



**Book Industry
Communication**

BIC Task and Finish Working Group

**Project Name:
Books Across Borders
Best Practice**

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BIC Project Brief

The Purpose of the BIC Project Brief

The BIC Project Brief is required to enable necessary projects or pieces of work to progress from being a good BIC Board or Committee idea to a formal request for work that is submitted to the appropriate Task and Finish Working Group and/ or consultant. The BIC Project Brief must be agreed upon and signed off initially by all members of the BIC Committee responsible for the project and then by the dedicated Task & Finish Working Group (if applicable, depending on the nature of the project) once established.

The BIC Project Brief should generally be short and provide an overview of the proposed project or piece of work.

The finalised, signed off document will be made available to all BIC members, who will be able to provide comment or feedback on the intended project or work.

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BIC Board/ Committee Review

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1. Purpose

The ultimate purpose of this project is to agree, document and promote best practice for the import and export of physical books and related products to and from the United Kingdom and Ireland. The guidelines will address issues as documented in the Business Across Borders Workshop Report, published in November 2022 (see Appendix A below). The guidelines will be published with all stakeholders in mind. These include manufacturers, printers, publishers, distributors, wholesalers, freight forwarders, retailers, standards organisations, data aggregators and other third parties.

2. Background

The Workshop highlighted the need for greater supply chain resilience. This can be achieved by addressing the challenges that UK and Ireland businesses face when importing and exporting books globally.

BREXIT has complicated doing business with former EU partners. Ireland remains in the EU and there is no physical border on the island of Ireland. However, it isn't as simple as replicating pre-BREXIT processes in a post BREXIT world. For those unfamiliar with doing business beyond the confines of Europe, they have no experience of non - EU trading protocols which are now the norm for the single market too.

Key challenges to address include the transactional role that metadata plays, supply chain roles and responsibilities, requirements by market, legally required documentation, the provision of worked examples and a glossary of terms.

This new project has been approved by the BIC Board and forms part of BIC's strategic priorities for 2023 – 2024 (Supply Chain Efficiency).

3. Project Definition

3.1 Project Objectives

By the end of the project, BIC (i.e., the Physical Supply Chain Committee, Metadata Sub Committee and Board) should be presented with best practice documentation for doing business internationally in the physical book supply chain, to be referred to in this document as "Books Across Borders Best Practice". This will address the issues captured in the Business Across Borders Workshop Report and include a plan for consideration by BIC to ensure the socialisation of the best practice during the project and after it has closed. The documentation will be arrived at through the efforts of the Books Across Borders Best Practice ("BAB") Task and Finish Working Group ("T&FWG") that will be set up for the purpose of completing this project. This T&FWG and the project will be led by the Project Consultant who will have responsibility for ensuring the project runs and delivers to schedule.

The effort involved is envisaged to be:

- 1) 2 days per week of consultancy between 20 June 2023 and 30 April 2024 (455 hours).
- 2) Recruiting a Project Consultant (recruited as of 26 June 2023).

- 3) Establishing which, if any, organisations outside the committees and board listed above should be approached to contribute information to this project. (None proposed as of 26 June 2023).
- 4) Ensuring the Project Consultant has a clear understanding of the deliverables and purpose of the project.
- 5) Meeting via regular video calls, at the discretion of the project consultant. These meetings will be held at least once a month but may vary throughout the duration of the project to reflect the project phase.
- 6) Regular catch-up sessions between BIC's Executive Director and the Project Consultant.
- 7) Monthly, written update reports from the Project Consultant to the BIC Board, the BIC Physical Supply Chain Committee and the BIC Metadata Sub Committee. These reports will also be published on the BIC website.
- 8) Final Best Practice documentation, accompanied by a marketing and adoption plan delivered in a clear manner.
- 9) There is minimal impact on the BIC office as the Project Consultant will work remotely.
- 10) The Project Consultant together with the T&FWG will need to determine how best to manage the project. A series of shorter, concurrent or consecutive projects (work packages) is likely to be the optimum way in which to approach this work. At the time of writing, the proposed work packages are:
 - a) Foundations (Supply Chain Map, Glossary, other items to be determined)
 - b) The Role of Transactional Metadata (including Timelines, Commodity Codes, INCOTERMS, Dangerous Goods)
 - c) Supply Chain Sustainability (Manufacture, Print, Import, Export, Orders, Returns)
 - d) Key Documentation, Supporting Systems and Guidance by Market (Legal vs. Nice to Have)
 - e) Stakeholders, Roles and Responsibilities
 - f) Project Legacy (extending the value and impact of the project through on-going training, support and engagement)

The final decision confirming the type and scope of the work packages for this project will be made by the T&FWG.

