

**Directorate General of Customs – Côte d'Ivoire**  
**28 April 2020**

**Expedited measures adopted by the Directorate General of Customs to manage the COVID-19 pandemic**

The Directorate General of Customs has adopted a number of expedited measures aimed at supporting economic activities as part of the Government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

These measures are aimed at adapting formalities and procedures to the challenging circumstances of this pandemic, and fall under the following headings:

- streamlining of Customs clearance formalities and acceleration of the Customs clearance procedure;
- reorganization of Customs services;
- Economic Support Plan.

**I. STREAMLINING OF FORMALITIES AND ACCELERATION OF THE CUSTOMS CLEARANCE PROCEDURE**

- option for economic operators to send correspondence and applications to e-mail addresses that have been provided for this purpose, so that these documents can be handled electronically and visits to Customs services can be reduced;
- acceptance of documents forwarded electronically (invoices, bills of lading, certificates of origin, insurance certificates, etc.) as valid for Customs clearance purposes;
- secure access to the Automated Customs Clearance System (SYDAM) via any Internet connection, for both economic operators and Customs clearing agents; the aim of this change is to facilitate remote working by allowing Customs operations to be completed from a computer workstation without needing to visit an office;
- suspension of the requirement for certain documents within the framework of documentary checks (cargo tracking note, verification of conformity, etc.);
- reduction in the number of documents required for the handling of VAT credit refunds, in particular through the **suspension of the requirement to produce a declaration of payment in the country of destination or the TIF (International Rail Transit) document**;
- streamlining of the procedure for handling sensitive goods in transit (**five stages instead of seven**), with the transfer of certain checks and authorizations normally carried out by the Director or Sub-Director of Economic Regimes to the Head of the Transit and Certificates Office;
- option for consignees to forward manifests electronically (in PDF format) to the competent Customs services, using the following e-mail addresses:
  - o [dsdpssmanifeste@douanes.ci](mailto:dsdpssmanifeste@douanes.ci) (for the Autonomous Port of Abidjan);
  - o [drsanpedromanifeste@douanes.ci](mailto:drsanpedromanifeste@douanes.ci) (for the Port of San Pedro);

- [dsamanifeste@douanes.ci](mailto:dsamanifeste@douanes.ci) (for Abidjan Airport).

Measures implemented for the purpose of accelerating Customs clearance procedures include the following:

- option for operators to unload sensitive goods directly from the vessel upon presentation of a bill of lading or air waybill stamped by the Customs services;
- increase in the number of approved Customs brokers eligible for the permanent and automatically validated release of goods imported by air on the basis of provisional notes; prior to the outbreak of the crisis, one operator was eligible (BOLLORE Transport & Logistics) – three others are now eligible (**DHL CI, Transit Transport Services (TTS) and Packing Service**);
- extension of the deadline for settling provisional notes for the release of perishable goods and basic foodstuffs imported by air **from 5 days to 15 days**;
- changes to the selection criteria aimed at increasing the number of declarations eligible for expedited circuits, namely release notes (green circuit) and non-intrusive controls (scanner-based controls);
- suspension of wharf checks for high-risk imports or exports, and the replacement of these checks with home visits;
- reduction in the deadline (48 hours instead of five days) for issuing valuation documents for urgent shipments, foodstuffs, perishable products and industrial inputs;
- option for users to submit accounting documents directly to SYDAM World.

## II. REORGANIZATION OF CUSTOMS SERVICES

The following measures have been implemented in keeping with the provisions of the Decree enacted by the Minister for Civil Service:

- changes to working hours:
  - Customs clearance, collection, inspection and support services: 08:00 to 14:00/Monday-Friday;
  - surveillance services at ports, the airport, the Intervention and Research Group (GIRA), the Mobile Rapid Intervention Unit (UMIR) and Regional Directorates: around the clock;
- introduction of a rota system based on the double vacation system in order to ensure that officials can observe social distancing at a minimum of one (1) metre;
- round-the-clock access to the Automated Customs Clearance System (SYDAM);
- scaled-back service for the urgent handling of goods covered by a prior import authorization;
- office opening hours extended beyond 16:00 on working days and Saturday opening for export operations; full containers are handled around the clock, and the scanner is operational at all times;

- designation of certain offices at land borders to serve as economic corridors with a view to avoiding any interruption in the supply of basic necessities to the national market; these include:
  - o eastern border: offices at Takikro and Noé;
  - o northern border: offices at Ouangolodougou and Pogo;
  - o western border: office at Sipilou.

### **III. ECONOMIC SUPPORT PLAN**

Measures provided for under the Government's Economic, Social and Humanitarian Support Plan for businesses include:

- suspension of post-clearance audits and current court proceedings instigated on the basis of such audits for a period of three (3) months;
- exemption from import duties and taxes levied by Customs on health equipment, materials and other health inputs related to the fight against coronavirus (COVID-19).

The Director General of Customs has adopted the following regulatory acts as a framework for the implementation of these facilitating measures:

- Decision No. 052/MPMBPE/DGD of 23 March 2020 on the establishment of a Monitoring Committee;
- Memorandum No. 053/MPMBPE/DGD of 25 March 2020 on the functioning of Customs services during the COVID-19 crisis;
- Decision No. 053/MPMBPE/DGD of 26 March 2020 on the establishment of a Crisis Committee for the duration of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic;
- Circular No. 2077/MPMBPE/DGD of 31 March 2020 on measures to facilitate Customs procedures for the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Circular No. 2078/MPMBPE/DGD of 6 April 2020 on the suspension of post-clearance audits for a period of three (3) months;
- Circular No. 2079/MPMBPE/DGD of 6 April 2020 on streamlining of the procedure for issuing Customs compliance certificates for refunds of VAT credits;
- Circular No. 2080/MPMBPE/DGD of 6 April 2020 on approved Customs brokers eligible for the permanent release procedure on the basis of provisional notes;
- Circular No. 2081/MPMBPE/DGD of 6 April 2020 on the electronic filing of manifests.