

COIs for Imports of Organic Products into Great Britain after BREXIT

Abbreviations		
AWB	Air Waybill	Official air transport document
B/L	Bill of Lading	Official maritime transport document
CMR	Convention Relative au Contrat de Transport International de Marchandises par Route	Official road transport document
COI	Certificate of Inspection	Previously called "TC = Transaction Certificate"
ETD	Estimated Time of Departure	With regard to COI applications, meaning the day when the goods are going to leave the <u>country of export</u>
ETA	Estimated Time of Arrival	
TRACES	Trade Control and Expert System	Official traceability system for organic imports into the EU (as well as the whole European Economic Area (EEA), Switzerland (CH) and Northern Ireland(NI))
GB-COI	Meaning the official COI that is mandatory for organic imports into Great Britain (<u>not</u> including Northern Ireland) from non-EU countries	

1. Background

The United Kingdom has left the European Union. Negotiations are partly still ongoing. The following summarizes the information that has been made available to CERES GmbH so far. **Please make sure to always check the latest updates on the official UK government website:**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/importing-and-exporting-organic-food>

2. Trade of Organic products between the UK and EU (+ EEA and CH)

- ✓ New rules apply from 1 January 2021
- ✓ Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) recognises organic products from EU member countries, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein as equivalent until 31 December 2023. Vice-versa, the EU also recognises organic products from Great Britain as equivalent until 31 December 2023.
- ✓ Until further notice, imports from the EU, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland to Great Britain can be done without a GB-COI.

3. Imports from non-EU countries (other than Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein), Certificates of Inspection

- ✓ New rules apply from 1 January 2021
- ✓ The UK has recognized certain third countries and territories as well as a number of control bodies and control authorities as “equivalent” for organic imports into Great Britain. For details, please check: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/organic-registers-lists-of-third-countries-or-territories-control-bodies-and-control-authorities>
- ✓ Since 1 January 2021, Great Britain (GB) does no longer participate in the TRACES system. **GB Certificates of Inspection (GB-COIs) have to be requested for organic imports from non-EU countries into GB.**
Northern Ireland, by contrast, still participates in the TRACES system and organic imports into Northern Ireland still need the official EU-COI, issued via TRACES NT.

When filling in a **GB-COI application**, please be particularly careful to **insert all information fully and correctly, seeing as we cannot rely on an electronic system** to complete any missing details. Make sure to always include the importer’s EORI number, the full name, address and code of the responsible customs office in GB (point of entry) as well as the complete and correct CN code.

- ✓ **GB-COIs (just like EU-COIs) must be issued BEFORE the goods leave the country of export.**

This means that:

- Once the shipment has departed it is generally no longer possible to issue a GB-COI for this shipment.
It is the responsibility of the exporter to make sure that the shipment does not leave the country of export before the GB-COI is issued.
- The exporter must **apply for the GB-COI as early as possible with enough time for CERES to check the documents and rule out any doubts before the shipment.**
Please take into account our usual handling times for COI-applications and, in case an application cannot be submitted with sufficient time in advance, also consider using the EXPRESS service option that we offer for national sales as well as international shipments by vessel or train (NOT applicable for international air- and land freight; generates additional costs, see our price list).

For international shipments, the application should be sent at least 6 – 10 working days prior to the shipment. (“Working days” do not include weekends and national holidays.)

Please **carefully check our** [General guidance for COI / TC applications](#) (available on our website under Documents > COI/TC) for a summary of the most important aspects regarding COI / TC applications (all types) as well as an overview of handling times and service options.

This is crucial to avoid unnecessary delays and misunderstandings.

- In case the official waybill (B/L, CMR or AWB) and commercial invoice are issued only after the vessel has departed, **we also accept draft versions of the waybill (or booking confirmations) and proforma invoices for COI issuance.**

In case it is actually impossible to provide a (draft) waybill (B/L, CMR or AWB) and/or (proforma) invoice in time for the application, we will accept the application without this document.

In case there is no (draft) waybill (B/L, CMR or AWB) at the time of issuance, the COI will, of course, not include any shipment details (boxes 14,15 and 17 for container number, seal number and means of transport will remain empty). GB-COIs that do not include shipment details are mostly accepted without any problems by Port Health Authorities (PHA), as long as the waybill (B/L, CMR or AWB) is clearly connectable to the COI. Sometimes PHA may require an additional confirmation by email directly from the issuing control body.

