COI user guide for Control Bodies, Control Authorities and Economic Operators

**Last update: 21/01/2021**

Health and Food Safety

CONTENTS

1 Completing and submitting the COI – Organic Importer, exporter or issuing body/control authority

Note: when the organic importer or exporter initiate the COI, they will need to submit the finished document to the issuing body/authority.
When the issuing body/authority start the COI, the option to "submit" is missing.
After completing the mandatory boxes these users can directly issue the COI.

How to create a COI?

On the homepage, click on "Documents" ➜ "COI"
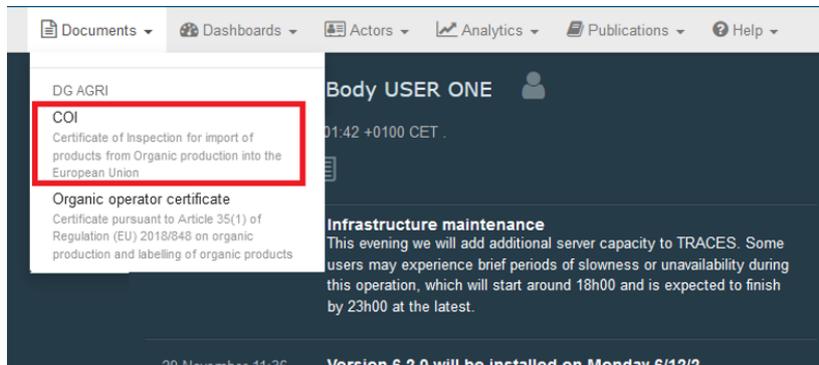
Click on the green button "+Create new COI"
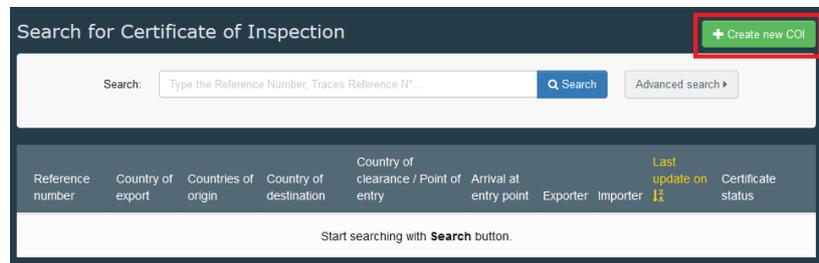
Select one (or more) commodities from the list and click "Done"
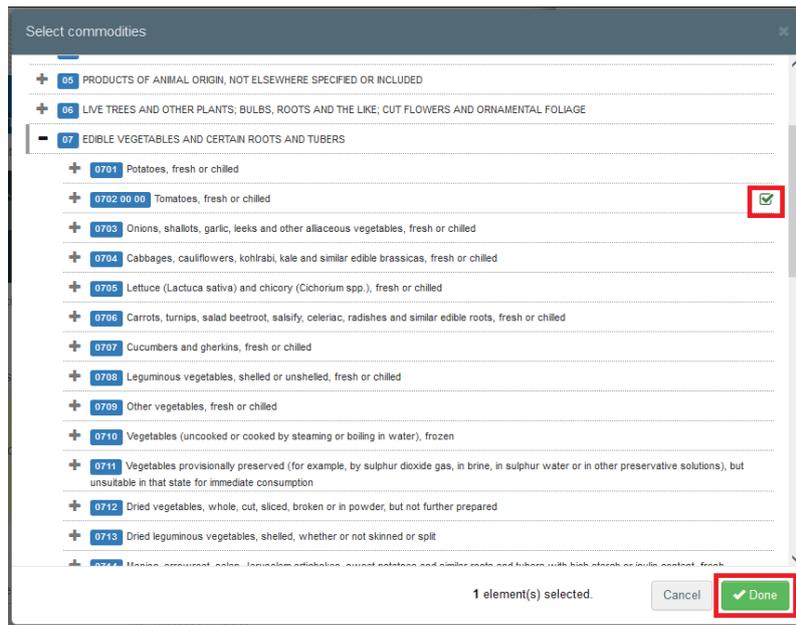
How to complete the document?

Note: *All the boxes marked with a red star * are mandatory*

Boxes 1-17, 20 and 24 can be completed by the importer inside the EU, the exporter in the third country or the control body of the exporter. It is however in the responsibility of the issuing authority/body to ensure the correctness of the information before they issue the COI.

Box 1 – Issuing control authority or control body
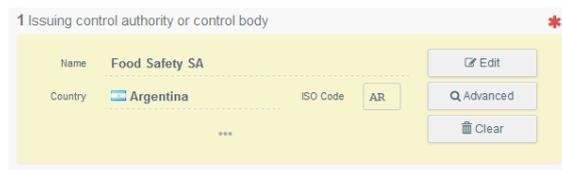
To complete this Box, it is possible to:

- Start typing the name or address of the issuing body/authority and select it from the drop down list that appears;
- Run an "advanced search" using some filters to narrow the search.
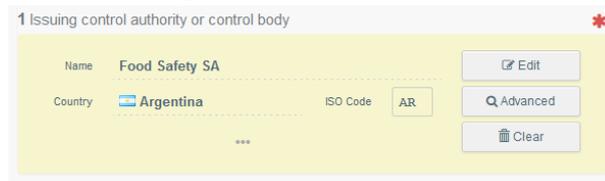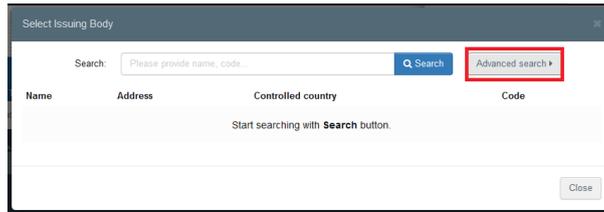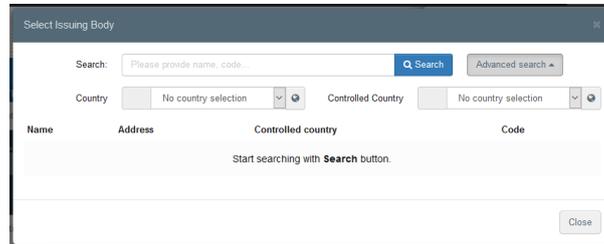
Once the correct match is selected, the "Name", "Country" and other details of the control body are automatically completed.

> **Note:** If you are signed in as the issuing body/authority and you are only certifying for one country, Box 1 will be automatically filled with the data of the control body/authority you are attached to.

Box 2 – Procedure pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2018/848 of the European Parliament and of the Council

Note that Box 2 - Procedure pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2018/848 of the European Parliament and of the Council is a mandatory box. But it cannot be filled by the user. The selection is automatically made based on the information in Box 1:

Box 3 – Certificate of inspection reference number

The box is initially empty but cannot be modified by the user. It will contain the DRAFT reference number of the COI, when the COI is saved as draft and finally the official reference number, when the COI is submitted or issued:

Unnumbered box – Links

This box cannot be edited by the user. In case the current COI is linked to another document in TRACES NT, the reference of the other document will appear here. For example, when the current COI replaces a former COI:

Links

Replaces: COI.AR.2021.0000007 12/03/2021 14:05:41 +01:00 CET
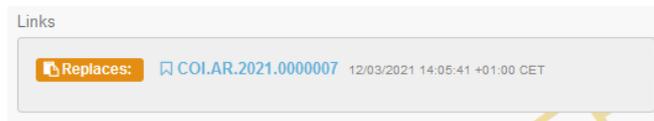
Box 4 – Producer or Processor of the product

This box is automatically completed when the producer/processor is indicated in box 13.

