maintained regardless of the UK's exit from the EU. This means that, as now, the UK will not operate routine immigration controls on journeys from within the CTA, with no immigration controls whatsoever on the land border between Ireland and the UK. We will also continue to work closely with CTA partners to secure the external CTA border, including through data sharing and operational cooperation. Additionally, we will continue to engage with the Crown Dependencies to maintain our customs arrangements and consult on the implementation of future proposals for the UK border.

Partnership at the local level

Ports and border operations often play an important role in local authority economic development strategies and wider local and sub-regional economic partnerships, so engagement and collaboration at the local level will be critical to realising the benefits of the 2025 UK Border Strategy. Where aspects of the border are delivered by local authorities (such as Port Health Authorities), or where the operation of the border has local impacts, we will work across government to engage and collaborate with local bodies in a coordinated manner to deliver the objectives of the 2025 UK Border Strategy.

Case study: Grangemouth Port

Working with the devolved administrations will be vital to ensure a coordinated approach to delivery of the border. Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are home to many critical ports, one of which is Grangemouth, part of the Forth Ports Group.[13]

In 1966 Grangemouth Port was the first UK port to handle a transatlantic ship carrying only containers and since then has handled in excess of three million containers. Grangemouth is now Scotland's largest port and the largest feeder port in the UK. Grangemouth is connected to Europe's major deep-sea hub ports through seven weekly feeder services. These feeder services are utilised by the world's top ten shipping lines.

This port runs regular container services with sailings to major deep sea connections at Rotterdam, Antwerp, Dunkirk and Felixstowe. It has a throughput of over 250,000 TEU per annum.[14] They can handle all container types and sizes and are also Scotland's largest terminal for refrigerated containers with over 400 reefer plugs on the terminal.

A key attribute of this port is its excellent connectivity via road, rail and sea, with its location making it a key logistics and distribution hub. 70% of Scotland's population can be reached within one hour's drive. The port runs weekly rail links between the port of Grangemouth and the Port of Tilbury in London. This service has the capacity for 36 containers and generally transports retail goods, food and drink to the south of England while the return journey supports Scotland's export market with the movement of spirits, chemicals and fresh food.

This port processes around nine million tonnes of cargo worth more than £6 billion each year, representing 30% of Scotland's GDP. Grangemouth also plays a vital role in Scotland's oil and gas industry, accommodating an import facility for its adjacent oil refinery which facilitates the supply of Scotland's aviation fuel and 70% of Scotland's domestic fuel supplying filling stations.

13. Centre for Economics and Business Research report for Maritime UK. The economic contribution of the UK ports industry (last accessed 02 December 2020).
14. Forth Ports (last accessed 02 December 2020).

Our plan to transform the border

Building on the Border Operating Model

At the end of the transition period the Border Operating Model will ensure that the GB–EU border continues to function effectively from January 2021.[15] Over 2021 and through our approach to staged controls we will fully implement this Border Operating Model. It is from this foundation that we must begin developing and delivering the target operating model for the border that will be the most effective in the world.

Some examples of where this strategy will guide improvements include: further coordination between government departments and agencies at the border; reducing the duplicative asks for data and examinations; a greater use of modern, digital and simple processes; increasing clear guidance in many areas including authorisations; and improving consistency at different crossing points and modes of transport where appropriate throughout the UK.

The Target Operating Model

Stakeholder feedback has been clear that a Target Operating Model (TOM) for the border that both government and industry can work towards is vital. A Target Operating Model will allow businesses to understand how they can invest and work alongside government to deliver the future border.

The Target Operating Model we have developed is built on three core foundations:

- The first is extracting maximum value from border data to improve the understanding of goods and people moving over the border. Better use of border data will allow industry and government to improve processes, create smoother journeys, and create a more resilient border.

- The second is harnessing the power of technology and innovation to improve delivery of the border. From advanced detection technologies to identify threats, to new technologies for tracking the movements of goods, technology has the ability to improve almost all border processes. The Target Operating Model will harness this potential and create an environment where border innovation is embraced.

- The third foundation is a highly skilled workforce, providing standardised experiences. By helping those who deliver the border, in the public and private sector, to develop their skills and by creating better guidance, the border can be made easier to move across, more resilient and more cost-effective.

15. Cabinet Office. The Border Operating Model (last accessed 27 November 2020).

Border Target Operating Model

	Before the border	**At the border**	**After the border**	**Delivering major benefits for the UK**
Traders	— **Supported to trade internationally** through an enhanced Trusted Trader programme — **Use the Single Trade Window** (STW), **to submit information once** to government — **Access open APIs** to build supply chain data pipelines direct to government	— **Encounter fewer checks as trusted traders** with government able to risk more effectively pre-arrival — **Experience faster, consistent checks when required** from the minimum number of agencies	— **Renew licences easily and have declarations auto-populated** with previously provided data — **Aggregate data and suspend duties** as helpful, through an enhanced Trusted Trader programme — **Receive clearance notifications and updates** from government on changes at the border	— **Lower end-to-end cost of trade** enabling businesses to innovate, grow and trade internationally — **Higher supply chain resilience and certainty** reducing disruption to business activity
Passengers	— **Submit ETA and eVisa applications** via easy to use systems pre-departure — **Receive an electronic permission to travel** ahead of departure	— **Experience automated passage** via eGates and biometrics that speeds their journey through a port	— **Do not have to complete further border processes** after leaving the port — **Have entry data stored** to support further interactions with government and the UK border	— **Smoother, more certain application processes** encouraging travel to the UK — **Shorter queues at UK ports** improving the user experience
Border Industry	— **Carriers integrate with government systems** to provide data and recognise electronic permissions to travel — **Professionalised intermediaries** offer more high quality services to traders	— **Ports are better resourced** with upgraded equipment and efficient deployment of the frontline — **Ports partner with government to pilot innovative solutions** to deliver fully contactless travel		— **Greater opportunities to innovate** increasing potential offerings to customers — **Smoother flow at ports** increasing capacity and reducing costs
Government	— **Operate a Single Trade Window** to share trader data across government systems — **Provide trader support** through better guidance and a Trusted Trader programme — **Share data across border agencies** to assess traders and travellers ahead of arrival	— **Use advanced analytics-enabled risk engines** to automate decisions and support frontline officers — **Detect illicit goods** efficiently with mobile inspections and improved scanning technology — **Minimise the number of agencies** interacting with goods and people crossing the border	— **Store, selectively harvest and pre-populate trader data** to minimise future data input	— **Safer, more secure UK border** preventing harm to the UK and those crossing the border — **Higher levels of trader compliance** reducing the tax gap

Delivered by a UK border ecosystem where…

— **Accurate data is gathered efficiently and shared across government at scale** to monitor flow and assure end-to-end identity minimising data requests and maximising data driven, automated decision making
— **Border industry innovation is enabled by open APIs, the STW platform, published technology use cases and standards, and government-provided sandboxes** improving end-to-end user journeys
— **Diverse, mission-oriented, and highly engaged workforces partner with an employer of choice** ensuring a secure and efficiently operated UK border
— **A Design Authority brings together stakeholder and government expertise** to ensure coherent development at the border and user-centric end-to-end design
— **Potential vulnerabilities at the border are minimised** by effective detection capabilities, enhanced data sharing and joint programmes with international partners

Our goal through the 2025 UK Border Strategy is to make as much progress as possible towards this Target Operating Model over the next five years. Of course, there is no 'one size fits all' approach to the border and each mode, commodity and individual crossing point is different. With this in mind, the Target Operating Model sets out a high-level vision of the border, while giving the border industry and government the flexibility to implement solutions appropriate to different locations and functions of the border.

Before the border, the Target Operating Model will mean that traders are supported to trade internationally through an enhanced Trusted Trader Programme recognised across border agencies; traders and their intermediaries can submit information just once to government through the Single Trade Window, and access Application Programming Interfaces (API) to build supply chain data pipelines direct to government. Passengers will have to obtain 'permission to travel' pre-departure which will increasingly become a digital status that will be confirmed before departure to ease the flow for legitimate passengers at the border whilst keeping threats away. Carriers will be able to integrate with government systems to receive confirmation about a passenger's permission, and intermediaries will have more capacity and innovative tools and systems to support their customers.

At the border, the Target Operating Model will ensure traders encounter fewer checks where they have provided information before travel and where those goods pose no risk to the UK. When checks are carried out they will be faster, consolidated and more consistent. For passengers, the main change at the border will be the experience of automated passage via eGates and biometrics for both UK and non-UK citizens.

For the wider border industry, the Target Operating Model will support them to trial and deploy innovative technologies at the border. For government, the changes at the border will mean risk engines have more advanced analytics to support frontline officers to make better decisions; and illegal migration and illicit goods will be more efficiently detected through improved non-intrusive inspection technology.

After and away from the border, the Target Operating Model will mean traders can renew licences easily; and will be able to aggregate data or suspend duties as needed through our Trusted Trader programme. Passengers will no longer have to complete further border processes after leaving the port and will have entry data stored to support further interactions with government, and when leaving the UK.

Implementing the Target Operating Model in full will dramatically change the experience of crossing the border for both traders and passengers, while improving government's ability to keep the UK safe from harm. It will drive significant economic benefits to the UK by reducing the cost of trade, preventing smuggling and maintaining fair competition between domestic and international businesses, whilst protecting the UK from crime and biosecurity threats.

This Target Operating Model could revolutionise crossing the border for traders and passengers

Illustrative user journey for Sarah, a medium-sized, legitimate trader who wishes to import books to the UK from the overseas arm of her business

Journey for a trader	Pre-departure	Moving internationally	International Port	Crossing	UK port	Moving within UK	At Destination
	Sarah is able to apply for a **Trusted Trader programme** that is simple to apply for and gives her access to various facilitations while giving government more information about her business and trade data	Sarah submits a single import declaration via the **Single Trade Window**	Through the **Single Trade Window**, the UK departmental risk engines receive notification of arrival at the international port and government gathers **critical data elements about Sarah's goods directly from the supply chain**, which allows an **advanced analytics risk assessment** to be made, which clears goods ahead of their arrival at the UK port		As a **trusted trader**, Sarah's consignment is prioritised and she is less likely to face a physical check. She can defer duty payment, which can be completed electronically at the end of the month	Sarah receives a cross-departmental **notification** that is enabled by the Single Window that her **goods have been released**	Sarah is able to access relevant information about the shipment via the Single Window; should there be any issues with the shipment following arrival **Sarah will be notified**
	Sarah uses the **government Single Trade Window** to register her goods and **can access guidance on importing in a single place**	If Sarah's systems **have the capability,** government collects data on movement from the supply chain and carriers	Through the data in the Single Window, all other departments can **determine whether checks are needed before departure**	**The frontline teams** receive intelligence-led targeting lists for interceptions	**Mobile x-ray scanners** perform scans on targeted consignments, allowing Sarah's shipment to leave the port rapidly		The shipment arrives at the destination **without any delays**

Illustrative user journey for Priyasha, a tourist from India who wishes to travel to the UK for a holiday by air

Journey for a passenger	Planning to come	Getting permission	Travelling to the UK	Crossing the border	Leaving the UK
	Priyasha searches online to find out what she must do to enter the UK as a tourist, based on the latest rules and regulations. Priyasha finds the **guidance on permission to travel** very clear. She understands the consequences of noncompliance	She applies for her **digital e-visa online**	The biographic and biometric data collected by the carrier and also provided by Priyasha is held in an interoperable format, and is combined with other data sources by government for a joint law enforcement capability	Priyasha crosses the border and enters the UK via an **ePassport gate** swiftly and securely	During check-in, Priyasha's departure data is **automatically shared between the carrier and government systems for status compliance checks**
	She finds out that that the she is eligible to apply for an **e-visa** and the application is straightforward and can be submitted online	**Risk assessments are used to dynamically evaluate** Priyasha's application and due to her previous compliance, she receives approval to travel rapidly and is provided an easy to use digital visa		Border Force is able to use **advanced risk analytics** to identify that Priyasha is a low risk traveller and allocates Border Force resources to higher risk interventions	

This is an illustration and does not reflect a particular port, mode, commodity trader or passenger

Transformations to deliver the Target Operating Model

To bring about our ambition of the world's most effective border, we believe there are six key transformations that need to be implemented in partnership with industry.

Through the public consultation we learned that stakeholders largely supported these transformations. However, we have refined these transformations based on feedback gathered through the consultation to better reflect the priorities of stakeholders.

Transformations Summary

1 **Develop a coordinated approach to border design and delivery which enables border innovation**

— **Create a new cross-governmental Design Authority** to coordinate design of the border across the public and private sector, ensuring that IT systems and border processes are developed and delivered in a joined-up way, on budget and on time

— **Support the border industry and technology firms with a technology and innovation roadmap** that will enable the private sector to drive innovation around the border with support of a single gateway into government

2 **Bring together government's collection, assurance and use of border data**

— **Develop the Single Trade Window** to build on upgraded systems for departments operating at the border to streamline stakeholder interactions with border agencies to create a single border data portal

— **Improve integration of supply chain data** through collection and assurance of timely and reliable data from commercial supply chains incorporated into government systems to reduce administration for businesses

— **Improve risk assessment ability** by leveraging advanced analytics and shared data across government. This will allow holistic risk evaluations of traders and passengers that better secure the border while allowing interventions to be more effectively targeted

— **Make border documentation digital by default** to reduce complexity for traders and the border industry

— **Put in place new border data legislation** to allow border data to be shared across entities that deliver the border

— **Enhance data-sharing for internal security** by improving and expanding the systems and data pipelines that allow us to share information with our international partners

3 **Establish resilient 'ports of the future' at border crossing points**

— **Set out the standards and requirements for border infrastructure and facilities,** in partnership with ports and the border industry, to support investment in innovation, modern and user-centered designs to speed up and secure the passage of people and goods through ports

— **Work with ports to continue digitisation of the border** including piloting a proof of concept for contactless travel based around an e-passport and the use of biometric data as the sole authentication for travel across the border

— **Review government's presence at the border** and the agencies and industries that carry out checks to identify potential efficiencies and improve effectiveness, with the aim of rationalising the process for physical checks

— **Review and strengthen our detection capability at ports** working with industry to identify where detection technology can improve flow. This will be supported by initial investment to improve our existing nuclear detection capability at ports

— **Build new Freeports** throughout the UK to help raise prosperity across the country

4 **Use upstream compliance to move processes away from the actual frontier where appropriate**

— **Create a world-leading Trusted Trader programme** with an improved AEO programme and authorisations to make it truly world class and offer maximum benefits to traders

— **Introduce an Electronic Travel Authorisation scheme** as part of a wider universal 'permission to travel' requirement to create smoother journeys to the UK

— **Improve upstream illegal migration countermeasures to prevent irregular migration** through increased engagement and intelligence sharing with near borders partners

5 **Build the capability of staff responsible for delivering border processes**

— **Support the UK intermediary sector** to increase capacity and the quality of service they provide

— **Make our presence at the border more resilient and efficient** by upskilling Border Force officers

— **Improve border guidance for all users of the border** ensuring border guidance is digital, accessible and in one place

6 **Shape the future development of borders worldwide**

— **Take a strategic approach to international engagement** to coordinate our efforts to shape the development of borders across the world, strengthening our relationships with multilaterals and our international partners to ensure the UK is taking a lead in shaping global border standards

— **Realise the benefits of Free Trade Agreements to simplify border processes for traders** and work towards additional mutual recognition agreements of our Trusted Trader programmes wherever this is practical and will support users

Transformation 1

Develop a coordinated user-centric government approach to border design and delivery, which works in partnership with industry and enables border innovation

To deliver this transformation we commit to:

1. **creating a new border Design Authority in 2021 to coordinate end-to-end design of the border across government; and**

2. **delivering a technology and innovation roadmap that will support border innovation and technology adoption.**

Responses to the public consultation reflected a strong view that government's approach to design and delivery of the border needed to be more joined-up. Frustrations were expressed not just with the duplication of paperwork and interactions at the border, but with the process by which government and industry work together to design the border. This transformation seeks to bring about a new approach to the design of the border, focussing on collaboration and co-design across government departments, the devolved administrations and industry. This will ensure that systems and processes are developed and delivered in a joined-up and user-centric manner across government. This will improve the experience for legitimate passengers and traders and will drive value for money for both the taxpayer and users.

