

Invitation Letter to BTSF National Contact Points seeking applications for BTSF training activities on

THE USE OF THE EU TRADE CONTROL AND EXPERT SYSTEM

(TRACES – 2016 –96-02)

Phase 2

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1. Course objectives

General objective

The General objective of BTSF is to ensure a high level of consumer protection throughout the EU internal market and to increase levels of trade in safe food across the globe by the implementation of efficient, objective, and adequate official controls. This objective is achieved by training the staff of the competent authorities, offering a better network and on-going dialogue with partners from both within, and outside, the European Union, thus contributing to a high level of expertise and competence.

Specific objectives

The specific objectives of the **BTSF training activities** on **TRACES** are to train **staff involved in official control** activities to keep them update with the use of the EU Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES).

Thereby, the programme will aim at ensuring a harmonised use of TRACES, considering the latest updates available. As TRACES is an **IT tool** in continuous development, the programme will also be flexible and able to adapt its contents to the new upcoming possibilities of the system.

Both the private and the public sector will benefit from a more harmonised use of TRACES and a deeper knowledge on the system by staff responsible for the official controls: better cooperation with customs, statistical data available, reduction of administrative work, faster clearance of the consignment at the border, etc.

2. Training dates and locations

The trainings consist of 4 days training. These will be delivered on March 2023 with approximately 35-40 participants.

The course agenda is attached (Annex 3).

Table 1: Training dates and Location

Year	Training sessions	Course title	Locations	Proposed date	Registration deadline
2023	4C	TRACES COI	Lisbon, Portugal	6-9 March 2023	3 rd February 2023

For organisational purposes, names of participants should be communicated at the latest 30 days before each workshop. A reminder will be sent to NCPs before each event.

3. Selection criteria for participants

- Participant must:
1. Fulfil the eligibility criteria
 2. Meet the minimum requirements
 3. Be selected using the evaluation criteria

1. Eligibility criteria for TRACES use in intra-EU trade of live animals and products of animal origin

Participants **who have previously completed the BTSF** courses on **TRACES** should be assessed for their eligibility for this training based on the criteria below. Only **eligible participants** should be further assessed against the minimum requirements below.

Participants must meet the minimum requirements below to ensure they can follow and fully participate in this course. Participants who do not meet the minimum requirements should not be proposed for the training.

2. Minimum requirements for TRACES use in intra-EU trade of live animals and products of animal origin	Yes/No
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevancy to daily work: participants should have a technical background related to the area of training. It should be clear that the training activity will improve their daily work. • Sufficient level of language and sound knowledge of computer: to ensure the transfer of knowledge and opportunities to exchange views, participants should master the language of the training session for which they applied • Ability to share their experience: priority will be given to participants whose working position will allow sharing with colleagues the outputs of the training session. • Dissemination of training material: commitment of the participants to disseminate the gathered information during the training session • Be familiar with the principles of the organic farming scheme (for course 4). • Courses 1 and 5 are designed for officers with an intermediate/advanced level on TRACES • Courses 2, 3 and 4 are addressed to both TRACES users and participants without extensive experience in TRACES. 	

The evaluation criteria should be used as a tool to prioritise participation (higher score indicates higher priority), but there is no minimum score necessary.

3. Evaluation criteria for Course 2		Enter Score
a)	<p>Be officers of the National Competent Authority, relevant Government Ministries or Inspection services involved (or that may be potentially involved) in the use of the TRACES application at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Course 5: LVU level <p><u>Scoring</u></p> <p>no experience = 2 points; < 2 years = 5 points; 2-5 years = 7.5 points; > 5 years = 10 points</p>	

b)	Experience in the drafting or adaptation of policies and Regulations in line with Regulation (EC) 882/2004, and related to the use of TRACES. <u>Scoring</u> no experience = 2 points; < 2 years = 5 points; 2-5 years = 7.5 points; > 5 years = 10 points	
c)	Contribution towards export and certification through TRACES system <u>Scoring</u> no experience = 2 points; < 2 years = 5 points; 2-4 years = 10 points; > 4 years = 12.5 points	
d)	During the course, participants will be provided with a training package to be used as support dissemination material. Commitment to disseminate the knowledge received is a prerequisite for course participation. <u>Scoring</u> 1. Commitment to distribute the training material among their colleagues = 5 points; 2. Point 1 plus preparing and giving presentations based on the training material for the staff of national competent authorities/uploading training material to national competent authorities' intranets/websites = 10 points 3. Points 1, 2 plus preparing informative articles in the professional national journals = 15 points no commitment = 2 points	
Maximum total score		50

