

New funding to support UK professional and business services regulators

- New pilot funding programme will provide targeted support to UK professional and business services regulators and professional bodies to help UK qualified professionals and businesses deliver services overseas
- The announcement follows the introduction to Parliament of new legislation that will include empowering UK regulators to enter into agreements with their overseas counterparts

Investment Minister Lord Gerry Grimstone has today (29 June) announced a new pilot grant funding programme that will provide targeted support to UK professional and business services regulators to make recognition arrangements on professional qualifications.

Recognition arrangements can make it easier for UK professionals to have their professional qualifications recognised outside the UK. By supporting these recognition agreements, this funding will help UK professionals and businesses deliver services overseas.

The pilot grant funding programme announced today will support regulators and professional bodies negotiating recognition arrangements by providing funding for additional technical expertise. This will allow UK businesses and professionals to seize opportunities overseas and boost the appeal of UK qualifications.

Minister for Investment Lord Gerry Grimstone said:

This funding is a welcome addition to our support for regulators in helping their professionals seize opportunities abroad, building on their reputation and those of their professions as being the global gold standard for quality, skill and reliability.

Today's announcement complements our new legislation, enabling UK regulators to enter into agreements with their overseas counterparts, supporting their autonomy to ensure professionals continue to meet the rigorous standards expected. The pilot grant funding programme will provide limited, targeted financial support to professional and business services regulators who are looking to negotiate and agree recognition arrangements with their overseas counterparts.

When negotiating recognition arrangements, regulators may benefit from using additional technical expertise, which is why the Government is providing grant funding for eligible regulators to use towards the cost of the technical expertise they require, for example translation or experts to help map the qualifications recognised by overseas regulators. This will ultimately help regulators, businesses and professionals to access new

markets and reduce barriers to trade.

The announcement follows the introduction of the Professional Qualifications Bill to Parliament last month. The legislation removes an outdated system for recognition of professional qualifications from overseas in the UK, establishing a new approach based on regulator autonomy and supports for UK professionals to deliver services overseas. The Bill supports regulators to pursue arrangements with counterparts in other countries in the interests of their professions.

The Bill gives UK regulators more autonomy to use their existing powers to put in place the unilateral, bilateral, and multilateral recognition routes which work for their profession. By replacing the current outdated system, it returns autonomy to regulators, enabling them to put in place the arrangements they need, and helps all parts of the UK to take advantage of the UK's global trading status.

The Bill also means an assistance centre will continue to provide an enquiry service which will cover both UK-wide and devolved professions, helping professionals to understand the steps they need to take to have their professional qualifications recognised in the UK and abroad.

Notes to Editors

[Multiparty Talks on Legacy](#)

News story

Framework for Multiparty Talks on Northern Ireland Legacy issues



1. The aim of these talks is to establish an agreed collective way forward on Northern Ireland legacy issues in light of the concerns raised, and in response to new proposals which will be brought forward by the UK Government in relation to aspects of the implementation of the Stormont House Agreement.

2. It is understood that the shared objective is to deal with these issues comprehensively and fairly, and in a way that supports information recovery and reconciliation, complies fully with international human rights obligations, and that responds to the needs of victims and survivors, and society as a whole.
3. In recognition of the breadth and extent of previous consultations and discussions on legacy issues including leading to, and on the implementation of, the Stormont House Agreement, and the urgent need for a dedicated framework to deal comprehensively with legacy cases, these talks will be short and they will be focused on the key issues that are central to achieving rapid progress.
4. The talks will have as their objective to find an agreed way forward that will allow implementing legislation to be introduced in both UK and Ireland by the end of this autumn.
5. Working groups will be convened to discuss in detail the key issues central to making progress. These will include discussions on how to implement all the key legacy themes that are addressed in the Stormont House Agreement and are also the subject of the new UK Government proposals. These include: Investigations, Information Recovery, Oral History, Reconciliation and Acknowledgement. This may initially see one group to examine issues around investigations and information recovery, and a second to examine issues of oral history, reconciliation, acknowledgement and memorialisation.
6. These working groups will involve nominated representatives from the main political parties and the two Governments. These working groups will begin meeting immediately. There will be a coordinating group chaired by the UK and Irish Governments and the two Governments will consider appointing independent facilitators for each working group.
7. The participants will also hold meetings on an inclusive basis including to ensure that the interests and perspectives of victims and survivors, and all those most directly affected by the Troubles, are central to the discussions. The participants will also meet with leading experts relevant to the areas under discussion. The UK and Irish Governments will each ensure that relevant Parliamentary committees and interested members of Parliament are engaged and updated on progress as appropriate.
8. Meetings chaired by the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and the Minister for Foreign Affairs will be convened as necessary to assess progress. The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach will review progress made and consider any necessary further steps at the appropriate point.

[The case for independent scrutiny of impact assessments earlier in the decision-making process](#)

News story

As the first in a series of blogs, RPC Chairman, Stephen Gibson discusses the case for independent scrutiny of impact assessments earlier in the decision-making process



What are impact assessments?

Impact assessments (IAs) are an important part of the government decision-making process; they set out the objectives of policy proposals and the costs, benefits and risks of different ways (non-regulatory as well as regulatory) of achieving those objectives. IAs help ministers and Parliament decide on the appropriate (regulatory or non-regulatory) approach when faced with a policy question.

