UK Border Target Operating Model (BTOM) – Updated 1ˢᵗ February 2024

Background:
- The BTOM is the Government plan for introducing full border checks for imports from the EU. The BTOM attempts to simplify imports, particularly of food, to speed up controls and link them to existing and emerging technology. The BTOM also is linked to the wider work on the Single Trade Window, the Government's approach to simplifying imports which will apply globally and expected to be fully in place by 2025.
- A full copy of the BTOM is available here. The Scottish, Welsh and UK Governments intend to start implementing the new Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) regime from January 2024, with legislation introduced in accordance with the below timetable detailed in the BTOM.
- Leaflets to support businesses can be found here.

Key Dates for Delivery of the BTOM and Risk Categorisations:
- **31 January 2024** – health certification applies for imports of medium risk animal products and animal by-products (where they are available) and phytosanitary certification on imports of medium risk plants and plant products and high-risk food and feed of non-animal origin from the EU. See links below.
- **Note**: *Transitional Staging Period (TSP) end date, from 31 January 2024 to 29 April 2024.* ***Note for medium risk fruit and vegetables:*** *A transitional easement for medium risk fruit and vegetables is currently in place. Defra confirmed no changes have been made to the risk categorisation for these commodities. If businesses are importing a medium-risk fruit or vegetable from the EU, Switzerland, or Liechtenstein to GB they do not need to obtain a Phytosanitary Certificate, nor pre-notify these goods at this time.*
- **30 April 2024 –** documentary and physical checks on medium risk animal products, plants, plant products and high-risk food and feed of non-animal origin from the EU. ***Note:*** *fruit and vegetables will require phytosanitary certificates. Simplified imports from Rest of World (RoW) based on risk levels.*
- *Note: instruments will be laid to deliver policies for implementation later in 2024. Legislation will also include the pre-notification requirements for goods moving from Republic of Ireland directly to Great Britain. Qualifying Northern Ireland goods will continue to move to Great Britain without additional requirements.*
- **31 October 2024 –** safety and security declarations for imports from the EU. Also reduced data for those on the Single Trade Window to avoid duplication.
- Risk categorisations (high, medium, low) for EU SPS (Sanitary and Phytosanitary) imports – see here:
  - For Plants and Plant Product TOM Risk Categories: click here. For details of pre-notification for fruit and vegetables from the EU, see update here.
  - For Animals and Animal Products TOM Risk Categories: click here.
- Simplified EHCs for use for POAO imports from EU – see here.
- Risk categorisation for imports of POAO from RoW – see here:
  - For non-EU animals and animal products, the risk categorisation is available here.
  - For non-EU plants and plant products the risk categorisation is available here.

January 2024: The latest meeting with the cabinet office on readiness and our feedback is here.

Note: the threats to public health and from animal and plant disease, such as African Swine Fever and Xylella fastidiosa, continue to change and Defra indicated that responsive biosecurity controls are in place to combat them and any changes on measures would have communication.

More on the Risk Categorisation for EU SPS Imports:
- The categories of high, medium, and low risk give the details of how the new SPS regime will be applied. If you import food products, live animals, animal products, plants or plant products from the EU into Great Britain (GB), you need to check the TOM risk-level of your commodity to be ready for upcoming changes to border processes.
- As a reminder, there are 3 components of the SPS regime:
  1. **Pre-notification** - supports action at points of entry and targets activity for shipments posing biggest biosecurity risk. The detail allows traceability and allows authorities to identify and respond to an outbreak or emerging threat.
  2. **Export Health Certification (EHC)** - requires exporting countries to certify that goods have been produced to safe standards and have a process to monitor this via documentary checks.
  3. **Identity and physical checks** – at the Border Control Post (BCP), health officials will check goods match the health certification, identify any trends of concern in non-compliance and to sample goods for pests and disease.
- With regards to the checks of low and medium risk animal products:
  - Low risk animal products – will not require a EHC and not subject to regular border checks.
  - Medium risk animal products - will require an a EHC to enter GB but still have less checks at the border.
- There will be a phased approach, through 3 milestones (see above for milestone dates)

More on EHCs (Export Health Certificates):
- The health certificates that accompany certain goods on import to GB have been streamlined to make them more straightforward to complete, while maintaining existing food safety standards and ensuring information required for risk management and traceability in an incident continues to be provided.
- The new EHCs for certain products have been published on gov.uk here.
- These new EHCs will need to be used for affected goods from 31 January 2024.
- Once adopted for EU imports they will be available for RoW imports.
- Digital certificates will be available in the future and accepted from 31 January 2024, but will be dependent on the IT support available in EU countries.
- *Note: Defra are looking to move to predominately digital certificates, and working with member states to ensure this will be smooth. If using paper copies, then they will need to be scanned and travel with the consignment, so a lot more work involved. So, members are encouraged to look to move to digital certificates.*
- To avoid delays, Defra has asked that there is a focus on the alignment of information, so admin errors are reduced. Commodity codes, CHED number and weight were indicated as the three most important pieces of information to check align. There will be a pragmatic approach between January to April 2024.

More on E-Phytocertificates for Plants:
- The government will be replacing manual paper-based phytosanitary certificates with digitalised certificates (ePhytos). Digitising the process will reduce the potential for error and fraud and allow data to be used to target risk-based checks. More information can be seen here.

- Guidance for moving plants has now been published – see [here](#).
- The NI Plant Health Label (NIPHL) scheme came into effect on the 1st of October 2023 and is a way for growers and traders in Great Britain to move products that are eligible for the scheme to Northern Ireland. Goods under the scheme will not require a Phytosantitary Certificate, provided they are for Northern Ireland (with no risk for onward movement to the EU).
- DAERA has put together guidance for the NIPHL scheme [here](#).

<u>More on the Accredited Trusted Trader Scheme:</u>
- The Accredited Trusted Trader Scheme applies to UK based businesses with good record of compliance and able to demonstrate excellent end to end controls of their supply chain (for animals and plants).
- The main benefit would be the ability to make physical and certification checks away from the border speeding up transport.
- The Government has been running pilots to understand how these could work, the information required for entry and any risks from its operation. Interest for this has now closed (on 6 October 2023).
- What is the UK Single Trade Window in all of this? The UK Single Trade Window will provide a gateway for application and management of Trusted Trader status. Traders applying for authorisations will have a more straightforward customer journey where data will not be requested on multiple occasions.