

Borders Bulletin

Dear Stakeholder,

This bulletin provides the latest news from the Government relating to UK borders.

Please share these updates with your clients, customers and members and feel free to highlight content on your communications channels.

For more information, go to gov.uk/transition

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Border Target Operating Model published

On 5 April 2023 the UK Government, in collaboration with the Scottish and Welsh Governments, published its plan to strengthen its borders against biosecurity threats and illegal imports.

The [draft Target Operating Model](#) proposes a new approach to security controls (applying to all imports), and sanitary and phytosanitary controls (applying to imports of live animals, animal products, plants and plants products) at the border.

It sets out how controls will be simplified, digitised and, over time, delivered through the UK's new Single Trade Window. The document has been developed through engagement with stakeholders, collaboration across the UK, Scottish and Welsh Governments, and engagement with officials from the devolved administration in Northern Ireland.

If you wish to provide feedback on the draft model you can do so by completing the online survey [here](#). If you have any questions (as opposed to feedback), you can send them through to the Border Enquiries Mailbox: border.enquiries@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

The Cabinet Office has been running a programme of engagement with stakeholders from all nations of the UK and international partners which will last for a six week period from 05/04/23. It will consist of sector specific workshops, international events as well as wider stakeholder groups and bespoke sessions, covering all aspects of the Border Target Operating Model.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) will host sector specific sessions and seminars for those who import or export: food, live animals, animal products, plants and/or plants products to or from the United Kingdom.

A list of all outstanding engagement activities can be found below. Please take a look through and find the event that will be most useful for you. All of the remaining events listed below will be virtual (unrestricted attendance).

If you are an existing member of border-related forums run by HMRC, Defra or FSA, they will be in touch directly with other opportunities to provide feedback on the draft Border Target Operating Model.

Cabinet Office Engagement Activities

Cabinet Office Carriers Workshop - Online (Monday 24th April, 2-4pm, [sign up here](#))

Purpose - Test the draft model and capture critical insight specific to the maritime and aviation sectors

Target audience - Carriers - airlines, ferry and rail operators

Cabinet Office Hauliers, Logistics & Customs Intermediaries Workshop - Online (Wednesday 26th April, 2-4pm, [sign up here](#))

Purpose - To test the draft model and capture critical insight and feedback from the haulage and logistics sector

Target audience - Hauliers & the logistics sector

Cabinet Office Final Workshop, Stakeholder Reflections - Online (Wednesday 17th May, 2-4pm, [sign up here](#))

Purpose - To provide reflections on the themes and issues raised during the engagement period

Target audience - Wide range of industry groups and stakeholders

Defra Engagement Activities

If you import or export: food, live animals, animal products, plants and/or plants products to or from the United Kingdom, Defra is also running a series of workshops and sector specific sessions. These will help you understand what the Border Target Operating Model will mean for your business, and give you a further opportunity to provide feedback on the proposals before they are finalised. They will include more information on risk-based controls, groupage models and trusted trader schemes.

You can sign up to the full list of the Defra-led sector specific and online events on [Eventbrite](#).

Export Academy: New Food and Drink Module

The Department for Business and Trade (DBT) will be hosting a free webinar on Thursday 27th April aimed at UK SMEs which will provide a step-by-step explanation of how you can move your food and drink produce overseas. Sector specialists from the DBT will take you through the essentials of getting your products from A to B, and private sector speakers will provide their own knowledge and insight on best practice. [Find further information and sign up online](#).

Abuse of Import Procedures for Alcohol

Criminals are trying to deceive customs agents into submitting incorrect import entries for alcohol. False or misleading information is being supplied by importers or their representatives, leading to loss of UK excise duty and VAT. Some of these importers claim to be genuine businesses whose identities have been hijacked, others are bogus firms who default on payments due to HMRC.

If you are a customs agent acting for an alcohol importer you could unwittingly be helping criminals to commit alcohol fraud. This is a crime that hurts both genuine businesses and the public purse.

