



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

# Movement Assistance Scheme

## Frequently Asked Questions

Version 6

Last Updated: April 2024



# Why was the Movement Assistant Scheme (MAS) set up?

Defra set up the [Movement Assistance Scheme](#) to support traders who move agri-food commodities from Great Britain (GB) to Northern Ireland (NI), including but not limited to:

- live animals
- products of animal origin
- plants and plant products
- organic products
- certain high-risk food and feed of non-animal origin (HRFNAO)

MAS provides financial support by reimbursing or waiving some of the costs required to move these commodities between GB and NI in order to be compliant with the requirements of the NI Protocol.

Through MAS, Defra is supporting traders to ensure they can trade goods from GB to NI in compliance with the requirements of the NI Protocol, including health, marketing standards and certain certification requirements.

## What is MAS?

MAS provides support for traders moving agri-food goods and equines from GB to NI following the end of the EU exit transition period.

First, it provides traders with assistance to understand the new regulations for moving goods from GB to NI.

Second, MAS reimburses some of the costs that would be incurred by traders for moving agri-food commodities and equines under the new requirements.

The scope of the financial support provided by MAS is listed on slide 3.

There is guidance for traders and certifiers on [GOV.UK](#) and further information for certifiers on [Vet Gateway](#). Questions about the process are answered there.

## What financial support is provided by MAS?

Cost	Date included in the scheme	Reimbursed or waived	Comments
Export Health Certificates (EHCs)	1 January 2021 (scheme launch)	Reimbursed	<b>From 01.05.24</b> flat rate of £150 excl. VAT for non-equine EHCs and £325 excl. VAT for equine EHCs
Phytosanitary Certificates (PCs)	1 January 2021 (scheme launch)	Waived	
Certificates of Inspection (COIs)	1 February 2021	Waived	Currently subject to a cap of £25 excl. VAT
Official Certificates for High-Risk Food and Feed of Non-Animal Origin (HRFNAO) products	1 April 2021	Waived	
Plant Health Exports Audited Trader Scheme (PHEATS) audit and registration costs	1 July 2021	Waived	
Costs related to scrapie testing for sheep exports	1 July 2021	Reimbursed	From 01.05.24 a flat rate of £150 excl. VAT and £34 excl. VAT for the test
Organic business registration costs	1 August 2021	Waived	
Costs related to seed certification	1 August 2021	Waived	
Costs related to Support Attestations (SAs)	27 September 2021	Reimbursed	Currently subject to a cap of £150 excl. VAT Only GB to NI declared SAs are eligible for reimbursement
Costs related to Scrapie Qualifying Scheme	1 April 2022	Reimbursed/Waived	
Costs related to Brucella ovis testing for sheep exports	1 September 2022	Reimbursed	From 01.05.24 flat rate of £150 excl vat

# What is the reimbursement process for EHCs?

## How is final destination defined for MAS?

To qualify for MAS financial support, the final destination of live animals or products must be Northern Ireland.

The place of destination is defined as the 'establishment, or where relevant another place, where live animals or products are being delivered for 'final unloading'' and to qualify for MAS financial support must remain in NI for a minimum period of 30 consecutive days, except in the case of equines.

For equines that will be returning from NI to GB the minimum period the animal must remain in NI before returning to GB should be 48 consecutive hours.

## Before I invoice MAS for the reimbursement of certification costs, are there any steps that my business needs to follow?

Yes. Refer to Vet Gateway for the steps you will need to take before submitting invoices for reimbursement.

## When should I send in my invoice for work done?

Invoices must be submitted within 90 days. To help ensure reimbursements are not unduly delayed, and to improve scheme turnaround times, a payment rule was introduced on 1 November 2021, limiting the time between certification and invoicing to 90 days.

## How do I obtain a Purchase Order (PO) for an invoice?

After your first EHC request, you will be contacted by APHA (via the email address registered in EHC Online for the EHC) with the details we need to set you up as a supplier. You will then be provided with a Purchase Order (PO) number via email, which you must include on your invoice. This may take up to 10 working days.

Queries regarding the PO number should be raised with APHA at [ServiceDeliveryVetandExportInvoices@apha.gov.uk](mailto:ServiceDeliveryVetandExportInvoices@apha.gov.uk) or on +44 (0)20 80265644

## Should I keep records of invoices and any supporting documentation?

Yes. You should keep full and accurate records for a period of six years. Under the terms of the scheme, we retain the right to inspect records to validate claims.

