HPRA
An tÚdarás Rialála Táirgí Sláinte
Health Products Regulatory Authority

Guide to
One-Off (Non-Routine) Import/Export of Tissues and Cells for Human Application Involving Countries Outside the European Union

1 SCOPE

Note: Following the publication of EU Directive 2015/566 and S.I. 33 of 2019, a definition has been provided for 'one-off import'. Previously the HPRA have referred to this activity as 'non-routine import'. Where 'non-routine' was previously referenced in documentation we have now replaced it with 'one-off' and included 'non-routine' in parentheses.

This guide is issued by the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) to provide guidance on the one-off (non-routine) import or export of tissues and cells for human application to or from countries outside the European Union (EU) by an authorised tissue establishment in Ireland. Routine import or export of tissues and cells is covered in a separate guideline, 'Guide to routine import/export of tissues and cells', available on the 'Publications and Forms' section of the HPRA website www.hpra.ie.

2 DEFINITIONS

Cells are individual human cells or a collection of human cells when not bound by any form of connective tissue.

Distribution means transportation and delivery of tissues and cells intended for human application.

Export of tissues/cells for human application is defined as sending tissues or cells to countries outside the EU (i.e. third countries).

Human application is the use of tissues or cells intended for human applications.

Importing activity means any activity consisting of any aspect of -

a) the importation of human tissues and cells intended for human application into the European Union;
b) the importation of manufactured products derived from human tissues and cells intended for human application, where those products are not covered by other European Union legislation;
c) the importation of human tissues and cells which are intended to be used exclusively in manufactured products which are covered by other European Union legislation.

Importing tissue establishment means a tissue bank or unit of a hospital or another body established within the Union which is party to a contractual agreement with a third country

supplier for the import into the Union of tissues and cells coming from a third country intended for human application.

One-off (non-routine) import means the import of any specific type of tissue or cell which is for the personal use of an intended recipient or recipients known to the importing tissue establishment and the third country supplier before the importation occurs. Such an import of any specific type of tissue or cell shall normally not occur more than once for any given recipient. Imports from the same third country supplier taking place on a regular or repeated basis shall not be considered to be one-off imports.

Third country supplier means a tissue establishment or another body, established in a third country, which is responsible for the export to the Union of tissues and cells it supplies to an importing tissue establishment. A third country supplier may also carry out one or more of the activities, which take place outside of the Union, of donation, procurement, testing, processing, preservation, storage or distribution of tissues and cells imported into the Union.

Tissue is defined as all constituent parts of the human body formed by cells.

Tissue establishment is a tissue bank or a unit of a hospital or another body where activities of processing, preservation, storage or distribution of human tissues and cells are undertaken.

3 IMPORT/EXPORT OF TISSUES OR CELLS FOR HUMAN APPLICATION ON A ONE-OFF (NON-ROUTINE) BASIS

3.1 Import of tissues or cells for human application on a one-off (non-routine) basis

Authorised importing tissue establishments in Ireland can be additionally authorised by the HPRA for the import of tissues/cells from organisations outside the EU on a one-off (non-routine) basis. This specific activity can be listed on the tissue establishment authorisation granted by the HPRA and in the case of medically assisted reproduction (MAR), it allows for the movement of patients' gametes and embryos as required.

This means that these importing tissue establishments may import tissues/cells from an organisation outside the EU on a one-off basis (e.g. at the patient's request).

The tissue establishment authorisations of those importing tissue establishments authorised for the activity of import on a one-off (non-routine) basis have specific special conditions with which they must comply:

(i) The Responsible Person (or delegated individual) of the importing tissue establishment must notify the HPRA in writing, prior to the one-off (non-routine) importation of tissues or cells from countries outside the EU, specifying:
- the type of tissues or cells to be imported
- the name and address of the importing tissue establishment or organisation from which the tissues or cells are to be imported
- the prescribed activities performed in the third country
- the tissues or cells code or reference number

(ii) The Responsible Person (or delegated individual) of the importing tissue establishment must provide evidence to the HPRA to confirm that tissues or cells which are to be imported into the European Community are tested in conformity with the requirements of S.I. 158 of 2006, including any additional tests which may be necessary for specific tissues or cells, types of donors or epidemiological situations.

(iii) The importing tissue establishment will declare to inform the HPRA if the tissues and cells imported are not subsequently used for the intended recipient and provide a justification.

