



# Exporting fruit and vegetables from Africa to Great Britain

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# Purpose and contents

This guidance provides African businesses with an overview of the requirements, standards, and processes for sending fruit and vegetables to Great Britain (GB).

The document has 7 sections:

- 1. Key messages** – provides an overview for African exporters
- 2. Process** – outlines the export process from dispatch to arrival at destination
- 3. Checking the requirements** – signposts the main resources to check which requirements apply for the product and country of dispatch
- 4. Meeting requirements for certifications** – describes how to get a Phytosanitary Certificate
- 5. Meeting requirements for marketing standards** – describes how to meet marketing standards
- 6. Preparing the consignment** – outlines how to prepare for dispatch and highlights the checks needed when the goods arrive in GB
- 7. Important information** – answers the most commonly asked questions about exporting fruit and vegetables to GB

About Growth Gateway: Growth Gateway is a business support service that helps African and UK businesses trade and invest. Growth Gateway's joint public-private sector team connects businesses with UK government trade and investment initiatives, provides business advice and expert support, and includes specialist online information tools. Growth Gateway also supports trade and investment in high potential sectors and markets.

# 1. Key messages

To export fruit and vegetables from Africa to GB, you may need:

- a Phytosanitary Certificate (PC)
- the GB importer to inform UK authorities ahead of the fruit or vegetable products arriving in GB
- labelling to meet the relevant marketing standards

Whether or not these requirements are necessary depends on the product and country of origin.

As a general rule, many fresh fruit and vegetable products require a PC. However, often processed and packaged products (for example, frozen material, or nut or seed butters) do not. There are exceptions, and you should always [check import requirements for plants, plant produce and products](#).

This list includes the products that the Growth Gateway team often answers questions about for PCs:

These products do not need a PC:

- fresh mango
- nut spreads
- edible oils
- dried fruits
- spices
- coffee beans (roasted)
- palm oil

These products need a PC:

- avocado
- coffee beans (green)
- fresh chillies
- casava

None of the products listed here require Specific Marketing Standards (SMS). Because of this, SMS quality, labelling and certification do not apply. However, you should check General Marketing Standards (GMS) – go to section 5 for more information.

## 2. Process

As an African exporter, to export to GB you must first check GB sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) requirements (more information in section 3).

If you need a Phytosanitary Certificate, you must also meet the requirements before you prepare and dispatch your consignment.

### Meet the requirements

You must:

- Get an appropriate certificate from your national plant health authority (more information in section 4)
- certify the PC (more information in section 4)
- comply with marketing standards, if needed (more information in section 5)
- share a copy of the PC and other consignment details with the GB importer

### Prepare the consignment before you dispatch it

You must attach a copy of the PC to the consignment or send by post to the Animal and Plant Health Agency (England and Wales) or Scottish Agricultural Science Agency (Scotland) – you can read more information on preparing your consignment in section 6.

# 3. Checking the requirements

As a general rule, many fresh fruit and vegetable products require a Phytosanitary Certificate (PC) and pre-notification ('Regulated and Notifiable'). However, processed and packaged products (for example, frozen material, or nut or seed butters) often do not require this ('Unregulated').

Fruit and vegetables fall into 5 categories of phytosanitary control:

- 'prohibited' – can only bring into Great Britain if you get a scientific research licence or derogation
- 'prohibited (pending risk assessment)' – can only bring into Great Britain if Defra assesses risk
- 'regulated and notifiable' – can only bring into Great Britain with a PC and advanced notification of landing
- 'regulated' – can only bring into Great Britain with a PC and after you complete a customs entry (a small number of these consignments may need advanced notification on CHIEF (Customs Handling of Import and Export Freight))
- 'unregulated' – can bring into Great Britain without a PC or advanced notification

You can check the detailed list for [import requirements for plants, plant produce and products](#) to find out whether you need a PC for the product you want to export to GB.

Note that this guidance helps you understand how to import products that are 'regulated and notifiable', 'regulated', and 'unregulated'. If your product is under 'prohibited' and 'prohibited (pending risk assessment)' categories, email Defra at [UKNPPO@defra.gov.uk](mailto:UKNPPO@defra.gov.uk). You can find more information at:

- [market access for high-risk imports – UK Plant Health Information Portal](#)
- [moving specified plants, plant pests, pathogens and soil](#)

# 4. Meeting requirements for certifications

If required, you must get a Phytosanitary Certificate (PC) for each consignment from the plant health authority in your country.

The PC is a statement from the plant health authority that the consignment:

- has been officially inspected
- complies with legal requirements for entry into GB
- is free from quarantine pests and diseases

PCs must be issued no more than 14 days before dispatching the consignment from the country of export.

