

**DIGITAL TRADE  
IN ACTION**

# The UK-Australia TradeTech Opportunity

EXAMINING HOW TRADETECH SOLUTIONS CAN REDUCE ADMINISTRATIVE FRICTION, IMPROVE EFFICIENCY, AND SUPPORT SMES IN SCALING EXPORTS ACROSS THE UK-AUSTRALIA CORRIDOR.

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# Executive Summary

**Trade between the United Kingdom and Australia is strategically significant, spanning high-value, compliance-intensive sectors and long-distance supply chains. The world leading UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement provides businesses with preferential access, reduced tariffs, and digital trade facilitation provisions. Operational friction, however, continues to limit efficiency and predictability for exporters, particularly SMEs.**

TradeTech, the integration of digital technology into trade processes, offers a pathway to transform these bottlenecks into measurable efficiency gains. Legal frameworks, including the FTA's digital trade provisions and alignment with international standards such as the UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records, establish the foundation for paperless, auditable trade.<sup>1</sup> However, legal enablement alone is insufficient; measurable impact requires interoperable platforms, standardised data flows, and integrated workflows across exporters, logistics providers, regulators, and financial institutions.

High-friction sectors such as advanced manufacturing, automotive, pharmaceuticals, specialised machinery, and road vehicles present clear opportunities for TradeTech deployment. Evidence from UK-Australia live TradeTech case studies of leading solutions like **Boex** shows that structured digital workflows can reduce document volumes, cut preparation time, shorten processing, and improve traceability, particularly for SMEs.

By adopting interoperable, end-to-end digital trade solutions, the UK-Australia corridor can transform administrative complexity into operational efficiency, creating faster, more reliable, and scalable trade processes.

<sup>1</sup> The [UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records \(MLETR\)](#) is a model legal framework that allows key trade documents to exist and be transferred electronically with the same legal effect as paper versions, enabling paperless trade across borders.

# Introduction

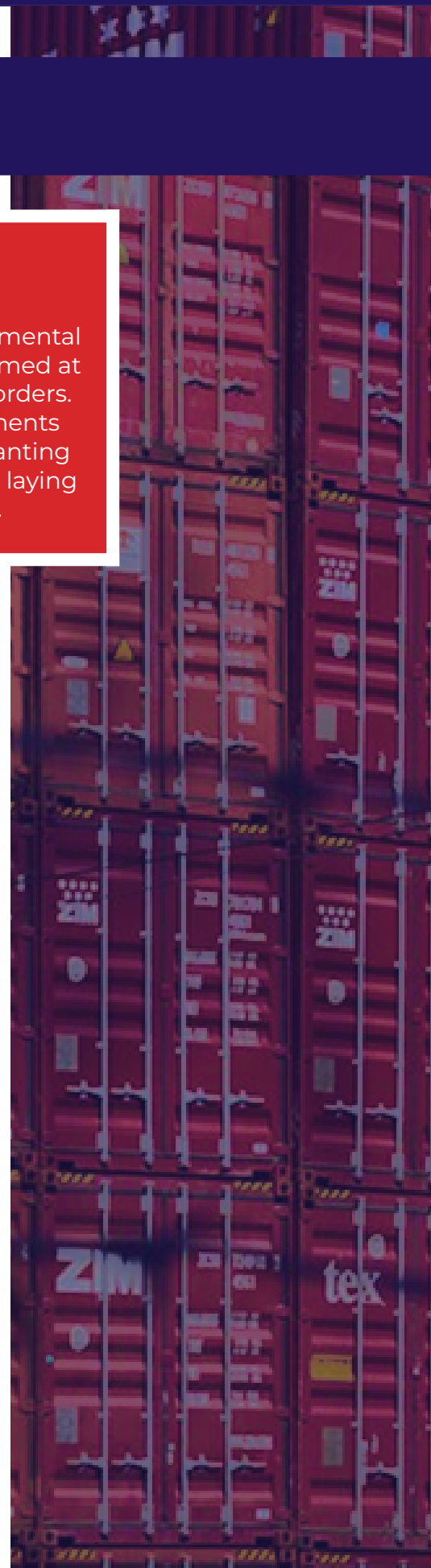
## TradeTech

The fusion of trade and technology - has evolved from incremental digitisation of paperwork into a structural reform agenda aimed at modernising how goods, services, and data move across borders. Early efforts focused on scanning and transmitting documents electronically. More recent reforms have moved further, granting electronic trade documents legal equivalence to paper and laying the groundwork for interoperable digital ecosystems.

In the United Kingdom, **the Electronic Trade Documents Act 2023 (ETDA)** marked a significant milestone by granting electronic trade documents the same legal status as their paper equivalents. Internationally, the MLETR provides a harmonised framework for recognising electronic bills of lading and other key instruments across jurisdictions. Australia has undertaken complementary reforms, including the alignment of national legislation with international MLETR standards, and initiatives such as the [Simplified Trade System](#) (STS) to streamline digital documentation and cross-border trade processes.

Building on this legal recognition, further operational transformation can unlock even greater efficiency and trade benefits. In practice, many trade processes remain document-centric, reliant on PDFs, email exchanges, and fragmented data systems. Interoperability gaps, inconsistent standards, integration barriers, and cautious commercial uptake continue to constrain system-wide adoption. The result is a corridor where **digital capability exists**, but full-scale implementation remains uneven.

This report focuses on bridging that gap. Rather than restating the theoretical promise of digital trade, it examines how TradeTech can translate legal enablement into measurable operational impact within the UK-Australia corridor.



## Importance of TradeTech in UK-Australia Relations

The **UK and Australia are strongly positioned to advance TradeTech collaboration**. Shared legal traditions, aligned regulatory approaches, and longstanding economic ties create favourable conditions for coordinated digital trade reform. Compared with many other APAC economies, Australia benefits from English as a primary language and cultural alignment with the UK, which can make cross-border trade smoother.

The **UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** reinforces this alignment by supporting cross-border data flows, recognising electronic contracts and signatures, and promoting cooperation on digital trade and emerging technologies. These provisions provide an enabling environment for TradeTech solutions and exporters to operate with greater certainty and reduced administrative friction.

Australia complements this framework through national trade facilitation initiatives and sector-led digital transformation. Programmes such as the Simplified Trade System (STS) streamline import and export processes and improve digital interoperability across trade documentation systems. At the legal level, reforms including the adoption of electronic bills of lading pilots and alignment with the UNCITRAL MLETR further support the transition toward digital transferable instruments and paperless trade documentation.

**Taken together, these initiatives create fertile ground for TradeTech deployment. However, enabling regulation must be matched by operational adoption if corridor-wide transformation is to be achieved.**

## The UK-Australia Trade Corridor

### **The UK-Australia trade corridor is a high-value and strategically aligned bilateral partnership.**

Although Australia accounts for a relatively modest share of overall UK trade, its importance lies in the corridor's strategic characteristics rather than sheer volume. Shared language, compatible legal frameworks, and regulatory alignment reduce market entry barriers compared with many other international markets, enabling innovative digital trade solutions to be tested and refined before wider deployment.

Trade between the two countries continues to grow across a range of sectors, including vehicles, pharmaceuticals, advanced manufacturing, machinery, and electrical and electronic equipment. According to recent UK government [trade statistics](#), UK goods exports to Australia were valued at approximately **£4.1 billion in 2024**.

