

OIM accepts landmark first request to examine proposed law change

Press release

The OIM has taken its first decision to accept a government's request to consider the potential impact of a proposed regulatory change, a ban on the sale of peat in England, on the UK Internal Market.



The UK government has consulted on banning the sale of peat in England. The proposed ban, designed to address environmental concerns surrounding the use of peat in horticulture, would not apply in Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland.

The UK government has requested that the Office for the Internal Market (OIM) – which sits within the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) – report on how the proposed ban may impact the effective operation of the Internal Market.

The OIM has considered this request in line with the criteria set out in the UK Internal Market Act and the principles stated in its operational guidance and has accepted the request. It will aim to provide its analysis by February 2023.

OIM Panel Chair, Murdoch MacLennan said:

This request is a significant development for the UK Internal Market and for the OIM. Since the OIM was launched less than a year ago, we have taken important steps to ensure we are ready to perform this new role and our decision to accept this request is another milestone.

We'll now examine any potential economic impacts the proposed ban could have on the UK Internal Market and provide our report within 6 months.

The OIM was launched in September 2021 and [published its Overview of the UK Internal Market report](#) in March of this year.

For more information on this request [visit the OIM's website](#).

1. The OIM was [launched in September 2021](#) to provide, among other things, non-binding technical and economic advice to all 4 governments of the UK on the effect on the UK Internal Market of specific regulatory provisions that they introduce. The OIM operates independently of all 4 governments.
2. Since leaving the EU, significant powers have returned to the UK government and devolved administrations, increasing the possibility of regulatory differences between the nations. Under the UK Internal Market Act 2020 ('the Act'), the OIM's work assists governments in understanding how effectively companies are able to sell their products and services across the 4 nations of the UK and the impact of regulatory provisions on this for the governments' consideration alongside their own wider policy issues.
3. This request to the OIM by the UK Government (i.e. the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs), on its proposal to end the sale of peat in horticultural products, is made under section 34(1) of the Act, which provides that the OIM may at the request of a relevant national authority (or two or more acting jointly) give advice or provide a report on a proposed regulatory provision of the requesting relevant national authority. A 'relevant national authority' means the Secretary of State, the Scottish Ministers, the Welsh Ministers and a Northern Ireland Department.
4. The proposed regulation applies to England only. Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are currently considering their approach.
5. For media queries, please contact the press office via press@cma.gov.uk or on 020 3738 6460.

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