Creating a Design Authority for the border

Through the Cabinet Office's Border and Protocol Delivery Group we will establish a Design Authority to act as a coordinating body for the design of the border to ensure that border policies and processes are coherent and work effectively together to deliver the long-term strategy for the border.

From 2021 the Design Authority will work cooperatively with departments and the devolved administrations to develop their border policies, processes and systems in a coordinated manner that designs around the end-to-end user experience. It will be responsible for coordinating delivery of the Target Operating Model across all organisations responsible for the border.

Engagement and co-design with businesses who deliver and use the border will be a key goal of the Design Authority. It will bring together private sector expertise to advise the Design Authority through a new expert advisory group. This expert group will complement the continued input that government gathers through specialist groups brought together by departments to discuss specific policy areas. The goal will be to engage industry experts at the start of all design work for border systems and processes to deliver better shared outcomes.

Case study: the USA's Border Interagency Executive Council – a successful model for border coordination

The USA's Border Interagency Executive Council is an executive board which brings together the US government agencies with border management authorities and responsibilities. President Obama issued an executive order to launch the Border Interagency Executive Council in 2014 to sit above partner government agencies and build "policies and processes to enhance coordination". It has played a critical role in developing the US's Single Trade Window: the Automated Commercial Environment system. It has had a significant impact and driven progress quickly on key border projects through:

- senior level accountability for driving coordination, being chaired by the Secretary of Homeland Security;

- close collaboration with users of the border through coordinated external engagement; and

- taking a coordinated approach to the design and coordination of processes around the border.

A Technology and Innovation Road Map for the border

Innovation should be at the heart of the future of the border and will be key to successful delivery of the transformations that underpin this strategy. Our goal is to make border innovation easier and the adoption of new technological solutions faster and more cost-effective for businesses who deliver and use the border.

Feedback from our consultation stressed the importance of innovation at the border but respondents flagged the danger of government picking and choosing solutions and not giving the private sector the freedom to choose the solutions that work in different contexts, be those modes of travel or port environments.

Our view is that the private sector must take the lead on border innovation, with government supporting this by creating an environment that encourages experimentation and technology adoption and by setting clear standards and requirements that can be innovated around. We must also ensure that the elements of the border that government controls, be these systems, regulations or processes, are designed in such a way as to be flexible and accessible enough to innovate around.

To embrace this approach we have set out a border technology and innovation roadmap below. This describes how we will work hand-in-hand with industry to drive forward border innovation and coordinate activity across government to support innovation adoption at the border. This is underpinned by the following core principles:

- we will avoid mandating specific technology solutions where possible. Rather, we will support the users of border technology to invest in innovative solutions that work best for them;

- we will ensure our border systems are built to support innovators, following Open Standards Principles co-designed and built with Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) to allow the private sector to interface to them; and

- where government procures border technology we will ensure this is done in an open and transparent way that engages innovative firms of all sizes.

To deliver this innovative approach the Cabinet Office's Border and Protocol Delivery Group will act as a hub for border innovation. This will build upon and coordinate existing border innovation and technology activity taking place across government which is already working closely with innovators.

Our Border Technology and Innovation Roadmap

We will work with industry to drive innovation and technology adoption at the border through a new Border Innovation Hub within the Border and Protocol Delivery Group. The roadmap of work we will take forward is set out below.

Create a visible first point of contact in UK Government for border innovation suppliers and users

The Border and Protocol Delivery Group will serve as a first point of contact within government for cross-cutting border innovation-related enquiries and proposals, able to communicate on behalf of the whole of government on border-innovation related matters and create connections into expert technology teams across border agencies. The hub will work collaboratively with industry, border departments and the devolved administrations to coordinate efforts to test and trial new technologies at the border and will engage regularly with the border technology industry to identify new opportunities for innovation around the border and to challenge progress.

Define target use cases with industry

We will adopt a use case model to identify and define target use cases and associated capabilities. The Border Innovation Hub's first priority will be to produce a hypothesis on the target use cases based on target user journeys. It will do this in close partnership with the border industry, border agencies and technology companies, evaluating proposals against the ambitions of the 2025 UK Border Strategy.

Set and collate security and interoperability standards

We will collaborate with industry and across government to set and clearly articulate standards around which the private sector can build IT and technology solutions. We will ensure these follow Open Standards Principles. Where possible we will seek to align these standards with our international partners to standardise processes across borders and drive interoperability wherever possible. Building on the existing 'Border Code' work of Border Force, we will set out a comprehensive set of standards across:

- Border Data

- Security

- Interoperability

Work across government to ensure internal changes support border innovation

We will assess each target use case to determine what internal changes are needed across government. Sitting centrally within the Cabinet Office, the Border Innovation Hub will be empowered to initiate and support change in any department or across departments. Example internal changes may include:

- an API-driven approach to ensure industry-government systems interoperability;

- progressing required legislation;

- training front-line operators and officers to use new technology; and

- incorporating the advantages or insights derived from new technology into existing government processes.

Encourage the development and uptake of innovation, especially in priority areas

After appropriate internal changes have been made and if market conditions continue to impede progress towards a priority target state, then our Innovation Hub will use a range of levers to stimulate and accelerate industry's development and/or adoption of solutions. Example measures may include:

- developing sandbox testing programmes in partnership with industry and government agencies;

- providing access to test environments; and

- supporting investment in border innovation through open competitions for Proof of Concept (PoC) funding in collaboration with the UK's Innovation agency, InnovateUK.

Contact the Border Innovation Hub to be added to their mailing list: border.innovation@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

Transformation 2

Bring together government's collection, assurance and use of border data to provide a comprehensive and holistic view of data at the border

To deliver this transformation we commit to:

1. **developing a world-leading Single Trade Window;**

2. **working with industry to integrate border systems with sources of supply chain data;**

3. **working with carriers to improve the use of Advance Passenger Information across all modes of transport;**

4. **improving government's ability to risk assess people and goods through the use of advanced risk analytics;**

5. **putting in place the data legislation and sharing agreements to enable more effective use of data;**

6. **digitising border documentation wherever possible; and**

7. **enhancing our data sharing capabilities with international partners to protect the UK's security.**

Data sits at the heart of the operation of the border. Data is key to allowing businesses to manage complex international supply chains, and for carriers to manage the movement of millions of passengers a year. For government, border data is vital for keeping the UK secure and underpins our ability to evaluate the risk associated with goods and people and to make swift and accurate interventions where needed to combat fraud, crime and illegal migration.

Responses to the consultation consistently emphasised that government must work with industry to improve the use of data at the border and how it is shared across government and industry. Specifically, stakeholders were clear that data must be collected only once by government to prevent duplicative and time consuming submission processes. They wanted to see data used more effectively and efficiently by government to target interventions better, thereby protecting the flow of goods and people at border crossing points. Finally, they wished to see more sharing of both data and insights between government and industry to improve management of the border.

Despite the importance of data it is clear that the existing border processes do not collect or use data as efficiently as they could. Across other complex organisations and systems, harnessing the power of data is proving revolutionary. The purpose of this transformation is to similarly revolutionise how border data is collected and used. Most importantly it seeks to move to a model where government will only collect data once from users of the border, effectively sharing that data across all organisations operating at the border who need access to it.

Current flow of information between stakeholders in the UK trade ecosystem

Trader
May transfer data to government directly or through a intermediary

Internal inventory management systems

Trader intermediary
(e.g., customs agents or freight forwarder)

3rd party software

Port authorities/ terminal operators

Terminal operating system (TOS)

Carriers/ storage operators

Manifest management systems

Community System Providers (CSPs)
Generally used where an inventory system is present

Port inventory system

Multiple interfaces with individual government services and systems

Multiple individual departmental front-end services and systems
Not optimised to share useful data between departments

Departmental risking and targeting of interventions
Not optimised to share useful insights between departments

Individual HMG systems

Example UK Government systems

HM Revenue & Customs — CHIEF /CDS, ICS

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs — IPAFFS /EHCO

The Association of Port Health Authorities — PHILIS

Maritime and Coastguard Agency — CERS

Individual HMG systems

Risking system

Risking system

Risking system

Risking system

Information flows

1 Customs declarations
2 Manifest data
3 Informing traders of cargo release
4 Port inventory management
5 Managing storage facilities
6 Arrange release of cargo
7 Data inputs for risking

IT system

Case study: Big Data in logistics

Over the past decade, the logistics sector has invested heavily in realising the transformative potential of Big Data. Advances in the practical application of predictive and descriptive data analysis have reduced inefficiencies arising from warehousing and fuel costs, surplus capacity, idle miles/turnarounds, route planning, and other factors, all while driving improvements in the timeliness, reliability, accuracy, visibility, and security of deliveries. This transformed the ability of the sector to meet the needs of customers and lower the costs of trade.

As analytics has increased the value of data, the industry has invested to improve and expand data sources. Fleets of highly connected vehicles now utilise on-board telematics, sensors, and diagnostics to relay granular, real-time data that can drive the live re-prioritisation of deliveries, reduce miles driven, identify inefficient driving styles or potential maintenance issues with vehicles, and maintain or adjust temperatures to better preserve perishable goods across their journey.

Data is also being used to drive the automation of the supply chain. As global freight volumes increase, the semi-automated or automated platooning of HGVs promises to further cut emissions and costs while reducing idle times.

Developing a world-leading Single Trade Window

The most advanced borders in the world are leading the development of Single Windows for trade to radically simplify traders' interactions with the border. The World Customs Organisation (WCO) defines such Single Windows as **'a facility that allows parties involved in trade and transport to lodge standardised information and documents with a single entry point to fulfil all import, export, and transit related regulatory requirements'**.

We will begin development of a world-leading UK Single Trade Window that will create a single portal through which all information required to import and export can be submitted to border agencies. This will allow parties involved in trade and transport to lodge standardised information and documents within a single electronic entry point to fulfil all UK import, export, and transit-related regulatory requirements. The capabilities of the UK's Single Trade Window will grow iteratively over the coming years, with functionality being extended to users in stages.

Features of a world-leading Single Trade Window

Stages of the trader journey							
Pre-Border				**At Border**		**Post-Border**	
Research	Register	Apply	Declare	Research	Clearance	Arrival	Complete

A single portal for trader data

Open API
Adopting an API–first approach to allow software developers and technology firms to create innovative tools for interfacing with the STW

Submission through Gov.UK
A simple online interface for submitting data directly through Gov.UK

STW Features

Research

Simple self-serve gateway
Enables the trader or intermediary to self-serve where desirable

Simplified processes and clearly articulated guidance
Digitisation provides the opportunity to simplify customs processes and improve guidance, directing traders to the most specific information to support their trade

Register

Single Sign On (SSO) for traders and agents, common to all agencies
The complexity of navigating multiple systems will be replaced by a seamless and integrated user experience

Apply

Product licences, certificates and memberships
Centralised and online application, issuance, and submission

Certificates of origin
Online application, issuance, and submission

SPS certificates and permits
Online application, issuance, and submission

Online submission of supporting documents
In suitable electronic formats

Proactive Licence Management
Proactive and pre-emptive automation of licence management activities reduces the need for manual processing

Declare

Import Declarations
Submitted and electronically processed via STW

Export Declarations
Submitted and electronically processed via STW

Transit Declarations
Submitted and electronically processed via STW

Electronic Cargo reports and manifests
Shared at or before arrival

Electronic handling of transhipment requests
For connection with gateway ports and customs stations

S&S Declarations
Submitted and electronically processed via STW

Research

Supply Chain Data
New data pipelines to enable direct ingestion of industry data from participating traders to automate data submission

Digital Vehicle Data
For pre-port compliance checks, queue and traffic management

Automated selection of risky consignments
AI-driven risking will help to target interventions and reduce border friction for traders

Integration with risking systems
Data from the STW will feed into government risking systems leading to better risk based targeting

Border flow monitoring
New visualisations of traffic and trade flows. Potential to make these available to industry

Supply Chain oversight and tracking
Visibility of goods progressing through transit phases and compliance checks

Clearance

Online Cargo control
Provision of electronic release updates to traders. Access to live or near-live goods location

Arrival

Single alert shared with trader
After inspection decision of all agencies

Complete

Data Driven Dashboards
Personalised dashboards with a view of all active and historic trades. As well as trading activity, news and reports. This further populates the more a trader or intermediary uses the STW

Automating key trading activities
Accelerating trade by enhancing user decision making by automating administrative tasks

How we will work to deliver Single Trade Window features

We are investing £16 million to start delivering this work in 2021, building on early proof of concept work already developed with industry. We will work closely with the border industry and users on the design and delivery, ensuring that it realises maximum benefits for traders.