Many of these sectors are documentation-intensive and compliance-heavy, particularly in areas such as advanced manufacturing, regulated goods, and complex machinery. This makes them particularly suitable for TradeTech deployment.

Taken together, the corridor combines regulatory alignment, commercial significance, and operational complexity - **characteristics that make it an effective proving ground for digital trade modernisation**.

An aerial photograph of a large industrial and port area. The foreground shows a busy port with numerous colorful shipping containers (yellow, blue, red) stacked and being moved by yellow cranes. In the background, there are several large industrial buildings, parking lots filled with cars, and residential-style buildings. A prominent red text box is overlaid on the center of the image.

**By piloting solutions here, stakeholders can test technical, legal, and operational models in a relatively controlled environment, generating lessons and confidence before scaling across other markets.**

## Scope of This Report

This report provides a structured evidence base to support the **development and scaling of TradeTech solutions** between the UK and Australia. It focuses on converting enabling policy into measurable operational impact.

The key objectives guiding this work are to:



### Analyse

Analyse market dynamics and sector potential



### Highlight

Highlight high-impact use cases across product verticals



### Showcase

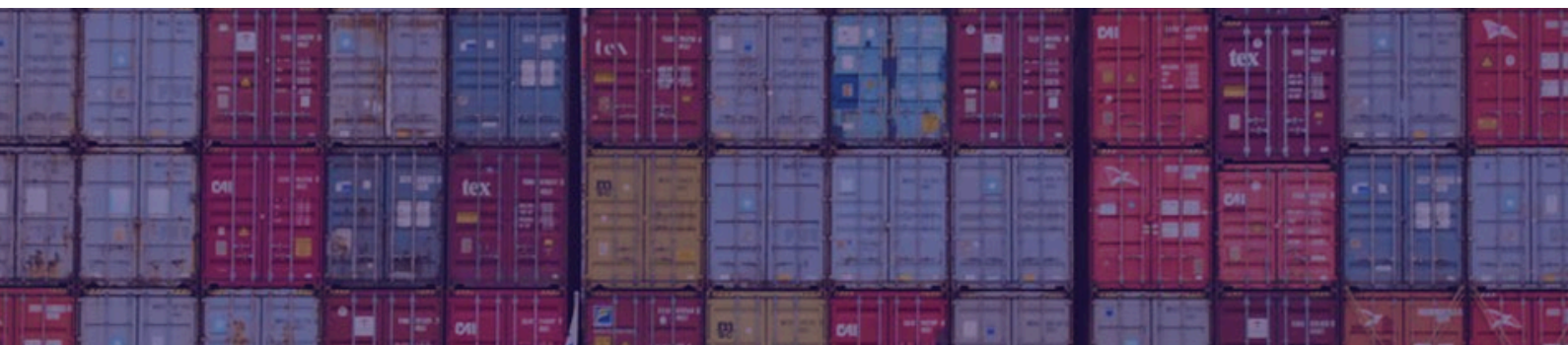
Showcase successful TradeTech solutions



### Recommend

Recommend measures\* to create the conditions necessary for growth

\* These measures include regulatory alignment, investment mobilisation, innovation partnerships, standards development, and collaborative frameworks - the "fertile soil" in which TradeTech can deliver sustained economic and operational impact. The emphasis is not on identifying what is missing in the corridor, but on identifying what more can be done to scale demonstrable success.



## Our Findings: Measurable Impact Requires Ecosystem Coordination

Our analysis identifies four overarching findings that frame the future of TradeTech adoption in the **UK-Australia** corridor.



### 1. TradeTech adoption is a shared priority across the UK-Australia corridor

Our research shows that both Australian stakeholders and engaged UK exporters see TradeTech as a critical enabler for efficient, predictable, and competitive trade. Evidence from live demonstrators, alongside engagement with exporters, logistics providers, and SMEs, highlights strong interest in digital solutions that reduce administrative burden, streamline compliance, and improve cross-border visibility.

These findings indicate that the corridor is not only receptive to innovation, but that adoption is driven by a shared recognition of operational challenges. Digital solutions are therefore well positioned to support growth, strengthen the UK-Australia trade relationship, and provide a foundation for broader international deployment.



### 2. Long-distance supply chains increase the value of trade process efficiency.

The geographic distance between the UK and Australia means shipments involve long transit times and complex logistics coordination. Most goods move via sea freight due to the size, weight, or volume of products - particularly vehicles, machinery, and manufactured goods - while air freight is used selectively for high-value, time-sensitive items.

In this context, delays caused by documentation errors, administrative bottlenecks, or sequential verification processes can have disproportionate operational impacts. While TradeTech cannot reduce the physical travel time of goods, evidence from live demonstrators shows that it can streamline documentation, compliance, and coordination across the supply chain, minimising delays before shipment and at key handover points.



### 3. Some sectors remain highly documentation-intensive despite streamlined imports.

While imports into Australia can be operationally efficient in sectors with well-established processes, certain industries remain highly documentation-intensive. Examples include regulated goods, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, and advanced manufactured components, where extensive certifications, safety documentation, and sector-specific approvals are required. TradeTech solutions can deliver immediate value in these areas by reducing manual processing, improving data accuracy, and supporting compliance with complex regulatory requirements.



### 4. Policy alignment provides a strong foundation, but operational adoption is key.

The UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement provides a strong policy framework for digital trade, with provisions supporting cross-border data flows, electronic authentication, and paperless trade.

However, regulatory alignment alone is not sufficient to produce system-wide transformation. To realise the full benefits of digital trade, customs authorities, logistics providers, financial institutions, and exporters must be able to exchange structured trade data across systems and borders. Without interoperable standards and coordinated implementation, digital processes risk becoming fragmented.

Continued collaboration between governments, industry stakeholders, and technology providers will therefore be essential to ensure TradeTech solutions can scale effectively across the corridor.

Together, these findings reinforce that the **UK-Australia corridor** provides a practical environment for testing TradeTech solutions, while offering insights that can support the wider modernisation of digitally enabled trade.

# What is TradeTech?

DIGITAL TRADE IN ACTION: The UK-Australia TradeTech Opportunity

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# What is TradeTech?



The UK-Australia TradeTech Sector Lookbook defines TradeTech as **any technology, product, or service that enhances the efficiency, security, and sustainability of cross-border trade.**<sup>2</sup>

It addresses real-world operational frictions while supporting government priorities, from customs compliance and logistics optimisation to trade finance and environmental sustainability.

The UK's TradeTech sector has evolved alongside a history of legal and digital reforms that enable electronic recognition of trade documents. The ETDA, together with alignment to international frameworks such as the UNCITRAL MLETR, has provided legal certainty for key electronic trade documentation. These reforms laid the foundation for interoperable digital trade systems and paved the way for the emergence of innovative solutions that automate documentation, enhance supply chain visibility, and reduce administrative burden.

Previous [work by our team developed a TradeTech taxonomy](#) by mapping the supply of solutions against validated demand signals from governments, trade bodies, exporters, and importers. This approach highlights where innovation directly addresses trade challenges, including paperless documentation, customs automation, supply chain management, and sustainable logistics. Across these areas, TradeTech aims to make trade faster, more transparent, and more resilient, but its impact is maximised only within a supportive ecosystem of interoperable standards, regulatory clarity, and commercial adoption.

