

Digital border by UK

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In news- The UK Home Office has launched a scheme to create a digital border as part of its plans for immigration reform.

About the scheme-

- The UK's '**New plan for immigration: legal migration and border control**' sets out how it aims to achieve a "**fully digital end-to-end experience**" in all aspects of immigration and border crossings.
- It includes the way people apply online, how they prove their identity, how they provide evidence that they meet the relevant criteria, to how they receive and use proof of their status to cross the border and demonstrate any entitlements in the UK.
- Hence it includes **delivering a digital system allowing for online evidence of immigration status.**
- This system has already been put in place for **European Economic Area (EEA) nationals** to apply for the right to remain in the UK post-Brexit.
- The Home Office originally launched an **e-Borders programme in 2003**, aiming to improve the use of information to track people across borders but failed to deliver.
- It then launched a replacement programme, **Digital Services at the Border (DSAB), in 2014.**
- The original aim was for DSAB to be completed by March 2019, delivering three main systems: *Advance Border Control, Border Crossing, and Advanced Freight Targeting Capability.*
- By March 2019, only one of the three systems was in live operation, Border Crossing.
- By 2021 end, the **border crossing capability will be extended to the e-gates.**
- The government will also put in place an **electronic**

travel authorisation system, similar to the US's ESTA system, which means everyone wishing to travel to the UK (except British and Irish citizens) will need to seek permission in advance of travel.

- The fully digital border will provide the **ability to count people in and count people out** of the country which helps to **tackle the broken asylum system**.

European Economic Area(EEA)-

- It consists of the **Member States of the European Union (EU) and** three countries of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) (**Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway**; excluding Switzerland) (in total **30 members**).
- The Agreement on the EEA entered into force on 1 **January 1994**.

It seeks to strengthen trade and economic relations and is principally concerned with the **four fundamental pillars** of the internal market- *free movement of goods, people, services and capital*.