GABONESE REPUBLIC
Programme Gabonais d' Evaluation de Conformite (PROGEC)

Gabonese Republic

EXPORTER AND IMPORTER GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

The **Gabonese Standard Body (AGANOR),** a public administrative institution of the government of Gabon, is responsible for the adoption and application of Standards for both imported and domestically manufactured products in the Gabon market. With effect from 5th July 2013, AGANOR implemented the **Pre-Export Verification of Conformity (PROGEC)** to Standards Programme. This is a conformity assessment and verification procedure applied to all Goods/Products at the respective exporting countries, to ensure their compliance with the applicable Gabon Technical Regulations and Mandatory Standards or approved equivalents.

AGANOR has appointed **Intertek** as the sole Agent to operate the PROGEC program on its behalf, operating in all countries of supply. All consignments are subject to PROGEC and must obtain a **Certificate of Conformity (CoC)** issued by Intertek Country Offices (CO). The Certificate is a mandatory Customs Clearance document in Gabon; consignments arriving at Gabon Ports without this document will be denied entry into the country.

NB: At the beginning of the programme, a grace period, allowing Exporters to become familiar with this new requirement, will be granted between 5th July and 1st October 2013.

As of 1st October 2013, all shipments arriving in Gabon without the Certificate of Conformity will be denied entry into the country.

GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE OPERATIONS OF THE PROGEC PROGRAMME

The Gabonese Standard Body (AGANOR) mission is to contribute to the development and implementation of government policy in the field of standardization. To this end, AGANOR requires pre-shipment conformity assessment services for goods exported to Gabon.

In addition, AGANOR wishes to promote trade, minimize the possibility of fraud in the import operations and to ensure that imported goods Gabon are in accordance with International Standards, Regional or Gabonese and/or the essential requirements.

To curb some of these problems, AGANOR has put in place Gabonese Conformity Assessment Programme (PROGEC) to ensure that all goods are verified for conformity to relevant Gabon standards or approved equivalents before shipment to Gabon. The primary objective of the programme is to ensure quality of products, health and safety, and environmental protection for Gabon and this is reflected in the product coverage scope.

The key elements undertaken in PROGEC are:

- Physical inspection prior to shipment,
- Sampling, testing and analysis in accredited laboratories,
- Audit of product processes,
- Documentary check of conformity with regulations; and
- Assessment of conformity to standards

PRINCIPLES OF THE PROGRAMME

The PROGEC Programme is based on Article 5 of Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT/WTO), which requires that technical requirements (i.e. Standards) applied to foreign products must also be applied to domestically manufactured products. Domestic companies are also subject to the Evaluation of Conformity and therefore PROGEC will offer equal treatment to national and to imported products.

Since PROGEC is a conformity assessment process to verify that products imported to Gabon are in compliance with the applicable Gabon standards or approved equivalents, regulations and technical requirements before shipment, it is the sole responsibility of the supplier (i.e. exporter) to demonstrate the same and hence meet any associated costs of verification.

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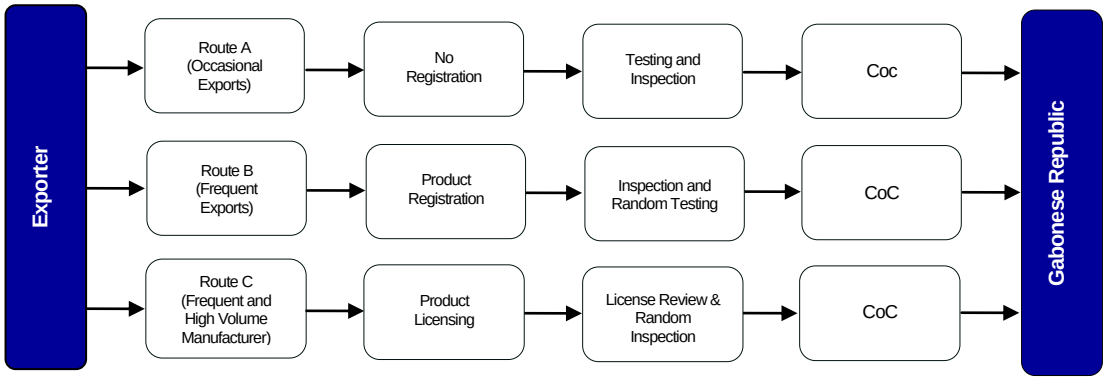
HOW TO OBTAIN A CERTIFICATE OF CONFORMITY

The PROGEC compliance procedures are designed to provide maximum flexibility to Exporters and Importers by providing three (3) possible Routes for obtaining a Certificate of Conformity (CoC) for their shipments. The method utilized will depend on the frequency of the Exporters' shipments to Gabon and the level of compliance they are able to demonstrate initially when applying for certification.