3.2 Project Scope

The project will focus on the processes associated with the management of physical books and related products in the end-to-end international supply chain.

The types of organisations that should be involved and be considered in scope include:

- Manufacturers
- Printers, including print on demand
- Publishers
- Distributors

- Wholesalers
- Freight Forwarders
- Booksellers
- Standards organisations
- Metadata aggregators
- Service and systems providers

Given the global nature of the book industry, the project needs to maintain a global perspective. BIC will reach out to the likes of BISG, BookNet Canada and EDItEUR to ensure an international approach. Whilst the focus is the needs of the BIC membership, the project may wish to approach non-BIC members on an ad hoc basis to reflect the diverse and complex nature of the international supply chain. These organisations will be identified by the T&FWG members.

Consideration of the sustainability impacts of international trade should feature throughout this project.

Areas in scope include (this list is not exhaustive):

- Product metadata, including information by market
- Commodity and HS Code classification
- Book production
- Printing (including print on demand and printing in the local market)
- Imports from the manufacturer
- Re-export of the finished product
- Stock holding by market
- Legally required documentation
- Stakeholders, roles and responsibilities
- Potential for conflict between book industry standards and other players' bespoke or ad hoc standards
- Compliance with current iterations of industry standards including ONIX, EDIFACT, TRADACOMS and EDItX
- Meeting BIC's new Metadata Excellence Award requirements
- Territorial rights issues
- Product availability
- Supply chain automation
- The B2B supply chain
- Existing resources on international trade

Areas out of scope include (this list is not exhaustive):

- Import/export scenarios considered to be unique to a business
- Import/export situations considered to be commercially sensitive or of a confidential nature
- Digital product and the digital supply chain
- Legal advice
- Consumer direct fulfilment
- Events and festivals

3.3 Outline project deliverables and desired outcomes

Key deliverables in summary are:

1. Best Practice documentation covering the areas outlined in Section 3.1 above.
2. T&FWG members understand that their participation in the project is a demonstration of their organisation's ambition to adopt the project's deliverables within a reasonable time period after their publication. What is meant by "a reasonable time period" is to be agreed by the T&FWG. BIC recognises that commitment is difficult without knowing what the end deliverables look like, so as the project progresses, the T&FWG should regularly review the relevance and applicability of the individual deliverables to their own organisations and reflect on what adoption might look like.
3. Agreement between the Project Consultant and the T&FWG regarding how this overarching project might be broken down into smaller, more manageable work packages.
4. Project plan to show deadlines for each deliverable with actions and owners clearly assigned. This should be drawn up and kept up to date by the Project Consultant.
5. A force ranked list of issues to be addressed by the best practice documentation based on the issues captured in the Business Across Borders Workshop Report.
6. Regular progress reports from the Project Consultant to the BIC Executive Director, Physical Supply Chain Committee, Metadata Sub Committee and the BIC Board.
7. The best practice documentation to include reference to the potential sustainability impacts on the international book supply chain where appropriate.
8. An outline marketing plan and a comprehensive adoption proposal.
9. A review of progress made by all T&FWG members regarding adoption, and the measurable impact of adoption of the best practice guidelines no later than 12 months after publication.
10. Project closure report.

3.4 Constraints

The timely and efficient management of physical books and related products in the international supply chain is key to efficient distribution processes. BREXIT has complicated what was already a problematic aspect of business. There is no clear understanding of what documents are legally required for the import or export of goods, or resources focused on how to complete them. INCOTERMS, commodity codes and valid commercial invoices all prove a challenge. The BIC Board and Physical Supply Chain Committee recognise the importance of collaborating on and adopting best practice in this area.

The workload and time pressures of those individuals that the consultant will need access to may be a constraint.

It is vitally important that the T&FWG participants commit their respective organisations to adopting and promoting the best practice guidelines resulting from this project, as well as increasing awareness of and socialising the project's objectives and outcomes.

3.5 Interfaces

BIC member groups outside the T&FWG will be interested in this project. However, it is the BIC Physical Supply Chain Committee that is ultimately responsible for the successful delivery of the recommendations of this project. This project has been assigned to the BIC Physical Supply Chain Committee due to the project scope being physical books. The BIC Metadata Sub Committee will have interested parties. The BIC Board will also have a keen interest in the execution and success of this project.

The Project Consultant will need to keep in mind the impact of the best practice guidelines on the following recognised standards, best practice resources and committees:

- ONIX 3
- BIC New ISBN Best Practice
- BIC Metadata Sub-committee
- BIC Metadata Map and its Metadata Capabilities Directory
- BIC Price & Availability
- BIC Weights and Dimensions
- BIC Physical Supply Chain Committee
- BIC Ordering Best Practice
- BIC Industry Returns Initiative
- Current TRADACOMS and EDIFACT EDI Standards
- Current EDItX Standards, including BIC Realtime

4. Outline Business/ Industry case

Please refer to sections 1 (Purpose) and 2 (Background) above.

