

# BORDER MANAGEMENT TODAY

Issue 006 | May 2021

## ANTI-SMUGGLING: INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION HOLDS THE KEY

Home Office Minister

## POST COVID BORDERS : A NEW SAFE SEAMLESS TRAVELLER MODEL

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# Message from the Chairman

Welcome to another bumper edition of “Border Management Today”.

Despite the ongoing challenges of COVID and our inability to run international events I am pleased to report that interest in IBMATA and our activities has continued unabated. Not least because the principles upon which we were founded – that is the need for international collaboration on Border Management and Future Borders Systems and Technologies – have never been more relevant than now.

In our first section, we take a close look at the ever-increasing problem of human smuggling, and how to tackle it. The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Immigration and Borders at the UK Home Office – Chris Philp MP – sets out his very clear vision about how the UK government intends to co-operate at international level to disrupt and deter the international organised crime gangs involved in human trafficking and human smuggling. Nick Fowler, who heads up the UK Border Force International network, sets out how this can be done. And my good friend Seth Stodder – one of the leading global experts on migration threats and challenges – sets out in stark terms the threats faced by the US Customs and Border Protection Service in this area. We have inputs from our friends in the Bali Process setting out the need for more international training for Border Agents worldwide to identify victims of trafficking and to distinguish them from irregular migrants, so that intelligence can be harvested more effectively to target the criminal gangs behind it all. Plus, a timely reminder from Reiner Pungs on the ongoing dangers of drug cultivation and smuggling in the Far East. We add to this the potent capability of some of our technology members – Ricardo Letosa from SITA and Shannon

Kerrigan from Leidos – to harvest data, convert it into intelligence, and make best use of safe AI to maximise our ability to intervene at international level – and we have a powerful case for international collaboration between both public and private sector actors to turn the tide on this despicable trade.

We hope to pursue our war on human smuggling at our next Asia Summit in Singapore on 27 – 29 September; and at our Europe Summit in Brussels on 8 – 10 November, COVID permitting. Martyn Hill, our Director of Events, gives us his take on the likelihood of us finally getting back on the road later this year.

Our second section returns to the familiar theme of the seamless traveller journey – something that we have been working on for some time now, as our followers will know. Now known as the “Safe” seamless traveller journey (SSTJ), we have the latest guidelines from our friends and partners at the WTTC on how this can be delivered in the post COVID world to get international travel moving again. Diane Sabatino - Deputy Executive Assistant Commissioner at the Office of Field Operations, U.S. Customs and Border Protection - shows us how it can be done, with some innovative examples of how facial recognition technology is transforming the US Border. Meanwhile our friends in the smaller border agencies haven't been idle, with reports of some excellent initiatives already underway in both the Maldives and the Seychelles. Jon Payne at World Reach invites us all to board the “seamless train”, and I have added a report on our latest IBMATA rainbow group “drive through” border solution, which demonstrates just what can be done through private sector partnerships and innovation in these challenging times.

Dr Katy Hayward reminds us that the story of the Irish border goes back

a lot further than Brexit - and uncovers the unique role that IBMATA members Queens University Belfast has played in shaping it. Not least the fact that Sir William Haldane-Porter – the first ever appointed Inspector of the UK “Immigration Branch” under the Aliens Order 1905 - was actually born there. Here we have a curtain raiser to Katy's new book, due out soon.

Meanwhile Shenali Jashani from Fujitsu takes us through the 47 steps needed to move a cow from the UK to the EU under the new regulations – and how we can deliver the “Single Trade Window” to help our importers and exporters to keep goods moving across our borders in the post Brexit world.

No edition of Border Management Today could be complete without a contribution from our very own Lars Karlsson, who tells us how “AEO X” is the future of Customs. Plus, we return to the ongoing theme of “Freeports” with contributions from Wolfgang Schuster at Atkins on the value of data, and Mark Pegler on the challenges of enforcement and compliance.

In times of hardship like these it is often family that holds things together – so once again I offer my heartfelt thanks to all the IBMATA family for your steadfast support to us throughout the COVID crisis. We are a small non-profit organization and as such we rely heavily upon your goodwill to survive. With that you have been hugely generous, and I sincerely hope we are able to meet in person again soon to discuss all things border related. Meanwhile, stay safe and well.

*Tony Smith*

**Tony Smith CBE,**

CHAIRPERSON *at* INTERNATIONAL BORDER

MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGIES ASSOCIATION



By Chris Philp MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, UK Home Office & Department for Justice



# Tackling Smuggling Gangs and Illegal Immigration through Collaboration

For many, the summer months may signal a day out with family and friends to enjoy the weather. For criminal networks facilitating small boat crossings, the sunny skies and calm waters is a time they choose to exploit and carry out illegal activities.

We know that there are links between the criminal gangs that facilitate illegal immigration with other illicit activities, from drug and firearms trafficking to modern slavery and violent crimes.

Not only are they putting people's lives at risk through dangerous crossings and exploiting our asylum system, but also the lives of emergency workers at the borders.

You only have to turn on the news or read the paper and see people making dangerous attempts to cross the Channel on small boats, shipping vessels and in containers.

There are some harrowing stories of people who have lost their lives attempting to enter the country. In 2019, 39

Vietnamese migrants lost their lives attempting to enter the country in a sealed refrigerated lorry container.

No longer should criminal crime gangs be able to line their pockets with the spoils of people smuggling, benefiting from human misery. We need to deter and disrupt this deadly business model which puts lives at risk.

However, this isn't something that we can tackle alone – international collaboration is vital if we want to dismantle these criminal networks that span across different countries.

Disrupting people smuggler networks and trafficking is a significant challenge that involves working with our partners locally and internationally to curb this plight at every level.

We are already working extensively with our partners in Europe, especially France and Belgium, to prevent migrants attempting to make their way illegally to the UK.

This includes work funded through overseas

development aid and activities of law enforcement and intelligence partners including the National Crime Agency (NCA) who lead the multi-agency Organised Immigration Crime Taskforce.

I cannot overstate enough the importance of working collaboratively across departments, between law enforcement agencies locally and further afield to share intelligence and break criminal gangs. A key example of our efforts in this space is the work under Project INVIGOR. Established in 2015, this multi-agency taskforce brings together 150 officers from Immigration Enforcement, Border Force, the police, NCA and the Crown Prosecution Service to combat the threat of organised immigration crime and break international people smuggling gangs across the globe.

We are working closely with law enforcement in France on more joint operations than ever before and will continue to do so. We have doubled the number of police officers working on French beaches, which has resulted in over 2,000 people being prevented from crossing - more than twice the number than the same time last year.

We have also secured more than 60 prosecutions against people smuggling gangs since 2020, with a total sentencing of 55 years. On average around 70% of crossings are now being intercepted in France.

We are increasing surveillance and introducing new technology to disrupt criminal networks further.

In addition, the Home Secretary recently hosted the G6 with our international partners (ministers of France, Germany, Italy, Poland and Spain, alongside representatives of the United States and the EU Commission) with the core theme of how we can work together to tackle illegal migration.

We also recognise there are strong links between modern slavery and organised immigration crime. That's why last year we provided funding to support the Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime Programme, in order to strengthen the response to modern slavery and increase prosecutions as well as building a new capability within the police to deal with organised immigration crime. We are providing continued funding to support the programme in 21/22.

However, it's clear that more must be done - we must better deter illegal migration and strengthen the protection of our borders. Our New Plan for Immigration includes several new measures that will tackle people smuggling gangs and illegal immigration through collaboration.

The New Plan for Immigration will bring about the biggest overhaul to our asylum system in decades. It will mean our asylum system is fair but firm, welcoming those who come to the UK in genuine need and cracking down on organised crime gangs that exploit the vulnerable and endanger lives.

The policy, which is currently going through the consultation process, will equip us with the tools necessary to protect our borders and deter these dangerous crossings.

As part of the policy we are seeking to introduce tougher criminal offences for those attempting to enter the UK illegally.

We will provide Border Force with additional powers to search, seize and dispose of vessels, in addition to stopping and redirecting vessels and those on board away from the UK where the people onboard are suspected of seeking to enter the UK illegally.

Our ambition is to fully digitise our legal borders system and introduce and enforce Electronic Travel

Authorisations (ETAs).

This will give the UK more control of our borders, improve our capability to count people in and out and ensure we can do more to prevent criminals from travelling to the UK.

Under the new reforms we will work with our international partners to facilitate the removal of those who enter the UK illegally, returning them back to their country or the safe country that they came from.

We are committed to working together to streamline and improve the returns process. Having robust returns agreements in place will seek to keep offenders at bay and remove those that have no lawful right to remain in the UK. We have amended our asylum rules accordingly, so that those who enter in an irregular manner and are not coming directly from a place of danger or have transited through countries where they could have claimed asylum will be inadmissible to the UK asylum system. Returning those who arrive illegally will act as a substantial deterrent, and migrants will soon stop making dangerous and illegal journeys when they realise they face rapid return - to their country of origin (if safe), a safe country of transit or another safe country.

We have made good progress but working together is key to tackling people smugglers.

CHRIS PHILP MP is a Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the UK Home Office and at the UK Department of Justice. He is the Member of Parliament for Croydon South, and has lead responsibility for the Management and Control of the UK Border, including the UK Border Force.



By Nick Fowler

# The importance of domestic and international collaboration to strengthen borders globally

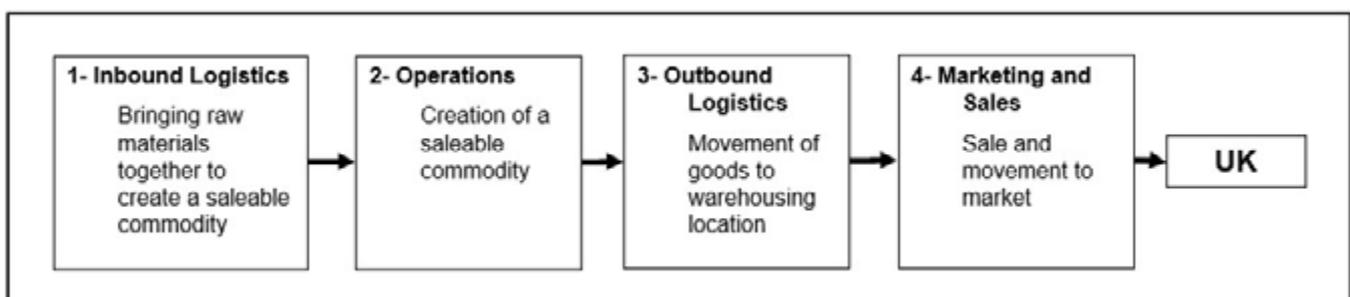
Borders represent a key intervention opportunity against serious and organised crime threats. Intelligence and information sharing partnerships with both domestic and global counterparts are symbiotic components of an effective full system response. Ensuring that a border both receives and shares information is critical to delivering a mutually productive process that both feeds and support both disruptions and investigations, as

- the ability to reactively detect and intervene against a criminal threat at a border creates increased opportunity to collect intelligence / gather evidence to inform investigations;
- a border capability integrated into the law enforcement system will provide a more professional response to intelligence developed for action; and lead to
- a more professional / robust border with mainstreamed processes which will be increasingly resilient to corruption.

Structural synergies are frequently drawn in analytical fields between successful commercial enterprises and organised crime groups (OCGs). In academia, the Porter Model remains the simplest method of outlining the varying steps within a successful commercial value chain (from point of origin through to end market). Figure 1 highlights the four key components of a UK-facing commercial value chain: Inbound Logistics, Operations, Outbound Logistics and Marketing/Sales.

The principles of the Porter Model to describe the key components of a manufacturing value chain are fully transferable to transnational organised crime. As with businesses in legitimate industry, OCGs will control and profit from disparate elements of a criminal value chain. Frequently, OCGs will specialise in niche areas, such as transport, communications, money movement or other enabling services – contracting these to other criminal groups and deriving a profit from the fees charged.

Figure 1 - Porter Model (Components of Value Chain)



**COLLABORATION  
TO STRENGTHEN  
BORDERS  
GLOBALLY**



As the fee paid only relates to the service provided, the profit will be generated regardless of whether the commodity being trafficked reaches the end market. For example – the profit derived from the controller of Inbound Logistics is dependent only upon the commodity successfully passing to the controller of the second element (Operations). Once the commodity passes from Inbound Logistics to Operations, the controller of the first element will most likely have been paid and is able to reinvest profit in further criminal activity in support of the same or other OCGs.

In a criminal context, the result of multi-OCG value chains is that many of those involved in trafficking will derive profit long before the commodity arrives on the streets of the final destination. Accordingly, a detection at the point of entry to the end market will not impact the profits of all involved in the facilitation of a dangerous commodity or vulnerable person.

Whilst detecting criminal threats at the point of entry into the UK is a critical component of the UK law enforcement response, it is recognised that the impact across the transnational criminal value chain is usually limited to OCG-related activity that would have otherwise occurred after a successful border penetration (but not before). Therefore, in parallel to law enforcement activity at the end border, it is important to support upstream activity, which, on a



sustained basis, has greater potential to collapse a wider cross-section of the criminal value chain.

Disrupting the value chain in this fashion denies the criminal opportunity for other OCGs, thereby eroding the profit of all stakeholders, whilst impacting upon destination-bound flow. Figure 2 describes the value of an upstream disruption (portrayed by the red cross) within the context of an illegal migration value chain involving facilitation to the UK via Schengen countries. It should be noted that this is just one example of the numerous routes and mechanisms exploited by facilitators involved in illegal migration.

Routings utilised by facilitators increase exponentially as the commodity or person moves further away from the point of origin. This growth can also be superimposed over the disparate elements of the value chain. Importantly, for single or limited-origin point threats, this means that a greater proportion of the threat can be targeted by resource focussed as closely as possible to the source.

Figure 2 – Impact of Upstream Activity on Illegal Migration Value Chains

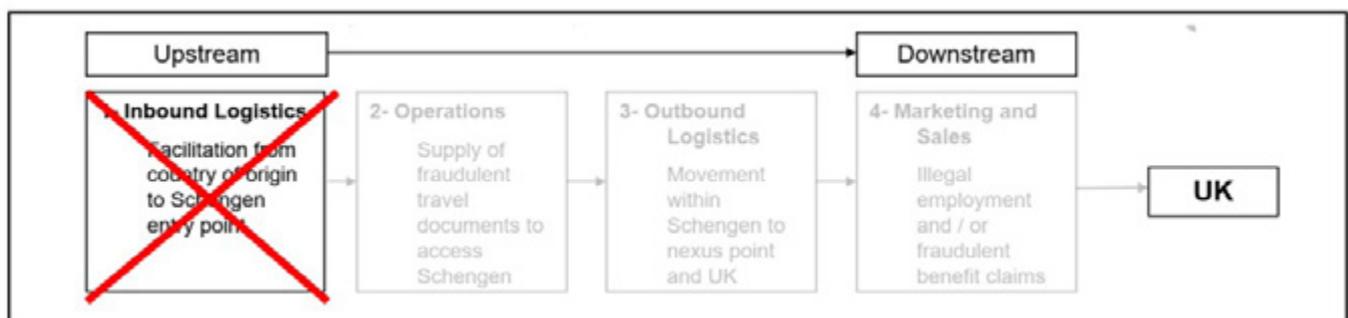
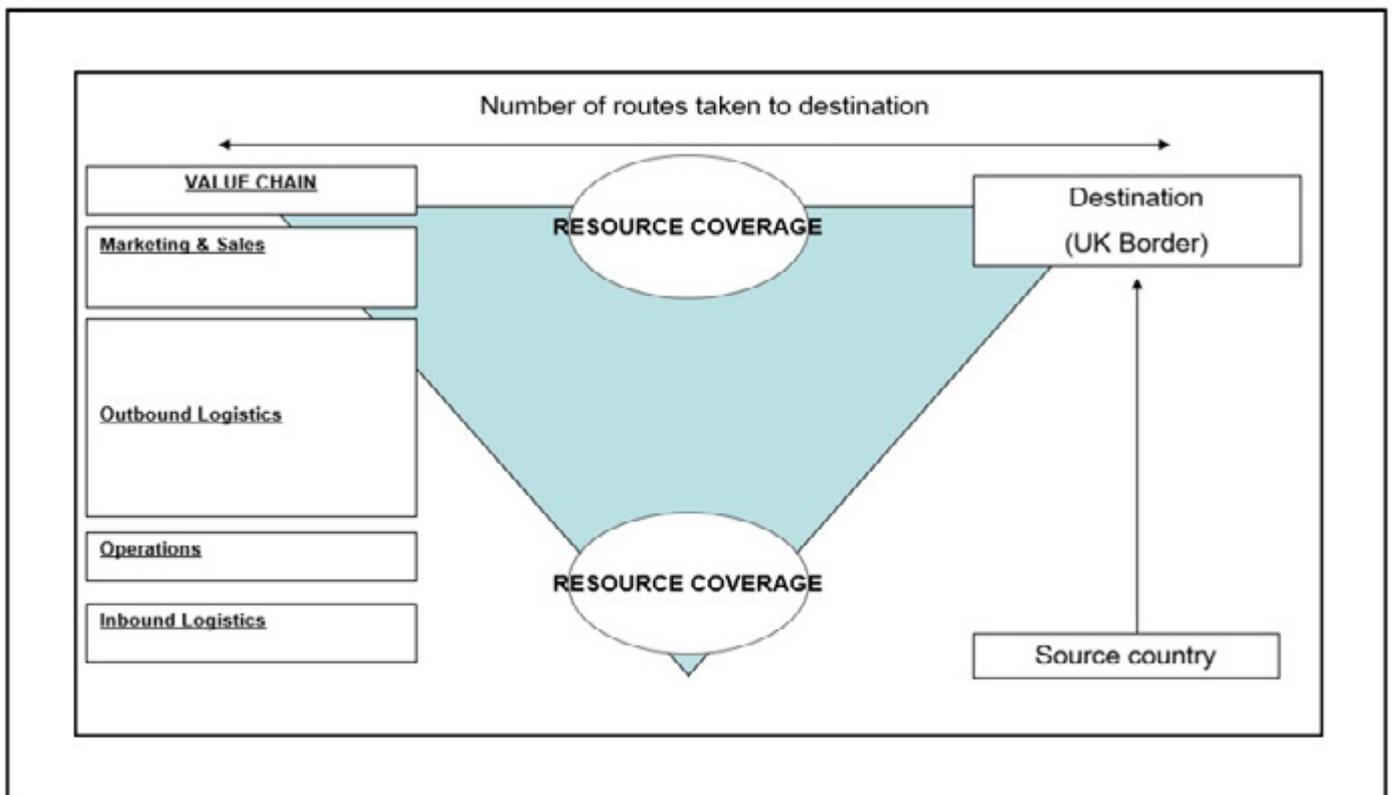


Figure 3 shows the interdependent correlation between increases in routes to destination and distance from point of origin, overlaid with the established components of a productive value chain.

It can be concluded that targeted and sustained law enforcement activity at source not only creates a broader impact across the value chain, but also against the size of the problem as a whole. Critically, interventions in threat source or transshipment / nexus countries ensure the presence of the physical evidence required under many judicial systems to allow an investigation and prosecution to take place.

Figure 3 – Route to Market Expansion Analysis



Even as the world continues to digitise, the physical border will remain one of the most significant risks for criminals and opportunities for law enforcement. Supporting the development of new capabilities, sharing best practice and exchanging intelligence (domestically and internationally) is key to delivering the maximum possible impact against crime groups exploiting borders across the world.

Over the past five years, Border Force International has delivered large-scale capacity building programmes to strengthen borders across the world against threats of mutual UK/host importance; including tackling modern slavery and child sexual abuse and exploitation as well as drug/firearms trafficking, illicit money movements and the illegal wildlife trade.

Nick Fowler is the Head of the International Network at the UK Border Force, UK Home Office. Nick leads a network of officers stationed in the UK and in over 20 locations of strategic importance to tackling serious and organised crime across the Americas, Eurasia and Africa regions. Previously stationed overseas for the Serious Organised Crime Agency and the National Crime Agency, Nick's experience spans large-scale border modernisation projects, international diplomacy, and intelligence-led operations.



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By Seth Stodder

# Addressing the Ongoing Crisis at the U.S.-Mexico Border



**T**he U.S. continues to experience a surge of migrants to the border – with monthly apprehensions made by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) at levels not seen in decades. We also face a border security problem, with CBP estimating that 1,500 people are now slipping into the country undetected every day.

America's broken immigration system sits at the root of this. Its dysfunctions are pulling vast flows of migrants to the border, which are overwhelming CBP and compromising border security, and they are fueling a humanitarian crisis by needlessly putting migrant kids in danger and enriching the smuggling organizations bringing them here.

More maddening is that, for all the focus on keeping migrants out, America actually needs more immigrants, not less. The most recent Census shows America's population growing at the slowest pace in a century. More immediately, America's economy is poised to roar quickly out of the pandemic, and with U.S. employers already starved for workers, our economy is at risk.

**1. America's dysfunctional immigration system is not responding to these needs.** Backlogs shadow every visa category and demand far outstrips the supply of available slots. But people find a way. Since 2013, over a million people have left Central

America's Northern Triangle, and it's not surprising why. Guatemala and Honduras rank among the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere. The governments are weak and corrupt, so they fail to better the lives of their citizens and instead allow their countries to be dominated by criminals. COVID-19 made everything worse and then in November, the region was hit by two hurricanes driving thousands from their homes. It's no secret why people want to head north. But our immigration system offers few lawful pathways to get here. Good luck on getting an immigrant visa and while H-2A and H-2B guest worker visas are theoretically available, most U.S. employers don't

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have recruiting networks in the Northern Triangle. So, realistically, the only way is to hire a smuggler and get across the border.