We will take an Application Programming Interface (API) first approach, ensuring the Single Trade Window is built to allow software developers and intermediaries to innovate around and build products that will simplify processes for traders and lower their costs.

Initial work will focus on the creation of the foundations of a world-leading Single Trade Window. Specifically, this foundational work will look at:

- creating a single sign-on for traders and intermediaries that will replace the multiple registration processes required for different government systems currently;

- creating the data standards and technology framework that will allow declarations of all types to be made through the Single Trade Window; and

- creating a digital service to bring together government's border guidance.

As development matures, our ambition is that the Single Trade Window will be the common point of entry for traders for both import and export journeys, and will only require submission of required data once. For trade, it will be the face of the UK border to the world, and will enable fulfilment of all regulatory requirements. For traders and those who support them it will ultimately mean:

- full scale data submission via a common entry point for all import and export processes;

- a single portal for application and management of trade facilitations;

- a source of unified release and clearance alerts for goods moving across the border, that acts as a digital dashboard for all border movements; and

- a single portal for licence management, which can be used by traders and border agencies to manage the digital processing of licence applications, approvals and their storage, retrieval and distribution.

Alongside the development of the Single Trade Window we will work across border agencies to review and improve the underpinning IT systems that support the operation of the border and into which the Single Trade Window will ultimately pass data. This will include continued development of the Customs Declaration Service.

Case study: New Zealand's Trade Single Window

Work on the New Zealand Trade Single Window (TSW) began in 2012. Prior to the introduction of TSW, industry had been required to navigate complex and duplicative registration and submission processes with individual border agencies. Data sharing between government agencies and with other nations' border agencies was limited, while inputs comprised of a range of digital formats and standards and in some cases relied on fax. Plans were drawn up for a Joint Border Management System (JBMS) with the TSW at its core, providing a Single Window for data submission and return notifications and, later, enabling and orchestrating new analytics capabilities. TSW's core features were rolled out incrementally between 2013 and 2017, including:

For Traders:

- Single sign-on and user account
- Timely notifications of goods release
- Clear and unified guidance on customs processes
- Single submission point for licence applications and document submissions
- Accessible via multiple methods including web, APIs, and dedicated software

For New Zealand government departments and agencies:

- Access to traders' registration data for customs processes
- Timely access to relevant data held by other departments
- Real-time view of goods checking and release

The TSW has already realised extensive benefits, including:

For Traders:

- 50% reduction in shippers' reporting time
- 20-50% reduction in compliance costs

For New Zealand's government:

- 50% reduction in time spent on export refunds
- Removal of process frictions across import and export processes

Integration of data from supply chains

Historically border data has been shared between industry and government through discrete declarations. However, the increasing ability to integrate sources of data across supply chains in a secure manner opens up the possibility of integrating those data sources with government's own systems through a Single Trade Window. Concurrently, distributed technologies offer the possibility of more highly assured pipelines of data between businesses and government.

We will leverage existing data pipelines to enable the direct ingestion of industry supply chain data into government systems. This will streamline border processes and reduce compliance burdens on industry by minimising the number of data submissions required of participating traders and the need for discrete declarations to provide that data.

The Single Trade Window will be at the heart of this approach, ultimately acting as the point of entry for these data pipelines into government. This work will lay the foundation for what could become a practically seamless border experience for traders in the long-term, with government acting as a 'Utility Platform' for trade, creating a decentralised platform through which data can be used to meet industry and government's needs.

Government has already run proofs of concept with the private sector but further work will need to be done with industry and academia as part of our technology and innovation roadmap. An initial discovery phase will explore with industry partners what priority data elements could be drawn directly from the supply chain and the requirements for the system integration methods to automate ingestion. To do this we will develop a set of data and security standards that will underpin how data could be shared in real-time between systems, aligning this with emerging best practice internationally.

Case study: reducing friction in International Trade project (RFIT)

The RFIT project was initiated in March 2019 as a Proof of Concept (PoC) to establish how Blockchain Distributed Ledger Technology and associated technologies can be used to seamlessly integrate supply chain data with HM Revenue and Customs and the Food Standards Agency's systems, guaranteeing the timeliness and provenance of critical data and avoiding the need for discrete declarations.

The proof of concept collected upstream data from wine producers that is relevant to Port Health Authorities and Customs and Border agencies, distributing it to authorised parties downstream in a secure manner within a Blockchain. This reduced the administrative effort required of traders at the border, and showed potential for realising additional efficiencies through expanding early work into 'smart contracts' that can further automate processing.

The platform is built in an open way with scope for extension avoiding proprietary systems or interfaces, and is enabled to provide tracking capabilities using Internet of Things (IoT) tracking devices that are capable of capturing and relaying relevant parameters including location, temperature, and humidity.

RFIT has demonstrated the many benefits to both traders and government of an integrated data source that is immutable, secure, distributed, and trusted across the supply chain. Reduction in data duplication and the need to manually enter data yielded a corresponding reduction in administrative overhead and submission errors, simultaneously improving data visibility, traceability, and tracking, while reducing risks associated with government use of upstream data.

This early work shows the potential benefits of creating a Utility Platform for trade, where government works with industry to connect and integrate decentralised data to facilitate international trade.

Improve the use of Advance Passenger Information

Passenger data is critical for the operation of ports and carriers. While the collection and use of passenger data has become more streamlined both within government and the wider industry, there is more that can be done to share better data on passengers to protect the UK and smooth the journey over the border.

Our goal is to ensure the provision of complete, accurate and timely Advance Passenger Information from carriers in advance of people travelling to the UK.

Advance Passenger Information represents the core biographic identity and nationality data for each international passenger, enabling accurate demand modelling, watch-listing checks for known threats and the targeting of potential threats at the border.

Whilst Advance Passenger Information has been provided by carriers since at least 2006, it is not submitted consistently in all modes of transport. In addition, new technical capabilities are needed to match Advance Passenger Information data with the identity data of the passenger recorded where passports are checked at control points.

The UK has already invested in an interactive Advance Passenger Information system, where we are able to communicate with carriers in response to the Advance Passenger Information submitted. We will work with carriers to increase the provision of accurate and timely Advance Passenger Information, identifying where incentives can help drive improvements in the passenger data we collect earlier in the passenger journey and assure the quality of that data.

Develop Advanced Risk Analytics for use in border systems

We will develop advanced new risking systems to target interventions more effectively, using emerging technologies like AI-driven decision making. We will also enable the real-time sharing of data-driven risk insights across government departments and agencies at and beyond the border to further enhance the effectiveness of UK detection capabilities. Improving the

targeting of interventions will reduce border friction for legitimate traders and passengers, helping to reduce the average time taken to cross the border and increasing certainty in supply chains.

We will begin by reviewing and upgrading government's risking systems to ensure they have the features and enhancements required to deliver our desired outcomes. These include the ability to:

- ingest data from a wide range of sources;

- handle large data volumes;

- share and incorporate flags/insights with other risking engines across government;

- automate the risking process wherever possible;

- enable use of AI-driven advanced analytics techniques;

- combine into a dashboard view for targeting teams; and

- produce timely outputs for the use of targeting teams and Border Force.

Critically, we will work to ensure that our risking systems form part of a joined-up approach to management of the border by government. By ensuring that insights can be shared between those systems and that they are integrated with the Single Trade Window, we will develop a fully data driven approach to border management.

Our long-term vision for using border data in advanced risk analytics

Trader receives single release message

Traders

Supply Chain Data

Single Trade Window (STW)

Central insight-sharing capability

HMRC Data Systems

HO Data Systems

DEFRA Data Systems

HMRC Risk Engine
Under-declared or mis-declared goods

HO Risk Engine
People and commodities

DEFRA Risk Engine
Environmental and bio-hazards
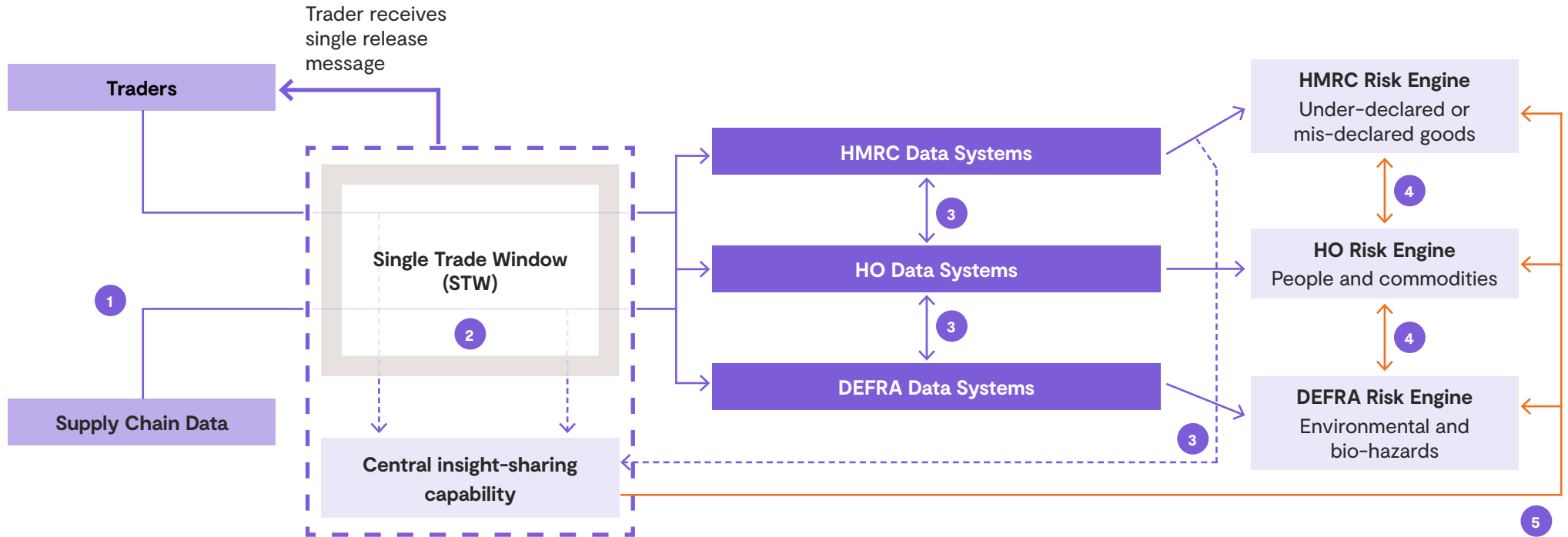
Information flows

1. **Additional data direct from the supply chain** to improve availability and quality of data feeds into risking engines

2. **Centralised insight-sharing capability supports sharing of data and insights between risk engines** drawing on shared data sets

3. **Data shared between border agencies** enabled by delivery of the STW

4. **Flags / insights shared between border agencies** to be used as additional inputs for risking and targeting

5. **Flags / insights generated by the central insight sharing capability shared with border agencies** to be used as additional inputs for risking and targeting

Bring forward data sharing legislation to enable better use of border data

To enable the transformative approach to border data set out above, we will work across border agencies, with the devolved administrations and industry to design a new legislative framework for the use of border data. This will allow us to harness its benefits for industry and government while maintaining the appropriate protections required to manage the data securely. We will take forward a more detailed consultation with the border industry and users of the border to ensure the legislation provides the private sector with confidence about how its data is used and explore opportunities for more data sharing between border agencies and businesses.

Digitising border documentation wherever possible

Respondents to the consultation highlighted that our border systems are too reliant on physical documentation at many stages of the process. There was a general desire to see more documentation processed in
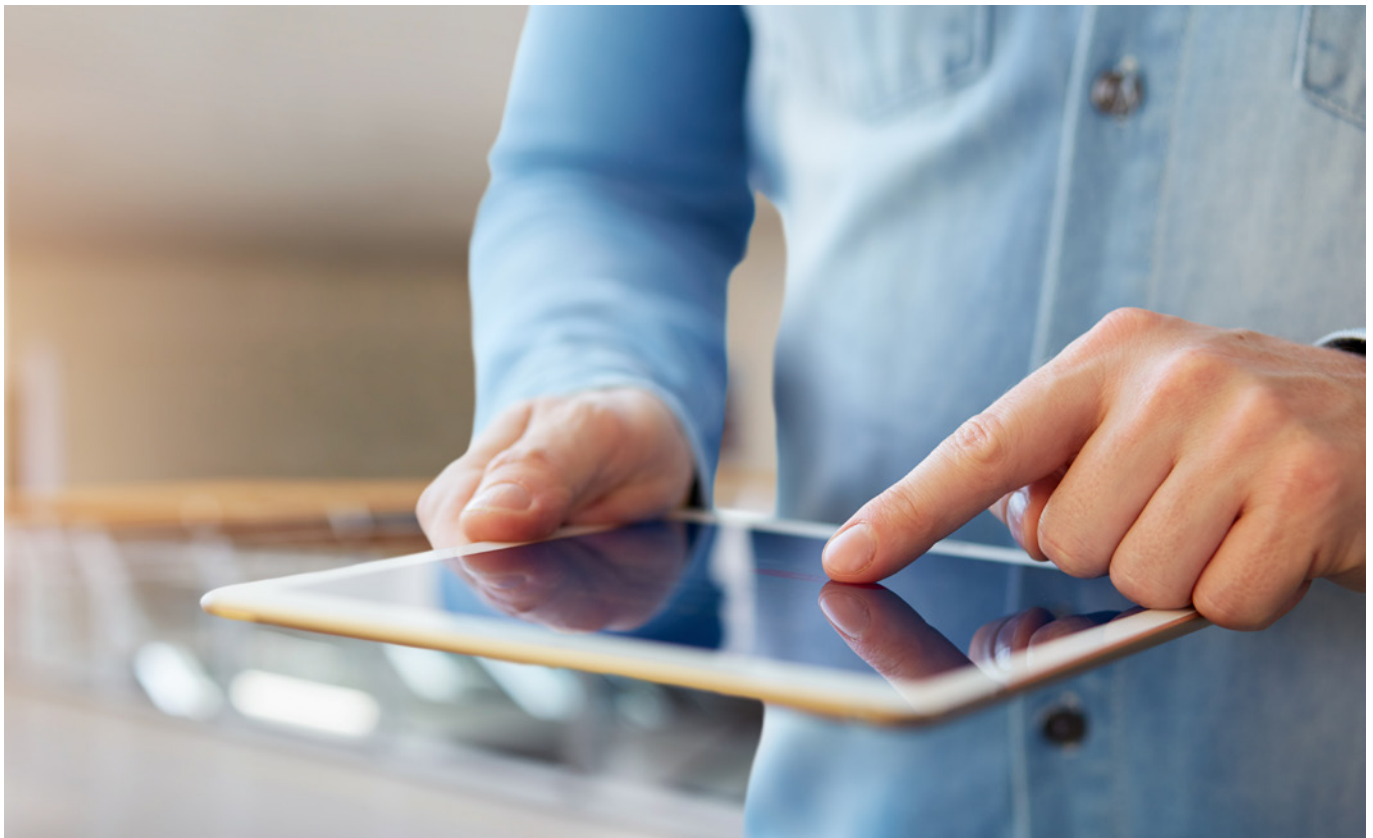
electronic form with less need for hard copies and original documentation.