<sup>2</sup> [UK-Australia TradeTech Sector Lookbook](#) (2025)

## Taxonomy of Key Solution Areas

Sustainable Trade \*

	<b>Paperless Trading</b>	Electronic transferable records	Automated trade documentation	Digital trade platform		
		Identity verification	Compliance reporting			
		<b>Trade Finance</b>	Electronic authentications	Cross-border payments	Electronic invoicing	Electronic Bills of Exchange and Promissory Notes
		<b>Logistics and Operations</b>	Port management	Fleet analytics & optimisation	Smart freight transportation	
			Automation and robotics in logistics	Cargo management	Warehouse management and sustainability	
		<b>Customs and Borders</b>	e-Customs / Single Trade Window	Automated customs clearance	Trade compliance	Customs tariff classification
	<b>Supply Chain</b>	Supply chain planning	Product authentication and provenance solutions	Supply chain visibility & management		
		Supply chain finance	Supply chain traceability			
	<b>Security &amp; Risk Management</b>	Cybersecurity monitoring & analytics	Fraud prevention	Insurance	AML/KYC Solutions	

\* Sustainable trade solutions reduce carbon emissions in global trade by improving fuel efficiency and decarbonisation, cutting carbon emissions, and lowering operational costs. This category intersects with all other taxonomies

## The UK TradeTech Sector Is Expanding but Remains Uneven in Scale and Integration

The UK TradeTech sector comprises an estimated **297 organisations** delivering products and services across the trade lifecycle. This growing network of firms reflects steady momentum in digital trade innovation, driven by demand for greater efficiency, resilience, and transparency in cross-border processes.

### Analysis of these organisations shows a concentration in:

- **Logistics and operations solutions** - optimising transport, warehousing, and shipment coordination
- **Supply chain management solutions** - improving visibility and collaboration across trading partners
- **Paperless trading solutions** - digitising documents and compliance processes

This distribution highlights where trade friction is most acute and where digital interventions can deliver immediate impact.

The sector's estimated value stands at approximately **£5 billion**, signalling both commercial maturity and growth potential.

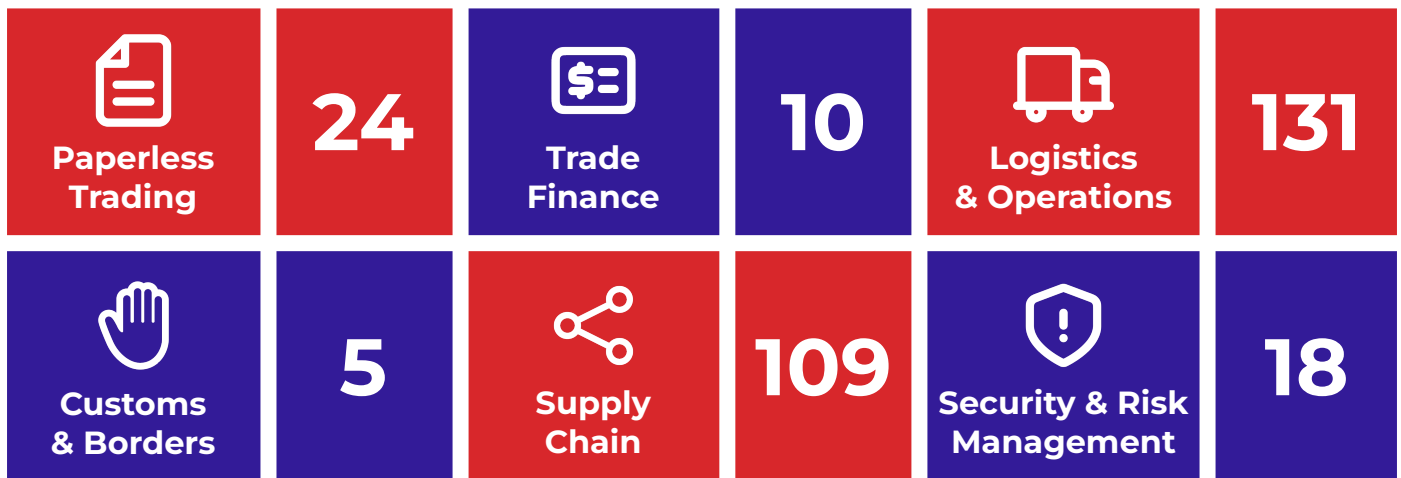
### However, despite this momentum, scale and integration remain uneven across the ecosystem, particularly in:

- Geographic reach of solutions
- Interoperability between platforms
- Adoption among SMEs versus large corporates

**~£ 5 billion**

**Estimated UK TradeTech market size to date**

## Distribution of companies: Among 297 TradeTech providers<sup>[1]</sup>:



[1] Many organisations offer products and services across multiple categories. They are classified based on the best-fit category of their primary offerings.

## Venture Investment Is Growing but Remains Concentrated in Early-Stage TradeTech Solutions

Solutions such as [Boex](#) and [LogChain](#) have leveraged public-private partnerships and early-stage funding to pilot automated trade documentation and other solutions. Trade finance providers, logistics technology startups, and supply chain visibility solutions have also attracted early investment, supported by initiatives such as the Digital Catapult and Digital Trade Testbed. While these developments show the venture ecosystem is growing, broader adoption will require stronger public-private buy-in and additional dedicated TradeTech funding to scale solutions across the sector.

## Deploying TradeTech Across the UK-Australia Corridor: From Friction to Flow

In 2024, total trade in goods and services between the UK and Australia reached approximately £6-7 billion, with UK exports to Australia valued at around **£4.1 billion** and imports from Australia at approximately £2-3 billion.<sup>3</sup> Over the year to Q3 2025, this reflected a steady and **growing bilateral trading relationship**.

While Australia accounts for a relatively **small share of total UK trade (around 1.2%)**, the corridor is strategically significant. It benefits from a modern, comprehensive UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement that entered into force in May 2023 and operates

<sup>3</sup> [UK-Australia Trade and Investment Factsheet \(2026\)](#)

alongside the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP). These frameworks provide preferential market access, reduced tariffs, and more flexible rules of origin, offering potential advantages for exporters on both sides of the corridor.