4 Producer or processor of the product			
Operator	Address	Activity	Certified by
COOPERATIVEFS23 Ltd	via Savigliano 52 Ciudad Autonoma De Buenos Argentina	Organic Producer / 30-56795224-6	Food Safety SA AR-BIO-001 Av. Pedro Goyena 1695 Postal Code: C1406GWF Buenos Aires, Argentina

Unnumbered box – Other reference numbers

It is possible to include other reference numbers in the COI, a national reference number for example. By clicking the "+ Add reference button" a new line appears that can be completed. The minus behind a line removes this:

Other reference numbers

+ Add Reference

Identifier
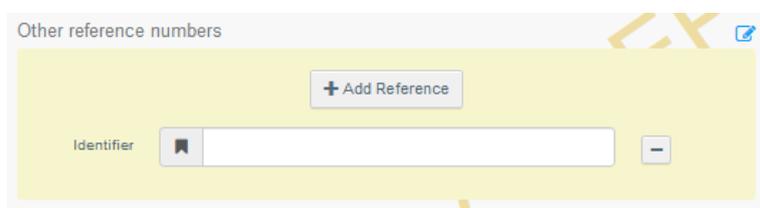
Unnumbered box – Extract Certificates

In case the current COI is a "Base for Extract" and Extract COI have already been created from this COI the link to these extracts with their status is displayed in this box:

Extract certificates

Extract No. 1	Consignee declaration signed
Extract No. 2	To be released as organic
Extract No. 3	Cannot be released for free circulation
Extract No. 4	To be released as organic

Box 5 – Exporter:

To complete this Box, it is possible to:

- Start typing the name or address of the operator and select it from the drop down list that appears
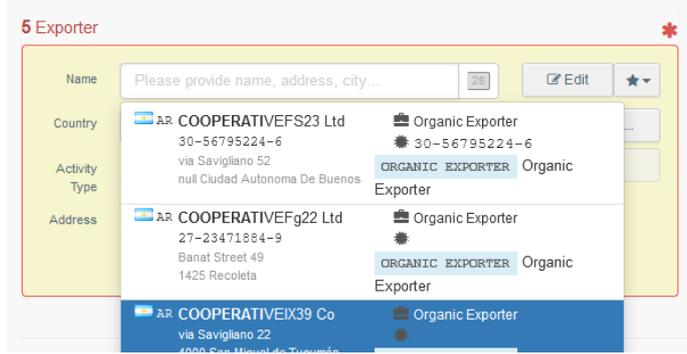
- Run an "advanced search" using some filters to narrow the search.

Then select the desired result from the list by clicking the "select" button behind the name
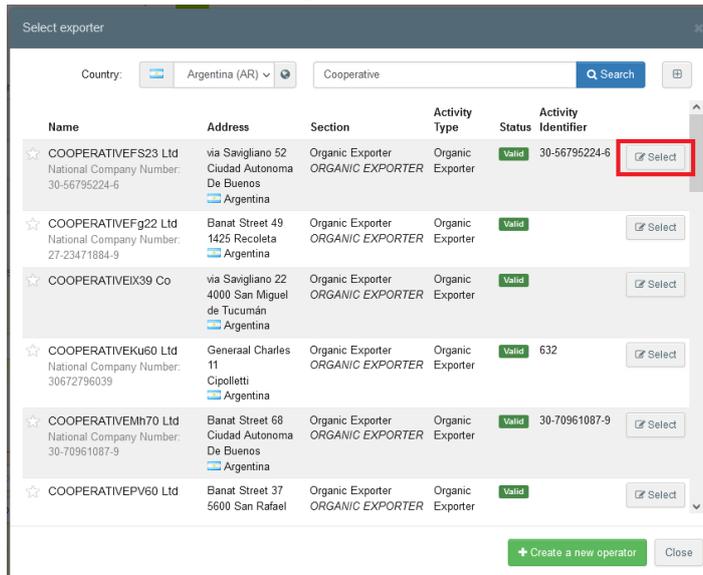
- Select an operator that was formerly saved as favourite by clicking on the grey star button

How to save an operator as favourite?

In order to start using the favourite operators list, you need to start your favourite operators selection as follows:

The operators displayed in the advanced search list have a star in front of their names. These stars are initially white. When you click on one of the stars it turns yellow, meaning that it has been added to your favourite operators list. When you selected all favourite operators, click on "close" at the bottom of the window:
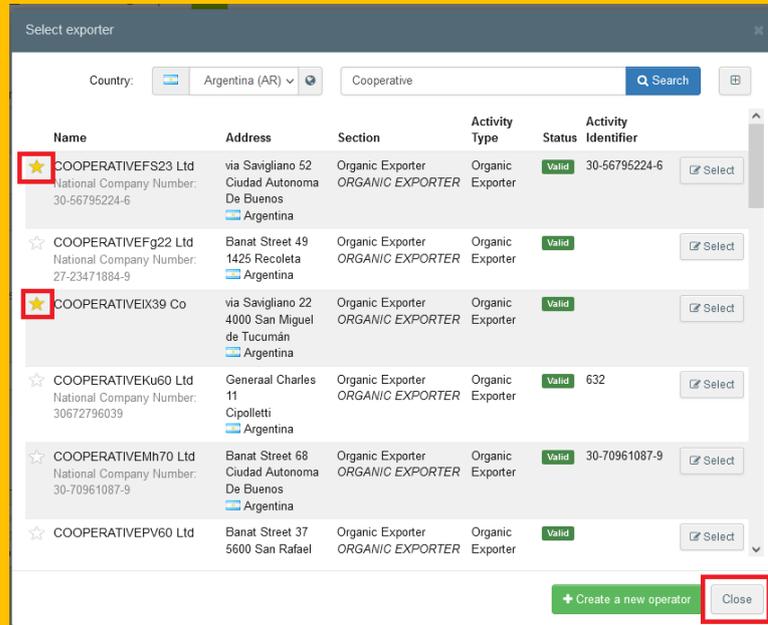
The operators marked with a yellow star will now appear in a list when you click the grey star button inside the operator box

If the operator is not present in the system, it is possible to create a new operator from inside the COI.

To do so, click on "Advanced search" inside the box where the operator is needed (for example box 5 – Exporter)
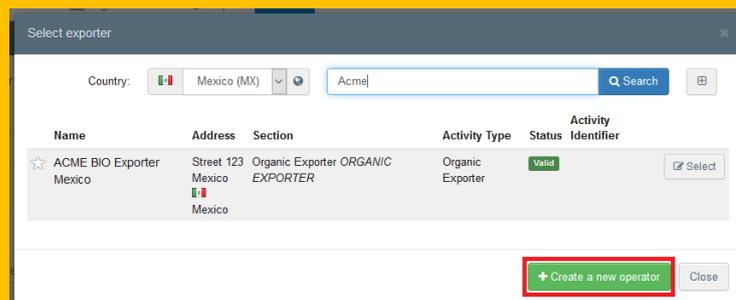
The button "+ Create new operator" will become active after you run a search in the system. You need to do the search first, in order to ensure that the operator doesn't exist already and so avoid that you create a duplicate entry.

