

Gabon

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.

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Documents

Documents required for importing used household goods, personal effects, and related shipments.

Required Documents

- Copy of passport
- Original bill of lading (OBL) / air waybill (AWB). No express release or sea waybill accepted.
- Electronic cargo tracking note (BIETC -- Bordereau d'Identification Electronique de Traçabilité des Cargaisons)
- Original valued inventory in French, dated and signed by the owner of the goods
- Invoice for all electrical items less than 6 months old
- Change of residence certificate (available from the shipper's home country embassy)
- End of employment letter from previous employer
- Resident permit / work permit / letter of employment in Gabon (for expatriates)
- Exemption certificate and letter from the Gabon embassy (for diplomats)
- Non-sale certificate (attestation de non-vente)

Specific Information

Document submission deadline: All documents must be provided to the destination agent at least 2 weeks before the shipment arrives, to allow time to apply for and obtain the duty-free clearance certificate.

RUSID tax: Even with duty-free clearance, all owners must pay a tax on imported items of approximately 3% to 4% of the CIF (cost, insurance, and freight) value. This is the RUSID tax (Redevance d'Utilisation du Système Informatique Douanier) and applies to all shipments regardless of exemption status.

Diplomat exemptions: Diplomats do not need to be physically present in Gabon to apply for their exemption certificate. The diplomatic mission can process the application on their behalf.

CEMAC membership: Gabon is a member of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC). The common external tariff (CET) applies to imports from outside the CEMAC zone. Goods originating from other CEMAC member states (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea) may be subject to reduced or zero tariffs.

Currency: CFA franc (XAF), pegged to the euro at a fixed rate of 655.957 XAF per 1 EUR.

ISPM 15: Wood packaging materials (pallets, crates, dunnage) must comply with ISPM 15 standards (heat-treated and marked). Non-compliant wood packaging may be refused entry or require fumigation at the port, causing delays and additional costs.

Language requirement: The inventory and all supporting documents must be in French. Gabon is a Francophone country and customs officers typically do not process documents in other languages.

Duties & Taxes

Duty-free conditions: Household goods and personal effects may be imported duty-free provided a certificate for free entry is obtained from the Customs head office (Direction Générale des Douanes) prior to the shipment's arrival. The application process typically takes several weeks.

New items subject to tax: All new items less than 6 months old included in the shipment are subject to full customs duties and taxes, even when the rest of the shipment qualifies for duty-free entry. These items must be declared separately with purchase invoices.

Prohibited & Restricted Items

Prohibited Items

- Illegal drugs
- Firearms and ammunition without authorization from the territorial administration (PERMIT REQUIRED)
- Counterfeit goods
- Pornographic materials
- Plants and plant materials (PERMIT REQUIRED -- phytosanitary certificate required from the Ministry of Agriculture for any authorized plant imports)
- Knives and deadly weapons

Restricted / Dutiable Items

Traveller allowances (persons aged 17 and over):
and VisaHQ:

- 200 cigarettes OR 50 cigars OR 200 cigarillos OR 250 grams of tobacco (note: VisaHQ states women may only import cigarettes, though this restriction's current enforcement status is unverified)
- 2 litres of alcoholic drinks
- 50 grams of perfume
- 2 cameras
- Other gifts up to XAF 5,000 in value

Alcohol within shipments: Only "Fond de Cave" (personal wine collection) is acceptable within a household goods shipment. Limit: 20 bottles, duty-free.

Firearms and ammunition: Authorization from the territorial administration (Ministère de l'Intérieur) is required before import. Import without prior authorization is prohibited.

Currency export limits: Holiday trips allow export of up to XAF 200,000 in local currency or the equivalent in foreign currency. Business trips allow up to XAF 25,000 per day with a maximum of XAF 500,000, or foreign currency equivalent.

Consignment Instructions

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

Document lead time is critical: The 2-week minimum for document submission to the destination agent is essential. The duty-free exemption certificate from Customs headquarters cannot be obtained quickly, and shipments arriving before the exemption is granted will be subject to full duties or held at the port incurring storage charges.

Inventory requirements: Original valued inventory in French, signed and dated by the owner. Must include detailed descriptions of all items. Electrical items require serial numbers and purchase dates.

Electronic cargo tracking: The BIETC (Bordereau d'Identification Electronique de Traçabilité des

Cargaisons) is mandatory for all shipments to Gabon. This must be arranged before the shipment departs the origin port. Shipments without a valid BIETC will not clear customs.

Port congestion and unpredictable costs: The port at Owendo can experience congestion. Demurrage and storage charges can accumulate rapidly. Advise clients to budget for potential delays and additional port-related expenses.

Language: All customs interactions are conducted in French. The destination agent must be fluent in French for customs processing.