Please keep in mind that for GB-COIs there is no electronic system and therefore **later updates of shipping details in the COI are not possible.**

- We request the exporter to send us the **final version of the B/L and the commercial invoice as soon as these documents are available.**

This needs to be an automatic process without the need for CERES to send reminders. **If we do not receive the relevant documents even after sending a reminder, we may stop issuing new COIs.**

In case of **changes between application / proforma / draft and original (final) version** of invoice or waybill (B/L, CMR or AWB), **it is the responsibility of the ex-porter to actively inform us about this when sending the final documents.**

- Please make sure to **include the correct ETD as well as the transport mode (BL / AWB / CMR) in the subject line** of your email when sending in the application.

(Remember that ETD with regard of COI applications means the estimated **date when the product leaves the country of export.**)

In case of shipments to GB by vessel or train, please also mention the applicable service option (**EXPRESS** or **STANDARD**).

A correct and complete subject line is crucial to make sure that your application is correctly prioritized and issued in time. Missing details may lead to delays and confusions and thus cause inconveniences for all sides. For this reason, we are asking for your kind support to enable a smooth COI issuance.

See detailed instructions and in our [General guidance for COI / TC applications](#) (available on our website under Documents > COI/TC).

- ✓ Since end of September 2021, it is no longer mandatory to provide an original on paper. **The PDF version of the GB-COI is sufficient for all customs clearance procedures on the condition that this PDF version is emailed by the issuing control body (in this case CERES) directly to the GB importer** (or representative). (For more details see website of Porth Health: <https://www.porthhealth.uk/import-guidance/organics/>).

For this reason, CERES usually does not send out paper originals anymore, seeing as this saves time and costs for all sides.

- ✓ **GB-COIs (same as EU-COIs) shall be issued "by the (...) control body of the operator carrying out the last operation for the purposes of preparation"**. Please check our Brief Info on TRACES NT and EU-COIs (3-2-8-1_EN_TRACES_Inf) for a more detailed explanation of this rule.

Following the same logic, the UK defines the **country of export** as "the country where the product has been subject to the **last operation for the purpose of preparation** (...)".

Please also note that **packing and labeling cannot be considered as processing** operations. (They are preparation operations.)

Consequently, an operator that only (re-)packs and/or (re-)labels a product (without performing any actual processing or agricultural production) cannot appear as processor or producer in a GB-COI, only as exporter.

We are obligated to mention the actual processor or agricultural producer of the product in box 5 of GB-COIs.

Further definitions regarding GB-COIs can be found in the explanatory notes from the DEFRA (included in this Brief Information down below).

4. Official GB-COI layout, notes and definitions:

CERTIFICATE OF INSPECTION FOR IMPORT OF PRODUCTS FROM ORGANIC PRODUCTION INTO GREAT BRITAIN														
1. Issuing control body or authority (name, address and code):		2. Council Regulation (EC) No 843/2007, as it has effect in Great Britain: - Article 33(2) ☐ or - Article 33(3) ☐ Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007, as it has effect in the European Union: - Article 33(2) ☐ or - Article 33(3) ☒												
3. Serial number of the certificate of inspection:		4. Exporter (name and address):												
5. Producer or processor of the product (name & address):		6. Control body or control authority (name, address and code):												
7. Country of origin:		8. Country of export:												
9. Country of clearance/Point of entry:		10. Country of destination: Great Britain												
11. Importer (name, address and EORI number):		12. First consignee in Great Britain (name and address):												
13. Description of products <table border="1" style="width:100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width:15%;">CN code</th> <th style="width:35%;">Trade name</th> <th style="width:15%;">Number of packages</th> <th style="width:15%;">Lot number</th> <th style="width:20%;">Net weight</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>					CN code	Trade name	Number of packages	Lot number	Net weight					
CN code	Trade name	Number of packages	Lot number	Net weight										
14. Container number		15. Seal number		16. Total gross weight										
17. Means of transport before point of entry into Great Britain: Mode Identification International transport document														

18. Declaration of control authority or control body issuing the certificate referred to in box 1

This is to certify that this certificate has been issued on the basis of the checks required under Article 13(4) or Regulation (EC) No 1235/2008 and that the products designated above have been obtained in accordance with rules of production and inspection of the organic production method which are considered equivalent in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 834/2007.