Priority will be given to the applications received before the datelines, from the countries invited in the session. However, to ensure some flexibility in the application process, 1 or 2 applications from the **reserve lists** might be accepted in each session.

Country allocations

A total of 42 seats will be allocated according to the tables below. Please note that the number of allocated seats for each country may vary.

COURSE 4: TRACES USE AT IMPORT OF ORGANIC PRODUCTS

Country	Session 4C
Member States (MS)	
Austria	2
Belgium	1
Bulgaria	2
Croatia	1
Czech Republic	1
Cyprus	2

Denmark	2
Estonia	1
Finland	1
France	1
Germany	1
Greece	1
Hungary	1
Ireland	0
Italy	1
Latvia	2
Lithuania	2
Luxembourg	1
Malta	1
Netherlands	2
Poland	2
Portugal	1
Romania	2
Slovakia	2
Slovenia	1
Spain	2
Sweden	2
Reserve List	1
Total MS	38
Candidate Countries (CC) + Potential CC (PCC)	
North Macedonia	
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1
Montenegro	
Serbia	1
Turkey	
Albania	
Total CC and PCC	2
MS + CC + PCC	40
EEA/EFTA/Countries with special agreements	
Norway	
UK (Northern Ireland)	1
Iceland	1
Switzerland	
Total EEA/EFTA/Countries special agreements	2
TOTAL/COURSE	42

You are welcome to nominate more participants. If seats will become available, you will be informed in due time.

Annex 1: Background and main topics covered in training

Background

The **Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES)** is the European Commissions' multilingual online management tool for all sanitary requirements on intra-EU trade and importation of animals, semen and embryo, food, feed, and plants. Its main objective is **to digitise the entire certification process and linked procedures** and is in line with the declaration of the Digital Agenda for Europe.

TRACES was launched in April 2004, and since then it has grown larger by diversifying both its activities and its target groups. After the initial certification modules for intra-EU trade and veterinary border control, many other modules have been introduced.

TRACES New Technology or TNT is new platform who bring those structural changes wished by users as well as an even more user-friendly interface. The certification in TNT module for organic production was launched on 4 April 2016 and it is already available for issuing COI, CHEDPP, PHYTO and FLEGT documents. About 30.000 users all over the world are issuing more than 1.5 million certificates per year within TRACES. That is about 5.000 per day; half of them for the single market trade and the other half for imports into the EU and EU border control system.

In these conditions, being TRACES such a dynamic instrument where improvements and new tools are continuously added, specific training is necessary for guaranteeing a correct and updated use of the system, where users are aware of its possibilities and can benefit from all the available options.

Annex 2: Legislation and guidance

The EU is one of the most important players in the international trade in food and the biggest importer in the world. About food safety, the EU has in place comprehensive legislation aimed at ensuring that all food for sale in the EU, produced in the EU or imported from other world regions is safe and complies with, or it is at least equivalent to, well defined standards.

Regulation 2017/625 (Official Control Regulation) require the Commission, in collaboration with the Member States, set up and manage a computerised information management system for official controls (IMSOC) for the integrated operation of the mechanisms and tools through which data, information and documents concerning official controls and other official activities are managed, handled, and automatically exchanged. The IMSOC integrate the existing Traces system.

COMMISSION IMPLEMENTING REGULATION (EU) 2019/1715 of 30 September 2019 laying down rules for the functioning of the information management system for official controls and its system components ('the IMSOC Regulation').

