

Customs Administration of the Dominican Republic
12 April 2021

1. Which of the measures outlined in the WCO Resolution on the role of Customs in facilitating the cross-border movement of situationally critical medicines and vaccines has your Customs administration implemented in practice? Please provide details of the implementation.

The WCO provided a list so that Customs administrations have the correct tariff heading of the equipment, devices and products that are aimed at controlling and mitigating the pandemic. And through a publication of April 30, 2020, they indicate which are the tariff items where they mention the first 6 digits. All classifications are made according to the current international HS - HS 2017.

The products are as follows: COVID-19 test equipment, instruments and apparatus used in diagnostics, COVID-19 tests, protective clothing and the like, disinfectants and sterilization products, oxygen therapy equipment and pulse oximeters, other devices, consumables and medical equipment, trolleys for the disabled, mobile clinics (medical) with operating rooms, anesthesia equipment and other surgical devices.

The WCO recommended advocating for Coordinated Border Management, i.e. Customs administrations of member countries should cooperate and coordinate with relevant government agencies and supply chain stakeholders to ensure the correct supply chain.

2. Was any relevant information concerning the Customs clearance of COVID-19 vaccines and the goods and devices used for their shipment and transportation, made publicly available, for example on the Customs administration's web-site? If yes, please provide a URL. If not made publicly available, was relevant information provided to the supply chain stakeholders – manufacturers, exporters, importers, logistics providers, etc.?

The dispatch of this merchandise has been in coordination with the Ministry of Public Health. There are still no importers that are importing the vaccine given that up to now government - public institutions - are the stakeholders.

By means of circular 0001133 dated February 11, 2021, the personnel of the Customs administrations was instructed to expedite and treat with priority the vaccines against COVID-19, without charging tariffs, taxes and Customs service fees.

Circular MH-2020-019749 of September 2020 of the Ministry of Finance instructs the elimination of 50% of the ITBIS to companies belonging to PROINDUSTRIA.

3. Was any dedicated guidance made available to the field Customs officers with regard to the Customs clearance of COVID-19 vaccines for export, transit and import, as well as the goods and devices used for the vaccines' shipment and transportation? If yes, please provide details on how the guidance was disseminated.

Through circulars and publications on social networks, the DGA reported the measure of suspension of the collection of tariffs and Customs service fees. They are instructed to execute the protocol on management and treatment in primary areas of the dispatch process, which is carried out in coordination with the Vice Presidency, Social Assistance and Public Health.

To date, the importation of vaccine against COVID-19 is done by plane and internal handling by refrigerated vehicles with the protocol established by Public Health.

4. Has any training been provided to the staff of your Customs administration in anticipation of the COVID-19 vaccines distribution effort, for example training for handling of time- and temperature-sensitive items, training for handling of dangerous goods (e.g. dry ice), training for identifying the COVID-19 vaccines on import or export documentation?

Customs personnel were not given any training for cargo handling (COVID-19 vaccine), the protocols are established by Social Assistance and Public Health. Customs personnel comply with the requirements of reviewing the documentation of the importation of materials and equipment, but not vaccines.

5. What mode of transport was used for the exportation/importation of COVID-19 vaccines from/into your country?

The vaccines are imported by air, and their distribution in the country is in refrigerated vehicles guarded by the Vice Presidency of the Dominican Republic, Social Assistance and the Ministry of Public Health.

6. What are the documents required for the exportation of COVID-19 vaccines from your country? (*applies to the Members exporting COVID-19 vaccines*)

The Dominican Republic does not export vaccines against COVID-19.

7. Which national authorities are responsible for the checking and clearing the COVID-19 vaccines shipments for exportation?

Ministry of Finance, General Directorate of Customs, the Vice Presidency of the Republic, Ministry of Social Assistance and the Ministry of Public Health.

8. How is the cooperation between these authorities arranged? (*applies to the Members exporting COVID-19 vaccines*)

The Dominican government signed a contract with the English pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca, in conjunction with the University of Oxford for the procurement of vaccines against COVID-19. 110,000 doses of the vaccine produced in India were imported.

The vaccines were sent from Bombay (India) to London on a British Airways airline flight, while Iberia has been in charge of taking the vaccines from London to Madrid and from the Spanish capital to Santo Domingo.

Then the protocol established by the institutions committed to safeguarding the vaccines was followed and Customs was in charge of speeding up the clearance procedures.

9. Is there any exchange of information/data between the Customs authorities of the exporting country and the Customs authorities of the importing country? What type of information is exchanged? How is the exchange of information arranged/regulated?

As the vice president and coordinator of the health cabinet Raquel Peña explained previously, she is in charge of coordinating everything related to vaccines. In matters of contracting and purchasing, it is carried out through the ambassadors of the countries that enter into the agreement or contract. After coordinating the purchase, the information is passed to the Ministry of Public Health. Once the contract for the tax exemption application and clearance at the airport is finished, the Ministry of Finance and the General Directorate of Customs are involved, and the Ministry of Social Assistance

is in charge, in coordination with the Vice Presidency and Public Health, of supplying the vaccines according to the established protocol.

10. Was the Customs transit procedure used for the COVID-19 vaccines imported into your country? If yes, why/what was the rationale?

All transit and dispatch procedures are handled with absolute discretion given that they have advance information on the arrival date of the vaccine to the country, in order to provide the highest possible efficiency, maintaining the safety and cold chain of vaccines.

11. Does your administration implement risk management techniques related to the cross-border movement of COVID-19 vaccines?

In the case of vaccines against COVID-19, it is being managed by the Dominican State. The risks are very minimal, since the shipments move from the supplier, pharmaceutical companies and the different ministries and directions that handle them.

12. What are the documents required for the importation of COVID-19 vaccines in your country?

Invoice, certificate of origin of the cargo and shipping document.

13. Which national authorities are responsible for the checking and clearing the COVID-19 vaccines shipments for importation? How is the cooperation between these authorities arranged?

Ministry of Finance, General Directorate of Customs, Vice Presidency of the Republic, Ministry of Social Assistance and Public Health.

14. If information is available, what was the time required for the release of the COVID-19 vaccines shipments imported into your country?

The release of the vaccines is express, we are talking about hours; given the established coordination, the import documentation is verified by Customs and the other members of the commission.

15. Has your government considered duty and tax waivers for the importation of COVID-19 vaccines?

The purchase of the vaccine so far is the responsibility of the Government of the Dominican Republic.