The temporary changes implemented to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic have showed us how there is scope to use electronic documentation and digital signatures at the border more effectively. We will work with industry to identify which of the changes we should maintain in the longer-term to strike the right balance between security, and the cost and complexity of providing paperwork, to support border movements where relevant.

As part of our international approach set out in Transformation 6, we will work with international organisations and partners to agree digitisation of paperwork that stems from international requirements, such as transit accompanying documents, wherever possible.

Enhanced data-sharing for internal security

It is critical that we improve and expand the systems and data pipelines that allow us to share information with our international partners. This is essential for keeping the UK secure. We will maintain and enhance the UK's capabilities for law enforcement alerts and biometric data sharing with international partners through the International Law Enforcement Alert Platform (ILEAP) and the Secure Real Time Platform (SRTP).

- ILEAP will enable real-time alert data sharing between UK law enforcement agencies and international partners (including INTERPOL databases) and will ensure the UK can continue to respond in real time to intelligence identifying potential security threats. The platform represents the practical enabler for future security data sharing agreements. This new capability will be critical to mitigate the UK's withdrawal from EU-wide real-time alert data sharing agreements.

- The Secure Real Time Platform (SRTP) is a flexible and scalable solution that will improve border security and integrity of the Borders, Immigration and Citizenship System (BICS) through immigration fingerprint checks with Five Eyes and, potentially, EU partners (underpinned by processes and resources set out in the BICS International Biometric Data Sharing Strategy); and enhance internal security through law enforcement (police) fingerprint checks with international partners.

Transformation 3

Establish resilient 'ports of the future' at border crossing points to make the experience smoother and more secure for passengers and traders, while better protecting the public and environment
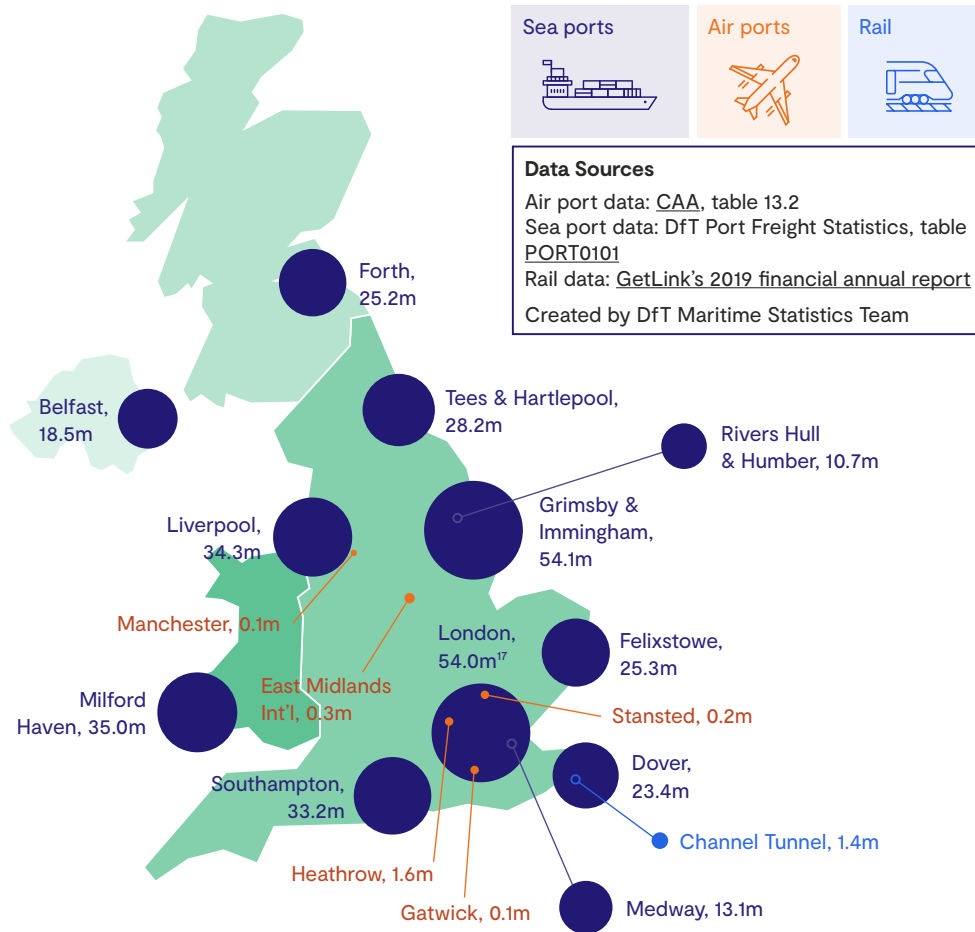
To deliver this transformation we commit to:

1. **working with ports and the border industry to set out the standards and requirements for border infrastructure and facilities at ports to support investment in innovation and technology to speed the passage of people and goods through ports and enhance security;**

2. **working with industry to develop a trial for a contactless approach to passenger travel for UK citizens based around an e-passport;**

3. **reviewing government's physical presence at the border and the checking regimes of all border agencies with the aim of rationalising the process for physical checks that happen at the border;**

4. **reviewing and strengthening our detection capability at ports to improve accuracy and speed of checks; and**

5. **creating at least ten new Freeports across the UK.**

Ports for all modes of travel play a critical role in the border model. As we respond to the challenges of COVID-19, it is clear that our ports are a vital intervention point and where there are real opportunities to strengthen our use of technology to address security and biosecurity risks to the UK and facilitate smoother international trade and travel. They are essential for the UK's role as a leading trading nation and they are important sources of local economic growth that will play a key role in the government's levelling up agenda.

This transformation seeks to build on the UK's world-class network of ports and airports, supporting them to become smarter and technologically enabled, with more efficient and effective processes operating at the frontier. By working together, the border industry, technology firms and government can create a highly digitised and automated border to significantly increase productivity and enable swift and secure clearance for legitimate goods and people at the border, while protecting the UK from security and biosecurity threats. In doing so this transformation will enhance the local economic benefits of ports by supporting UK port authorities and their partners' ambitions to enhance their role as drivers of local growth and jobs whilst minimising their environmental impacts. It builds on our investment in ports through the Port Infrastructure Fund and the ambition to make UK ports centres of economic growth through the creation of new Freeports.
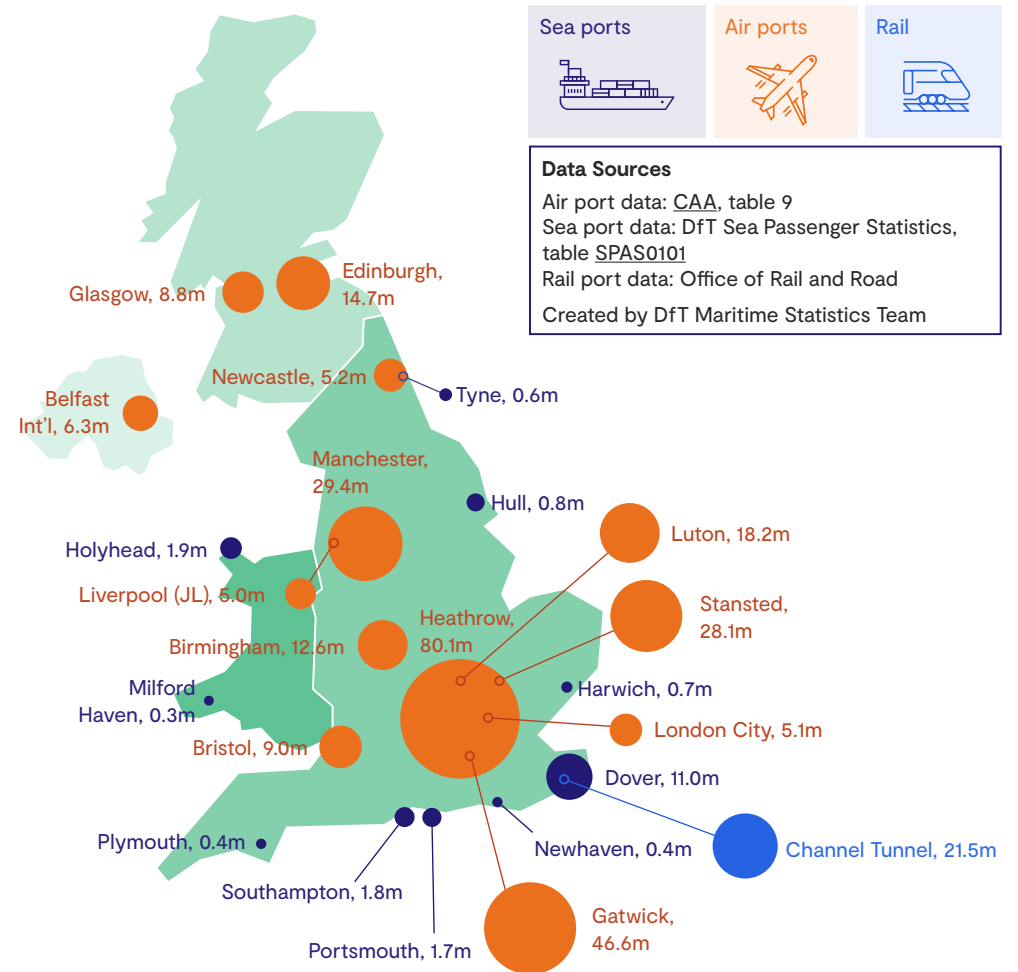
2019 Freight Tonnage Volumes at UK ports[16]

Sea ports · Air ports · Rail

Data Sources
Air port data: CAA, table 13.2
Sea port data: DfT Port Freight Statistics, table PORT0101
Rail data: GetLink's 2019 financial annual report

Created by DfT Maritime Statistics Team

Forth, 25.2m
Belfast, 18.5m
Tees & Hartlepool, 28.2m
Rivers Hull & Humber, 10.7m
Liverpool, 34.3m
Grimsby & Immingham, 54.1m
Manchester, 0.1m
London, 54.0m[17]
Felixstowe, 25.3m
East Midlands Int'l, 0.3m
Stansted, 0.2m
Milford Haven, 35.0m
Dover, 23.4m
Southampton, 33.2m
Channel Tunnel, 1.4m
Heathrow, 1.6m
Medway, 13.1m
Gatwick, 0.1m

2019 Passenger Volumes at UK ports[18]

Sea ports · Air ports · Rail

Data Sources
Air port data: CAA, table 9
Sea port data: DfT Sea Passenger Statistics, table SPAS0101
Rail port data: Office of Rail and Road

Created by DfT Maritime Statistics Team

Glasgow, 8.8m
Edinburgh, 14.7m
Newcastle, 5.2m
Tyne, 0.6m
Belfast Int'l, 6.3m
Manchester, 29.4m
Hull, 0.8m
Luton, 18.2m
Holyhead, 1.9m
Liverpool (JL), 5.0m
Stansted, 28.1m
Birmingham, 12.6m
Heathrow, 80.1m
Milford Haven, 0.3m
Harwich, 0.7m
Bristol, 9.0m
London City, 5.1m
Dover, 11.0m
Plymouth, 0.4m
Newhaven, 0.4m
Channel Tunnel, 21.5m
Southampton, 1.8m
Portsmouth, 1.7m
Gatwick, 46.6m

16. Only air ports that handled more than 0.1 million tonnes, and sea ports that handled more than 10 million tonnes of domestic and international traffic, and rail ports than handled international traffic are shown in the above map.

17. This figure for London is made up of freight volumes handled by London Gateway Port, Tilbury, Purfleet, Thurrock, Grays, and other ports which are geographically located in the Greater London area along the RIver Thames.

18. Only air ports that handled more than 5 million domestic and international terminal passengers, sea ports that handled more than 0.3 million international passengers and rail routes serving passengers travelling internationally are shown in the above map.

Digitisation and automation of ports

The UK port industry has already invested significantly in automation and digitisation of processes. Government is determined to support ports to trial new approaches and take advantage of new technologies. In particular, we will work with ports who operate a roll-on roll-off model to explore how technology can be used to protect the critical flow of goods at these locations, while delivering the wider outcomes we wish to deliver through this strategy. Using the approach set out in our technology and innovation roadmap in Transformation 1, we will support industry through the setting of technology and security standards that can allow ports to identify solutions that will work for them, and by working with ports to test and trial new technologies with the support of Border Force.
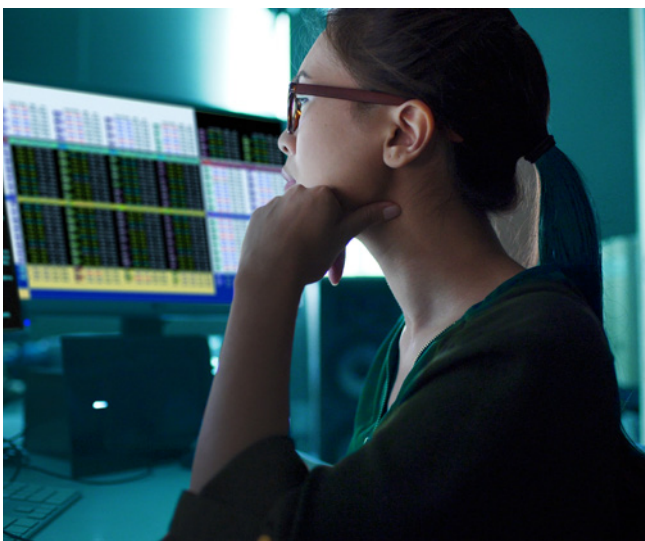
To support our ambition to introduce a universal 'permission to travel' (as set out in Transformation 4) we will continue to work with ports to develop the digital infrastructure that can work alongside this to increase security of the border while speeding up journeys. eGates have proved to be an effective method of increasing capacity at ports, for example in 2018, there were 51.9 million ePassport gate transactions, an increase of 376% over the previous five years, due to the expansion of our eGates offering.[19]

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the importance of ensuring that passenger travel is as resilient as possible. Developing processes that are less reliant on personal contact and interaction may be key to this. We will work with industry to develop a proof of concept for a contactless travel model for UK citizens based on biometric e-passport technology. In the longer-term this model could allow for faster movement of UK citizens across the border with a greatly reduced risk of identity fraud. Delivering a fully contactless model may also be an important health protection measure, allowing UK ports to protect their customers and provide more resilience of the travel industry to global health threats.