**2. The broken U.S. asylum processing system is fueling the border crisis.** Most migrants don't need to sneak in. Instead, America's broken asylum system provides a wide open door. Some Northern Triangle migrants legitimately need asylum protection from violent gangs, but the stark reality is that 60-70% of the asylum claims by Northern Triangle migrants are denied. So this is a "mixed" flow, with more than half presenting non-meritorious claims. Unfortunately, the system for determining which asylum claims are genuine has broken down. Initial "credible fear" screening interviews don't weed out many non-genuine cases, so most migrants are allowed to present asylum claims in immigration courts, which now face a 1.3 million case backlog. As a result, it can take up to 5 years to resolve a claim and, during that time, asylum seekers can stay and work. And those who lose are rarely removed by ICE. So Northern Triangle asylum seekers are generally able to stay in the U.S. indefinitely, win or lose. This is a huge "pull factor" bringing migrants to the border.

**3. The differential treatment of single adults, UACs and family units is compounding the disaster.** Prior to the pandemic, single adults were referred to ICE and placed in detention – often until their asylum claims were resolved. By contrast, UACs are only detained briefly before they are let in and released to a parent or guardian. The difference has produced a predictable result – surges of UACs to the border, like in 2014 when over 68,000 were apprehended.



After the 2014 UAC surge, smugglers also started bringing family units – betting correctly that the Obama Administration wouldn't separate families by detaining parents but releasing the kids. But once it was clear that smugglers were using children as "passports" to enable adults to enter the U.S. without detention, the Obama Administration responded by detaining entire family units. A federal court (in Flores) blocked this, however, holding that family detention violated a 1997 court settlement that had restricted the detention of UACs. Both the Obama and Trump Administrations appealed the ruling, asserting that the Flores settlement didn't apply to accompanied minors, but it remains the law – and the predictable result has been surges like in 2019, when CBP apprehended over 500,000 family unit migrants – more than triple the previous year, and more than ten times the 39,838 in 2015. The Trump Administration responded with a number of draconian laws aimed at deterring this and getting around Flores, culminating in the "Title 42" rule promulgated under CDC's authority, which empowered CBP to expel all undocumented migrants coming to the border, without allowing them to claim asylum. In November 2020, however, the Title 42 wall started to crumble – with a court decision blocking use Title 42 against UACs. Inevitably

a surge followed, with UAC apprehensions jumping to around 18,000 in both March and April 2021. What about family units? The Biden Administration asserts that Title 42 still applies to family units, but the reality is that only 30% are being expelled under Title 42, with the rest being allowed in. This is because the Mexican state of Tamaulipas, through which most family units are traveling, is refusing to accept expulsions of family units with young children. So most are now being let in by CBP. As a result, another surge – with CBP apprehending over 50,000 family units in March and April, more than ten times December. In short, the crumbling of Title 42 for UACs and most family units was the immediate spark for the current crisis.

**4. We need a new approach.** Unfortunately, the situation isn't getting better – HHS is still housing over 20,000 UACs and, according to UNICEF, there are another 150,000 kids and families in Mexico en route to the U.S. border, with thousands more living in overcrowded shelters and on the streets of Mexican border towns. In the short run, the only solution is for the Administration to ride it through, providing whatever resources are necessary to care for UACs, and working with Mexico to slow the flow to the border. But in the longer term, we need to craft a more comprehensive solution that

considers not only the systemic nature of the issue, but also our country's need for a reliable, orderly and lawful flow of immigrants. President Biden has pointed the way to such a holistic approach through his immigration reform proposal and his February 2021 Executive Order on Central American migration, but in a nutshell, the four key elements of a solution should be:

• **Help the Northern Triangle**

We need to help the Northern Triangle nations address the “acute” causes of the current mass migration – specifically the deepening poverty and food insecurity caused by the pandemic and hurricanes. If we want to slow the flow of people out of the region, we need to start by making sure people have sufficient food and shelter – and Congress needs to step up and fund this.

We also need to tackle the “root” causes of migration, such as endemic corruption, violence, and lack of economic opportunity – but we need to be realistic. These are long term issues, and it will be many years before such efforts bear fruit. Additionally, the Northern Triangle countries aren't the only impoverished places in the Western Hemisphere; nor are they the only places sending migrants to our border. Migration is rising from places other than the Northern Triangle, such as Venezuela, Ecuador, Brazil or Nicaragua, with family unit apprehensions up from around 1000 in January to nearly 15,000 a month now. So focusing on the “root” causes of Northern Triangle migration should not distract us from what would make the biggest difference – reforming our broken immigration and asylum system.

• **Regional Resettlement and Putting Smugglers Out of Business**

We also need to build a refugee resettlement system in southern Mexico or in the Northern Triangle – which would identify people needing protection and then resettle them safely to the U.S., Mexico, Canada, or another country. This needs to be more than simply an expansion of the now-restarted Central American Minors (CAM) program – because CAM is expressly limited to children seeking to be reunited with parents lawfully in the U.S. Many asylum seekers from the Northern Triangle do not meet these preconditions, and we need to establish a system that applies to all genuine refugees. Ultimately, we need to put the smuggling gangs out of business by giving genuine refugees a lawful pathway to getting protection – while at the same time building on Operation Sentinel, the vigorous interagency counter-smuggling effort announced by Secretary Mayorkas in April. Obviously there are many devils in the details of how to structure, staff and enforce such a resettlement system, but there are ample precedents for it. And if we are serious about protecting people fleeing violence, we shouldn't be leaving the victims to the mercy of criminals to get them to our border.

• **Widen Lawful Pathways for Migrants and Fix the Asylum System**

A refugee resettlement program will not be sufficient, because most Northern Triangle migrants are not refugees. But America's economy needs more immigrants and the migrants coming to our border want to work. We should therefore be redirecting much of the flow of irregular migrants into

lawful channels, such as the H-2A and H-2B visa programs or others that could be created by Congress as part of a broader immigration reform. In April, the Biden Administration took a step in this direction by increasing the number of H-2B non-agricultural seasonal guest worker visas available by 22,000 and reserving 6,000 for Northern Triangle, but our system must accommodate more if we want to make a difference.

In addition, we need to reform our asylum system. Given the long backlogs, the ability of asylum seekers to stay here and work for many years pending resolution of claims, and rarity of ICE removals, the asylum system has become too easy for smugglers to exploit as a vehicle for mass irregular migration. Former INS Commissioner Doris Meissner has proposed a variety of reforms, including greater use of the faster USCIS “affirmative” asylum process (as opposed to courts), process improvements aimed at reducing the current backlog (such as a “last in, first out” process), and other things that should be adopted as part of any effort to solve the crisis.

• **Secure the Border and Enforce Our Immigration Laws**

Finally, we must strengthen the security of U.S. borders – a vital issue, given CBP's disturbing estimate that 1,500 migrants are sneaking into the country every day. The best way of helping CBP regain operational control of the border is through the steps outlined above, all aimed at reducing the flow of irregular migrants and shifting as many as possible into lawful channels. This will take pressure off the border and help CBP do its most important job, which is to keep real public safety threats out of the country.

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We must also rethink Title 42. To combat COVID-19, it would be better to work with Mexico to vaccinate and test all migrants coming to our border, detain people in quarantine until they achieve immunity, and vaccinate all DHS officers who may come into contact with them. And while Title 42 has helped manage the surge, it also is compounding the border security problem by encouraging repeat crossing attempts that are overwhelming CBP and distracting it from its security mission. Unlike the normal “expedited removal” process, which carries a 5-year ban on re-entry, a Title 42 “expulsion” carries no legal consequence. So there is nothing stopping migrants from trying to cross again – which they are doing in large numbers. We need to re-establish deterrence at the border by re-imposing legal consequences for illegal entry via expedited removal. Title 42 is also compounding the humanitarian crisis. Single adult migrants are barred from claiming asylum – even those who are legitimately on the run from gangs. And the combination of Title 42 applying to single adults – but with UACs being let in – is leading families to split up at the border, with kids crossing with smugglers and then turning themselves into CBP, and the adults trying to sneak past the Border Patrol, hopefully to be reunited on the other side.

In one horrific instance caught on video, smugglers dumped two girls aged 3 and 5 over a 14 foot border fence, dropping them onto the other side by themselves. Thousands have been victims of violent crime, with Human Rights First documenting nearly 500 migrant families being kidnapped and held for ransom by Mexican gangs just since January. So Title 42 needs to be revisited. But we need to end it carefully, so as not to spark an even greater rush to the border. The shift from Title 42 back to expedited removal needs to be messaged as a deterrent measure, with real legal consequences imposed for illegal entry and, especially, illegal re-entry. Once Title 42 ends, though, we should not simply revert to the system that caused the prior surges. Instead, we must establish an orderly system for fairly and expeditiously processing all asylum claims and implement a better system for managing and tracking people while they are here waiting for resolution of asylum claims – enabling ICE to remove them if their claims fail. We must also be open to using detention where an asylum seeker may be a flight risk and alternatives to detention will not suffice. This should include families. The court decisions applying the Flores settlement to accompanied children need to be rethought, given the

massive incentive they have given to smugglers to use children as “passports” for adult entry – as happened both in 2019, when over 500,000 family units flooded the border. Instead, we should establish safe and humane regional processing centers that can house both single adults and families during the short period it should ideally take for USCIS to adjudicate an asylum petition under a reformed U.S. asylum system.

### CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

These reforms should help CBP re-establish operational control of the border, while at the same time providing migrants with an orderly system for having asylum claims heard. Additionally, they will open up more channels for U.S. employers to recruit the workers they need to fuel our economy. No doubt, the proposed reforms present our divided political system with a tough challenge. But the status quo simply cannot continue.

Seth Stodder served in the Obama Administration as Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security for Borders, Immigration & Trade. He also served in the Bush Administration as Director of Policy for U.S. Customs and Border Protection. He serves on the Advisory Board for the International Summit on Borders and teaches national security law at the University of Southern California Law School.



By Dusita Videsa

# Identification of victims of trafficking in persons at borders: beyond providing protection to victims

As part of ongoing efforts to help address specific people smuggling and trafficking in persons issues across the 49 Members of the Bali Process, the Regional Support Office of the Bali Process has hosted a series of border management roundtable discussions and related training workshops in recent years. Feedback received from attendees to these events has consistently reflected upon the increased challenges facing the Member States in facilitating the legitimate movement of people and goods while maintaining secure borders. Within the context of migration and border management, primary challenges facing the

Members States of the Bali Process within the Southeast Asia Region, are mixed migration flows that often include regular and irregular migrants, victims of trafficking in persons, individuals fleeing persecution or situations of armed conflict in their countries of origin, as well as stateless persons, and State's ability to identify and assist victims of trafficking in persons at the borders.

The purpose of this article is to discuss States' interests in identifying victims of trafficking at their borders and advocate for the capacity building of frontline border officials.

The identification of victims of trafficking presents several barriers

and difficulties for officials. Where officials are not equipped with skills to distinguish between trafficking in persons and people smuggling, they fail to identify victims who are then exposed to being miscategorized and/or re-victimized. Moreover, since people smuggling and trafficking in persons are related crimes and often intertwined, especially in the Southeast Asian Region, it is usually challenging for border officials to distinguish a trafficking victim from a smuggled migrant<sup>1</sup>. Thus, victims of trafficking are more likely to be treated as migrants violating immigration laws, and deported or detained<sup>2</sup>.

1 R Miller and S Baumeister (2013), 'Managing Migration: Is border control fundamental to anti-trafficking and anti-smuggling interventions?', *Anti-Trafficking Review*, issue 2, 2013 pp.15-32, [www.antitraffickingreview.org](http://www.antitraffickingreview.org).

2 Ibid.



By failing to identify victims of trafficking, States fail to protect and recognize the rights to which the victims are entitled. One could argue that this failure contributes to the increased risk to the populace and national interests of a State in three significant ways:

**1. Losing the opportunity to arrest and prosecute criminals and organized crime groups**

Southeast Asia's geographic position, coupled with its open and growing economy, contributes to it being an origin, transit, and destination point for trafficking in persons. In many countries, there is no comprehensive legislative and administrative system in place to manage migration in a consistent and integrated manner that can respond to new trends and modus operandi of people smugglers and human traffickers. Although legal frameworks are in place which are aligned with international and regional standards - and make specific reference to the rights of the victims - implementation remains

a challenge. Victims of trafficking in persons are often misidentified and simply treated as irregular migrants. As such, they become subject to immigration enforcement measures such as arrest, detention, prosecution and deportation. Contrary to the non-punishment principle upheld in the ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons and elsewhere<sup>3</sup>, victims may also be arrested, punished, or deported for offenses that are directly associated with their victim status including working illegally, and prostitution<sup>4</sup>. Victim identification is a key means of identifying human trafficking supply chains, and the criminal networks behind them. Where victims are identified and receive appropriate protection and support, they can provide evidence and become key witnesses who can support the criminal justice process which can bring offenders to justice<sup>5</sup>. By failing to identify victims of crime and simply deporting them, States miss opportunities to collect evidence, arrest and prosecute criminal organizations

that are actively exploiting border deficiencies to criminally profit across Southeast Asia.

**2. Failure to protect populations at risk**

Failing to identify victims means at-risk populations are not protected and remain at risk of further victimization by ruthless criminals focused solely on profit. Lack of capacity to deter and detect trafficking in persons at the borders has often resulted in deficient and inadequate responses to cross-border crime which, in turn, gives rise to more complex situations and preventable adverse outcomes. At the same time, transnational criminal networks exploit gaps in State responses and employ sophisticated modus operandi and technology to carry out their illegal activities, that not only put the lives and safety of vulnerable populations at risk of being exploited, but also pose threats to wider public safety and represents an obstacle for the socio-economic development of a

3 The Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (2020). Issue Brief: Non-Punishment of Victims of Trafficking. [https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/19-10800\\_ICAT-Issue-Brief-8\\_Ebook\\_final.pdf](https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/19-10800_ICAT-Issue-Brief-8_Ebook_final.pdf)

4 Gallagher, A. (2010). Obligation of Protection and Support. In the International Law of Human Trafficking (pp. 283-284). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

5 The Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime (2015). Policy Guides on Identifying Victims of Trafficking. (pp.12). [www.baliprocess.net/regional-support-office/resources/](http://www.baliprocess.net/regional-support-office/resources/).

nation. Besides, corruption, which is a common facilitator of trafficking in persons, compromises the protection of smuggling migrants and victims of trafficking by preventing the investigation of exploitative situations, and creating impunity for offenders<sup>6</sup>.

### 3. *Inefficient migration management*

Although trafficking in persons can occur within a country's border, available data suggest that 80% of trafficked adults and 56% of trafficked children are likely to be trafficked through official border control points<sup>7</sup>. Due to an emphasis on national security interests, a lack of awareness, and the duty to fulfill border control policies, frontline officials may place importance on immigration violation and criminality issues and pay less attention to protection and trafficking considerations. State emphasis on criminalizing irregular migration detracts from efforts to effectively target transnational organized criminals who profit from providing services to meet the demand for mobility in Southeast Asia and undermine State's capacity to effectively manage migration. With efficient policies in place, migration can bring development benefits to origin and destination countries. Not only do migrants contribute significantly to economic growth and development by filling labor market gaps and remitting substantial amounts to developing countries, but they also bring diversity, innovation, and skills to their countries of origin and destination.

### CAPACITY BUILDING AS A WAY FORWARD:

Despite the ratification of global and

regional anti-trafficking frameworks, including the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and the Trafficking in Persons Protocol thereto, and the enactment of relevant national laws, identifying and supporting victims can be, in practice, challenging for many countries in the region. Different priorities and approaches in managing borders, and the varied interpretation and application of international/domestic laws and policies persist, driving the need for capacity building, international cooperation, and information sharing to implement them properly.

In the context of border management, identifying victims of trafficking in persons can be challenging, particularly when border officials lack the expertise, time, and access to information and resources that are necessary to identify victims of trafficking in persons.

Equipping frontline border officials with the capacity to make appropriate referrals will minimize the risk that people vulnerable to trafficking will be miscategorized<sup>8</sup>. It is also necessary to raise awareness, develop and strengthen the capacity of frontline border officials to improve the ability to screen or identify, and refer victims of trafficking at an early stage upon arrival at air, land, and sea border-crossing points. By cooperating with other relevant agencies, by providing border officials with regular training, and by ensuring victims are aided at the border, States can reduce danger faced by an at-risk population. Capacity building and reference materials should be user-friendly and accessible to those frontline officers who may not have access to any specialized training to ensure they are up to date on best practices. All too often officials dealing with these issues or working in more remote areas without proper internet access, are forced to

do their "best" when they encounter a suspected victim at the border. Clearly, this situation is not acceptable as it adds to rather than reduces the risk faced by a vulnerable sector of society.

In addition, technical training, improving facilities, and upgrading technology at border crossing points should contribute to improved data collection and analysis which, in turn can support information sharing, risk assessment, and real-time identification of individuals.

In conclusion, States have several interests in identifying victims beyond providing them with protection. Equipping border officers with skills is vital because they play an important role in preventing and detecting trafficking in persons and traffickers at the entry point before they disperse into the territory. This reduces the opportunities organized crime groups have to carry out further illegal activities. More commonly, misidentification can demonstrate States' and its agencies' lack of commitment, understanding, and resources<sup>9</sup>. If victims are unidentified or treated as criminals, traffickers and their criminal networks can continue with impunity. This impunity provides an incentive for traffickers and organized crime groups to engage in trafficking in persons and other related transnational crime in a more active manner. This could also undermine State's capacity to detect and prevent trafficking in persons and other related transnational crime, and to manage its borders efficiently, compromising public safety interests and denying opportunities to benefit from migration.

Dusita Videsa is a Program Manager with the Regional Support Office of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons & Related Transnational Crime.

6 The Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2021). Research Brief: Corruption as a Facilitator of Smuggling of Migrants and Trafficking in Persons in the Bali Process Region with a focus on Southeast Asia. (pp.2) [www.baliprocess.net/regional-support-office/resources](http://www.baliprocess.net/regional-support-office/resources)

7 The Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative (CTDC). Type of Border Crossings Victims of Trafficking Make. <https://www.ctdatacollaborative.org/story/victims-trafficking-road>

8 M McAdam (2013). 'Who's Who at the Border? A rights-based approach to identifying human trafficking at international borders'. *Anti-Trafficking Review*, issue 2, 2013, pp. 33–49. [www.antitraffickingreview.org](http://www.antitraffickingreview.org)

9 Gallagher, A. (2010). *Obligation of Protection and Support*. In *The International Law of Human Trafficking* (pp. 278 -279). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



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By Reiner Pungs

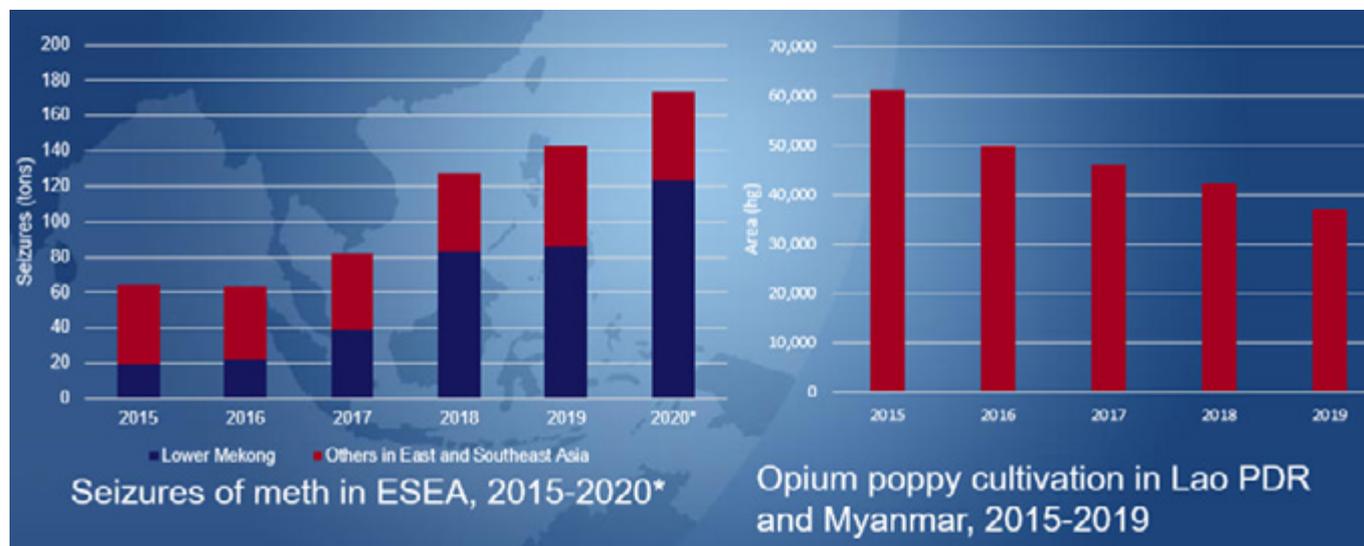
# Addressing Drug and precursor trafficking in Northern Thailand though improved border management

## I - BACKGROUND

Thailand is situated in Southeast Asia or in the also known Lower Mekong region<sup>1</sup> and comprises a territory of approximately 510,000 square kilometers with a population of nearly 70 million inhabitants. It has a land border of roughly 1,800 kilometers with Myanmar, which is the main source of illicit synthetic drugs, specifically methamphetamine in its crystalline form or in the more

Figure 1 shows the increasing seizures of methamphetamine from 2015 to 2020, and the growing percentage of those seizures being effected by countries located in the Lower Mekong region. East and Southeast Asia represents around 2.4 billion people and seized approximately 178 tons of methamphetamine in 2020. The Lower Mekong region, representing 11% of the population of

Figure 1 - Methamphetamine seizures and opium poppy cultivation, 2015-2020



commonly used tablets known as “yaba”. Part of the territory of both countries and including Lao PDR, form another region known as the Golden Triangle, notorious also for the manufacture of heroin.

