**Frequently asked questions**

**Movement of Products of Animal Origin (POAO) to and from GB and for onward exports**

**Q What are Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) requirements?**

Sanitary and phytosanitary requirements are measures to protect humans, animals, and plants from diseases, pests, or contaminants as laid down in EU legislation. These measures maintain traceability, safety and standards in the food chain. They are comprised of a wide range of regulatory controls including auditing, inspection and certification.

**Requirements depending on export routes**

**Q What are the requirements for POAO moving from NI to GB?**

There are no requirements for any additional documentation to accompany POAO from NI to GB, if the intention is for it to remain on the GB market. A support health attestation may be required if this product is intended for export, or further processing for export, from GB to the EU/NI.

**Q What is required to export Product of Animal Origin (POAO) from NI to the EU via ROI (Republic of Ireland), not using GB land bridge. Is an Export Health Certificate (EHC) needed?**

If travelling to the EU from NI directly, a commercial document should be acceptable for most exports of POAO. This should include details for the exporter, the importer, place of destination, date of dispatch, description of product, origin of product, quantities, including net and gross weights and the approval number of the dispatching establishment.

A seal would be good practice.

Some specific animal products do require an export health certificate, e.g. germinal products, see link below for commodity specific advice.

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/landing-pages/exporting-animals-and-animal-products-northern-ireland>

In addition, there is a specific commercial document template for Animal By-Product e.g. pet food.

**Q What is needed to enter EU if Product of Animal Origin (POAO) transits GB?**

POAO travelling from NI to EU via GB land bridge can travel with commercial documentation only and does not require an official seal. However, a commercial seal may be applied to ease re-entry into EU.  Exporters should check with BCP of re-entry for further information.

The EU importer is required to pre-notify the Border Control Post (BCP). The exporter should present the goods to the BCP after transiting GB and on re-entry into the EU, whether the journey started in NI or ROI.

The BCP carries out documentary checks to verify origin and may carry out further checks if there is a suspicion of non- compliance.

Land-bridge consignments must travel directly from NI or ROI to the EU with no storage, consolidation, unloading of product or addition of product, in GB.

**Q What SPS checks are done at GB ports both for moves from NI directly to GB and for moves to EU via the GB land-bridge?**

There are no additional SPS checks in GB for goods entering GB from NI. This applies to product destined for GB as final destination and for consignments transiting the GB land bridge.

**Q What are the requirements for POAO (including fresh meat of NI animals slaughtered in ROI) originating from ROI and processed in NI for NI/GB markets?**

There are no requirements for any additional documentation to accompany products manufactured in NI when moving to GB, where the product is destined for the GB market.

**Q What are the requirements for NI product stored in GB and moved on to EU?**

Where POAO stops off/remains in GB for any length of time, i.e. does not transit directly through the land bridge, then an EHC is required to move from GB to the EU.

A support health attestation may be required but in most cases NI POAO stored in GB, and retaining its UK(NI) ID mark, will be eligible for export certification from GB to EU/NI using EHC 8461.

This move should not require a support health attestation from NI.

You will find the scope of Export Health Certificate 8461 in the guidance here: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/617957168fa8f52978e14c19/8461NFG_Jan22-v3.pdf>

**Q Is Traces NT required for movement of POAO from GB to NI?**

You will need the appropriate EHC to accompany the goods from GB. The Import to NI must be pre-notified to the NI Point of Entry via TRACES-NT.

You will need to contact HMRC etc. for advice on other obligations.

**Q What is required to import from GB to NI a Product of Animal Origin (POAO), e.g. cheese, for a pallet made up from several producers in GB? Is an EHC needed for each product or each pallet?**

An EHC is needed to import POAO, including cheese, from GB to NI. The EHC required depends on the treatment the milk in the product had and more than one EHC may be needed e.g. if some cheese was made from heat-treated milk and more from raw milk. The GB manufacturer may establish which DEFRA certificate is appropriate for their product here

<https://www.gov.uk/export-health-certificates>

A consignment of the same product that had the same treatment would require one EHC regardless of the quantity or number of pallets.

A single EHC can cover the same type of POAO from multiple producers in GB so long as it is all dispatched from the one location where final certification may be issued.

**Q Once meat is moved from GB to NI for processing, is it possible to ship by-product of that meat e.g. bones to the ROI without certification?**

Once POAO has entered NI from GB with the appropriate EHC, and is placed on the market here, it is able to move freely within the EU market, including to Ireland. If the bones are sent as Category 3 Animal By-Product, then they can move on a commercial document, however, there are specific requirements for movement of some other types of Animal By- Product.

