# Guidance for requesting a transaction certificate

This Guidance Document (procedure) establishes the procedures and requirement for operations certified by Quality Certification Services (QCS) to request transaction certificates (TCs), including domestic TCs, Certificates of Inspection (COIs), NOP Import Certificates, and other country specific import certificates. The type of transaction certificate needed for a consignment is based on the organic standard the product is certified to, the country of origin and the consignment[[1]](#footnote-2) destination. Certified operations must maintain records of all activities relating to sales, movement and volume of organic products sold.

The certified operation must request a Transaction Certificate (TC) for certified organic products using the appropriate format:

* **NOP Import Certificate Request Form:** All organic products certified to USDA-NOP or COR that will be exported from a foreign country into the United States.
* **Electronic request through Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES):** All organic exports to the European Union.
* **Transaction Certificate Request Form:** All other requests.

Submit requests to QCS via e-mail to your assigned representative, or to [imports@qcsinfo.org](mailto:imports@qcsinfo.org).

## General Requirements

1. The request form must be completed by a person who is on file with QCS as an authorized representative of the certified operation.
2. The product must be listed on the operation’s Product Verification Form as certified to the appropriate organic standard or relevant equivalence arrangement.
3. All required documentation must be submitted with the request.
4. The operation may not have open noncompliances (including EU Temporary Suspension) indicating the product’s organic integrity is at risk.
5. QCS must verify the validity of the transaction certificate request and organic status of the product before issuing the transaction certificate.

## Required Documentation

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Organic Standard** | **Origin of consignment** | **Destination of Consignment** | **Type of TC** | **Required documentation** (submit in .pdf format) | | | | | | | |
| **Commercial invoice** | **Packing List** | **Transport records** | **Producer list & certificate[[2]](#footnote-3)** | **Product label** | **Transaction certificate** | **Purchase/ receiving records** | **Production records** |
| COR | Outside of US | United States | NOP Import Certificate |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| USDA-NOP | Outside of US | United States | NOP Import Certificate |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Outside of US | Transaction Certificate | X | X | X | X |  |  |  |  |
| USDA-NOP | United States | United States | Domestic TC | X | X | X | X |  |  |  |  |
| Korea | NAQS | X | X | X | X | X |  |  |  |
| EU | EU Certificate of Inspection | X | X | X | X |  |  |  |  |
| UK | UK Certificate of Inspection | X | X | X | X |  |  |  |  |
| Japan | TM-11 | X | X | X |  |  |  |  |  |
| Taiwan |
| EU | Outside of EU | EU | EU Certificate of Inspection | X | X | X | X |  | X | X | X |
| Switzerland | Swiss Certificate of Inspection | X | X | X | X |  | X | X | X |
| Outside of EU | Transaction Certificate | X | X | X | X |  | X | X | X |
| UK | Outside of UK | UK | UK Certificate of Inspection | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |

## Definition of required documentation

**Commercial invoice for the consignment.** Copy of the purchase order, invoice (may be draft invoice), or equivalent for the consignment that identifies the QCS certified operation (seller/exporter), the buyer or importer (first consignee), and the final recipient if different from the buyer/importer.

**Packing list.** Record of all organic products in the consignment, their organic status and the total volume/quantity of each product.

**Transport records.** Bill of Lading (BOL) or Airway Bill (AWB), etc. for the outgoing consignment that identifies the QCS certified operation that conducted the final preparation of the product, the shipper or exporter, and the buyer or importer (first consignee).

**Producer list and certificate.** Only for processed products when the exporter is not the processor. Include a list of all operations that processed the products in the consignment and their Control Bodies.

**Product labels** must comply with the organic standard the product is certified to and any additional requirements in the destination country if traded under an equivalence arrangement.

**Transaction certificate (TC).** Documentation issued by the control body of the supplier.

**Purchase and receiving records.** Documentation that the QCS certified operation purchased and received the products in the shipment from the organic supplier listed on the organic certificate or Transaction Certificate.

**Production records.** Production records demonstrating the production or handling of the entire volume of all organic product lots included in the request:

* Harvest records: crops whose final preparation (packaging and labeling for export) occurs on farm. Please include a list of farms/farmers involved and the weight of their product if it is the case.
* Packaging records: products that are packaged into retail containers but not processed by the final handler.
* Batch records: products processed by the final handler.
* Receiving records: products that are not processed or packaged into retail containers by the final handler.

## Additional Requirements

### NOP Import Certificate for exports to the United States

1. The import certificate must be requested before shipment.
2. Only one product may be listed on the NOP Import Certificate.

### EU Certificate of Inspection (COI) for exports to Europe

1. All the operators involved in this transaction must have a valid profile on TRACES, including the producer, exporter, and importer. Profile validation must be completed by the organic control body (CB) of each operator.
2. The COI must be requested and issued before shipment.
3. The COI can only be issued to the operation that has conducted the last preparation of the product and the sealing and labeling of the containers in the consignment. If the exporter requesting the COI was not the producer or processor of the organic product, they must attest that they conducted the last preparation and submit a clearly readable photograph of the label applied to the container in the consignment showing the **lot number linked to the COI request** and all other required marks.
4. Products subject to EU Additional Controls must also include the *Traceability report* with details and documentation of the financial and physical traceability of products through the supply chain.

### UK Certificate of Inspection (COI)

1. The COI must be requested and issued before shipment.

### Korea NAQS

1. For exports by an operation with multiple addresses: submit the organic certificate showing the name and address of last facility to process/package the product.
2. For exports by a Private Label Operation: submit the organic certificate of the private label organization AND the last facility to process/produce the product.

## Processing Time to Issuance

QCS is committed to promptly processing requests for compliant and verified transaction certificates within the turnaround time requested by the client upon receipt of: 1) a complete and accurate request, 2) all supporting documentation and 3) information that is reliable and consistent. Please note that all turnaround times are in ***working days***. The COI will be issued within 2 to 4 business hours after the client approves a draft.

Operators must submit any pending documentation (final invoices, final BOL, final AWB) within a maximum period of 5 days, sending the final document, and referring to the temporary document sent.

1. Batch of goods, which is sent from one exporter to one consignee. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Applies to processed products when the exporter requesting the COI is not the processor. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)