## If I have a problem with invoicing or the reimbursement process, who do I contact?

Queries regarding the payment of invoices or PO queries should be raised with APHA at [ServiceDeliveryVetandExportInvoices@apha.gov.uk](mailto:ServiceDeliveryVetandExportInvoices@apha.gov.uk) or on +44 (0)20 80265644

# What is the reimbursement process for EHCs?

## What date can I start to claim back time spent on travel?

Before 1 April 2021 certifiers of EHCs could claim for travel based on mileage (and this charge was outside of the cap for EHCs). This changed on 1 April 2021. Now certifiers of EHCs may charge for the time spent on travel, based on their charge out rate. **Note that the charge for travel time is now included within the flat rate of £150 excl. VAT for non-equine EHCs and £325 excl. VAT for equine EHCs.**

## Is the charge for time spent on travel included in the overall certification cost flat rate?

Yes

## How many days do I have for a reimbursement with the new flat rate introduction?

EHCs certified with a signed date of 30 April 2024 or earlier will be reimbursed up to the cap if invoiced within 90 days.

# What is the reimbursement process for PCs?

## **How does MAS provide financial support for costs associated with Phytosanitary Certificates?**

From 1 January 2021, traders requiring Phytosanitary Certificates for the movement of goods from GB to NI only are eligible to receive defrayment of related certification, inspection and sampling costs.

# What is the reimbursement process for Organics COIs and other related costs?

## **I am a trader of organic products, what do I need to do?**

You should apply for the required checks needed for goods to travel from GB to NI in the usual way. You will not be charged for COI costs relating to organic agri-food products moving from GB to NI. Note that certification prices from 1 April 2023 now charge £30+VAT for the certificates.

## **What other support is available?**

From 1 August 2021, MAS also reimburses traders for the licencing component of registration with their organic control body where they move goods solely GB to NI. This includes the importer/exporter licencing component of organic registration costs faced by exporters operating out of GB who move organics solely to NI and now must license as such, and importers in NI who face new costs to license as an importer to receive these goods from GB, provided that the registering control body is UK based. Traders moving organic products from GB to NI can also contact their organic control body for advice.

Note that the Defra helpline team is unable to help regarding reimbursements or status updates for individual cases.

## **How does the process work for the licencing component of registration?**

The new costs faced by exporters/importers will be paid by traders and reimbursed by MAS, once traders have demonstrated that they have only imported/exported N to GB or vice versa, at the end of that licencing period. You will need to complete an application form, including payment information and declaration that movements have been solely between GB and NI. This form will be returned to your control body to confirm registration and on to DEFRA who will audit imports/exports to ensure eligibility and return a PO. This will then allow the trader to directly invoice Defra. Please contact your organic control body to obtain an application form.

# What is the reimbursement process for Organics COIs and other related costs?

## **For Organics Control Bodies**

### **If our account details change, who should we contact?**

Please email Defra at [organic.standards@defra.gov.uk](mailto:organic.standards@defra.gov.uk) to make any amendments to your supplier details. This should be in advance of submitting an invoice.

### **If we are having any issues with submitting our invoice, who should we contact?**

Please email Defra if you have any issues submitting an invoice at: [organic.standards@defra.gov.uk](mailto:organic.standards@defra.gov.uk)

### **If our account details change, who should we contact?**

Please email Defra at [organic.standards@defra.gov.uk](mailto:organic.standards@defra.gov.uk) to make any amendments to your supplier details. This should be in advance of submitting an invoice.

### **Who should I contact for invoice queries?**

Please email Defra at [organic.standards@defra.gov.uk](mailto:organic.standards@defra.gov.uk)

# What is the reimbursement process for HRFNAO?

## What is the process for traders moving HRFNAO from GB to NI?

From 1 April 2021, traders moving HRFNAO products (those listed in Annex 2 of regulation 2019/1793 and products originating from countries listed in Annex 1 of regulation 2020/1158) from GB to NI only are eligible to receive defrayment of costs.

## What process should Local Authorities (LAs) follow for the reimbursement of official certificates for certain HRFNAO?

The high-level process below outlines the steps LAs should follow for the reimbursement of official certification costs.

- When a LA receives a request from a trader to inspect HRFNAO goods, they should conduct that assessment as usual.
- When the request is received, the LA should, for first time only, contact APHA to notify them at [ServiceDeliveryVetandExportInvoices@apha.gov.uk](mailto:ServiceDeliveryVetandExportInvoices@apha.gov.uk). This will allow the APHA to conduct checks to see if the LA has been set up as a supplier for payment to be made later.
- The LA must supply APHA with evidence that they have received an application from a trader to move HRFNAO to NI.
- If they have been set up as a supplier, they will be provided with a unique Purchase Order (PO) number, which should be used on all invoices.
- If they have not been set up as a supplier APHA will contact the LA and request details to be provided to get them set up as a supplier. They will also then be provided with a PO number. To help speed up this process, LAs should complete and return the Information for Supplier Set-Up form as soon as possible.
- Checks on the HRFNAO goods are carried out as usual and certification provided to the trader.
- Each month the LA should generate an invoice and submit a PDF version to APHA at [ServiceDeliveryVetandExportInvoices@apha.gov.uk](mailto:ServiceDeliveryVetandExportInvoices@apha.gov.uk). This should be for all GB to NI HRFNAO checks they have completed that fall in-scope of MAS.

