

CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE PCEC

EXPORTER GUIDE

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1 VERIFICATION OF CONFORMITY (VOC) PROGRAM FOR GOODS SHIPPED TO CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE

For the attention of importers: This document is intended for exporters in order to explain how to comply with Congo and approved regional and international standards. It is the responsibility of importers to inform exporters of the existence of the present procedure. Verifications are executed at origin on exporter's initiative; therefore, importers are not required to initiate any process in Congo.

PROGRAM MANDATED BY	Ministère du Développement Industriel et de la Promotion du Secteur Privé de la République du Congo Agence Congolaise de Normalisation et de la Qualité (ACONOQ)
APPLICABLE REGULATION(S)	Law n°20-2015 of 29 October 2015 regulating the National System of Standardization and Quality Management Law 51-2021 dated 31.12.2021 Notice to Service Providers dated 12 th April 2022
STANDARDS	Please contact your closest Cotecna office to determine if your product is subject or not to this program
STARTING DATE	1 st February 2024: Certificate of Conformity is mandatory
APPOINTED COMPANIES	Includes COTECNA Inspection S.A. and affiliated companies (hereinafter referred as Cotecna)
SELECTION OF INSPECTION COMPANY	Exporter's choice
SCOPE OF VOC PROGRAM	To verify that regulated products intended for importation into Congo conform to National Standards and Regulations, and/or approved Regional/International Standards. Scope includes one or a combination of the following verifications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Documentation verification - Laboratory testing (please see below for accepted laboratories) - Physical inspection in exporting country - Factory audit
CONTACT IN CONGO	<p>COTECNA CONFORMITE CONGO</p> <p><i>Main Office</i> : Duplex E1, Concession Ex Ocer, Avenue de L'Emeraude, Centre-Ville de Pointe-Noire,</p> <p><i>Branch</i> : Siège ACONOQ, 10 impasse Jean Pierre NIABA, derrière le club hippique de Brazzaville</p> <p>Email : infopcec@cotecna.com</p>

2 VOC PROCESS TO COMPLY WITH CONGOLESE REQUIREMENTS

In order to clear their goods in Congo, importers need to present at Congolese Customs a Certificate of Conformity (COC) issued by Cotecna. COCs are needed for every consignment and must cover 100% of goods to be shipped to Congo and subject to the program.

The COC can be obtained by exporters in the Country of Supply using one of the below methods of compliance. All exporters must be certified for their first shipment through route A. For subsequent shipments, they might be eligible for Route B or C depending on the specific requirement of each route.

2.1 ROUTE A – For sensitive products

This route is recommended mainly for infrequent exporter. **This route is compulsory for sensitive products.** (Please refer to section 5 for the list of sensitive products.)

Exporter needs to follow this process for every shipment as a COC is valid for one shipment only.

2.1.1 Documentation verification

Exporter will provide Cotecna with following documents:

- > Request for Certification as per Cotecna template (please contact your closest Cotecna office to get it)
- > Proforma invoice where goods are listed,
- > Import licence number (required for issuing the Certificate),
- > Conformity documents (test/analysis reports/product certificates, etc.) for products to be shipped (if available)
- > Technical data sheet and/or description of the product specifying its intended use and technical specifications.

And if possible

- > QMS certificates
- > User manual / instructions
- > Production information (e.g. batch number/size, manufacturer's name, model number, production date/expiry date, manufacturer's certificates)
- > Vehicle tracking and maintenance records (if available)
- > Distribution/reseller agreements - if available (applicable to authorised resellers/distributors only).

Based on the documents received, Cotecna will verify the conformity of goods to the applicable standards and decide if testing is required. Testing is not required when valid conformity documents are presented to Cotecna.

2.1.2 Testing in exporting country

If no valid conformity documents are presented by exporter, Cotecna will:

- > Collect samples
- > Have samples analyzed in a laboratory that will issue a valid test reports for at least one product from the shipment.
(Please refer to section 3 of this document to learn more about what is considered as a valid conformity document.)

2.1.3 Physical inspection in exporting country

- > Physically inspect the goods and/or supervise the container loading, as required
- > Seal the containers (for FCL), as required

2.1.4 Collect final documents

Exporter will provide Cotecna with following documents:

- > Commercial Invoice
- > Import Declaration
- > Transport document (BL, AWB or Road Consignment), if available

Cotecna will issue of Certificate of Conformity (COC) if the exporter meets the requirements. If not Cotecna will issue Non Conformity Report (NCR).

2.2 ROUTE B – For registered products

This route is recommended in case of regular shipments with homogeneous products. Exporter can apply for the registration of the products in order to decrease the level of intervention of Cotecna on each shipment.

