



ELECTRONIC EXPORT CERTIFICATION SYSTEM (ECOS)

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. What is ECOS?

ECOS is a cloud hosted, web-application for electronic export management. The system was developed by the Western Cape Government and is completely government owned. It is developed to support trade by ensuring that all export compliance information is located in one place that is easy to navigate and well defined.

ECOS will form part of a Single Window facility providing trade facilitation that allows parties involved in trade and transport to lodge standardized information and documents with a single entry point to fulfil all import, export, and transit-related regulatory requirements where individual data elements should only be submitted once electronically.

2. Why did the WCDoA start working on ECOS?

Due to the location and history of South Africa, we have an extremely diverse set of products, factories, and processes. We also have a complex food and export legislative system with different authorities (>6 religious, state and authorised signatories) with overlap between authorities as often we work on similar products and the same locations. Due to our endemic diseases, our rich diversity of wildlife, and animal health system we need to have a systems approach to disease risk mitigation and international trade in animal products. We must therefore focus on commodity-based trade and compartmentalisation if we are to remain internationally relevant when it comes to trade in animal products.

South Africa is busy with a project called LITSSA (Livestock Identification and Traceability System South Africa) which is divided into two main parts.

A. Identification and traceability of cattle (for now) from birth to abattoir.

B. Identification and traceability of products from abattoir to export or retail

The Western Cape is developing and piloting ECOS as we have over 160 export factories and experience in many different types of production processes as well as retail export. We are hoping ECOS will become the national system for composite and animal-based products.



South Africa currently has no electronic system, which tracks the movement of animal products, that are to be exported in line with the guidelines of the Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) and Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations.

An electronic data management system – Export Certificate Office System (ECOS) – developed by the Western Cape Government will address these deficiencies and create a platform that supports market access and export certification in line with global standards.

South Africa has a Ecert system that is linked to the plant hub and ECOS will “talk” to the rest of the world via that system to create a unified international view of South African products.

3. What are the benefits/goals of ECOS?

The benefits/goals of ECOS is to:

- simplify and expedite the clearance of the consignment at the point of entry or the point of control
- provide for accurate identification of the consignment being certified and the parties involved in the production and issuance of the certificate
- facilitate the importing country’s assessment of the validity of the certificate
- minimize the potential for fraud

4. Is this limited to just export of Animal Products?

The main focus is on animal and animal containing products. As the system has been developed to be flexible by making use of the international trade organisation harmonised system (Tariff codes) codes.

5. Is this system limited to the Western Cape?

The Western Cape is piloting the system but it is open for use for any province in South Africa.

6. How will it impact the farmer at grass route level?

South Africa is investing in an animal identification and traceability system that takes the traceability of the animal from birth or identification until slaughter. The value of the of ECOS in this is to maintain the traceability of the animal from slaughter through processing.



7. Can small enterprises also make use of this system?

This is more for food producers than farmers. It is applicable to farms when they would like to export their products directly. For example raw milk. Small food processors are welcome to make use of the system. They will benefit by being able to identify markets that are open for their products and taking note of the requirements that they need to meet for these markets.

8. Where can one access it?

You can visit our website on www.elsenburg.com and find ECOS under our Veterinary Services. Don't forget to check out the Western Cape Department of Agriculture YouTube channel with an [ECOS playlist](#) to help clients navigate the system.

9. Who are some of the key stakeholder involved in this system?

Since inception of the system we have had a very diverse steering committee. The committee has consisted of technical representatives of the National Department of Health, National Regulator of Compulsory Specifications, Department of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural development, inspection services and veterinary services, Perishable Products Export Control Board, CSIR, Our ZA register export facilities and our exporters.

10. Where can one find more information about this system?

For more information about ECOS and the many other services offered by the Western Cape Department of Agriculture, visit our website at: www.elsenburg.com. Don't forget to check out the Western Cape Department of Agriculture YouTube channel with an [ECOS playlist](#) to help clients navigate the system.