

PRACTICAL GUIDE · FREIGHT FORWARDING AND CUSTOMS

Clearing goods through customs at the port of Conakry: step by step

Importing into Guinea (Guinée, Guinea-Conakry) almost always means going through the Autonomous Port of Conakry. Here, step by step, is what happens between the vessel's arrival and delivery to your site, and what you can prepare to avoid losing days.

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01 Before the vessel arrives

Customs clearance starts before the goods reach the quay. The earlier the documents are complete, the faster the declaration goes in.

- The bill of lading (B/L) or air waybill (AWB).
- The commercial invoice and the packing list.
- The certificate of origin, which determines the applicable tariff.
- Depending on the goods: sanitary or phytosanitary certificates, technical approvals, safety data sheets.
- The importer's tax number (NIF) and, for a project under an agreement, the reference of its approval or exemptions.

> The shipping line's arrival notice starts the count of free days. That is the right time to send the documents to your customs broker.

02 The customs declaration

The declaration is lodged on SYDONIA, the Guinean customs IT system, by a licensed customs broker. For a definitive import, it is the declaration for home use, commonly called the IM4.

It sets out the description of the goods, their tariff heading in the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET), their value, origin and weight. The quality of the description and of the classification drives everything else.

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03 Duty assessment: duties and taxes

Customs then calculates the duties and taxes: this is the assessment, called liquidation. Customs duty follows the bands of the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (0, 5, 10, 20 or 35% depending on the product), plus community levies and charges and VAT.

The basis is the customs value, generally the CIF value: price of the goods, freight and insurance to Conakry. The assessed amount is paid at the bank, and the receipt is attached to the file.

> For a first idea of the amount, our online estimator applies the official tariff. The final figure is always the one on the assessment.

04 Inspection and release order

Depending on the channel assigned, the file goes through a documentary check, a scanner or a physical inspection. Once the check is cleared and the duties paid, customs issues the release order (BAE, bon à enlever).

05 Port, terminal and shipping line

In parallel, the terminal and port charges must be paid and the delivery order (DO) obtained from the shipping line. For a container, the line often requires a deposit, refunded when the empty container is returned.

- Storage: terminal storage charges after the free period.
- Demurrage: shipping line charges when the container stays in the port beyond the free time.
- Detention: shipping line charges when the container is not returned empty on time after leaving the port.

06 Pickup and delivery

With the release order and the DO, the goods leave the terminal for your warehouse, construction site or mine, in Conakry or inland: Kamsar, Boké, Kindia, Mamou, Kankan, Siguiri or further. For out-of-gauge cargo, an abnormal load convoy is prepared in advance.

07 Where the days are lost

- Incomplete or inconsistent documents (weight, value, description).
- A description too vague, which forces the goods to be reclassified.
- Late payment of duties, which delays the release order.
- No truck booked when the release order and the DO are ready.

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Every day beyond the free time costs storage and demurrage. The best saving is still a file prepared before arrival.

? Frequently asked questions

What is an IM4?

It is the declaration for home use lodged on SYDONIA for a definitive import into Guinea.

What does BAE mean?

Bon à enlever, the release order: the customs document that authorises the goods to leave once the checks are done and the duties paid.

What is the difference between demurrage and detention?

Demurrage runs while the container stays in the port after the free time; detention runs when a container that has left the port is not returned empty on time.

General information guide written by TransXpress. Customs rules and procedures change: every file is checked against the documents and the regulations in force. This guide is neither a quotation nor a commitment.

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