# National Audit Office Expresses Concerns over UK Government's Post-Brexit Border Checks Strategy



### National Audit Office Report on Post-Brexit Border Checks

The National Audit Office (NAO) has reported concerns about the UK government's post-Brexit border checks strategy, highlighting a lack of a clear timetable and an integrated cross-government delivery plan. The NAO estimates these checks will cost UK businesses £470 million annually.

### Key Findings

* Delayed Implementation: The implementation of full post-Brexit import controls has been delayed five times, leading to uncertainty and additional costs for businesses and government.
* Staff and Infrastructure Issues: There were critical shortages of inspectors and issues with recruiting and training port health authority inspectors. The government also spent funds on unused infrastructure and staff.
* Legislative Concerns: The government raised concerns about the sufficiency of legislation to support the new checks.
* Partial Control Implementation: Physical checks on lorries bringing in animal and plant products were introduced on April 30, 2024, but full controls are yet to be implemented.
* Financial Impact: The overall cost of implementing new border arrangements is estimated at £4.7 billion.

### Government Response

The government aims to have the "world’s most effective border" by 2025 and has started rolling out new checks. However, the strategy's execution and communication have faced criticism for causing confusion and additional burdens on businesses.

### Statements

Gareth Davies, head of the NAO, emphasized the need for strong delivery and accountability to meet the UK's border strategy objectives. Martin McTague from the Federation of Small Businesses highlighted the complexity and cost for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) due to the new border processes.

### Conclusion

The report underscores the necessity for the government to provide clearer timelines and better coordination across departments to minimize disruptions and costs associated with post-Brexit border checks. The lack of a detailed and unified approach has led to repeated delays and financial inefficiencies.