The role of the RPC in independent scrutiny of IAs

In order to give ministers and Parliament confidence that the evidence and analysis in IAs is fit for purpose, the Regulatory Policy Committee (RPC) independently reviews all qualifying IAs. In its review, the RPC considers whether the analysis and evidence is robust, whether all relevant factors have been considered and properly assessed (including the direct and wider impacts of the proposed measure) and whether there is a plan to monitor its effectiveness. The RPC also validates the estimate of the direct costs to business of the measure and whether the impacts on small and micro businesses have been assessed properly and, where possible, mitigated.

Earlier independent scrutiny in the policy-making process

Since 2018 it has been optional for departments to submit IAs at pre-consultation stage (while the policy is being developed). Currently, only around a third of IAs are submitted for RPC review at this point, compared to those submitted at the final stage where RPC scrutiny is mandatory.

While scrutiny of final stage IAs still allows the RPC to question the estimated impact of proposed measures on businesses, it does not inform the decision-making process – since the decision has already been made. Earlier scrutiny – before consultation – also allows gaps in the evidence and analysis to be addressed as part of the consultation to better inform the final policy decision. Put simply, earlier scrutiny helps policy-makers and ministers to make better and more effective regulation.

By independently challenging and correcting the impacts and their calculations, early scrutiny can also help those impacted by proposed regulations who can have greater trust in the IA and either be reassured or better informed to respond to consultation. This is the point at which the RPC can add the greatest value to IAs for ministers, departments and stakeholders alike, a point supported by business groups, think tanks, academics and other stakeholders.

Why are we raising this now?

The Government are about to launch a review of the Better Regulation framework. This provides an opportunity to make changes to the way the independent scrutiny process works and to ensure that it is as effective as possible in delivering better policy-making and better policy. We therefore encourage Government to mandate earlier independent scrutiny at pre-consultation stage as part of the policy-making process and we ask stakeholders to support this approach in their response to the Government's consultation.

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Industry helps shape the future of Multi-Domain Integration

On 24 June 2021, Strategic Command hosted our first Multi-Domain Integration (MDI) industry event, with the aim of providing industry and academic leaders with an understanding of the MDI Change Programme.

It was a collaborative event, with defence sharing their ambitions for MDI, and industry and academics providing valuable feedback on how future

relationships can be as productive and efficient as possible.

Eighteen representatives from across defence spoke during the day, including Lieutenant General Rob Magowan, the programme's Senior Responsible Owner, and Major General Robin Anderton-Brown, UKStratCom's Director of Capability.

Major General Robin Anderton-Brown. Copyright MOD News Licence

Following opening remarks, representatives from all the Front Line Commands, as well as from Defence Equipment and Support, the Permanent Joint Headquarters and the Future Capability Group, gave their perspectives on the Multi-Domain Integration Change Programme, and how crucial industry and academics are to it.

A hybrid format allowed as many industry and academic representatives to be involved in the day with 100 delegates attending in-person, and a further 450 virtually.

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During the afternoon, in-person attendees were involved in focus group sessions while the virtual audience had the opportunity to put their questions and ideas to a panel of ten Ministry of Defence representatives.

Thank you to all those from who joined the day in-person or virtually. In the coming weeks we will provide more details on the outcomes from the event, including the important suggestions made by industry.

European motor insurance directive: removal of Vnuk from UK law

On 21 February 2021, the government announced it intended to [remove the effects of the 2014 European Court of Justice's ruling in the Vnuk case from GB law](#).

The government has been clear since the ruling in 2014 that it does not agree with it. The decision directed the unnecessary extension of the provisions requiring motor insurance to private land as well as a greater range of vehicles that potentially includes motorsports, agricultural machinery and light electric vehicles.

This has led to excessive liabilities on the insurance industry and to potential increases in motorists' insurance premiums. Delivering on this

commitment is a priority for the government and we will continue to explore bringing forward the necessary legislation as soon as parliamentary time allows.

The Hon. Member for Wellingborough has introduced a private member's bill entitled 'Motor Vehicles (Compulsory Insurance)' which aims to deliver the necessary legislative change. The government will follow passage of this bill with interest.

Background

Vnuk is a 2014 European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruling on the case of a Slovenian farmer, Mr Vnuk, who was knocked off his ladder by a reversing tractor-trailer on a private farm in 2007.

The ruling directed that the compulsory motor insurance requirement must be extended to include vehicles being used on private land, as well as a greater range of vehicles – potentially including those used in motorsports, agricultural machinery and light electric vehicles (LEV).

This contrasts sharply with the scope of the domestic compulsory insurance requirement (in GB) under the [Road Traffic Act 1988 \(RTA\)](#), which is limited to accidents on roads and other public places and has a narrower definition of 'motor vehicle'.

Implementing Vnuk would have been costly, in the region of £2 billion (covering existing motorcars, existing motorcycles, existing business vehicles, motorsports and other business), [according to the Government Actuary's Department](#) (GAD).

Focusing just on existing motorcars, GAD calculates that insurance policyholders could face an estimated additional cost of £1.227 billion if Vnuk was implemented – expressed as a potential increase in individual insurance premiums of around £50 for 25 million consumers.

In order to remove the impact of the Vnuk decision from GB law, primary legislation is required and a slot to introduce this will be sought at the earliest possible opportunity.