e-Borders

Creating an integrated, secure
border for the 21st century

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"Migration is vital for our economy. Moreover it is our moral duty to protect those genuinely seeking protection. But it is essential that we enforce the rules rigorously and fairly. Over the next five years we will transform our border controls. Using new technology we will develop an integrated control before people enter the UK, at our borders and while they are in the country. We will continue to welcome economic migration within strict criteria. Visitors, students and migrant workers make huge contributions to the UK economy. A key enabler to this transformation is the e-Borders Programme, designed to deliver to all of the border agencies totally new capabilities for data sharing and risk assessment."

ANDY BURNHAM, PARLIAMENTARY UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE

"The e-Borders Programme will deliver a radical new means of securing and operating the UK border. The border control and security agencies, as key partners to e-Borders, will continue to modernise their business in order to realise the shared approach to securing the border, and improve the control of people travelling to, from or through the UK. The business, systems and technology solution required to underpin the delivery of border control and security will require both flexibility and resilience to deal with the ever changing demands on the UK from increased international travel, and will strengthen border security and facilitate an improved passenger travel experience.

The programme has both national and international dimensions. It represents a step change in the way that border controls can be operated in the future so that for the first time border security agencies will be able to assess passengers' credentials for travel in advance of the journey, then plan and deploy resources accordingly. In short this is an identity management system and service to passengers, the travel industry and border control agencies to provide for a highly effective and efficient method of travelling into and out of the UK.

With two years of planning and development behind us, e-Borders is set to ensure that the benefits of this programme are realised and maximised. I am confident that the end result will be a significantly more efficient and effective border management system supporting a new integrated service used by all passengers travelling to, from or through the UK."
MARK GOULDING, E-BORDERS PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

Background

More affordable and accessible travel has resulted in a marked rise in the number of international passengers crossing UK borders, and significant further growth is expected in future. For example, if growth continues in line with current trends, the Department for Transport estimates that by 2030, 400–600 million passengers will pass through UK airports each year, compared with 2003 figures of some 200 million.[1]

Recent terrorist attacks in the US and Europe have forced governments to review fundamentally their border control arrangements. The UK is also under threat from cross-border organised crime and the increase in irregular migration. A comprehensive strategic approach is required that will integrate the requirements of the border control and law enforcement agencies with the aim of identifying passengers who present a risk to the UK, whilst expediting passage of bona fide passengers.

[1] The Department for Transport's White Paper *The Future of Air Transport,* published on 16 December 2003.

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e-Borders will deliver timely data, information, intelligence and risk assessments to relevant government agencies on all passengers seeking to enter or leave the UK. The data will be utilised to export the border wherever possible, denying boarding to categories of passenger who do not qualify for entry to the UK, and providing intelligence to enhance operational responses. e-Borders will enable the agencies to identify and generate alerts in respect of persons of interest whilst streamlining passenger handling and clearance processes, and targeting resources more effectively.

e-Borders is a joint programme of work, led by the Home Office's Immigration & Nationality Directorate (IND), though its success is also dependent on integration with the aims, objectives and requirements of other key beneficiaries – the border control and law enforcement agencies. The programme's strategic approach is therefore founded upon active involvement of all the key operational partners – the UK Immigration Service (UKIS), HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC), UKvisas and the Police Service – as well as close working with its many other stakeholders.

Objectives of e-Borders

The e-Borders Programme will establish a modernised, intelligence-led border control and security framework, based on the electronic processing of information relating to travellers to and from the UK for all modes of transport. It will:

- provide a co-ordinated and integrated approach to meeting the requirements of the border control, law enforcement, intelligence and visa issuing agencies in relation to the entry and exit of people to and from the UK;
- enhance the security of the UK through the provision of improved intelligence and information on traveller movements;
- provide the systems to support the operation of more efficient processes for the management of resources utilised on UK border control activity; and
- provide technology systems to support the more efficient management of passengers through UK border control.

