



ADMINISTRATIVE GUIDELINES FOR THE IMPORTATION OF RICE INTO LIBERIA

To: All concerned

From: The Ministry of Commerce and Industry

Subject: Administrative guidelines for the importation of rice by all persons or businesses desiring to import rice into Liberia.

Date: July 15, 2024

I. Introduction

The Republic of Liberia, through the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MOCI), recognizes the crucial role of rice as a staple food and its significant impact on food security, political and economic stability, and public welfare. Observations have highlighted a concentrated commercial rice import market, predominantly under the control of very few enterprises, resulting in limited competition, potential price manipulation, and a reduced participation of others wanting to engage in the rice market. To address these challenges and foster a more inclusive, competitive, open, and stable commercial rice market, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry introduces new administrative guidelines to help diversify and enhance the importation of the rice market landscape, ensuring a broad-based participation that includes Liberian entrepreneurs.

II. Objectives

The key objectives of these guidelines are:

1. Create a competitive, open, and inclusive commercial rice import market in Liberia,
2. Ensure quality grades of rice are accessible and sold at affordable prices,
3. Promote compliance with regulatory standards and laws,
4. Break any monopoly (perceived/real) in the commercial rice market,
5. Mitigate risks associated with market monopolies and price manipulations,
6. Ensure the continuous availability of rice on the Liberian market at affordable prices,
7. Encourage and promote local entrepreneurship and investment in the rice value chain,
8. Allow more Liberian-owned businesses entry into commercial rice market,
9. Create more choices for the consumers, and
10. Remove dependence on a few importers for the nation's staple food.

III. Requirements for the importation of rice into Liberia

1.0 Mandatory Legal Requirements

- 1.1 Registered as a business entity with classification of G4630 with description of *Wholesale of food, beverages, and tobacco*.
- 1.2 Must have a valid business registration.
- 1.3 Must be in compliance with the tax laws, including in possession of a tax clearance issued by the Liberia Revenue Authority.
- 1.4 Must be in compliance with labor laws with foreign nationals possessing legal work permits, where applicable.
- 1.5 Must be in compliance with immigration laws including foreign nationals possessing a legal residence permit, where applicable.

2.0 Mandatory Business Requirements

- 2.1 Have a valid bank account at a reputable banking institution in Liberia.
- 2.2 Must have an approved import permit declaration form from the Ministry prior to the importation of the rice.
- 2.3 Have at least one local bank reference letter notification of credit worthiness.
- 2.4 Must have proof of financial ability, providing bank guarantee or letter of credit of no less than \$500,000 United States Dollars or an equivalent to cover the cost of the initial import.
- 2.5 Must have a warehouse, owned, or leased to store no less than 10,000 metric tons (MT) with minimum height of 10.5 meters and proper ventilation and pest prevention.
- 2.6 Warehouses must be equipped with modern inventory management systems and be accessible for regular inspections.
- 2.7 Must provide an agreement with an international supplier for continuous supply of rice.
- 2.8 Must have valid insurance policy for warehouse (s).
- 2.9 Must present valid insurance for every shipment.
- 2.10 Must have the capacity to facilitate cleaning and rebagging of damaged consignments including sewing machines.
- 2.11 Must maintain a steady buffer stock of at least 5,000 metric tons always.
- 2.12 Must possess the ability to purchase a minimum of 25% of import volume from domestic production.
- 2.13 Must have at least three (3) Liberians in senior management positions.
- 2.14 All new importers must submit samples of the grade of rice to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry one to three months before the first import to test for quality by the Liberia Standards Authority.
- 2.15 Must provide provisional pricing structure for a variety of rice grades to be imported at the time of submitting all necessary required documents.
- 2.16 Must make sure to state the quantity of metric tons to be imported and the grade and type.

IV. Effective date

These Guidelines and the actions hereby authorized herein take effect from August 1, 2024, and shall remain in full force and effect until otherwise altered by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.