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/landing-pages/exporting-animals-and-animal-products-northern-ireland>

**Q Do animals moving to the EU via the GB land bridge need to be offloaded at the port of departure?**

Normally, animals moving to the EU, via the GB land bridge, are not unloaded. The accompanying documents are endorsed, there is a visual inspection of the animals from outside the mode of transport and the load is sealed.

Animals are unloaded if there is evidence of non-compliance or a welfare issue.

**Q How can I establish what EHC certificates will apply in GB to my products that are sent to GB for onward export to the EU/NI?**

All of the GB to EU/NI EHCs can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/export-health-certificates>

If you still have difficulties in establishing which EHC applies to your products, please consult your regulator.

**Q What additional documentation is needed to buy meat and/or dairy products from GB to sell in NI and supply directly to the ROI/EU?**

POAO moving from GB to NI requires an EHC. No additional SPS documentation or EHCs is required to supply this product directly to customers in NI or EU/RoI unless for onward export to third countries.

**Support Health Attestation (SHA) and Support Attestations (SA)**

**Q When is a Support Health Attestation (SHA) needed?**

POAO exported from GB to EU, including that moved from GB to NI, requires an EHC to demonstrate compliance with EU import requirements. Therefore where POAO originating in NI is moved to GB and intended for further export from GB to the EU, or movement back to NI, then NI to GB movements of POAO may require a Support Health Attestation (SHA) or in some cases a Support Attestation (SA). This is to provide the necessary sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) assurances to allow completion of the final EHC in GB. NI exporters should ask the GB importer what evidence the certifying officer in GB requires.

The same rules apply both to goods moving from GB to NI and to movement of goods from GB to EU/ROI. All these movements require an EHC. Once the product enters NI, it can move freely to ROI/EU on commercial documentation, and vice versa.

POAO exported from NI to EU via the GB land bridge, whether departing from either an NI or an ROI port, will not require either an EHC or SHA.

**Q Where an SHA is required what products require one and which are exempt?**

Products of animal origin for human consumption and some animal by products, which require an export health certificate for export from GB to EU, may require an SHA. Some composite products are exempt. Further information can be found at Gov.uk - [Export or move composite food products to the EU or Northern Ireland from 1 January 2021](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/export-composite-food-products-to-the-eu-from-1-january-2021)

Certain animal by-products require an EHC to move from NI to GB /EU. Where this is the case, an SHA is not required. The GB importer should advise the NI exporter as to what support certification is required, if any.

To see the certificates and guidance required by the GB exporter for export from GB to EU go to <https://www.gov.uk/export-health-certificates>, enter EU as the destination country and insert the commodity in the search bar.

**Q Where can I apply for an SHA? Is it the same system as DECOL?**

 An SHA application template, templates for the Groupage Export Facilitation Scheme (GEFS), the Risk Based Fish Export Certification (RBFEC) approach and a link to the SHA online system can be found at:

<https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sha-online-apply-support-health-attestation>

**Q Is one SHA needed per product/consignment or can a SHA cover multiple consignments?**

Generally, SHAs are issued per consignment; however, some flexibility may be available in certain cases. For example, a reduced frequency of SHA is permitted for the movement of fish and some retail products. Please visit UK Certification Schemes Guidance Page for more information.

[UK Certification Schemes | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (daera-ni.gov.uk)](https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/uk-certification-schemes)

In addition, where a standard operating procedure has been agreed with the certifying officer, it may be possible to issue SHAs on a production batch basis, up to a maximum of 1 day’s production, rather than a per consignment basis. In all cases, strict eligibility criteria apply.

**Q Can I apply for multiple recurring SHAs at once e.g. if I make the same product and ship it twice weekly each month can I make one application for my two SHAs/week just once a month?**

The Groupage Export Facilitation Scheme (GEFS) and the Risk Based Fish Export Certification (RBEFC) approach both allow issue of a support attestation to cover multiple loads during a limited time frame where the product meets specific criteria, for example certain commodities in retail packaging. For further details, please visit UK Certification Schemes Guidance Page above.

**Q My business buys POAO from EU and third countries for further processing before it is exported to EU via a depot in GB. What do I need to obtain an SHA/SA?**

The SPS requirements that apply to the POAO exported from GB to EU will have to be certified in GB for all the POAO regardless of its origin. The GB exporter should advise you as to what support statements are required, if any, for GB exports that include NI POAO.

