

Third Country EU Digital COVID certificate Equivalence Decision procedure

Version 1.0

1 Onboarding procedure

In case a third country wishes to link up to the EU's Digital COVID Certificate, it should self-assess that its system complies with the EU's specifications described in this document. The checklist, which you find below, must be used for the self-assessment.

If they wish to link up with the EU's Digital Covid Certificate, third countries are encouraged to issue their COVID certificates according to the exact same technical specifications used by Member States in accordance with the EU DCC Regulation (EU DCC specifications). Third countries are encouraged to make use of available open source implementations.

The EU DCC specifications covering data structure and encoding mechanisms, including the QR code, which will ensure that all certificates, whether digital or on paper, can be read and verified across the EU are available at https://ec.europa.eu/health/ehealth/covid-19_en and more specifically:

- Detailed technical specifications:
 - [Volume 1: formats and trust management](#)
 - [Volume 2: Digital Green Certificate Gateway](#)
 - [Volume 3: 2D Barcode Specifications](#)
 - [Volume 4: Digital Green Certificate Applications](#)
 - [Volume 5: Public Key Certificate Governance](#)
 - [EU DCC Validation Rules](#)
- Datasets and value sets:
 - [Value sets](#)
 - [JSON Schema for Digital Green Certificates](#)

If a third country applies the EU DCC specifications in full, it follows that the conditions set in Article 8 EU DCC Regulation¹ are fulfilled. It will indeed be established that the third country certificates: i) are in accordance with standards and technological systems interoperable with the trust framework for the EU Digital COVID Certificate (EU DCC), ii) can be verified for their authenticity, validity and integrity iii) contain the data set out in the Annex of the EU DCC Regulation.

If the result of this self-assessment is conclusive, a formal request should be addressed via an official letter to the Commission (official letter on behalf of the government addressed to the Secretary-General of the European Commission, Ms Ilze Juhansone), to express the interest of the respective country in the adoption of a decision by the Commission establishing that certificates issued by the respective country should be considered as equivalent to EU Digital COVID Certificates. This letter

¹ [Regulation \(EU\) 2021/953](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 June 2021 on a framework for the issuance, verification and acceptance of interoperable COVID-19 vaccination, test and recovery certificates (EU Digital COVID Certificate) to facilitate free movement during the COVID-19 pandemic

should include as annexes a description of the system developed and the completed checklist. Upon receipt, the Commission will launch the procedure to assess whether a third country applies the EU DCC specifications, and whether the process for the onboarding procedure workflow can be launched, which is the same that Member States have already used to bring their system online within the Union.

If the result of this self-assessment is inconclusive, a fully-fledged equivalence decision cannot be granted to a third country. Entry to the EU for non-essential reasons would remain possible under the conditions set in Council Recommendation 2020/912. Technical level contact can be sought with the Commission if any clarification is required on these conditions.

1. Initiation of the procedure –First contacts, pre-checks of readiness, technical clarification.

- ✓ The third country completes the Evaluation Checklist (Annex I) through which the third country will self-assess its readiness to enter the technical part of the onboarding procedure.
- ✓ If the assessment of the Evaluation Checklist concludes that the applicant country is technically fit to connect to EU Gateway (onboarding), go to step 2.
- ✓ Otherwise, the Commission will, accordingly, inform the third country about this.

To manage the flow of potential applications, priority will have to be established prior to moving to Step 2, also taking into account the Council Recommendation 2020/912² and resource constraints.

2. Country is deemed to be technically fit for onboarding procedure

- ✓ The third country is invited to submit its application for an Equivalence Decision on the basis of the onboarding procedure via the following email address: EU-DIGITAL-COVID-CERTIFICATE-COMMITTEE@ec.europa.eu
- ✓ The Commission acknowledges the receipt of application and provides the applicant country the contact details of the team that will test the compatibility of the third country certificates with the EU-DCC specifications.
- ✓ The procedure described in Annex II details the technical screening process.
- ✓ If the applicant country falls under the scope of Article 3(5) of the EU DCC Regulation, in order to continue with the procedure the Commission will require from the third country formal assurances that the third country will accept Digital Covid Certificates issued by Member States.
- ✓ The Commission will notify the third country of the result of the technical compliance tests

² [Council Recommendation \(EU\) 2020/912](#) on the temporary restriction on non-essential travel into the EU and the possible lifting of such restriction-Amendment of Annex I (Council Doc nr. 9878/21, 16 June 2021)

3. Equivalence Decision

- ✓ Upon a motivated positive opinion from the Commission technical team, the Commission will adopt the implementing act relative to the third country³ and inform the third country of a positive Equivalence Decision

4. Go live

- ✓ As soon as the Equivalence Decision has been adopted, the Commission will invite the third country to submit an application form (Annex III) including relevant information to connect the country to the production environment.
- ✓ upon assessment of the application form, the Commission will invite the third country to register their production certificates and promote them to the production environment.

³ Subject to a positive opinion by the comitology committee