During the last decade, illicit drug manufacture moved constantly away from opiates to amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), specifically methamphetamine.

both regions is responsible for 125 tons of methamphetamine seizure in the same period representing almost 70% of all seizures. This just shows the size of the challenge this region is facing. At the same time, the cultivation of opium poppy is decreasing, reaching one of its lower cultivation areas in decades.

1 Lower Mekong region: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam.

# TACKLING DRUG TRAFFICKING IN NORTHERN THAILAND

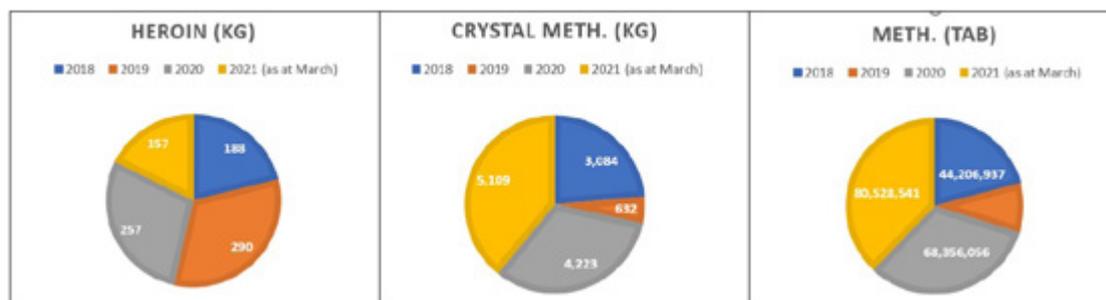
## II – THAILAND

Thailand has historically been a country of transit and consumption of drugs. Some minor manufacture takes place but irrelevant in comparison to its North- Northwestern neighbor,

Myanmar. Over the past two years, Thailand has also seen a shift away from traditional trafficking routes located along its northern border, provinces of Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai, towards the Northeastern border

with Lao PDR. According to recent information received from the Thai authorities, around 70% of the trafficking flows in the country now come across the land border with Lao PDR.

Thailand northeastern drug seizures, 2018-2021



After the coup in Myanmar at the first day of February 2021, seizures of drugs have increased mainly at the Northeastern border of Thailand with Lao PDR. The trend shows that the Northern border with Myanmar is well protected from the Thai side with their border offices, a multitude of law enforcement agencies and military personnel. The border with Lao PDR is much less protected, especially because of bilateral agreements still in place between Thailand and Lao PDR, because of undefinition of the land border and the conflicts generated on this issue in recent years<sup>2</sup>. The Laotian border with Myanmar is less protected and Lao PDR borders directly with some of the special regions in Myanmar that are out of governmental control, and close to the illicit drug manufacturing sites in the Shan states of Myanmar.

The ongoing declared state of emergency in Myanmar generates additional difficulties for the international community to support Myanmar in their drug enforcement policy in providing advice to identify chemicals used for the illicit manufacture of drugs, to establish communication channels with neighboring countries, and to improve its regulatory system to monitor the flow of chemicals essential for the illicit drug market. The sanctions imposed by the international community on the military Junta in

Myanmar also generated difficulties for the domestic market resulting in an absence of essential products to be acquired by the population for their subsistence, and dwindling currency in circulation for cash transactions. Organized crime groups need cash to keep their business flowing and the trend is most likely to accelerate their operations to generate necessary funds.

One of the existing alternatives for the neighboring countries of Myanmar, including Thailand, is to fortify their borders to reduce the options for organized crime groups to traffic their products out of Myanmar, and in the reverse flow, to acquire the needed chemicals. To achieve this, three levels of cooperation should be strengthened. First, intra-service cooperation, which refers to the interaction between a ministry and is border management agency. The second, inter-agency cooperation, where a number of different agencies coordinate their actions focused on the border. And last, but not least, international cooperation, where existing regional and multilateral fora and agreements can support common approaches to these problems.

In conclusion, several alternatives to improve border control exist and are in place, some of them in need of improvement to cope with the growing problem of drug and precursor trafficking. Regional mechanisms, like

ASEAN, prioritize addressing drug and precursor trafficking and can be used to reach an agreement for a common approach and actions for all bordering countries, including China. International agencies can provide supplementary advice and technical support to enhance border operations were needed. UNODC has been providing technical assistance on this issue for the region for several years and has undertaken several recent missions to border areas to consolidate its support to the sub-region. Despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, several activities have been carried out including the provision of equipment and training to border units, organizing joint trainings for various law enforcement agencies, and supporting regional meetings to tackle the main problems for government authorities to adopt common approaches.

Reiner Pungs is an expert in chemical precursors and has worked for the Precursors Control Section of the Secretariat of the International Narcotics Control Board (PRE/SINCB/DTA) in Vienna, Austria for almost 12 years. He is a national of Brazil, and previously worked for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in the Regional Office for Brazil and the South Cone.

<sup>2</sup> From December 1987 to February 1988, Thailand and Lao PDR had clashed at their border about the ownership of the village of Ban Romklao and three other small villages. Approximately 1,000 people died during this conflict.



By Ricardo Ietosa  
Senior product manager  
SITA AT BORDERS

# Intelligence & Targeting: How can technology help?

**T**o tackle any form of criminality, the right agencies need the right intelligence at the right time.

Intelligence comes from data, but one of the biggest challenges is finding the nuggets of useful information from the flood of data available. Likewise, the profile of risk and threats to a nation and its borders continuously shift and evolve as international criminals are looking for gaps in the net. Their modus operandi changes to exploit alternative vulnerabilities of the border management and government functioning. As we have experienced all too evidently over the last years, the threats to a border don't just come from criminality or illegitimate movements, but also from the health status of travelers.

The task of border management and law enforcement has turned from reactive to proactive, identifying and disrupting criminal networks up-stream thanks to larger sets of

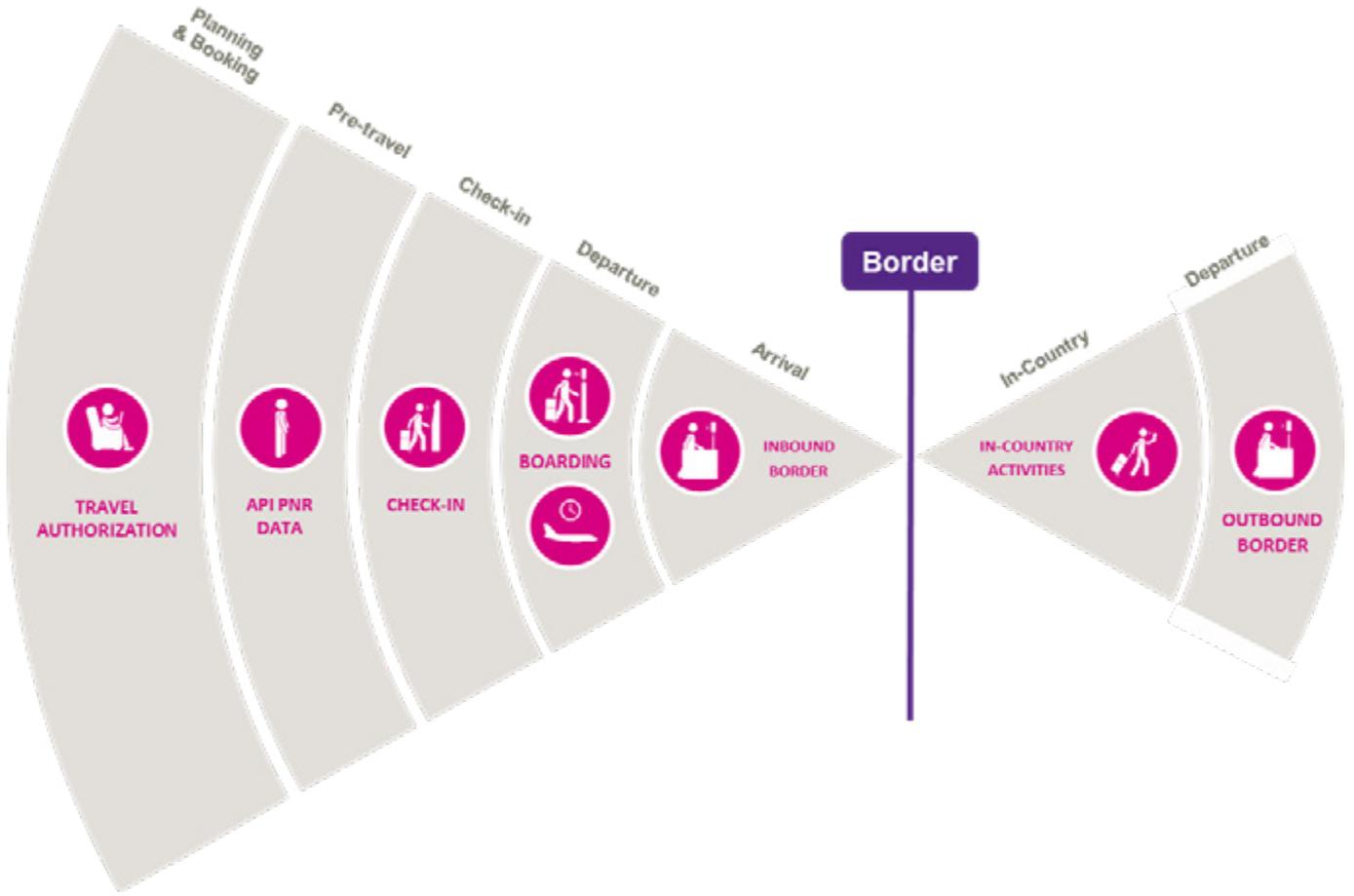
intelligence. This means working with the entire digitized travel journey against the backdrop of historic data and experience, with new and more detailed data processing needs and often the requirement for multiple agencies or governments to analyze and provide feedback on the same data while delivering a consolidated response for action to the front-line officers.

## HELPING PREVENT DATA OVERLOAD

While nothing can beat the skills, training, experience, and even “gut feel” of border and intelligence officers, in times where the volume of data is growing dramatically, there is the danger of any part of the system becoming overwhelmed. Effective data management and analytics tools can help manage the intelligence flow and allow the skilled personnel the time and space they need to identify risks.

Similarly, for specific risk threats, the intervention should take place before boarding in the origin-destination – rather than having to deal with the disruption, cost, and risk of the threat at arrival; effectively digitally exporting the border.

Of course, while the security of its own citizens is always a nation's first priority, it must maintain national prosperity by enabling legitimate travel, trade, and tourism. So systems and processes must get the balance between security and facilitation correct. At SITA we have worked with border agencies for more than two decades to develop, evolve, and deliver such systems. While every border has its unique challenges, there are common needs of the intelligence needed for effective border operations. Firstly, the ability to ingest and enrich data from all modes of transport and multiple data sources. Second,



accurate matching of identities, or entities, across numerous languages and variations. The systems need to highlight unusual patterns and trends and automatically identify and analyze entity relationships enabling the identification of known and unknown threats and criminal networks expected or attempting to cross the border. And of course, facilitate inter-agency collaboration and provide alerts, escalations, qualification, and intervention management.

**THE TRAVELER CONTINUUM**

In addition to the needs above, many agencies are now recognizing that borders are no longer a line in an immigration hall or on a map. Instead, they are a continuum of possible interaction and intervention from the moment a traveler (legitimate or otherwise) decides to travel to their destination address and possibly onward travel too. This creates a layered approach to integrated

border management. If effectively implemented, this integrated border can enable earlier insight on who is travelling, allowing governments to plan their activities before a traveler arrives at the border.

Of course, early engagement leads to increasing amounts of data gathered, which should be turned into actionable intelligence that can be applied at the right location and time. However, securing the border and facilitating national prosperity demand a digital transformation of this end-to-end process.

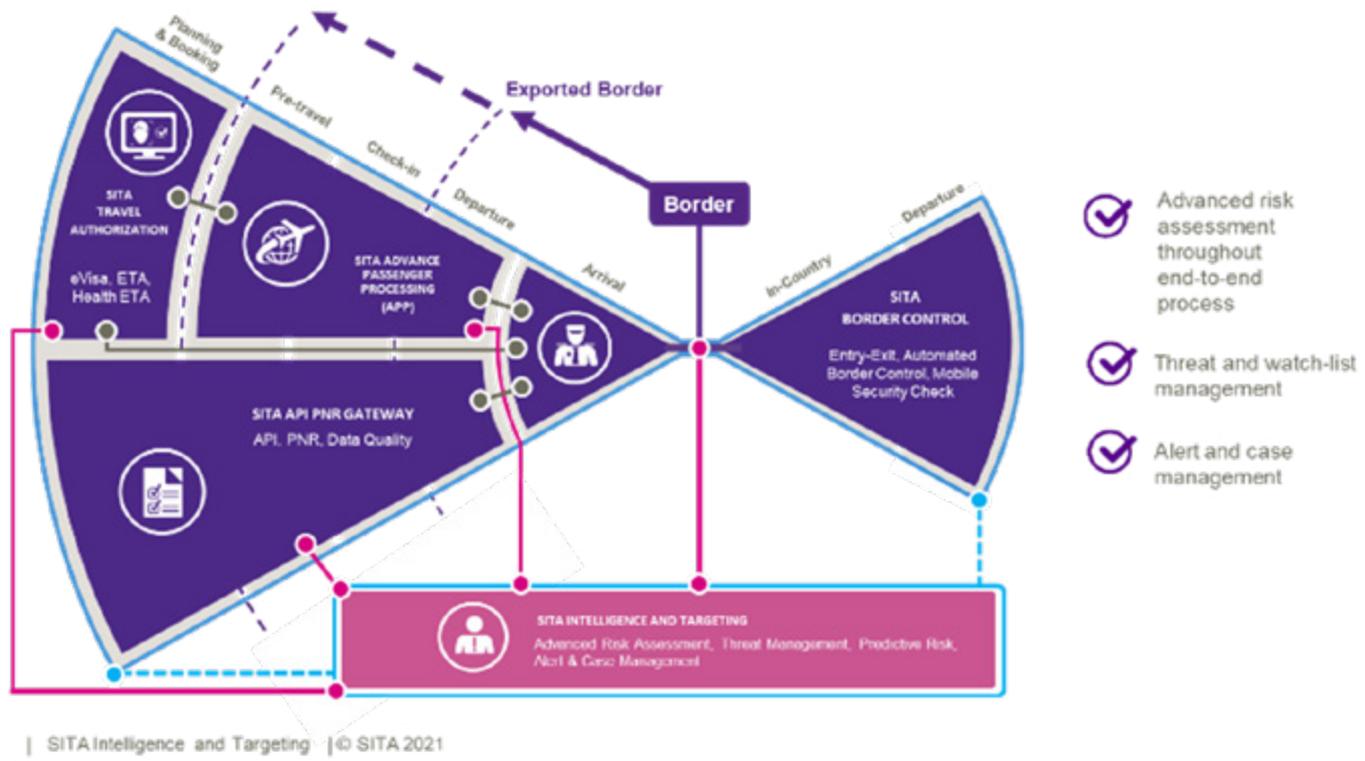
**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRAVELER AND GOVERNMENT**

Even before the Covid pandemic, we saw an increasing interest in nations looking to deploy Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) systems, many following the world’s first system deployed by the Australian government more than 20 years ago. These allow an early initial relationship

between traveler and destination government and the ability to carry out primary vetting of individuals. As recommended by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), these ETAs are combined with the ability to deny boarding to those without one, or who have failed vetting using interactive systems such as Advance Passenger Processing (APP), to create Electronic Travel Systems (ETS), so that the exporting of borders can be truly effective. The need for personal health status information, as now being required to start to help travel recover from the impacts and threats of Covid, has strengthened the need for this direct relationship between governments and travelers and is likely to see an increase in the use of ETA and ETS.

But of course, the travel authorization is just the first point of contact. All other interactions, particularly when carriers submit travel document information (API) and

**INTELLIGENCE  
INTELLIGENCE AND  
TARGETING – HOW CAN  
TECHNOLOGY HELP?**



details from the travelers booking data (PNR), and naturally when the traveler actually presents at the border crossing point, must be combined, collated, and processed efficiently. These data inputs could come from a range of sources and system providers in a bewildering array of formats and configurations. Ideally, a nation will work with system integrators to simplify and consolidate this data ingest to allow for easier processing. As well as the pure ingest aspects, the data should be enriched with additional data sources, identity information, and relationships. In addition to the input side of the equation, there is a need to combine the intelligence aspects of border management; the analytics, managing watchlists, risk assessment, threat management, and alert and case management across multiple agencies.

SITA's Intelligence and Targeting system works alongside any or many of these products to provide an event history record, real-time risk assessment, and analytics tools to assist governments in identifying and intercepting high-risk individuals at any stage of their journey. It builds a

comprehensive view of every traveler, across multiple sources of data and throughout their entire journey. Once this data is received, it is turned into intelligence through enrichment with other available and historic data. It is then subject to automatic real-time risk assessment methods such as watchlist matching, profiles, and validation against government databases. Finally, it provides the tools needed to support government action and intervention of high-risk individuals or criminal networks, in collaboration with many stakeholders.

SITA's Intelligence and Targeting system has proven its value to nations by processing billions of traveler journeys and enabling that balance between security and facilitation. However, perhaps one of the less publicly apparent benefits of such as system is that the operationally effective melding of data sources enables the identification of suspicious behavior against previously unknown individuals. With sufficient historical data, this can help identify criminality such as smuggling or human trafficking.

There is no doubt that the volume of data will inexorably rise, particularly as health status information is likely to be a feature for several years to come. And it is just as likely that criminals will continue to seek vulnerabilities in borders, mainly when resources may be limited or perceived to be distracted by the pandemic, to conduct nefarious activities. Systems such as SITA's Intelligence and Targeting give border and intelligence agencies the tools to combat this activity.

Ricardo Letosa is Senior Product Manager for SITA's Border Management solutions. Ricardo joined SITA in 2006. Since this time, he has worked with airlines, airports, and governments driving innovation and transformation to improve border security while processing passengers faster and more efficiently. Ricardo holds a Bachelor in Science (Hons.) in Information Systems from Trinity College, Dublin, and a Masters in Business Administration from IE Business School of Madrid.

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- All Government Departments and Agencies charged with the responsibility of managing the international movement of people, goods and materials across national borders; including pre-entry, on-entry and after entry applications;
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By Shannon Kerrigan,  
Business Development  
Manager, Leidos UK

# Leidos Trusted AI: Supporting UK Border Security and Efficiency

AS THE UK GOVERNMENT PUSHES TO PROGRESS CITIZEN-CENTRICITY AND DIGITISATION AT THE BORDER, THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE ALGORITHMS THAT DRIVE IT (SUCH AS MACHINE LEARNING) REMAINS CONTROVERSIAL. CONCERNS AROUND IMMIGRATION PROCESSING BIAS, THE WAY DATA IS COLLECTED AND USED, AND THE ALGORITHMS SUPPORTING BORDER PROCESSES MEAN GOVERNMENTS MUST FOCUS ON BALANCING INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY WITH RELIABILITY, RESILIENCE AND SECURITY TO PROTECT THE PRIVACY AND SAFETY OF CITIZENS. RECOGNISING THIS CHALLENGE, LEIDOS HAS COMBINED THE CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY THAT MAKES AI AND ML ALGORITHMS RELIABLE, RESILIENT, AND SECURE - WITH TOOLS THAT INCREASE HUMAN TRUST BY PROVIDING TRANSPARENCY AND ELIMINATING BIAS. OUR DISCIPLINED, TRUST-BASED APPROACH DISTINGUISHES OUR SOLUTIONS AND ENABLES US TO DELIVER HOLISTIC END-TO-END TRANSFORMATION WITH INTEGRITY.

AI and ML have been used for everything from improving the Army's supply chains to forecasting major cyber threats by analysing Tweets for mentions of software security vulnerabilities, but the most successful use cases have always required a comprehensive understanding of the risks and benefits posed by the technology, and a methodology that builds stakeholder trust. Trust is incredibly important. As users and owners of systems keep pace with ambitious transformation and efficiency agendas, problems often arise during deployment and maintenance due to fundamental barriers in confidence. Can humans trust AI to do what it is supposed to do, when it is supposed to do it, in the circumstance it is supposed to do it in? As we support our UK National Security and Defence clients to turn complex data into new opportunities for insight and efficiency, the Leidos approach is to deliver Trusted AI.

## WHAT DO WE MEAN BY TRUSTED AI?

AI that:

- Acts as a valued partner and works with humans to solve problems;
- Is predictable & resilient across changing environments;
- Increases security rather than introducing new vulnerabilities;
- Doesn't put humans or missions at additional risk;
- Behaves ethically.

We believe that AI is a true partnership between technology and humans, with each stakeholder playing a critical role in how the other works. With this in mind, the implementation methodology is critical. We know that building human trust requires more than tools and technology. It requires a robust test and evaluation process that assures these technologies are effective and safe to use. And most importantly, trust in AI requires a tailored process where the level of automation

increases gradually through stages, reducing risk and assuring human control and governance –

This is why we developed our 4A Methodology.

## 4A METHODOLOGY

1. **Analysis:** First, we assist customers with data identification/organization, helping reduce the overall timeline to introduce AI. Working in partnership, we analyse potential opportunities to generate value through AI, prioritising those where AI offers the greatest value.
2. **Assistance:** As we introduce AI, we focus initially on solutions where AI assists humans to do their work more efficiently, e.g. sifting through data to help improve decision-making processes.
3. **Augmentation:** As user trust grows and human feedback is

incorporated into the AI, humans work as partners to inspect, analyze, and confirm potential options presented by the system.