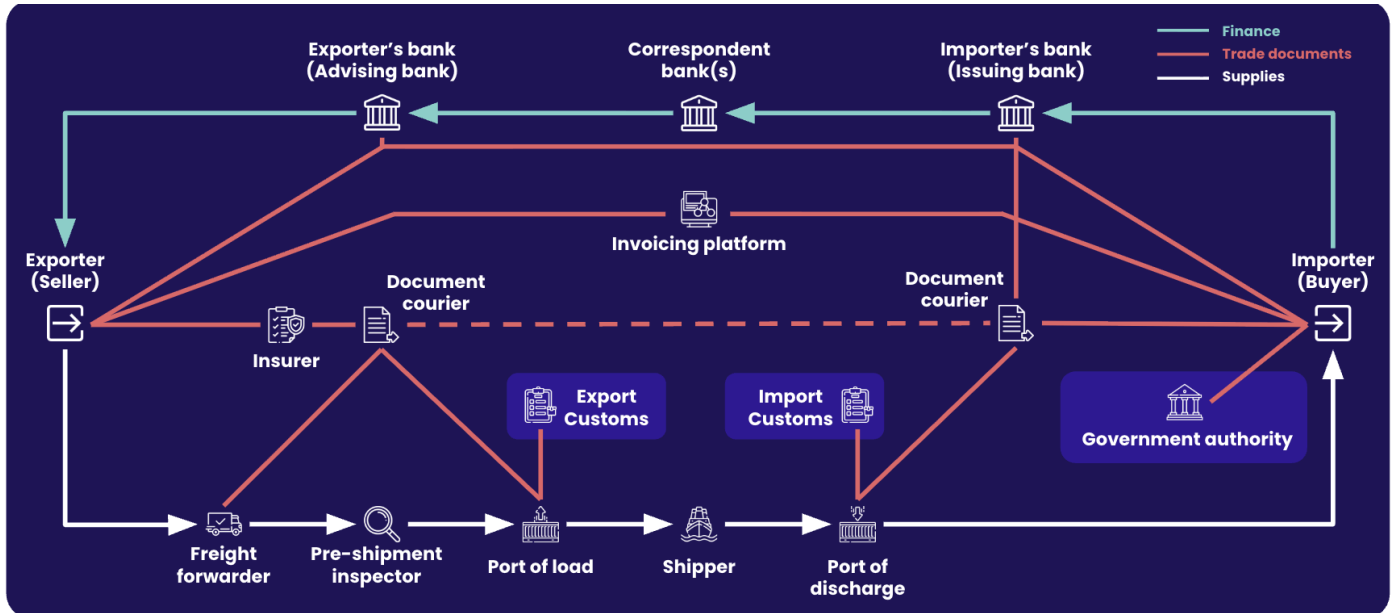
### Trade between the UK and Australia involves a dense network of actors, including:

- **Exporters** - preparing goods and documentation for shipment
- **Freight forwarders** - coordinating multimodal logistics
- **Insurers** - providing coverage for goods in transit
- **Customs brokers** - managing declarations and regulatory compliance
- **Inspection agencies** - verifying quality, safety and biosecurity requirements
- **Banks** - facilitating trade finance and payment mechanisms
- **Port authorities** - overseeing handling and port operations
- **Government regulators** - enforcing rules, issuing permits, and performing compliance checks

The primary mode of transport for UK-Australia goods trade is sea freight. UK government analysis shows that approximately **95-96% of goods trade between the UK and Australia by weight is transported by sea**, with air freight accounting for a much smaller share, typically used for high-value or time-sensitive consignments.<sup>4</sup>

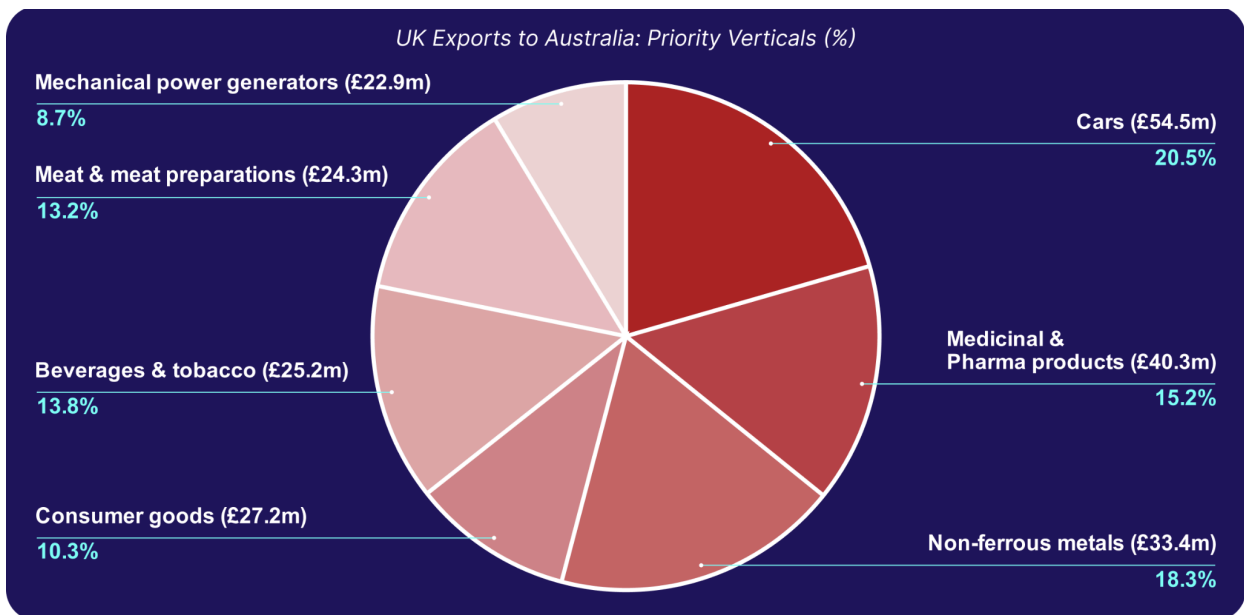
- **Data re-entry:** Information is repeatedly entered into separate systems across actors, increasing the risk of errors and delays.
- **Staged approvals:** Authorisations are issued in sequence by freight forwarders, inspectors, ports of load, shippers, customs authorities, and ports, creating a multi-step approval chain.
- **Compliance checks at multiple nodes:** Regulatory and compliance verifications occur at several points in the journey, adding further time and administrative burden.

<sup>4</sup> [UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement](#)



This structural complexity creates measurable friction - particularly in high-value, highly regulated verticals. These layers of complexity demonstrate why **digital trade solutions are critical**: by enabling secure data sharing, automating documentation, and coordinating approvals, they can reduce manual re-entry, accelerate approvals, and streamline compliance checks across the corridor.

To understand the nature of trade along this corridor, it is useful to note that UK exports to Australia are concentrated in specific sectors, which highlights where TradeTech solutions could have the greatest impact:



The above sectors are compliance-intensive, documentation-heavy, and operationally sensitive. Our stakeholder interviews indicate that while large corporates often deploy in-house systems to manage this complexity, **SMEs typically operate with limited resources and digital capabilities**. They often lack dedicated compliance teams, rely on manual processes such as spreadsheet tracking and email-based approvals, and use disconnected or minimally integrated software systems. This fragmentation leads to repeated data entry, slower or sequential approvals, higher error rates, and limited visibility across the trade journey. As a result, **SMEs experience disproportionately high administrative burdens compared with larger firms**, making them prime beneficiaries of scalable TradeTech solutions that can automate documentation, streamline approvals, and provide end-to-end visibility.<sup>5</sup>

**TradeTech is most effective when deployed where friction is highest and where there is a clear opportunity to solve real operational pain points. For the UK-Australia corridor, we have identified priority verticals where targeted intervention can generate measurable impact.**

## TradeTech Delivers Measurable Economic and Operational Efficiencies Across Trade Ecosystems

SMEs are a dominant force in both the UK and Australian economies, representing around **99% of private sector businesses in the UK** and **approximately 97% of enterprises in Australia**.<sup>6</sup> For these firms, TradeTech can significantly improve engagement with international markets by making trade faster, cheaper, and more reliable.

By lowering entry costs, TradeTech enables smaller firms to access global markets, while smarter logistics and digital documentation reduce errors, administrative burden, and environmental waste. Evidence increasingly suggests that digital trade facilitation can generate economic gains that exceed those delivered by tariff reductions alone. These benefits, however, materialise only when solutions are tailored to corridor-specific challenges and integrated within a supportive regulatory and commercial ecosystem.



