

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

DISCOVER TRACES

**QUESTIONS ARISING FROM
AGRINFO WEBINARS (SEPTEMBER–
OCTOBER 2025)**

November 2025



**Funded by
the European Union**



DISCLAIMER

This publication has been developed by the AGRINFO programme, implemented by COLEAD and funded by the European Union. This publication has been produced with the financial support of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of COLEAD and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.

This publication is part of a collection of COLEAD resources, which consists of online and offline educational and technical tools and materials. All of these tools and methods are the result of more than 20 years of experience and have been developed progressively through COLEAD's technical assistance programmes, notably in the framework of development cooperation between the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and the EU.

The use of particular designations of countries or territories does not imply any judgement on the part of COLEAD concerning the legal status of these countries or territories, their authorities and institutions or the delimitation of their frontiers.

The content of this publication is provided in a "currently available" form. COLEAD makes no warranty, direct or implied, as to the accuracy, completeness, reliability or suitability of the information at a later date. COLEAD reserves the right to change the content of this publication at any time without notice. The content may contain errors, omissions or inaccuracies, and COLEAD cannot guarantee the accuracy or completeness of the content.

COLEAD cannot guarantee that the content of this publication will always be current or suitable for any particular purpose. Any use of the content is at the user's own risk and the user is solely responsible for the interpretation and use of the information provided.

COLEAD accepts no liability for any loss or damage of any kind arising from the use of, or inability to use, the content of this publication, including but not limited to direct, indirect, special, incidental or consequential damages, loss of profits, loss of data, loss of opportunity, loss of reputation, or any other economic or commercial loss.

This publication may contain hyperlinks. Links to non-COLEAD sites/platforms are provided solely for the information of COLEAD staff, its partner-beneficiaries, its funders and the general public. COLEAD cannot and does not guarantee the authenticity of information on the Internet. Links to non-COLEAD sites/platforms do not imply any official endorsement of, or responsibility for, the opinions, ideas, data or products presented on those sites, or any guarantee as to the validity of the information provided.

Unless otherwise stated, all material contained in this publication is the intellectual property of COLEAD and is protected by copyright or similar rights. As this content is compiled solely for educational and/or technical purposes, the publication may contain copyrighted material, the further use of which is not always specifically authorised by the copyright owner.

Mention of specific company or product names (whether or not indicated as registered) does not imply any intention to infringe proprietary rights and should not be construed as an endorsement or recommendation by COLEAD.

This publication is publicly available and may be freely used provided that the source is credited and/or the publication remains hosted on one of COLEAD's platforms. However, it is strictly forbidden for any third party to state or imply publicly that COLEAD is participating in, or has sponsored, approved or endorsed the manner or purpose of the use or reproduction of the information presented in this publication, without prior written consent from COLEAD. The use of the contents of this publication by any third party does not imply any affiliation and/or partnership with COLEAD.

Similarly, the use of any COLEAD trademark, official mark, official emblem or logo, or any other means of promotion or advertising, is strictly prohibited without the prior written consent of COLEAD. For more information, please contact COLEAD at network@colead.link.



A. Access and login

Q1: How do I access the TRACES platform?

1. If you are accessing TRACES for the first time, please go through the [Getting started](#) on-boarding process
2. Create an [EU Login account](#), which provides secure access to all European Union (EU) online services
3. Connect to TRACES using same email address/password, followed by a two-factor authentication step (usually via the [EU Login Mobile App on your phone](#))
4. Your account will be validated (see Q4)

Q2: What should I do if I cannot re-access TRACES?

If you have lost your password, go to the [EU Login](#) page and click on “Lost your password?” to update it.

