



## Buckling up for Brexit

The latest UK Government announcement has revealed that there will not be an extension of the Brexit Transition Period, despite still not having secured a final deal with the EU. As a result, there still remains some uncertainty as to what the future deal looks like. But one thing that we can be sure of is the added requirement of EU import and export customs declarations from January 1st 2021.

For those that are not prepared for Brexit, there is a deferred six-month opportunity for importers (excluding excise goods and controlled goods) to complete declarations after January 1st 2021, but now is the time to begin implementing solutions that will help to alleviate inefficiencies at the borders and backlogs of administrative tasks – particularly for those industries that rely on just-in-time (JIT) distribution.

Andrew Tavener, Head of Marketing, Descartes Systems UK, explores some of the solutions that firms have already deployed to ensure business remains as seamless as possible, and for those who have not yet considered the implications of Brexit, he urges them to act immediately.

### Customs Declarations

The migration to CDS from the existing Customs Handling of Import and Export Freight (CHIEF) has been in process for some time, in fact the decision was made prior to voting for Brexit. But coupled with the vote to leave the EU and logistics businesses now being sure of the increased requirement of import and export declarations post January 1st 2021, complexities have increased.

The shift from CHIEF to CDS is a significant change and now with the compulsory extra volume of declarations, training and education are essential – as is access to test systems to ensure organisations understand the new processes and steps required.

The Descartes e-customs solution is designed to make the transition as seamless as possible, and ensures firms can be both compliant and efficient with increased input of customs declarations as required post Brexit.

One organisation that has employed the support of Descartes is that of Customs Consultancy firm; Clearlight Customs. Rob Pryce, Director at Clearlight Customs, comments: “Finding a software solution to manage the inevitable implications on customs procedures in the wake of Brexit is key to ensuring both our business and our clients’ businesses continue to run efficiently. Not only do we recommend Descartes solutions to our customers, we have also implemented the e-customs software ourselves to help us further support our clients. Descartes was an obvious choice for us, it’s market leading, trusted and reliable, for that reason we know we are offering our clients the ultimate Brexit ready tools.”

### ETSF

Brexit will undoubtedly cause further delays to already busy ports and stretched supply chains, and for those industries that rely on JIT distribution, it’s crucial to get goods through customs clearance without delays and remain compliant with ease.

Descartes e-customs External Temporary Storage Facility (ETSF) allows you to move the customs border away from the busy port and effectively to your own premises, so that customs declarations can be pre-lodged ahead of the goods arriving and the entire customs process can be significantly accelerated. So long as the business is running an approved ETSF solution, it enables the site to operate as if it is the Customs Frontier from an HMRC and Border Force perspective.

The ETSF setup can also be enhanced to include an inventory system that is designed to group goods at truck level, instead of typical systems today that are designed for flight or vessel-based arrival. With a truck-based system, once a vehicle physically arrives at your site, its arrival triggers the clearance of all its consignments so they can be unloaded and handled.

### Final mile

With supply chains severely impacted by the current Covid-19 pandemic, coupled with the strict imposing Brexit transition deadline, ensuring drivers remain compliant and efficient is imperative to ensuring operations are kept slick with goods arriving on time and to the right place.

Intelligent route optimisation solutions have enabled operators to minimise costs and evolving customer demands. Real-time vehicle visibility from telematics has delivered new levels of business agility, providing operators with the chance to reroute vehicles on the fly in response to a raft of issues such as unexpected delays or new deliveries or pick-ups. Traditionally, compliance management and fleet optimisation have been siloed operations, but Descartes’ fleet and compliance management offers a joined up approach to improve both efficiency and safety.

### Conclusion

A combination of Covid-19, Brexit and migration from CHIEF to CDS means that it has never been more important for businesses to unlock crucial efficiencies and put the right technology and processes in place to ensure business continues as normal. While much of the focus is on the guaranteed increase of customs declarations for imports and exports due to Brexit, ensuring drivers remain compliant and safe combined with route optimisation to drive efficiency will only add to the overall seamless operations for logistics businesses to survive and thrive during the Brexit transition.

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