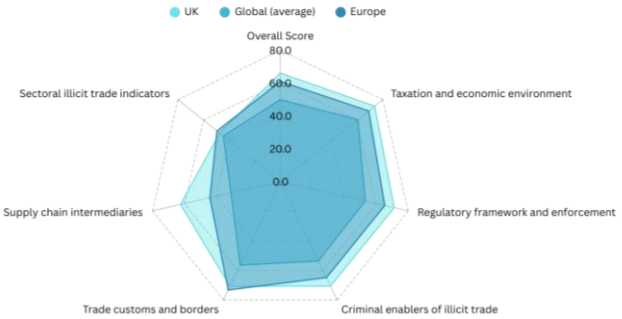
2025 ILLICIT TRADE INDEX

COUNTRY SNAPSHOT

UNITED KINGDOM

Protecting its markets from illicit trade is vital for the United Kingdom's economic integrity, consumer safety and the rule of law. Although the country ranks in the top quintile globally, its overall score of just 66.1 reveals that it still trails many developing economies that have implemented relatively more robust anti-illicit-trade measures . Closing this performance gap will require the UK to deepen its market oversight, strengthen cross-sector collaboration and adopt best practices from leading emerging markets.

UNITED KINGDOM'S PERFORMANCE



ILLICIT TRADE INDEX SCORES

	UK	Global (average)	Europe
Overall Score	**66.1**	**49.9**	**61**
Category scores			
Taxation and economic environment	73.7	60.5	69
Regulatory framework and enforcement	71.3	53.2	65.4
Criminal enablers of illicit trade	70.6	53.6	64.9
Trade customs and borders	70.8	56.5	73.3
Supply chain intermediaries	62.5	30.9	44.1
Sectoral illicit trade indicators	47.4	44.6	49.5

PRIORITY ACTIONS

- **Enact measures that holds online marketplaces liable** for illicit goods if they fail to implement robust "know-your-seller" checks and proactively block suspicious listings.
- **Strengthen controls in free trade zones** to prevent illicit goods entering, leaving or transiting, aligned with OECD and WCO standards.
- **Upgrade customs intelligence** by investing in AI-driven analytics and restore secured data-sharing links with the EU and key partners to transform the UK IPO intelligence hub into a real-time alerting system.
- **Expand container profiling and monitoring** and implement seizures of goods-in-transit to prevent diversion mid-shipment.
- **Improve resource and funding allocation** for enforcement actions and border controls including for interdiction of illicit small parcels.

KEY INSIGHTS

GLOBAL RANKING
18th out of 158 countries

ECONOMIC GROUP RANKING (G20)
7th out of 20 countries

OVERALL SCORE
66.1 / 100

TOP PERFORMING CATEGORY
Taxation and economic environment (73.7)

LOWEST-PERFORMING CATEGORY
Sectoral illicit trade indicators (47.4)

RESILIENCE METER

The Resilience to Illicit Trade Meter illustrates a country's risk level from illicit trade—ranging from low to very high—based on its Illicit Trade Index scores

TRACIT's **2025 Illicit Trade Index**, covering 158 countries, is a policy tool that provides governments and enforcement agencies with actionable insights by highlighting national vulnerabilities, strengths, and trends in combating illicit trade.

For more information, visit:
www.tracit.org/illicit-trade-index

TRANSNATIONAL ALLIANCE TO COMBAT ILLICIT TRADE
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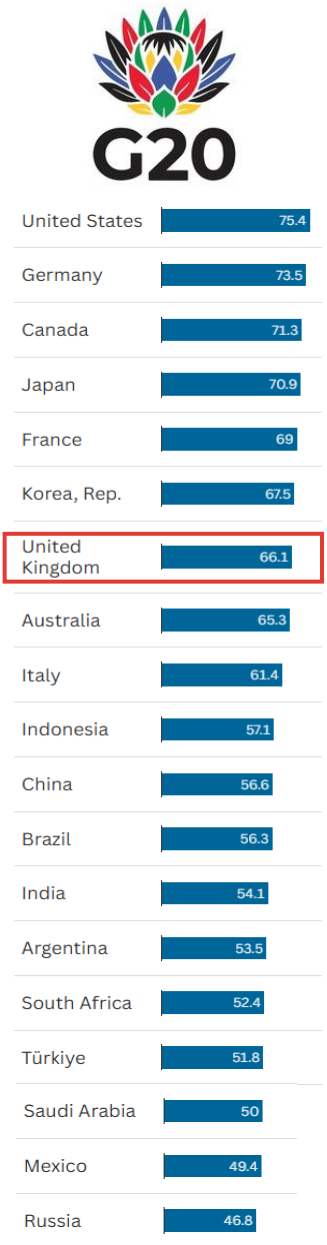
UNITED KINGDOM

UNITED KINGDOM'S PERFORMANCE: A MIXED PICTURE



The **United Kingdom** ranks 18th out of 158 countries in the *2025 Illicit Trade Index*, with an overall score of 66.1 out of 100. This places it firmly in the top quintile globally and 7th among G20 economies—a strong showing for a mature market—but still shy of leading peers among G20 economies and in Europe.

Among the Index's six categories, the UK's strongest performance is in **Taxation and Economic Environment** (73.7), reflecting stable excise regimes, low informal economy levels and effective fiscal deterrents.

It also scores mid-high in **Regulatory Framework and Enforcement** (71.3) and **Trade, Customs and Borders** (70.8), reflecting top-tier logistics, a good de minimis threshold, full AEO accreditation, a modern customs recordal system and mandatory AEI/EAD filings—but it scores zero on container profiling and only partial marks for in-transit seizure powers.

However, critical weaknesses remain in other areas:

- **Supply Chain Intermediaries** (62.5) suffer from unaddressed sub-indicators. Although the UK earns full marks for cybersecurity and for participation in the UPU's Illicit Goods Mitigation Expert Team, it scores low on mandatory platform-liability rules for e-commerce. It has also not ratified Chapter 2 of Annex D to the WCO Revised Kyoto Convention—leaving free trade-zone procedures non-standardized.
- **Sectoral illicit trade indicators** (47.4) score poorly because counterfeit networks exploit intelligence gaps. Luxury goods and apparel remain prime targets, while criminals increasingly trade in other dangerous illicit goods - ranging from automotive parts and children's toys to medicines and tobacco products to household appliances—through under-resourced inspection regimes. The UK IPO's domestic "intelligence hub" has yet to match the real-time alerting once provided by the EU customs database, leaving enforcement reactive rather than pre-emptive.

Comparison with Strategic Peers

- Among G20 members, the UK sits 7th, outperforming Australia, Mexico, India and South Africa but trailing Germany, Japan and Canada.
- Within Europe, it ranks behind leading performers such as Germany and France, suggesting opportunities to adopt their sector-specific best practices.