19. Home Office. E-passport gate expansion (last accessed on 26 November 2020).

Case study: Innovation at UK Ports – the Port of Tyne

UK ports are already at the forefront of technological innovation. The Port of Tyne is one of the UK ports collaborating with partners across the country and the world towards an even safer, more seamlessly digitally connected, and fully sustainable future.

Port of Tyne is home to the 2050 Maritime Innovation Hub, which opened in July 2019 and has since held over 60 events including design sprints, webinars, and hackathons, with over 1,600 attendees from 250 organisations. The Hub has identified three key opportunity areas for innovation in maritime and developed programmes to progress and support innovation in each:

- 'Automation and Real Time Information' – maximising the potential of data to drive efficiencies and advance collaboration, aligning with the Port's ambition to deliver the first phase of a port automation and real-time information plan by 2021, and implement distributed ledger technologies by 2030 to improve real-time visibility of freight being processed at the port.

- 'Regional Smart Distribution Centres' – exploring the role regional freight consolidation centres can play in driving trade efficiency and meeting environmental targets.

- 'Predictive Safety and Environmental Impact Modelling' – creating a safer and cleaner workplace through smarter use of data and modelling to inform decision making.

Additionally, in March 2020 Port of Tyne became the first UK port to become a member of the 'Connected Ports Partnership', a major international data and resource sharing initiative. The Connected Ports Partnership includes the ports of Rotterdam, Gdansk, Helsinki, Hamburg, and Los Angeles. Port of Tyne will contribute to co-developing a mutual platform for monitoring shipping and environmental data. Collaborative initiatives such as these will be key to enabling greater digitisation and automation in the maritime sector in the years ahead.

The UK's ports are also increasingly establishing themselves as major sustainability and green industry hubs. Port of Tyne is undertaking projects to electrify port hardware including, the UK's first fully electric mobile harbour crane and creating the Tyne Clean Energy Park, which will create a convenient, versatile strategic base for the region's rapidly growing renewable energy cluster. These initiatives will be key to supporting the UK's sustainability targets and improving the connectivity and automation of ports.

Matt Beeton, CEO at Port of Tyne says: *"We share the government's vision for the vital role that ports will play in executing a digitally enabled border strategy and are absolutely committed to creating regional hubs for global trade and inward investment, to level up the North East economy. We are already actively developing cybersecure, data driven solutions to rationalise and streamline our trade processes and eliminate any friction at borders."*

Case study: Emerging technologies being implemented across global borders for passengers

The Australian Department of Immigration and Border Protection (DIBP) has started to deliver a new and integrated border clearance traveller platform. International travellers entering the country will be processed via a completely unmanned biometric system based on fingerprints, iris scanning, and facial recognition.

Schiphol Airport has started facial recognition boarding using a Vision-Box platform. Passengers travelling with Cathay Pacific can now participate in a trial of facial recognition self-boarding at Amsterdam Airport Schiphol. This trial is part of the first phase of Seamless Flow, a programme that intends to make paperless travel possible in the long-term. The next phase will add passport control to the trial.

Atlanta's Hartsfield Jackson International Airport and Delta Air Lines have opened the first curb-to-gate biometric terminal in the USA. The system compares scans of travellers' faces to a database of verified ID photos curated by US Customs and Border Protection (CBP). A typical stop at a Transport Security Administration (TSA) ID check station can take 11-20 seconds; whereas with this model less than three. CBP deletes facial images of US citizens scanned at airports shortly after confirmation. Facial images of non-citizens who arrive in the US are stored for 75 years, but departure photos of non-citizens are deleted after 14 days. Similar systems operate at approximately 20 US ports.

Review our Detection Capabilities

Our detection capability at ports is critical for keeping the UK secure and identifying a range of threats from both people and goods. We must continue to work with industry to develop those detection technologies which can identify threats quickly and effectively in as non-invasive way as possible. Combining better detection equipment with improvements in data sharing and intelligence could improve the resilience of supply chains, allow goods and people to move through ports faster, help disrupt illegal migration and keep the UK safe.

Existing detection equipment is ageing and lacks modern technology and IT support systems. With freight and passenger traffic volumes predicted to continue in an upward curve, more effective scanning equipment

is critical to the effective operation of the UK's ports and airports. Respondents to our consultation were clear about the impact that this can have, with extended downtimes for scanning equipment slowing down movements across the border and risking creating backlogs at ports. Our capabilities must evolve to keep pace with evolving threats.

We will build on existing work to drive innovation in detection technologies, working closely with industry, international partners and the research and academic sector. The UK has many shared interests and challenges with other international customs administrations and we are partnering with our international counterparts to explore new technologies. This includes being part of consortiums developing a unique x-ray body-scanner able to detect concealments on the body; developing a small low-cost analyser to identify illicit drugs and harmful substances, allowing greater flexibility in the field; and developing a novel 3D freight scanner for maritime cargo that will improve detection and reduce false positives. We will also aim to increase our clandestine detection capability at the border to reduce the harm caused by attempted and successful illegal entry.

In our postal operations we will build on successful pilots to progress high speed x-ray diffraction technology (Halo) from the Counter Terrorism Accelerator and have partnered in a proposal with Dutch Customs, Royal Mail and postal operators that aims to integrate detection technology into the postal security supply chain.

These and other detection technologies could improve the efficiency and effectiveness of Border Force operations and reduce friction on flow of traffic across the border, while improving our ability to intercept illegitimate goods and detect clandestine migrants. It would also facilitate more non-invasive searches, enabling officers to discount innocuous targeted loads more quickly.

We will also invest to sustain and enhance Cyclamen, our radiological and nuclear detection and deterrence capability at the border, as part of the £329 million investment in domestic nuclear security announced in the 2020 Spending Review. This will strengthen our defences against the risk of radiological and nuclear terrorism. Replacing the current ageing technology will also enable Border Force to deliver operational efficiencies and protect the flow of goods at critical ports.

Case study: Spectroscopy – a critical detection capability

UK Border Force played a key role in influencing the development of the next generation Spectroscopy Devices developed by Agilent (formally Cobalt) to address and tackle the increase in hazardous powders. The devices enable the detection and identification of hazardous powders such as fentanyl without the need to open or expose the drug from within its packaging. Following successful trials the devices have subsequently been rolled out across the UK to more than 35 locations following the implementation of a four year framework contract.

The benefits of the Spectroscopy detection capabilities include:

- improved health and safety for Border Force officers who can detect drugs, including highly toxic drugs such as fentanyl, without exposing themselves directly to the drugs;

- the ability to continuously refine and update drugs libraries which can be shared with international partners. As a result, we are able to detect a range of hazardous substances in real-time and evolve with the trend globally as the software develops, whilst playing a key role on the international stage; and

- increased capability to detect and seize hazardous substances at the border which prevents and disrupts illicit activities of organised crime groups and these substances reaching the UK.

Reviewing and rationalising our presence at the border and our checking regimes

It is essential to carry out checks on some goods at ports and places of entry before they enter UK supply or food chains. This protects the security and biosecurity of the UK and ensures that the goods that enter the UK meet our standards. However, responses to the consultation revealed the impact that delays caused by checks can have on businesses and their supply chains. Respondents absolutely supported the need for checks but expressed frustration that goods may be checked multiple times by different border agencies as they cross the frontier, which can lead to delays in the release of goods.
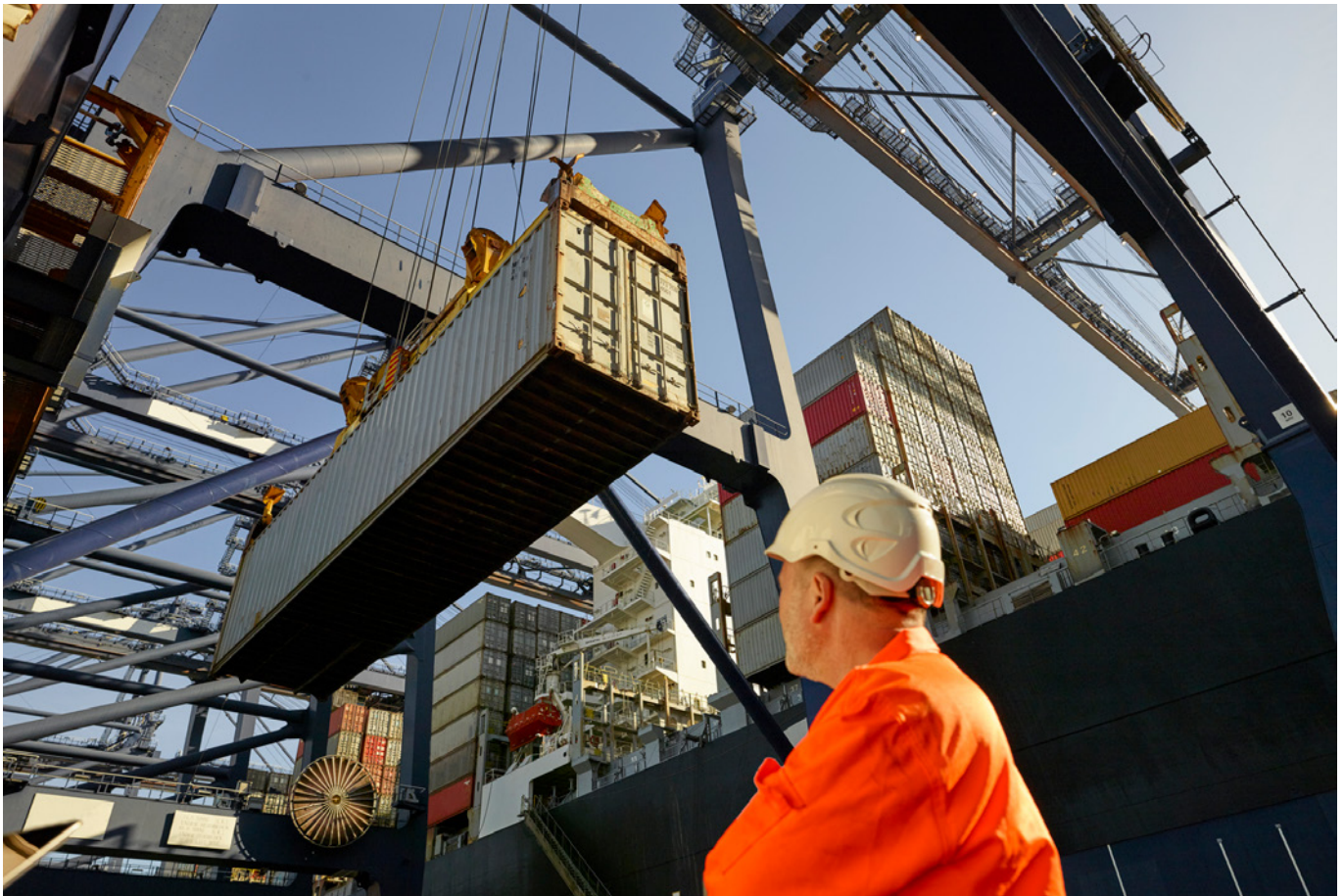
We believe there is more we can do to streamline checks and government's presence at the border to ensure the necessary checks are carried out efficiently.

We will start by undertaking a comprehensive review to consider the burden of checks on goods at the border and the options to streamline those interventions following the UK's departure from the EU's regulatory regime, towards an independent, forward-looking regulatory environment. We will work with industry to consider how checks are conducted and the legislation underpinning these, with the objective of simplifying where possible. Controls on sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) goods from the EU and the rest of the world will be reviewed in light of existing and new trade agreements and any changes in risk status.

We will also review government's presence at the border, including the agencies that conduct checks. This will enable us to identify inefficient processes, duplication of interactions with users, as well as any unjustified differences in approach across the UK. We will then work with industry to develop an approach to rationalising our presence at the border to improve the user journey and deliver value for money, whilst meeting our security and biosecurity objectives.

Freeports

We have drawn upon the best of the international examples of Freeports and have designed a bespoke, world-leading UK Freeport model aiming to achieve three objectives: enhancing trade and investment; promoting regeneration and job creation; and creating dynamic environments for innovative activity.

The UK Government has committed to establishing Freeports in each of the four nations, to a target of ten across the UK. However, further awards may be made if bids are particularly strong. The number of awards in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales will be jointly agreed with the relevant devolved administration. Separate processes will be run in each UK nation to ensure that local conditions and priorities are considered as part of the allocation process and to account for differences between nations where policy levers are devolved.

One of the core objectives for Freeports is to establish them as national hubs for global trade and investment, intensifying the economic impact of our ports and generating increased economic activity across the UK. They will help to level up the country by bringing jobs, investment and prosperity to some of our most deprived communities around the UK.

Freeports are designed to be innovative hubs that boost the economy by helping businesses to invest in their machinery, infrastructure and staff. Freeports will directly encourage and support port-specific and port-related innovation in research, testing of novel solutions and developing skills, pushing forward advancements at the border.

The government has proposed an ambitious Freeport customs model that allows businesses operating in Freeport customs sites to access a range of benefits and new opportunities to boost their international competitiveness. Businesses will be able to take advantage of customs and tariff benefits, including simplified customs procedures to access Freeports and duty suspension while goods remain in the Freeport. Businesses will also benefit from simplified declaration procedures for goods entering a Freeport to balance trader facilitation and ensure the security of the border. Businesses bringing non-controlled goods into the Freeport will need to make a customs declaration into their commercial records, while traders bringing in controlled goods, including those that are subject to excise duty will need to complete a simplified frontier declaration.