<sup>5</sup> [Strengthening SMEs and Entrepreneurship for Productivity and Inclusive Growth](#) (2018)

<sup>6</sup> [Department for Business and Trade \(2025\)](#), [OECD Scoreboard \(2024\)](#)

## Measuring Impact Across TradeTech

### Framework to monitor TradeTech impact on documents, time, communication, and process efficiency

To assess the operational impact of TradeTech solutions like Boex, we explored and monitored key areas of trade execution, focusing on **document handling, staff time, communication, and overall process efficiency**.

Metric	Description
 Trade Documents	The number, type, and handling method of documents were recorded, including paper, email/PDF, and digital workflows. We also captured where administrative burden is greatest.
 Time and communication	Staff time spent on document preparation, checking, sharing, and rework was measured. Typical communication channels, such as email, phone, messaging apps, and digital solutions, were tracked alongside interaction frequency.
 End-to-end timelines	Estimates of total trade processing time, border waiting time, and operational cost impacts of administrative delays were collected to understand efficiency and predictability.

This framework provides a consistent and comparable approach to quantify the operational, financial, and sustainability impacts of TradeTech solutions, capturing how they reduce administrative burden, improve process accuracy, streamline communication, and enhance overall trade efficiency. It enables robust measurement across different use cases and trade corridors, supporting evidence-based insights for governments, regulators, and businesses considering digital trade adoption.

## Product-Vertical Use Cases

As highlighted above, UK-Australia trade is concentrated in high-value, **compliance-intensive** sectors where documentation, regulatory oversight, and logistics complexity intersect. These characteristics create **structural friction - but also clear entry points for TradeTech deployment.**

### Automotive and Transport

#### Challenge

**High documentation intensity and regulatory alignment requirements create customs friction and compliance risk.**

Automotive exports require commercial invoices, packing lists, rules of origin declarations, and compliance with [Australian Design Rules \(ADR\)](#). Multi-part shipments and increasing electric vehicle exports further increase documentation volume and classification complexity.

#### Opportunity

**Digital customs automation and rules-of-origin verification can materially reduce administrative burden and clearance times.**

Automated tariff classification, pre-validation of origin documentation, and electronic filing aligned with UK-Australia FTA provisions create clear efficiency gains and reduce error-driven delays.



## Medicinal and Pharmaceutical Products

### Challenge

**Regulatory intensity and cold-chain requirements make pharmaceutical exports highly sensitive to compliance and traceability failures.**

UK pharmaceutical exports to Australia (approximately £402 million in Q3 2025)<sup>7</sup> must meet Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) standards, including ARTG registration, sponsor requirements, and [Good Distribution Practice \(GDP\)](#) compliance. Batch traceability and temperature monitoring add further operational risk.

### Opportunity

**End-to-end digital traceability and automated regulatory reporting can reduce compliance risk while improving shipment integrity.**

TradeTech solutions that integrate provenance tracking, documentation validation, and real-time monitoring provide measurable improvements in both audit readiness and shipment reliability.

## Non-ferrous metals

### Challenge

**Complex commodity classifications and rules-of-origin verification create customs friction and increase compliance risk.**

Large shipments of different metal products need correct codes, certificates of origin, and regulatory documents, and multi-part shipments make administration more complex and can cause delays.

### Opportunity

**Automated tariff classification, pre-validation of origin documentation, and electronic filing aligned with UK-Australia FTA provisions can reduce administrative burden, minimise errors, and accelerate customs clearance.**

Digital workflows streamline data entry and reconciliation across exporters, buyers, and customs authorities, improving efficiency and predictability.

<sup>7</sup> [UK-Australia Trade and Investment Factsheet \(2026\)](#)

## Beverages & tobacco

### Challenge

**Excise, labelling, and origin documentation requirements increase administrative burden and inspection risk.**

Accurate compliance with Australian excise and biosecurity regulations is essential to benefit from preferential tariffs and avoid duty liabilities, particularly for SMEs with limited administrative capacity.

### Opportunity

**Digital certification, pre-arrival compliance validation, and structured electronic documentation reduce errors, streamline communication, and improve clearance times.**

Automated workflows enhance accuracy, reduce rework, and provide predictable shipment outcomes in compliance-sensitive sectors.

## Consumer Goods

### Challenge

**High SKU volumes and GST compliance requirements generate repetitive administrative workload and declaration risk.**

Consumer goods exports (approximately £273 million, Q3 2025)<sup>8</sup> must navigate Australian GST rules, cross-border e-commerce frameworks, and large-scale customs declarations, increasing the likelihood of classification errors.

### Opportunity

**Integrated customs and order-management solutions can streamline declarations and reduce manual processing overhead.**

Automation of declaration preparation and GST validation reduces repetitive tasks while improving compliance consistency.

<sup>8</sup> [UK-Australia Trade and Investment Factsheet \(2026\)](#)

While trade volumes are often driven by large corporates, stakeholder consultations indicate that SMEs are affected by documentation friction, time-zone differences, and long shipping durations. Larger firms may absorb delays through in-house compliance infrastructure; smaller exporters often cannot.

To illustrate this dynamic clearly, the case study that follows focuses on a niche advanced manufacturing product - gasket paper, an industrial sealing material used in energy, automotive, and heavy industry supply chains.

Gasket paper sits within complex classification categories and requires precise documentation. A minor error can result in clearance delays that disrupt downstream industrial operations in Australia. The extended transit time between the UK and Australia magnifies the cost of such mistakes.

**This example provides a practical lens through which to demonstrate how TradeTech interventions can convert documentation friction into measurable operational flow.**



# Boex: A UK-Australia Digital Trade Case Study

DIGITAL TRADE IN ACTION: The UK-Australia TradeTech Opportunity

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# Boex: A UK-Australia Digital Trade Case Study



## How Boex is Delivering Measurable Impact for SMEs

**Boex is a digital trade platform designed to support SME trade by turning commercial agreements into enforceable, digital transactions.** It replaces email- and paper-based workflows with secure, legally enforceable processes, enabling automatic updates across the trade lifecycle. By reducing manual errors and operational delays, Boex lowers costs and improves the efficiency and accessibility of cross-border trade.

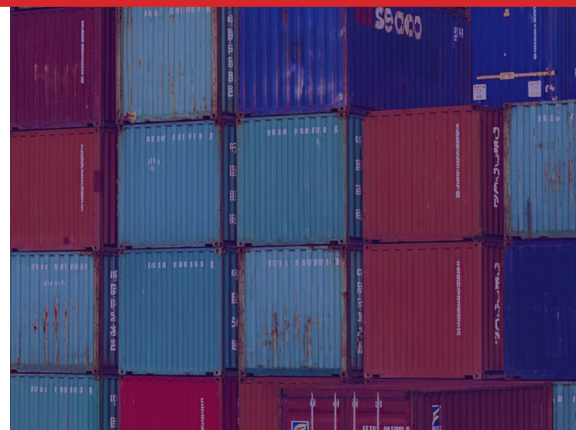
For SMEs, exporting larger volumes is often limited more by administrative complexity than by demand. Even routine shipments require multiple documents, repeated data entry across disconnected systems, and ongoing coordination between exporters, buyers, customs agents, and carriers.

Boex was deployed to assess whether structured digital documentation could reduce this burden without altering compliance requirements. Developed in line with the UK's **Electronic Trade Documents Act 2023**, the platform enables legally enforceable digital trade documents, identity verification, and secure, auditable workflows.

