Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Groupage Export Facilitation Scheme (GEFS)

Guidance for the use of the Groupage Export Facilitation Scheme to facilitate groupage exports from Great Britain to the EU (transit or direct export) and movement of products to or through Northern Ireland

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ET193 (Rev. 01/22)

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ET193 (Rev. 01/22)

Contents

Background

1. This guidance sets out a scheme for using time-limited support attestations to facilitate certification of **European Union (EU)** export health certification for **groupage** exports[1] to, or for transit through, the EU[2] (including as required under the Northern Ireland Protocol for the movement of products from Great Britain to Northern Ireland where EHCs are required).

2. To use this scheme exporters must be members of the “Groupage Export Facilitation Scheme”.

3. The scheme is restricted to support exports or movements from Great Britain using relevant supporting attestations from suppliers in the UK. The GEFS scheme does not remove or change the requirement for each consignment of products exported to be accompanied by its own EHC but is designed to facilitate the process for certifying officers to obtain relevant information.

4. The 30-day support attestations described in this document can only be used to facilitate provision of information to certifying officers for **specific categories of products produced by a stable network of known suppliers, as detailed below:**.

5. 30-day support attestations may be used for composite products, meat products, meat preparations and dairy products for human consumption as well as processed pet food. They may also be used for other products of animal origin such as honey, frogs’ legs, snails, live bivalve molluscs, fish/fishery products, eggs and egg products where they are for human consumption .

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[1] A groupage export is an export where:

a) multiple product lines of the same commodity type (e.g., composite products) are grouped under a single export health certificate to export as a single consignment.

b) multiple quantities of the same commodity type (e.g., fish products) potentially from several sources are grouped into the same container. It may be possible to export these as a single consignment covered by a single health certificate or as a mixed load (containing several consignments).

c) multiple different commodity types (e.g., dairy products and meat products) are grouped in a single container.

[2] A transit occurs where the products enter and exit the EU, without the products being received by the EU for entry onto the EU market. A direct export occurs where the products enter the EU and are received by the EU for entry onto the EU market

6. 30-day support attestations may not be used for fresh meat, raw milk, products of animal origin (POAO) not for human consumption (except processed pet food), live animals, germinal products or any other products not included in point 5.

7. Products must be fully packaged for sale to the final consumer at the point the support attestation is issued. This includes products that are subsequently:
    - re-packaged directly at the point of sale to the final consumer[3]
    - unpackaged in a food-service environment and subject to cutting or reheating at the point of sale to the final consumer

    Bulk products exported for further processing are not in scope

8. The guidance is intended to be used by:
    - Exporters
    - Certifying Officers (COs) including Official Veterinarians (OVs)
    - Suppliers
    - Veterinarians and Food Competent Certifying Officers (FCCOs) certifying support attestations
    - Certification Support Officers (CSOs) working under the direction of COs

9. This guidance document should be read as a whole. All sections apply to the implementation and operation of the scheme. This guidance must be read alongside the other legislation, and guidance (EU and UK) related to Export Heath Certification, including (but not restricted to) the notes for guidance for the relevant EHCs.

10. This guidance does not specify or set out any financial charges that arise from the operation of the scheme.

11. The scheme described within this document will be reviewed regularly. In the event of closure of the GEFS, six months' notice will be given to members. Exporters, suppliers, and certifiers using this system must ensure that they apply the rules set out in the latest published version of this guidance.

12. This approach has been approved by the Chief Veterinary Officers within the UK, Defra, and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.

[3] An example of products re-packaged directly at the point of sale could be a composite (e.g., pork pie) exported whole that is re-packaged at a deli counter for sale to the final customer.

13. The GEFS is intended to provide COs and competent authorities with a sufficient level of confidence in the accuracy of the support attestations used within this guidance, and their operation under this guidance.

14. GEFS is administered by Defra in Great Britain.

Guidance for exporting companies

15. All exporters wishing to use this scheme must be listed as members of the Groupage Export Facilitation Scheme (GEFS). To apply for listing under the GEFS, exporters must fully complete the application form shown in Annex III and available on GOV.UK and email it to GEFS@defra.gov.uk.All exporters using the scheme must source all animal products included in their exports from a documented and stable supplier list.[4] The supplier list must include:
    - the registered address for each supplier
    - the address from which the supplies are procured or delivered (if different from the registered address)
    - details of the products supplied from each supplier
    - the length of time that each supplier has been providing the commodity or commodities to the exporter
    - confirmation the products are fully packaged for the final consumer

16. If an exporter wishes to use support attestations to move products from their manufacturing site to a depot within GB from which they are then exported, they can treat their manufacturing sites as suppliers. Where this occurs the supplier list should include:
    - the registered address for each supplier/supplying site
    - the address from which the supplies are procured or delivered (if different from the registered address)
    - details of the supplies from each supplier/supplying site
    - confirmation the products are fully packaged for the final consumer

17. If there are a small number of supplying sites providing a limited number of products for export it may be simpler for the Certifying Officer (CO) to obtain the information

[4] This supplier list is to be created by the exporter and must be a complete list of all suppliers from which animal products are obtained for export to or transit via the EU or Northern Ireland, who will make use of support attestations.

they need without the use of GEFS 30-day support attestations and businesses should discuss this with their CO.

18. This list must be available on request by the CO, CSO or registered vet. In Great Britain a registered vet is defined as a member (or fellow) of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS). In Northern Ireland, for the purpose and implementation of this scheme only, a registered vet is defined as a vet who is a member (or fellow) of the RCVS and who is appointed by DAERA to issue support attestations under this scheme.

19. COs must have evidence that the exporter is a member of the scheme before a support attestation can be issued. Evidence would include an official acceptance letter (typically sent via email) or reference to the Members list.

20. All suppliers using support attestations will be subject to regular veterinary inspections and, at the initial inspection, will be required to provide evidence documenting a stable supply chain for the preceding six months (see Annex II). Suppliers will be required to gather relevant evidence to present to the inspecting vet, FCCO or CSO working under OV direction at these inspections. support attestations cannot be signed until this evidence has been provided and reviewed, and suppliers will need to plan ahead to agree what information will be required to satisfy the CO.