Transformation 4

Use upstream compliance to move processes away from the actual frontier where appropriate, both for passengers and traders
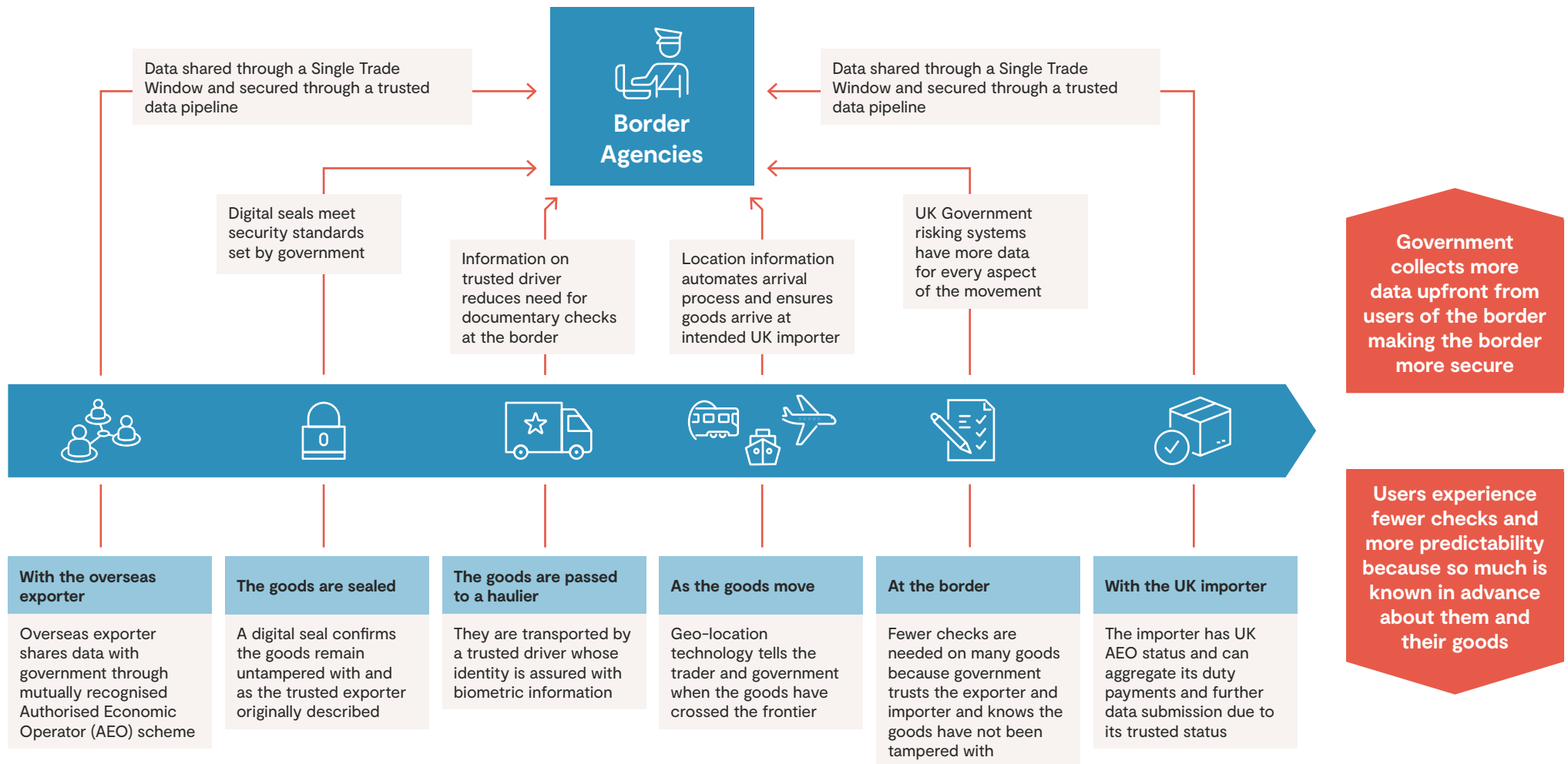
To deliver this transformation we commit to:

1. **developing a world-leading Trusted Trader programme to support UK businesses to trade internationally;**

2. **introducing an Electronic Travel Authorisation scheme as part of a wider universal 'permission to travel' requirement; and**

3. **improving measures upstream to counter illegal migration and prevent irregular entry to the UK.**

Our consultation highlighted the need to simplify and automate our border processes. Those involved in cross-border trade were keen for us to explore how more could be done to take advantage of the UK's Trusted Trader programme to allow companies who have gone through rigorous authorisation processes to experience more predictable journeys over the border. This was balanced by feedback from trade groups that the UK must continue to ensure that products moving across the border meet the UK's biosecurity and products standards, and that some checks related to those could never be moved away from the point of entry. Groups that represented leisure or commercial passengers, stressed the need for a more user-focussed approach, with a simplified visa process that would improve the experience of legitimate passengers crossing the border and reduce the time taken for immigration checks.

Building on the transformations set out above, this transformation is about using data, technology and relationships between government and users of the border to deliver robust upstream compliance which will allow processes to be moved away from the frontier. We can accomplish this by creating an ecosystem of trust based on enhanced data around the border. We will deliver this by working with industry to share information and data effectively so that government understands the nature of goods or people moving across the frontier well in advance of arrival. Not only will this provide enforcement agencies with more information, but it will provide more opportunity to perform processes away from the border, minimising delays at ports and making the border more resilient.

Creating an ecosystem of trust around the border using technology

Technology offers many opportunities to build trusted relationships between government and users of the border. Our strategy focusses on exploring these approaches with industry and taking forward the solutions that drive the greatest benefits for the UK

Border Agencies

Data shared through a Single Trade Window and secured through a trusted data pipeline

Digital seals meet security standards set by government

Information on trusted driver reduces need for documentary checks at the border

Location information automates arrival process and ensures goods arrive at intended UK importer

Data shared through a Single Trade Window and secured through a trusted data pipeline

UK Government risking systems have more data for every aspect of the movement

Government collects more data upfront from users of the border making the border more secure

Users experience fewer checks and more predictability because so much is known in advance about them and their goods

With the overseas exporter

Overseas exporter shares data with government through mutually recognised Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) scheme

The goods are sealed

A digital seal confirms the goods remain untampered with and as the trusted exporter originally described

The goods are passed to a haulier

They are transported by a trusted driver whose identity is assured with biometric information

As the goods move

Geo-location technology tells the trader and government when the goods have crossed the frontier

At the border

Fewer checks are needed on many goods because government trusts the exporter and importer and knows the goods have not been tampered with

With the UK importer

The importer has UK AEO status and can aggregate its duty payments and further data submission due to its trusted status

Of course, moving processes away from the frontier will never be appropriate or convenient in all instances and while delivering this transformation we will need to ensure that the right processes are kept at the frontier to protect the UK from biosecurity and criminal threats.

Create a world-leading Trusted Trader programme

The UK's trade with non-EU countries accounted for just over half of the UK's trade in 2018 and was valued at £683 billion.[20] Whilst the majority of that trade by volume is conducted by traders with existing authorisations such as Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) or Customs Freight Simplified Procedures (CFSP) authorisations (87% imports, 87% exports[21] for AEO and CFSP), the number of traders applying for the UK's AEO programme is low compared to other countries.
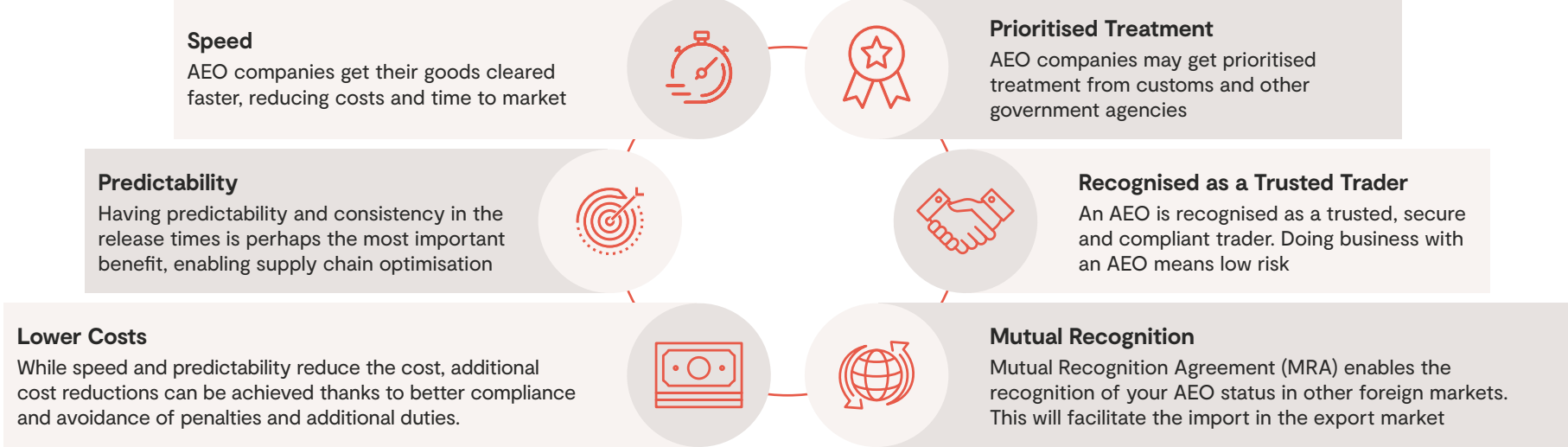
Feedback from the consultation suggests that it is challenging to navigate the authorisations on offer and understand their benefits. The application process for AEO and other authorisations has historically been perceived to be complex and time consuming and respondents suggested this disincentivised some traders from applying. Stakeholders with AEO status also expressed a common frustration that their trusted status was not recognised in any way by compliance regimes owned by border agencies beyond HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), despite the significant level of assurance they had provided to government through the application process.

20. Department for International Trade. UK Trade in Numbers (last accessed 26 November 2020).
21. HM Revenue and Customs.

Case study: International best practice in relation to Authorised Economic Operator

Concept

"A party involved in the international movement of goods, in whatever function, that has been approved by, or on behalf of, a national Customs administration as complying with WCO or equivalent supply chain security standards"

– WCO definition of an Authorised Economic Operator (AEO)

Criteria

Customs compliance
No records of previous serious criminal offences and proven ability to remain compliant.

Record keeping
Satisfactory system of managing commercial and transport records, which allows appropriate customs controls.

Financial solvency
Fulfilled financial obligations on customs duties, taxes and charges. Sufficient financial standing to meet financial commitments.

Competence
Three years proved practical experience in customs matters. Successfully completed training on customs legislation.

Security and safety
Security and safety standards for buildings security, access controls, cargo security, business partners, personnel, external service providers and awareness.

Benefits

Speed
AEO companies get their goods cleared faster, reducing costs and time to market

Prioritised Treatment
AEO companies may get prioritised treatment from customs and other government agencies

Predictability
Having predictability and consistency in the release times is perhaps the most important benefit, enabling supply chain optimisation

Recognised as a Trusted Trader
An AEO is recognised as a trusted, secure and compliant trader. Doing business with an AEO means low risk

Lower Costs
While speed and predictability reduce the cost, additional cost reductions can be achieved thanks to better compliance and avoidance of penalties and additional duties.

Mutual Recognition
Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) enables the recognition of your AEO status in other foreign markets. This will facilitate the import in the export market

International Standards

~80 global AEO programmes are **aligned with international standards such as WCO SAFE Framework of Standards**

WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION
ORGANISATION MONDIALE DES DOUANES

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

Source: KGH Global Consulting; MRA Strategy Guide, WCO

Increasing the uptake of trusted trader authorisations and delivering a navigable, joined up system with better linking across departments has the potential to add great value to both government and industry.

For industry, trusted trader status lowers the costs of trade and makes supply chains more resilient by giving them more certainty on the level of checks they will experience at the border. The simplifications to customs processes available through trusted trader status can significantly reduce the costs of compliance. Given that HMRC estimate the number of customs declarations it may need to process from 2021 is 270 million per year, significant reductions in business costs could be achieved if declarations fall within scope of the Trusted Trader programme. Traders holding AEO status for safety and security purposes can also be recognised internationally, extending the benefits of being trusted across different countries through Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs).

For government, companies registering for trusted trader status provides enforcement agencies with additional data long before goods arrive at the border so that less is required at the border. This helps segment trade and better target illegitimate movements. This in turn leads to a more secure border, better revenue collection, improved trade facilitation and export promotion. Government agencies at the border currently target on relatively crude risk profiles – more information provided by trusted traders could improve border security while allowing compliant goods to move more swiftly across the border. Trusted schemes are likely to be key in testing new approaches at the border, as

they can be used as a testing ground for new technology with trusted partners.

We will develop an enhanced Trusted Trader Programme recognised across border agencies aimed at improving and streamlining the authorisation process and supporting it with high quality guidance and support for traders. We will look to provide new and improved facilitations, improving the UK's existing Authorised Economic Operator scheme to make use of its full potential. Specifically, our improved trusted trader offering will:

- extend the concept of trust conferred by the UK's AEO programme and other authorisations across compliance regimes where this is appropriate so that authorised traders will be recognised by government agencies collectively as trusted. Practically we will seek to build our systems and approach to risking to ensure that authorised traders benefit from reduced risking profiles at the border – while still ensuring that any goods can be stopped if intelligence suggests a risk;

- streamline applications to reduce the time it takes to get authorised as a trusted trader;

- re-use data to enable traders to move between authorisations without re-submitting the same information;

- use previous evidence when making decisions about when to carry out interventions on goods in order to reduce checks for trusted traders. This would increase the predictability and speed of crossing the border, driving efficiency for both traders and government;

- simplify the Trusted Trader programme, by providing clear online guidance to help traders understand all they need to do in regard to trust and authorisations. This will include articulating the benefits of trusted

trader more clearly, making clear what benefits different authorisations provide so traders can choose those that will work best for them; and

- seek to fully digitise the application process for the UK's Trusted Trader programme, and ultimately integrate this into our Single Trade Window.

We will work with innovators to explore how technologies such as geofencing, digital seals and smart contracts can be deployed to enable a world-leading Trusted Trader programme. Alongside this we will also explore how trusted traveller and trusted shipper programmes could complement our Trusted Trader programme and support creation of the ecosystem of trust, based on enhanced data, to enable border trade.