4. **Automation Autonomy:** As more human feedback is incorporated, the AI is ready to autonomously handle human tasks, though humans always remain in control of critical processes.

Leidos uses this incremental approach to minimize the inherent biases that typically impact the design and development of automated solutions. Think of biases as our digital fingerprints that we leave on data, the algorithms we develop, and even in the way we interact with technology. Leidos' AI experts help reduce biases through a variety of ways, including analysis of all data types (structured and unstructured), combining both AI and human-led algorithms, and offering visibility into how it arrives at decisions.

As the UK continues to mature the way we collect, assure and use data – implementation methodology is as critical (if not more so) to achieving success as the heavily publicised technology components. For example, the Cabinet Office 2025 Border Strategy of developing a UK Single Trade Window to act as the entry and exit point for all trade data requires an overwhelming volume of data which is currently in diverse formats to be harmonised, standardised, and integrated into a single view. To achieve the first step in this journey, confidence must be built in the user community by demonstrating the value potential of applying AI to increase automation within this massive transformation programme.

Another clear need for a structured implementation framework around technology initiatives exists in the Home Office's Future Borders and Immigration System Programme. It is

critical that system users and owners, and citizens, are also on the journey as we transform our border and accompanying processes to deliver:

- A universal permission to travel;
- A person centric approach, and;
- Increased use of automation.

Using a framework such as the Leidos 4A Methodology to deliver Trusted AI ensures that the pace of progress is synchronised with stakeholders' confidence levels. Working in this type of close partnership empowers users to unlock the value of the technology and tools they have access to. Supporting front line officers with faster access to accurate data that informs critical decision making – saving officers time and increasing their effectiveness as confidence is built in the growing capability.

#### **4A METHODOLOGY ADVANTAGES**

- **Increased Trust:** Trust in AI is established gradually and organically, with feedback captured in models, features and User Interfaces;
- **Contextual, human-driven control:** Users select level of AI based on context and confidence;
- **Better data:** Human interaction with AI at early stages provides rich data needed to build more complex and reliable AI capabilities;
- **Lower risk:** Scope of AI deployment is increased based on proven success and trust gained through experience;
- **More robust:** Reliable fallback modes with human control;
- **Better governance:** Continuous transition and iterative capability development;
- **Mature Tactics, Techniques & Procedures:** Providing time to train and develop policies due to the incremental approach





### PROVEN SUCCESS

Leidos' in-depth understanding of our customers, their data, and their missions allow us to deliver AI/ML solutions that immediately provide real value, including:

- Reduced a large-scale military vehicle's daily operating costs by 65% while eliminating the human risk for personnel using the vehicle for hazardous missions;
- Developed and deployed 20 different machine learning micro services on one of our programmes, including computer vision, natural language processing, and video analysis, into a complex data processing pipeline that processes petabytes of heterogeneous data. And we did it all within 18 months using a highly scalable and fast model production and deployment

capability. The DOD has since reused many of these micro services for other programmes.

- We are demonstrating an advanced network fabric that seamlessly deploys AI algorithms between the tactical edge and the cloud for the U.S. Army. Our Edge-to-Cloud (E2C) solution enables soldiers in the field to make better decisions, even in denied environments.
- Developed a more efficient cyber threat identification tool for the intelligence community that incorporated more unconventional data sources than were used previously. Threats were identified much earlier than before, allowing organizations to harden their security postures in advance of any attacks;
- Uncovered new performance estimation techniques for the oil

and gas industry by gathering, identifying, and analysing complex data sets from isolated and proprietary data stores.

### WHY PARTNER WITH LEIDOS?

As a leading provider of data-rich solutions for the public and private sectors, we understand our customers and their data. By combining that understanding with our expertise in designing and building AI/ML systems, we're able to accelerate solutions that provide immediate value for our customers' most pressing problems. Our knowledge of the underlying landscape in the National Security domain allows us to take a disciplined, science-based approach to AI/ML that distinguishes our solutions.

For more information visit [www.leidos.com/uk-borders](http://www.leidos.com/uk-borders).



By Martyn Hill

# Bringing back live in-person events in 2021

2020 WAS AN EXTREMELY TOUGH YEAR FOR THE EVENTS INDUSTRY WITH MANY EVENTS BEING CANCELLED OR CHANGED TO THE DREADED VIRTUAL CONFERENCE. 2021 HAS NOT BEEN GREAT EITHER, WITH COMPANIES JUST WAITING TO BE ABLE TO HOST INTERNATIONAL IN-PERSON EVENTS ONCE AGAIN. THERE IS NOTHING BETTER THAN THE BUZZ OF WALKING INTO A BUSY EXHIBITION HALL AND MEETING FRIENDS, CLIENTS AND POTENTIALLY NEW CUSTOMERS WHERE YOU CAN PHYSICALLY SEE PRODUCTS AND SOLUTIONS BEING DEMONSTRATED FIRSTHAND.

Currently, our upcoming IBMATA Summits in Asia and Europe are both scheduled for the Autumn of 2021 in Singapore and Brussels. Thankfully, both agenda's have remained the same as we all wait patiently to be given the green light to travel once again.

Luckily, here in the United Kingdom we have been very efficient in vaccinating our population against COVID-19 and the many variants that have mutated over the past few months. That is great for us living here, however, other nations have been slower at rolling out the many various COVID-19 vaccines due to logistical issues and persuading citizens to have the vaccine. As an event planner this provides another headache, as each nation has their own COVID-19 regulations as well as travel bubbles with neighbouring countries. Some

nations are continuing self-isolation or quarantine for overseas arrivals which increases the total cost of travelling abroad. All these factors need to be considered when planning an international event.

Singapore, where our Asian event will take place on the 28th – 30th September 2021, has currently vaccinated 23.9% of the population, compared to the UK who have vaccinated 51.7% or Bahrain, another small nation, who have vaccinated 43.7% of their population. We are continuing to monitor current travel restrictions to Singapore, and they are creating air bubbles with Australia, Malaysia, and Hong Kong in the coming months as well as countries with a good vaccination percentage which would include countries like Israel, USA, UK, Bahrain, Qatar, Maldives, and Canada. Conferences and exhibitions are taking place

in Singapore for local citizens. Hopefully, by July, their vaccine rollout percentage will be higher - and their borders open once again for international arrivals.

Brussels, where our European event will take place on the 8th – 10th November 2021, have been in and out of tough lockdowns over the past 18 months and they have successfully vaccinated 26.7% of the population which is one of the best countries within the EU only behind Hungary, Finland, and Germany. The European Union (EU) have stated that they will want 50% of all EU citizens vaccinated by July - which on current review is looking highly likely considering the slow initial rollout of the COVID-19 vaccines. If these figures are met it would look like a good possibility that conferences and exhibitions will be happening once again in mainland Europe.



With all these factors in mind we are highly optimistic that our events will be able to take place on the specified dates mentioned. Holding an event in a COVID safe manner can be achieved and much research has been conducted on this over the past few months to allow events to get back up and running once again. Our Border

Management & Technologies Summit's will provide plenty of information and analysis on how international travel will change since the global pandemic.

We do hope that you will be able to join us at our IBMATA Border Management & Technologies Summits in Singapore and Brussels in September and November 2021. It will

be great to finally meet all our friends, members, speakers and sponsors once again after almost a 2-year delay in hosting our events. For more information regarding our upcoming events please contact us at [info@ibmata.org](mailto:info@ibmata.org) or you can visit [www.ibmata.org](http://www.ibmata.org).

Source on vaccine rollout  
[https://ig.ft.com/coronavirus-vaccine-tracker?areas=gbr&areas=\\_isr&areas=usa&areas=eue&cumulative=1&populationAdjusted=1](https://ig.ft.com/coronavirus-vaccine-tracker?areas=gbr&areas=_isr&areas=usa&areas=eue&cumulative=1&populationAdjusted=1)



By Helena Bonini, Vice President (Commercial), World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC)

# Global Guidelines for Safe & Seamless Traveller Journey (SSTJ)

In 2019, the Travel & Tourism sector contributed 10.4% to global GDP; a share which decreased to 5.5% in 2020. The sector continues to struggle for its survival in the face of travel restrictions and quarantines. In 2020, more than 62 million jobs were lost, representing a drop of 18.5%, leaving just 272 million employed across the industry globally, compared to 334 million in 2019, and the losses and impact were not equitable.

Over the last decade, the Travel & Tourism sector has made enormous gains in driving solutions that will enhance security while improving the traveller experience. In particular, the sector has embraced the use of biometrics to make travel safer, offer a better experience, reduce friction points in the traveller journey, and cut costs.

Global best practices facilitate a seamless experience, providing the mechanism to increase security while enhancing the traveller experience across air and non-air checkpoints. While estimates vary on when domestic and international travel will fully return, government and industry should be poised to meet that demand and maximize efficiencies. Future planning should support and allow

the adoption of biometrics, enabling features such as dynamic passenger screening and biometric boarding.

***Significant technological advances in digital identities continue to enter the marketplace and can help overcome the COVID-19 crisis.***

Several facial recognition solutions at airport check-in and biometric baggage drop requires no human contact and can allow for additional health screening. Where physical distancing is required, biometrics may provide the ability to increase the speed at which travellers are processed at checkpoints.

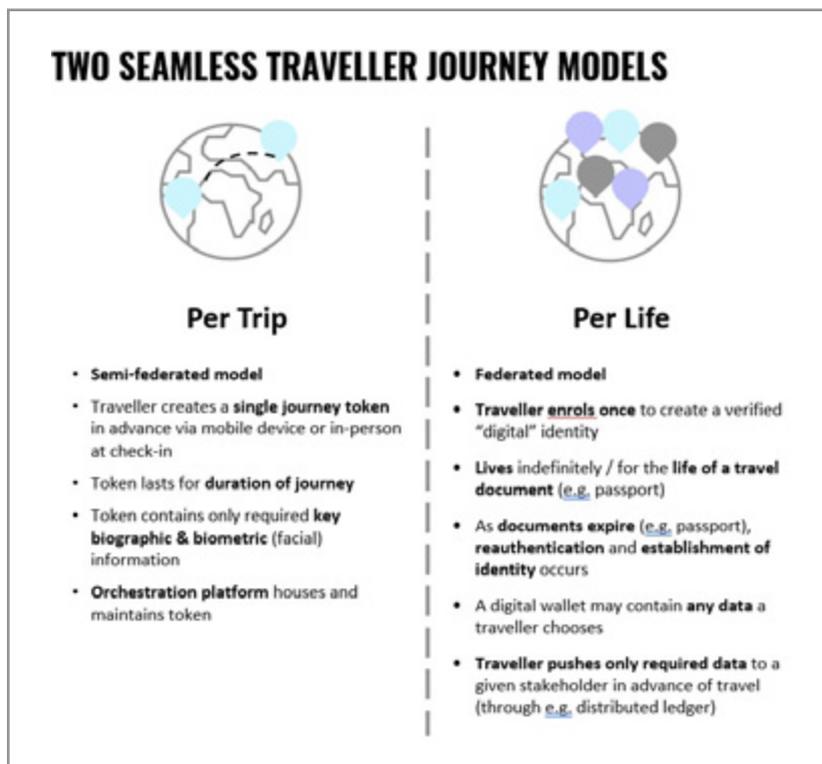
Technological advances enable verified digital identities that use biometrics to confirm with high certainty the identity of a user. Applying these solutions to the Travel & Tourism sector offers significant benefits. Verified identities enable the secure, seamless movement and management of travellers across air and non-air journeys.

Utilization of traveller biographic, biometric, loyalty, credit card, travel history, proof of immunity or vaccine and other personal information, will allow governments and travel

providers to move the traveller more efficiently and safely through journey touchpoints. Travellers will no longer be required to present and verify their identity, relevant travel (e.g., recently visited countries) and medical history (e.g., vaccine) at multiple touchpoints. The result reduces fraud and allows for the movement of more travellers securely and efficiently through existing infrastructure and easing resource requirements.

SSTJ solutions align with WTTC's consumer research undertaken in five European countries and the United States. The data states that on average, 4 in 5 international & domestic travellers would be willing to share their photographs in advance of travel to speed up their journey.

***Capturing and uploading biometric and biographic data before travel allows border and security agencies to authenticate and pre-clear travellers in advance of arrival. This enhances security across the entire system while relieving***



- **Privacy standards** are continually developed and enhanced with guidelines to ensure they are of the highest quality.

*Despite the current crisis, many countries continue to invest in biometric Entry/Exit Systems (EES). While significant progress is being made in many countries, key challenges exist within the technology landscape.*

Public-private engagement is critical to driving forward biometric enabled digital traveller identity. The public sector has a major role in regulation and implementation, especially relating to aspects of security and government-issued identity credentials which is the foundation for the traveller's digital identity. The private sector plays a key role as a user of systems and a provider of technology and knowledge.

#### GOVERNMENT IMPERATIVES

There are four critical elements governments need to focus on to establish globally accepted biometric digital identities:

1. Increase acceptance and adoption of biometrics at government-regulated checkpoints, including advance capture and verification of identity that feed into risk assessment, screening, and checkpoint clearance processes.
2. Pave the way through legislation and regulations to allow for biometrics and digital identity usage by the Travel & Tourism sector. Also address key questions about roles and responsibilities and legislative challenges over the capture, transmission, and retention of data.

*pressure on infrastructure & capacity constraints. In exchange, travellers experience reduced cumbersome checks and queues at ports and airports.*

The Travel & Tourism sector is at a critical point where biometric digital identity solutions are being designed and developed to serve travellers across air and non-air touchpoints. Key principles of success are:

- 1 **Public/private sector collaboration**
- 2 **Data collection and sharing**
- 3 **Data privacy**
- 4 **Interoperability**
- 5 **Customer-first by design**

What has become clear is that there is no "one-size-fits-all" solution - and successful initiatives will be grounded in cross-border collaborations and strong partnerships between private companies and government entities.

Here is a summary of the best practices for a successful global SSTJ programme:

- **Travellers create a single digital identity** containing their biographic data and any additional information required for identity establishment and verification. This is used across all stakeholders, public and private, in the traveller's journey.
- Allow travellers to **enrol early in the traveller journey**, so they can use their digital identity across the end-to-end journey.
- Digital identity management is done in a **decentralized manner**, where the traveller maintains and controls access to their data.
- Traveller's digital identity **data is governed by a globally agreed-upon set of standards**, allowing for interoperability across governments and all sectors of the Travel & Tourism sector.

**PRINCIPLES OF SUCCESS**

| 1   | 2   | 3   | 4   | 5   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |    |    |    |      |
| <b>Interoperability</b>   | <b>Data collection and sharing</b>  | <b>Data privacy</b>   | <b>Intergovernmental and private sector cooperation</b>   | <b>Customer first by design</b>   |
| <b>Definition</b>   |   |   |   |   |
| Scalable solutions seamlessly interacting between the private and public sector   | Data shared in a fully transparent manner with minimum data required, including 'zero-knowledge proof messages' where a traveller provider is given proof data exists without receiving the sensitive information | Highest standards of data privacy, clear transparency to the traveller and only share operationally required data to travel providers | Bilateral data sharing agreements and verifiable trust between multiple governments and between the public and private sector | Simple solutions creating a seamless, intuitive, and non-cumbersome customer experience |

- 3. Work across borders with the private sector and standard-setting organizations to establish global standards for biometrics and digital identities, specifically around what information is included in a traveller identity and data privacy.
- 4. Set high levels of security and compliance that private sector initiatives must meet, as the government is ultimately responsible for safe, secure borders and the protection of its people.

Traveller digital identity solutions will alleviate the strain on travel infrastructure as demand recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic. More immediately, SSTJ solutions will help the Travel & Tourism sector stimulate demand in the recovery from COVID-19 with the health and safety components native to biometric-enabled solutions. There are significant universal benefits to the entire sector including the promotion of a healthier journey, for both travellers and employees,

through biometric-enabled touchless interactions.

Regarding Digital Health Pass, vaccination records and COVID-19 test results may be issued as a “digital certificate”, that can be held within a digital health travel pass (such as an ‘app’ on a mobile phone). This should only contain a travellers COVID-19 status and be referred to as a “pass” and not a “passport”, as it should not contain additional personal or medical information that does not need to be shared for the purpose of international travel.

We need to work with WHO, EU and other national authorities on the development of digital vaccine certificates (sometimes referred to as a ‘green certificate’ or ‘smart yellow card’). Governments may swiftly adopt these guidelines and put in place a simple procedure for citizens who have already been vaccinated (and received a paper certificate) to also obtain a digital version. For digital test certificates, we recommend that governments adopt the minimum data requirements specified by ICAO in their Manual on Testing & Cross Border Risk Management.

We are working with the private sector to ensure digital health travel passes are secure, convenient for the traveller and interoperable across borders and with existing travel systems.

Helena Bononi is the Vice-President Commercial at the World Travel & Tourism Council where she is responsible for directing and overseeing membership activities including development of programs, initiatives, and policies. She also leads the WTTC Seamless Traveller Journey Programme under Travel Security and Facilitation. WTTC is the global body that represents travel & tourism worldwide, a sector that generates 10% of GDP and employs 300 million jobs.



By Andy Smith

# Bridging the gap between Covid testing and border process

Borders have rarely been under as much scrutiny or pressure as they have experienced during the Covid pandemic. In an incredibly short time at the beginning of 2020, nations went from observing the spread of a respiratory disease in China, to responding to a pandemic and shutting down their borders to all but returning residents and nationals. Alongside these closures, nations needed information on those intending to travel to their borders that had never been requested before; health information, medical test results and history, travel records, and information on family members, even those not traveling.

SITA has been providing Border Management systems for 25 years, and many of the 60+ governments we work with asked us to help them with both these needs. We were able to adjust our Advance Passenger Processing (APP) interactive API solution to help nations deny boarding to all but residents and citizens, or those from countries (or even airports) that the nation deemed high risk. Similarly, we took our experience of building and running the first Electronic Travel Authorisation (ETA) system, to develop a Health ETA that acted as a combined Declaration, Attestation and Passenger Locator Form (PLF) solution. This web-based solution also includes risk analysis and case

management to allow nations to issue approvals to travel.

Both these solutions help nations protect their citizens and get valuable information on travelers. At the same time, there was a surge in apps and technology solutions to create Digital Wallets to capture a traveler's Covid test results. What was evident very quickly, however, was that these apps rarely took into account existing airport, airline, and especially border processes, procedures, and capabilities. This meant that there was an expectation that to process travelers, airline and airport staff would have to download apps and scan QR codes for each and every passenger. A clearly unworkable approach if we wanted to get back to anywhere near normal levels of operation. Indeed, airports were telling us that to process just 10-15% of normal traffic, they needed 100% of staffing levels.

The situation for Border Control was perhaps even worse. As there was no integration between the health status of travelers and existing border automation systems, these had to be shut down and all passengers directed to manual processing. Without time-consuming, direct discussion with travelers, it is impossible for border officers to know which flight someone was on, where they were coming from and which (if any) health pass scheme

they used. How could these officers verify the authenticity of a screen on a phone, or a barcode or even worse a bit of paper perhaps in another language? For this reason, officers had to resort to skilled questioning causing huge queues in immigration halls and even requiring aircraft to be diverted to airports with less congested arrivals.

It should also be noted that in response to the Covid pandemic, we were trying to connect two complex and highly regulated industries: healthcare and testing laboratories, and travel and transportation. Each had their own rules, regulations, and formats pertaining to personal data, sharing, and privacy – and there was little similarity or mapping between them. The most obvious of these was related to identity verification and binding. For example, some test labs use name and insurance policy details as identity verifiers – not information that is particularly useful to international travel, which relies on government issued passports or ID cards.

The industry is looking at how these issues can be resolved. It is very positive to see how well technology providers, carriers, port authorities, and integrators have come together to work on collaborative solutions. Much of the initial work was on how to get test results to airlines – mainly utilizing health pass apps, such as those from IATA, AOK or The Commons Project.



These apps also acted as the decision-making engine by assessing the validity of the test against the Covid rules imposed by the relevant government authorities, generating an “OK/NOT OK” result. There have been some very successful tests of these apps and they have gone some way to demonstrate to the authorities that health status information can be safely and securely processed electronically. However, this is only one part of the challenges facing the industry to get us back operating at any level of volume.

Perhaps the most obvious challenge is that it is virtually certain that there won't be a single app for the industry. Airlines, alliances, and countries may have preferred solutions, but they as well as airports and government authorities, will have to work with a vast variety of apps, and of course paper-based information. There has been work to try and align the apps with standard, interoperable underlying technology. However, even when this works, there remains the issue that personnel have to intervene in the travellers journey to scan the app or QR code to verify the results and give the go ahead to move to the next step in the process. This intervention is happening at least twice – at check in and immigration – and potentially several additional times too, with significant time and cost penalties for all stakeholders. Clearly, we cannot operate these additional, non-aligned checks if we are to return to sustainable

volumes of passengers, but just as clearly, we need to maintain the integrity of the borders.

While some airline system providers can integrate multiple pass schemes into their systems, this only applies to their airline customers. Similarly, this does not allow for easy integration with declarations required by governments or with passenger processing automation in airports.

For this reason, SITA is working with pass scheme providers and other stakeholders to develop the Health Protect ecosystem, connecting our own solutions, such as the declaration capabilities of Health ETA, in airport Passenger Processing and denial of boarding or check in with APP Protect, with third parties. Importantly, Health Protect integrates with the existing airline, airport, and government process, allowing the health status checks to be carried out simultaneously and as invisibly as possible. At the heart of this is the Health Hub, a gateway that allows travelers to share health information either from the declaration system or from scheme providers, and for this to be securely shared at the right time to the right stakeholder.

