UK Single Trade Window

January 2024 update

Introduction from the STW Programme Director – Max Hacon

Hello,

Happy New Year! As I reflect on 2023, I want to thank you for your continued support.

We researched, designed and built the foundational Single Trade Window (STW) service and we've engaged with industry in the design, and now the testing, of this service.

The next 12 months are certainly going to be a busy as well as significant. The Single Trade Window Programme is now firmly in delivery, and we've already had an external trader connect to the live service for the first time. We look to move into Private Beta in the early part of this year then onto the first public release of the Single Trade Window.

The foundational service offers a user interface for traders using GVMS locations to complete and manage their own Full Frontier Import Declarations (Submission and Cancellation). As we develop the service, we'll start to offer functionality that'll be of interest to broader groups of border users, including Export, Excise and Transit functionality and the development of APIs as well as extending the service to those using Temporary Storage locations.

In this edition of the trade bulletin, we're pleased to share with you the latest information about recent testing of the Single Trade Window, roadmap progress, engagement and how to prepare.

We'll be sending these updates to border industry stakeholders regularly to provide more information about the development of the service. We would really appreciate you sharing these updates with your customers and members via your communications channels, to help answer any questions they might have.

Testing the foundational STW service

In December 2023 an external trader connected to the Single Trade Window. This was the first time a trader had interacted with the live service and generated valuable learning. More traders will be invited to take part in similar testing to us help us optimise the functionality further and learn from "real world" user experience.

The first release of the service focuses on building the foundations of the Single Trade Window, with key functionality including:

- Registration & Authentication
- Full Frontier Import Declaration (Submission and Cancellation)
- A dashboard with key notifications
- Simple error messaging

Our priority now is to continue to prepare for private beta testing, where the service will be released in a controlled live environment available for a limited number of users. We already have several traders lined up to test the service, although **we are still recruiting traders who import goods at GVMS locations** – if you'd like to be involved, please email STWBCRteam@hmrc.gov.uk.

While it is being developed, the Single Trade Window will sit alongside existing systems and channels for submitting border data. The time and cost saving benefits of interacting with the Single Trade Window will help encourage border users to adopt its use in advance of the Government formally transitioning to it as the sole point of data entry.

Single Trade Window Roadmap

The current Strategic Roadmap was developed over a year ago, prior to the recruitment of our Technical Delivery Partner (TDP) and underpinned by the Single Trade Window ambition as outlined in the Border Strategy.

We've recently started reviewing the roadmap, taking advantage of the TDP's insight and experience, and drawing on other Government Department feedback and learnings from the foundational development. The functionality that we had identified and prioritised for the first release remains unchanged, but some features will be delivered after the service first enters public beta, where it will be available to all.

In August 2023 the Border Target Operating Model (BTOM) included a new model for Safety and Security (S&S) controls that will minimise trader burdens and maintain border security while remaining aligned with international standards. The BTOM confirmed that Government will implement the requirement for S&S data to be submitted for goods arriving in Great Britain from the EU from 31 October 2024. **We remain on track to add, test, and deliver a user interface for S&S before the changes come into effect.**

Planning activities for the second release of functionality has been completed. This release will also expand functionality to include Export and Excise obligations. We are working closely with our TDP to design and develop these features. We're nearing competition of a new Roadmap and we'll soon be able to share more information about for the rest of this year - we appreciate your patience.

Engagement

While testing the live service is starting with a small group of traders, we're continuing to develop and deliver the STW in conjunction with a much broader group of border users. **In 2023 we completed over 100 engagements with industry, with over 400 pieces of internal and external user research.**

Co-Design

Co-Design is an approach to designing with, and not for, the people who will use the Single Trade Window to build a service around how traders actually operate. It empowers users to

take an active part in designing and creating the products and services they will use.To date Community Service Providers (CSPs), Traders, Intermediaries, Third-party software providers, Rail, Deep Sea Carriers and Airlines have been involved.

CSPs play a critical role at Temporary Storage (TS) Ports and based on the current model at TS border locations, Government are reliant on CSPs for the safe and effective running of the border at these locations. Government has also previously received feedback from CSPs that they want to be involved in the design process. Making sure CSPs are aligned to the Single Trade Window solution at Inventory Linked ports is critical to maintaining an effective service.

Software Developers (SWDs) (as an industry) provide systems and interfaces that cater to all types of declarants who rely on their software to process their required custom compliance. Given their importance to trade as current enablers of customs compliance across user groups, it was critical that the programme prioritises engagement with SWDs so that their views can be incorporated into Single Trade Window's design from the outset

Our Co-Design activities have included 24 sessions on Single Trade Window imports at Inventory Linked Locations, 13 on APIs and 32 sessions on exports at Inventory Linked Locations.

The next steps are to continue using Co-Design within cross-disciplinary teams including Design, Policy, Data and Technology, with increased focus on consolidating end-to-end service journeys.

Thank you to those that have taken part in this activity or are signed up to be part of the work in the coming weeks and months.

User research

User research will inform the wider design of the Single Trade Window as well as help to steer which functionality is available with each strategic release. It's already influenced the designs being produced and will continue to do so as we develop the Single Trade Window. **The programme is always looking for volunteers to take part in User Research. [Register your interest](#) if you'd like to be involved. We'd like to hear from traders, freight forwarders, hauliers and carriers.**

Some activities that you may be asked to get involved in include remote or in-person interviews, usability and comprehension testing and diary studies. There will be more exciting opportunities as the development of the Single Trade Window progresses.

Registering your interest via the link above will mean you are registering your interest for HMRC research as a whole. You may be contacted about other research opportunities, but you can choose which you would like to take part in. You can opt out at any time.

Preparing for the Single Trade Window

In anticipation of the initial public release later this year, we'll soon be sharing further details and guidance around what businesses will need to know and how to use the optional service. **The early functionality of the first release may particularly benefit infrequent and new traders, intermediaries, and carriers who complete import declarations.**

You can start preparing for the launch of the service by making sure you have a:

- EORI (Economic Operators Registration and Identification) number
- Government Gateway account ID

Users will be able to access step by step guides, short videos, and a range of other material tailored to their experience level and situation to help support them through their submissions and check the status of their goods crossing the border. Embedded guidance will help direct users to engage with intermediaries where appropriate to support them in managing their border obligations.

For more information on the Single Trade Window, visit our newly published GOV.UK page.

Next steps

We'll continue to engage with border industry stakeholders at key forums and provide updates through trade associations, as well as written updates to explain any action you need to take and how to prepare for the launch of the first Strategic Release of the Single Trade Window this year.

If there are any areas you'd like to know more about for future editions, or for any questions about the Single Trade Window more generally, please contact STWEnquiries@hmrc.gov.uk.