

2026 food audit programme: non-EU countries targeted for controls

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EU presents food audit programme for 2026

European Commission: [Health and food audits and analysis programme – 2026](#)

Update

The European Commission conducts regular “controls” (audits and remote assessments) of European Union (EU) Member States and non-EU countries to ensure the highest standards of food safety and regulatory compliance of goods put on the EU market.

This AGRINFO report highlights audits planned for 2026 in non-EU countries, including Albania, Argentina, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Cambodia, China, Costa Rica, India, Kenya, Madagascar, Montenegro, Moldova, Panama, Peru, Senegal, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Tunisia, Türkiye, Uganda, Ukraine, and Viet Nam. Remote assessments will take place for fishery products in Cabo Verde, Malaysia, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Senegal, and Solomon Islands. A few additional countries will be also added to the list but they are not yet confirmed.

Impacted products

All

What is changing?

The European Commission performs “controls” (audits and remote assessments) of EU Member States and non-EU countries to ensure they have official control systems in place to guarantee that food put on the EU market meets EU rules for food safety, and for plant and animal health. Of the 159 controls planned for 2026 in the agri-food chain, 49% are planned in EU Member States, and 51% are planned in non-EU countries wishing to export, or already exporting, to the EU. In proportion, controls in non-EU countries are increasing. This reflects the policy orientation announced in the [EU Vision for Agriculture and Food 2025–2029](#).

Audits

The following audits of non-EU countries are planned, each focusing on specific sectors/topics.

- Albania – pre-accession to the EU: import controls; food safety; pesticides and contaminants; plant health.
- Argentina – poultry meat; wild hares.
- Bangladesh – pesticides in food of plant origin; residues of pharmacologically active substances, pesticides and contaminants in animals and animal products.
- Bosnia and Herzegovina – pre-accession to the EU: residues of pharmacologically active substances, pesticides, and contaminants in animals and animal products; public health control system (beef, sheep, and goats).
- Brazil – beef.
- Cambodia – fishery products; residues of pharmacologically active substances, pesticides, and contaminants in animals and animal products.
- China – animal health (poultry meat); plant health; food safety (eggs, fish oil); food contact materials with (or containing) recycled plastic.
- Costa Rica – plant health.
- India – food contact materials with (or containing) recycled plastic.
- Kenya – pesticides in food of plant origin.
- Madagascar – pesticides in food of plant origin.
- Montenegro – pre-accession to the EU: plant health; import controls.
- Moldova – pre-accession to the EU: agri-food chain; food safety; animal health (pork), public health (pork heat-treated meat products); residues of pharmacologically active substances, pesticides, and contaminants in animals and animal products.
- Panama – fishery products, including fish oil; residues of pharmacologically active substances, pesticides, and contaminants in animals and animal products.
- Peru – plant health.
- Senegal – certification of seed.
- Serbia – microbial safety of food of non-animal origin.
- Sri Lanka – pesticides in food of plant origin.
- Thailand – animal health (poultry and eggs); plant health; pesticides in food of plant origin.
- Tunisia – residues of pharmacologically active substances, pesticides, and contaminants in animals and animal products.
- Türkiye – pre-accession to the EU: control mycotoxins in pistachios and dried figs; food contact materials with (or containing) recycled plastic; fishery products; food irradiation facilities; residues of pharmacologically active substances, pesticides, and contaminants in animals and animal products.
- Uganda – plant health.

- Ukraine – animal health (pork); public health (porcine heat-treated meat products).
- Viet Nam – live bivalve molluscs.

Further audits are planned, but the countries to be audited have not yet been decided in the areas of: plant health (1); residues of pharmacologically active substances – food of animal origin (1); animal health (2) in the frame of accession negotiations; food safety (1) in the frame of accession negotiations.

How are audits conducted?