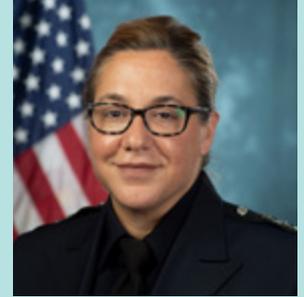
This will allow governments to more easily combine data from declaration or passenger locator forms with health pass or self-entered information, in a machine readable way. This will allow existing automation, such as immigration eGates to be reactivated and significantly reduce the delays of

five or six hours seen at some ports. Similarly, we can rely on outbound automation to ensure checks are effective, timely, and part of the processes that have been safely and securely checking travelers for years.

The industry is coming together to restore confidence in travel. Hopefully, government authorities will join this journey.

Andy Smith has been delivering IT and Telecommunications solutions to the aviation sector for over 20 years. Joining SITA in 2007, Andy has focused on driving innovation and collaboration for airlines, airports and government bodies. Since 2012 Andy has represented SITA's Government, Security and Border Management business. In addition to promoting the effective use of passenger data, pre-clearance, risk assessment, border management and biometric solutions, Andy continues to champion the collaboration of all stakeholders within the transport industry, with a focus on the passenger experience. After 5 years concentrating on the European market, Andy now supports SITA's global teams as Subject Matter Expert for Border Management, Immigration and Security solutions.

Andy has a Bachelor of Science Degree from De Montfort University (Leicester, UK) in Physics with Management Science. He is based in London.



By: Diane J. Sabatino,  
Deputy Executive  
Assistant Commissioner,  
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# CBP Expands the Biometric Entry/Exit Program and Launches CBP One™ Mobile App to secure and streamline travel to and from the United States



Although non-essential international travel remains restricted in the United States, it has not slowed down U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) from expanding its innovation efforts to further secure and streamline travel. For the past few years, CBP has been transforming the travel process by using biometric facial comparison technology for identity verification as the key to enhancing security and facilitating legitimate travel. Numerous federal statutes require the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to create an integrated, automated biometric entry and exit system that records the arrival and departure of foreign travelers.

Moreover, CBP has a clear authority and a responsibility to confirm the identity of all international

travelers and verify that they are the authorized bearers of their travel documents, to include U.S. passports. Traditionally, CBP officers manually review passports to carry out this responsibility, but biometric facial comparison technology can do so with greater consistency and accuracy. While DHS led the way to deploy the first biometric entry system in 2004, using fingerprints and a photograph, the biometric exit mandate has been a challenge given the co-mingling of domestic and international travelers and the lack of infrastructure for exit processing at U.S. airports.

To meet the security mandate, CBP created a robust, cloud-based matching service that leverages existing advance passenger information to create a pre-positioned “gallery” of facial images from U.S. Government holdings, such

as photographs from U.S. passports, U.S. visas, and other travel documents. In addition, CBP has partnered with the air travel industry to implement a secure, stand-alone system that can be seamlessly integrated into the boarding process. When departing from select airports during international travel, passengers pause for a photo at the departure gate and in a matter of seconds, CBP’s biometric facial comparison service will compare that photo to images the traveler has already provided.

To complement biometric boarding, CBP implemented a similar process at entry known as Simplified Arrival, an enhanced international arrival process that uses facial biometrics to automate the manual document checks that are already required for admission into the United States. As

## BIOMETRIC ENTRY/EXIT PROGRAM

the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic was becoming clear in the first half of 2020, CBP recognized the health and safety benefits of a touchless biometric identification service and accelerated the deployment schedule to ensure maximum utilization of Simplified Arrival. As a result, CBP is part of the travel recovery solution as Simplified Arrival will help build passenger confidence in the various travel environments. Currently, CBP has implemented biometric facial comparison technology partially or fully at entry into the United States at 48 airports, including Preclearance locations, and at exit from the United States at 29 airports.

As part of its land border innovation efforts and building upon the successful implementation of Simplified Arrival at the airports, CBP expanded the use of facial biometrics to the pedestrian lanes at U.S. land borders. Currently, Simplified Arrival has been deployed in varying degrees to 52 locations representing 26 Ports of Entry (six on the Northern Border and 20 on the Southern Border). Each of these locations has a 1:1 biometric facial matching process, in which the traveler's live photo is compared to the document the traveler presents.

In the vehicle lanes, CBP had previously conducted a facial biometric technology demonstration both in the inbound and outbound vehicle lanes. The purpose of the pilot was to measure and evaluate the camera solution's ability to capture a quality facial image for each occupant position in the vehicle, as the vehicle moved at lower speeds through the primary lane and coming to a stop at the booth; and the biometric matching accuracy of images captured. CBP continues to explore technology solutions for vehicle processing and engages with international government partners to share lessons learned and exchange best practices on a mutual challenge.

In the sea environment, CBP has

deployed biometric facial comparison into the debarkation process at seven seaports in the U.S., in partnership with nine cruise lines. This year, CBP's goal is to expand facial biometrics to the top 10 seaports and is working closely with the cruise lines as they plan for the resumption of cruising. In addition, CBP is expanding its data sharing agreements with cruise partners to enhance security. This effort will provide a more complete analysis of passengers in advance of travel and streamline inspections.

Whether air, land, or sea innovation, the use of facial biometrics is secure, efficient, and touchless and enhances the customer experience. Biometric facial comparison technology has been proven to decrease aircraft boarding times and facilitate lawful travel. For example, airlines have reported that they have boarded travelers on A380 planes in 20 minutes through the biometric boarding process. Additionally, post-cruise satisfaction surveys by travelers have been exceedingly positive and highlight the ease and efficiency of facial biometrics in the debarkation process.

To date, CBP has processed over 70 million travelers using facial biometrics. In addition to streamlining travel, the use of facial biometrics protects the identity of travelers and adds another layer of security. Since September 2018, CBP has used biometric facial comparison technology to identify over 600 impostors. Recently, CBP officers prevented two impostors from entry at Washington Dulles International Airport by leveraging facial biometrics:

<https://www.cbp.gov/newsroom/local-media-release/cbp-officers-facial-biometrics-detect-two-cameroon-impostors-us>

As with the use of any new emerging technology, it's critical that privacy and accuracy concerns are appropriately addressed at the forefront to ensure the public's acceptance and use. CBP's Entry/Exit program includes

four primary safeguards to secure passenger data, including encryption during data storage and transfer, irreversible biometric templates, brief retention periods, and secure storage. CBP uses a high-quality facial comparison algorithm, NEC-3, which shows virtually no measurable differential performance in results based on demographic factors. CBP continually evaluates the performance of this algorithm and has partnered with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) to further enhance the facial comparison process.

CBP takes privacy obligations very seriously and is dedicated to protecting the privacy of all travelers. Privacy is implemented by design, ensuring data protection through the architecture and implementation of the biometric technology. CBP has published multiple Privacy Impact Assessments (PIA) that explain all aspects of CBP's biometric Entry/Exit program, to include policies and procedures for the collection, storage, analysis, use, dissemination, retention, and/or deletion of data.

As part of its Business Requirements, CBP prohibits its approved partners such as airlines, airport authorities, or cruise lines from retaining the photos they collect under this process for their own business purposes. The partners must immediately purge the images following transmittal to CBP, and the partner must allow CBP to audit compliance with this requirement.

It's important to note that CBP uses biometric facial comparison technology only at specific times and locations where travelers are already required to present proof of identity. This should not be confused with the application of facial comparison technology in a public space or in a situation in which the presentation of identity documents is not required. CBP uses facial comparison technology simply to automate the document checks that are already required at all U.S. ports of entry.

## BIOMETRIC ENTRY/EXIT PROGRAM



Photos of U.S. citizens and select foreign travelers who are not statutorily required to provide biometrics are held in secure CBP systems and deleted within 12 hours. Photos of all other foreign travelers are stored in a secure DHS database. U.S. citizens are welcome to participate in the biometric facial comparison process; however, if they do not wish to do so, they can simply notify a CBP officer who will perform a manual document check. In addition, foreign travelers who prefer not to participate in the biometric boarding process upon departure from the U.S. can also request a manual document check.

In November 2020, CBP published a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NPRM), which would amend the CBP's Entry/Exit regulations requiring foreign travelers to provide photographs upon entry to and/or departure from the United States. The rule also proposes to amend CBP's Entry/Exit regulations to eliminate references to pilot programs and the port limitation to permit the collection of photographs or other biometrics from non-U.S. travelers departing from airports, land ports, seaports, or any other authorized point of departure. As a testament to CBP's steadfast commitment to privacy principles and transparency, CBP reopened the comment period to the biometric entry and exit proposed rule for an

additional 30 days, which closed last month, so CBP could review additional input from the public.

While confronting the many operational challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, CBP remains steadfast in its commitment to facilitating lawful trade and ensuring the security of America's supply chains. Although the pandemic has severely impacted travel in the air, land, and sea environments, there is also a significant opportunity to transform and enhance the future of touchless travel by expanding public-private partnerships and leveraging technology. With our facial matching service, CBP can now offer its stakeholders "identity as a service" throughout the travel process, including check in, bag drop, Transportation Security Administration (TSA) screening, and departure, which will revolutionize travel and enhance the customer experience.

In addition, CBP has developed innovative solutions for travelers to provide information in advance of their travel to the U.S. to further secure and streamline their entry into the country. CBP has recently launched a mobile application CBP One™ to serve as the single portal for travelers and stakeholders to access CBP mobile applications and services. The CBP One™ Mobile App will

provide travelers an opportunity to streamline their travel into the United States by providing information before or upon their arrival or departure. It also increases transparency for CBP stakeholders through online access to service requests, live status updates, and direct chat capabilities.

Currently, travelers needing to file, update, or check the status of their I-94 can use the app, and additional services will be phased in over time. The CBP One™ Mobile App is available for free in the Apple App Store and Google Play and can be downloaded on a web-enabled smart device.

CBP collaborates regularly with a variety of key external stakeholders, including travel and tourism, air travel industry, cruise travel industry, biometrics and technology industry, privacy and civil liberties advocates, and federal and international partners to provide Entry/Exit updates, discuss partnership opportunities, and highlight measures that we are taking to protect traveler privacy through the biometric facial comparison process. To keep up with the latest Entry/Exit updates, review locations and privacy resources, or / and discuss partnership opportunities with CBP, please go to <https://biometrics.cbp.gov>.



By Jon Payne,  
Executive Director,  
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# All Aboard the Seamless Train: Why 2021 is the Year for Safe & Seamless Travel

**T**he World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) Global Guidelines for Safe & Seamless Traveller Journey (SSTJ) - see page 28 above - is essential reading on the current state of seamless travel initiatives, and, more importantly, on why such efforts are crucial for the recovery of the travel and tourism industry post-pandemic.

The guidelines define seamless travel as “a journey during which the traveler no longer needs to present travel-related documents (e.g., boarding passes) or identification

documents (e.g., passport) multiple times to a variety of stakeholders at different checkpoints in their journey.” The near-term vision is a world where passengers enroll their passport and identity data in a way that is remote and touchless (e.g., on their own smartphones before leaving home) and then proceed, without stopping, through multiple checkpoints in the travel continuum using only their face to identify themselves.

In the context of air travel these checkpoints could include booking, check-in, security, boarding, border

control, baggage check, car rental and hotel check-in. Imagine how much more pleasant and efficient the travel experience might be if you could navigate each of these stages by simply showing your face to establish your identity.

## COVID-19’S IMPACT ON TRAVEL & TOURISM

But Safe and Seamless Travel is not only about an improved customer experience. The WTTC added the word Safe to its Seamless Traveller Journey initiative in 2020 in reaction

## WHY 2021 IS THE YEAR FOR SAFE & SEAMLESS TRAVEL

to the shocking impact of COVID-19. In 2019, the travel & tourism industry accounted for 10.4% of the global economy; in 2020, this collapsed to only 5.5%. That collapse represents a loss of 62 million jobs. That is the equivalent of the entire populations of England and Scotland being made redundant in the same year. If you prefer a North American example, it is the equivalent of all the residents of California and Florida combined.

It is clear that travel and tourism has a significant hill to climb as we emerge from the pandemic. The success of that effort depends in part on the willingness of the travelling public to get moving again. Which is why it is essential to offer remote and touchless services. Remote in the sense that passengers can make all their travel arrangements from the comfort and safety of their own homes, avoiding large crowds and queues. Touchless in the sense that there is no need to interact with common equipment, such as kiosks, or hand over physical documents to officials. The good news is that the technologies to enable all this already exist.

Thanks to game-changing improvements in facial recognition technology, we can now allow travelers to register their face and passport information remotely, before leaving home, at a level of security that meets the requirements of both travel providers and border agencies. Previously, a trained border officer could match a person to a passport more accurately than most facial matching algorithms; today, that situation is reversed.

### A NEW WAY TO ASSERT YOUR IDENTITY

Digital Travel Credential (DTC) standards are another game-changer that brings seamless travel a step closer. In late 2020, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) published the long-awaited DTC

standard, a credential derived from a passport that can be stored on the holder's smartphone. Crucially, the derivation of passport data in a digital format allows it to be transmitted – at the holder's discretion – to multiple players in the travel continuum; and stores it securely for future use.

There are other technological advances that have not been widely applied to the travel industry yet could also contribute in significant ways. These include automated risk engines that can assess a passenger against immigration policy, for example, allowing border agencies to stream arriving passengers. Additionally, advancements in facial image capture have enabled the creation of biometric lanes or corridors in which cameras can capture an image sufficient to match against pre-enrolled data when passengers are walking (or even running) through a checkpoint, without needing to stop.

### WHY ICAO IS THE ONLY GAME IN TOWN

This point might get me into trouble, but here goes. If you are considering a seamless travel initiative and you choose to issue your passengers with a proprietary credential – i.e., something that does not follow the ICAO DTC standard – you are limiting the relevance of the initiative in terms of interoperability. Ultimately, initiatives that are not able to interoperate fully between travel and immigration use cases are building in obsolescence from the outset.

It is not surprising that commercial travel providers – airlines, airports, train companies, cruise companies, etc. – are looking for ways to issue digital credentials to create seamless experiences for their customers. A proprietary digital credential might very well prove useful, for example, in linking together booking, check-in and boarding.

The problem arises when attempting interoperability across international borders. Unlike the travel industry, the world of immigration already has a globally trusted and accepted credential: the passport, the ePassport, and now the DTC, derived from the ePassport chip. This is the standard trusted by border agencies. In other words, in the border management business, ICAO is the only game in town.

For that reason, commercial service providers in the international travel and tourism industry should think very carefully about how to issue digital credentials to their customers. Initiatives conforming to ICAO standards are more likely to be accepted by border agencies globally and so more likely to succeed in building genuine interoperability between travel and immigration.

### WHAT COMES NEXT?

The building blocks of seamless travel, as envisioned by WTTC, are already available. What is now needed as we emerge from the pandemic is a global effort to make seamless travel a reality, both to improve the passenger experience and to fuel the return of the travel industry.

We can achieve this by starting pilot implementations now, linking travel service providers with immigration agencies to create a production ready, end-to-end, biometrically enabled seamless path. The current lower volume of travelers provides an opportunity for feedback and refinement, encouraging larger volumes of travelers to return and feel safe, with improved customer experiences.

It is time to board the seamless train...or plane...or car, truck, or ship. Let's go!



By Tony Smith CBE,  
Chairman, IBMATA

# Border Security: A forward look over the rainbow

According to international bodies, Border Agencies will come under increasing pressure over the next century. The volume of air travellers is predicted to double over the next 20 years. The volume of cargo will quadruple by 2050. There is a 70% chance that the global population will rise from 7 billion today to 11 billion in 2100. The UN predicts that 2.2 million migrants will seek new homes in new countries each year between now and 2050. According to UNHCR, 79.5 million people were forcibly displaced at the end of 2019, 34 million of them into different countries. Meanwhile the huge growth in international e-commerce is placing unprecedented pressure upon Customs Agencies, who are struggling to cope with the sheer volume of cross border consignments.

Experts believe that the global movement of people and goods is placing unprecedented pressures upon borders, and this will only get worse. The pressure to emigrate from poorer countries to richer countries has never been greater, and unstable governments in some parts of the world will continue to fuel the number of globally displaced persons seeking

refuge elsewhere. International organised crime gangs will continue to try to exploit weaknesses in border security, including trafficking in human beings, smuggling dangerous and prohibited goods, and facilitating terrorist travel. In addition to national security, immigration and customs controls Border Agencies are now facing up to a new challenge – managing the transmission of pandemics across borders in the wake of COVID-19.

In order to cope with these demands, it is vital that Border Agencies around the world invest in strategies, systems, technologies and processes that will facilitate the legitimate flow of people and goods across their borders to support economic growth – whilst simultaneously preventing and disrupting harmful and non-compliant movements to protect the security and well-being of their indigenous population. Which is, after all, the fundamental responsibility of any government.

This means embracing the 3 key principles of modern-day border management:

(a) the multiple borders strategy (whereby transactions take place

away from the physical border, and preferably upstream to yield facilitation benefits at the ports);

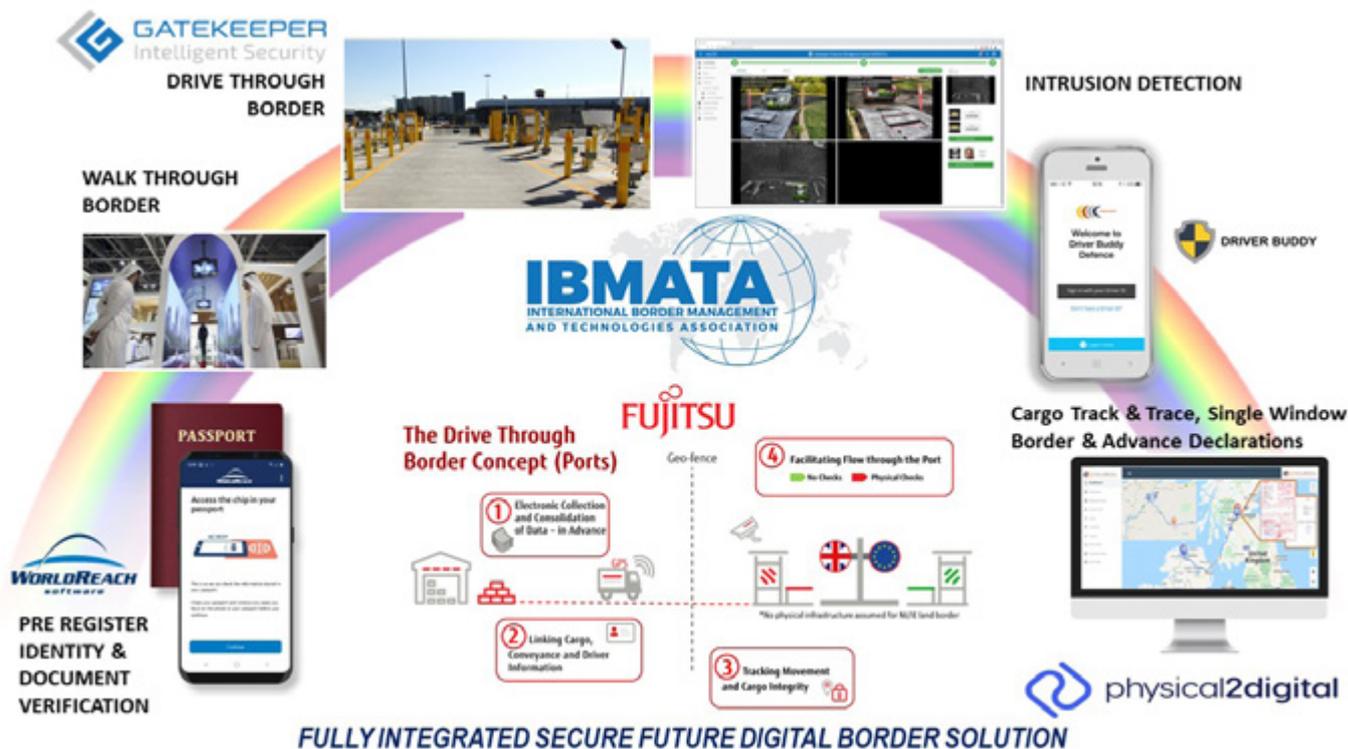
(b) integrated border management, which ensures that data is captured as accurately and easily as possible (via a single window) and shared across multiple departments and agencies for intelligence led risk assessment; and

(c) end to end identity, where identity is validated prior to travel and transmitted to ports of arrival for biometric validation. The concept of “identity” could apply to those goods that are secured, sealed, and tracked from point of loading to point of unloading.

These principles must be underpinned by an effective perimeter strategy that inhibits the unlawful entry of people and goods by unauthorised routes. They are also reflected in many Border Strategy documents around the world – including the UK 2025 Border Strategy.

Public expectations of mass transport solutions will be framed around improvements in ‘seamless transport’, so that international journeys can proceed without interruption. This will require closer integration and coordination across

# BORDER SECURITY: A FORWARD LOOK OVER THE RAINBOW



infrastructure, transport providers and borders, demanding increasingly automated systems, rapid data analysis and secure data management. Future risk assessment models will incorporate not just immigration and security credentials, but health credentials too.

In order to facilitate the legitimate movement of people and goods across international borders without compromising on security and compliance, the International Border Management and Technologies Association (IBMATA) has pulled together a group of its members to deliver a seamless “drive through” border solution. This group – known as the “IBMATA rainbow group” – comprises of a variety of companies that are already delivering border security solutions in different parts of the world. By bringing together the various components of border control – identity management, automated vehicle recognition, biometrics, track and trace, secure seals, and vehicle intrusion systems – the rainbow group can deliver a drive through border capability for passengers and freight which is available for deployment anywhere in

the world. What’s more, the group also offers additional capability to integrate the solution with existing port and government systems and infrastructure.