Request for Certification

The Exporter must send the Request for Certification (RFC) form completed together with a Proforma Invoice and provide information about the date and place for inspection. The Exporter attaches the test reports (if available) and when applicable copies of the Statements of Registration and/or License to the RFC form.

Determination of Route

The Intertek Country Office will review the RFC and attached documentation and will confirm the applicable Route for certification and the standards applicable.

Product Testing

Wherever possible, the Intertek Country Office shall arrange for product sampling and testing with an approved or an ISO/IEC 17025 accredited laboratory in advance of the scheduled date of shipment. The Exporters should wait for test results before shipment. Where the Exporter wishes to provide test certificates, these should be from a laboratory accredited to an ISO/IEC system or other approved laboratories. The Exporter may also make arrangements to have the tests witnessed by an Intertek staff. Test reports should be submitted to the Intertek Country Office along with a copy of the Laboratory Accreditation. The test reports must be sufficiently detailed so as to demonstrate traceability to the consignment to be shipped to Gabon.

Inspection

The Intertek Country Office will contact the place of inspection and confirm the appointment for physical inspection of the consignment. Physical inspection is normally carried out to verify requirements that may be visually verified (e.g. product labeling) and to ensure reconciliation of the consignment with previously submitted test reports. If applicable, product sampling for testing purposes may also be performed during physical inspection. In such cases, exporters should await the test results of the samples before shipment.

Certification

Except for air-shipments, the exporter shall submit a Final Invoice to the Intertek Country Office, as soon as possible after physical inspection. The Intertek Country Office will perform a final review of all test and inspection reports and decide upon the issuance of the Certificate of Conformity (CoC) or Non Conformity Report (NCR). Intertek Country Office will indicate any corrective actions needed prior the issuance of a Certificate of Conformity. Only if the discrepancy is corrected, a CoC will be issued.

EXPORTER AND IMPORTER GUIDELINES

ROUTES FOR CERTIFICATION

ROUTE A – CONSIGNMENT CERTIFICATION

Under Route A, products to be shipped have to be both tested and physically inspected to demonstrate conformity to relevant standards, essential requirements or manufacturer's specification. This Route is open to all products being exported by either traders or manufacturers. This Route is open to any trade party, shipments or products and certification process is as outlined below:

Step 1 – Submission of Request for Certification (RFC) by the Exporter

The Exporter shall complete and submit RFC form to the respective Country Office together with the following documentations:

Documentation	Importance
Product Data Sheet and/or Product Description	Mandatory (to specify the product intended use)
Product Technical Specification	If Available (from the manufacturer)
Proforma Invoice	Mandatory
Manual Operating Instructions	Where applicable
Production Data	Where applicable (Batch No/ Size, Manufacturer's Name, Production Date, Expiration Date, Manufacturer's Certificates)
QMS Certificates, Conformity Marks, Safety Marks, National Approval	If Available
Product Technical Specification	If Available (from the manufacturer)
Third Party Test Reports	If Available
Distributorship/Dealership Agreement	If Available (only applicable to manufacturer authorized distributors or dealers)

NOTE: Quality and completeness of the above mentioned documentation directly influences time and cost of processing of the order/request.

Step 2 – Review of Documentation submitted by Exporter to the Intertek Country Office

The concerned Intertek Coordinator shall review the documentation for completeness and to:

Action	Purpose
Establish the appropriate Gabon Standard and/or international equivalent	Standard application priority to be applied
Establish the essential requirements	Based on Health and safety hazards as per the Standard
Establish product risk profile	For purposes of determining level of intervention
Prepare inspection and testing instructions	See: Step 3 and 4

And respond to the Exporter's request giving details specified below within 48 hours:

- Missing documents (if any);
- Essential requirements (as per the identified standard) and the level of intervention (i.e. where testing must be done, the Exporter shall be informed);
- Proposed inspection date and schedule for the Exporter's confirmation; any other PROGEC related requirements.