The registration is valid for one year and allows the exporter to get a COC for every shipment without having a systematic physical inspection of their shipments. The registration remains valid only if the registered products are not modified (composition and packaging).

2.2.1 Conditions for registering products

The exporter can register his products with Cotecna when he complies with the following conditions:

- > The products that have been successfully through route A
- > He must demonstrate that the products comply with applicable standards
- > He must demonstrate that he is capable of supplying constantly compliant shipments.

2.2.2 Documentation verification

Exporter will provide Cotecna with following documents/information:

- > Request for Certification as per Cotecna template (please contact your closest Cotecna office to get it)
- > Proforma invoice where goods are listed,
- > Import licence number (required for issuing the Certificate),
- > Conformity documents (test/analysis reports/product certificates, etc.) for products to be shipped (if available)
- > Technical data sheet and/or description of the product specifying its intended use and technical specifications.

And if possible

- > QMS certificates
- > User manual / instructions
- > Production information (e.g. batch number/size, manufacturer's name, model number, production date/expiry date, manufacturer's certificates)
- > Vehicle tracking and maintenance records (if available)
- > Distribution/reseller agreements - if available (applicable to authorised resellers/distributors only).

2.2.3 Testing in exporting country

During the registration validity, Cotecna might execute additional sampling and testing during the life time of the registration to countercheck the results of the test reports provided with each shipment. Registration will be cancelled in case the counterchecks show non-compliant goods.

2.2.4 Physical inspection in exporting country

Cotecna might proceed to random physical inspection during the registration validity.

2.2.5 Issuance of COC

Exporter need to apply for a COC for every shipment. They will need to provide only the following documents:

- > Commercial Invoice
- > Import Declaration
- > Transport document (BL, AWB or Road Consignment), if available

2.3 ROUTE C – For licensed products

This route is intended for manufacturers, their official distributors or brand owners with a constant volume of shipments of homogeneous products. Exporter can apply for the license of the products in order to decrease the level of intervention of Cotecna on each shipment.

The license is valid for one year and allows the exporter to get a COC for every shipment without having a systematic physical inspection of their shipments. The license remains valid only if the licensed products are not modified (composition and packaging).

2.3.1 Conditions for licensing products

The exporter can license his products with Cotecna when he complies with the following conditions:

- > The applicant must be the manufacturer, its official distributor or brand owner.
- > The products that have been successfully through route A or B.
- > Existence of a Quality Management System (QMS) for the production process needs to be demonstrated via one of the following evidences:
 - A certified quality system by an accreditation body as per ISO 9001 standard or any specialized standard such as ISO 22000, ISO 22716, ISO/TS 16949, etc.
 - The product is certified by an accreditation body, in other words only certified products can be licensed. The certification should include a procedure of monitoring including periodical audit/inspection of the production site.
 - A factory audit of the QMS with satisfactory results is conducted by Cotecna.

2.3.2 Documentation verification

Exporter will provide Cotecna with following documents/information:

- > Request for Certification as per Cotecna template (please contact your closest Cotecna office to get it)
- > Proforma invoice where goods are listed,
- > Import licence number (required for issuing the Certificate),
- > Conformity documents (test/analysis reports/product certificates, etc.) for products to be shipped (if available)
- > Technical data sheet and/or description of the product specifying its intended use and technical specifications.
- > QMS certificates

And if possible

- > User manual / instructions
- > Production information (e.g. batch number/size, manufacturer's name, model number, production date/expiry date, manufacturer's certificates)
- > Vehicle tracking and maintenance records (if available)
- > Distribution/reseller agreements - if available (applicable to authorised resellers/distributors only).
- > Any other document, as requested by Cotecna

NOTE: Traders of branded products will need to provide evidence of their relationship with the original manufacturer of the products (OEM)

2.3.3 Testing in exporting country

During the license validity, Cotecna might execute additional sampling and testing during the life time of the license to countercheck the results of the test reports provided with each shipment. License will be cancelled in case the counterchecks show non-compliant goods.

2.3.4 Physical inspection in exporting country

Cotecna might proceed to random physical inspection of the shipments to be sent, with a minimum of one shipment inspection per year.

2.3.5 Issuance of COC

Exporter need to apply for a COC for every shipment. They will need to provide only the following documents:

- > Commercial Invoice
- > Import Declaration
- > Transport document (BL, AWB or Road Consignment), if available

3 DEFINITION OF “VALID CONFORMITY DOCUMENT”

Exporter might submit to Cotecna “Valid Conformity Documents”, such as test reports, quality certificates and analysis reports. If they are not available, Cotecna will arrange for the necessary tests to be performed.