21. Inspections must be conducted in person by the inspecting vet, FCCO or CSO working under OV direction every three months as a minimum, with intervening visits able to be conducted virtually if the certifier judges it to be in line with the RCVS Code of Conduct with regards to remote certification.

22. If using a support attestation to support certification of exports, exporters must ensure that their suppliers:
    - Have discussed in advance with the CO what supporting information to include in the support attestation (with reference to the relevant EU EHCs)
    - Arrange inspection and facilitate access by registered veterinarians, FCCO or CSO under the direction of the CO to the supplying establishment(s) and facilitate their access to relevant records and inspection locations.
    - Ensure that support attestations are signed on behalf of the supplying company by an individual with sufficient knowledge on the plants and processes and with the responsibility and authority (obtained in writing from company director level or equivalent) to sign on behalf of the supplying company
    - Ensure that suppliers inform both the exporting company and the registered vet, FCCO or CSO who signed the support attestation without any delay of any changes which affect the validity of the declarations provided in the support attestation.

23. Products that have been frozen or are undergoing processing for longer than six months (e.g., cheese undergoing maturation) can still be covered by a support attestation provided that the relevant health and traceability details (as required by the Export Health Certificate) for any products supplied to the exporter in the six-month period is suitably stable (see Annex II).

24. Where there is evidence of exporter non-compliance with the GEFS, Defra reserve the right to remove an exporter's approval to operate under this scheme. Removal from the GEFS would prevent exporters certifying consignments for export under this guidance. Exporters that have been removed from the GEFS may be reinstated on the basis of evidence providing supporting reassurances they and their suppliers will comply with the scheme.

25. Upon readmission of the exporter in to GEFS, any suppliers that fail to meet the conditions of the scheme will be subject to an initial veterinary or FCCO inspection scrutinising at least the preceding 6 months (from the date of readmission) to demonstrate (to the satisfaction of the registered vet or FCCO) that their supply chain is sufficiently stable and documented before support attestations could be used (see guidance in Annex II on new suppliers).

26. Any serious or repeated failures to abide by the conditions of this scheme are likely to result in permanent exclusion of the exporter from this scheme. Where an exporter is removed from the scheme, the exporter can request that the decision to be removed is reconsidered.

27. Members are subject to an audit process, which will ensure members are complying with the scheme with regards to the stability of the supply chain and the products that are included on GEFS support attestations. The audit process focusses on documentary evidence from members rather than on-site checks. A separate process already exists for investigating reports of possible misconduct, which remains separate to the audit process.

28. Two members are selected for audit per month, chosen by random sampling.

29. Sampled members are requested to complete a checklist listing the last 50 EHCs issued using GEFS support attestations, with questions relating to the commodities covered, the volume of products and the suppliers they were obtained from. From that checklist EHCs are randomly sampled and the following paperwork relating to the sampled support attestations is requested:

    - support attestation
    - EHCs relating to support attestation

- Any other documents which demonstrate supply chain stability and health and traceability standards

The paperwork provided must demonstrate the member is meeting the requirements of the scheme. Failure to comply with the audit process may result in expulsion from the scheme.

30. Where major errors are found as part of the audit, further investigation will occur, which may result in suspension.

31. Where appropriate, recommendations will be made from audit findings to improve the scheme and communications will be carried out to all members. A record of audit findings and outcomes will be shared in a yearly summary of the scheme with the RCVS.

Use of support attestations

Overview

32. GEFS members may use time limited (30 calendar days) support attestations to provide information from supplier/manufacturing establishments, who are currently approved under EU regulations (Regulation (EU) 853/2004)[5], to COs at the exporting premises.

33. The approval or registration number (as required) of the establishments of origin/manufacturer of the POAO will be part of the support attestation.

34. The support attestation wording from the template in Annex II must be used but additional information may be included as needed.

35. This document may only be used to facilitate EU export certification of groupage consignments of specific categories of products (including as required under the Northern Ireland Protocol for GB to NI movements of products).

36. These categories are products of animal origin (POAO) for human consumption as listed below and processed pet food that complies with the definition of **fully**

[5] Or, in the case of Composite Products, registered in line with Regulation EC 852/2004 and in the case of pet food registered in line with Regulation EC 1069/2009

packaged for the final consumer[6] (or purchased in the case of pet food). They are products that are produced using only animal content from a **traceable network of known suppliers**.

Included: Composite products[7], meat products[8], meat preparations[9], processed milk/matured or processed dairy products, fish/fisheries products, eggs/egg products, processed pet food, honey, frogs' legs, snails, and live bivalve molluscs.

Excluded: Live animals, germinal products, fresh meat, raw milk, animal by-products (including raw pet food but excluding processed pet food). Some of these products may be included within a groupage consignment, but they must have been separately certified without the use of a 30 day support attestation.

37. Support attestations must be fully completed and signed by a suitable representative of the supplying company (see below) and a registered vet, FCCO or a CSO acting under the direction of the CO.

38. Support attestations can only be used to provide health and traceability information which is stable and known/verifiable by the person certifying the support attestation. GEFS support attestations cannot include future batch specific information which is not known or cannot be verified when the support attestation is signed. This information cannot be certified by veterinarians in the GEFS support attestation but can be declared by the supplier to aid traceability.

39. GEFS attestations cannot be used to declare notifiable disease freedom statements in advance but can be used to provide relevant traceability information (where the supply chain is known and stable). Identifying either establishments or geographic regions where products originate from will assist the export OV in obtaining the necessary disease clearance information at the point of export

40. Export Health Certificates (EHCs) are consignment specific documents so where EHCs require consignment specific details to be provided, these must be provided

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[6] See point 7

[7] See GOV.UK guidance: Export or move composite food products . Note that not all composite products require Export Health Certification.