If you imported POAO that is incorporated into POAO moving to GB, additional information may be required to allow completion of the SHA in NI and the final EHC in GB. This may be provided to your business in the form of an incoming certificate to you from the country of origin. This will depend on the commodity being certified.

**Q Do I have to pay for an SHA?**

Businesses will have to pay for SHAs provided by a private Official Veterinarian (OV).

**Q Can I apply for a SHA retrospectively if I discover one is needed after the product moved to GB?**

No, SHAs cannot be issued retrospectively.

**Q How quickly will my application be processed?**

Exporters must apply a minimum of 2 days in advance of dispatch of the consignment and supply all the relevant information as soon as possible. You must arrange for the Certifying officer to inspect and verify the consignment before dispatch.

**Q What is the inspection process for preparing an SHA?**

This varies depending on whether you are using a scheme such as GEFS (Groupage Export Facilitation Scheme) or requesting an SHA per consignment. Please consult the guidance documentation for the relevant scheme, as appropriate, read the notes for guidance specific to your commodity, and contact your certifying officer to discuss the requirements for inspection of your establishment, food management systems documentation and product.

**Q What happens if the final weight of the product is only available at the time of loading?**

You are required to make the application 2 days in advance on the DAERA SHA On Line system, and provide as much information as possible relevant to the consignment at this stage. However, it is possible to provide further and final details, for example, the weight, or batch numbers of the product, prior to final loading and issue of the SHA. Any delay in provision of this information will result in a delay in issue of the SHA.

**Q Is there a legal requirement for the SHA to accompany the consignment? May it be sent electronically?**

If agreed with the certifying officer in GB, a copy may be transmitted electronically.

**Q How often do pre- movement inspections need to happen to obtain an attestation?**

This will depend on which certification scheme is being used. It will range from per consignment to every 30 days or on a risk-based frequency. Please refer to the scheme that is appropriate for your business.

**Q Who is responsible for ensuring that the necessary paperwork accompanies the consignment?**

It is the responsibility of the exporter to make storage depot operators and hauliers aware of the need for this additional documentation, where it is required. It is also the responsibility of the exporter to arrange to obtain an SHA. If this process is contracted to a third party, then that third party must be in a position to supply all the relevant production and traceability information required by the certifying officer.

Further information on provision of SHAs is available at SHA Online - Apply for a Support Health Attestation. <https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/landing-pages/exporting-food-products-animal-origin-and-animal-by-products-gb>

**Q If I move product to GB for further processing and return it to NI on a daily basis, can I get one SHA to cover such moves for a week/month or do I need one for each load?**

You can use one SHA to cover such moves for a week/month only if the product is fish. Products for further processing do not qualify for GEFS, and an SHA cannot be issued to cover more than one production batch/ day’s production, so in most cases one will be required per consignment.

**Q I am not sure what my GB customer will do with the product I ship from NI. Do I need to apply for an SHA just in case?**

Processors should try to establish, as far as is reasonably possible, what the final destination of their product will be, after arrival in GB. Where this cannot be established, and there is a reasonable chance that the product may be exported to EU/NI later, then an application for an SHA can be made. However, we would urge all NI exporters to monitor this.

**Q If POAO in a cold store in NI were sold to a trader located outside NI, who applies for the attestation to accompany the POAO from NI to GB?**

It is the responsibility of the owner of the POAO, in this case the trader, to apply for the SHA. However, the producer of the POAO will be required to provide all the necessary SPS information to the trader. If this is not available, an attestation cannot be provided.

Where the POAO is eligible for either RBFEC (Risk Based Fish Export Certification) or GEFS (Group Export Facilitation Scheme) then only the Food Business Operator (FBO) of the establishment of manufacture or origin can apply for the support attestation (SA). The SA is issued only to that Food Business Operator.

**Composite products**

**Q How do I know if the product I manufacture is a composite product?**

Please consult your enforcement authority re "composite products" definitions and requirements or check out the information on the FSA website ​​

You will find more Information on which composite products require an export health certificate to enter NI here:

[Moving composite products into Northern Ireland | Food Standards Agency](https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/moving-composite-products-into-northern-ireland)

**Q What is needed to move composite products from NI to GB?**

Additional documentation is not needed to move these products from NI to GB, unless they are intended to be onward shipped to EU/NI.