In the window that appears, please make sure you select all mandatory information and then click on "save" at the bottom the operator is saved and the option to select it appears. Please click on that as well:

It is also possible to click on "Edit" and modify the content of the Box or to clear it and select another exporter, by clicking on the "Clear" button:
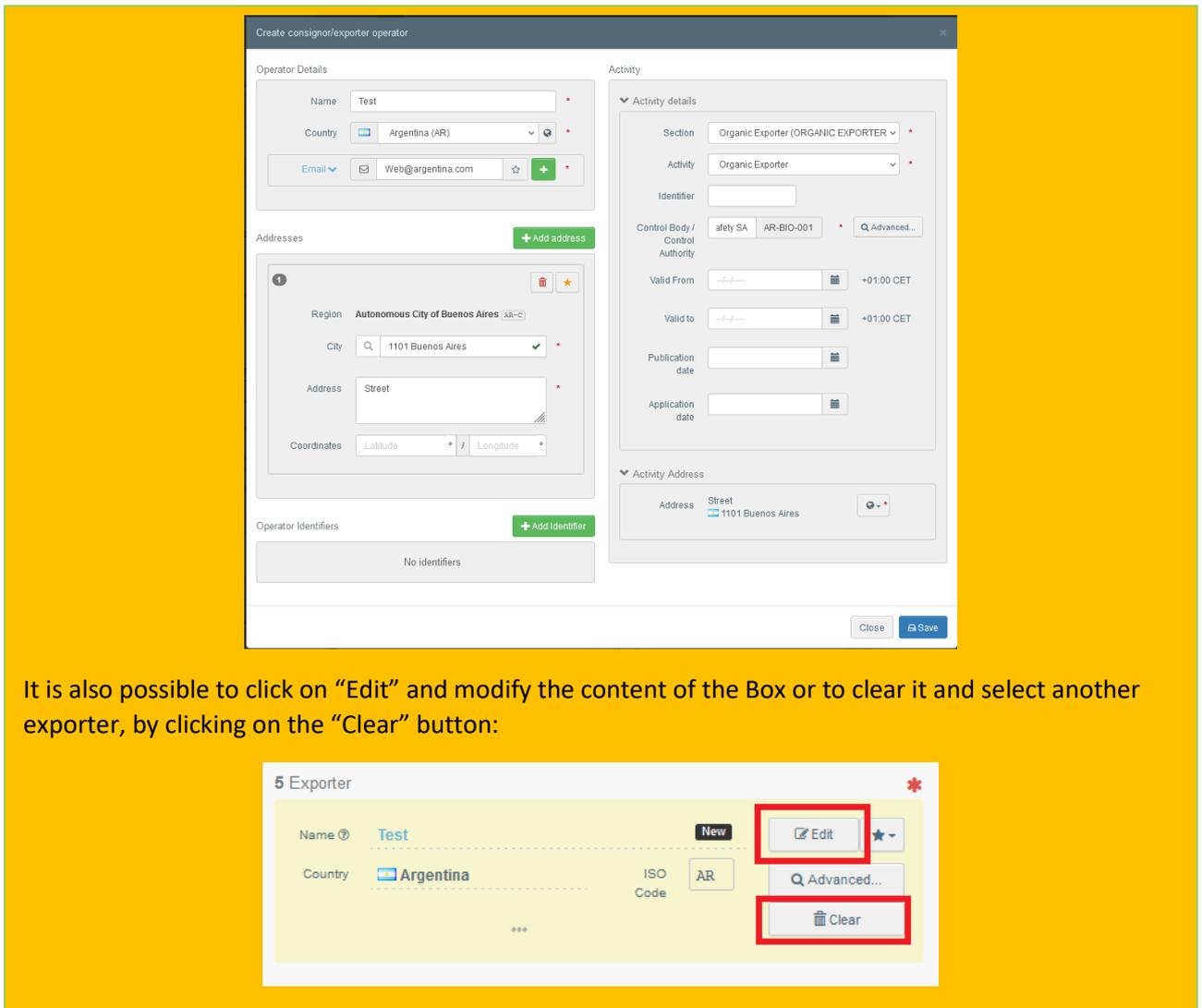
Box 6 – Operator who buys or sells the product without storing or physically handling the product

To complete this box, it is possible to follow the same procedures as described for Box 5 – Exporter.

Note that Box 6 is not mandatory. Where applicable, name and address of one or more operators who buy or sell the product without storing or physically handling the product need to be provided.
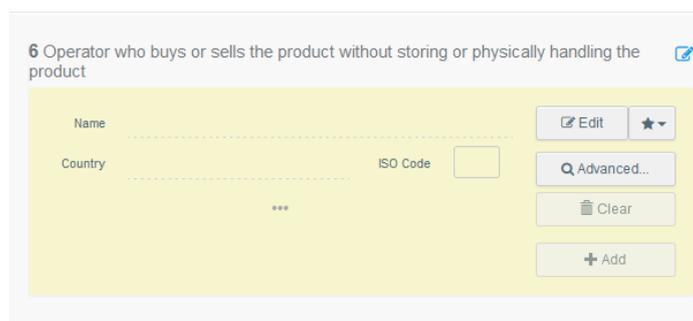

If you want to add more than one operator in Box 6, click the "add" button:

This will open a new field, where an additional operator can be added:

Once this field is completed, the "add" button becomes available again and as many operators as needed can be added.

Box 7 – Control authority or control body

Box 7 cannot be edited by the user. This box is completed with the control body information from box 13.

Box 8 – Country of origin

You can select one or more countries of origin. Start typing the name in the search box, when the country appears, click on the name to add it to the list of countries of origin.

By clicking on the minus behind each row you can delete each country individually. Click "x Remove all" to clear the complete box.

Box 9 – Country of export

The country of export is the last 3rd country where the product has been subject to the last operation for the purpose of preparation as defined in Article 3, point (44), of Regulation (EU) 2018/848 and sealed in appropriate packaging or containers.

You need to select the country from the drop-down menu.
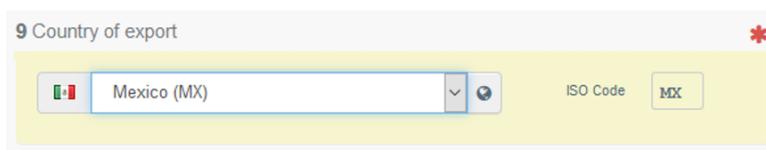
Box 10 – Border control post / point of release for free circulation

The box can be completed in the same way as box 1.

For consignments subject to organic import controls at border control posts (BCPs) pursuant to Article 45(5) of Regulation (EU) 2018/848, it is mandatory to select in this box a BCP designated for checks on the categories of organic and in-conversion products in the consignment.

For products exempted from organic import controls at border control posts in accordance with Article 3 of Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2305 it is mandatory to select a point of release for free circulation. To do so, click on the grey box appearing in box 10 and select "point of release for free circulation". (see also the Notes for the completion of the model COI in relation to box 10 in Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2021/2306).

Box 11 – Country of destination

The box is automatically completed with the country where the first consignee (in box 24) is based.


Box 12 – Importer

To complete this box, it is possible to follow the same procedures as described for Box 5 – Exporter.

> **Note**: The box first consignee in the European Union has been moved to box 24, further down the page. But the importer, exporter or issuing body can still complete the information at this point.

Box 13 – Description of Products

Fill-in the requested information for each box by typing or selecting an option from the drop-down menu. Don't forget to define the quantity and weight unit.