The PC can be signed by any authorised public officer from the National Plant Protection Organisation of the country of export.

This list provides the names of authorities that can issue PCs in the African countries from which Growth Gateway has had the most business queries:

- Kenya – Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service
- South Africa – Department for Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development
- Ghana – Ministry of Food and Agriculture, Plant Protection and Regulatory Services Directorate

When a PC is required, the GB importer (or their agent) must pre-notify of any import consignments of goods. They should do this using the Procedure for Electronic Application for Certificates (PEACH) system (or a new service, the Import of Products, Animals, Food and Feed System (IPAFFS)).

Using PEACH is mandatory – there is no paper-based alternative.

[Get more information on using the PEACH system to import plants and fresh produce](#)

Resources: [import plants and plant products from non-EU countries to Great Britain and Northern Ireland](#)

# 5. Meeting requirements for marketing standards

The Special Marketing Standards (SMS) and General Marketing Standards (GMS) include quality and labelling rules that your products must comply with at each stage of production and marketing.

The SMS applies to:

- apples
- table grapes
- kiwi fruit
- citrus fruit (including oranges, lemons and fruit that's easy to peel)
- peaches and nectarines
- pears
- strawberries
- lettuces (including curly green and broad leaves that are eaten uncooked in salads)
- sweet peppers
- tomatoes

There is a range of [marketing standards for fresh fruit and vegetables](#).

All goods that have to meet the SMS need a certificate of conformity before they can enter Great Britain.

Non-EU countries with Authorised Inspection Service (AIS) status can issue a certificate of conformity to show that the product meets the SMS. The product must originate from the country issuing the certificate.

The African countries that have GB AIS status for all fresh fruit and vegetables are:

- Kenya
- Morocco
- Senegal
- South Africa

# 6. Preparing the consignment

When preparing your consignment for dispatch be aware that when it arrives in GB, your consignment must be presented for inspection to check it:

- includes all required documents
- contains the plants you have declared
- is free from pests and diseases

If your consignment does not pass an inspection, it may be destroyed, treated, or sent back at your expense.

If you're travelling with your consignment, you can provide Phytosanitary Certificates (PCs) and reforwarding certificates for inspection yourself when you arrive in GB.

If you're shipping the consignment by post, put the certificates in an envelope marked 'For the attention of Border Force' and attach it to the outside of your package.

If you have more than one package, attach certified copies of the PCs and reforwarding certificates to each package.

You can also submit the PC after the goods arrive but this must be within 3 days of the consignment reaching GB. For goods arriving in England and Wales you should post the PC to the appropriate Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA).

For consignments arriving at Heathrow or Gatwick send the certificate to:

Animal and Plant Health Agency  
1st Floor  
Building 4  
Heathrow Boulevard  
284 Bath Road  
West Drayton  
Middlesex  
UB7 0DQ

For consignments arriving anywhere else send the certificate to:

Animal and Plant Health Agency  
Foss House  
1st Floor  
Kings Pool  
1-2 Peasholme Green

York  
YO1 7PX

For goods arriving into Scotland, the Scottish Government is responsible – check the [Scottish Agricultural Science Agency website](#) for more information.

Resources: [Import plants and plant products from non-EU countries to Great Britain and Northern Ireland - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

# 7. Important information

This section includes frequently asked question and responses. Visit us at <https://growthgateway.campaign.gov.uk> for more information.

## 1. Get a Phytosanitary Certificate

You can get a Phytosanitary Certificate from your country's plant health authority. Read section 4 for a list of plant health authorities.

## 2. Certify a Phytosanitary Certificate

The national plant health authority in your country can provide the certification.

## 3. How far in advance can the Phytosanitary Certificate be certified before dispatch

Certification should be done no more than 14 days before dispatch.

## 4. Attaching the Phytosanitary Certificate to the consignment

If you're shipping the consignment by post, put the certificates in an envelope marked 'For the attention of Border Force' and attach it to the outside of your package. You can also send it to the Animal and Plant Health Agency within 3 days of consignment arrival.

## 5. Submit information to PEACH

The GB importer must submit information to PEACH (or the new IPAFFS). However, the exporter must give the GB importer a copy of the Phytosanitary Certificate so they can submit this as part of the application.

## 6. How far in advance of goods arriving should information be submitted on PEACH

The Animal and Plant Health Agency requires that importers provide the pre-notification material:

- at least 4 working hours before the goods land in GB, for air and 'roll-on-roll-off' freight
- at least 1 working day before the goods arrive in GB for all other freight

## 7. What food safety or quality standards need to be met to export to GB

The government guidance (find more information on this in section 3) provides information on food safety and quality standards.