NOTE: Inspection shall be scheduled for a date not later than 3 days from receipt of the missing documents specified in the Intertek Coordinator's communication to the Exporter after reviewing RFC. However, if the RFC was accompanied with all the valid documents specified in Step 1, the inspection shall be scheduled for a date not later than 5 days from receipt of RFC unless the Exporter prefers a later date.

Step 3 – Consignment Inspection by the Appointed Inspector

The inspection shall be carried out as per the instruction prepared in Step 2. The inspection shall focus on marking, packing, product's shelf life (where applicable) and visual product conformity for reconciliation with the test report. Assessment of product functionalities is critical more so where testing is not feasible (See: Step 4).

Samples shall be drawn and respective packages from which samples drawn marked appropriately by the inspector for testing. Upon completion of the inspection, the inspector shall prepare report detailing findings and remarks (recommendation). A copy of the report shall be submitted to the exporter immediately thereafter. Any discrepancy noted during inspection shall be brought immediately to the attention of the exporter through a discrepancy report.

NOTE: The completion of the physical inspection of the goods does not mean that the conformity assessment process is completed. Final decision on conformity of the inspected goods will be undertaken by the concerned Intertek Coordinator after evaluation of the inspection report, test reports (where applicable) and other relevant quality documentations.

Step 4 – Consignment Testing

Testing shall be confined to essential requirements or parameters of the applicable standard only. Testing shall only be performed on samples drawn by the concerned Intertek Inspector in any of the following laboratories:

- Any Intertek laboratory
- An independent laboratory accredited to ISO/IEC 17025 worldwide.
- Any laboratory not accredited to ISO/IEC 17025 or the manufacturer's laboratory under witnessing by Intertek Coordinator. *(This option is only open in instances where the first two labs cannot be found within the locality).*

NOTE: Witness testing shall be performed by qualified personnel familiar with the product and test methods. The Intertek Coordinator shall witness testing only in laboratories meeting requirements specified in ISO 9001.

Witness testing shall be performed by qualified personnel familiar with the product and test methods. The Intertek authorized personnel shall witness testing only in laboratories meeting requirements specified in ISO 9001 standard. Where testing is not economically viable/feasible due to multi-line items, low value consignments, disassembled machinery etc., evaluation of the following documents may be carried out in lieu of testing:

- Manufacturer's own test report
- Safety Marks/Conformity Marks/National Approvals (e.g. CE mark, type approval reports, etc.)
- Relevant Quality Management System Certificates

Step 5 – Issuance of the Final Certification Documentation by the Intertek Coordinator

Upon receipt of the inspection report (Step 3) and test report/documentary evaluation report (Step 4), the Intertek Coordinator shall take a certification decision and issue certificate (i.e. Certificate of Conformity or Non Conformity Report) within 3 working days of receipt of the reports and the Final Invoice.

NOTE: Where testing has to be carried out, the final decision on conformity of goods will be taken no earlier than completion of testing. Exporter may contact the concerned Intertek Coordinator in order to obtain Certificate of Conformity (CoC) or to know certification decision prior to shipment.

ROUTE B – PRODUCT REGISTRATION AND CERTIFICATION OF SHIPMENTS

Route B offers a fast track certification process for goods with reasonable and consistent levels of quality through registration of such products by the Intertek Coordinator. **Product Registration** is recommended to Exporters having frequent shipments of homogenous products. The Registration is valid for a period of one year. Shipments of registered products are exempted from mandatory testing and certification may be based on physical inspection only. However, random testing of registered product is still required to ensure product conformity throughout the registration period.