Date

Name and signature of authorised person
body

Stamp of issuing authority or

19. Customs warehousing ☐

Inward processing ☐

Name and address of operator:

Control body or control authority (name, address and code):

Customs Declaration Reference Number for customs warehousing or inward processing:

20. Verification of the consignment and endorsement by Great Britain's competent authority.

Authority:

Date:

Name and signature of authorised person

Stamp

21. Declaration of the first consignee.

This is to certify that the reception of the products has been carried out in accordance with Article 34 of Regulation (EC) No 889/2008.

Name of the company:

Date:

Name and signature of the authorised person



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

GB Certificate of Inspection (Col) explanatory notes

Box 1: Name, address and code of control body or authority in the third country. This body also completes boxes 4 to 8.

Box 2: This box indicates which provisions of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 are relevant for the issue and use of this COI:

Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007, as it has effect in Great Britain:

- Article 33(2) – confirms that the products are imported under Annex III, equivalent third countries.
- Article 33(3) – confirms that the products are certified as equivalent to **GB Regulations** in the third country and are certified by a control body listed on Annex IV.

Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007, as it has effect in the European Union:

- Article 33(2) – confirms that the products are imported under annex III, EU's equivalent third countries. **(Do not check this box for imports to GB).**
- Article 33(3) – confirms that the products are certified as equivalent to the **EU Regulations** in the third country and are certified by a control body listed on Annex IV. **(Do not check this box for imports to GB after 31 December 2022).**

The boxes that should be checked must be the 1st or 2nd and which box is checked will depend on whether the import is from a third country listed on Annex III or is certified by a control body appearing on Annex IV as approved to operate in the third country the products originate from. The 4th box should not be checked after 31 December 2022 as imports recognised for import under Annex IV must be recognised to an equivalent GB standard.

Box 3: Serial number of the certificate, this will need to be assigned by the third country control body until an electronic system can automatically assign this.

In order to ensure a logical serial number is given and it is unique to the consignment, we propose the following format "COI.[CB code].nnnnn". As the CB code is unique, there will be no possible duplication by other CBs.

Box 4: Name and address of the operator exporting the products from the country mentioned in box 8. The exporter is: the operator performing the last operation for the purposes of preparation and sealing products in appropriate packaging or containers.

Box 5: Operator(s) who produced or processed the products in the third country mentioned in box 7.

Box 6: Control body(ies) or authority(ies) for monitoring compliance of the production or processing of the products with the rules of organic production in the country mentioned in box 7.

Box 7: Country of origin means the country where the product has been produced/ grown or processed.

Box 8: Country of export means the country where the product has been subject to the last operation for the purposes of preparation and sealed in appropriate packaging or containers.

Box 9: Country of clearance means Great Britain. Point of entry is the point of release for free circulation.

Box 10: Country of destination would be Great Britain.

Box 11: Name, address and the Economic Operators Registration and Identification number (EORI) of the importer.

Box 12: Name and address of the first consignee of the consignment in the United Kingdom. The first consignee shall mean the natural or legal person where the consignment is delivered and where it will be handled for further preparation and/or marketing. The first consignee shall also complete box 21.

Box 13: Description of products that includes Combined Nomenclature (CN) codes for the products concerned (8-digit level where possible), trade name, number of packages (number of boxes, cartons, bags, buckets, etc.), lot number and net weight.

Box 14: Optional

Box 15: Optional

Box 16: Total gross weight expressed in appropriate units (Kg of net mass, Litre, etc.)

Box 17: Means of transport arriving at the point of entry.
Mode of transport: aeroplane, vessel, railways, road vehicle, other.

Identification of the means of transport:

- ☐ for aeroplane, indicate the flight number,
- ☐ for vessels, indicate the ship name(s),
- ☐ for railways, indicate the train identity and wagon number,
- ☐ for road transportation, indicate the registration number plate with trailer number plate, if appropriate.

In the case of ferry, indicate vessel and road vehicle with the identification of the road vehicle and of the scheduled ferry.

Box 18: Declaration of control authority or control body issuing the certificate. The signature and the stamp must be in a different colour to that of the printing.

Box 19: Shall be filled in by the competent authority or by the importer.

Box 20: Shall be completed by the competent authority, if appropriate, before the preparation or splitting operation in the circumstances and at the verification of the consignment.

Box 21: Shall be filled in by the first consignee at the reception of the products, when the checks have been completed.