



Rt Hon Douglas Alexander MP
Minister of State at the Cabinet Office
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Rt Hon Lord Strathclyde CH
Constitution Committee
House of Lords
London
SW1A 0AA

17 July 2025

Dear Lord Strathclyde,

Common Framework programme update

Following the Department for Business and Trade's completion of the statutory review of the UK Internal Market Act 2020, I am writing to update you on the progress of Common Frameworks.

I am attaching a copy of the government's response to the review which outlines measures intended to facilitate a more transparent, proportionate and pragmatic approach to managing the internal market. The review makes Common Frameworks the primary fora where exclusions to the Act's market access principles are discussed and agreed, and outlines steps to make processes more transparent and more proportionate in cases of minimum economic impact. The review also commits the UK government to working with the devolved governments to jointly agree a process for how all four governments engage with businesses and other key stakeholders within Common Framework discussions. This will foster open and collaborative policy discussions between the UK government and the devolved governments.

I also wanted to take this opportunity to update you on the broader progress of the Common Frameworks programme following the commitment from all four governments at the Interministerial Standing Committee in December 2024 to finalise the Common Framework programme by the end of the year.

Of the 32 Common Frameworks, one Framework, Hazardous Substances, has been fully implemented since August 2021. There are 23 Frameworks that have completed scrutiny, which are making good progress at official level towards completion. There are a further 4 Frameworks that are currently awaiting scrutiny from Northern Ireland Assembly committees before next steps to full implementation can begin.

There are also two Frameworks at earlier stages of development. In the case of Recognition of Professional Qualifications, we are continuing to discuss its scope and whether to proceed with a Framework in this area with the devolved governments. The other, Specified Quantities and Packaged Goods, has, following agreement by its parties, the UK government and Northern Ireland Executive, been reclassified to 'no framework required', meaning that it does not require an active Common Framework at this time, reducing the programme to 31 Frameworks overall.

Finally, I am pleased to attach a copy of the evaluation of the Common Frameworks programme. Officials from all four governments participated in the evaluation and it found

that most Frameworks are being successfully operationalised, facilitating discussion and decision making across different policy areas.

I will be depositing a copy of this letter and a copy of the Common Frameworks evaluation in the Libraries of both Houses.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Douglas Alexander'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name 'Douglas' and the last name 'Alexander' clearly distinguishable.

Rt Hon Douglas Alexander MP
Minister of State at the Cabinet Office