



# **DAERA Stakeholder / Industry: Third Country Export Health Certification Crown Gold Removal – Beginning of Public Beta Phase**

**Bulletin: 06/21**

**Issued: 19 October 2021**

**Audience:** Third Country Exporters in Northern Ireland and Industry bodies

**Subject:** Improved Digital Security Measures for Export Health Certificates - Removal of Crown Vellum (Gold) Paper

## **Purpose**

1. To inform Exporters located in Northern Ireland of new digital anti-fraud security measures being introduced for Export Health Certificates (EHCs) to replace existing Crown Vellum (Gold) watermarked security paper.

## **Background**

2. EHCs from the United Kingdom to third countries are normally issued using Crown Vellum (Gold) watermarked security paper to provide anti-fraud assurance to importing Competent Authorities of the authenticity of UK certification.
3. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, DEFRA agreed, with a number of third country Competent Authorities, the production of EHCs on plain white paper as a temporary measure to assist in issuing EHCs.
4. DEFRA and DAERA have also been working on a longer term solution to remove Crown Vellum watermarked security paper across all countries and replace with plain white paper with improved digital security measures. The new digital anti-fraud security features include a **12 digit unique code** applied to page 1 of the EHC and a **'dithered watermark'** applied to all pages, visible when the EHC is printed on white paper.
5. There is no change to how exporters apply for EHCs. Exporters can continue to apply for an EHC by completing an application on DECOL.
6. When the EHC is issued to the exporter, the new security features will be present. A 12-digit code will be visible on the first page of the certificate.
7. The dithered watermark consists of the certificate serial number applied as a diagonal watermark and a crown applied in the centre of each page. These features will be added to all pages of the export health certificate.



8. **Annex 1** provides an example of an EHC including the dithered watermark.
9. The Importing Competent Authority can enter the 12-digit code (from the certified EHC), into a new '**verification service**' on GOV.UK, to confirm the validity of the certificate (valid or invalid) as part of the security features.
10. DAERA will respond to any correspondence from the Importing Competent Authority if any queries are received as to the authenticity of a white paper EHC.
11. It is recommended that you advise your Importers in third countries to expect this 'new look' for all EHCs issued from the start dates listed in the table in **Annex 2**.
12. Initial use of this new technical solution took place during a Private Beta trial with 4 participating Third Countries, during which time DAERA requested feedback on the new procedures from importing Competent Authorities and Certifying Officers.
13. This successful period of Private Beta testing of the new digital security measures has now been completed, with DEFRA and DAERA having received largely positive feedback from the Competent Authorities in Australia, Hong Kong, Japan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Initial issues with the presentation of the EHCs containing the security features in private beta have been addressed and will continue to be monitored.
14. Implementation of the use of the digital security measures as the business-as-usual process for issuing EHCs will now progress on a **phased approach**.
15. The list of Third Countries this currently applies to can be found in Annex 2, and this will be updated as implementation roll out moves forward. **Note: the move to public beta phase is beginning with the existing 4 participating countries so exporters to these countries should already be accustomed to this process and not notice any appreciable difference.**
16. As part of the implementation plans, DAERA will make the necessary changes to the EHCs in DECOL for each Third Country as it agrees to use of the new digital security measures.
17. All other EHCs will continue to be issued by one of the methods below, as applicable:
  - Issued using white paper as a temporary measure during coronavirus restrictions (where agreements are in place).
  - Issued using Crown Vellum (Gold) watermarked security paper
  - Issued on white paper where Crown Vellum watermarked Paper is not required e.g. EHCs for the European Union (EU)



18. [This Third Country Easement Exporter Communication](#) provided details of temporary measures introduced to print EHCs on plain white paper during the Coronavirus pandemic. When a Third Country agrees to implement the use of the new digital security measures, EHCs will be printed on plain white paper with the new digital security features applied which will supersede the white paper- only easement.

## Contact

If you have any queries please contact [DAERATradeExports@daera-ni.gov.uk](mailto:DAERATradeExports@daera-ni.gov.uk)  
Trade Programme





## Annex 1

An example of an EHC including the new dithered watermark (for illustration purposes only):





## Annex 2

The list of Third Countries which have agreed to implement the new EHC anti-fraud security measures as a business-as usual procedure are:

<b>Country</b>	<b>With effect from</b>
Australia	27.05.2021
Hong Kong	27.05.2021
United Arab Emirates	14.06.2021
Japan	12.07.2021