Working with our international partners will be imperative to our long-term approach to our Trusted Trader programme. As part of our international approach to borders (see Transformation 6 for more details) we will pursue Mutual Recognition Agreements with other countries to ensure that the UK's Trusted Trader programme is recognised by our trading partners. This will help reduce the costs of trading across supply chains and help UK businesses create more resilient supply chains through increased reliability.

Case study: the World Customs Organisation recommended approach to Authorised Economic Operator

The World Customs Organisation (WCO) has a variety of recommendations for improving countries' AEO programmes, which should form the basis of improvements to the UK's programme.[22]

Suggested improvements

- A minimum set of tangible benefits to AEOs, for example reduced examination rates in return for industry investment in good security systems and practices, and self-assessment.

- Consistency in global AEO programmes to assist in Mutual Recognition Agreements with other countries, and the wider cooperation of international customs organisations.

- Equal access to simplified arrangements for AEOs regardless of modes of transport, for example with necessary differences around pre-lodgement times.

- Reasonable expectation of simplified and rapid release procedures on the provision of minimum information at the border.

- An international standard of qualification that includes:

  - an appropriate record of compliance with customs requirements;

  - a demonstrable commitment to supply chain security by being a participant in a Customs-Business partnership programme;

  - a satisfactory system for managing commercial records and financial viability; and

  - incorporation of security best practices into existing business practices.

- Extension of AEO to all parts of the supply chain, with consignments passing from origin to destination entirely within an authorised supply chain, where only one simplified declaration with minimal information would be required for both export and import purposes.

- Encouragement of incremental incentives for the incremental use of sealing technologies.

- Harmonisation and alignment of customs with other agencies, working together to align their processes for assessment and validation of secure operators, including with AEO.

- True partnership between customs and AEOs, for example, to jointly determine and document the appropriate security measures that will be implemented and maintained by the AEO.

- Periodic reviews on the AEOs processes and security measures based on risk.

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22. World Customs Organisation. SAFE Framework of Standards 2018 Edition (last accessed 27 November 2020).

Introduce an Electronic Travel Authorisation scheme as part of a wider universal 'permission to travel' requirement

As part of the forthcoming points-based immigration system, the government will implement a suite of changes to transform the way in which we manage people crossing the UK border. Our border will provide for a fully digital end-to-end user journey, improving both security and the clearance of legitimate passengers. As part of our phased delivery to 2025, the UK government has committed to introducing a universal 'permission to travel' requirement which will require everyone wishing to travel to the UK (except British and Irish citizens) to seek permission in advance of travel. We will use the information provided to facilitate the passage of legitimate passengers whilst keeping threats away from the UK border.

The type of permission a person has will depend on their individual circumstances. For British and Irish citizens, who do not require leave to enter the UK, their permission will be demonstrated by their passport. For those coming to either work or study in the UK or as visa national visitors, their permission will be their visa, which we will develop into a digital status record. We aim to make the visa a digital document to replace the paper one.
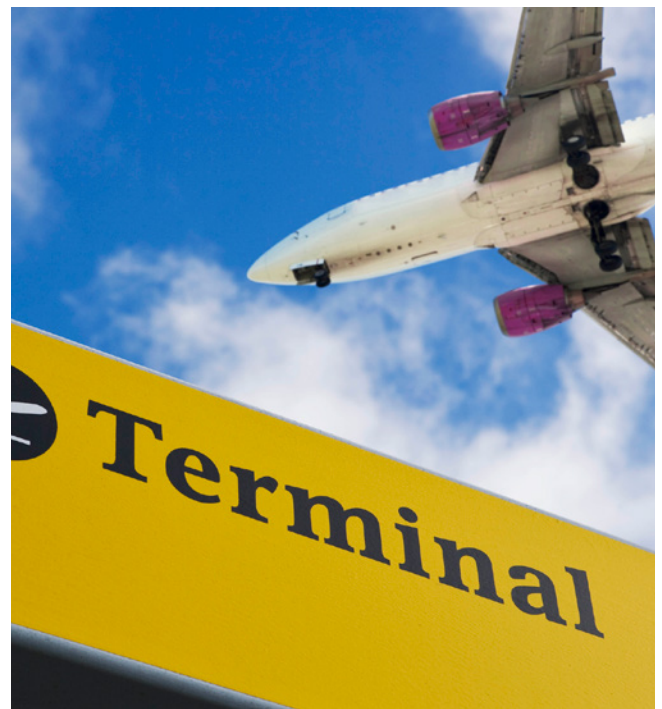
We have already introduced a digital status for those granted EU Settlement Status and from 2021, EEA nationals who are granted permission to work, study or live in the UK will also benefit from a digital status. This digital status will replace the paper visa ("vignette") which is currently manually inserted into passports or travel documents. Over time we will replace the physical vignette for migrants from the rest of the world with digital status too, making the end-to-end user journey friendly and digital by default.
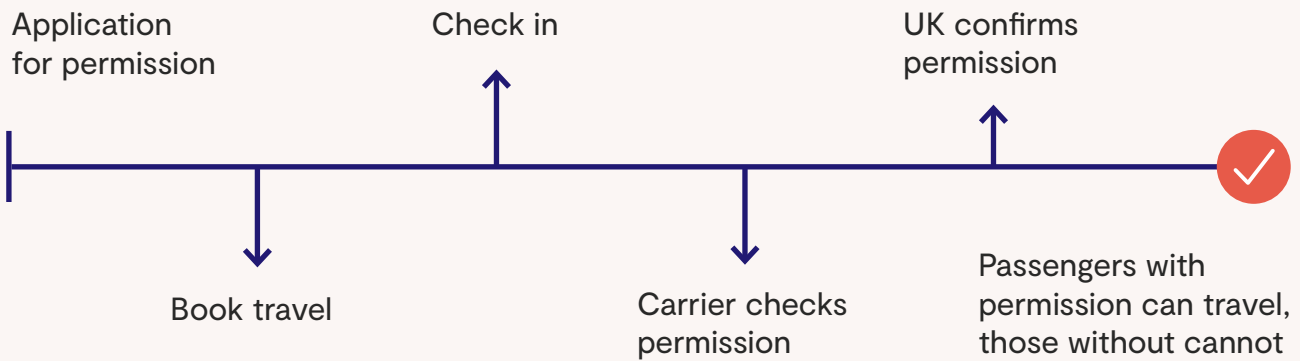
We will introduce an Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) scheme for those passengers visiting the UK or transiting through the UK who do not currently need a visa for short stays or do not have an immigration status prior to travelling. This will allow security checks to be conducted and more informed decisions to be taken at an earlier stage in advance of travel, as to whether individuals should be granted permission to travel to the UK or not. The ETA scheme will provide an enhanced ability to screen arrivals and block those deemed to be a threat from entering the UK.

To be fully effective, individuals' permissions must be checked by their carrier and confirmed prior to travel. As fewer permissions will be in a physical format, we will support carriers to establish whether individuals have permission to travel using established connections between carriers' passenger data systems and government border systems. We will work with carriers to build on the existing use of interactive Advance Passenger Information (as set out in our plans for Transformation 2) to confirm passenger permission to travel prior to check-in and boarding.

As a result of this pre-departure check, at the border we will use the information provided in advance of travel to employ a targeted approach to the level of intervention needed. We will aim to increase the number of low-risk passengers who can be checked on arrival by an automated process without needing to speak to a Border Force Officer, creating a smoother journey for most passengers.

Passenger journey using an electronic travel authorisation

Application for permission		Check in		UK confirms permission	
	Book travel		Carrier checks permission		Passengers with permission can travel, those without cannot

With the implementation of the requirement that everyone needs a 'permission to travel', carriers will need to do less to determine a passenger's status – rather, government will confirm the majority of passengers' 'permission to travel'. This means less time will be spent on inspecting travel documents as they will be able to rely on the official message sent to them confirming the permission of each individual. The proposed solution will improve the process by reducing the number of messages sent to carriers. In many more instances carriers will receive a single message confirming the passengers' permission to travel.

We will implement our universal 'permission to travel' programme incrementally, with a phased rollout. We will start development work with selected carriers for those passengers who currently travel with an Electronic Visa Waiver with a view to begin initial testing by September 2021. The ETA scheme, which requires primary legislation, is under development.

Phased approach for ETAs: testing the technology and using different passenger cohorts to allow all parties to familiarise themselves with the requirements and processes

1	**2**	**3**	**4**
Phase 1	**Phase 2**	**Phase 3**	**Phase 4**
Current Electronic Visa Waiver Holder	Persons who hold an Electronic Immigration Status	Persons who hold a current immigration status in physical form	Introduction of ETA

The introduction of the ETA scheme is in line with the approach taken to border security by many of the UK's closest international partners, meaning that it is a familiar concept to many carriers and passengers. Australia has operated an Electronic Travel Authority scheme since 1996, the United States introduced the Electronic System for Travel Authorization (ESTA) in 2008, Canada introduced an ETA scheme in August 2015, and New Zealand introduced one (NZeTA) in October 2019. The European Commission is also developing plans for a similar system covering the Schengen area, the Electronic Travel Information and Authorisation System (ETIAS), which could be in operation from 2023.

Case study: the USA ESTA programme

Electronic System for Travel Authorisation (ESTA) is the automated web-based system used to determine whether travellers to the USA are eligible for visa-free travel under the Visa Waiver Program and whether they pose a security risk. In order to apply for an ESTA, applicants must go to the ESTA website, follow the instructions to answer all of the required questions and submit an application for travel authorisation. Applicants from Visa Waiver Program eligible countries are advised to apply 72 hours in advance of travel and are subsequently notified of their authorisation to travel under Visa Waiver Program. Each travel authorisation under ESTA can be valid for up to two years. Visa Waiver Program travellers, who travel without an approved ESTA, may be denied boarding.

ESTA mitigates vulnerabilities inherent in visa-free travel by providing an advance risking function, allowing US border staff to focus on the small population of potentially dangerous travellers. ESTA also enables passengers to quickly and conveniently obtain authorisation to travel to the US, forgoing the need to apply for a traditional visa, which would require applicants to undergo an interview and submit additional biographic information.

Improve our use of upstream illegal migration countermeasures to prevent irregular entry into the UK

Irregular migration flow remains high and migrants remain willing to undertake increasingly high-risk and deadly journeys in order to reach the UK. To tackle the serious and organised crime groups facilitating illegal migration and exploiting vulnerable migrants, as well as those attempting to travel on false identity documents, we will aim to prevent entry into the UK through improved border security and through deterrence, detection and disruption of migrant flows before they reach our border. Specifically we will:

- develop a joint long-term response with nearby neighbours to disrupt clandestine entry through agreement of strategic and operational plans, as well as working together to improve physical border security and reduce border vulnerabilities at near border ports;

- promote joint working with partner agencies and improve coordination and information sharing between international Law Enforcement Agencies;

- bring forward legislation to deliver a firm and fair immigration system and end-to-end reform of our systems and processes; and

- work with countries of origin and transit to support them in addressing irregular migration challenges within their region.

Transformation 5

Build the capability of staff and the border industry responsible for delivering border processes, particularly in an environment of greater automation; and simplify communication with border users to improve their experience

To deliver this transformation we commit to:

1. **working with the UK intermediary sector to help the sector develop to support UK traders with high-quality services;**

2. **making our presence at the border more resilient and efficient to improve the service we deliver; and**

3. **improving the guidance we make available on moving across the border for traders and passengers.**

People play a critical role in the operation of the border. Border Force officials operate at 140 official ports (across multiple modes of entry), along 18,000 km of coastline, at 54 main UK airports and at 3,000+ private airstrips.[23] Greater than 90% of traders use an intermediary, including ~99% of SMEs which support UK businesses to trade.[24] Traders require employees who understand border processes to help them to trade, or need access to specialist intermediaries to manage border and logistics process for them. Simultaneously, traders and passengers must be supported by government employees with specialist expertise at all levels, who have the capability and knowledge to make the border operate efficiently and effectively. This transformation recognises the importance of the staff in the public and private sector operating at and around the border and seeks to build their capability and capacity further to support the smooth operation of the border and adapt to an increasingly automated and digitised environment.

Respondents to the consultation stressed the importance of interactions with frontline staff and the intermediary sector on the user's border experience. It is also apparent that whilst some traders had very good experiences with intermediaries and found clear benefits to using them, there was a lack of consistency and capacity across the sector. Additionally, respondents highlighted the need for better communication from government on the processes border users are required to follow; explaining that government guidance on the use of the border was often unnecessarily complex and hard to locate online.

23. Home Office.
24. HM Revenue and Customs.

Our ambition is to deliver the most streamlined and competitive Service Level Agreements (SLAs) we can, using advanced data and modern technologies, such as data analytics and biometrics, to reduce average transaction times for low-risk traffic as much as possible, whilst maintaining core border security functions. Traditionally SLAs are associated with passenger and goods wait times which are currently measured differently across different ports. We will shift this focus towards service delivery standards that will include clearance for people and goods traffic. These will be based on forecasts, to suit different modes and port environments, as well as actual demand to ensure the right capability is in place to deliver the most effective border controls.

remove barriers to intermediaries taking on extra clients, including making available over £80 million of support to help the sector in scaling up. This has included grant funding for customs IT, training and recruitment of new staff. We will continue to work with the sector and their customers to understand how the role of intermediaries is changing, as the way businesses trade continues to evolve in response to the end of the transition period and changes in the wider business environment.

Through our technology and innovation roadmap we will continue to work with the sector to support market-led solutions which reduce costs, increase innovation, and ensure that the UK continues to grow a dynamic and high quality intermediaries sector.

Developing the UK's intermediary sector

The intermediary sector – including customs brokers, freight forwarders and express parcel operators – play a vital role in helping businesses to import and export their goods by ensuring the necessary customs paperwork has been completed. Strengthening this sector will ensure that traders are more able to navigate an affordable market, intermediaries will benefit from increased efficiency and profitability, while government will receive more accurately completed declarations.

Government is committed to ensuring all businesses trading internationally, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), have access to high quality intermediaries. To help deliver this we have already provided extensive support to help grow the UK's customs intermediaries sector and to

Making our presence at the border more resilient and efficient

Border Force is the primary face of government at the border and is critical to its operation. Border Force responds to different threats through the blended application of operational and organisational capabilities. These capabilities apply to the movement of both people and goods. Ensuring that Border Force is able to support and complement the transformations set out in this strategy is critical. While better advanced data and intelligence supports decision making, there will always be the need for human judgement. So, rather than data systems and technology de-valuing the highly skilled staff operating the border, human judgement will still have a vital role in decision making.