Timetable

e-Borders is already delivering operational benefits through its two projects, Semaphore and IRIS, and it is expected that e-Borders will be fully operational by 2014. The operational benefits that it provides will be enhanced and developed during the intervening period.
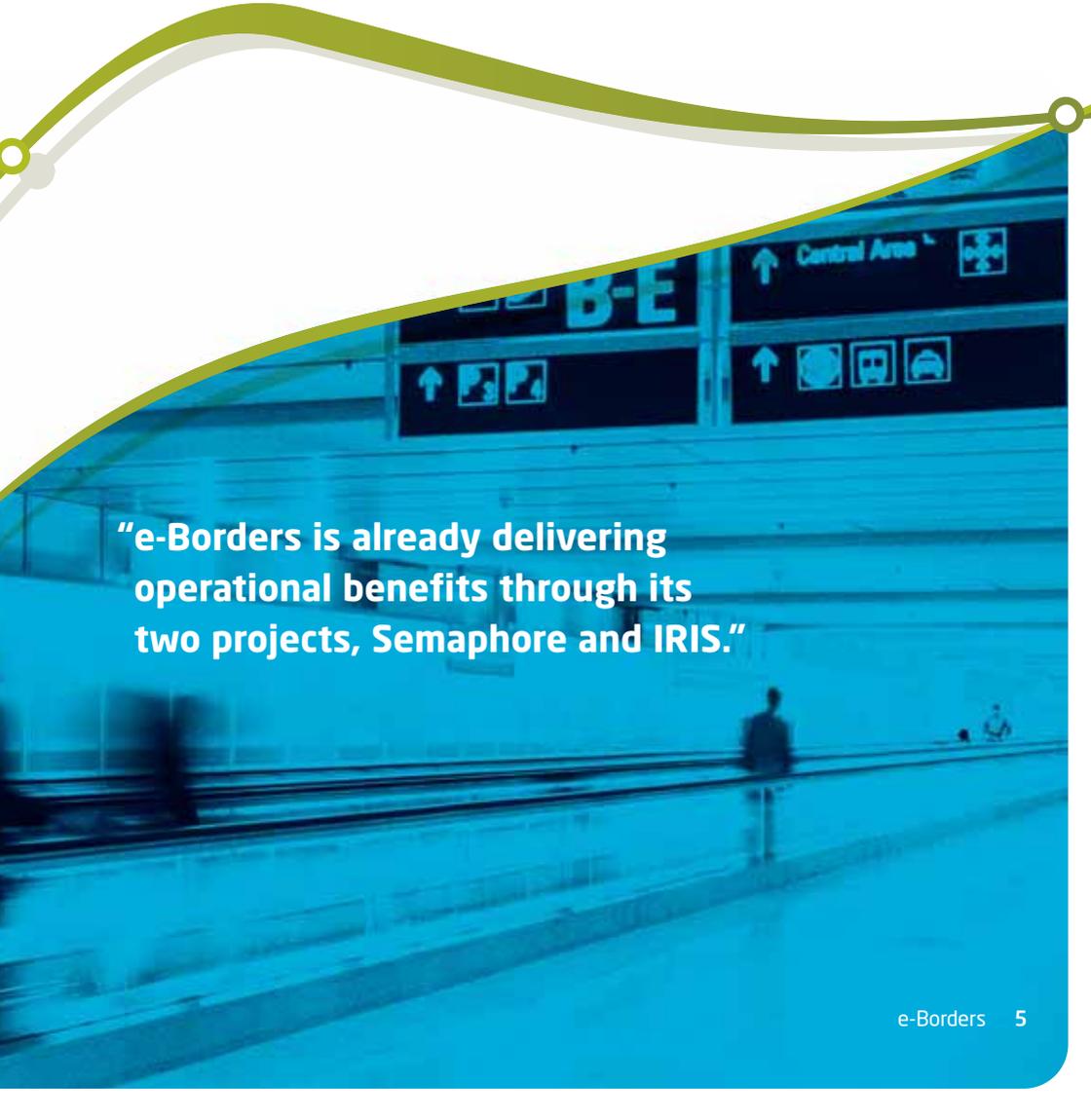
"e-Borders is already delivering operational benefits through its two projects, Semaphore and IRIS."

e-Borders in summary

The e-Borders concept

Data collation and analysis → Assess risks → Export the border / Identify persons of interest / Expedite legitimate travellers

e-Borders seeks to achieve the following:

1. A service for data collation and analysis will be established. This will collect data from the travel industry (air, sea and rail carriers) on all passengers intending to travel to or from the UK.