Please share this new information with people in your business who create import entries for alcohol. The main areas of concern are **alcohol described as zero strength, low strength or subject to reliefs**.

The tax types to look out for:

Beers, Wines, or Spirits

- 431 (no duty charged)

Beers only

- 446 and 443 (low duty rates)
- 447 and 473 (high strength – both codes required)

Wines only

- 433 and 435 (low duty rates)

Spirits only

- low volumes (less duty paid)

Please check that the tax type used matches the alcohol being imported. If you identify a problem you should proceed with caution.

It is in your interests to check carefully who you are dealing with. Effective due diligence helps protect both business and HMRC from financial losses and disruption due to fraud.

Further information on due diligence procedures can be found in online guidance: [due diligence when making customs declarations](#). You can also [report concerns](#) online.

Exporting food and drink to China

Defra wanted to remind food and drink businesses who were successful as part of the fast-track process in 2021, of the requirement from the General Administration of Customs China (GACC) to modify their details on Cifer before 30 June 2023. To modify an application, businesses need to provide further information specific to their product category. This includes a signed and stamped checklist and declaration. Failure to modify a registration could result in delays, blockages or inability to export to China.

Further information can be found in the attached [FAQs](#).

Helpline numbers

Here is the list of helplines you may find useful. We have added hyperlinks that will take you to pages that provide extra information such as the opening hours for the helpline all of which have sufficient capacity to support businesses.

- [Export support service](#)
- HMRC Customs & International Trade Helpline - 0300 200 3700
- [HMRC Imports and Exports General Enquiries](#) (including GVMS) - 0300 322 9434
- [New Computerised Transit System](#) - 0300 322 7095
- [DVLA Contact Centre](#) - 0300 790 6802
- DVSA:
 - [Vehicle Operator Licensing Enquiries](#) - 0300 123 9000
 - [International Road Haulage Permits](#) - 0330 678 1117
- [The Office for Product Safety and Standards](#) - 0121 345 1201
- [MHRA Customer Service Centre](#) - 020 3080 6000
- [National Supply Disruption Centre](#) - 0800 915 9964
- [Rural Payments Agency \(RPA\) Trader team](#) - 0330 041 6500
- [Animal, Plant and Health Agency \(APHA\)](#) - 0300 100 0313
 - IPAFFS general - 0300 100 0313
 - IPAFFS technical - 0330 041 6999
 - PEACH - 0345 607 3224
- [Defra Rural Services](#) - 0300 020 0301
- [Environment Agency England](#) - 03708 506 506
- [Forestry Commission](#) - 0300 067 4000
- [Fish Exports Helpline](#) - 0330 159 1989
- [The Intellectual Property Office](#) - 0300 300 2000
- [BEIS Public Enquiries Helpline](#) - 020 7215 5000
- BEIS Business Support Lines:
 - [England](#) - 0800 998 1098
 - [Scotland](#) - 0300 303 0660
 - [Wales](#) - 0300 060 3000
 - [Northern Ireland](#) - 0800 181 4422
- [Citizen Advice Consumer Helpline](#) - 0808 223 1133
- [Department for Education Helpline](#) - 0370 000 2288
- [Home Office - UK Visas & Immigration Helpline](#) - 0300 790 6268
- [Home Office - EU Settlement Scheme Application Resolution Centre](#) - 0300 123 7379

HMRC also operates a number of services, including:

- Import/export general enquiries can be made by calling 0300 200 3700.

You can also [speak to an adviser online](#) about general import and export queries.

- It is also possible to [send a question about imports, exports and customs reliefs](#).

DEFRA Helplines:

DEFRA also has a number of additional [helplines](#) for the commodity you are exporting to the EU.

For questions to the DVSA on vehicle operator licensing you can call 0300 123 9000. For questions to the DVLA you should call 0300 790 6802.

The UK Government also operates an online forum where you can access key information and ask questions directly on [customs and tax](#).
