Nuclear Industry Association response to the Department for International Trade’s consultation on The UK Global Tariff

1. The Nuclear Industry Association (NIA) welcomes the chance to respond to the Government’s consultation on a new UK Global Tariff.

2. The NIA is the trade association and representative body for the civil nuclear industry in the UK. We represent around 250 companies operating across all aspects of the nuclear fuel cycle, including the current and prospective operators of nuclear power stations, the international designers and vendors of nuclear power stations, and those engaged in decommissioning, waste management and nuclear liabilities management. Members also include nuclear equipment suppliers, engineering and construction firms, nuclear research organisations, and legal, financial and consultancy companies.

3. As an organisation representing a wide variety of companies across the nuclear sector and its supply chain, it is not for the NIA to comment on specific measures that the Government should take in deciding on a new UK Global Tariff. Several of our members will be making their own, detailed responses to this consultation. The focus of this submission is therefore on high-level, industry-wide matters.

Setting the right global tariffs will help encourage low carbon infrastructure investment into the UK at a vital time for meeting climate targets

4. Removing or setting low tariffs for imported goods and materials important for an array of products and services in the nuclear sector, including new build, fuel manufacturing and waste management, is critical for the future success of the industry.

5. Zero or low tariffs will also help encourage investment into the nuclear sector, as well as other low-carbon generation methods, helping to level-up the economy and reach the UK Government’s ambitious goal of net zero by 2050.

6. Increasing inward investment into the UK nuclear industry is one of the key targets of the Nuclear Sector Deal, which outlines the aim of the industry and UK Government to procure up to £2bn domestic and international contract wins by 2030.

7. Setting zero or low tariffs for essential nuclear goods and materials is essential into making sure this target is achievable.
It is crucial that the Government considers the timings of setting a new UK Global Tariff and the effects that this may have on the nuclear sector and its supply chain.

8. The NIA and its member companies were grateful for the support of the UK Government provided in the period leading up to the UK leaving the European Union on 31 January 2020. In the same vein, the UK Government needs to ensure that the same level of support is provided to companies, not just in the nuclear sector but across the economy, when transitioning to a new tariff regime.

9. This requires the UK Government to listen and engage with companies in determining the timing and implementation of a new UK Global Tariff and the effects that this may have on their business.

10. Making changes too quickly and without sufficient evidence could be incredibly damaging to the economy and therefore the UK Government needs to balance its wish to resolve this issue quickly and alongside negotiations with the EU with the potential ramifications of doing so when businesses are not ready for such changes.