

INTERNATIONAL TRADE DOCUMENTS TEMPLATES USED FOR EXPORTING AND IMPORTING

International trade documents templates, either for exporting or importing, are a really important aspect of foreign trade operations, as the wrong or not complete preparation or even the absence of some of them can prevent goods from travelling correctly and passing customs and tax controls at borders, both in the country of origin and, above all, in the country of destination, as well as in transit countries.

The documentation required for exporting and importing is more complex than that required for domestic sales due to the special characteristics of foreign trade: geographical distances, different customs legislations, use of different means of transport, greater risks, etc. The documents required for each shipment will depend on the conditions of sale agreed in accordance with the [INCOTERMS RULES](#), published by the International Chamber of Commerce, which were last updated in 2020 and are expected to remain in force until 1 January 2030.

MAIN INTERNATIONAL TRADE DOCUMENTS

The 10 main export documents are described below, mentioning for each of them: what are they for?, who prepares them?, and for whom are they intended? The documents are presented in the sequential order of international trade transactions.

INTERNATIONAL PURCHASE ORDER

Usually it is the exporter who issues this document. Nevertheless, sometimes, companies with international purchase experience (such trading companies) have their own international purchase order template where they establish the purchase conditions to their suppliers.

Each company has its own model of international purchase order. This document includes: the buyer contact details, as well as the goods description, quantities, unit and total prices, delivery and payment conditions and any additional information which might be necessary.

International purchase orders must be numbered in accordance with a correlative issuing date system. The number of the international purchase order can be then included in the corresponding commercial invoice, as a reference.

This document is drawn up by the exporter and is addressed to the importer.

[Model International Purchase Order with instructions for use.](#)

INTERNATIONAL PROFORMA INVOICE

It is an administrative document which is mostly used as a commercial offer, that is to say, as a detailed document about sale conditions that provides precise information for the buyer. If the proforma invoice is signed by both parties, this establishes a commitment and acquires the nature of an international sale contract.

Apart from its use as a commercial offer, this document is also used for: obtaining import licenses, authorizations for currency payments, customs procedures prior to operations, receipt of the amounts paid into an account (prepayment), the issue of letters of credit and for the sending of commercial samples.

A proforma invoice is a document that can be modified; that is to say, all its points can be modified until the moment at which there is an agreement between buyer and seller. Once they have come into an agreement, the exporter signs and stamps the document and sends it to the importer so that the importer sends it back to him signed and stamped too.

This document is drawn up by the exporter and is addressed to the importer and customs office.

[Model International Proforma Invoice with instructions for use.](#)

INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL INVOICE

It is the administrative document which contains all the information about the sale. The item, quantity, price for the products/services sold, delivery and payment conditions, as well as the taxes and other expenses that the sale may involve, are detailed.

The importer, with the original of the invoice, declares to the tax authority of his country the amount that he must pay, to whom he is going to pay it and the agreed means of payment. For the exporter, this document means a documentary evidence of the sales that he has made in foreign markets.

In operations with third countries, this document is part of the customs declaration, upon which, the taxes and tariff rights applied, must be paid at the moment at which the products enter the country. In operations with European countries, this document is used as a declaration of the transaction and the taxes exoneration for the accomplishment with the basic conditions of the taxes settlement.

This document is drawn up by the exporter and is addressed to the importer and customs office.

[Model International Commercial Invoice with instructions for use.](#)

PACKING LIST

The Packing List detailed and relates the amount of goods shipped, and its location on each loading units (packages, boxes, pallets, containers, etc.) in international transportation. The information provided must have a direct relationship with the one included in the commercial invoice.

This document serves as a link between the physical products and its documents. It serves the importer, when he receives the goods, to know where to place them in their store.

Also, it is used as evidence at the time of the revision or inspection of the goods, as it states in writing the details of location and amount of products, allowing the importer to identify faults, excesses or defects.

This document is drawn up by the exporter and is addressed to the importer, carrier, and customs office.