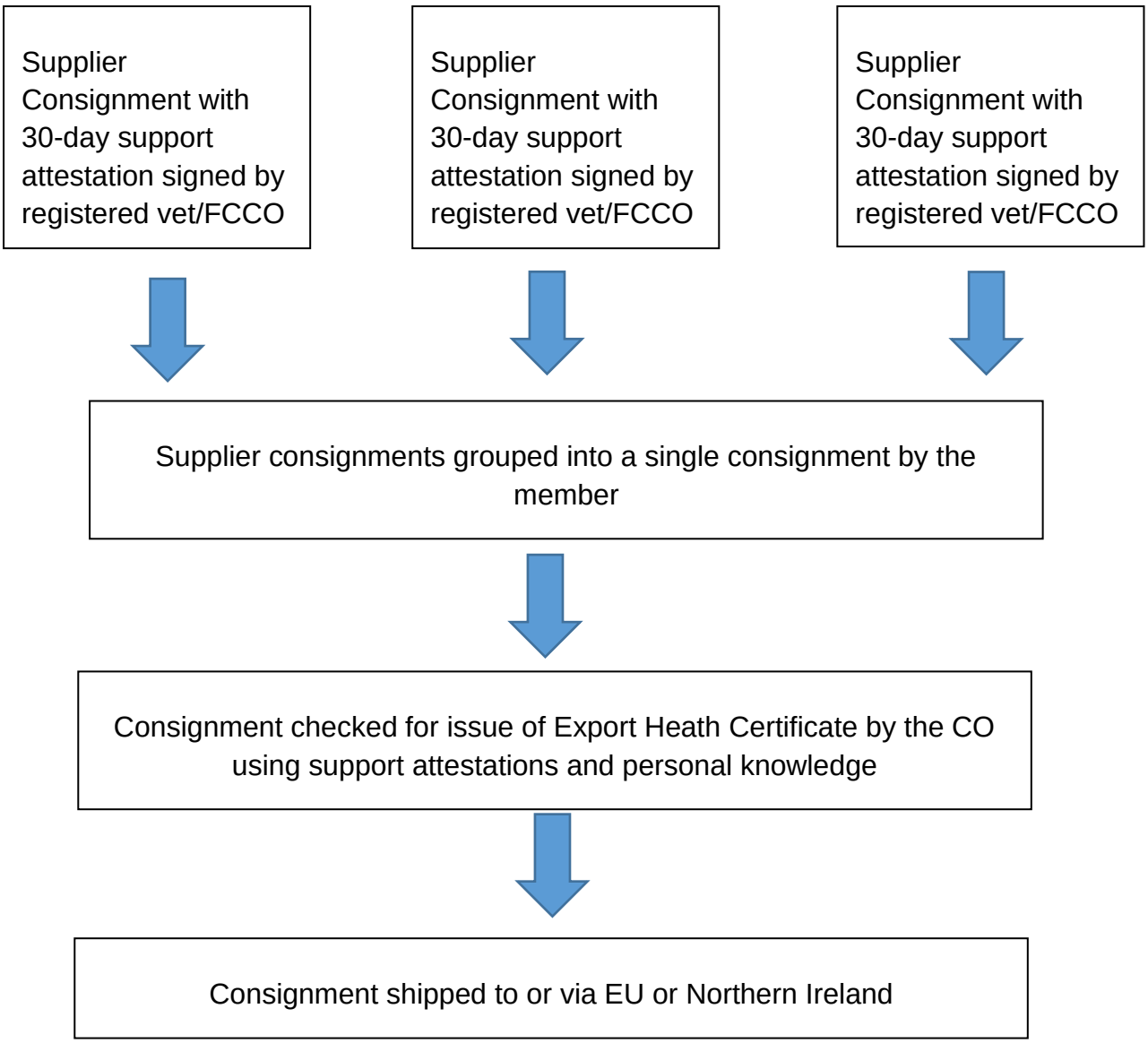
[8] 'Meat products' means processed products resulting from the processing of meat or from the further processing of such processed products, so that the cut surface shows that the product no longer has the characteristics of fresh meat. This includes products such as a gelatine which are meat products but require a different EU export certificate to the "meat product" certificate.

[9] 'Meat preparations' means fresh meat (including meat that has been reduced to fragments) which has had foodstuffs, seasonings or additives added to it or which has undergone processes insufficient to modify the internal muscle fibre structure of the meat and thus to eliminate the characteristics of fresh meat.

to the certifying officer separately to GEFS support attestations (e.g., via commercial systems which are accessible by the certifying officer).

41. Support attestations can provide relevant health and traceability information for a range of different products from the same supplier including products which will ultimately be exported on different EHCs. Health and traceability requirements differ for different EHCs and vets/suppliers/exporters need to discuss in advance to agree what supporting information to include in the support attestation (by referring to the relevant EU EHCs).

High level overview



42. A more detailed representation of scheme's operation is provided in Annex I.

Support Attestation Guidance for Certifying Officers

43. It is envisaged that most groupage exports will require the Certifying Officer (CO) to be an Official Veterinarian (OV) however in some cases (dependent on the specific commodities in the consignment) a groupage export may be certified by a Food Competent Certifying Officer (FCCO).

44. In GB a CO acting under this guidance must be suitably qualified and approved by APHA. Where CSOs are utilised they also must be trained according to APHA requirements and must act under the supervision of CO. The role of the CSO is not to exceed that outlined by APHA in relevant guidance notes.[10]

45. COs must confirm that the exporters are current GEFS members before using support attestations. This can be done by checking the list of current members that is available publicly on APHA's Vet Gateway.

46. Support attestations used according to this guidance may be used to confirm aspects such as:

- The species and origin of animal products
- The methods used for processing of animal products
- Confirmation of the approval or registration status of the supplying food establishment(s)

47. COs must refer to the relevant EU Export Health Certificate and associated Notes for Guidance to determine the information they require to be included in the support attestation (Part IB) and enable them to complete the relevant export certificate(s). This varies by commodity and is subject to review by the EU.

48. In all cases, a documentary inspection check must be made by the CO for each export consignment covered by the EHC. This includes use of:

a. support attestations

b. Personal knowledge of the consignment where appropriate

c. Audit history where appropriate

[10] http://apha.defra.gov.uk/external-operations-admin/library/documents/exports/ET175.pdf

49. Where the supporting information contained within the support attestation covers a range of products from a supplier, the exporter will need to provide the elements specific to the consignment certified to the CO at the point the EHC is completed.

50. COs should undertake sufficient physical checks as to ensure the accuracy and validity of the support attestations provided under this guidance. These checks may be supported by CSO evidence made under the direction of the CO. These checks may include (but are not limited to):

    - Physical checks of the products
    - Physical inspection of the manufacturing site/processing
    - Both random and risk-based spot checks to verify the authenticity of the information provided.