If you can no longer complete the second authentication step linked to your phone number (for example if you have changed, or lost, or re-set your phone), you should:

1. Go to the [EU Login](#) page and enter your password
2. Click on the cog wheel/gear top right next to your name and select “My account”
3. Click on “STOP/Delete all my devices and the e-ID (PANIC)”
4. You will see “Warning! This operation cannot be undone” – do not panic, it will be okay
5. Click on the delete button
6. Login again using your email address and password (no further verification should be needed)
7. You can now complete the procedure to activate the EU Login Mobile App or any other authentication method

Q3: When I try to connect to EU Login or TRACES, I get an error message (“trusted platform” or “security key” error) – what do I do?

Ensure your authentication method is correctly registered in EU Login by logging in on a previously used device and, if needed, removing and re-adding your security key on the trusted platform.

There are two EU Login options:

- Choose the EU Login Mobile App if you prefer convenience and offline options
- Choose Trusted Platform/Security Key/Passkeys if you want hardware-based security directly on your device.

Such messages may also indicate that your device or browser is not fully compatible with the latest EU Login security requirements. To resolve this issue:

- Check your device and browser meet system requirements.
- **Update your system and browser** – make sure your operating system and browser are fully updated (recommended browsers: Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Microsoft Edge). But – avoid Safari on mobile, and avoid outdated versions of all browsers. Clear your browser’s cache, and ensure that JavaScript and cookies are enabled before trying again.
- **Check your device settings:** if you are using a work network or VPN, try connecting via a personal or mobile network to exclude institutional firewall restrictions.



- See also the following EU resources:
 - [How can I add a Security Key or a Trusted Platform?](#)
 - [Strengthen your digital security](#)

If the issue persists: take a **screenshot** of the error message and send it, along with a short description of your issue (browser, device type, network used), to sante-traces@ec.europa.eu.

B. User management and roles

Q4: What is the difference between “authority”, “operator”, and “administrator”?

Authority

To use TRACES, every user must be validated by a higher-level authority:

- The European Commission validates the first National Contact Point (NCP) from the central competent authorities; afterwards, this NCP can add any further national users
- Central competent authorities validate regional/local/other national authorities
- National authorities (central or regional) validate operators.

Once validated, competent authorities have access to functions and data relevant to their specific competence (e.g. animal or plant products), including statistical data and the results of official controls at EU border control posts.

Operator

Operators have access to TRACES modules for creating/submitting official export certificates and control results linked to their consignments through the Common Health Entry Document (CHED). Operators can undertake several activities under a single account, once approved by the national competent authority.

Administrator

Each authority or operator must have at least one administrator who:

- manages user access rights (there is no limit on the number of users the authority or operator can manage)
- supervises activities
- ensures correct and compliant use of the system.

The administrator is normally the first person in an authority (NCP) to create an account in TRACES.

It is possible to have more than one administrator. When an administrator is about to leave, a plan should be made to transfer the role to a colleague. If there is no administrator available, please contact TRACES support via sante-traces@ec.europa.eu.

Any national organisational structure is transferable into TRACES so that the certification process using paper certificates will remain the same when certificates are issued in TRACES.

Q5: Should customs agencies (traders) register on TRACES?

Traders do not issue/validate sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) certificates, but they may need to access TRACES data for operational processes. The same validation process applies as for other users. Staff of traders can be validated by operators for which they are working, even if they are not part of the company.



Q6: Is further guidance available on navigating the TRACES platform?

Further guidance on how to create and submit documents, and how to list a new approved establishment, is available via [TRACES NT Documentation](#).

Q7: Who can answer specific questions about users in my country?

You may have questions specific to your country, such as:

- Which authorities in my country can issue veterinary health certificates?
- Can the Ministry of Agriculture in my country have access to statistical data and control results?
- There has been a change of ministry responsibilities in my country – how can the ministry name be changed?
- Can beekeepers in my country have access to TRACES?

For such country-specific questions, please contact the TRACES Support Team via sante-traces@ec.europa.eu.

C. TRACES scope and services

Q8: What is TRACES and how does it link to RASSF?

TRACES is the European Commission's online platform for animal and plant health certification, required for the import of animals, animal products, food and feed of non-animal origin, and plants into the EU; trade between the EU Member States; and EU exports of animals and certain plant and animal products.