Firstly, a pre-audit questionnaire is sent to the competent authorities and the responses are analysed. The audit team then meets with national, regional, and local authorities, and carries out visits to relevant sites to see how the competent authority controls are implemented. An audit typically involves two auditors. The Commission issues a report after each audit, which may include recommendations to the competent authority to address any systemic or significant non-compliances that have been identified.

Remote assessments

The following remote assessments of non-EU countries are planned.

On fishery products:

- Cabo Verde
- Malaysia
- Nigeria
- Papua New Guinea
- Senegal
- Solomon Islands.

In addition, about 30 remote assessments are planned on **residues of pharmacologically active substances – food of animal origin**. All residue control plans of non-EU countries must be checked at least once every 5 years, and a new 5-year cycle starts in 2026.

How are remote assessments conducted?

Desk-based audits, called “remote assessments”, are based on comprehensive questionnaires. These remote assessments check that official controls carried out by the competent authorities of listed non-EU countries are appropriate to verify that exported animals and foods comply with EU requirements. They also check whether the authorities reliably certify compliance with those requirements when signing official certificates.

Lists of control activities to be conducted in 2026 are set out in the following Annexes to the [Health and food audits and analysis programme 2026](#):

- Annex 3: Controls in candidate countries/potential candidates planned in 2026
- Annex 4: Controls in third countries planned in 2026.

Audits for countries that are not within the scope of the [AGRINFO programme](#) are not covered in this report.

Why?

Control systems in EU Member States, and in non-EU countries, are continually monitored to guarantee effective enforcement of EU requirements on food safety, and on plant and animal health.

Timeline

This programme highlights the audits and remote assessments planned for 2026.

What are the major implications for exporting countries?

A negative outcome of an audit or remote assessment performed by the European Commission in a non-EU country may result in the imposition of trade-restrictive measures. This is to protect European consumers and/or animal and plant health, as well as to encourage the authorities and food business operators concerned to quickly take action and implement any necessary corrective measures. Examples of trade-restrictive measures include increased checks at EU borders and, as a last resort, suspension of imports. The Commission reviews such measures periodically.

Recommended Actions

EU audits are greatly facilitated when exporting countries provide comprehensive responses to questionnaires (including for remote assessments), and prepare for an audit with detailed and organised records. This involves documenting all procedures, controls, and corrective actions that are taken to align with EU requirements. EU auditors require accessible evidence of system improvements, training logs, health and safety checks, and traceability systems. Conducting regular internal reviews and updating compliance strategies helps to demonstrate ongoing adherence to EU requirements.

Background

Article 120 of the [Official Controls Regulation \(2017/625\)](#) allows the European Commission to perform audits and remote assessments in non-EU countries. These play a central role in the decision on whether or not to include a non-EU country in the list of countries permitted to export animals and animal products to the EU. The audits and assessments also allow the EU to check the systems in place in non-EU countries that are exporting food, feed, animals, or plants to the EU. The Commission targets countries according to the level of risk associated with their exports and takes into account the volume of exports, non-compliant consignments identified at EU points of entry, and higher levels of risk associated with particular types of food, feed, animals, or plants.

These audits are also opportunities to foster international cooperation, share best practice, and encourage continuous improvement in global food safety standards.

Resources

Online resources on food safety from the European Commission:

- Videos on audit preparation, reporting and monitoring, and how recommendations are addressed – various languages available
- Audit reports
- Audit map

Regulation (EU) [2017/625](#) on official controls and other official activities performed to ensure the application of food and feed law, rules on animal health and welfare, plant health and plant protection products (Official Controls Regulation)

Regulation (EC) No [178/2002](#) laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety (General Food Law)

Regulation (EU) [2016/429](#) on transmissible animal diseases and amending and repealing certain acts in the area of animal health (Animal Health Law)

Regulation (EU) [2016/2031](#) on protective measures against pests of plants (Plant Health Law)

Sources

European Commission: [Health and food audits and analysis programme – 2026](#)

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