51. Where evidence suggests that an upstream supplier of POAO to the exporter presents an increased risk, inspections of the exported products must be more frequent. Examples of increased risk may include:

    - Evidence of minor inaccuracies within the attestations
    - Supply of products considered to pose an increased risk to animal or human health

52. Evidence to support the audit process for each supplier must be retained by the CO.

53. Where the CO identifies minor irregularities or noncompliance within a support attestation this should be reported to the exporter and to the vet/FCCO/CSO (as applicable) who issued the relevant support attestation.

    - An example of a minor irregularities or noncompliance is a minor documentary errors, such as transposition errors

54. Where the CO identifies serious irregularities or noncompliance within a supplier attestation this should be reported to:

    - GEFS@defra.gov.uk

55. Examples of serious irregularities may include:

    - Evidence of deliberate deception or falsification of supporting documentation
    - Supplier's failure to immediately inform of any changes that affect the validity of a support attestation

56. Where there is evidence of a minor irregularity or noncompliance, the relevant inaccurate supporting attestations must not be accepted until they have been corrected.

57. Where there is evidence of serious or repeated minor irregularities within an attestation, attestations from that supplier must no longer be accepted as reliable evidence by the CO for the issuance of an EHC. Future attestations provided by that supplier may only be accepted for certification purposes where the CO is fully satisfied that they are accurate, which may involve conducting physical inspection of the supplier premises or through the provision of relevant traceability information specific to that consignment by another veterinarian.

Support Attestation Guidance for Suppliers / Registered Vets

58. The support attestation must be signed by an individual who has both sufficient knowledge of and responsibility for the relevant parts of the production, transport, and storage processes and who has been authorised in writing by the Managing Director (or equivalent) of the supplying company to sign on behalf of the supplying company.

59. A registered vet[11] must also sign the relevant section of the support attestation following a review of the appropriate evidence. When doing so, they will do so in their private capacity as a registered vet and not in their official capacity as an Official Veterinarian (if they also have this authorisation). Official Veterinary stamps should not be used on support attestations as these are private documents rather than official documents. This also helps avoid any risk of confusion between support attestations and export health certificates.

60. A Food Competent Certifying Officer may sign the support attestation in certain circumstances. FCCOs are authorised by the Competent Authority. In line with the RCVS Code of Practice they are able to provide attestations to a certifying Official Veterinarian on certain matters. An FCCO may only sign a GEFS support attestation in keeping with the conditions outlined in the RCVS Code - e.g., for products the FCCO could certify the export of in their own right such as fishery products. For further information on what supporting evidence FCCOs can provide see RCVS guidance here (21.A.5).

[11] In Great Britain this is defined as a member or fellow of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS)

In Northern Ireland, for the purpose and implementation of this scheme only, a registered vet is defined as a vet who is a member or fellow of the RCVS and who is appointed by DAERA to issue support attestations under this scheme.

61. A Certification Support Officer (CSO) may sign the relevant section of the support attestation instead of a registered vet but **only when they are acting under the direction of Certifying Officer (e.g., OV or FCCO) certifying the final export**. In this case, the responsibility to decide what evidence must be checked rests with the relevant CO. The CO must first be sufficiently familiar with the establishment being inspected in order to delegate specific administrative checks to the CSO working under their direction. In GB, CSOs must refer to and abide by APHA policy including that they must not carry out functions that require veterinary judgements. CSOs may use their official stamps (if available), to help provide evidence in the form of support attestations or other documentation required to assist the CO in certifying products for export.

62. Suppliers must undergo an initial veterinary inspection, followed by regular inspection each time a new support attestation is required.

63. After the initial inspection, the inspecting registered veterinarian or FCCO is required to conduct in-person visits every three months as a minimum, with other visits able to be conducted virtually if the person issuing the support attestation is able to satisfy either the RCVS Code with regards to remote certification or the guidance of the competent authority as appropriate. In the case of a CSO working under OV direction, the OV is expected to physically visit every three months at minimum, and visits in between can be conducted by the CSO as needed.

64. Suitable forms of evidence which registered veterinarians, FCCOs or CSOs may check before signing support attestations could include:

    - contractual agreements,
    - invoices,
    - HACCP plans/records,
    - Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
    - Traceability records

65. Suppliers should put Standard Operating Procedures in place to define processes and responsibilities required for stable production of the commodity for export, specifying verification of these processes and then the subsequent issuing of support attestations and notification of any relevant changes to COs, inspecting vets or FCCOs and exporters if these occur during the period of validity of the support attestation.

66. Suppliers will be required to gather together relevant evidence to present to the inspecting vet, FCCO or CSO working under OV direction. Support attestations cannot be signed until this evidence has been inspected. Support attestations will

need to include all of the information ultimately required by the Certifying Officer completing the EHC.

67. At the initial inspection suppliers must also be able to demonstrate (to the satisfaction of the registered vet, FCCO or of the CO directing CSO to perform checks that:

    - The relevant health/traceability and processing records for the products included are correct

    - There have been no relevant[12] changes (with exception of changes made specifically to meet new EU-exit dependent requirements or in response to COVID19) within the preceding 30 calendar days

    - There have been no such changes in at least four of the preceding six months.

68. Registered vets, FCCOs, or CSOs must also inspect at least a representative sample of the products included to verify that their description matches that declared by the supplier, that they are fully packaged for the final consumer[13], and that any available identification marking on such products matches that declared in the support attestation.

69. For suppliers with multiple production sites one support attestation can be issued to cover all sites. This is only where production sites are all operated by the same supplier and the inspecting vet, FCCO or CSO working under OV direction signing the support attestation is able to inspect and gather the required information for all sites.

70. Where a CSO is used, clear written instructions (e.g., a checklist) must be provided by the CO to state specifically what checks are required.

71. Copies of evidence used to support the issue of support attestations (electronic or hard copies) and, if used, any checklists completed must be kept by registered vets, FCCOs or CSOs for at least two years and made available on request to COs responsible for certifying export consignments (e.g., through an electronic portal).

72. Support attestations are time limited, commencing immediately after the point of inspection/re-inspection by the registered vet, FCCO or CSO. Support attestations are valid for use from the day of inspection up to and including the expiry date (inspection date + 30 calendar days).