A conformity document is valid when:

- > It has been issued by an approved laboratory:
 - ISO 17025 accredited laboratory
 - Manufacturer’s laboratory
 - Otherwise qualified laboratory (as per Cotecna/Congolese’s procedures)
- > We can establish traceability between the conformity document and the goods of the consignment.
- > It covers the exact same production, meaning same batch, as the goods of the consignment.
- > It is in compliance with applicable standards requirements in the following hierarchical order: Congolese standards and technical regulations, then Regional standards, then International standards, then manufacturers’ specifications.
- > Under PCEC the essential parameters of the standard or manufacturers’ specifications will be taken into consideration.

4 REGULATED PRODUCTS

4.1 Submitted products

The PCEC covers all imported products except the following exemptions:

- gold and other precious metals
- precious stones;
- works of art.
- scrap metals.
- explosives, arms, ammunition and other war materials intended for the national armed forces and law enforcement agencies;
- fish, certain vegetables and fruit, fresh or chilled (NB: Frozen products are subject to CoC)
- live animals.
- plants and floricultural products.
- printed and developed cinematographic films.
- newspapers and current periodicals, postage or revenue stamps, stamped paper, banknotes; cheque books, passports.
- personal effects and used household items
- personal gifts.
- postal parcels of no commercial value and express mail
- commercial samples.
- crude or partially refined oil
- certain donations from foreign governments, international organisations to the State, foundations, charities, philanthropic organisations recognised as being of public utility;
- supplies imported for their own needs by diplomatic and consular missions, by international organisations;
- complete imports with an FOB value of less than one million (1,000,000) CFA francs or the equivalent value in another currency;
- postal parcels for e-commerce products

4.2 Exempted products

> As per above list 4.1

4.3 Sensitive products

<i>Sensitive products</i>	<i>Tariff chapter</i>	<i>Tariff headings</i>
<i>Milk</i>	04	All tariff headings of Chapter 04.
<i>Rice</i>	10	1006
<i>Frozen fish</i>	03	03.03 & 03.04
<i>Frozen meat</i>	02	-
<i>Frozen poultry</i>	02	02.07
<i>Salt</i>	25	25.01
<i>Egg</i>	04	04.07 & 04.08
<i>Wheat Flour</i>	11	11.01

4.4 Prohibited/ banned products

The following products or any products containing them are prohibited in Congo:

- > Cosmetic products containing hydroquinone above the authorized limits.
- > The following food additives:

Prohibited Food additives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Preservatives: E217, E232, E236, E237, E238 et E240;• Acidifiers: E430, E459, E487;• Flavours enhancers: E636, E638, E641;• Sweeteners: E956, E964;• Thickeners: E518, E1411, E1421, E1423, E1443, E1453;• Colours: E103, E111, E121, E125, E126, E128, E130, E143, E152, E154, E155, E161i, E164, E165, E166
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Note: The above lists of products can be changed by ACONOQ when/if necessary.

5 FEES PAID BY EXPORTER

5.1 Certification fees

Route	Applicable fee (% of declared FOB value)	Min fee in EUR	Max fee in EUR
A	0.53%	300 EUR	7000 EUR
B	0.45%	300 EUR	7000 EUR
C	0.27%	220 EUR	7000 EUR

Above-mentioned fees are net of any duties and taxes and include:

- > Documentary verification
- > Physical inspection
- > Issuance of COC or NCR

The above-mentioned fees do not include the following:

- > Factory audit
- > Laboratory testing fees
- > Sampling not done at the time of inspection and sampling of bulk shipments
- > Containers sealing and loading supervision if applicable
- > Product Registration and Licensing fees
- > Re-inspection
- > Fees for additional services may apply

5.2 Registration fee

The registration fee in Route B is 375 EUR for up to 15 lines item + 20 EUR per additional line item.

6 CONDITIONS

- > Costs of the COC (certification and inspection), sealing and/or analysis are borne by the exporter and are quoted at the time of nomination.
- > All costs incurred for presenting the goods for inspection, such as unpacking, handling, repacking, are borne by the exporter.
- > If the goods do not conform to the requirements, fees for physical inspection, testing and Non-Conformity Report issuance remain due to Cotecna.
- > This program is subject to the [General Terms and Conditions of Cotecna](#).

Disclaimer: This data-sheet has been prepared for information purpose only and is not intended to be nor does it constitute the regulation of the country of importation. Every effort has been made by Cotecna to ensure the accuracy of the information contained herein at the time of its issuance but Cotecna does not guarantee its correctness and takes no responsibility for the contents of this data-sheet, makes no representation as to its accuracy or completeness and expressly disclaims any liability whatsoever for any loss howsoever arising from or in reliance upon the whole or any part of the contents of this data-sheet.