

PRACTICAL GUIDE · INTERNATIONAL PURCHASING

Finding a reliable supplier in China from Guinea: verification, contract, inspection and shipping

China is often the most competitive source for the equipment, parts, materials and finished goods that Guinean companies need. The risk is not the country, it is the supplier: a trading company presented as a factory, a perfect sample followed by different production, or a payment made with no safeguard. Here is a simple method to reduce these risks, from the search to arrival at the port of Conakry.

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01 How do you recognise a reliable supplier?

A reliable Chinese supplier is a company whose legal existence, actual business and production capacity can be checked on documents, and which accepts a sample, a written contract, a pre-shipment inspection and payment in stages. If a counterpart refuses any of these conditions, treat it as a warning sign, whatever the price offered.

The search often starts on business-to-business platforms, at trade fairs or through recommendations. These sources give you names; they do not guarantee reliability. Verification comes next, supplier by supplier.

02 Checking the supplier's identity and capacity

- Ask for the business licence and compare the exact company name with the one that will appear on the invoice and on the beneficiary bank account.
- Check the company's registration in the official Chinese company registers, directly or through a verification provider.
- Tell a factory from a trading company: both can work, but you must know who you are dealing with and who actually manufactures.
- Ask for export references, preferably to West Africa, and the product certificates relevant to your goods.
- Where the stakes justify it, have an independent body carry out a factory audit: workshop visit, quality control, real capacity.

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> Beware of a change of bank account announced by email during an order. Always confirm bank details through another channel before paying.

03 The sample: the quality benchmark

The sample is the benchmark for the whole order. Have it approved by the end user (workshop, site, technical department) and keep a sealed unit, or dated photos and measurements. If production is disputed, that benchmark settles it.

- For technical products, compare the sample with the data sheet and the required standards.
- For branded or packaged products, also approve the labelling, markings and packing.
- Record any requested change and have it confirmed in writing before production.

04 The contract: put in writing what matters

A signed purchase order or contract protects better than an exchange of messages. It must be precise on the points that most often cause problems.

- The exact specification, the reference of the approved sample and the accepted tolerances.
- The quantity, packing, case marking and loading method (container, pallets, lashing).
- The Incoterm (for example FOB Chinese port or CFR / CIF Conakry), which sets who pays for freight and insurance, and where risk passes.
- The production and shipping schedule, and the consequences of a delay.
- The payment terms, the right to inspect before shipment and the procedure in case of non-conformity.
- The documents to be supplied for shipping and for customs clearance in Guinea.

05 Pre-shipment inspection and staged payment

A pre-shipment inspection by an independent body checks quantity, conformity with the sample, packing and loading before the goods leave the factory. It is all the more valuable when part of the price is still to be paid after its result.

1. Deposit with the order, to start production.
2. Pre-shipment inspection, with a report and photos.
3. Balance after a satisfactory inspection, or against a copy of the bill of lading, as the contract provides.
4. For large amounts, other instruments exist, such as the documentary credit: your bank will tell you which options are available.

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06 Shipping and preparing clearance in Conakry

A good order can still be held at the port if the documents do not match. The commercial invoice, the packing list and the bill of lading (B/L, the sea transport document) must show the same description, quantities and weights.

- Ask for a certificate of origin and, depending on the goods, any required certificates of conformity or analysis.
- Check with your forwarder, before shipment, any cargo tracking or inspection documents that may be required under the regulations in force.
- Have the goods described precisely on the invoice: a vague description complicates tariff classification and can delay the file.
- Send the documents to your forwarder before the vessel arrives.

07 What we do for you

TransXpress consults suppliers, buys on your behalf, arranges collection through its partner agents, consolidation and shipping by sea or air, then declares and clears the goods in Conakry. Send us the product specification, the quantities and, if you have them, the name and offer of the supplier you are considering.

? Frequently asked questions

Do you have to pay a Chinese supplier in full with the order?

It is not an obligation: many orders are paid with a deposit and then a balance after inspection or against documents. The terms are negotiated and written into the contract.

How do you know whether you are dealing with a factory or a trader?

Compare the business licence, the declared activity and the production address, and have the factory checked on site if the stakes justify it. A trader can be a good supplier, provided you know it.

Which documents should you ask the supplier for to clear goods in Guinea?

At least the commercial invoice, the packing list, the bill of lading or air waybill and the certificate of origin; depending on the goods, certificates of conformity or analysis.

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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