

The World Customs Organization (WCO) has published today on its website a [Guide](#) for Customs Administrations and economic operators on the practical implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Rules of Origin. This guide is basically a handbook which explains how to apply the Rules of Origin contained in the Annex 2 (and its relevant appendices) of the Protocol on Trade in goods of the AfCFTA Agreement. Already in the end of December 2022 the WCO developed a

[quick guide](#)

specifically addressed to African traders. The purpose of such guide was to help them to better understand the AfCFTA Rules of Origin. The new publication takes up the key points already contained in that guide, but expanding them with more detailed explanations and additional examples on how to determine the origin of goods for the purposes of the AfCFTA preferential tariff treatment, for the use of both private operators and Customs.

In order to be traded between African countries on the basis of the AfCFTA preferences, a product needs to be considered as “originating” from a State that has signed and ratified the AfCFTA Agreement according to the criteria described in the above Annex of the AfCFTA Protocol on Trade in goods.

Particularly detailed in the new guide are the explanations regarding the criteria used for determining the minimal working or processing operations conferring the origin with regard to processed products whose production occurs in more countries, contained in the so called “rules of the list” (appendix IV of the Annex 2). The guidelines indicate four main criteria for calculating such an origin: 1) Change in Tariff Classification; 2) Specific processing; 3) Value Added; 4) Value of Non-Originating Material content.

Such criteria, detailed in the AfCFTA list rules, correspond to 4 specific codes (SX, SP, SV and SM),

that must be indicated in the box 12 of the AfCFTA certificate of origin. In case the product is wholly obtained, the code to indicate in box 12 is 'WP', while in case of cumulation of origin the code is 'SC', followed by the country or the countries with which the cumulation is applied.

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n reality,

the AfCFTA list rules never mention the value-added criterion, but only the value of non-originating material content (which after the criterion of the Change in Tariff Classification is the most used in such rules),

indicating for a number of groups of products a maximum threshold that non-originating materials that are incorporated in the manufacture of the final product cannot exceed (usually 60% of the EXW price of the product), or the final product will not obtain the origin of the country where the working or processing operation has occurred.

The guidelines are also available in [French](#) .