(iv) There should be a third-party agreement in place between the Irish importing tissue establishment and the third country organisation defining the respective responsibilities in relation to the proposed import. In addition the Irish importing tissue establishment should have documented evidence in relation to the third country organisation's accreditation/authorisation.

To comply with these conditions, tissue establishments intending to import tissues or cells from third countries must complete the 'Notification of one-off (non-routine) import/export of tissues or cells for human application' form. In addition a copy of the service level agreement between the Irish tissue establishment and the third country supplier should be provided to the HPRA.

The import arrangements will not have been previously assessed by the HPRA on inspection and will therefore be followed up at the next routine inspection of the tissue establishment.

3.2 Export of tissue or cells for human application on a one-off (non-routine) basis

Tissue establishments in Ireland can be authorised by the HPRA for the export of tissues or cells to organisations outside the EU on a one-off (non-routine) basis. This specific activity is listed on the tissue establishment authorisation granted by the HPRA to those tissue establishments.

This means that these tissue establishments may export tissues or cells to an organisation outside the EU on a one-off basis (e.g. at the patient's request).

The tissue establishment authorisations of those tissue establishments authorised for the activity of export on a one-off (non-routine) basis have specific special conditions with which they must comply:

(i) The Responsible Person (or delegated individual) of the tissue establishment must notify the HPRA in writing, prior to the one-off (non-routine) export of tissues or cells to countries outside the EU, specifying:
- the type of tissues or cells to be exported
- the name and address of the tissue establishment or organisation to which the tissues or cells are to be exported
- the tissues or cells code or reference number, including the single European code (SEC), where relevant. Further information on the SEC can be found on the HPRA website at https://www.hpra.ie/homepage/blood-tissues-organs/special-topics.

(ii) There should be a third-party agreement in place between the Irish tissue establishment and the third country organisation defining the respective responsibilities in relation to the proposed export. In addition the Irish tissue establishment should have documented evidence in relation to the third country organisation's accreditation/authorisation.

To comply with this condition, tissue establishments intending to export tissues or cells to third countries must complete the 'Notification of one-off (non-routine) import/export of tissues or cells for human application' form.

The arrangements of such exports will not have been previously assessed by the HPRA on inspection and will therefore be followed up at the next routine inspection of the tissue establishment.

3.3 Who should complete the notification form

The 'Notification of one-off (non-routine) import/export of tissues or cells for human application' form **must** be completed prior to one-off (non-routine) imports or exports by tissue establishments authorised for this activity. The form must be signed by the individual completing the form and by the tissue establishment's Responsible Person.

4 NOTES ON THE COMPLETION OF THE NOTIFICATION FORM

Following are some brief guidance notes on the completion of the 'Notification of one-off (non-routine) import/export of tissues or cells for human application' form.

4.1 Total number of units of tissues or cells to be imported or exported

In this instance, the 'number of units' means the number of primary containers used to package the tissues or cells, for example:

Tissues or cells	One unit equals:
Medically assisted reproduction	One vial/straw of partner sperm or one straw containing embryos (e.g. 4 vials/straws of partner sperm and 3 straws containing embryos would be a total of 7 units of tissues/cells to be imported)
Skeletal tissues	One individually packaged graft (e.g. one femoral head, one unit of demineralised bone, one container of bone chips, one femoral strut, one osteochondral allograft, one individually packaged tendon or part of tendon)
Haematopoietic stem cells	One single bag or container of cells
Ocular tissues	One individually packaged or contained graft (e.g. one cornea, one piece of sclera)
Skin	One container of skin, regardless of the area of skin it contains
Amniotic membrane	One container of tissue, regardless of the area of tissue it contains

Cardiovascular tissues	One individually packaged or contained graft (e.g. one valve, one package containing one or more lengths of vessel)

4.2 Type of tissues or cells to be imported or exported

Please provide a description of each unit of tissues or cells to be imported, e.g. 'straw containing 2 embryos' or 'unit of stem cells'. Please also provide the assigned code or reference number used for traceability purposes.

5 FEES

An application fee must be submitted with each application for one-off (non-routine) import and export of tissues and cells. The fee code for applications is 330.

For more information, please refer to section 4 of the 'Guide to Fees for Human Products' available under the 'Publications and Forms' section on the HPRA website www.hpra.ie.

6 FURTHER INFORMATION

Please email any queries to compliance@hpra.ie.

HPRA
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