Several other options are also available:

- "+ Add new commodity" or "Modify commodities" will allow you to add a CN code or change the CN code selected.
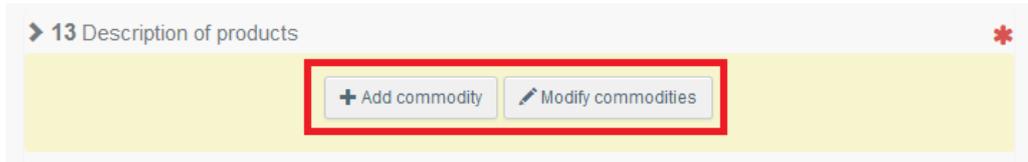
- "Remove commodity" will delete the selected commodity from the certificate.
- "Clear Descriptors" or "+ Add row" will affect the lines of commodities included in the certificate. You can also delete, modify or add 5, 10, 50 or 100 rows by 21 clicking on the small icons on the right side of the box

- Default weight unit and package type: You can select a default weight unit and packaging type for all commodity descriptor rows. When selected, these will automatically be added to all rows, where commodities can be described.
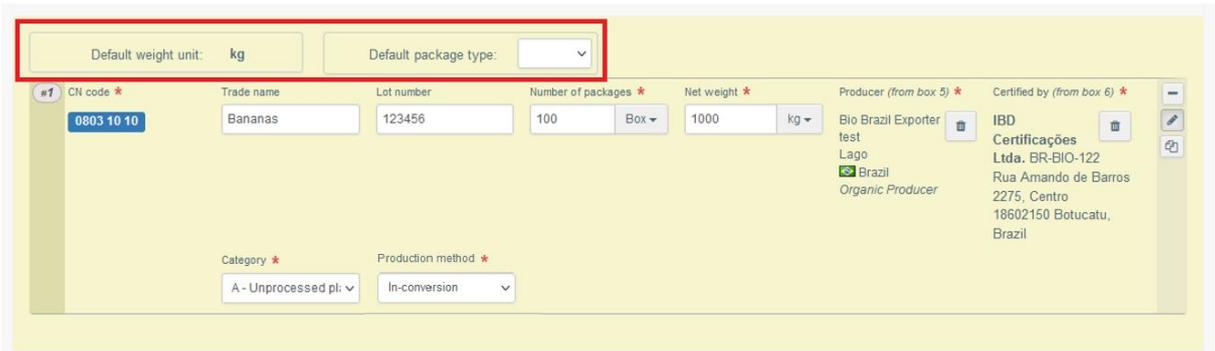
In case, there is only one option for the weight unit foreseen for a CN code, this default net option is automatically pre-selected – as shown in the capture above.

The selected default option will be displayed in every row, but can be changed individually for each row, in case one of the consignments is delivered in a different package or the weight unit is different.

Box 14/15 – Container No/ Seal No

These boxes are not marked as mandatory. However, as soon as the commodities are delivered in a container, the container number needs to be indicated. The same applies to a seal: as soon as the commodities are delivered sealed, the seal number is mandatory.

It is possible to indicate either the seal number or the container number or both. As soon as you start completing one of the boxes, a new empty row for box 14 and 15 appears.

14 / 15 Container No / Seal No

Container number	Seal number

Format: ABC[U or J or Z]1234567 = 3 letters, then either U or J or Z, then 7 numbers

Fill last entries with seal / container numbers to add a new row.
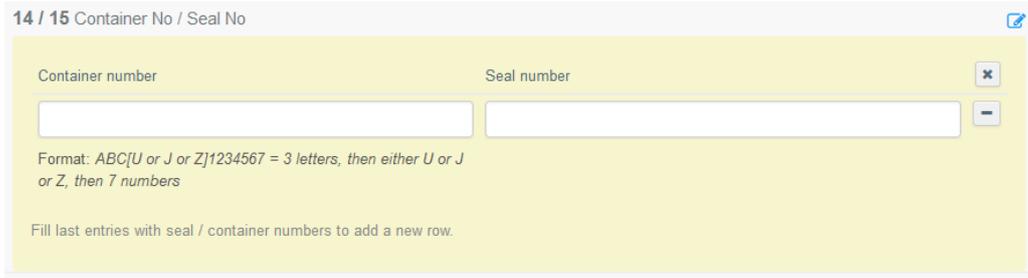
Note: The Container number needs to comply with the official format: 3 capital letters, then a capital U, J or Z, followed by 7 numbers.

Box 16 – Total gross weight

Indicate the total gross weight of all organic products listed in box 13. This weight can be equal to the total weight of all products in box 13 or higher. Please don't forget to select the weight unit.

16 Total gross weight ✱

Unit ▾
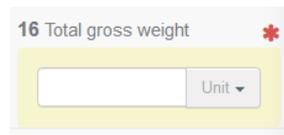
*Note: The gross weight concerns the **organic** part of your shipment covered by the certificate of inspection and certify in accordance with the relevant EU organic regulation*

Box 17 – Means of transport before point of entry into the Union

Click on the button "Add means of transport", select the means of transport that arrives at the BCP or at the point of release for free circulation and complete the mandatory fields.

17 Means of transport before point of entry into the Union

Add Means of Transport ▾

No Means of Transport before Entry Point.

Choose the type of transport from the list: "Railway", "Road vehicle", "Airplane" or "Vessel";

17 Means of transport before point of entry into the Union

Add Means of Transport ▾

No Mea...   y Point.

🚆 Railway
🚚 Road vehicle
✈ Airplane
🚢 Vessel
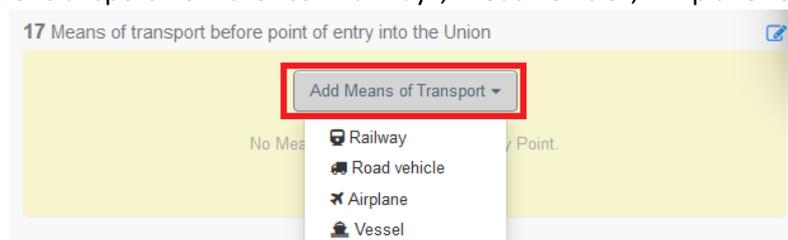
Depending on the type of vehicle, you may need to enter the specific identifiers.

If the means of transport already exists in the system, select it from the drop down list that pops out (Airplane: Flight number; Vessel: Ship's name; Road vehicle: Vehicle registration; Railway: Identifier). If it does not exist in the system, click on the green button "+ Create" after completing the mandatory fields.
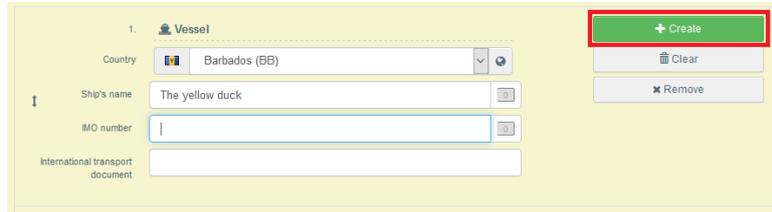
> **Note**: It is possible to add several means of transport and to change their order by dragging the items with the double sense arrows on the left.
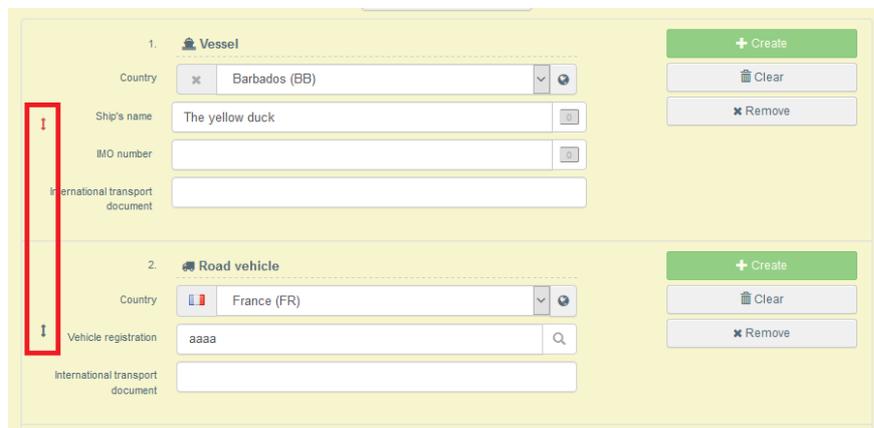

In case you selected too many boxes for means of transport, click the "remove" button next to the box that isn't needed. An empty or not completely filled box will cause an error message, when you try to sign or submit the certificate.