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[12] A relevant change is a change that impacts information to be certified in the Export Health Certificate (e.g., addition of a new supplier of POAO, change to processing/heat treatment of product).

[13] See point 7

73. During this time period the supplier must immediately inform the exporter and the vet or FCCO who signed the support attestation of any changes that affect the validity of the support attestation. In order for this to happen the supplier must have a clear process in place (included within their SOP) to ensure that such notification takes place without delay.

74. A unique reference number must be given to each original support attestation used. This must be given to the support attestation before the support attestation is issued by the registered vet, FCCO, or CSO. Where a support attestation is used by multiple exporters, the exporter may add an additional reference number to the document to align to their own internal information management systems, but they must keep a record of the URN issued at the supplying site.

    Suggested format: unique supplier number/sequential number/unique number for vet, FCCO or CSO signing part II/year e.g.: 15435/0000001/m159607/2021).

75. In the support attestation template in Annex II the following information is optional to include the situation in which a support attestation is issued before the intended exporter(s) is known:

    ‘Company name of exporter’

    - ‘Address and, if available, Approval* / Registration Number* of the establishment(s) to which the consignment will be dispatched (e.g., exporting depots)’

76. A commercial document/manifest is required to accompany (or be electronically linked to) each and every consignment moved to the export depot during the validity of the support attestation. This must be signed/endorsed on behalf of the supplying company with words to the following effect: “The evidence required to facilitate export of the products in this consignment has been provided in support attestation …. [insert unique reference number of relevant support attestation]. No changes have been made that affect the validity of the information provided in this support attestation”.

Conflicts of Interest

77. This guidance does not define or prescribe any contractual arrangements between COs, exporters, suppliers, or those certifying the support attestations. However, reference should be made to the relevant competent authority guidance and professional codes of conduct that define conflicts of interest, to ensure that attestations remain impartial.

    Vets must consider and abide by the principles contained in the RCVS principles of certification relating to conflict of interest including that:

- They must not allow commercial, financial, or other pressures to compromise their impartiality.
- They must not certify where they own, or part own either a business producing a commodity for export or the commodity to be exported or are a salaried employee of the business.

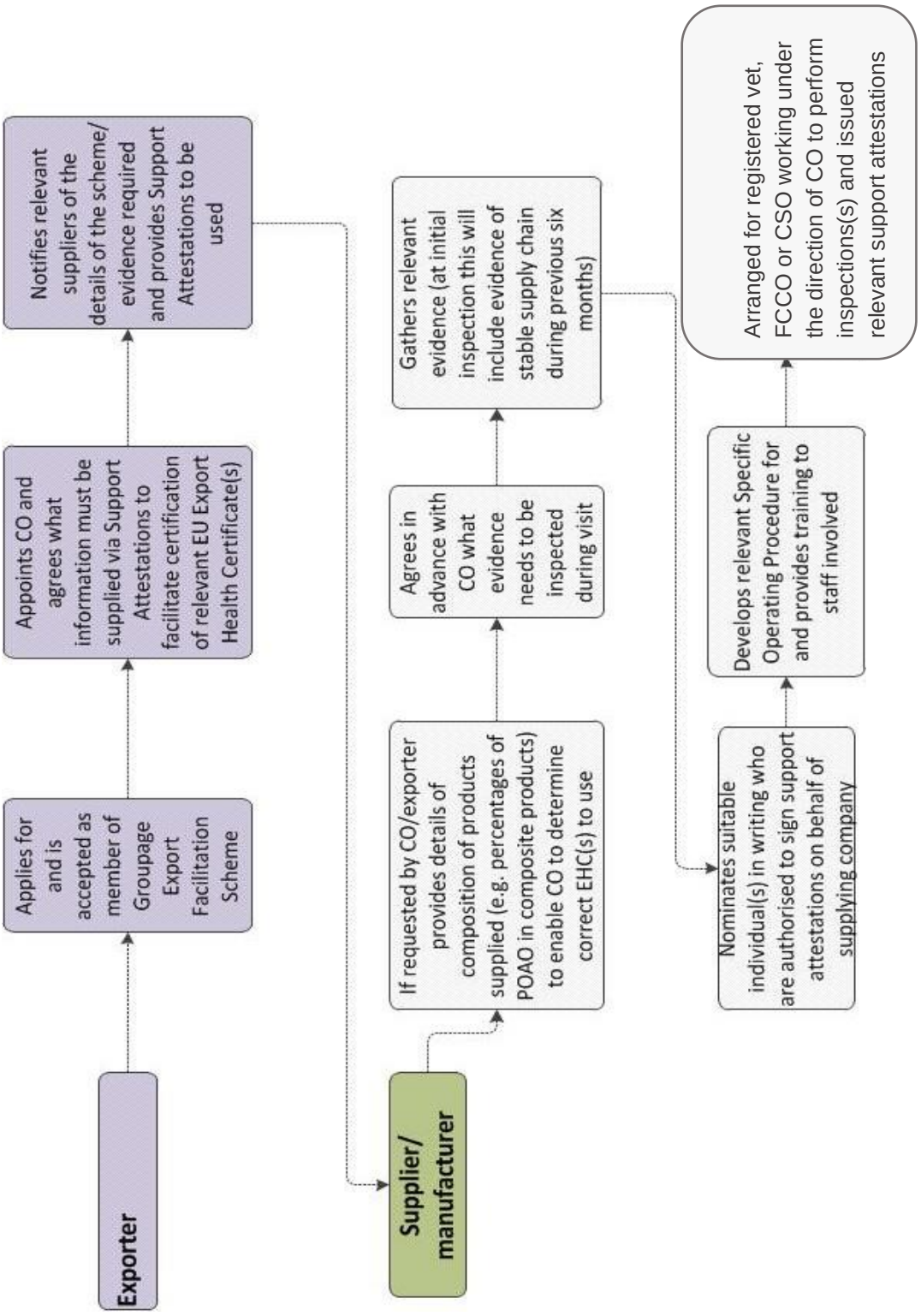
FCCOs should be aware of their obligations under the OIE relating to conflict of interest.

Contact us

Please contact GEFS@defra.gov.uk with any questions.