The IBMATA drive through border has already been presented to several border agencies including the UK, US, and the EU as a potential solution to meet the demands of future border security. IBMATA is a UK based non-profit organisation dedicated to improving communication between Border Agencies and Technology providers worldwide. Although the specific members involved in this solution have commercial propositions of their own, the IBMATA rainbow group is not exclusive. We know that there are many other technology providers in this market who can add value to the proposal. Our ambition is simply to join the dots between them to deliver innovative solutions for future border security. As such, IBMATA is supporting the UK Department for Trade in developing its Border Security chapter.

Of course, any effective border security strategy must take account of the relative geo-political circumstances

of the country concerned. Specific responses will vary between air, sea and land border entry and exit points and the management of the border zones between those points.

The primary aim of any Border Agency is to facilitate the genuine flow of people and goods across their border, whilst maintaining security and compliance and minimising the risk of harm to the indigenous community. It is no longer necessary or appropriate to conduct physical examinations of all people and goods crossing international borders. Instead, Border Agencies will need to embrace the power of technology and innovation like never before to conduct advanced risk assessments, thus enabling highly skilled officers to focus on areas of higher risk. This means embracing best practice in international border management and innovation, to maximise the opportunity of delivering a border of the future which is capable of withstanding these challenges. The rainbow group is just one example of what can be achieved through a collaborative approach to meeting the challenges ahead.



By Alan Renaud  
Principal Secretary for Civil  
Aviation, Ports and Marine  
Ministry of Transport  
Republic of Seychelles

# Biometric borders: The Seychelles, an African pioneer

**W**hat if I told you that someday your face alone could let you travel the world? Or that instead of having multiple officials and airline staff flick through your passport, a flash of a QR code on your phone could whizz you straight onto your destination?

Technology like this doesn't just exist in a Steven Spielberg science fiction epic set in 2050 - our travel security experts at Travizory have proved that this technology can work in the real world, with the small island nation of the Seychelles serving as a microcosm of the varied benefits this innovation can bring.

In little over 6 months, Travizory and the Seychelles Government have worked together to successfully overhaul the country's immigration system, not only to combat the ongoing threat of COVID but also to completely modernise the existing border control. Travizory technology has been pivotal in limiting the number of imported cases of the virus, and thus largely protecting the local population, while our forward thinking, innovative approach has helped this small island nation make its mark on the global stage.

## RE-OPENING DURING A PANDEMIC

The pandemic caused great stress for tourism dependent countries like the Seychelles - with numbers of visitors plummeting and the entire economy put on hold as a result. With over 60% of its GDP derived from the tourism sector, it was obvious that keeping the borders closed and hotels out of operation for the duration of the pandemic was unsustainable.

Enter Travizory.

Travizory's expert team was drafted in to help simplify and streamline the overly complex and resource-intensive process that was already in place. When they arrived, entry into Seychelles consisted of a 4-stage process:

- Each visitor had to fill in an online authorization form via the Public Health Authority (PHA) website prior to their flight.
- An individual PHA official would manually review the email and, if all checked out, offer conditional approval via email.
- On receipt of a positive response

from PHA, each person would then have to follow up with their PCR test results via email.

- An individual officer at PHA would then review the results and grant official approval for entry, again in the form of an email response.

Not only was this a lengthy process, but having gone through it myself, it was time-consuming and unnecessarily stressful.

The 72-hour period for taking and receiving a negative test result prior to flying is already a tight window for many labs to process within. Add to that the extra time that PHA needs to manually process each and every request and you're down to the wire. While tourism numbers dropped off significantly, Seychelles still welcomed over 97,000 visitors between January and November last year - that's 97,000 forms being reviewed and likely double that in emails exchanged.

That's where Travizory's cutting-edge Visitor Management Platform comes in. The platform replaced our existing system, streamlining the process to generate less stress for tourists and offer greater control to the authorities.

## BIOMETRIC BORDERS: THE SEYCHELLES, AN AFRICAN PIONEER

Since September 15, 2020, over 50 thousand visitors have benefitted from use of our new system, with daily peaks reaching over 2,000 authorizations processed, while guaranteeing firm responses within 6 hours.

Instead of manual reviews, the new technology allows our health authorities to collect identity and health information directly from the traveler via easy-to-use web and mobile apps. Using a single system and one portal for passengers, it also eliminates the burden on airlines who no longer take on the risk of transporting passengers who may be denied entry.

### LEADING THE CHARGE: MEETING GLOBAL STANDARDS

Building on this early success, we continue to work with Travizory to ensure that the benefits of the technology are not limited solely to tackling the pandemic, but that we were able to tackle all the threats

associated with cross-border travel as efficiently as possible.

Since 2017, the United Nations has been calling on all countries to introduce new and improved measures to prevent the transit of terrorists. This requires cooperation, communication and above all standardization to ensure that travel data collected in different countries is effective in identifying individuals who pose a terrorist threat. To support States in achieving this goal, the ICAO has since set out new Passenger Name Record (PNR) Data Standards, providing standardised guidelines for the collection, use, processing and protection of airline PNR data.

Our new, comprehensive border management system has proved it can contain the threat of a pandemic, as well as effectively supporting the global fight against international terrorism and financial crime. In pioneering this new technology Seychelles can now not only participate but also lead in this endeavour.

An ambitious project from the outset, we have since evolved our Visitor Management Platform to support the broader aims of the Seychelles Government and international bodies - namely ensuring the safety and security of citizens and visitors. This new system is fully integrated with our Electronic Travel Authorization system already in place, enabling increased cooperation across Government departments and agencies overseeing various aspects of border security. As an added benefit, the system can be used to promote tourism and enhance the experience for international visitors to the Seychelles.

From Immigration, to Customs and Law Enforcement Agencies - our new border management technology allows authorities to screen international travelers against national and international watchlists for known terrorists, criminals, and human traffickers. With this one-of-a-kind system in place, the Seychelles



## BIOMETRIC BORDERS: THE SEYCHELLES, AN AFRICAN PIONEER

has propelled itself into the highest echelons of border security - joining the EU, US, Canada, Australia, and GCC countries in complying with the international requirements and becoming the first, and only, African country to do so by the March 2021 deadline.

### FACING THE FUTURE

As tourism reopens on the heels of Seychelles' wildly successful vaccination programme, the need to ensure a seamless and hassle-free experience for visitors is paramount in the "new normal". It is also vital that Seychelles citizens have the confidence that this reopening is being managed safely and securely - with technology tackling the issues of the here-and-now, as well as anticipating the challenges of the future.

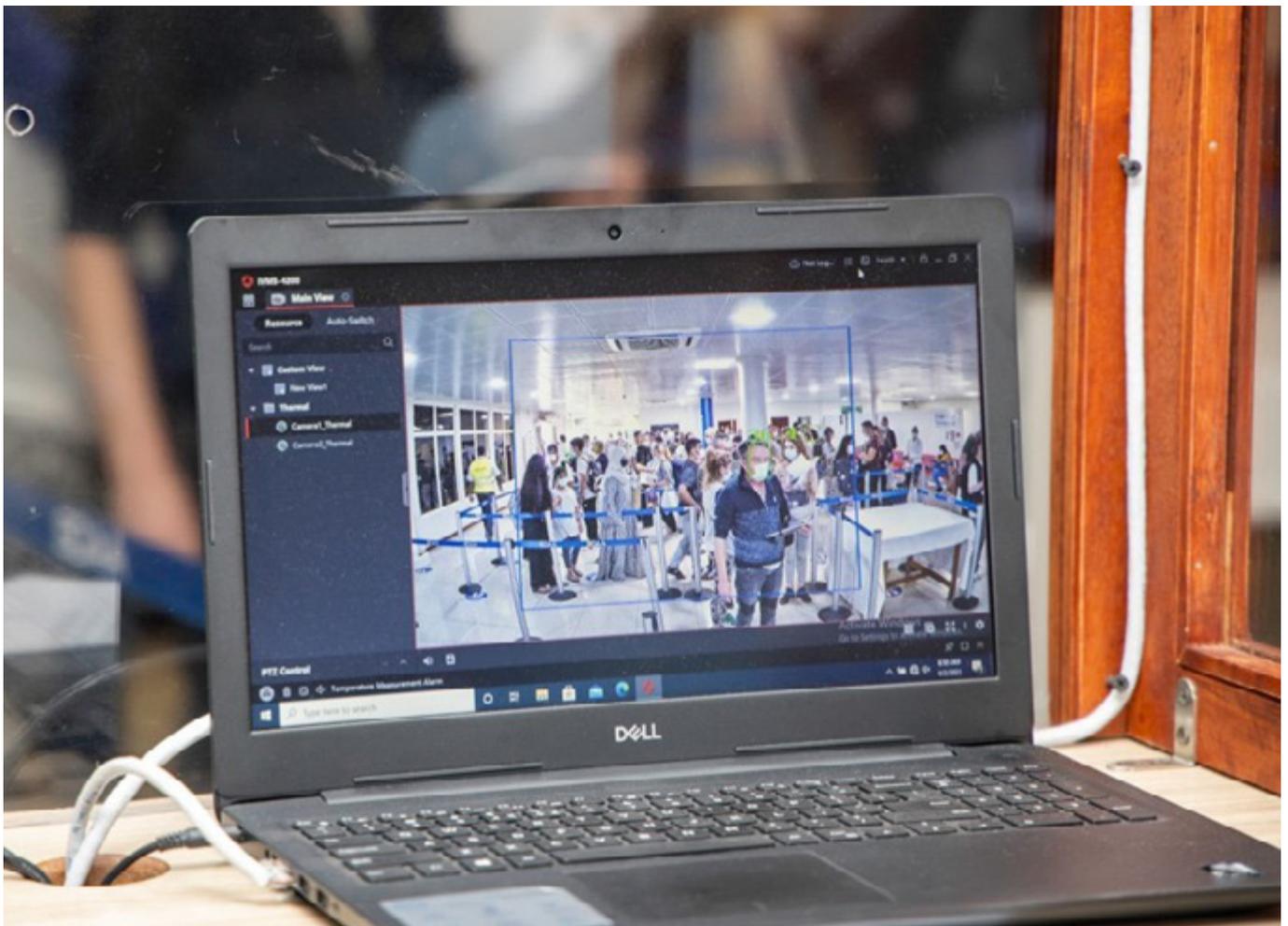
That's where Travizory's world-beating biometric system comes into play. In a groundbreaking 10-year deal, Travizory have launched a biometric Travel Authorization system that uses facial recognition technology alongside the Travizory Advance Passenger Information and Passenger Name Record (API/PNR) system to deliver Africa's most secure immigration system yet.

In a continental first, Seychelles will allow passengers to travel using an encrypted Travel Authorization (TA) - featuring all of their data alongside information from API/PNR - handily stored on their smartphone to ensure the passenger retains full control of their own data.

From my Government's perspective it allows advance approval to travellers who meet specific entry

requirements, while visitors are able to sail through the airport, using just their face or a QR code, without having to worry about passports and boarding passes. The end result? Virtually no queues in the already too-small arrival hall leaving officials with time and resources to focus on cases that really need them.

The pandemic has highlighted the fragility of our current immigration systems, with many countries having to either fully shut down or face opening up their populations to unprecedented health risks. While many are desperately calling for things to reopen and "go back to normal", Travizory's work in the Seychelles proves that things don't have to revert to how they once were for them to get better.





# Border Management in the Maldives amidst the global pandemic

By Mohamed Ahmed Hussain, Controller General, Maldives Immigration

The COVID-19 pandemic has wrecked travel freedom by leaving chaos to the global economy. Countries had no choice but to enter stringent nationwide lockdown to streamline the health system and prevent further deaths. The tourism-dependent tropical island nation, the Maldives, was gravely affected by the travel restrictions. White sandy beaches and serenity at the ‘sunny side of life’ became empty, with no one to stroll under the shining sun. The COVID-19 pandemic is the largest shock to have ever hit the Maldives’ economy. The government closed borders between the end-March of mid-July 2020, resulting in a sudden stop of tourist inflow and spiraled the country’s economy into a recession.

After almost four months of border closure, the Maldives government, along with travel and tourism industry personnel, prepared to ensure this vital industry is set to motion with a strong focus on maintaining appropriate health and safety measures across the country. Maldives Immigration is the nodal border agency working with the related counterparts to ensure the health and safety measures when travelers enter the country. Although the Maldives has

a Universal Visa Waiver Regime, which allows 30 days gratis tourist visa on arrival, it seemed challenging to ensure the health and safety of the visitors. The tourism industry is the backbone of the Maldivian economy, and a prolonged closure of the border posed an enormous economic loss to the nation.

As a law enforcement agency, Maldives Immigration strives to provide excellence in public service, facilitate all legal travel, assist travelers, and safeguard national borders. Maldives Immigration offices are established in five international airports and four international seaports. Maldives Immigration is currently using two Border Control systems to process passengers arriving in the Maldives. Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System (PISCES) is used to collect and store the foreigners travel records, whereas Citizen Screening System (CSS) is used in the border control processing of Maldivians which is attached to e-Gates and automatic fingerprint identification systems.

Amidst the border closure during March 2020, it took a lot of dedication, collaboration and forward-thinking for the Maldives to reopen its borders

to tourists of all nationalities on 15th July 2020. All the time keeping in mind that a post-COVID-19 world will never be the same as it was before. There is no definitive solution. The only way is to adapt to the changes and embrace new technology-based solutions to take adequate measures by balancing risk mitigation. In these unprecedented times, Maldives Immigration took a bold new initiative and introduced its first-ever online platform for travelers, the Traveler Health Declaration (THD). It was made mandatory as an entry and exit requirement for all travelers to submit the online health declaration form within 24 hours prior to their departure to and from the Maldives.

THD was designed by following the guiding principles set by the International Air Transport Association (IATA). As such, these guidelines were utilized to introduce measures as far upstream as possible in the travel process by minimizing the risk of contagion in the airport environment. THD ensures that travelers health information is received before they depart from their last destination. Additionally, to ensure the success of THD, it was collaborated between the government and all actors of the



industry. Understanding that the government is responsible for assessing and identifying traveler health risks, THD guarantees that all travelers are empowered to take more control of their travel journey, including the responsibility of evaluating their level of health risk before a journey. It also ensures that all actors working in the travel sector are involved in working together and implementing internationally consistent measures to build traveller confidence.

In addition to THD, Maldives Immigration initiated to introduce the world's first nationwide loyalty program, the Maldives Border Miles, focused on tourism promotion. The joint stakeholders of the program are the Ministry of Tourism, Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Cooperation and Maldives Airports Company Limited. This program is a three-tier loyalty program for tourists who will earn points based on the frequency of visits, duration of stay, and other aspects. It is designed to boost the economy by increasing the number of repeated travelers to the Maldives amidst the pandemic.

In July 2019, Maldives Immigration signed an agreement with INTERPOL National Central Bureau in Male to get direct access to INTERPOL Information System. Since then, Maldives Immigration has integrated its border control system with the

INTERPOL's Stolen and Lost Travel Document Database (SLTD) and Travel Documents Associated with Notices database (TDAWN). It resulted in giving capabilities to Maldives Immigration, to screen all border crossing actions against records of these databases in real-time. Additionally, Maldives Immigration has also implemented an integrated system to upload SLTD information to INTERPOL's global database automatically. At the same time, these tools are utilized at all Immigration border control checkpoints by our frontline officers. Moreover, on a secondary level, questioned documents are verified using document inspection tools such as "Verifier TD&B". Stand-alone systems are being used to detect fraudulent travel documents and imposters.

As the national nodal agency to control movements of people across our borders, Maldives Immigration is determined to work together with national and international partners alike, with a shared sense of responsibility. Maldives is an active member of "The Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime" (Bali Process) and "Asia-Pacific Document Examination Experts" (ANDEX). We strongly believe that information sharing and practical cooperation among border control agencies are vital to address cross-border challenges.

Hence, we have been actively engaged and will continue to engage with our international and regional partners to share information on irregular travel movements, best practices in travel document examination, identity verification procedures, and fraud patterns.

Planning is an essential feature of a successful organization. Maldives Immigration successfully launched the first Strategic Plan 2020-2024, which is aligned to the government's National Strategic Action Plan 2019-2023. This action plan provides the organization's strategic outlook and future-oriented development in line with core values, mission, and vision. Additionally, with the introduction of programs like the Maldives Border Miles, Maldives Immigration is focused to deliver innovative services, which will ultimately benefit the travelers with the true colors of the 'sunny side of life' and make their journey a memorable one.

Mohamed Ahmed Hussain (better known as Hanafy) is a member of Jumhooree Party and was sworn in as the Controller General of Maldives Immigration on 23rd of December 2018, to serve for the Administration of the 7th President of the Maldives, His Excellency Ibrahim Mohamed Solih.



Dr Katy Hayward is an expert commentator on the Irish Border and a Professor of Political Sociology at Queens University, Belfast.

# British-Irish borders as lines of connection and division



The Irish border is 100 years old. The men who drew a red pen around the boundaries of six Ulster counties could hardly have imagined the consequences of their actions. Such deeds were not, of course, untypical at the time. But this imperial cartographic act was very close to home. Partition of the island of Ireland was not about war, nor territory, nor, primarily, economics. It was about politics (including domestic British politics) and identity – with no small measure of ideology in there too. A century on, Northern Ireland is again in the middle of a fray in British and Irish politics, and the focus is once more upon its borders.

In and of itself, drawing a line across a map does nothing; it is human activity which gives a border meaning and effect. From this principle, we know that the significance of any border varies by context. The relevant context, for a state border, is not just geographical; it is historical, legal, political, socio-cultural, and economic. Immediately we see, therefore, that when it comes to the creation of new – or ‘harder’ – borders, it can easily become subject to dispute. Such border-related contestation may come from within the state or from another state, as in the case of irredentism, i.e. the claim by one state over the territory of another.

This was the situation for the Irish border until the 1998 Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement. Only after that British-Irish Agreement was Bunreacht na hÉireann, the Irish constitution, rewritten to retract

Ireland’s claim over the six counties. Instead, the Irish state and the UK accepted the principle of majority consent. That is: the Irish border can be removed and a united Ireland created if a majority in Northern Ireland vote for this to happen. This prospect helps to explain why it is that the Irish border remained politically and symbolically important within Northern Ireland even as other forms of friction over it were eased, mainly through European integration.

The Irish border is totemic of the relationship between Britain and Ireland. When that relationship has been tense, we have seen the worst effects at the border in the form of violence, controls and barriers. When the relationship has been good, the Irish border has become – to all intents and purposes – open, invisible and criss-crossed with connections. With the UK’s exit from the European Union, the challenge of managing the Irish border as a source and a symbol of British-Irish difference became an international concern. The Brexit process itself became afflicted by the tendency of the Irish border, as historian Diarmaid Ferriter (2019) put it, to ‘polarise and frustrate, with reverberations well beyond Britain and Ireland’.

Both the UK and EU were jointly determined to protect the openness of the Irish border, even as its status changed to become that of an external boundary of the European Union. The negotiated outcome they came to in the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland in the UK-EU Withdrawal Agreement reflects the

promised ‘flexible and imaginative’ approach. Northern Ireland remains de facto within the EU’s single market for goods, and the default setting is that the Union Customs Code is applied on goods arriving to it from non-EU states, including Britain. This is a complicated and extraordinary arrangement. It requires considerable adjustment to manage the movement of goods across Northern Ireland’s other border with Britain: the Irish Sea. This is why many borders experts, including members of IBMATA, repeatedly emphasised the need for detailed planning and preparation in anticipation of implementing the Protocol.

As this book recounts, historical experience from Ireland/Northern Ireland has already shown that international agreements do not bring complete resolution of complex problems; indeed, treaties have consequences that have to be enacted and managed. Any new border regime is but the working out of a changed legal, economic and, on occasion, political relationship between two states. This is true of the Ireland/Northern Ireland Protocol in the Withdrawal Agreement. There has been a hardening of borders all around Northern Ireland because of the changed legal conditions for movement across them. Whether it be for the movement of pets or plants (across the Irish Sea) or mobile phones or migrant workers (around the Irish land border), these new conditions make the borders around Northern Ireland seem friction-filled. And the friction is not confined to

inconvenience and costs.

With complication and upheaval comes insecurity, and with this comes a retreat to the most trusted moorings. In times of flux in Northern Ireland, the two main political ideologies (British unionism and Irish nationalism) coalesce around opposing pillars. The whole process of Brexit is about adding friction and separation where there was none before. A process of disintegration, no matter how limited, has inevitably disturbed the fragile political consensus. In a pattern seen since the earliest days of partition, anger about what is happening at borders between Britain and Ireland has recently become manifest on streets within Northern Ireland. This has included 'interface areas', where the 'border' under pressure may be a physical 'peace wall' separating a predominantly unionist community from a predominantly nationalist one. A century after partition, and as we enter the post-Brexit era, it seems an appropriate time to re-examine the borders of Northern Ireland.

There has, unsurprisingly, been a surge of books on this topic recently, including some fascinating studies on its history as a customs border and as a securitised frontier, see Leary (2016) and Mulroe (2017). This book is a bit different to the others. It is part of the series published by Sage which seek to answer the questions: 'What do we know and what should we do about...?' Often in public debate there is a demand for greater clarity about the facts, and that is one of the things the books in this series provide: to set out 'what we know'. But not only can there be disputes about facts, there are almost invariably different views on what should follow from these facts. In any case, public debate requires more of academics than just to report facts; it is also necessary to make suggestions and recommendations about the

implications of these facts. Hence the books also ask: 'what we should do'.