Unnumbered box – supporting documents

The purpose of this box is to provide any other relevant documents.

- **"Add Accompanying Document"**: choose the type of document from the corresponding drop-down list and enter all relevant information, such as "Number", "Date" and "Country". If you wish to upload a file, then click on the "Select file(s)" button. Don't forget to click on "√ Apply".

- **"Add Certificate Reference":** the certificate reference is the reference of a certificate that is issued in TRACES NT. Fill in the number of the certificate.

It is possible to add several accompanying documents and to order them by dragging and dropping the items with the double sense arrows on the left.

Box 20 – Prior notification

In case a consignment of products intended to be placed on the Union market as organic products or in-conversion products is subject to official controls at border control posts or points of release for free circulation, the estimated arrival date and time at the border control or point of release for free circulation post needs to be indicated here by the importer or, where appropriate, the operator responsible for the consignment. Please see the minimum time requirements included in the legislation.

The information in this box can be updated by the importer or its representative prior to the arrival of the consignment at the border control post or point of release for free circulation.

Attention: All the relevant information that is needed to issue the COI has now been completed. But before the COI is submitted to the issuing body/authority it is possible for the importer or exporter to also complete the following boxes:

Box 19 – Operator responsible for the consignment

Operator responsible for the consignment' is a natural or legal person established in the Union who presents the consignment at the border control post on behalf of the importer.

This box may be completed only in the case in box 10 the option BCP is selected.

The name, address and the EORI number of the operator responsible for the consignment must be completed by the importer indicated inbox 12, if the operator responsible for the consignment is different from this importer.

To complete this box, it is possible to follow the same procedures as described for Box 5 – Exporter.
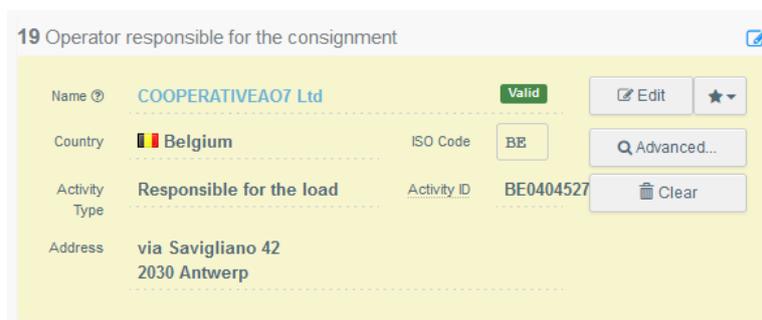
Box 21 – For transfer to

Note: This box is optional (the operator may chose that organic identity and physical checks are carried out at the border control post). **However, in case the transfer to a control point for sanitary or phytosanitary identity and physical checks has been requested by the completion of box I.20 in a related CHED-D or CHED-PP, the importer or the operator responsible for the consignment must also tick the option in box 21 of the COI**, to request transfer to the same control point as the one indicated in the CHED, for organic identity and physical checks.

To request the transfer the importer or the operator responsible for the consignment, need to tick the option in this box in case they wish to request the transfer of the products to a control point in the Union for the performance of organic identity and physical checks at that control point, if the consignment is selected for organic identity and physical checks by the competent authorities at the border control post.
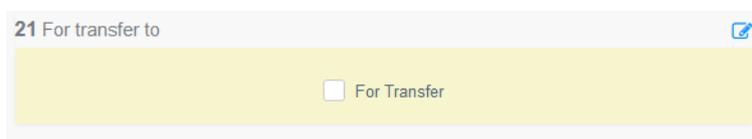
Note: This box applies only to products subject to official controls at border control post indicated in Box 10.

Box 22 – Details of the control point

The importer or the operator responsible for the consignment must indicate the name of the control point in the Member State where the products are to be transferred for organic identity and physical checks in case the consignment is selected for such checks by the competent authorities at the border control post.
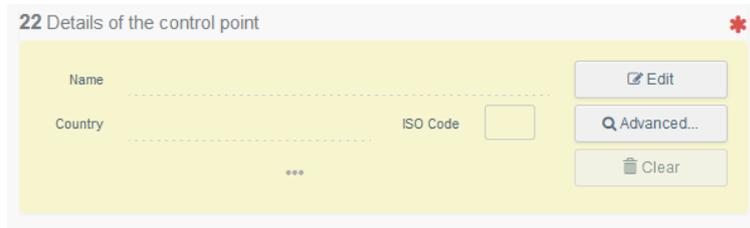
> **Note:** Only if the option in box 21 is selected, box 22 becomes mandatory. Otherwise the box cannot be edited.

Box 24 –First consignee in the Union

The box can be completed in the same way as described for Box 5 – Exporter:

> **Note:** the first consignee in box 24 is mandatory, even if the option "to be released in batches" is selected. The information needs to be completed before the verification of the consignment and the endorsement of the certificate of inspection by the competent authority.

The first consignee of a COI that is marked as a Base for extract will automatically be indicated as consignee of the Extract COIs – but the information in the Extract COI can be updated – see further below in this guide.

Submitting the Certification

If you are an organic importer or an organic exporter and you completed all mandatory fields you can now submit the COI for certification to the issuing body by clicking the blue button "Submit certification as".


> **Note**: if some of the boxes have been completed incorrectly, an "Error" message will appear at the bottom of the page. If you click on the expand sign you will be able to read the message in detail. Click on each of the messages, to be redirected to the box where the error appeared and correct the mistakes.

Issuing the COI

As the organic control body or control authority of the exporter the user is the issuing body of the COI (with the exception of a few countries, where the COI is issued by the organic control authority).

As issuing body or control authority the user can complete boxes 1-17, 20 and 24 and issue the COI or they can issue a COI that was submitted by the exporter or importer. However, if they issue a COI submitted to them , they need to ensure that boxes 1-17, 20 and 24 are completed correctly, as the correctnes of the information is in their responsibilty.