2. The risks presented by passengers entering and leaving the United Kingdom will be assessed.

3. e-Borders will seek to export the UK border by establishing an Authority to Carry (ATC) scheme. This will allow the UK Government to grant or refuse a carrier the authority to carry individual passengers to the UK.

4. e-Borders will identify persons of interest to the authorities prior to their arrival in the UK on an inbound journey and prior to their departure from the UK on an outbound journey. This information will be passed as 'alerts' to the relevant border control agency, which will determine the appropriate intervention.

5. e-Borders will support the movement of passengers to, from and through the controls, expediting the clearance of legitimate travellers and the interception of others.

Joint working

"The UK Immigration Service, HM Revenue & Customs, the Police Service and UKvisas are united in their goal of modernising the UK's border control and security framework."

Government stakeholders

Joint working between the border agencies is a key component of the e-Borders Programme. The four core partners (the UK Immigration Service, HM Revenue & Customs, the Police Service and UKvisas) are united in their goal of modernising the UK's border control and security framework, and the e-Borders Programme structure involves key leaders in these agencies as well as representatives embedded in the programme team. The strategic aim of e-Borders to "create an integrated, secure border for the 21st century" is likewise well aligned with the strategic aims and objectives of these agencies.

e-Borders has also engaged a number of other government stakeholders who will contribute to and/or benefit from the programme.

Industry stakeholders

As well as the various government organisations, other key stakeholders with whom the programme is engaging include:

- carriers (air, sea and rail);
- handling agents acting for carriers;
- port operators (air, sea and rail);
- regulators;
- interest groups; and
- other travel industry bodies.

Carriers and port operators in particular are key contributors and beneficiaries. Throughout programme development, the programme team has pursued an active dialogue with carriers and with ports.

e-Borders projects

The e-Borders Programme approach

An important element of the strategy for the development of e-Borders is recognition of the risks of implementing a major programme in a complex environment. This has resulted in two pilot projects, Semaphore and IRIS. The key objective of these projects is to 'de-risk' the development and delivery of the main e-Borders solution.

Semaphore overview

Semaphore commenced in 2004 and provides for:
- an operational prototype to trial e-Borders concepts and technology;
- the development of understanding of the operational processes and changes required, involving agencies, in the creation of an operational capability including an operations centre;
- the identification of lessons learnt in order to minimise the procurement, project management, technical and process risks of the wider e-Borders Programme;
- the identification and assessment of initial operational benefits; and
- the involvement of stakeholders (including agencies, the travel industry and system and service providers) in the development of the e-Borders concept.

A contract was awarded to IBM in November 2004 for the delivery, as part of Semaphore, of an operational working prototype system that would test the core concepts of an intelligence-led, multi-agency integrated border control network.

IRIS overview

IRIS (Iris Recognition Immigration System) is delivering a pilot biometric automated barrier entry system for pre-registered travellers at selected ports in the UK. IRIS will provide fast, secure clearance through UK immigration controls for pre-assessed passengers, enabling immigration control staff to concentrate on higher priorities and reduce the possibility of identity fraud.

The scheme is voluntary and is principally targeted at permanent residents, work permit holders, long-term students and frequent business travellers. Enrolment on to the scheme is carried out by immigration officers. The checks carried out on enrolment mirror those carried out on the arrivals control. If passengers are eligible for the scheme, their iris patterns are photographed, and linked to their passport data, their immigration status in the UK and a photograph, and stored securely in a UK Immigration Service database.

On subsequent arrivals, for as long as their entitlement to use the scheme remains valid, enrolled passengers are able to use the automated barriers to enter the UK by looking into an iris recognition camera. An electronic record is kept for every arrival via the IRIS automated barrier.

IRIS went live to the public as an operational pilot at Heathrow Terminal 2 and Terminal 4 in June 2005. The scheme is due to be installed at Gatwick, Stansted, Manchester and Birmingham airports and the other two Heathrow terminals during 2006. A contract was awarded to Sagem in April 2004 for the development of the IRIS solution, the implementation of 11 IRIS barriers at 10 sites, and for ongoing support and maintenance.

Please contact the e-Borders Programme team
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More information on Project IRIS can be found
at **www.iris.gov.uk**