Annex I: process flow chart

Preparation:



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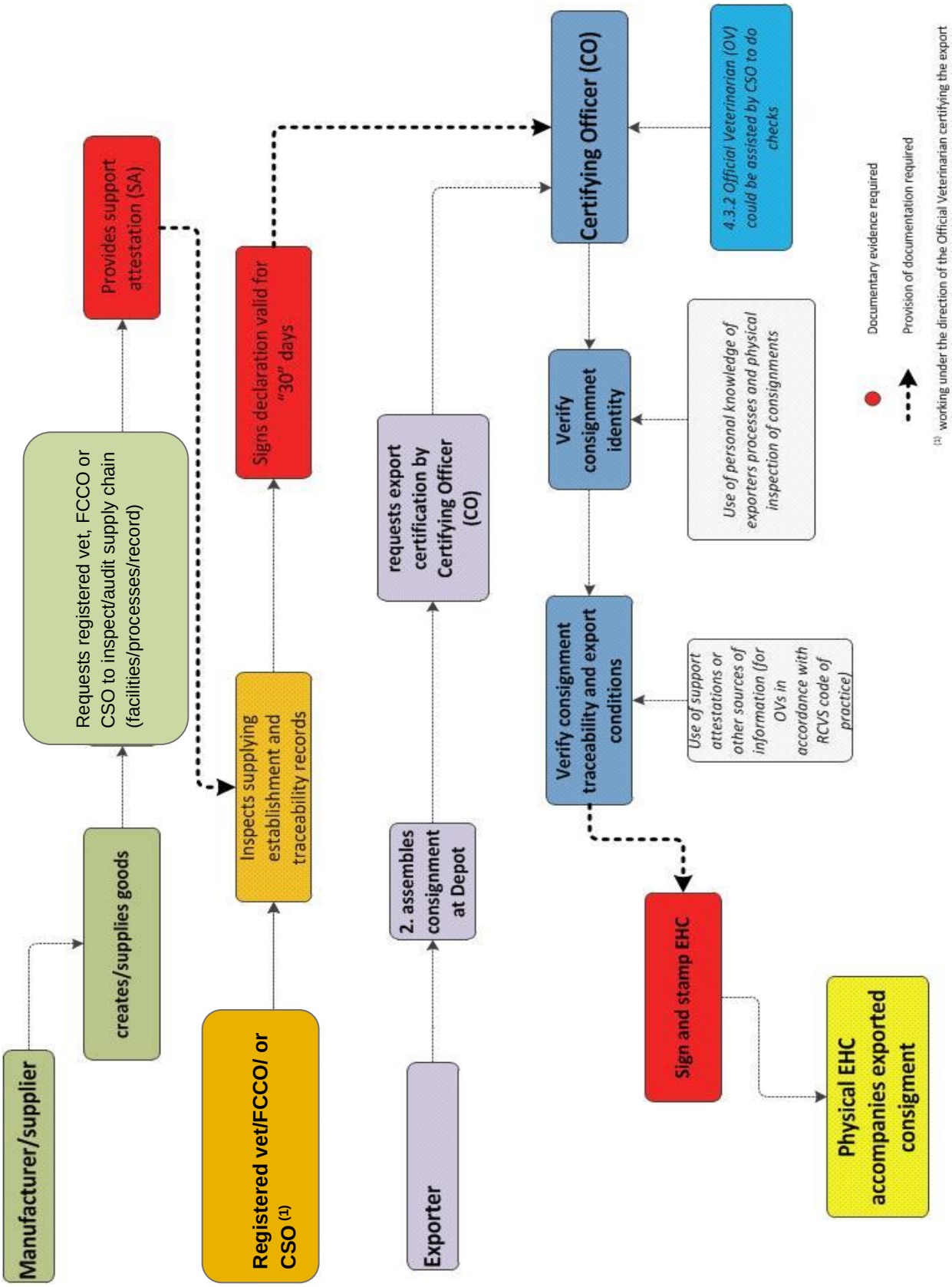

The following annex is a template for the support attestation. All GEFS support attestations must use this text. Additional information may be added as needed.

Annex II: Template support attestation

IMPORTANT NOTE: THIS SUPPORT ATTESTATION IS NOT AN OFFICIAL EXPORT CERTIFICATE. It is to be used solely to support EU export certification of specific product categories in groupage consignments to the EU in accordance with guidance issued by Defra/APHA.

UNIQUE DOCUMENT REFERENCE NUMBER [14] ……

I. Supplier declaration

I …….. (full name), being……..(official position in the company) of …… (name and address of supplying company), have authority and responsibility to sign this declaration on behalf of this supplying company.

[Optional section[15]:

I hereby declare that the details in sections A and B below includes a complete list of the products of animal origin contained within the products to which this support attestation relates supplied to …….. (company name of exporter).]

I confirm that the information within this support attestation is correct and that no changes will be made to affect its validity prior to its date of expiry.

I will ensure that the registered veterinarian* / CSO (Certification Support Officer)* / Food Competent Certifying Officer signing the attestation in section II and the exporter listed above are immediately informed if any changes are made that affect the validity of this document and/or if I leave the employment of the supplying company detailed above. I understand that in such cases this support attestation will immediately become null and void.

I understand that supplying false or misleading declarations that will be relied upon by the exporter in respect of the verifications provided in the relevant export health certificate is an offence and may result in rejection of the exported product and immediate removal of the exporter from the Groupage Export Facilitation Scheme as well as risk of liability for costs incurred.

I will ensure that each consignment of products sent to the export depot that is covered by this support attestation is accompanied by a declaration signed on behalf of the supplying company and stating that “The evidence required to facilitate export of the products in this consignment has been provided in support attestation …. [insert

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[14] A unique reference number must be given to each original support health attestation used. Suggested format: unique supplier number/sequential number/ unique number for vet, FCCO or CSO signing part II /year (e.g.: 15435/0000001/m159607/2019)

[15] See point 74

unique reference number as above]. No changes have been made that affect the validity of the information provided in this support attestation."

A. Details of product(s):

1. Origin and Destination

a) Address and, if available, Approval* / Registration Number* of the establishment(s) from which the consignment will be dispatched (e.g., supplier):

.....
.....