Before signing the COI in box 18 the boxes concerning documentary and physical checks appearing above box 18 need to be completed.
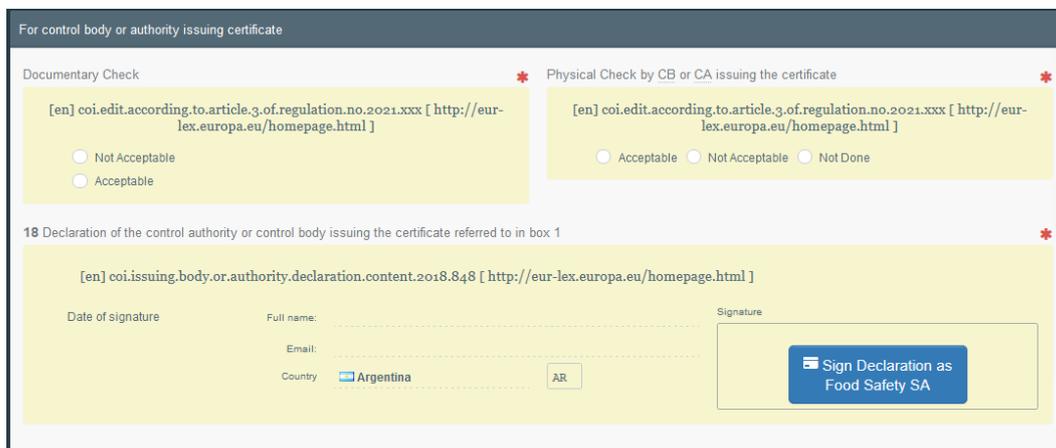
**SUCCESS: The COI has now successfully been issued!**

Issuing the COI with a digital seal

If the users' control body has a digital seal and the user is entitled to use it. The user needs to select the option to sign the declaration digitally:

This will open the PDF version of the COI where the digital seal needs to be confirmed.
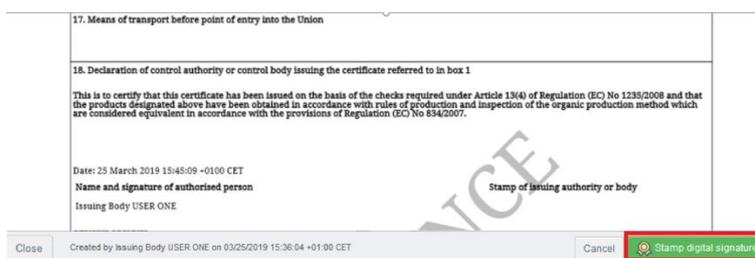
After the confirmation above, the user is again redirected to the entry form of the document. The document reference is followed by an icon, signaling that the certificate has been signed digitally:

The digitally signed PDF is added to the options on the "Preview PDF" button:
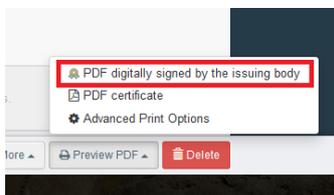
Updating a COI

As the COI is issued before the consignment leaves the third country, there are some boxes for which the information might change before the consignment reaches the EU, as explained below. The following boxes can be modified.

> **Note**: If the COI has been issued with the application of a digital seal, the changes made to the following boxes are not visible in the PDF digitally sealed by the issuing body/authority. They will be applied to the PDF that is digitally sealed by the endorsing authority.

Updates possible for the issuing body

The issuing body will be able to change the following boxes in an issued COI:

- Box 10 - Border control post / point of release for free circulation,
- Box 13 – Description of the products
  - Only the number of packages and the net weight
- Box 14/15 – Container No/Seal No
- Box 16 – Total gross weight
- Box 17 Means of transport before the entry into the Union
- Supporting documents

Updates possible for the importer or responsible for the consignment

Although the majority of boxes is fixed, once the COI has been submitted to the issuing body or issued by them, some information can still be updated by the importer, the responsible for the consignment or the issuing body after the COI has been issued.

The following boxes are the boxes that the importer can update in an issued COI:

- Box 10 - Border control post / point of release for free circulation,
- Box 19 - Responsible for the load,
- Box 20 – Prior notification,
- Box 23 – Special customs procedures,
- Box 24 - First consignee

All these boxes have a "modify" button. By clicking this button the box becomes editable. Once you updated the information, click the "save" button inside the box to commit the changes.
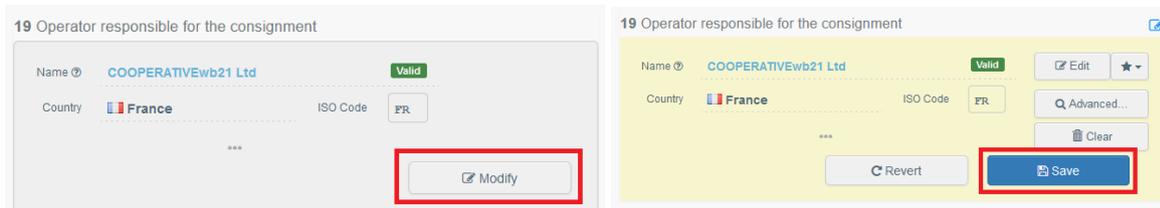
Note: updating the boxes is only possible, when the COI is in status "Description completed" or "Issuing Body Declaration Signed". Once the COI is in the process of the verification of the goods or endorsed, changes are no longer possible.

2 First consignee signing the COI

A COI that has been signed by the relevant competent authority as "**To be released as organic"** or "**To be released as in-conversion"** and the option "to be released in batches" was not selected needs to be signed by the first consignee mentioned in box 24.

Box 31 – Declaration of the first consignee

Before applying the signature, the first consignee needs to select one of the two options:

- **in accordance with point 6 of Annex III to Regulation (EU) 2018/848**: This option should be selected by the consignee, if the consignment has been received in a condition according to the mentioned regulation
- **not in accordance with point 6 of Annex III to Regulation (EU) 2018/848**: This option should be selected by the consignee, if the condition of the consignment is not satisfactory according to the regulation
  If this second option has been selected, this allows the competent authority to change the status of the COI to "OFIS irregularity" and therefore block the consignment

Note: updating the boxes is only possible, when the COI is in status "Description completed" or "Issuing Body Declaration Signed". Once the COI is in the process of the verification of the goods or endorsed, changes are no longer possible. **Note:** Is a COI marked as "to be released in batches" in box 24, box 31 for the first consignee is not editable in the main COI. The consignee will need to sign the Extract COI – see further below.
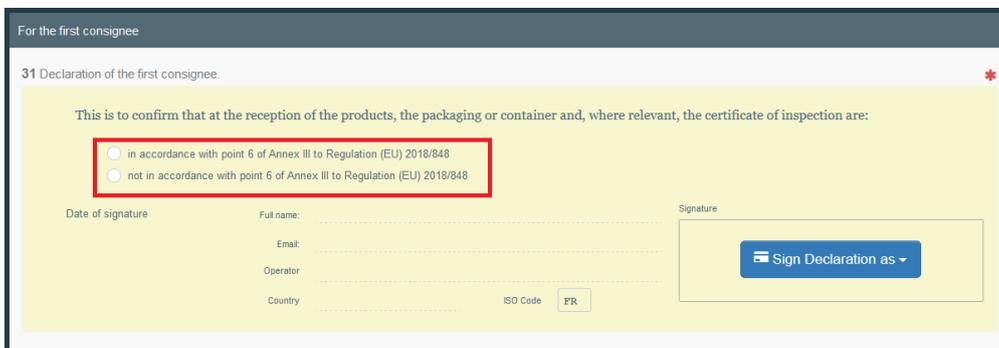
# First consignee signing the COI with a digital seal

If the COI has been signed digitally by the endorsing authority in box 30, the operator user needs to select the option to sign the declaration digitally:


