



Australian Government

Applying for border services at new and redeveloping international ports

International transport is vital to Australia's trade and tourism, along with the need to balance the efficient movement of people and goods across Australia's border.

The Australian Government has established a clear, transparent and consistent process to help ensure that border services (biosecurity, immigration and customs control) are available at ports when they are required.

Port operators seeking to introduce international services at a port where no border services are provided, or where there is a change to an existing business model that impacts on border services capabilities, need to apply to the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities.

Port operators are advised they are responsible for costs associated with relevant infrastructure and facilities required to support international services. This includes any costs associated with establishing or redeveloping a border services capability at the port incurred by the Australian Government.

Proposals will be assessed to determine whether they are in the national interest. The Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities is responsible for coordinating advice to the Australian Government in consultation with the Department of Home Affairs, the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources, and other relevant agencies.

Port operators are encouraged to contact the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities early in the development of a proposal at: internationalaviation@infrastructure.gov.au.

Who does the process apply to?

The process applies equally to all port operator proposals for new or redeveloped international ports that require new or additional border services.

A 'new international port' is any port that seeks to introduce international services where no border services are currently provided. Examples of new international port proposals include:

- a port set to receive international services for the first time; and
- a port set to import or export cargo for the first time.

A 'redeveloping international port' is any port where there is a change to the existing business model. Examples of redeveloping international port proposals include:

- an increase in the number of carriers or services at that international port; and
- port initiated infrastructure changes that require border service capabilities to be expanded or repositioned within the port.

What is the process?

1. Port operator develops a proposal

The port operator develops a proposal, supported by any relevant evidence and noting the assessment considerations outlined below. Port operators should engage early with the Department of Home Affairs and the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources (through the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities) to determine their requirements.

2. Port operator presents its proposal

The port operator provides an evidence-based business case in writing to the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development and Cities for assessment by the Australian Government, noting the assessment considerations outlined below.

The financial feasibility of the proposal should be well established by the port operator and reflect the indicative costs for the establishment of border services. At this stage, proposals should be supported by a firm commitment from an international carrier.

3. Consideration of the proposal

The Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities will coordinate the Australian Government's consideration of proposals to determine the national interest, noting the assessment considerations outlined below. The assessment will be undertaken in a consultative manner.

4. Decision on the proposal

The Australian Government will decide whether or not to support the proposal (i.e. whether to provide new or enhanced border services at the port). The Australian Government's decision will be communicated to port operators by the Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities.

Timeframes

Lead times to assess a proposal and provide border services at a new or redeveloping international port can be significant, in some cases up to 14 months following a decision by the Australian Government. This is due to lead times relating to design and construction of required infrastructure, procurement of specialist equipment, and recruitment and training of border clearance staff.

Port operators should take account of these timeframes when developing a proposal.

National interest assessment considerations

The Australian Government will have regard to the criteria and considerations outlined below in assessing whether proposals are in the national interest. Note that there is a degree of overlap between criteria and that the summary of considerations is not exhaustive.

Port operators should provide (at minimum) a comprehensive business case that demonstrates the nature and financial sustainability of the proposal, along with detail on the requirement for any proposed infrastructure to be developed at the port and any associated regulatory approvals. Port operators should provide any additional information they consider appropriate for the Australian Government to take into account in forming its views.

1. *Financial sustainability and expected economic benefits:*

The Australian Government will assess the financial sustainability of the proposal. Port operators should detail the scope of proposed international services (projected over at least five years) including:

- the carrier/s involved
- nature of services (passenger and/or cargo)
- number of services per week
- aircraft or vessel type
- scheduling details
- expected load factor (including passenger mix and ratio of inbound/outbound passengers)

Port operators should also outline any relevant future aspirations, including other prospective international carriers, timing and scope of international services.

Port operators should demonstrate financial viability and sustainability of the proposal in the form of an evidence-based business case including:

- detail of all relevant investments (including for any necessary infrastructure)
- financial status of the port operator
- any financial support from governments
- firm commitment by the carrier/s
- sustainability of the proposed business model or method of operation

In addition to assessing the financial sustainability of the proposal, the Australian Government will also assess any expected benefits to the local, state and national economy, including direct and indirect economic and employment benefits.

2. *Alignment with Australia's strategic interests:*

The Australian Government will assess alignment of the proposal against Australia's broader strategic interests and with existing Australian Government commitments and investments.

Proposals will be assessed against factors including:

- international and domestic transport connectivity
- relationship to existing international ports
- biosecurity, national and border security

3. *Expected tourism, trade and investment benefits:*

The Australian Government will assess any tourism, trade and investment benefits that the proposal is expected to deliver.

Proposals will be assessed against factors including any new:

- trade opportunities for Australian industry (i.e. forecast nature, volume and value of exports and imports, and cost of freight)
- tourism opportunities for Australian businesses (i.e. forecast tourist numbers, origin and value of tourist spend)
- international education opportunities for Australian providers (i.e. forecast student numbers, origin and value)
- investment opportunities, including for foreign investment (i.e. forecast nature and value)

through access to new international markets or improved access to existing markets.

4. *Expected rural and regional benefits:*

The Australian Government will assess any rural and regional development benefits or impacts.

Proposals will be assessed against factors including:

- impacts on local and regional infrastructure
- regional economic and employment benefits
- greater regional connectivity with international transport
- regional dispersal of tourists (including value of tourist spend)
- trade and investment opportunities (including foreign investment)

5. *Expected social benefits:*

The Australian Government will assess any social benefits or impacts.

Proposals will be assessed against factors including:

- the nature and number of forecast employment opportunities to be created (initial and ongoing, direct and indirect employment)
- improved connectivity to international services for Australians

6. *Appropriate infrastructure in place and regulatory approvals obtained:*

Port operators should detail the requirement for any proposed infrastructure to be developed at the port and demonstrate viable timeframes for delivery. Port operators should also identify the status of any necessary regulatory approvals (in particular state and local government approvals) required to operate an international port and develop any associated infrastructure.

7. *Funding and resourcing:*

The Australian Government will assess proposals to determine funding and resourcing requirements. Port operators are advised they are responsible for costs associated with any relevant infrastructure and facilities required to support international services. This includes any costs associated with establishing a border services capability at the port incurred by the Australian Government.

Following the assessment

The Department of Infrastructure, Regional Development and Cities will advise port operators of the outcome of the Australian Government's assessment of a proposal.

If a proposal is successful, the Department of Home Affairs and the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources will work closely with the port operator to establish a border services capability, provided that all agreed infrastructure requirements have been met.