[Model of Packing List with instructions for use.](#)

IRREVOCABLE LETTER OF CREDIT

In an Irrevocable Letter of Credit L/C the importer's bank agrees to the exporter (called "the beneficiary") that the exporter will get paid if it can prove it has shipped the proper goods by providing the corresponding documents required by the Letter of Credit. Exporters like Letters of Credit because the advance assurance of payment ensures the seller that it will not waste time preparing or shipping an order to a buyer who ultimately refuse to accept or pay for the goods.

Letters of credit are one of the classic instruments of trade because facilitate international payments by providing security for both the exporter-seller and the importer-buyer. The seller receives in advance assurance if payment upon presentation of documents conforming to the terms and conditions of the letter of credit, and the buyer is assured that the bank will not pay unless the seller has actually submitted documents strictly complying with the letter of credit. International letter of credit practice is governed by a set or rules produced by the International Chamber of Commerce, the latest version of which is known as UCP 600 (*Uniform Customs and Practice for Documentary Credits*).

All characteristics and conditions of the irrevocable letter of credit must be agreed between the exporter and importer prior to the opening of the letter, as once applied and formalized, its modification is not possible without the consent of all parties involved, and that will have banking charges.

[Model of Irrevocable Letter of Credit with instructions for use.](#)

CMR TRANSPORT DOCUMENT

The CMR document - also known as CMR consignment note - constitutes a proof of the contract of carriage by road, determines the scope and responsibility for the operation performed and identifies the parties involved and the goods being transported. Its use implies adherence to the CMR (*Contrat de Transport International de Marchandises par Route*) that governs this document.

This document includes the instructions that the exporter or the importer gives to the carrier, so it necessarily has to accompany the goods in road shipments.

This document is issued in four originals (sender, consignee, carrier and administration) which must be signed by the sender and the carrier at delivery and the consignee at destination. Each issue has different colour edges: sender (red), consignee (blue), carrier (green) and administration (black).

[Model of CMR Transport Document with instructions for use.](#)

BILL OF LADING (B/L)

A bill of lading B/L is a document issued by the agent of a carrier to a shipper, signed by the captain, agent, or owner of a vessel, furnishing written evidence regarding receipt of the goods (cargo), the conditions on which transportation is made (contract of carriage), and the engagement to deliver goods at the prescribed port of destination to the lawful holder of the bill of lading.

A bill of lading is, therefore, both a receipt for merchandise and a contract to deliver it as freight. There are a number of different types of bills of lading and a number of regulations that relate to them as a group of documents.

This document is issued in three originals that confer title of the goods to the possessor, if done in negotiable form; in fact, with the only one original is possible to dispatch the merchandise so is advisable that the exporter has located at all times the complete set of originals. Copies are not negotiable, so if the buyer requires to be informed in advance of the details of the shipment is advisable to use these copies and keep the originals.

[Model of Bill of Lading with instructions for use.](#)

AIR WAYBILL (AWB)

An Air Waybill AWB is a non-negotiable transport document covering transport of cargo from airport to airport. The Air Waybill must name a consignee (who can be the buyer), and it should not be required to be issued "to order" and/or "to be endorsed" as it is not a title of property of

the merchandise. Since it is not negotiable, and it does not evidence title to the goods, in order to maintain some control of goods not paid for by cash in advance, sellers often consign air shipments to their sales agents, or freight forwarders' agents in the buyer's country.

The document is issued in three originals and is not negotiable so cannot be issued to the order; it is always nominative and non-endorsable.

[Model of Air Waybill AWB with instructions for use.](#)

FIATA BILL OF LADING (FBL)

The FIATA Multimodal Bill of lading, commonly known by its acronym in English FBL (Forwarder Bill of Lading), serves as a shipping contract and a proof that the goods have been carried with the use of more than one mode of transportation. It also determines the responsibility of the freight forwarder. When issued "to order", it is a title of the property of the goods so it can be negotiated.

This document is used only in international transactions in which the goods are carried in two or more modes of transportation (multimodal).

This document is issued in three originals and several copies non-negotiable. The originals confer title to the goods to the possessor if done in the form "to order"; in fact, with only one original is possible to transmit the property of the goods, so it is recommended that the exporter have located the three originals during all the transaction.