TRACES interoperates with:

- **RASFF** (Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed) – TRACES contributes data to RASFF notifications when non-compliances are detected at border control posts, improving the coordination of official responses within the EU
- **International Plant Protection Convention** (IPPC) ePhyto solution – TRACES is connected to the IPPC's hub for exchanging electronic phytosanitary certificates (ePhytos), enabling the secure digital transfer of plant health certificates between the EU and partner countries, and also between non-EU countries.

Q9: Are other online platforms such as ELAN or EUDR linked to TRACES?

Other EU systems work alongside TRACES, but are managed separately. To use them, you must apply for access to each platform individually, using the same EU Login account you already created for TRACES.

- **ELAN** – A European Commission platform for agricultural trade documents not directly related to SPS certification (e.g. quality or origin documents).
- **EUDR** (EU Deforestation Regulation) – A separate system managing compliance with deforestation-free supply chains.
- **ADIS** (Animal Disease Information System) – A system used by the EU for monitoring and managing animal disease outbreaks.

Q10: Should competent authorities report action on RASSF-reported non-compliances through the TRACES –RASSF platform?

Feedback must be submitted through the national **Single Contact Point (SCP)** for RASFF (check your country's official government food safety portal). The SCP forwards the information to the European Commission's RASFF contact point, which enters it into the system. Alternatively, if a competent authority is expected to



provide regular feedback, they may request the national SCP to register them for access to the [RASFF Window](#). This allows them to provide feedback directly to the European Commission.

The International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) is a global food safety alert network coordinated by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO); it complements RASFF at international level.

D. Management of establishment listings

This section covers registering, editing, and validation for sprouts, food of animal origin (including fisheries), animal by-products, and germinal products

Q11: Who is responsible for updating establishment listings?

A non-EU competent authority must nominate a **National Contact Point (NCP)**. The NCP is responsible for entering and managing establishment information in TRACES, and is the official liaison with the European Commission on all matters related to establishment listings (proposing new establishments, removing those that no longer meet EU requirements, and maintaining accurate data). Only authorised NCPs may submit or amend establishment data. The Commission approves the first NCP user, and further users may be added internally.

Q12: What is the difference between the approval date and publication date?

The approval date marks when an establishment or list is officially authorised by the non-EU competent authority. The publication date refers to the subsequent technical step in TRACES when this information becomes visible in the system.

A certificate can be signed by the non-EU competent authority only once the establishment approval is published. These lists are available in TRACES on the [Establishment Lists](#) webpage. Also see [Non-EU countries authorised establishments](#).

E. EU import certificates

Q13: What legal texts are relevant to completing the certificates for food of animal origin?

The relevant Regulations are:

- Commission Implementing Regulation [2020/2235](#) – rules on animal health/official certificates
- Regulation [2017/625](#) (Official Controls Regulation) – establishing TRACES as one of the components of the Information Management System for Official Controls (IMSOC)
- Commission Implementing Regulation [2019/1715](#) – on the implementation of IMSOC, including TRACES and RASFF.



Q14: Can non-EU countries still issue paper certificates for goods entering the EU via a border control post?

Paper certificates are still accepted, and can also be generated through TRACES.

TRACES also allows certificates to be issued electronically, instead of paper certificates. The certificate templates depend on the type of product and the relevant EU legislation. TRACES is continuously updated with the most recent certificate templates in line with the latest EU regulatory requirements, ensuring that competent authorities always have access to the correct versions.

Q15: Where products contain more than one animal product (e.g. fish oil in gelatin capsules), will more than one certificate be required?

Yes, it is possible that a single product can require multiple certificates, depending on the specific product and related EU requirements.

Q16: What rules apply to samples sent to European laboratories by researchers (who are not establishments)?