[Optional[16]

b) Address and, if available, Approval / Registration Number* of the establishment(s) to which the consignment will be dispatched (e.g., exporting depots):*

.....
.....]

2. Description of the product(s)

Product specific details of all products to which this support attestation relates (this may be attached as a schedule):

.....
.....

B. Traceability information:

[INSERT REQUIRED INFORMATION RELATING TO ALL PRODUCTS LISTED ABOVE (IN A.2) AS AGREED WITH THE CERTIFYING OFFICER RESPONSIBLE FOR EXPORT CERTIFICATION]

Authorised by

Name:

Signature:

Position:

Date:

[16] See point 74

* delete as necessary

II. Registered veterinarian, Food Competent Certifying Officer or CSO declaration

Either section A (registered vet declaration), section B (FCCO declaration) or section C (CSO declaration) must be completed and signed [17]

A. Registered vet declaration

I, the undersigned registered veterinarian, hereby declare that I have inspected the supplying premise(s) mentioned in "I.A.1.a" above and, having reviewed the relevant supplier's manufacturing and traceability processes including relevant documentary evidence concerning all products listed in "I.A.2", I can confirm that the attestations provided in section I B (health and traceability details) are currently correct.

I confirm that I have seen written confirmation from the managing director (or equivalent) of the supplying company to verify that the signatory of Part I is authorised to sign this document on behalf of the supplying company.

There have been no additions, removals or alterations to the product health and traceability details relevant to part I.B (above) in the preceding 30 calendar days.

[To be competed at the initial inspection only; delete for subsequent inspections:
And:
Either There have been no changes to the product health and traceability details relevant to part I.B (above) in the preceding 6 months*
Or There have been no changes to the product health and traceability details relevant to part I.B (above) in at least 4 of the preceding 6 months[18] and details, including the date of change(s), are described here……*]

Date of inspection: …….
Current Date of Expiry: …… **[30 days from date of inspection above]**

This support attestation is valid only for 30 days from the above date or until I am notified of any changes of the above supplier's declaration (whichever is the sooner). If I am notified of changes that affect the date of expiry above I will notify the Official Veterinarian/FCCO responsible for certifying exports from establishment(s) listed in I.A.1.b.

Signature:

[17] CSOs may only sign and stamp this support attestation if they are working under the direction of the certifying Official Veterinarian at the final exporting depot.

[18] See point 66 of this guidance document

Name:..... **[full name of Veterinary surgeon and RCVS number]**
Veterinary practice stamp[19]: **Address:**

B. Food Competent Certifying Officer Declaration

I, the undersigned Food Competent Certifying Officer, hereby declare that I have inspected the supplying premise(s) mentioned in "I.A.1.a" above and, having reviewed the relevant supplier's manufacturing and traceability processes including relevant documentary evidence concerning all products listed in "I.A.2", I can confirm that the attestations provided in section I B (health and traceability details) are currently correct.

I confirm that I have seen written confirmation from the managing director (or equivalent) of the supplying company to verify that the signatory of Part I is authorised to sign this document on behalf of the supplying company.

There have been no additions, removals or alterations to the product health and traceability details relevant to part I.B (above) in the preceding 30 calendar days.

[To be competed at the initial inspection only; delete for subsequent inspections:
And:
Either There have been no changes to the product health and traceability details relevant to part I.B (above) in the preceding 6 months*
Or There have been no changes to the product health and traceability details relevant to part I.B (above) in at least 4 of the preceding 6 months[20] and details, including the date of change(s), are described here……*]

Date of inspection: …….
Current Date of Expiry: …… **[30 days from date of inspection above]**

This support attestation is valid only for 30 days from the above date or until I am notified of any changes of the above supplier's declaration (whichever is the sooner). If I am notified of changes that affect the date of expiry above I will notify the Official Veterinarian/FCCO responsible for certifying exports from establishment(s) listed in I.A.1.b.

Signature:

Name:..... **[full name of FCCO and authorisation number]**
FCCO stamp[21]: **Address:**

C. CSO declaration

[19] Required to be used on paper copies only (see guidance below)

[20] See point 66 of this guidance document

[21] Required to be used on paper copies only (see guidance below)

I, the undersigned CSO have checked documentary evidence and performed physical inspections at the supplying premise(s) mentioned in "I.A.1.a" above under the direction of […….. (name of the certifying officer(s) at the final exporting depot)] to provide assurance to this certifying officer that attestations provided in section I B (traceability details) are currently correct.

I confirm that I have seen written confirmation from the managing director (or equivalent) of the supplying company to verify that the signatory of Part I is authorised to sign this document on behalf of the supplying company.

I have performed checks under the direction of this certifying officer, who, based on these checks, has specifically authorised me to make the following statements:
There have been no additions, removals or alterations to the product traceability details relevant to part I.B (above) in the preceding 30 calendar days.

[[*To be competed at the initial inspection only; delete for subsequent inspections:*
And:
Either There have been no changes to the product traceability details relevant to part I.B (above) in the preceding 6 months*
Or There have been no changes to the product traceability details relevant to part I.B (above) in at least 4 of the preceding 6 months*[22] *and details, including the date of change(s), are described here……*]

Date of inspection: …….
Current Date of Expiry: …… **[30 days from date of inspection above]**

This support attestation is valid only for 30 days from the above date or until I am notified of any changes of the above supplier's declaration (whichever is the sooner). If I am notified of changes that affect the date of expiry above I will notify the Certifying Officer responsible for certifying exports from establishment(s) listed in I.A.1.b.

Signature:

Name:.....