Used products or second hand products are however not eligible for registration under Route B. **These are subject to certification under Route A only.**

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PRODUCT REGISTRATION PROCESS

Step 1 – Submission of Registration Application Form to Intertek Coordinator by the Exporter

Exporters seeking registration of their products under the PROGEC programme may fill and submit to the Intertek Coordinator Registration Application Form together with the following documentations:

Documentation	Importance
Product Data Sheet and/or Product Description	Mandatory (to specify the product intended use)
Product Technical Specification	If Available (from the manufacturer)
Proforma Invoice	Mandatory
Manual Operating Instructions	Where applicable
Production Data	Where applicable (Batch No/ Size, Manufacturer's Name, Production Date, Expiration Date, Manufacturer's Certificates)
QMS Certificates, Conformity Marks, Safety Marks, National Approval	If Available
Third Party Test Reports	If Available
Distributorship/ Dealership Agreement*	If Available (only applicable to manufacturer authorized distributors or dealers)

NOTE: Traders dealing in branded goods shall provide evidence of their relationship with the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) or brand owner.

Step 2 – Review of Registration Application by the Intertek Coordinator

Intertek Coordinator shall review the submitted documentations to:

- Establish product compliance to Gabon Standard and/or international equivalent
- Establish the exporter's ability to consistently supply quality goods

The concerned Intertek Coordinator shall communicate the review outcome to the Exporter within 4 working days of receipt of the application. On successful review by the concerned Intertek Coordinator, the Exporter shall be issued with the ***Statement of Registration*** detailing the products registered, validity period and other registration conditions upon payment of the applicable fees.

REGISTERED PRODUCTS SHIPMENT CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Shipments of registered products still require **Certificate of Conformity** in order to be permitted into Gabon. However, the certification process is faster due to the above registration. Below is the procedure for certification:

Step 1 – Submission of Request for Certification (RFC)

The Exporter shall fill and submit to the concerned Intertek Coordinator the following documentations:

- RFC Form
- Valid Statement of Registration containing goods to be shipped.
- Proforma Invoice

The concerned Intertek Coordinator shall review the documentations with a view to establishing the validity of the Statement of Registration and schedule inspection for a date not later than 3 days from the date of receipt of the RFC unless the exporter/ supplier prefers a later date.

Step 2 – Consignment/Shipment Inspection by Intertek Coordinator Appointed Inspector

The Inspector shall conduct inspection as per the guidelines and instructions issued by the Intertek Coordinator. The inspection shall focus on:

- Marking
- Packaging
- Product shelf life (where applicable)
- Conformity to packing list/ invoice
- Visual product conformity

Samples may be drawn and respective packages from which samples drawn marked appropriately by the inspector as and when advised by Intertek Coordinator for testing. Upon completion of the inspection, the Inspector shall prepare report detailing findings and remarks (recommendation). A copy of the report shall be submitted to the exporter immediately thereafter. Any discrepancy noted during inspection shall be brought immediately to the attention of the Exporter through a Discrepancy Report.

NOTE: Intertek Coordinator shall inform the Exporter when the products are to be sampled for testing. However, the conformity decision for the shipment sampled may not be pegged to the test report obtained thereafter. Such test reports may be useful in making conformity decision for subsequent shipments.

Step 3 – Consignment/Shipment Testing

Testing shall be confined to essential requirements or parameters of the applicable standard only. Testing shall only be performed on samples drawn by the concerned Intertek Coordinator in any of the following laboratories:

- Any Intertek laboratory
- An independent laboratory accredited to ISO/IEC 17025 worldwide.
- Any laboratory not accredited to ISO/IEC 17025 or the manufacturer's laboratory under witnessing by Intertek Coordinator. *(This option is only open in instances where the first two labs cannot be found within the locality)*

NOTE: Witness testing shall be performed by qualified personnel familiar with the product and test methods. The Intertek Coordinator shall witness testing only in laboratories meeting requirements specified in ISO 9001.

Step 4 – Issuance of the Final Certification Documentation by the Intertek Coordinator

Upon receipt of the inspection report, the Intertek Coordinator shall take a certification decision and issue certificate (i.e. Certificate of Conformity or Non Conformity Report) within 3 working days of receipt of the reports and the final invoice.

NOTE: Exporter may contact the concerned Intertek Coordinator in order to obtain Certificate of Conformity (CoC) or to know certification decision prior to shipment.

ROUTE C – PRODUCT LICENSING

This Route is open only to manufacturers who can demonstrate existence of a quality management system in their production/ manufacturing process.