EU Member State competent authorities may exempt research and diagnostic samples from official controls at border control posts, provided these samples comply with certain conditions (Delegated Regulation [2019/2122](#), Art. 4 and following). These samples are considered as animal by-products (animal products not intended for human consumption). In general, the export of such samples will require the following:

- An import permit issued by the competent authority in the Member State
- A commercial document accompanying the consignment, which must specify:
 - description of the material and the animal species of origin
 - category of material
 - quantity of material
 - place of origin and date of dispatch
 - name and address of the consignor
 - name and address of the consignee and/or user(Regulation 142/2011/EU, Annex VI, Chapter I, Section 1).
- No border control post veterinary check is required.

The above procedure may also apply to honey samples. However, when a honey sample is sent from a [listed establishment](#), it can be sent with the standard EU model for honey certificates: “HON” (ticking box I.28, and box I.20 for “Human consumption”). For more information see the AGRINFO Guide: [Exporting Honey to the European Union](#).

Q17: Can the certificate be translated into the language of the destination country?

Certificates issued in TRACES can be generated and printed in any of the 24 official EU languages, as well as several additional non-EU languages. However, by default, TRACES automatically pre-selects the language that must be understood by the border control post (BCP) where the consignment will enter the EU. This ensures that officials at the BCP can review the certificate without language barriers.



Q18: Can Seychelles issue a sanitary certificate for fish on behalf of Mauritius to the EU?

The competent authorities of the non-EU country of dispatch may certify consignments of products of animal origin that only require public health attestation, coming from another non-EU country, if the competent authorities in the country of dispatch can ensure compliance of the consignments with EU requirements.

Q19: Can certificates be changed once created?

In TRACES, a certificate can be replaced under specific conditions, and the process is strictly regulated. Competent authorities may issue a replacement certificate only in cases of administrative errors in the original certificate, or if a certificate has been lost or damaged. The replacement certificate must:

- clearly reference the unique code and issue date of the original
- have a new certificate number
- state that it replaces the initial certificate.

A replacement certificate signed electronically will be immediately available at EU borders, without the need to send a paper version by courier.

Q20: Can TRACES certificates be electronically signed?

On request, the European Commission can provide any national competent authority with an electronic seal that enables the digital signing of certificates issued in TRACES. This function includes a remote identity verification (ID check) of the legal representative of the issuing authority. No paper document is required, which simplifies customs clearance procedures at EU borders.

Q21: Is an ePhytosanitary certificate issued in a Generic ePhyto National System (GeNS) equivalent to an ePhytosanitary certificate issued in TRACES?

Yes. Thanks to the interoperability between TRACES and the IPPC ePhyto Hub, an ePhyto issued in a GeNS is available in TRACES for the issuance of the corresponding entry document (CHED-PP), in line with the EU import control regulations.

Q22: Can operators access the results of documentary and physical checks at border control posts (BCP)?

TRACES provides access to CHEDs and the outcome of official controls in real time. Non-EU country authorities can view all the CHEDs in which their veterinary, food safety, or plant health authorities are mentioned. Operators have access only to the entry documents of their own consignments, in particular the outcomes of official controls. The system clearly shows the three types of official controls performed: documentary checks, identity checks, and physical checks.

With the appropriate access to TRACES, you can view rejected CHEDs, including the reasons for refusal, and take corrective action where relevant. This enables authorities to monitor the outcomes of EU border controls on exported consignments efficiently.

TRACES provides automated notifications when consignments are on hold, sampled for analysis, or rejected. Users can manage their notification preferences in their profile settings. This faster and more direct notification process improves on the traditional flow, enabling quicker responses to non-compliance.



European Commission Resources

- [EU Login user portal](#)
- [How does TRACES work?](#)
- [Getting started](#) (TRACES NT Documentation)
- [TRACES](#)
- [TRACES NT Documentation](#)
- Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) Academy Training Management System, e-learning courses:
[TRACES and non-EU countries](#)
- User manuals for [COI](#) (Certificates of Inspection). For any request of change on COI, please contact AGRI-E-COI-ORGANIC@ec.europa.eu



GROWING PEOPLE