[insert full name of and CSO number]

CSO stamp[23]**:**

Address:

* delete as necessary

[22] See point 66 of this guidance document

[23] Required to be used on paper copies only (see guidance below)

Notes for Guidance for suppliers, exporters, and veterinarians, FCCOs and CSOs

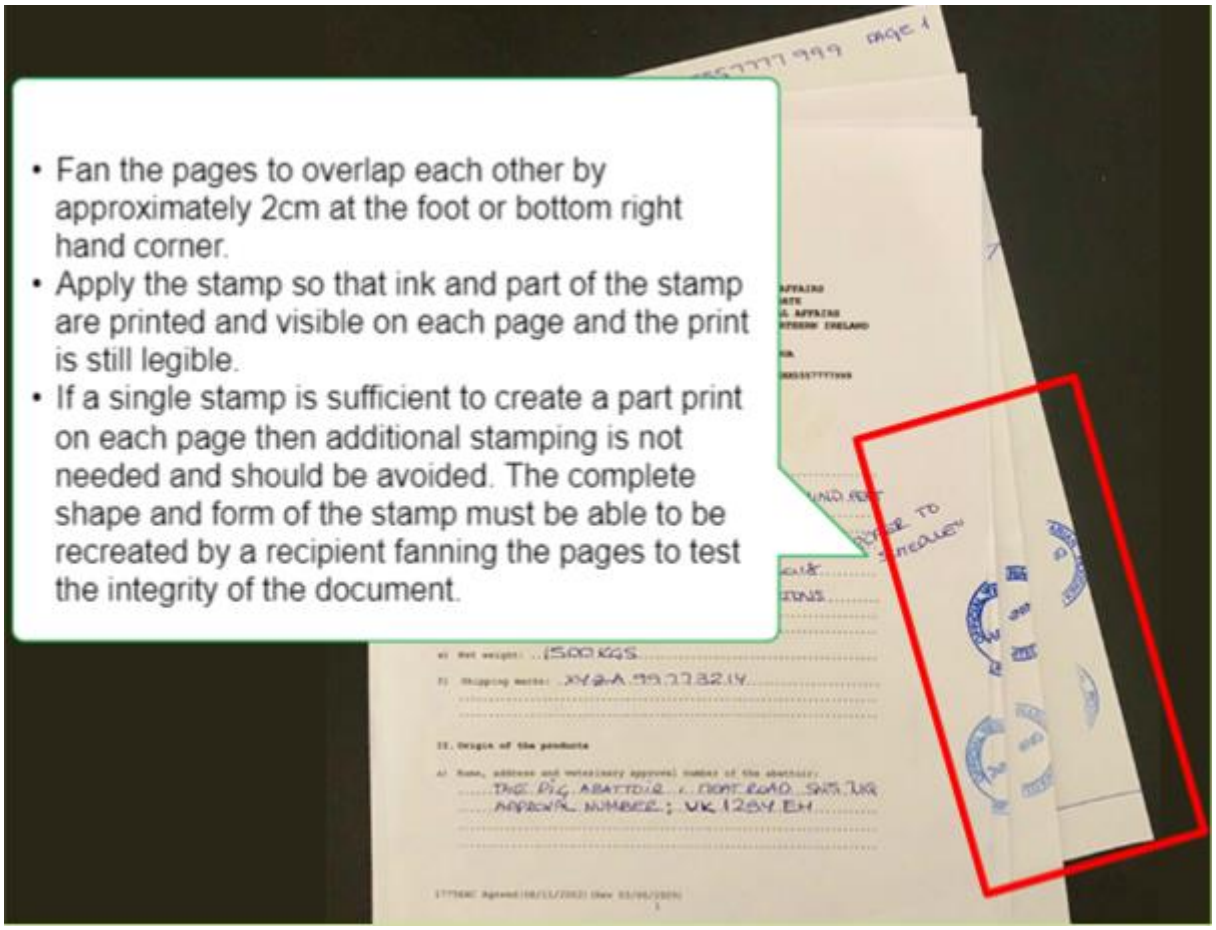
An original version of this support attestation must be supplied to the CO at the exporting depot. This must either be supplied:

- Electronically – directly from the vet/FCCO/CSO signing part II above to the CO in such a way that document tampering by a third party is not possible.

Or

- As a paper copy – in which case this must be the original signed document (signed in a colour other than black) and must be 'fan stamped' by the vet/FCCO/CSO to guard against tampering.

How to 'fan stamp' a document:



Annex III: Groupage Export Facilitation Scheme (GEFS) application form

Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Groupage Export Facilitation Scheme Membership Application Form

To apply for membership of the Groupage Export Facilitation Scheme (GEFS) please complete Parts I, II and III of this form. Please ensure that all sections are fully complete as failure to do so may lead to a delay in processing your application.

Before completing this form, please ensure you have read our privacy notice.

I have read the Groupage Export Facilitation Scheme privacy notice ☐

Part I: Contact details of exporting company	
Trading name of exporting company	
Registered UK address of exporting company	
If providing the name of a parent company, please provide the trading names of all the companies you wish to be included as part of your membership. Continue on a separate sheet if necessary.	

Name of person who will sign the declaration in Part III:		Position:	
Contact phone number		Contact email address	

Part II: Supporting Information
To help validate your organisation please provide at least one of the following:
☐ EORI number: Enter number here
☐ Companies House number: Enter number here
☐ VAT registration number: Enter number here
☐ Other evidence that allows us to validate your organisation (please state):
You must also include a list of suppliers who will make use of support attestations. It is your duty to ensure Defra have the most up to date copy of this supplier list at all times. Please tick this box to confirm you have attached your list to this application ☐

Part III: The Declaration
I have authority and responsibility to sign this declaration on behalf of the exporting company. This exporting company will abide by the conditions on the usage of support attestations in accordance with the guidance issued by Defra on simplified certification of groupage consignments of certain products.

I understand and accept that failure of this company (or of companies supplying support attestations for exported products) to abide by this guidance may result in immediate removal from the Groupage Export Facilitation Scheme.

I also understand that I need to ensure Defra has the most recent copy of our supplier list at all times and failure to submit the most recent list may result in immediate removal from the Groupage Export Facilitation Scheme.

I understand that the following details of my organisation will be listed on gov.uk to allow Certifying Officers to confirm my membership status: organisation name, address and membership number.

Defra is committed to protecting the privacy and security of your personal information, by signing this declaration you are consenting to the collection and storage of the following personal contact details – your name, your email address and your telephone number. We will only use your personal information for official purposes such as contacting you for information relating to the exporting company.

We will not be publishing your personal data on Gov.uk. You can withdraw your consent for us to use your personal details at any time by e-mailing GEFS@defra.gov.uk. Further information on how Defra will process your personal data is available in the privacy notice.

Signature:		*Name:*	
Position:		*Date:*	

For office use only			
Form reviewed by		*Date:*	

DATA PROTECTION

For information on how we handle personal data please go to www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs/about/personal-information-charter