

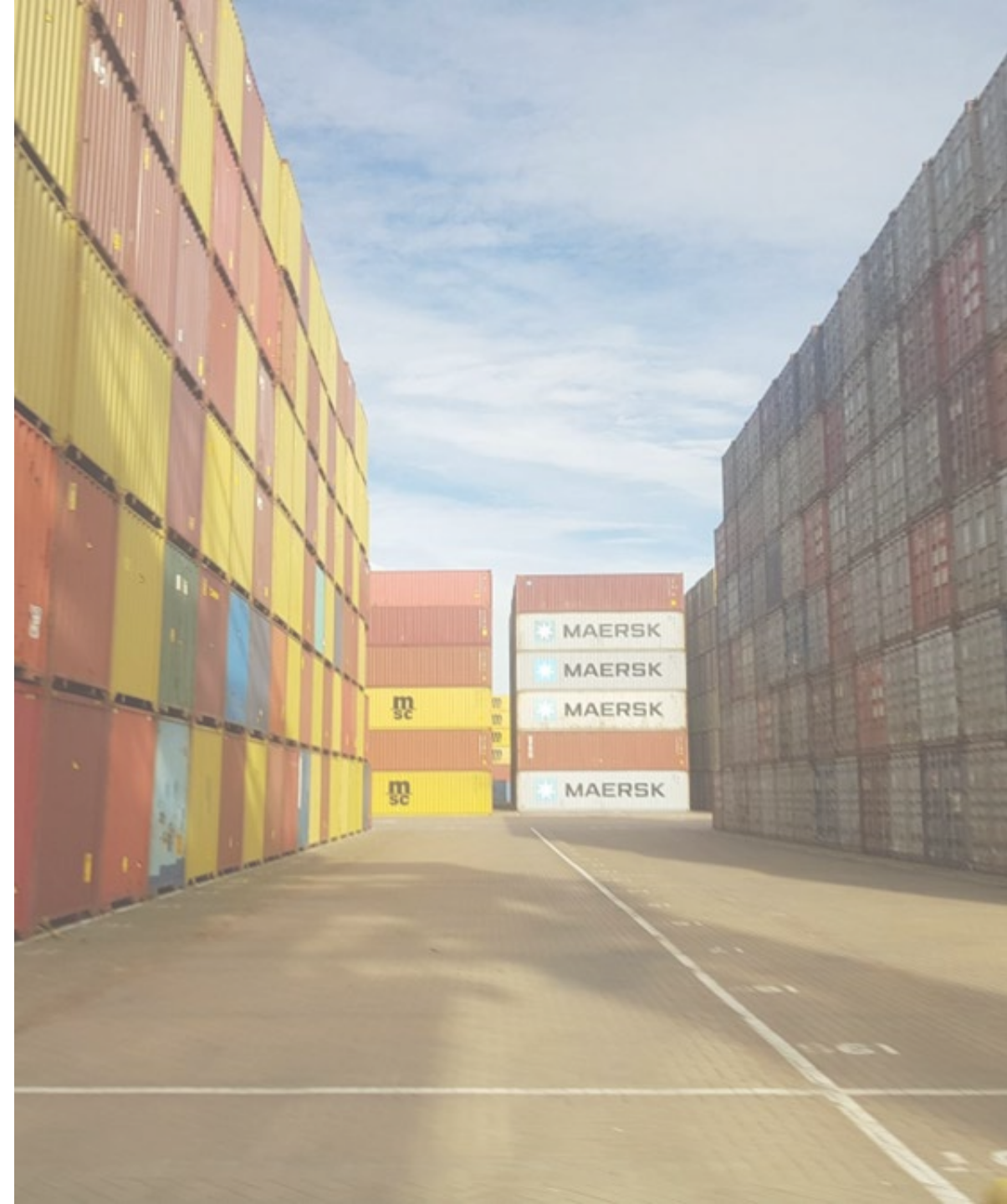


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Trade Facilitation during a crisis: Lessons learned from Covid-19