When it comes to setting out 'what do we know' about the Irish border, this book focuses as much on connections and interdependence east/west and north/south as on divisions. The section on 'what should we do about' the Irish border is understandably wide ranging. It considers the role of technological solutions in facilitating movement across a border. It looks at lessons from the difficulties in handling the coronavirus pandemic across Northern Ireland's borders with Britain and Ireland. And it also considers the process by which the Irish border would be removed altogether (at least in constitutional terms) by Irish unification. Ultimately, what we need to know about the Irish border underpins what we should do about it, i.e. to recognise that the relationship between the UK and Ireland can perpetuate conflict, or build peace. Much of that depends on whether the borders between them are treated as lines of connection or lines of division.

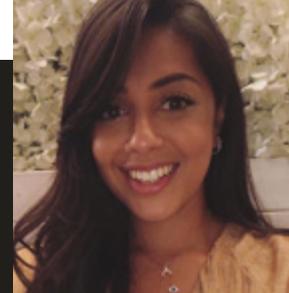
This book will be the latest of many on the subject of borders to be authored by an academic from Queen's University Belfast. Founded in 1845 by Queen Victoria, Queen's Belfast was one of three colleges on the island of Ireland – the other two in Cork and Galway. In 1867, a new professor of theology was appointed to the university. Revd. Professor Josiah Porter was born in Donegal, went to school in Derry/Londonderry, and studied at university in Scotland. He spent ten years as a missionary in Syria and Palestine, where two of his children were born. His youngest son, William, was born in Belfast – in University Square – in the year of his appointment to Queen's. After completing a scholarship at the university, William moved to

England to study and work. His eminent career saw him become responsible for implementing the first laws controlling immigration across the UK's borders. At the time of the partition of Ireland, William Haldane Porter was Chief Inspector under the Aliens Restriction Act. As well as being knighted in 1926, Sir William was made an officer of the Order of Leopold of Belgium. In 1930, Sir William and his English wife, Lady Sybil, retired to live in Dublin, Ireland. He died in 1944 and is buried in St James' Church in the city. It is known nowadays for tourists attracted to the Guinness Brewery, but St. James's Gate has been a stopping-off point for pilgrims since medieval times. The professional and the personal life of Sir William Haldane Porter exemplifies the significance of borders as lines of connection as well as lines of division. Written just a stone's throw from where he was born, this small book attempts to explain the Irish border in terms of both.

**What do we know and what should we do about the Irish border by Katy Hayward is published by Sage in June 2021.**  
<https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/what-do-we-know-and-what-should-we-do-about-the-irish-border/book275653>

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By Shenali Jashani  
Business Consultant – Customs &  
International Trade, Fujitsu

# Modernising the UK Border – A lens on the UK’s RoRo and Agri-food trade with the EU

Fujitsu’s vision to leverage existing customs facilitations with the innovative use of technology to support UK businesses trade with the EU; boost the economy; and ultimately help position the UK as a global trade leader.

## THE CONTEXT

On 31st December 2020, the Transition Period ended, and the United Kingdom (UK) fully exited the European Union (EU). To help traders to adjust to the new Trading and Cooperation Agreement (TCA)<sup>1</sup> between the UK and the EU, the UK is phasing in the introduction of new trade administration and border operations. This effectively pushed certain border controls and requirements to later in the year, for example, the need for Export Health Certificates (EHCs) and document checks on the import of EU food and products of animal origin are not required until October 2021, and customs import declarations deferred

for 175 days after arrival<sup>2</sup>. Other similar easements ensure medicines to continue to flow across the border by maintaining alignment on licences until the end of 2021.

The UK’s exit from the EU customs union offers both fresh challenges and opportunities to not only UK businesses but to the country as a whole. For the first time in 47 years the UK has the authority to develop and act on its aspiration to strengthen its position as a leading global trading nation and continue to drive UK prosperity. Central to achieving these objectives is establishing a world leading border capability, based on advanced customs procedures supported by the innovative use of technology solutions, to encourage growth in trade.

## THE NEED

The UK’s trade in goods with the EU is heavily dependent on road transport and the use of the short crossing sea

ferry and Eurotunnel routes. This is often referred to as “Roll-on Roll-off” or RoRo transport by virtue of the vehicles driving directly onto and off the ferry or trains.

RoRo trade is estimated to make up 90% of all the UK’s trade with the EU, with over 17,000 vehicles a day crossing via the English Channel alone carrying over £120bn worth of trade in goods annually<sup>3</sup>.

When the phased implementation period ends, there is a risk that RoRo freight will be subject to increased levels of checks at the border – very limited customs checks are required on the UK side during this period. These will include security, health and safety, and customs checks which may be required to be performed at UK entry and exit ports. Physical space in major RoRo ports such as Dover and Eurotunnel is very limited and severely limits the ability to perform any in-port checks without causing major congestion and subsequent

<sup>1</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/948119/EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement 24.12.2020.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/948119/EU-UK_Trade_and_Cooperation_Agreement_24.12.2020.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-border-operating-model>  
<https://www.export.org.uk/news/555851/Government-delays-new-controls-on-GB-border-with-EU-in-response-to-business-concerns-and-Covid-19-.htm>

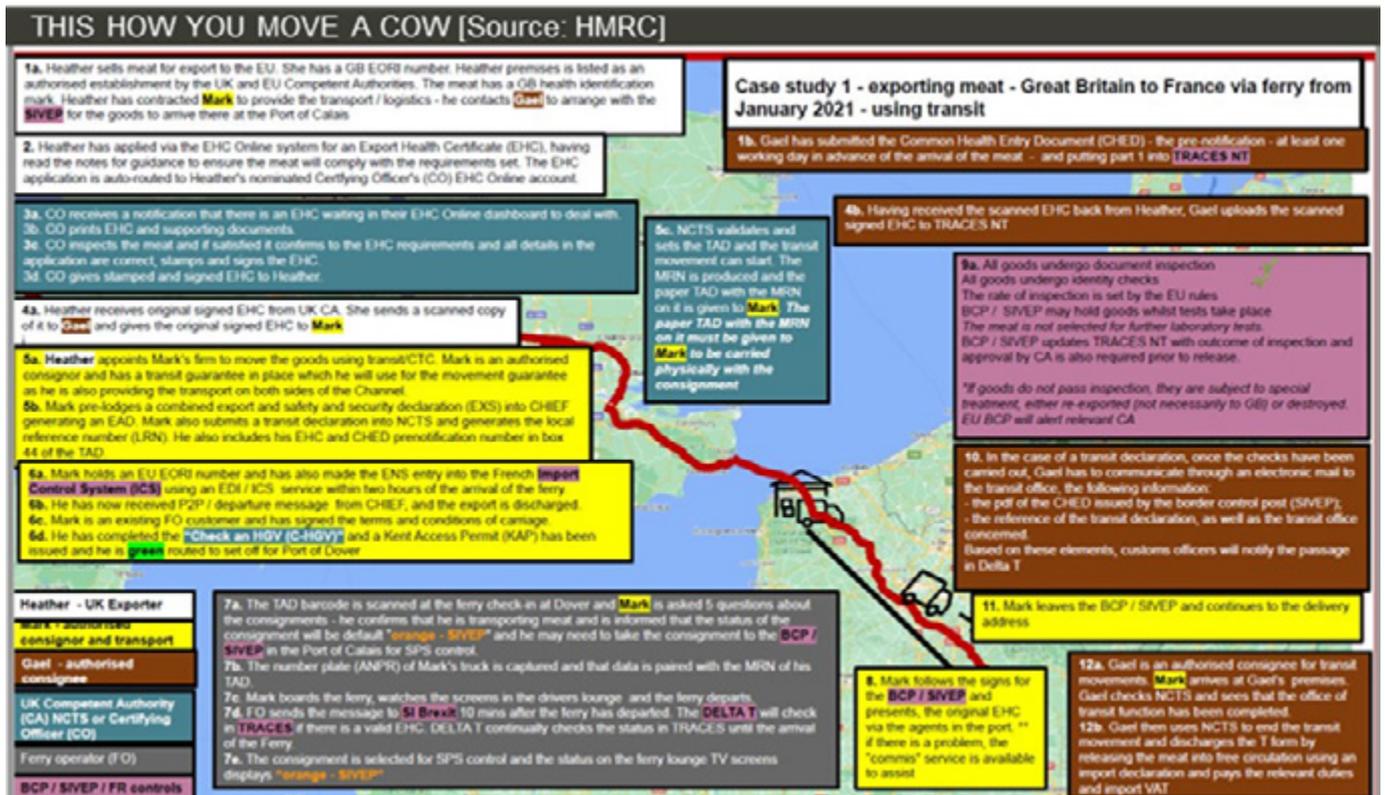
<sup>3</sup> [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/908558/port-freight-statistics-2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/908558/port-freight-statistics-2019.pdf)

impact to industry supply chains. The UK will need to focus on maintaining flow and minimising customs and border administration for all traders whilst also demonstrating compliance with the TCA.

The agri-food sector, or the wider

sanitary phyto-sanitary sector (SPS), which covers products of plant and animal origin, will face the steepest increase in new processes and requirements due to being subject to regulations on both a customs and health and safety aspects.

HMRC have estimated that there are approximately 47 steps required to move a live cow from the UK to the EU, involving a wide range of stakeholders and government systems;



Typically, goods of this nature will require a range of declarations and certificates, including:

- An Export Health Certificate (EHC) signed by an Official Vet
- Common Health Entry Document (CHED) created on the TRACES system
- Import and export customs declarations
- Vehicles must be sealed prior to movement
- Attendance to Border Control Post's (BCP's) for document and/or physical inspection checks.

This process also presents a significant challenge for groupage consignments where a vehicle carries several loads of SPS goods from a

number of suppliers. Each collection requires an EHC and associated vehicle seal. Collecting multiple consignments presents an interesting challenge if they are to have their own unique seal which remains unbroken until it crosses the border.

The opportunity exists to take advantage of the breathing space provided by the easement period to introduce solutions which encourage growth in goods trade between the UK and the EU by minimising additional administrative burdens on industry and friction at the border.

This requires solutions which maximise the use of existing UCC customs facilitations, supported by the innovative use of technology to make

these facilitations available to traders while ensuring the integrity of the border is maintained.

## THE SOLUTION – HOW WE GET THERE

The UK government is already considering a range of ambitious and forward thinking initiatives to promote growth in UK international trade. The recent announcement of a new Freeport programme plans to establish 10 new Freeport's or Freeport zones to anchor the UK's growth in international trade. Furthermore the recently published '2025 UK Border Strategy'<sup>4</sup> includes a range of innovative idea to ensure the UK can continue to compete on an

4 [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/945380/2025\\_UK\\_Border\\_Strategy.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/945380/2025_UK_Border_Strategy.pdf)

# MODERNISING THE UK BORDER

international scale such as; a single trade window, advanced trusted trader programmes and Smart Port / Freight concepts.

The world's top ranked trading regions have all developed a Single Trade Window (STW) capability to underpin their border strategy. STWs ensure efficient collaboration across government departments, connect the IT systems of different border departments, and offer a single point of entry for traders and industry players. Developing a STW, and creating a cohesive, digital trading environment would support the UK's ambition to compete as a leading global trading region.

STW's are, however, complex and time consuming to develop and implement when approached as a single 'big bang' programme. A practical strategy is to collaborate with industry to create a STW in

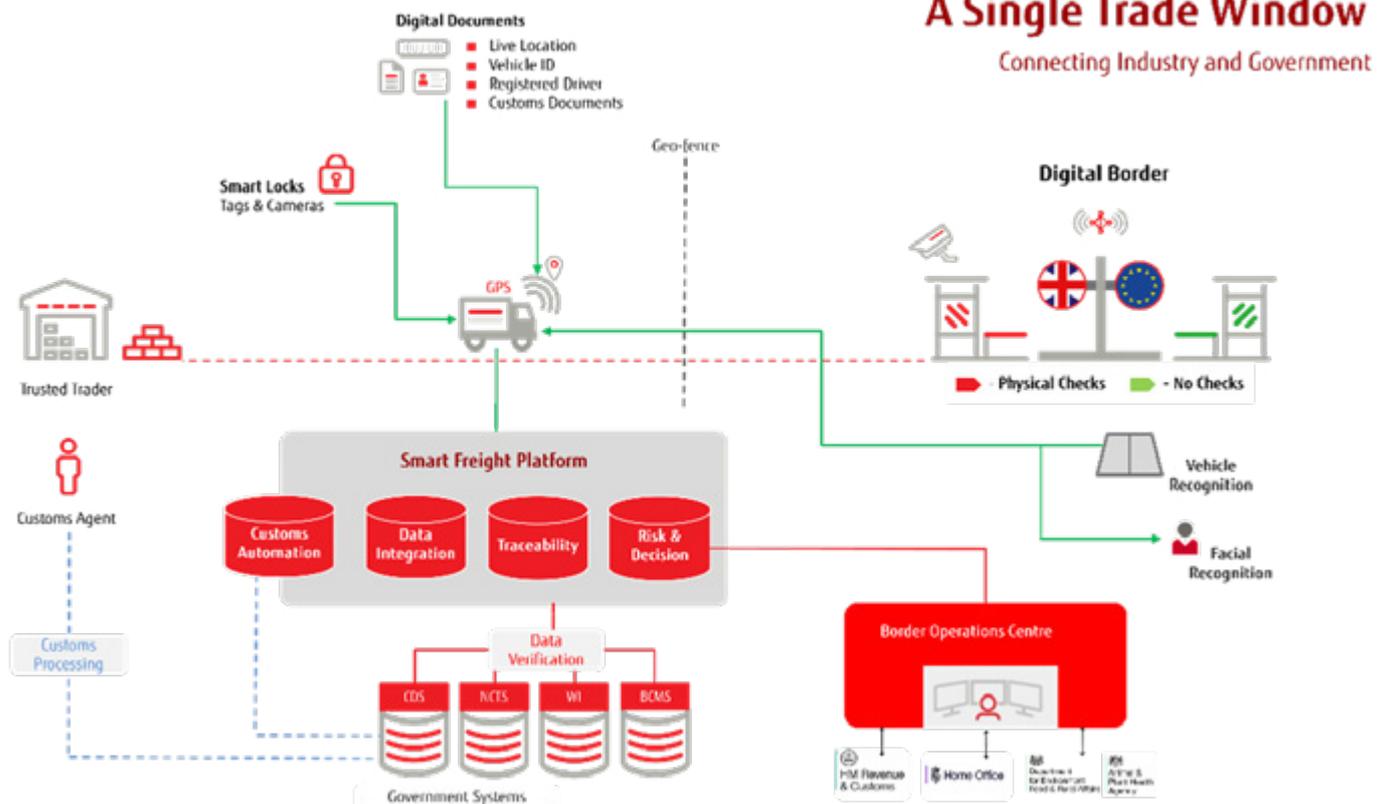
incremental steps. For example introducing Smart Freight and Smart Port capabilities as a first phase. Smart Freight and Smart Port concepts enable transparency across the supply chain, providing information and insights which strengthen risk assessment capabilities and facilitate the movement of checks away from the border to maintain flow. Enhanced Trusted Trader schemes strengthened by the application of these Smart capabilities promise the ability to significantly increase trust in the supply chain. In return traders may be offered simplifications in their customs administration and less frequent checks at the border while actually increasing confidence in border security management and operations.

The UK has developed a vision to

invest in its future global trading strategy with a series of ambitious new programmes, including creating 10 new Freeports, as well as agreeing new trade deals with global partners. Core to the success of this programme is to put in place a world class border operations and management capability which supports and indeed encourages growth in global trade.

Central to a successful Future Border strategy is the concept of a Single Trade Window to coordinate the activities and responsibilities of the many border agencies into a common operating model. This simplifies and streamlines the border crossing and international trade procedures for the many operators involved in moving goods around the world, reducing friction and cost, making it easier to do business with the UK.

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The UK's Single Trade Window programme must be developed in close collaboration with industry, and in discrete phases to reduce complexity, while benefiting from lessons learnt from the best practice of leading global trading regions.

## A FOUNDATION FOR THE STW

The diagram on previous page depicts Fujitsu's vision of an early phase of a Single Trade Window programme. Based on open IT standards, the Smart Freight platform captures supply chain data feeds from industry, and makes the information available to government agencies and systems of record. The platform provides transparency of information across the supply chain and enhances Trusted Trader schemes with strengthened security through the use of;

- Real-time vehicle location tracking to monitor planned journeys and provide accurate port arrival information;
- 'Smart locks' to control and monitor access to the goods in the vehicle – ensuring they have not been tampered with during the journey;
- Visibility of all official documentation and licences associated with each vehicle via a digital dashboard – a STW for road freight;
- Driver registration linked to port based facial recognition systems to automate the verification of drivers – which can also include Covid-19 vaccine details;

Smart Freight technology will have significant relevance to classifications of trade which are subject to high levels of controls to ensure compliance to standards. For

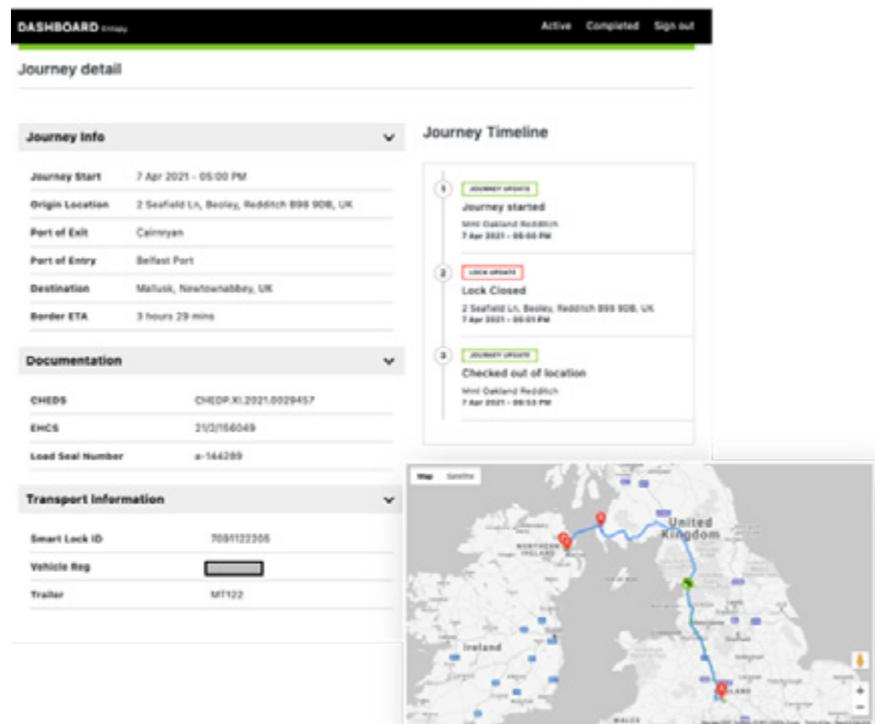
example, in the food supply chain where high volumes of checks at the border are required to confirm compliance to health and safety standards.

In collaboration with a consortium of expert partners, Fujitsu has developed an end-to-end Smart Freight solution, which employs technology to secure trust in the provenance of livestock and animal products through the supply chain.

Using next generation products and services, including Blockchain to secure transactions, our Smart

Freight platform also includes transparency of animal rearing information and health and medical certificates, leading to greater trust in animal welfare and provenance.

We believe these solutions align with the wider Future Border vision to establish a world class border management and operational capability, supporting growth in the economy through increased global trade.





By Rajiv Ranjan,  
Managing Director,  
Complygate HR Software

# Why do companies need a Skilled Worker Visa Compliance and Monitoring Software after Brexit?



## WHAT DOES BREXIT MEAN FOR UK EMPLOYERS?

In a nutshell, it means that anyone with an EU / EEA / Swiss passport who wants to stay and work in the UK now needs permission to do so – regardless of how long they have lived here. The UK Home Office has been running the “EU Settlement Scheme” for some years now, but the deadline by which EU / EEA / Swiss passport holders (other than British and Irish citizens) must register for this is fast approaching (30 June 2021). After that date, employers will have to demonstrate to the Home Office that they have checked their workforce credentials including “right to work” status. Possession of an EU / EEA / Swiss passport or identity card will no longer be sufficient evidence in itself.

Furthermore, since 1 January 2021 employers wishing to bring workers to the UK from the EU and beyond will need a “Skilled Worker Visa” to do so.

## WHAT IS A SKILLED WORKER VISA?

The skilled worker visa has replaced the Tier 2 (General) work visa. A skilled worker visa allows individuals to come to or stay in the UK to take an eligible job with a Home Office approved employer (sponsor).

## WHY WOULD YOU NEED A SKILLED WORKER VISA COMPLIANCE AND MONITORING SOFTWARE?

The UK Home Office is moving away from physical document checks towards a digital online system. In order to best keep up with developments, UK companies would be wise to invest need a skilled worker visa compliance software as a digital resource, which can be used to track employees and migrant worker’s activity and is capable of flagging suspicious activity early. The Complygate HR Software Solution has

been developed specifically to:

- monitor your employees’ immigration status.
- maintain copies of relevant documents for each employee, including passport and right to work information.
- track and record employees’ attendance.
- keep employee contact details up to date.
- To flag if there is a problem, for example if your employee stops coming to work.

## WHAT DOES A HOME OFFICE AUDIT REQUIRE?

### 1. EXTERNAL (FOR UKVI)

- The terms of a UK sponsor’s licence require an employer to notify UKVI of any changes through their sponsor management system (SMS).
- These changes can include a raft of events, including termination

or curtailment of employment/ sponsorship; changes to the role/hours/place of work/salary; and unauthorised absence.

- Employers need to keep records to demonstrate that these requirements are being met. They can be required by UKVI at any time as part of their compliance process.

The Complygate HR Software solution issues prompts/alerts which remind the employer that UKVI's SMS needs to be updated - and ensures that this happens so as to ensure that the date, time, and name of the person updating the record is clearly traceable. A reminder alert will be issued if the prompt is overlooked.