# What is the reimbursement process for HRFNAO?

As part of the information they submit, LAs will need to provide the following details:

- PO number provided by APHA
- Certificate unique reference number
- Copy of the certificate, including date processed and destination of goods
- Breakdown of costs - charge out rates, time spent on travel and lab costs
- Receipt or evidence of lab sampling costs (including a copy of the invoice if not inhouse lab costs)

The invoice(s) will then be processed by APHA and checks carried out, with any clarifications sent back to the LA if required.

If all details are supplied correctly and all enquiries have been resolved, payment should be made within 30 days.

## **If I have a problem with invoicing or the reimbursement process, who do I contact?**

Queries regarding the payment of invoices or PO queries should be raised with APHA at [ServiceDeliveryVetandExportInvoices@apha.gov.uk](mailto:ServiceDeliveryVetandExportInvoices@apha.gov.uk) or on +44 (0)20 80265644

# What is the reimbursement process for PHEATS registration and ongoing audit costs?

## How does PHEATS provide financial support to traders?

From 1 July 2021, traders registered to PHEATS received defrayment of initial registration costs (£313) and subsequent audit costs (£172) where trade is to GB to NI only.

## What happens if a trader moves goods outside of NI under PHEATS?

Where goods are exported to a destination other than NI, charges will no longer be waived, and the trader will be invoiced by APHA. Traders with queries should visit the PHEATS website for contact details.

# What is the reimbursement process for scrapie testing for sheep exports and costs related to Scrapie Qualifying Scheme?

## How does MAS provide financial support to traders moving sheep from GB to NI?

From 1 July 2021, traders moving sheep (GB to NI only) receive support against the costs for scrapie genotype tests. The scheme has been expanded from 1 April 2022 to bring the costs of Scrapie Qualifying Status (SQS) into MAS.

The costs include:

- Annual membership fee paid to SRUC (Scotland's Rural College), waived from 1 January 2022 (no fees have been taken since 1 January 2022).
- Cost of vet providing annual flock inspection (reimbursed to Official Veterinarian up to £150 excl. VAT).
- Costs associated with fallen stock (reimbursed in one payment to trader), including: scrapie testing of fallen stock, carcass collection, carcass disposal, a flat rate of £150 excl. VAT per animal.

# What is the reimbursement process for International Seed Testing Association (ISTA) sample testing and certification costs?

**How does MAS provide financial support for costs associated with the ISTA certification process?**

From 1 August 2021, traders requiring Orange International Certificates (OIC) for the movement of seeds from GB to NI only are eligible to receive defrayment of costs.

# What is the reimbursement process for SAs?

## How will MAS help traders with the costs of SAs?

From 27 September 2021, traders who require SAs to provide assurance to move agri-foods between GB and NI received financial support for some of the direct costs paid to Certifying Officers (either an Official Veterinarian (OV) or Food Competent Certifying Officer (FCCO)) or another registered vet for checking and issuing the certification.

## How much can traders claim for SAs?

Where there is a clear need for assurance indicated by an OV/FCCO for issuing an EHC, traders can claim up to £150 excl. VAT for each GB to NI declared SA. Only GB to NI declared SAs are eligible for reimbursement.

## If I have a problem with invoicing or the reimbursement process, who do I contact?

Queries regarding application and the payment of invoices or PO queries should be raised with APHA at [MAS\\_SAinvoices@apha.gov.uk](mailto:MAS_SAinvoices@apha.gov.uk) or on 0208 026 5644.

## I would like to claim SA costs. What do I need to include on my application for reimbursement by MAS?

For details of what to include, see the application form on GOV.UK and the process map included on the GB-NI Trader Showcase.

## Where do I send the application?

Applications should be sent to [MAS\\_SAinvoices@apha.gov.uk](mailto:MAS_SAinvoices@apha.gov.uk)

# What is the reimbursement process for Brucella ovis testing for uncastrated ram exports?

## How does MAS provide financial support to traders moving uncastrated rams from GB to NI?

From 1 September 2022, MAS will cover the costs as follows:

- Costs relating to Brucella ovis testing in NI prior to movement to GB before returning to NI – flock owners will incur these costs and in turn be reimbursed up to £150 (vet administration of testing) excl. VAT and £34 excl. VAT (cost of test).
- Costs relating to Brucella ovis testing in GB prior to movement to NI - the vet will not charge the flock owner but be reimbursed a flat rate of £150 (vet administration of testing) excl. VAT and £34 excl. VAT (cost of test). Flock owners can claim for reimbursement for Brucella ovis testing by completing an application form and submitting to APHA.