[Model of FIATA Bill of Lading \(FBL\) with instructions for use.](#)

CERTIFICATE OF ORIGIN

This document certifies the country of origin of the goods, that is to say, it proves that the goods have been manufactured in that country. It is only used for exportations and importations with countries which are not part of the EC, so that the products could benefit from the preferential regimes and of the application of tariffs that corresponds them.

Usually, the certificate of origin is issued in the dispatching country of the goods, when exportation is going to be done. It is a document that certifies the specific origin of the goods and, therefore, it is a separated document that must not be included or combined with any other one.

The goods description must coincide with that provided in the commercial invoice and in the packing list (number, goods description, name of the consignor and of the consignee, trademarks, etc).

[Model of Certificate of Origin with instructions for use.](#)

CERTIFICATE OF INSPECTION

The Inspection Certificate for pre shipment inspection is a document issued by an authority indicating that goods have been inspected (typically according to a set of industry, customer, government, or carrier specifications) prior to shipment and the results of the inspection.

In some cases, it is also requested by some developing countries to verify that the goods inspected before being shipped comply with certain requirements (correct assignment customs code, contract price, etc.) in order to prevent errors or irregularities.

In some cases, the Inspection Certificate can come from the manufacturer or shipper, but never from the forwarder or logistics firm.

[Model of Certificate of Inspection with instructions for use.](#)



A full explanation as well as the corresponding model or template for virtually all foreign trade documents can be found at the link:

[INTERNATIONAL TRADE DOCUMENTS](#)

MODEL CONTRACTS

INTERNATIONAL CONTRACTS (ENGLISH, SPANISH, FRENCH, GERMAN & PORTUGUESE)

- International Sale Contract
- International Distribution Contract
- International Commercial Agency Contract
- International Sales Representative Agreement
- Intermediary Contract for Trade Operations
- International Joint Venture Contract
- International Strategic Alliance Agreement
- International Franchise Contract
- International Services Contract
- International Consulting Contract
- International Technology Transfer Agreement
- International Trademark License Agreement
- International Supply Contract
- International Manufacturing Contract
- International Buying Agent Contract
- Logistics Services Contract
- Export Contract
- Confidentiality Agreement
- Expatriate Contract of Employment
- Memorandum of Understanding for International Distribution
- Memorandum of Understanding for Joint Venture
- **Pack 10 Contracts in English**
- **Pack All Contracts in English**

BUSINESS CONTRACTS (ENGLISH, SPANISH, FRENCH, GERMAN & PORTUGUESE)

- Distribution Contract
- Commercial Agency Contract
- Sales Representative Agreement
- Commission Contract
- Joint Venture Contract
- Services Provider Contract
- Consulting Contract
- Strategic Alliance Agreement
- Franchise Contract
- Supply Contract
- **Pack 12 Commercial Contracts (Premium)**

CHINA CONTRACTS (ENGLISH-CHINESE DUAL VERSION)

- Distribution Contract China
- Agency Contract China
- Commission Contract China
- Supply Contract China
- Manufacturing Contract China
- Confidentiality Contract China
- Memorandum of Understanding for Distribution Contract China
- Memorandum of Understanding for Joint Venture China

LETTERS OF INTENT (ENGLISH & SPANISH)

- Letter of Intent for International Sale
- Letter of Intent for International Distribution
- Letter of Intent for International Joint Venture
- **Pack 3 Letters on Intent**

LETTERS FOR EXPORTERS (ENGLISH & SPANISH) LETTERS FOR IMPORTERS

- Presentation to potential client
- Proposal for agent/distributor
- Proposal to form a strategic alliance
- Invitation to a trade fair
- Making a commercial offer
- Preparation of a contract
- Reminder of payment pending
- **Pack 15 Letters for Exporters**
- Request for information to an overseas supplier
- Offering as agent/distributor
- Reply to proposal for strategic alliance
- Making contact after a trade fair
- Renegotiation of a contract
- Complaint about delivery of faulty goods
- **Pack 15 Letters for Importers**
- **Pack 30 Letters for Exporters and Importers**