This case study demonstrates Boex's impact on a live shipment between **Jointine Products** (UK) and **Klinger** (Australia), capturing both baseline and post-implementation metrics.

## Paperless Trade in Advanced Manufacturing

The Jointine-Klinger shipment involved **gasket paper** used in high-performance sealing components for energy, renewables, mining, and industrial processing. This represents a compliance-sensitive **advanced manufacturing** use case aligned with UK-Australia priority sectors under the FTA.



## Challenges Faced by the Business

Prior to working with Boex, Jointine faced growing administrative and compliance complexity, a challenge that disproportionately affects SME exporters.

*The manual burden was described as “**high and unnecessarily complicated.**”  
- Jane Cullen, Managing Director, Jointine*

### 1. Fragmented Data Across Systems

Export processes involve multiple actors and systems, including compliance, customs, and trade documentation platforms. While frameworks like the UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement provide clear rules, their benefits rely on consistent, aligned data across all documents. In practice, **mismatched information between systems and participants causes delays, higher costs, and can limit the full advantage of preferential trade provisions.**

### 2. Repeated Manual Data Entry

Trade information is often entered **multiple times across emails, internal platforms, and documents.** Even when internal systems are digitised, communication with external partners remains largely document-based, creating duplicated work. This adds inefficiencies, increases errors, and slows down processing.

### 3. Static, Document-Based Workflows

Documents currently act as static records rather than structured data. Information must be rekeyed and passed between freight forwarders, customs brokers, and buyers, **leading to version control challenges, reconciliation overhead, and corrections that are often only identified late in the shipment process.**

## Case Study Findings



**Boex supported a 55% reduction in physical document handling.**

Using Boex, Jointine reduced the number of physical documents handled by 55% per shipment. While the total number of documents required for compliance remained unchanged, the platform digitised core documents and enabled structured workflows, replacing fragmented email and PDF-based processes.

Beyond reducing paper, this shift created a single source of truth: data entered once now populates multiple documents, eliminating repeated corrections and reducing reconciliation effort. For SMEs, this change frees capacity for higher-value work such as customer engagement, compliance monitoring, and operational optimisation.

All core documents were digitised by the end of the trade, removing the need for physical document handling and aligning with international standards toward achieving paperless trade. In practice, this shows how TradeTech solutions can lower administrative barriers across SMEs, enabling smaller exporters to participate in cross-border trade without requiring additional staff resources.



**Boex supported a 60% reduction in document preparation time.**

Document preparation time fell by 60% per shipment.<sup>9</sup> Staff no longer re-enter data across disconnected systems, and manual data entries per shipment dropped by 75%.<sup>10</sup> Email exchanges were reduced by 89%, reflecting the elimination of repeated coordination and asynchronous delays.<sup>11</sup>

The reduction in document preparation time and communication overhead directly lowers administrative burden, enabling staff to complete shipments faster and with fewer errors. Fewer emails and automated workflows improve traceability, version control, and operational reliability. For SMEs, this supports the potential to manage higher trade volumes with existing resources, while the TradeTech ecosystem illustrates how structured digital processes can enhance trade operations.

<sup>9</sup> Document preparation time fell from 149.5 minutes to 60 minutes.

<sup>10</sup> Manual data fields re-entry reduced from 120 to 30.

<sup>11</sup> Email exchanges were cut from 9 to 1 per shipment.



## Boex supported a **83%** reduction in processing time per shipment.

Boex reduced processing time per shipment by 83%.<sup>12</sup> This acceleration was driven by automated document generation and validation, reducing manual handling and enabling faster completion of operational tasks.

By digitising and centralising document workflows, Boex provided a single platform for all stakeholders, ensuring accurate information and reducing delays from errors or conflicting paperwork. The introduction of structured, auditable processes further streamlined coordination, eliminating the need for repeated confirmations and shortening operational cycles.

Taken together, these results demonstrate how improving end-to-end processing time through structured digital processes can act as a central lever for trade efficiency. SMEs benefit from **faster, more reliable shipments and lower administrative burden**, while the wider TradeTech startup ecosystem gains evidence that digitisation can deliver measurable operational, financial, and sustainability outcomes at scale, supporting resilient and transparent cross-border trade corridors.

The primary source of inefficiency in Jointine's export process was data fragmentation, not regulatory burden.

The main inefficiency in Jointine's export process stemmed from fragmented data across multiple systems and stakeholders. Information was repeatedly entered across emails, PDFs, internal platforms, and external partners, causing errors, delays, and extra work. By centralising these previously disconnected systems into a structured digital environment, **Boex eliminated duplicated data entry, reduced reconciliation needs, and improved end-to-end shipment visibility.**

For SMEs, this represents a step-change: moving from manual, fragmented coordination to auditable, interoperable digital trade processes. **The most meaningful gains came from redesigning how trade data is created, shared, and validated - not from lowering compliance requirements or bypassing regulations.** Digital TradeTech solutions enable smaller exporters to operate more efficiently and reliably in international markets while meeting existing compliance obligations. Ultimately, the efficiency gains arise from reorganising data and processes.

<sup>12</sup> Processing time reduced from 30 minutes to 5 minutes.

# Projections of TradeTech Benefits

DIGITAL TRADE IN ACTION: The UK-Australia TradeTech Opportunity

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# Projections of TradeTech Benefits

TradeTech adoption offers the potential to improve end-to-end trade processes by reducing manual handling, accelerating approvals, and increasing data accuracy through structured digital workflows. **Evidence from Jointine's operations demonstrates that such workflows can reduce administrative processing time by around 60% per shipment.**<sup>13</sup> These efficiency gains eliminate repeated data entry, centralise document handling, and minimise handovers, rework, and verification delays, streamlining the entire export process.

In 2024, around 14,800 UK VAT-registered businesses exported goods to Australia, the majority of which were SMEs. While shipment frequency varies, modelling three representative SME profiles illustrates the potential impact of TradeTech adoption:

- **Low-frequency exporters:** ~100 shipments/year<sup>14</sup>
- **Mid-frequency exporters:** ~300 shipments/year<sup>15</sup>
- **High-frequency exporters:** ~500 shipments/year<sup>16</sup>

For Jointine, executing 450-500 shipments per year, this translates into approximately 675 hours saved annually and over £12,800 in operational cost reductions. Specifically, Boex's solution delivered £40,535 in annual cost savings, driven by reduced staff time (£13,325), eliminated software costs (£1,550), lower customs entry costs (£7,000), reduced training costs (£3,000), removal of courier costs (£2,160), reduced printing costs (£500), and fewer errors and omissions (£13,000). **These savings demonstrate the tangible financial impact of TradeTech adoption, particularly for SMEs managing high volumes of documentation-intensive trade.**

The corridor-wide implications are significant. If similar efficiency gains were realised across all UK SMEs exporting to Australia, **the cumulative impact in terms of time savings, labour cost reduction, and administrative efficiency would be considerable.** Beyond the direct cost benefits, freeing staff hours allows SMEs to focus on higher-value activities such as compliance oversight, logistics optimisation, and market expansion. More predictable, reliable shipment processing further strengthens the UK-Australia trade corridor, showing that structured digital workflows can reduce administrative burden and accelerate trade execution without altering compliance frameworks.