5. Quality Expectations

It is important that the project deliverables address all areas detailed in the scope above (section 3.2 of this document).

The importance of this project work will be in the following order of priority:

1. Quality
2. Cost
3. Time

Quality is most important because BIC's work must always be of the highest standard. Misinformation or poor recommendations in such a key area as the management of the international physical supply chain would be detrimental to BIC and ultimately its reputation across the industry. Cost is the second priority because BIC's budget is important and BIC's resources must be managed. Timeline is the least important because if overrunning slightly, the project was still within budget and delivered optimum quality, then this would be acceptable. The timeline is (at the time of writing) only estimated, while the budget is fixed. The crucial point is that any delay does not lead to increased costs.

6. Ownership

The Physical Supply Chain Committee will assume responsibility for this project and will be mandated to make all necessary decisions to ensure the project runs to time, on budget and is delivered to a high standard. Should additional funding be required over and above what has been agreed in the budget, application for the additional funds will need to be made to the BIC Board. The timing of the project start date reflects this.

7. Acceptance Criteria

The Physical Supply Chain Committee has responsibility for the final sign off on the recommendations and best practice documentation presented by the Project Consultant.

The documentation that the Project Consultant submits should address all areas in scope and should first be signed off by all T&FWG participants. It should also include an Executive Summary. Acceptance of this documentation will close the project, after which point the marketing and adoption plan outlined in the best practice documentation will begin.

A meeting of the original project group to review adoption progress made will be called within 12 months of the closure of the project.



8. Risks

Given its unique position at the heart of the supply chain, BIC can lead the way in bringing clarity and transparency to a complex and bureaucratic aspect of the physical supply chain. Not doing so risks ignoring feedback from the BIC membership (and wider industry) about the need for a clear lead to be offered where international trade is concerned. BIC may appear in a bad light if it does not address this area as it is clearly something it should be tackling.

There is some risk that the suggested ambition to adopt the project deliverables will deter active project participation or will result in T&FWG participants not adopting the resulting best practice guidelines, despite their best intentions. This could undermine the value and impact of the project overall.

There is also a possibility that the resulting best practice will have no impact beyond participants in the project. The Consultant, T&FWG and the Physical Supply Chain Committee should develop a strategy to promote wider industry implementation in order to mitigate these adoption risks. This will require ongoing activity from BIC and its members beyond the life of the project. See section 3.3, Outline Project Deliverables and Desired Outcomes.

9. Outline Project Plan

The Physical Supply Chain committee will be asked to sign off on this project brief. Agreement on budget has already been given by the BIC Board. The next steps will be:

- **By 21 July 2023:** Obtain project brief sign off from the Physical Supply Chain Committee.
- **By end July 2023.** Begin call for project volunteers and schedule on boarding interviews
- **By end August 2023:** Complete on boarding interviews; schedule the initial T&FWG meeting; adapt existing collateral in the Business Across Borders Workshop Report for social media posts to create project awareness
- **By end September 2023:** Hold the initial T&FWG meeting (ideally face to face), and prioritise immediate next steps
- **October 2023 – April 2024:** Project underway

The anticipated end date for the project is April 2024. This is the date by which all the deliverables outlined in Section 3.3 will be achieved.

A more detailed project plan will be put together by the Project Consultant and will be one of their first actions.

10. Budget/ Costs

At the time of writing, the costs to BIC are limited to the agreed Project Consultant's fees. Meeting room costs, staff time and staff travel expenses are not anticipated at this point unless a face-to-face T&FWG meeting is held.

11. Authority Responsible

BIC's Executive Director.

12. Project Consultant

Stephen Long, Independent Book Industry Consultant, has been appointed by the Physical Supply Chain Committee and BIC's Executive Director.

13. Customers and Users

All BIC member organisations (including BISG and BookNet Canada).

14. Reporting

This project reports into the BIC Physical Supply Chain Committee for the duration of the project. This committee meets online 3 times a year. The frequency of project update reports to the Committee will be agreed between the Executive Director and the Project Consultant at the start of the project but is likely to be monthly. This reporting should include, but may not be limited to the following:

- i) Progress of deliverables against the agreed timeline and associated project plan
- ii) Engagement and availability of stakeholders
- iii) Potential and actual obstacles to delivering the project on time and in full
- iv) Key Project KPIs

The Project Consultant will take responsibility for this reporting.

[Appendix A]

[BIC's Business across Borders Workshop Report – download here.](#)