

# ***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](https://www.gov.uk/transition)

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## **Border Target Operating Model published**

Last month, 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](#) by Friday 19th May. If you have any questions (as opposed to feedback), you

can send them through to the Border Enquiries Mailbox:

[border.enquiries@cabinetoffice.gov.uk](mailto: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 and conclude on 19/05/23. It has consisted 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) has hosted 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.

Thank you to those of you who have participated in our workshops. Our final event next week is listed below which is a stakeholder reflections workshop on the 17th May. This event will be virtual (unrestricted attendance).

### **Cabinet Office Engagement Activity**

**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

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## Border Target Operating Model - Overview for Traders in the EU and EFTA

The UK's [draft Border Target Operating Model](#) sets out proposed changes to the UK's Sanitary and PhytoSanitary (SPS) import controls for products imported into Great Britain. These SPS import controls cover animals and animal products and plants and plant products.

Defra would like to invite **traders based in EU and EFTA countries who are exporting products that require SPS controls into Great Britain** to an online overview of the draft Border Target Operating Model on **Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> May at 10:00 BST**. This session will be presented in English on Microsoft Teams, and we'll be taking questions in advance via [Sli.do](#). Register on [Eventbrite](#).

Over the past few weeks, Defra have hosted three TOM sessions: one focused on the Authorised Operator Status model, and two focused on what the TOM means for the Fresh Produce and Horticulture sector. A recording of the sessions is now available on the [Plant Health Portal](#), alongside a readout of the questions and answers Defra received during the session.

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## **Border Target Operating Model risk categorisation for SPS goods & streamlined EHCs**

On the 28th April, Defra published the initial Border Target Operating Model (TOM) [risk categorisation](#) for the imports of animals; animal products; plants and plant products of EU & EFTA origin (excluding Norway and Iceland for plants and plant products); which sets out the controls that will apply to these goods when they are imported into Great Britain from 31 October 2023, as set out in the draft TOM published earlier this month. The TOM describes broad categories of high, medium and low risk, and this categorisation gives the details of how the new Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) regime – as set out in the draft TOM - will be applied.

For animals and animal products, the categorisation is derived from a scientific assessment of the biosecurity and food safety risk that each commodity poses, weighted against the disease and pest risk of the country of origin. For plants and plant products, an equivalent process is in place to categorise commodities according to biosecurity risk. The categorisation is designed to be dynamic to respond to changing risks. There are some specific commodity groups (some dairy, composites and fruit and veg) where further risk assessment is ongoing. These have been placed in the 'low' TOM risk category from October 2023, pending further risk assessments. Any changes to these TOM risk categories will not take place before April 2024 and we will communicate with traders well in advance of any changes to commodity categorisation.

The EU will be treated as a single epidemiological entity, therefore all imports from the EU countries will have SPS controls applied consistently.

If you import food products, live animals, animal products, [plants or plant products](#) from the EU into GB, you need to check the TOM risk-level of your commodity now to be ready for upcoming changes to border processes.

To view the Plants and Plant Product TOM Risk Categories click [here](#).

To view the Animals and Animal Products TOM Risk Categories click [here](#).

We welcome [further feedback](#) on Defra's approach as part of the ongoing engagement period on the TOM.

The TOM includes a commitment to streamline the format and content of the Export Health Certificates (EHCs) for Animals and Animal Products imported to GB.

The new GB model certificates do not change the requirements for importing animal and animal products into GB. The GB EHCs will be shorter and more logical in their format from the existing GB EHCs. The new GB EHCs for Products of Animal Origin (POAO) and a number of Animal By-Products (ABP) has been published on gov.uk [here](#)

The remaining APB EHCs will follow by mid-May 2023. All high and medium-risk POAO and ABP imported into GB from EU/EEA countries will need to use the new GB EHCs from 31 October 2023. New model EHCs for live animals and germinal products will be published in the summer.

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## HMRC's Advance Valuation Ruling Service (AVRS) is here

Traders can now get legal certainty on their chosen valuation method for imported goods, for a period of three years.

We understand that customs valuations are complicated and we are introducing this new service to make things simpler.

Advance Valuation Rulings are written decisions made by customs authorities at the request of a trader that are legally binding on both parties.

Traders do not have to use this service but it will help to facilitate trade by providing certainty on the correct method of customs valuation.

### How to sign up

If traders want to sign up for AVRS, they need:

- A Government Gateway ID
- EORI number

For [more information](#), visit GOV.UK.

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# 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.

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# Exporting food and drink to China

Defra would like 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](#).

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## 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](#).

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