This will open the PDF version of the COI where the digital seal needs to be confirmed.
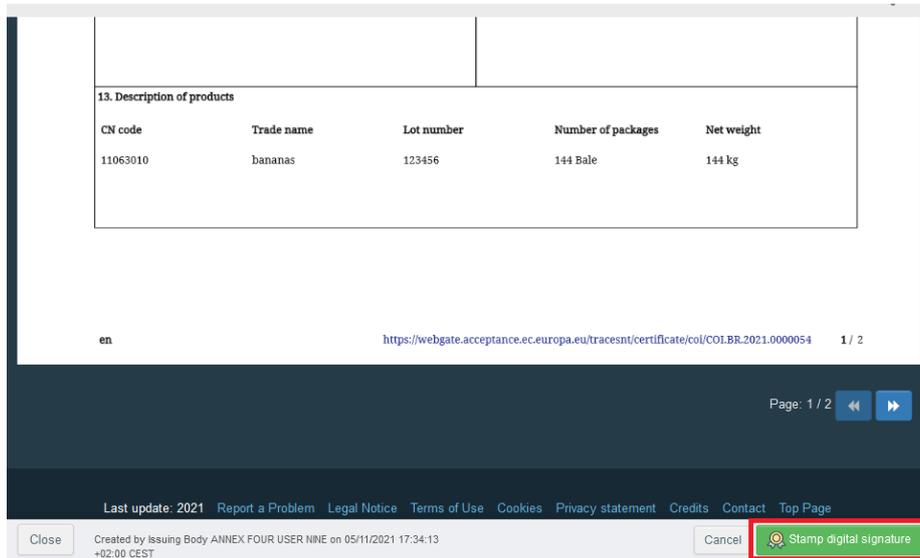
After the confirmation above, the user is again redirected to the entry form of the document. The document reference is followed by an icon, signaling that the certificate has been signed digitally:

The digitally signed PDF is added to the options on the "Preview PDF" button:
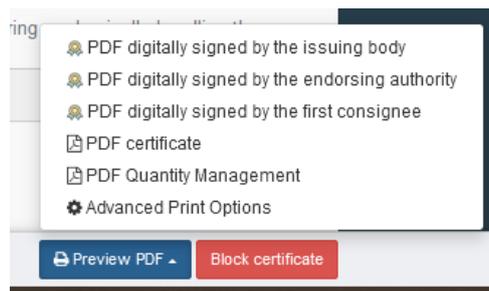
Note: The Lock icon next to the COI reference number is added for each step where a digital signature has been applied. The same goes for the PDF version.

3 A COI with status "Base for Extract" and Extract COI

Has a COI been signed as a base for extract, it has reached its final status – with the exception of being marked as "depleted" (see further down). In order to release the consignments, the importer needs to initiate the extracts and submit them to the endorsing authority for decision.

Submitting an Extract COI

In order to submit an Extract COI the importer or responsible for the consignment needs to log in to TRACES NT and open the COI with status "Base for Extract". At the bottom of the page the user will see the button "Initiate Extract". Clicking on this will open the entry form of the extract COI.
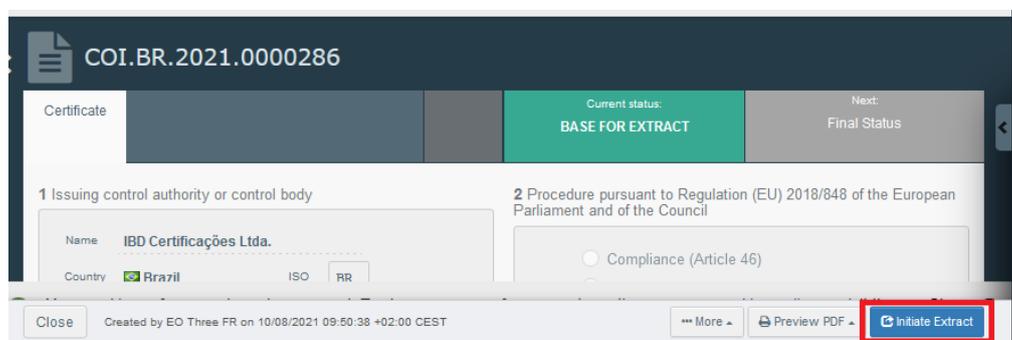
Completing the Extract COI follows the same principle as the main COI. Boxes in grey are automatically completed with information from the Base for Extract. The yellow boxes need to be completed. As before, boxes with an asterisk are mandatory.

Note: The consignee information in box 10 is automatically completed with the information of the first consignee in box 24 of the main COI. But this information can be changed before the Extract COI is submitted.

Completing Box 11 – Description of products

Parts of the information in box 11 are taken over from the Base for Extract. The user needs however to indicate the packaging and the net weight.

The packaging can be selected freely. However, there is a check on the net weight. The total of consignments in all Extracts created from one Base for Extract cannot be more than 100 % of the consignment in the Base.

When you point the mouse into the net weight box, an information bubble appears informing the user, how much of the original consignment is still available.
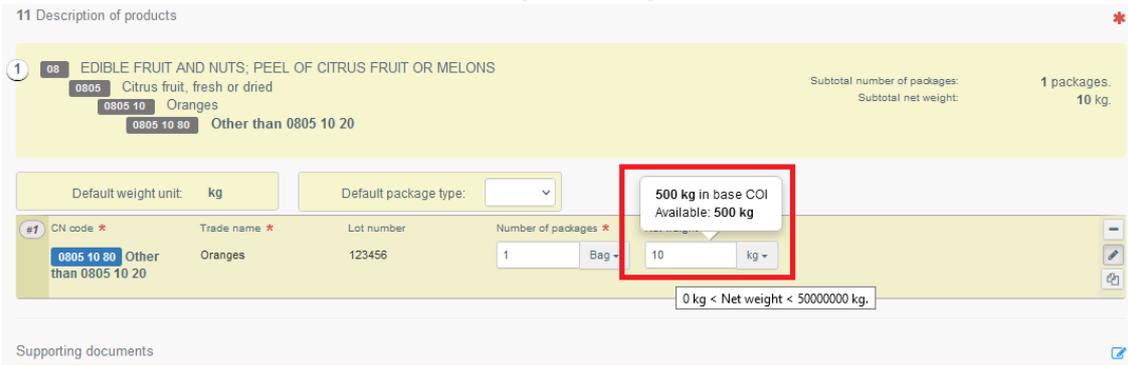
> **Note**: you cannot create an Extract with 100% of the consignment from the main COI. When you try, an error message appears when submitting the COI, informing you that you have selected an amount in box 11 that is too high. The same happens, if you select an amount higher than the amount that is still available.

However, if the Base for Extract is for several rows of consignment, the total taken into account is the gross weight in box 16. In these cases you are able to extract 100 % of one row in box 11, which is then deducted from the total gross weight for the security cross-check when you submit the Extract.

Updating an Extract COI

The importer or RFC user who submitted an Extract COI are able to update "Box 8 - Border control post / control point / point of release for free circulation" of this extract as long as it is in the status "submitted". Updating a box works in the same way as described further above for the main COI.

The users are also able to delete this extract as long as it is in the status ''submitted''. To delete an extract, click on the "delete" button in the right corner at the bottom of the Extract COI:
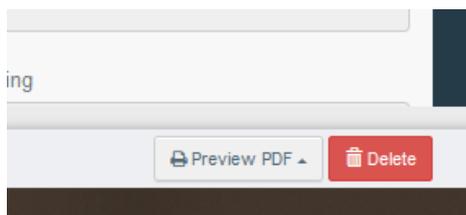
A window appears where the user needs to confirm the deletion:

4   Other available Functions:

Copy as new: this function allows the user to initialise a new COI from an existing one. All the information in boxes 1 – 17 of the COI which is being copied will be kept in the new Document. The only information that will need to be inserted are the "supporting documents", the "Means of transport" and some details in the description of products. All information can be modified. This function saves time when creating a new document if the majority of information is identical. The function is available to importers, exporters and issuing bodies.

