

Central African Republic

This guide is compiled from the IAM Country Guide for reference only. Customs regulations change frequently; please consult your Seapoe relocation consultant for the latest requirements before shipping.

Updated 2026-08-19

Documents

Required Documents

Specific Information

Goods NOT exempt from import taxes (even within personal effects shipments):

- Computers: 80% CIF + 19% VAT
- Alcohol: 67.5% CIF + 19% VAT
- Tobacco: 77.5% CIF + 19% VAT
- New electrical appliances: 80% CIF + 19% VAT
- Vehicles: 48% to 78% depending on engine power + 19% VAT

Diplomatic shipments: Duty-free except for computers (80% CIF + 19% VAT) and vehicles (0.5% CIF).

BSC / CTN requirement: The Bordereau de Suivi de Cargaison is a compulsory cargo tracking document for all sea freight entering the Central African Republic. It must be obtained at the port of origin before the shipment departs. Failure to obtain this document will delay or block customs clearance.

All shipments are physically inspected by Customs.

CEMAC framework: The Central African Republic is a member of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), along with Cameroon, Chad, Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon. CEMAC countries apply a Common External Tariff (CET) with rates ranging from 0% to 30% (with some higher rates for luxury goods). A Community Integration Tax (TCI) of 1% applies to imports from outside CEMAC. An ECCAS Community Integration Contribution of 0.4% applies to imports from outside the broader ECCAS region. An OHADA levy of 0.05% also applies. As of January 2026, a broader CEEAC-CEMAC common external tariff harmonization process is underway.

Regulatory update (2026): The CEEAC (Economic Community of Central African States) and CEMAC are harmonizing their common external tariffs. Customs duties under the new framework range from 0% to 40% depending on product type. VAT and excise duties remain set at the national level and are not included in the CET framework. Confirm current applicable rates with the destination agent.

Currency: CFA Franc BEAC (XAF). The CFA Franc is pegged to the Euro at a fixed rate of 1 EUR = 655.957 XAF.

Language: French is the official language. All customs documentation, inventories, and declarations must be in French.

Duties & Taxes

Duty-free conditions: Used personal effects and household goods may be imported with reduced duties provided all required documents are submitted to the destination agent prior to

the shipment's arrival. Duty-free clearance must be applied for and granted before the goods arrive. All documents must be provided to the agent well in advance.

1% import tax: A flat 1% import tax (based on declared value) is levied on all personal effects shipments to the Central African Republic. This applies even when the shipment qualifies for reduced duties.

RGS tax: All shipments are subject to a 0.5% RGS (Redevance Générale Statistique) tax on declared value.

VAT rate: The Central African Republic applies a VAT rate of 19% on most imported goods.

Recommended: Contact the destination agent to ensure all requirements have been met prior to import, especially for differences regarding air / sea / road shipments.

Pre-arrival documentation: All documents must be provided to the destination agent prior to the shipment's arrival. Duty-free clearance must be applied for and granted before the goods reach the Central African Republic. Late or incomplete documentation will result in the shipment being assessed at full commercial duty rates.

French-language inventory required: The valued inventory must be in French, dated, and signed by the owner. This is a strict requirement. Inventories in other languages will not be accepted.

BSC / CTN at origin: The Bordereau de Suivi de Cargaison must be obtained at the port of origin for all sea shipments. This cannot be obtained retroactively.

Routing: The Central African Republic is landlocked. Sea freight typically transits through the port of Douala (Cameroon) and is transported overland to Bangui. Alternative routing through Pointe-Noire (Republic of Congo) via river transport on the Oubangui River is possible but seasonal and less reliable. Air freight arrives at Bangui M'Poko International Airport (BGF).

Transit times and security: Overland transit from Douala to Bangui can take 2 to 4 weeks depending on road conditions, security situation, and customs processing at the Cameroon-CAR border. The security environment in many parts of the country remains volatile. Armed escort may be required for overland transit in certain areas. Consult with the destination agent on current conditions.

Unpredictable expenses: Delays at the Cameroon-CAR border, road conditions, and additional security costs can significantly increase the final cost of a shipment. Budget for contingencies.

ISPM 15 (wood packaging): All wood packaging materials must comply with ISPM 15 standards (heat treated or fumigated, with the IPPC stamp). Non-compliant wood packaging may be refused entry or require fumigation at the owner's expense.

Storage: Warehouse and storage facilities in Bangui are limited. Prolonged storage may expose goods to damage or loss. Arrange for prompt customs clearance and delivery.