<sup>13</sup> Equivalent to approximately 90 minutes saved per shipment

<sup>14</sup> ~150 hours saved annually (~£2,850)

<sup>15</sup> ~450 hours saved annually (~£8,550)

<sup>16</sup> ~750 hours saved annually (~£14,250)

# Recommendations & Conclusions

DIGITAL TRADE IN ACTION: The UK-Australia TradeTech Opportunity

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# Recommendations

Trade between the UK and Australia presents opportunities to enhance efficiency and competitiveness through TradeTech adoption. Both countries bring complementary strengths: the UK with its growing TradeTech ecosystem and innovative startups, and Australia with its established digital trade framework and well-connected logistics networks. While the UK-Australia FTA provides tariff and market access benefits, operational friction still limits SMEs and other corridor participants. Lessons from other corridors, including UK-New Zealand and UK-Singapore Trade Digitalisation Pilots, show that interoperable standards, practical guidance, and targeted pilots can support adoption and unlock efficiency gains. The recommendations below suggest practical approaches to create a more digitised, efficient, and resilient trade ecosystem.

## 1. Government Actors - Turning Legal Foundations into Operational Reality

The UK's Electronic Trade Documents Act and Australia's Digital Trade Facilitation Framework provide the legal foundation for electronic records, e-certificates of origin, and alignment with international standards. However, legal recognition alone has not translated into structured, corridor-wide data flows. Siloed systems, and document-centric workflows mean firms still rely on manual entry, emails, and PDFs - particularly SMEs with limited integration capacity.

### Recommendations:

- **Encourage stability in digital trade standards:** Maintaining consistency in interoperable data standards across the corridor could support SME investment in TradeTech and reduce risks from frequent changes.
- **Consider deployment incentives:** Targeted co-investment, grants, or matched funding could help SMEs participate in pilots and demonstrate efficiency gains while managing operational risks.
- **Provide practical FTA guidance and sector-specific resources:** Clear guidance, such as step-by-step instructions, illustrative case studies, or digital calculators for sectors like chilled/frozen foods, dairy, seafood, and advanced manufacturing, could help SMEs understand operational benefits.
- **Integrate cybersecurity into adoption frameworks:** Promoting secure digital workflows from the outset could help protect sensitive trade data, maintain trust among SMEs, logistics partners, and regulators, and reduce operational risk.

## 2. Trade & Logistics Partners - Integrating Across the Value Chain

Operational inefficiencies along the UK-Australia corridor are often caused by fragmented logistics, multi-part shipments, and disconnected systems. Even with digital platforms in place, SMEs and exporters frequently rely on emails, PDFs, and spreadsheets for complex shipments and sector-specific compliance. Shared platforms, interoperable standards, and structured workflows could help reduce delays and improve predictability.

### Recommendations:

Trade and logistics partners should integrate structured data practices and participate in interoperability pilots:

- **Explore interoperable trade data standards:** Enabling forwarders, brokers, and terminals to share structured, machine-readable data could reduce duplication, improve visibility, and make shipment planning more predictable.
- **Pilot standardised compliance modules:** Automating verification for tariffs, rules-of-origin, and sector-specific requirements could lower manual effort and improve reliability.
- **Implement digital document verification at ports:** Real-time validation of trade documents could minimise hold-ups and improve certainty for SMEs and high-value shipments.
- **Promote collaborative traceability:** Shared ledgers could allow multiple actors to monitor shipments, trace compliance, and make coordinated operational decisions.
- **Prioritise cybersecurity standards:** Encouraging secure practices across interconnected platforms and communications could help maintain trust and continuity as processes become more automated.

## 3. Commercial Adopters - SMEs and Exporters

SMEs face the highest barriers to TradeTech adoption but also stand to gain the most. Manual workflows, repeated document handling, and limited visibility into compliance processes reduce efficiency. Evidence from other corridors shows that structured digital workflows can reduce errors, accelerate processing, and improve communication between exporters, intermediaries, and regulators.

## Recommendations:

- **Adopt structured, end-to-end digital workflows:** Integrating compliance, logistics, and financial reporting could replace emails and PDFs with interoperable, machine-readable data. Sector-specific pilots - such as chilled/frozen foods or biosecurity certificates - could help SMEs learn practical applications and realise efficiency gains.
- **Leverage digital identity and transferable records:** Secure digital identities and trade registries could accelerate trade finance, reduce risk, and strengthen data integrity across stakeholders.
- **Prioritise cybersecurity and technical standards:** Choosing platforms aligned with international protocols could build trust when connecting to brokers, terminals, and government systems.
- **Engage in structured adoption programmes:** Participation in pilots and collaborative initiatives could help SMEs transition from manual processes to data-driven workflows, turning compliance management into an operational advantage.

## 4. Venture and Investment Landscape - Funding Scale, Not Just Innovation

The UK TradeTech venture ecosystem is active, but integration-heavy solutions connecting government systems, corridor data flows, and commercial platforms require sustained funding. The UK-Singapore pilot shows that interoperability is achievable, but scaling solutions beyond proof-of-concept benefits from targeted investment.

### Recommendations:

- **Align investment with operational outcomes:** Focus funding on sectors and corridors with measurable efficiency potential, such as chilled/frozen foods, dairy, seafood, and advanced manufacturing.
- **Support ecosystem building through accelerators and clusters:** Co-developing interoperable solutions with startups, corporates, and regulators could help move pilots toward scalable adoption.
- **Tie capital to adoption milestones:** Structuring investment around demonstrable uptake, integration, and operational impact could bridge the gap between innovation and real-world deployment.

# Conclusion

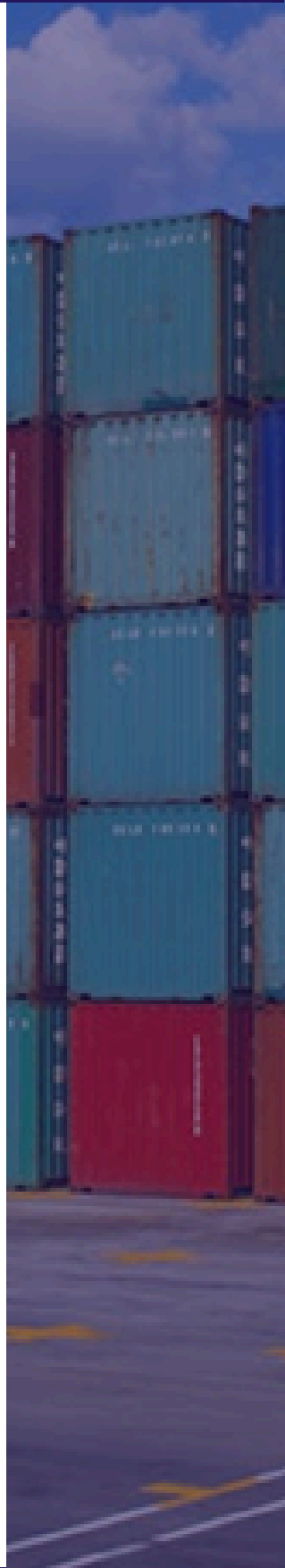
**Trade between the UK and Australia offers significant potential for efficiency gains and operational improvements through TradeTech adoption.**

While the UK-Australia FTA provides preferential market access and tariff benefits, operational challenges continue to create friction, particularly for smaller exporters. UK exporters are well-positioned to leverage TradeTech solutions to address these challenges. By structuring, validating, and securely sharing trade data across stakeholders, SMEs can reduce manual processes, improve accuracy, and accelerate shipment processing - all **without changes to regulatory obligations**. These digital trade solutions can make international trade more predictable, transparent, and cost-effective.