TRACES is the European Commission's online platform for sanitary and phytosanitary certification required for the importation of animals, animal products, food and feed of non-animal origin and plants into the European Union, and the intra-EU trade and EU exports of animals and certain animal products. Today, TRACES is an indispensable tool used in about 90 countries, from more than 55.000 users worldwide for the issuance of sanitary and phytosanitary certificates and official documents required for imports, exports and intra EU movements of live animals and goods.

The main objective of TRACES is to streamline the certification process and all linked entry procedures and to offer a fully digitised and paperless workflow.

It facilitates the exchange of data, information and documents between all involved trading parties and control authorities and therefore simplifies and speeds up the administrative procedures.

The possibility to trace back and forth all the movements of animals, animal products, food and feed of non-animal origin and plants contributes to the reduction of the impact of disease outbreaks and allows for a quick response to counter certain serious risks along the agri-food chain.

The TRACES platform enhances cooperation and coordination between the competent authorities of EU countries and non-EU countries, but also between the traders themselves and their competent authorities. When a decision is taken on a consignment, the involved parties are notified and have access to the relevant documents. TRACES allows for the quick detection of fake certificates and therefore contributes to the fight against food fraud and enhances cooperation and collaboration between authorities.

The integrated statistical tool allows the extraction of valuable data in relation to imports into the EU, exports from the EU and intra-Union trade.

Annex 3: Agenda

EXAMPLE OF AGENDA FOR COURSE 4 TRACES USE AT IMPORT OF ORGANIC PRODUCTS

Day 1	Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Welcome of participants. - General introduction on BTSF. - Introduction on the course programme. - Knowledge test - Overview of TRACES: legislation and explanation
Day 2	Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TRACES practice in the computers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TRACES certification. Structure of COI. • Users and Organisations management. • Other sections of TRACES
	Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TRACES implementation - TRACES notifications: OFIS Irregularity module. - TRACES certification workflow (role game) - Case studies
Day 3	Morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Statistical tools: DWH & Qlikview - Specific procedures - Real examples: Presentation of real cases presented by tutors and participants. Reproduction in the system and discussion on difficulties.
	Afternoon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TRACES updates - The escape room: Review of different TRACES options (role game) - Case studies: specific TRACES procedures as transfer to approve place of destination.

Day 4

Morning

- Visit to Border premises
- Practice in the computers: TRACES procedures and Statistical tools
- Q&A session
- Knowledge test
- Final conclusions
- Evaluation online
- Certificates

Annex 4: Training material, outcomes, and dissemination activitiesTraining material

All participants will receive the training material well in advance of the training. The material will include additional pre-recorded material for offline studies. Preparatory videos will introduce the specific topic and provide background information to participants.

All participants will receive a Dissemination Kit (electronically) to enable them to actively disseminate course knowledge upon their return from BTSF training. Participants attending face-to-face courses will receive the information on the USB key.

Dissemination Kit

This contains the following training materials:

- All course presentations
- Study notes on field trips and group activities/discussions and conclusions thereof
- The course syllabus
- The training information sheet
- Other information and material delivered at the course such as quizzes, FAQs etc.

Dissemination questionnaire

Two to three months after the respective training session, participants will receive a standard questionnaire requesting information on the dissemination activities of the participant after the training, and details on differences in the approach adopted in day-to-day work following the training.

Self-assessment test

Furthermore, the programme will include an anonymous knowledge test to be carried out at the beginning and at the end of each training session, to measure the impact of the training on the understanding of the participants of the subjects taught.

Participants are expected to agree to carry out the above tests and to reply to the surveys and questionnaires.

Annex 5: Contractor contact details

The Project is managed by: Agriconsulting Europe SA-AESA

Project Manager: Lorenzo Grazioli

Training Coordinator: Mary Gianniou

Separate notifications will be sent to National Contact Points for each course and will contain the names and contact details of the Event Manager and Assistant Event Manager as well as logistical details on the event.

All official communication between National Contact Points and the project will be maintained through the functional e-mail address 2016.96.02_TRACES@aesagroup.eu.

All information on BTSF training can be found at the BTSF Academy website.