This procedure involves the review of analytical reports, and possibly additional testing to demonstrate full compliance of the products with respect to the relevant international standard. This is accompanied by a full audit of the production site, and follow-up inspections to ensure that local requirements are systematically integrated into the manufacturing process. Approval procedures are in compliance with the Guide 28, ISO / IEC - Guidance on a third-party certification system for products. Having passed these stages, the manufacturer will be granted a license for the products concerned.

On successful conclusion of this process, the manufacturer will be presented with a License for the relevant products valid for a period of one (1) year. Licensed products shall be subject to random physical inspection by authorized Intertek Coordinator(s) prior issuance of Certificate of Conformity and subsequent shipping of the same. However the Intertek Coordinator(s) shall carry out limited testing during the license valid period.

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RESPONSIBILITIES

Importers

Ensure their suppliers are conversant with import quality requirements and that their consignments are accompanied with a Certificate of Conformity (CoC) from Intertek.

Exporters

Ensure their products or goods meet the regulations and quality requirements of Gabon before shipment by carrying out tests and/or obtaining the necessary certification of Conformity (CoC) from Intertek for all products subject to the PROGEC programme.

Gabon Bureau of Standards

Ensure that only quality goods gain entry into the country as provided in Decree No. 00341/PR/MIM of 28/02/2013 establishing the national conformity assessment system, thereby offering the necessary protection to Gabon's consumers in safety, health and environmental matters.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

Container Sealing Requirements

Wherever feasible, sealing of FCL Containers (Full Container Loads) is required during physical inspection for High Risk Products. Exporters are required to give advance notice to Intertek Country Office of container stuffing arrangements, so that the date of inspection is scheduled to coincide with the container stuffing.

Labeling and Shelf Life Requirements

Other than the requirements listed in the standards, the labeling packaging of imported products must be in French at least for markings and instructions relative to consumer safety. Packaged goods (e.g. foodstuffs, chemicals, cosmetics, and similar) shall indicate the batch numbers and dates of expiration and/or date of production. All imports with a limited shelf life shall have sufficient shelf life remaining from the date of expected landing in Gabon.

Counterfeit Products/Goods

Importation of any counterfeit goods is not allowed. Where Intertek will have a doubt on products/goods that may be counterfeits, Intertek could require the exporter of products suspected to be counterfeited to provide sufficient proof of authenticity before a Certificate of Conformity (CoC) is issued, and reserve the rights to inform AGANOR/customs.

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FEES

The fees are payable by the Exporter or Manufacturer and payable in advance:

Verification Fees	Registration and Licensing Fees
The applicable **Verification Fees** depend on the route, subject to the minimum and maximum detailed below. • **Route A** 0.53%of declared FOB value subject to a minimum of 300 Euros and to a maximum of 7000 Euros • **Route B** 0.45%of declared FOB value subject to a minimum of 300 Euros and to a maximum of 7000 Euros • **Route C** 0.27% of declared FOB value subject to a minimum of 300 Euros and to a maximum of 7000 Euros • **Used Vehicles** 1 to 3 vehicles : 300 € More than 3 vehicles : 300 € + 30 € for every additional vehicle • **Testing Fees** Determined on a case by case basis **NOTE: The above fees are subject to a minimum of 300 Euros and a maximum of 7000 Euros. However, the maximum fee chargeable is subject to the applicable commercial rates at the port of inspection.**	**Registration Fees** • The Registration fees shall be 375 Euros, which will cover the Registration of **15 products /line items** in the Statement of Registration (SoR). • **Every additional product/line item above 15 products/line items** will be charged an additional fee of 20 Euros. • **Amendments to SoRs** will be charged at the rate of 40 Euros minimum for up two products /line items amendments and then 20 Euros per line item amendment after that. **Licensing Fees** • Licensing fees are calculated on a case-by-case basis. Please contact your nearest Registration and Licensing Certification Centre or Intertek Country Office for further information. **NOTE: Products with common characteristics will be grouped together in determining the Registration / License Fees.**

CONTACT US

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APPENDICES

Appendix A	Country Offices and their Zones of Responsibility
Appendix B	Request for Certification Form
Appendix C	Products Subject to PROGEC Programme (Covered)
Appendix E	Registration and Licensing Application Form

The above Appendices are available at www.export2gabon.com