Border Force is already using this cross-government plan to develop its organisational priorities to ensure any future impact on capability requirements is built into planning and investment choices over the coming years, to fully support the vision set out in this strategy. Ensuring a resilient and agile workforce is a fundamental part of this, and over the next five years, Border Force will:

- upskill frontline staff to ensure they have the necessary skills and capabilities to support users of the border with consistent service that protects the public and enables legitimate trade and travel. We will continue to work with the border industry to ensure that Border Force meets the needs of all users as

they manage increased automation, innovation, trade and complex security risks;

- increase the integrity of the system by tackling corruption through the Border Force's Insider Threat Programme which recognises and contributes towards the priorities in the UK Anti–Corruption Strategy 2017-2022; and

- continue to work with partners in industry and internationally to strengthen our joint approach to protect the public and enable legitimate trade and travel.

Case study: Working in partnership with Border Force; the Manchester Airports Group experience

"Over the past six years, the Manchester Airports Group (MAG) has undertaken a £1 billion infrastructure investment programme at Manchester Airport increasing capacity of its terminals, airfield and landside road network. During this time, Manchester Airport worked closely with UK Border Force to deliver a best in class border experience which is due to open early 2021. The level of collaboration throughout this development process is an excellent example of UK Border Force engagement with industry partners to achieve outstanding outcomes for partners and travelling customers.

A dedicated UK Border Force team was established to support the development programme. This provided continuity during a multi-year programme and the opportunity to develop strong working relationships which were critical to the success of the programme. The team were involved in all stages of design development with early design engagement on facility requirements to support forecast growth including Gate and desk provision, welfare facilities for Border Force Colleagues, IT requirements and all other infrastructure requirements to support operational excellence at the new border. Since completion of the physical works, we have worked collaboratively with the UK Border Force team to develop the Operational Readiness and Transitioning (ORAT) programme to support a successful commissioning of the border and wider terminal operations through robust training and familiarisation of UK Border Force colleagues and testing of the new border facility.

Throughout the programme the UK Border Force team have worked with us in an incredibly positive and a truly 'one team' approach. The team has shown huge commitment and creativity to find positive solutions to challenges, particularly in response to delays cause by the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. This approach has resulted in a facility which meets UK Border Force requirements, delivers a great experience for travelling customers and provides capacity for future growth at Manchester Airport. It also resulted in a working relationship between UK Border Force and MAG which will benefit both organisations for many years to come as we operate in these uncertain times. The team showed great collaboration and are a testament to the UK Border Force organisation."

Improving border guidance for all users

Our consultation and wider industry engagement has made it clear that users find border guidance difficult to use and spread across multiple, disparate sources. This complexity can deter first time exporters from trading.

We are committed to improving the quality of border guidance for both traders and passengers. The Border and Protocol Delivery Group has already begun work across government to create more joined-up border guidance that explains processes in an end-to-end manner, such as we have done for the Border Operating Model that will be in place at the end of the transition period.

We will work in partnership with users of the border to improve existing information provided and ensure it is understandable for everyday users of the border. To this end, we will work across border agencies to review the guidance and create a single source of border guidance on GOV.UK that can support users' end-to-end journeys across the border.

As well as improving the content of border guidance, we are determined to make it digitally accessible and give users the tools they need to identify the requirements for trading internationally. We will build on the online tools that the Department for International Trade has developed for export, expanding these to cover import requirements for UK traders. Furthermore, we will integrate these tools into the Single Trade Window, creating a single source of border information for importers and exporters.

Transformation 6

Shape the future development of borders worldwide, to promote the UK's interests and facilitate end-to-end trade and travel

To deliver this transformation we commit to:

1. **taking a strategic approach to international engagement on borders that will coordinate our efforts to shape the development of borders across the world; and**

2. **realising the benefits of Free Trade Agreements to simplify border processes for traders and work towards additional mutual recognition agreements of our Trusted Trader programme wherever this is practical and will support users.**

All international movements of goods and people require multiple borders to be crossed and so it is important that we work with international partners to ensure that their borders support trade and movement of people. This transformation seeks to set a strategic approach to the UK's international engagement on border issues. Through clearly articulated objectives and identification of the key international forums the UK will act as global leader on the development of borders, and ensure that UK traders and passengers experience the benefits of advanced, interoperable borders worldwide.

This international approach is important not just for enabling international trade but also to support the movement of people and the UK's wider tourism ambitions. The UK made commitments alongside G20 tourism ministers in autumn 2020[25] to address the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism and hospitality sector, in part, facilitating safe and seamless travel, and an improved passenger experience. Alongside the transformations set out above, an international approach will be key to achieving these objectives.

25. G20 Riyadh Summit. Leaders Declaration (last accessed 27 November 2020).

A strategic approach to international engagement on borders

We will coordinate our strategic approach to engaging on border issues internationally through the new Design Authority we are creating, as set out in Transformation 1.

Our objectives through this joined-up, strategic approach are to:

- work through multilateral border organisations to improve the reliability and resilience of borders worldwide in order to make international supply chains more robust;

- work through multilateral border organisations to agree mutual recognition of common data, technology and security standards for borders to standardise experiences for traders, drive interoperability of systems, and to help the border industry innovate across multiple markets;

- work with our international partners to make our border systems interoperable wherever this is practical and will support users. At the systems level this may take the form of creating data-pipelines between our systems where appropriate. At the process level this may involve agreeing mutually acceptable and recognised upstream compliance approaches;

- work with other members of international customs and security conventions that the UK is party to, to ensure that processes are digitised wherever possible. This will include the Common Transit Convention, Transports Internationaux Routiers (TIR) and the ATA Carnets where we will implement a digital version of documentation;

- work with partners to harness shared collective capabilities to identify and respond to emerging security opportunities and threats at the border. This includes data sharing agreements with our trusted partners;

- develop a joint long-term response with nearby neighbours to disrupt clandestine entry through agreement of strategic and operational plans, as well as working together to improve physical border security and reduce border vulnerabilities at near border ports; and

- work with our international partners to improve and enhance the passenger experience end-to end.

The international forums where we will seek to pursue these objectives include:

Border Five (B5) Network: the UK is committed to ensuring that we deliver effective customs and border management policy in collaboration with B5 partners and will remain pivotal in shaping the global Border of the Future 2030 Programme.

G7/G20: the UK will remain committed to working with G7 and G20 Members to progress multilateral cooperation on border agreements between partner countries as per the agenda of each forum.

Europol: we will maintain our relationships with our European law enforcement partners to strengthen the security of our borders and combat serious international organised crime.
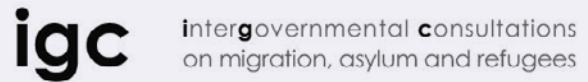
Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC): we will continue to share information and participate in discussions with IGC partners on matters relevant to the management of international migratory flows.

Five Eyes: the UK, as world leaders, will work proactively with the Five Eyes group to test and introduce innovation while drawing on lessons learnt from those countries that have been more advanced in data sharing and AEO schemes.

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO): the UK remains committed to working in close partnership with ICAO and its members states to achieve a thriving and sustainable aviation sector that is able to quickly recover from the effects of COVID-19 and be more efficient, safer and environmentally sustainable in order to facilitate the movement of people and goods.

Frontex: the UK will seek to maintain our close working relationship with our European partners and continue to work closely to improve border control policies, where appropriate.

International Maritime Organisation (IMO): the UK is committed to remaining an active participant in the IMO. We will continue to use it to forge strong working relationships with other nations to promote the agenda for key international maritime issues, including security and border issues where appropriate.

International Transport Forum (Road Transport Group): the UK will work closely with member countries to achieve consensus around how to develop the multilateral freight quota further, and identify ways to incentivise the use of the newest, most environmentally friendly freight vehicle types.

INTERPOL: we will work closely with international Law Enforcement Partners to facilitate worldwide police cooperation and crime control.

Migration Five (M5) Network: the UK will remain focused on collaboration with M5 Partners on joint initiatives and information exchange to achieve improvements in security, service, and savings.

United Nations (UN): the UK will remain committed to working closely with our UN partners, particularly the Food and Agriculture Organisation where we will seek to improve food security standards and influence the regulations of sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS) and the UN Economic Commission for Europe where we will seek to establish common standards that make it easier for UK businesses to trade and for UK transport operators to operate across borders.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime: the UK will maintain its commitment to working with international partners at the United Nations to make our borders more robust to threats from drugs, serious and organised crime groups, corruption and terrorism.

World Customs Organisation (WCO): the UK will remain committed to the promotion of more trade facilitation, and better and fairer revenue collection through our participation in the WCO. We will particularly look to develop digitised facilitations such as ATA Carnets – the widely used international trade facilitation tool allowing duty free movement of goods for up to one year.

World Health Organisation (WHO): the UK will remain committed to reviewing the application of sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS) with international partners to maintain food safety and prevent the cross-border spread of infections, as well as streamlining processes where possible to facilitate trade.

World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE): the UK greatly values the work of OIE, and will continue to play an active role in supporting review of the international standards underpinning sanitary and phytosanitary measures (SPS) with other experts, to influence improving international standards of animal health and welfare, maintain UK standards of animal health and welfare and manage the risks of cross-border spread of pathogens, in order to facilitate trade and protect food safety.

World Trade Organisation (WTO): with our newly independent WTO membership, we will work with like-minded members to lead and shape the global discussion on trade. The UK is committed to supporting developing countries simplify their trade procedures and implement the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA). This assistance is focused on reducing inefficient border processes, helping to tackle administrative bottlenecks and enhancing trade facilitation logistics which can often hinder businesses reaching customers.

Case study: the importance of international data standards for borders

The Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade (SAFE) was adopted by international leaders at the World Customs Organisation (WCO) Council in 2005 in response to threats to supply chains, while supporting the facilitation of legitimate and secure businesses. The framework includes baseline standards that have been tested as being effective across the globe.

Baseline standards for data use stipulates that customs should use sophisticated methods to identify and target potentially high risk cargo and transport conveyances. For example, customs should request advance electronic information about cargo shipments to and from a country before they depart or arrive. Customs administrations are also instructed to require advance electronic information in time for adequate risk assessment to take place.[26]

These standards allow customs to inspect and screen cargo and transport conveyances before arrival at the border. Applying these standards globally ensures that supply chains remain secure while avoiding delays associated with checks at the border which can disrupt the flow of international trade. To date, 171 countries have agreed to implement the SAFE framework, ensuring that the global supply chain remains secure according to consistent and widely accepted standards.[27]

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26. World Customs Organisation. SAFE Framework of Standards, 2018 edition (last accessed 27 November 2020).
27. World Customs Organisation. Intention to implement framework of standards, August 2020 (last accessed 27 November 2020).

Realise the benefits of Free Trade Agreements

Through our negotiations with international partners, the UK will seek to sign new trade deals which will be specifically tailored to our country's economy and interests. Our initial focus has been on agreements with Australia, Japan, New Zealand, the United States and the potential accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

The 2025 UK Border Strategy sets out a future UK border that is more effective for both UK and international users, therefore providing a more attractive export market for the international partners with which we are seeking to negotiate Free Trade Agreements (FTAs). For example, this includes components of the strategy such as the Single Trade Window, which offers one portal for operators and traders to submit information to multiple agencies, thereby reducing delays and administrative burdens for foreign businesses seeking to export to the UK.

In negotiating FTAs, the UK will also seek to influence the border policy of trade partners to improve export processes for UK businesses at the border of the destination country by seeking to:

- improve efficiency and minimise unwanted costs by ensuring fair and equal treatment for UK businesses, such as seeking the removal of fees and charges;

- open up new markets for UK traders and remove frictions and non-tariff barriers, such as seeking consistency towards penalties and access to information on appeals procedures for UK businesses;

- include commitments on developing and maintaining a Single Trade Window so that UK traders and their customers can benefit from a single platform to facilitate the movement of goods more easily across the border;

- reduce burdens and minimise delays, such as by seeking commitments from trade partners on maximum release times for goods by customs administrations; and

- achieve regulatory equivalence and safety of UK sanitary and phytosanitary arrangements with FTA partners and streamline import certification processes.

Case study:
The Japan–UK FTA – delivering benefits for border users

The UK–Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) was signed by International Trade Secretary Liz Truss and Japan's Foreign Minister Motegi Toshimitsu in Tokyo on Friday 23 October 2020.[28] It was the first major trade deal that the UK secured as an independent trading nation and will increase trade with Japan by an estimated £15.2 billion.

UK businesses will be able to conduct tariff-free trade on 99% of exports to Japan. Government analysis shows that a deal with Japan will deliver a £1.5 billion boost to the UK economy and increase UK workers' wages by £800 million in the long run.[29]

These benefits will be delivered through a range of negotiated measures including: maintaining tariff reductions and market access, increased geographical indicator protections, as well as digital and data provisions that go well beyond the EU–Japan Agreement. In particular, negotiating effective border arrangements has been essential to secure benefits to British businesses and the UK economy. For example:

- The customs provisions in the CEPA minimise costs and administrative burdens, meaning that Japanese consumers can get more of the British products they enjoy and UK SMEs benefit from simple and predictable customs procedures.

- The UK and Japan have agreed to measures that make the CEPA easy and predictable to use. CEPA establishes a committee to ensure direct cooperation between the UK and Japan's customs authorities in customs (and Rules of Origin) matters. It also ensures that goods are held in customs for a period no longer than necessary and that information on customs procedures is publicly available to exporters.

28. Department for International Trade. UK and Japan sign historic free trade agreement (last accessed 27 November 2020).
29. Department for International Trade. UK and Japan agree historic free trade agreement (last accessed 27 November 2020).

Next steps

Our border will undergo significant change as we end the transition period. This strategy will enable us to harness the opportunities of regained independence and control to shape how our border operates as a sovereign nation determined to take advantage of global opportunities.

This strategy aims to provide long-term clarity on the Target Operating Model we wish to create. It aims to give the border industry and users of the border a framework with which to work with government to co-design and deliver that model in partnership.

Delivering the transformations we have set out will require collaborative work between the public and private sector over the coming years, as well as close collaboration between all the nations of the UK.

The Border and Protocol Delivery Group will coordinate the delivery of these transformations to ensure that we stay on track to deliver the world's most effective border. Through the new Design Authority the first step we will take is to work with stakeholders to build a detailed roadmap of changes that deliver our ambition and develop detailed designs for the processes and systems that will make the Target Operating Model a reality.