Presentation from the United Kingdom

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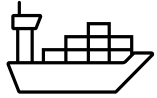


Overview

- ① Summary of the challenges of moving goods during the pandemic
- ② UK Government response to challenges
- ③ Role of the Trade Facilitation Agreement in keeping goods moving
- ④ Key reflections to build future resilience



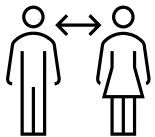
Challenges of moving goods during the pandemic



Disruptions in global supply chains and reduced capacity in logistics systems



Surge in urgent demand for critical goods such as personal protective equipment, vaccines and medicines



Strict health and safety measures such as quarantine and social distancing constrained traditional face-to-face or paper-based border processes



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How did the UK Government respond?

- ① Provided support for businesses through key worker exemptions and online guidance.
- ② Ensured the swift movement of critical goods through special processes and tariff reliefs for critical goods.
- ③ Implemented temporary flexibilities for release and clearance of goods.
- ④ Accelerated implementation of trade facilitation reforms through digitalisation of documentation.



Role of Trade Facilitation Agreement in keeping goods moving

Article 1: Publication and Availability of Information

Measures introduced

- Dedicated webpage to communicate changes to procedures and guidance.
- VAT and import duty relief [applied to critical goods temporarily](#).

Benefits

- Information is easily accessible, on a single and well-established website, with free and publicly available information provided in a timely manner.
- Relief of VAT and duties reduced the cost of importing goods essential for combatting Covid-19.



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Role of Trade Facilitation Agreement in keeping goods moving

Article 7: Release and Clearance of Goods

Measures introduced

- Special processes were introduced to expedite the movement of critical goods.
- The UK prioritised the simplification of customs authorisations during the pandemic by:
 - Permitting applications to be sent to HMRC via email, without the immediate need for a wet signature;
 - Granting additional flexibilities for renewing authorisations.

Benefits

- Critical goods are anticipated ahead of arrival and can be easily identified and cleared at the border.
- Greater flexibilities within these processes moved processes away from the border.



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Role of Trade Facilitation Agreement in keeping goods moving

Article 10: Formalities Connected with Importation, Exportation and Transit

Measures introduced

- The UK accepted digital copies of documentation, issued digital stamps, or extended the validity of documents including:
 - ATA carnets
 - Transit documents
 - Phytosanitary certificates
 - Certificates of Origin

Benefits

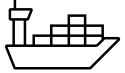
- Averted delays and allowed checks to take place away from the border, at a time where customs offices and border posts were closed.
- Digitalised documents were popular with traders, as indicated by trader and NTFC feedback.



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Boosting resilience : UK Government work on supply chains



In order to mitigate against supply chain disruption, the UK Government has developed its ability to anticipate, mitigate, and respond to supply chains crises by conducting analysis in response to acute international supply chain shocks.



We are also acquiring new commercial data sets to help identify vulnerable goods which may be exposed to disruptions.



We are supporting UK industry by developing a [toolkit for businesses](#) providing guidance and support for supply chain resilience planning.



The UK is collaborating with international partners, including the G7, on supply chain resilience principles as a mechanism to underpin global economic security.



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Key reflections

We asked our National Trade Facilitation Committee for their reflections on the UK government's response to the pandemic. Our stakeholders raised:

- The importance of **global implementation of the TFA**.
- **Digitalisation**: Removal of wet stamping and use of e-documentation was hugely welcomed by industry, and work is underway in the UK to digitise the remaining documentation and introduce the Model Law of Electronic Transferable Records in the UK.
- **Key worker exemptions**: Identification of seafarers, cargo crew and logistics professionals as key workers was viewed by UK industry as critical to trade.
- **Communication**: The importance of joined up government communications and close coordination with the private sector.



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Thankyou for listening



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