*Save as Draft***:** the importer, exporter or issuing body user clicks on "Save as draft" and all progress is saved. The user can exit the page, start a new document etc. but will be able to come back to the draft COI and continue working on it or modify it. (the TRACES reference number is DRAFT.COI.YYYY.XXXXXXX) the draft can only be seen by the initiator or a user with identical roles. Once the draft is submitted or issued, the draft reference number will be converted into an official reference number.

Replace: this function allows the issuing body user to replace an issued COI with a new one. A new COI will be generated and all information contained in the original certificate will be kept in the new COI. All the information can be modified. The two documents will be linked. The replaced COI is available via a direct link from the replacing COI and vice versa. The replacing COI is the one with legal value and will be the one that needs to be signed by the endorsing authority and the first consignee.

> *Note:* The control authority or control body may carry out this action only, if it has been accepted by the competent authority of the Member State.

Linking a CHED to a COI

> **Attention**
>
> For organic and in-conversion products subject to organic checks at border control posts, if the operator intends to release the products in the consignment covered by the CHED on the EU market as organic or in-conversion products it is mandatory to insert the product type 'organic' in the CHED in TRACES (see below) and to link a COI to the CHED.

To do so, you must select the product type "organic" inside a commodity box of the CHED:
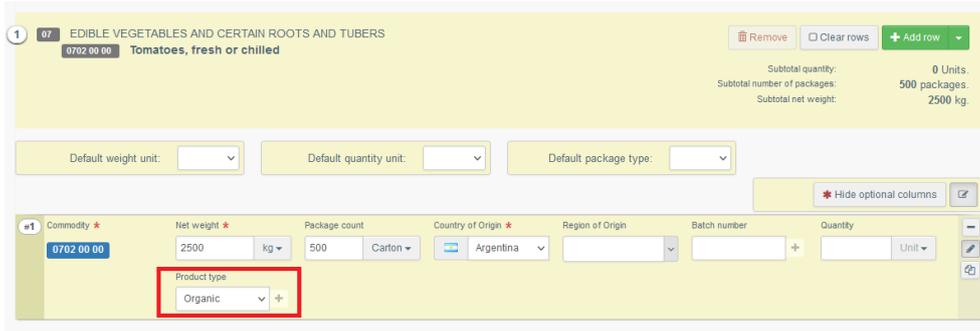
When this product type has been selected, it becomes mandatory to link a COI to the CHED inside the accompanying documents. Click on the option "Add certificate reference" and select the COI that should be linked to the CHED:
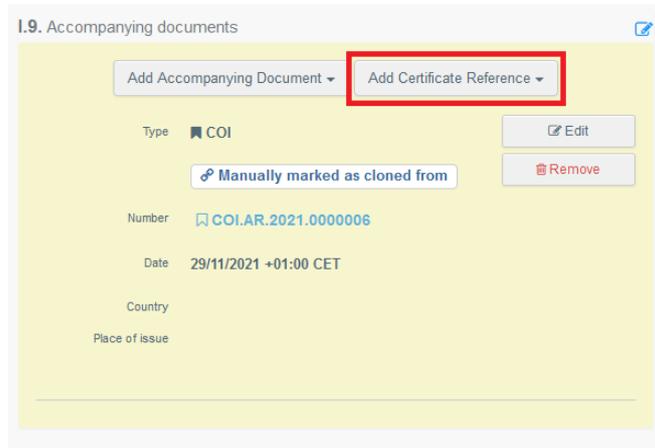
If a CHED and a COI are linked, the link automatically appears in the "Links" box below the reference number of a COI
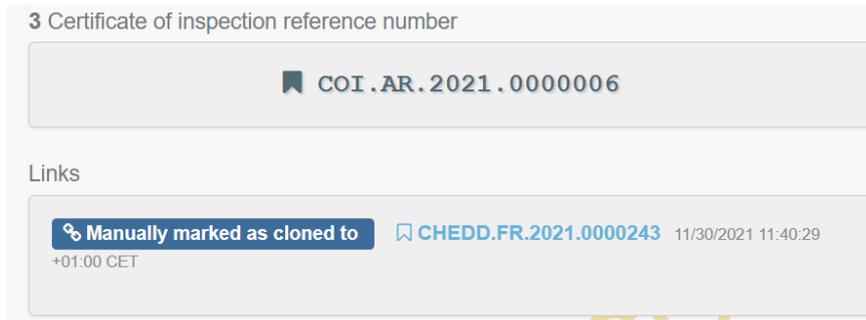

Attention!

The rule above does NOT apply to products exempted from organic checks at border control posts (that is to say, those for which only a point of release for free circulation can be selected in box 10 of the COI) and this even in the case where by virtue of national law only it is required that those goods be checked at border control posts registered in TRACES as points of release for free circulation and be accompanied by an entry document in the same format as the CHED.

Cloning a COI as CHED

A responsible for the consignment has the possibility to clone a COI as CHED, even if the operator is not mentioned in the COI.

Through the menu go to Documents > COI and click on "clone as CHED":
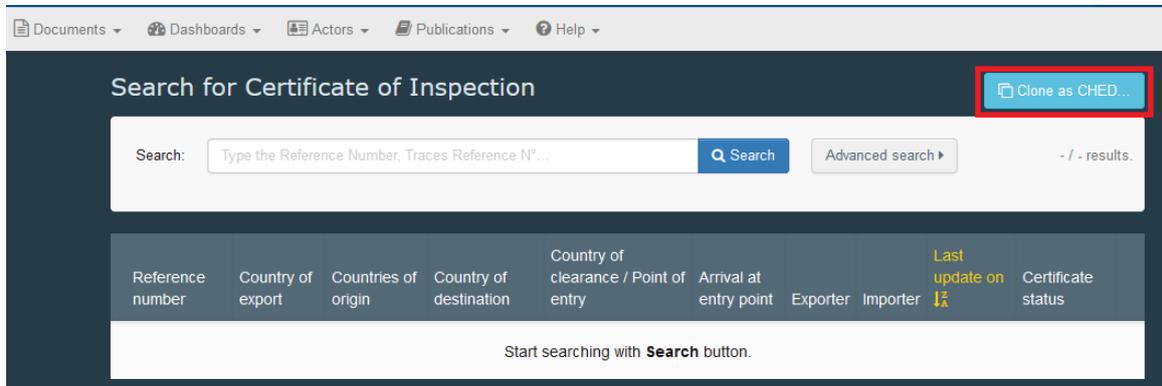
In the window that opens indicate all the relevant information and click on "clone as CHED to connect the two documents:
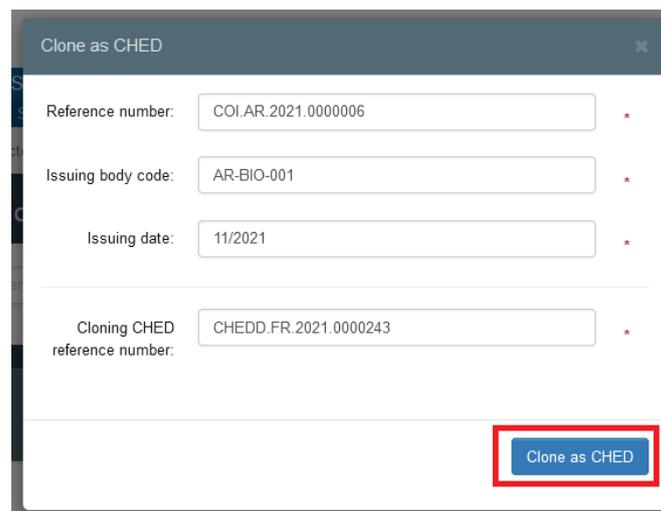
This will link the two indicated documents.