Realising these benefits requires practical action across the corridor. The UK can continue to drive operational interoperability by stabilising digital trade standards, supporting pre-departure compliance checks, and providing sector-specific guidance. Trade and logistics partners can embed structured workflows, automate verification, and ensure seamless integration with UK systems. SMEs can adopt end-to-end digital processes and leverage secure digital identities and transferable records to reduce risk and enhance access to trade finance. Investors can support scaling by linking funding to measurable adoption and operational impact.

Targeted interventions, such as accessible digital tools, standardised compliance modules, and co-investment programmes, can help SMEs move from paper-based trade processes to streamlined and reliable digital workflows. Lessons from other corridors demonstrate that combining UK-led innovation, interoperable platforms, and collaborative pilots can transform operational complexity into **tangible efficiency gains**.

With the UK's leadership in TradeTech, coordinated investment, and practical implementation across government, logistics partners, and SMEs, the **UK-Australia corridor can become a model of efficient, reliable, and digitally enabled trade - delivering measurable benefits for businesses, regulators, and the broader economy.**



# Annex

DIGITAL TRADE IN ACTION: The UK-Australia TradeTech Opportunity

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## Methodology and Use-Case Mapping for TradeTech Interventions

TradeTech delivers the greatest value where trade processes are complex, high-volume, and documentation-intensive. Our methodology focused on identifying real operational challenges for UK exporters to Australia, ensuring interventions target measurable opportunities for automation, efficiency, and compliance improvements rather than pre-assuming digital readiness or adoption barriers.

### Challenge Mapping and Corridor Selection

We began by mapping operational bottlenecks through engagement with exporters, logistics partners, and regulatory authorities. This challenge-based approach highlighted key friction points, including multi-part shipments, classification errors, regulatory compliance, and delays at ports and border crossings.

### Trade Flow and Vertical Analysis

Using ONS trade data to Q2 2025 and UK-Australia trade statistics, we focused on the following high-value, documentation-intensive product verticals.

For each vertical, we mapped key challenges - such as complex classification, regulatory compliance, multi-part shipments, and origin documentation - and identified where TradeTech could reduce administrative burden. This vertical-specific approach ensures interventions target sectors with the greatest potential for measurable operational impact.

### Open Call and TradeTech Engagement

Following vertical analysis, we engaged UK TradeTech providers to demonstrate solutions addressing these challenge areas. By working with Boex, we were able to capture **baseline and post-implementation** metrics from their Jointine / Klinger trade.

#### Evaluation captured three key dimensions:

- **Trade Documents** - Number, type, and handling method of documents (paper, email/PDF, digital workflows), and identification of administrative bottlenecks.
- **Time and Communication** - Staff time spent preparing, checking, sharing, and reworking documents; frequency and type of communication channels (email, phone, messaging apps, digital solutions).
- **End-to-End Timelines** - Total trade processing time, border waiting times, and operational cost impacts of administrative delays, providing insight into efficiency and predictability.

## Methodology for Measuring TradeTech Impact

To ensure comparability, the same standardised metrics framework used in the UK-Australia corridor was applied to all use cases. It evaluates:

1. Efficiency and productivity
2. Reduction in paper and communication overhead
3. Business and financial outcomes

### Data Collection

Data was collected through direct engagement with exporters (mainly Jointine Products), combining:

- Observed workflow mapping of baseline (traditional) and endpoint (digital) processes
- Quantitative inputs on staff time for key administrative tasks
- Counts of documents, communications, and manual data entry steps
- Business-reported cost data, including operational expenses and error-related costs

Where precise system logs were unavailable, estimates were validated with operational staff to reflect typical shipment processes.

### Baseline vs Endpoint Comparison

**All impact metrics were calculated using a baseline vs endpoint approach:**

- **Baseline:** Traditional processes, including paper-based documentation, email communication, and manual data entry
- **Endpoint:** Digitally enabled workflows using structured, interoperable data

Percentage improvements were calculated using the standard formula:

Percentage reduction =  $\frac{\text{Baseline} - \text{Endpoint}}{\text{Baseline}}$

This approach ensures comparability across case studies and validates that observed benefits are consistent with UK-New Zealand results.

### Time and Efficiency Metrics

Time savings were calculated across:

- **Document preparation time:** Time spent creating, reviewing, and sharing trade documents
- **Administrative processing time:** Time spent on operational tasks, including coordination, validation, and handling

**Total processing time** = document preparation time + administrative processing time

Additional efficiency metrics included:

- **Document handling:** Number of physical documents replaced by digital equivalents
- **Manual data entry:** Reduction in repeated data entry across systems
- **Communication overhead:** Reduction in email exchanges and manual interactions per shipment

## Cost Savings

Operational savings were estimated using:

- Staff and administrative time savings (converted to monetary value using reported salary data)
- Reduction in software or third-party service costs
- Lower customs, training, and courier costs
- Reduced printing and error-related correction costs

All figures were validated with the business and annualised based on typical shipment volumes.

## Scaling and Projections

The projections in this report estimate potential efficiency gains achievable through TradeTech adoption along the UK-Australia corridor. They are based on **observed operational impacts from Jointine**, a UK SME exporting gasket paper, and informed by lessons from other corridors, including UK-New Zealand.

## Data Sources

- **SME case studies:** Primary data from Jointine provided insight into administrative workflows, shipment volumes, and time spent on documentation and compliance.
- **Operational benchmarks:** Structured digital workflow pilots, notably Boex, informed assumptions on time savings, reduced handovers, and improved workflow efficiency.
- **SME population statistics:** UK government data on VAT-registered SMEs was used to estimate the number of exporters to Australia (~14,800), most of which are SMEs.

## Approach

- **Profiled SME activity:** Three shipment frequency profiles reflect operational diversity:
  - Low-frequency: ~80 shipments/year
  - Mid-frequency: ~250 shipments/year
  - High-frequency: ~450 shipments/year
- **Workflow efficiency gains:** Case study insights were applied per shipment. Jointine's adoption of Boex reduced administrative processing by ~1.5 hours per

shipment, centralising document handling, minimising handovers, and eliminating repeated data entry.

- **Scaling to corridor-level:** Average savings per shipment were applied across SME profiles to illustrate potential annual efficiency gains. This provides an indicative view of operational benefits achievable through structured digital workflows.
- **Operational assumptions:**
  - Time savings scale linearly with shipment volume.
  - Administrative gains do not alter regulatory compliance requirements.
  - Benefits are measured in staff hours saved, reduced coordination effort, and improved predictability, rather than purely financial terms.

## Limitations

- Inputs are based on SME self-reported estimates rather than automated system logs.
- Shipment complexity, sector requirements, and trade volumes vary, affecting realised gains.
- Results are indicative of typical SME operations and may differ for large corporates or specialised exporters/importers.

By combining Jointine's operational data, corridor-specific trade flow analysis, and targeted TradeTech engagement, this methodology ensures interventions are concentrated on sectors and processes most likely to deliver tangible operational and economic benefits. The resulting case studies demonstrate that TradeTech solutions can significantly improve the efficiency and reliability of cross-border trade. By streamlining documentation and accelerating clearance, these case studies provide a clear evidence base for scaling TradeTech across the UK-Australia corridor.

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