## 2. INTERNAL

Compliance and monitoring software should have a code of conduct which requires each member of the staff to read, sign and confirm that they have understood it before they operate the product. This must be re-signed every now and then (ideally annually), prevents misunderstandings, and clarifies responsibilities and limits.

The employer needs to be able to record who has authorised a person to access the system, and in what capacity (e.g., you may have standard users and supervisory/administrative roles).

The system records who has accessed a record, even if they make no changes to it.

Finally, it needs to comply with all relevant legislation.

## MANAGEMENT INFORMATION (MI)

The skilled worker visa compliance tool should ensure that any reports can be created both for individual employees of a licence holder, and for all their sponsored employees.

Different components of the



Complygate skilled worker visa compliance and monitoring system is accessible only to nominated members, so that they have confidence in the system.

## PENALTIES

Employers can be sent to jail for 5 years and pay an unlimited fine if they are found guilty of employing someone who they knew or had 'reasonable cause to believe' did not have the right to work in the UK. This includes any employee who:

- did not have leave (permission) to enter or remain in the UK,
- had overstayed their visa,
- had taken certain types of work to which they were not permitted, or
- had produced documents which were incorrect or false.

## RIGHT TO WORK CHECKS

Although the Home Office introduced temporary measures on 30 March 2020 to overcome COVID issues - which enabled employers to ask prospective employees to submit a scanned copy or a photo of their original documents via email which could then be verified on a video call with the candidate or employee - these

temporary measures will come to an end on 16 May 2021. Therefore, from 17 May 2021, employers must either:

- have sight of and check the individual's original documents; or
- check the individual's right to work online (if they have provided their share code).

The Complygate system includes Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) which helps you identify that the Right to work documents are genuine, original, and unchanged – and that they belong to the person who has given them to you.

Complygate HR Software has teamed up with former Home Office experts in this area at Fortinus Global Ltd and with expert immigration lawyers at Ince Group to provide a comprehensive advisory, training, technical and legal solution for UK employers who may be struggling to come to terms with these changes.

**For further information please contact [info@fortinusglobal.com](mailto:info@fortinusglobal.com)**



by Lars Karlsson



# AEO X – The Next Generation is here

A REVOLUTION OF WORLD TRADE IS APPROACHING WHEN AUTHORIZED ECONOMIC OPERATOR AND TRUSTED TRADER PROGRAMS WILL BECOME FULLY DIGITAL. AEO X - THE NEXT GENERATION OF RISK AND COMPLIANCE MANAGEMENT - IS ALREADY HERE.

## THE WORLD WE NEED TO MANAGE, TODAY AND TOMORROW

We live in a world of globalization, change and crises. During the past year we have been prisoners of a global pandemic that will get worse before it gets better. Whilst in many cases our borders have been closed to people movements due to the virus, they have been open for goods. Our ability to keep our borders open for the movement of medicines, medical equipment, food and vaccines has become an essential part of our defense - and the fight against Covid-19 worldwide.

Global trade is a key driver for development, growth, and poverty reduction. It is the bloodflow system of the global economy. During the last decade, global trade has changed dramatically through the evolution of integrated international value chains. No longer do we produce goods in one

place and sell it in another; now we produce products everywhere and sell them everywhere. Made in the World. This is now true for not only high-end products, but for all industry segments. We are also seeing trends where goods and services increasingly merge, and people-goods movements become more integrated. The fast evolution and maturity of supply chain and value chain integration has clearly been one of the reasons why customs and borders became the most critical topic in relation to Brexit, and it still is today.

At the same time there are several huge global trade changes approaching in the years to come including the fast development of e-commerce (driven by changing global consumer patterns); the upcoming change related to the traditional postal system ;emerging new safe free zones integrating into value chains; and ocean freight, transforming to more

advanced integrated services. In fact, many experts believe that there will be more changes the next five years than we have seen in the preceding fifty.

So what is the global response to these new challenges? How can we support safe and predictable trade flows in a world of crises, pandemics, raising protectionism, and trade wars?

## THE GOOD NEWS IS THAT WE HAVE THE ANSWER.

The good news is that the answer is already available. Segmentation of trade flows.

Digitalization of customs and border processes, using customer segmentation based on risk and compliance. This is how we make border management today and tomorrow more efficient, safe, and predictable, while still being scalable and agile enough. These models and systems are already available in international standards, but we

need to make their application more efficient through digital solutions. This is not only possible, but also actually realistic and essential.

Last year, the concept of Authorized Economic Operator and customs compliance management celebrated its 20th birthday. It was in January 2000 when we introduced The Stairway concept in Sweden, the first AEO program in the world. In 2005, the AEO concept became an international standard under the World Customs organization SAFE Framework of Standards.

This is the existing well-established model we have for compliance management and operator risk management today - but a lot of water has passed under the bridge since then.

The AEO trend in the first decade was a focus on supply chain security, mainly establishing a partnership between Customs and Private Sector to manage supply chain security risks. The idea was to minimize risks throughout the supply chain through stakeholder cooperation, making it possible to offer compliant low risk companies safer, faster, and more predictable customs and border processes. Nowadays the early adopters have legacy systems which are often working well - but sometimes not generating enough benefits to the stakeholders involved due to lack of updates and modernization.

The next trend was to develop combined security and compliance certifications under the AEO standard.

The third trend was to include other border agencies in the AEO system, through a coordinated border management approach.

The fourth trend was the signing of Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRA) between WCO member countries, acknowledging AEO status and avoiding duplication of controls. This is a trend exploding right now, with new AEO MRA's under negotiation in many parts of the world. We will see

many interesting examples of new benefits for all stakeholders from this development, especially when countries with newer programs sign agreements with other countries that have modern or updated/upgraded programs.

Today there are AEO companies all over the world, with more than 120 countries having implemented AEO and Trusted Trader programs. WCO is working on the update to the international SAFE standards with an AEO 2.0 on the way - and there are successful examples of the new AEO and Trusted Trader paradigm in countries like Australia, Brazil, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates.

## CURRENT NEW TRENDS IN AEO

There is a new paradigm of AEO and Trusted Trader emerging globally. These are some of the trends we see right now:

- **Re-emerging holistic programs**  
We see countries implementing, or updating existing AEO concepts, to holistic AEO-Trusted Trader programs covering both compliance and security and often with different tiers to segment companies based on risk and compliance levels.

- **New extensive benefit programs**

We see a wide range of new benefits implemented for AEO Trusted Traders. This is still an area where there is room for improvement, especially in legacy programs used in early adopting countries.

- **Single government AEO status - integrated AEO**

We see AEO programs including agencies and authorities within areas like agriculture, food and health, security, export control, defense etc. There are already multiagency programs operational today, and many more to come. This development naturally increases the benefits tremendously for all stakeholders, both Government and Private Sector, while at the same time improving compliance and security.

- **AEO for all supply chain stakeholders, including Free Zones and SMEs**

We see AEO programs for areas like free zones, free ports and special economic zones emerging. There are tests and pilots with AEO for e-commerce





and post. We see many countries working on AEO and Trusted Trader programs and tiers for SMEs.

- **Regional MRAs**

We see regions starting to build and enhance regional AEO programs with the ambition not only to improve intra-regional trade but also to facilitate regional AEO Mutual recognition Agreements with main trading partners. This is positive trend creating added value to a region, but also fostering an opportunity for greater inclusiveness of emerging economies in the international trade system.

- **AEO performance measurement**

We see a range of new KPI's used to measure the benefits of AEO and Trusted Trader programs. These indexes measure things like cost savings, compliance

levels, and the use and effectiveness of various benefits (for both Government and Private Sectors).

However, the real change will come with digitalization of AEO and Trusted Trader programs.

### **GOING DIGITAL – AEO X IS HERE!**

The original process for application, validation, and certification of AEO programs has been evolving over the years. The same goes for Government daily management and monitoring of AEO companies, and benefit programs offered to AEO companies where a smarter system-based AEO model with company individual control plans and self-assessment is introduced.

The fundamental change of the AEO and Trusted Trader instrument comes with using these new process improvements - together with the introduction of a digital AEO process.

Today there are off-the-shelf software

and SaaS solutions available for both Government, customs and border agencies, and AEO companies to manage the entire AEO process.

The application, validation and certification process is handled efficiently in a digital flow with automatic risk based controls, digital communication between all stakeholders and a digitally supported validation and inspection procedure - a powerful instrument when using site validation.

The pandemic has affected the speed of change in this context, when some countries with harsher Covid-10 restrictions now using this new way of validating AEO companies.

The digital AEO tools introduce a new level of security, safety and compliance efficiency since the digital process delivers individual company control plans that can be managed and monitored - on both sides – online and in real time. Early warning signals and different types of reports are generated automatically based on configuration directly from the software. This creates

## AEO X – THE NEXT GENERATION IS HERE



a higher level of certainty for all stakeholders involved, while a wide range of KPI's can be followed more easily using the new tools.

Operational examples using software like AEO360 or similar show that the accreditation process time can be reduced by 80%, whilst simultaneously delivering better quality and lower costs throughout the process for all involved parties.

The digital management and monitoring phase creates enormous new value for both Government agencies and the AEO companies, with the ability to have continuous day-to-day control of compliance levels whilst simultaneously detecting any potential new risks early. The re-valuation process becomes a routine day-to-day process rather than a huge costly audit, delivering benefits for both sides that can be managed and evaluated over time through automatic online statistics. Using the aforementioned tools Customs and other border agencies, can manage AEO companies with 25% of the resource

used today; and one officer can manage up to twenty AEO companies on a daily basis. AEO companies can save up to 60% of costs they incur today. Independent studies show huge savings for both Private Sector and Government when using a modern AEO and Trusted Trader model with digital AEO tools.

Adding complementary – and already existing – AEO software solutions for track-and-trace of shipments creates the new paradigm of AEO - the AEO X generation.

AEO X provides a level of certainty unheard of and beyond any management-control-monitoring system for trade used to date, which creates the opportunity to implement scalable Smart Borders.

Smart Borders fosters an increased export and import to a lower cost for all stakeholders, using digital fast track border solutions for trusted AEO traders with higher safety and security levels than ever before.

AEO X is not a vision or fantasy. Smart Border is not a unicorn. The models and

software applications already exist on the commercial market today. They are not even expensive.

The questions are, when will your country adopt this new way to meet the challenges of the future - and when will your company become a digital global AEO company?

Lars Karlsson is the Managing Director of Global Consulting, KGH Customs Services – a Maersk Company. He was previously Director of World Customs Organization and acting Director General of Swedish Customs. He was the architect of the AEO concept and lead work of SAFE Framework implementation in more than 120 countries. He has been involved in AEO, AEO MRA and Trusted Trader design, development and implementation in more than 70 countries in all regions and is widely considered as the leading expert on the topic. Lars Karlsson is Chairman of the IBMATA International Advisory Board.



Dr Wolfgang Schuster,  
Technical Director,  
Data Intelligence, Atkins

# Is data the fuel that powers our success towards efficient and sustainable Freeports?

**A**chieving sustainability in our socio-economic system while at the same time responding to the individual needs of an interlinked network of stakeholders is by far one of the most difficult challenges of humankind. Freeports are no exception. If evidence from other parts of the world serves as a guide, there is a risk of significant negative impacts - including on the environment - of Freeports due to the anticipated lenient regulatory environment. Created to encourage economic growth and innovation, through the likes of fast-tracked planning and flexible planning procedures (relaxed planning controls), this could lead to poor enforcement and non-transparent customs processes<sup>1</sup>, making it even more difficult to achieve sustainability.

Meanwhile, the importance of generating, and the ability to access, accurate and reliable data in shaping the rapidly changing landscape of Freeports cannot be understated. We have unprecedented opportunities to capitalise on innovative technologies (such as the Internet of Things, autonomous systems, digital twins, augmented and virtual reality,

blockchain, etc.) to shape a truly sustainable future for Freeports.

Embedding these technologies in Freeports will result in an abundance of data, fuelling new data hubs including London's new hub for planning data<sup>2</sup>, the UK Government's open data<sup>3</sup>, and others. Low-latency communication and computing capabilities (such as cloud computing, fog computing and quantum computing) will enable us to harness and process this data using cutting edge analytical capabilities (such as Machines Learning, Artificial Intelligence and even increasingly Artificial General Intelligence – AGI). This will generate intelligence that will allow us to make more informed and strategic decisions to, amongst others, increase business and operational efficiencies and thereby reduce our impact on the environment.

## MODELLING FREEPORTS AND WIDER REGIONS

Accurate, timely and up-to-date digital twins can help improve our understanding of the Freeport ecosystem and wider regions, including potential human and business challenges across multiple stakeholders.

If this data can be captured in a common data environment to form a single source of truth, it can be used to generate insights that help during the planning of solutions in Freeports. This could range from spatial analysis for choosing the optimal sites for factories, buildings and transport links, to development and investment planning, to the provision of public services including recycling via a circular economy, optimising transport operations, including better demand-capacity balancing, and mitigating environmental impacts.

## IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Freeports will need to trade-off potentially conflicting challenges like developing transport infrastructure while also addressing environmental concerns. Digital twins can feed optioneering technologies such as simulations to identify the most efficient designs and lifecycle management through detailed impact assessments of one decision versus another. This will allow for more informed decisions in the design process, from capturing customer requirements to the conceptual and

1 Response to Freeport Consultation, HM Government (October 2020), [FINAL - 200923 - OFF\\_SEN - Freeports\\_Con\\_Res - FINAL.pdf](#) (publishing.service.gov.uk)

2 <https://smartlondon.medium.com/londons-new-hub-for-planning-data-is-going-live-e33341220ce2>

3 <https://data.gov.uk/>

## EFFICIENT AND SUSTAINABLE FREEPORTS



technical designs and support tools. It will also lead to enhanced production efficiency and improved business operations, while saving time and money and improving the customer experience.

### OPTIMISE SCHEME SUSTAINABILITY

To improve UK competitiveness, Freeports and their associated manufacturing operations will need to be the most efficient and sustainable ports in the world. Achieving this will require a detailed experience in the strategic application of cutting-edge technology - IOT, 5G, drones, BIM, etc. Not only will this be essential in the design stages, but these technologies are also able to feed timely, high-quality data into digital twins, creating a Freeport model that is always up to date. This will enable the model to be used to understand and optimise the sustainability of the scheme in real-time (e.g. throughout construction). Strategic decision-making tools including advanced simulations will be required to process any complex interdependencies and tease out key decision areas. These should focus on predictive and proactive interventions to ensure the strategic management of networks to ensure efficiency,

safety and security throughout the whole lifecycle of operations. A further benefit of data-based proactive interventions is the optimised usage and replacement of assets, leading to a reduction in preventative maintenance and associated environmental footprint, thereby increasing the longevity of Freeports at a minimal environmental cost.

### SO, WHAT IS NEEDED NOW?

Now that a number of the UK's Freeport sites have been announced, Freeport operators need to develop a comprehensive data strategy as part of the vision and business strategy of Freeports. This will ensure the right data is captured and used effectively and efficiently to ensure the sustainability of the UK's Freeport sites. Developing overall data governance and architecture frameworks will also be essential, to capitalise on the tools and capabilities that will generate value from data by enabling a better understanding of the challenges Freeports face. This will allow for improved planning, design and implementation of solutions that are future-proof and sustainable. Solutions that will remain competitive throughout their lifecycle. Lastly, we need to ensure that an appropriate

framework is in place to protect the data in Freeports from unauthorised access.

Data is, in essence, the vital fuel that will power safety, efficiency and sustainability throughout all lifecycle stages of Freeports. So, let's ensure we harness the power of data collectively to build the most collaborative and competitive Freeport environment for the benefit of all Freeport stakeholders, surrounding regions and the wider UK.

Wolfgang Schuster is Technical Director at Atkins, a global design, engineering and project management consultancy with over 19,000 employees around the world. He has extensive experience in Digital Advisory and Data Intelligence, and leads innovative, disruptive, intelligent and sustainable business transformation across a broad range of sectors.



By Mark Pegler

# UK FREEPORTS: An Opportunity for the Opportunistic?

In November 2016, RH Richie Sunak MP put pen to paper expounding the benefits of a post Brexit Britain, where thousands of jobs and a re-balance of the economy would be led by the creation of Freeports<sup>1</sup>.

Sunak envisaged economic revitalization through Freeports providing strategic (tax) benefits to trade, including (Customs/import) duty exemption, duty deferral, tax inversion, tax credits, regulatory flexibility, and other financial incentives, while at the same time creating thousands of jobs

by 're-connecting Britain with its proud maritime history as a trading nation'<sup>2</sup>.

The paper was quick to point out (erroneously), that that 'a Freeport is inside a country's land border but outside its Customs territory'.....more of that later.

The paper used various worldwide case studies, all of them positive, to highlight a 'wealth of tangible benefits' that Britain absolutely must avail itself of. The paper argued that 'an extensive and ambitious network of UK Freeports would send a clear message to

international markets that Britain's new global role will be 'open, innovative, and outward looking'<sup>3</sup>. However, Sunak's paper and the subsequent government consultation document, makes little or no mention of enforcement - and pays only scant regard for control measures. Rather it highlights 'success story after success story', as if by inaugurating Freeports in (for the most part) northern Britain, a panacea of economic enlightenment will befall those lucky enough to be on the bandwagon.

You may have guessed already that



1 Sunak, R (2016). The Free Ports opportunity, How Brexit could boost Trade, Manufacturing and The North.

2 Ibid

3 Ibid

I'm not wholly convinced. We all know and appreciate that Mr Sunak's stock has risen since his time as a member of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Select Committee, when the report was commissioned. However, it is this notion of the 'free' in Freeports, that I take issue with. That and how the thousands of promised 'new' jobs would materialize. The question then...In a Freeport, how 'free' is free?

RH Sunak's main driver in championing 'Free' ports, was seemingly a desire to see a regenerated UK manufacturing base enjoying all those lovely tax breaks. No bad thing, you might think. Yet the UK Government's consultation paper skirts around the issue of multi million pound frauds that have occurred in Free Zones and Freeports the world over during the past decades. It is with some irony that at a time when the UK Government is promoting them, the European Parliament has issued a call for an urgent phasing out of Free Zones within the EU<sup>4</sup>.

And why would the European Parliament be calling for such a measure, especially one which a post Brexit UK may seek to take advantage of?

Much of the UK Governments levelling up agenda around Freeports depends on how far tax breaks and other inducements encourage genuine opportunity, or risky opportunists. I think it is the notion of 'Free', which belies the fact that there has to be regulatory control and enforcement of Freeports. Otherwise we could end up as in Panama, Colombia, Switzerland... (I could go on), not so much in an economic free tax boon, but a 'free for all'.

Let us hereby kill the notion that Freeports are geographically outside of Customs jurisdiction and therefore not under Customs control. This is not so. The Revised Kyoto Convention is a blueprint for modern transparent and

predictable Customs procedures and control mechanisms. Specific Annex D of the RKC, defines FZ's as 'a part of the territory of a Contracting Party where any goods introduced are generally regarded, insofar as import duties and taxes are concerned, as being outside the Customs territory.' Notably, the definition does not state that FZs are geographically outside the Customs territory.

In his World Customs Organisation research paper on extraterritoriality of Free Zones/ Free Ports,<sup>5</sup> Kenji Omi highlights the misinterpretation of the definitions of FZ's under the auspices of the RKC.

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*'Interpreting that goods inside FZs are considered as being outside the Customs territory altogether, and not only in terms of duty/tax application, is a misinterpretation.*

*The concept of a FZ's own 'extraterritoriality' and 'segregation' from the Customs territory seems to be leading to the concept of an 'extraterritorial free-area' which is free from, and where there is a rejection of, usual Customs controls. This could result in reduced Customs' involvement in monitoring cargo movements inside FZs and relaxed Customs controls inside FZs'*

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Omi points to the already mentioned Switzerland, a country which in the wake of allegations that FZs were being used for storing stolen cultural heritage, amended their Customs Act in 2007 to define FZs as being 'part of the Customs territory'.

Furthermore, the global money laundering and terrorist financing watchdog, The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) identifies cases of money laundering and illicit activity within Free ports and Free zones, with high level corruption enabling organized

crime groups to take advantage of lax controls and weak legislation<sup>6</sup>. And in its very balanced response to the UK's Freeport consultation paper, which recognizes the Governments intentions to consult on 'optimal ways to prevent criminal misuse of Freeports', The Royal United Service Institute (RUSI) recommends a 'strong response' to the risk posed in the establishment of a the UK Freeport programme<sup>7</sup>.

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*'the government should beware of its rhetoric of 'cutting red tape' being misinterpreted as downplaying the value of proper customs controls. Its current plans do not provide for an assessment of existing criminal risks in places where Freeports will be established; do not commit to anti-illicit trade efforts being proportionate to the risk profile and volume of activity taking place in Freeports; and do not establish a mechanism for the review of Freeport Operators' effectiveness in discharging their security-related responsibilities'*<sup>8</sup>

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In order to fully realize the promised potential of Freeports, particularly now Britain has left a genuinely 'free' trading bloc of 27 other countries, requires more debate. A debate which while focusing on economic gains and employment opportunities, must seriously consider regulation to answer the question, how 'free' is free, in a Freeport?

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4 European Parliament, Report on Financial Crimes, Tax Evasion and Tax Avoidance (2018/2121(INI)), 8 March 2019, para. 211, accessed 8 April 2020.

5 Omi, K (2019), 'Extraterritoriality' of Free Zones: The Necessity for Enhanced Customs Involvement (September WCO research paper Number 47).

6 Financial Action Task Force (FATF), 'Money Laundering Vulnerabilities of Free Trade Zones', March 2010, p. 6.

7 Moiseienko et al (2020), Free Ports, Not Safe Havens Preventing Crime in the UK's Future Freeports (RUSI briefing paper).

8 RUSI report



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