

**COTONOU PORT AUTHORITY  
GENERAL MANAGEMENT OFFICE**

**COTONOU PORT INFORMATION FOR MARINE NAVIGATORS**

**GEOGRAPHICAL SITUATION OF THE PORT**

Latitude: 06°21'N

Longitude: 002°26' E

Located in the Gulf of Guinea, on West African coast at about 90 nautical miles at East North East of St Paul Cape, it is an artificial port built at 30 kilometres from Porto-Novo, the capital city.

**THE PORT OF COTONOU**

The port of Cotonou built from November 1959 to June 1965, included the East breakwater (3 berths) and a continuous quay of 660 meters long (1 to 4 berths)

Benin Coast is characterized by a very high rate of sand transit : West-East (1.2 up to 1.5 cubic meters each year); the coastal current is about two knots with a dominance of the South-West wind.

The extension works carried out from March 1979 to June 1982 and the construction of the Oryx Terminal under BOT concession in 1999 doubled the port's capacity and enabled to set up the following infrastructures and facilities.

**ACCESS FACILITIES**

The port's water level is about 60 hectares and contains two breakwaters: the main breakwater called West jetty which is extended southwards by a sand trap and the East jetty or cross-piece which protects the water level and allows ships drawing alongside.

The access channel dredged on the coast to -11.00 metres and -12.00 metres let in vessels of 10.00 meters maximum draught.

The swinging basin of 520 meters in diameter runs into the former port (commercial quay) which comprises four berths of 660 meters capable of receiving 9.00 meters - 9.50 meters draught ships, and at the cross-piece, the berth P2 designed for bulk carriers and tankers, let in 10.00 meters draught ships and the berth C is designed for 9.00 meters draught ships.

The port basin of 625 meters long and 220 meters wide is meant to 10.00 meters draught ships.

**BERTHING FACILITIES**

**Commercial quay:** Located in the north of the port basin and 1275 metres long, it comprises eight (8) to ten (10) berths which could be adjusted according to ships' length. Among these, a 220 meters berth is designed for container ships and a 200 metres berth for roll-on roll-off ships.

**The Cross-piece or “ East jetty”**: It is 460 meters long and provides protection for the basin as well as ships’ drawing alongside ; it includes three (03) berths as follows : a berth of 200 meters for bulk carriers such as clinker and hydrocarbons ; a 160 meters berth for vessels carrying vegetable oils and a 100 meters berth to let in refrigerated ships of weak tonnage and trawlers.

### **ORYX Terminal**

Built and operated since 1999 by ADDAX-ORYX consortium in accordance with the BOT system, it has a 250 meters long berth and comprises an ultra modern delivery and warehousing system of refined oil products.

### **WAREHOUSING FACILITIES**

- Dock stores and transit warehouses : more than 100 000 square meters.
- Bituminized platform: 20 000 square meters.
- Park with containers arranged: 3 terminals, 150 000 square meters
- Free zone: for Niger, Burkina Faso, Mali and Chad;
- Large platform in duty-free zone for industrial and commercial operations;
- One auction hall of 1 560 m<sup>2</sup>
- One hall for sea products semi bulky sales.
- Grain silos of 11 000 tonnes capacity.
- Storage tanks for petroleum products and vegetable oils of 43 700 cubic meters (SONACOP)
- One Liquid hydrocarbons storage centre (ORYX) of 55 000 square metres.
- One butane gas storage and bottling centre of 3 200 square metres.

### **THE PORT AUTHORITY**

The Port Authority of Cotonou  
01P.O. Box 927 Cotonou, Benin  
Phone: (229) 21-31-52-80 / 21-31-28-90  
Fax: (229) 21-31-28-91  
Email: [pac@leland.bj](mailto:pac@leland.bj)

**General Manager**: Christophe V. C. AGUESSY; Phone: 21-31-22-04

**Information desk and customer service**: phone/Fax (229)21-31-43-87

**Harbour Master’s office**: phone (229) 21-31-55-92  
Fax (229) 21-31-28-91

**Harbour master**: Isidore C. OGAN TCHEDE; Mobile: 95-85-93-15

**Tool-free number**: 81-00-00-00

### **COTONOU PORT AND ANCHORAGE CHART**

Admiralty chart N°1380: Ports and anchorages in Ghana, Togo and Benin.

## WINDS

The most important winds move from South to West through the year (force 3-6 Beaufort; 4-12 m/sec)

Those winds of humid monsoon come after dry harmattan carrying dust from North, and only from mid-December to the end of January.

Some terrible winds called storms come from East during the April-July period.

## TIDE AND WATER STREAM

Tides of spring water reach the amplitude of 1.80 m but the raisings or lowerings of waters level may happen under particular weather phenomena.

The tide is semi diurnal. The table below shows the main characteristics:

	High tide	Low tide	Amplitude
Spring tides	+1.80 m	-0.20 m	2 m
Neap tides	+1.00 m	+0.40 m	0.60 m

The tide currents are not considerable, and subjected to the winds regimes. Apart from coastal currents connected to the swell, they are low : less than 0.2 – 0.3 m/s. The following information can be noticed :

- Crossing current two (02) knots (0.3 m/s general current + 0.7 m/s coastal current)

## SWELLS

- **Periods**

Swells frequencies generally occur between 10 and 16 seconds and the most frequent period is 12 seconds. The high swells frequencies vary from 5 to 8 seconds.

- **Heights**

The average heights of the swell occur most of the time between 1 and 2 meters.

Swells have a high sceptre narrow enough varying between 0.50 and 2.50 meters for considerable heights. (Few swells are very low or very high). Their direction by the coast side is South- West and South.

## **COLDNESS**

It is cold from half December to the end of January. During this period, the Harmattan, a dry and cold wind carrying dust from the Sahara, reduces considerably the visibility (less than 0.5 nautical mile on Cotonou roadstead, which makes piloting quite hard).

## **WATER DENSITY**

Water density inside the port basin is between 1020 and 1024.

## **ANCHORAGE AT THE PORT OF COTONOU**

Any vessel wishing to anchor on the roadstead of Cotonou Port shall choose a place located in the Southeast of the West jetty pierhead lighthouse, at about one (01) nautical mile.

No risk of ships attack by pirates.

## **ANCHORAGE PROHIBITED**

It is forbidden to anchor in the West of the meridian passing through the centre of the head of the West pier. It is strictly forbidden to drop the anchor in the port entrance channel. Any anchor dropped in the port must be raised.

## **ARRIVAL AT COTONOU PORT**

Shipmasters are forbidden to enter, to leave the port or to move inside the port without a pilot aboard the ship except :

- Warships;
- Port service craft ;
- Ships of less than 1000 barrels net tonnage;
- Oceanographic and hydrographical research vessels

## **BALLAST AT COTONOU PORT**

The ballast may be unloaded at Cotonou port by complying with the provisions of the ISM code and MARPOL convention.

However any dumping of polluted water into the port basin or any discharge inside the port of toxic products deriving from tank's washing is severely blamed.

## **CARGO HANDLING FACILITIES**

No cranes provided at the berths.

Three (03) port operators share the cargo handling business in the port of Cotonou : SMTC (BOLLORE group), COMAN (AP MOLLER group) which loads and unloads container ships and SOBEMAP (a State-owned Company) which offer handling services to container ships as well as other types of ships (conventional ships, bulk carriers and bagged cargo ships).

The aforementioned businessmen have sophisticated equipments and provide a good quality service.

## **PRECAUTIONS**

Every ship must have their engine in good working condition. Every ship must get harbour Master authorization prior to overhaul their engine.

Any ship moored at the port must have at least a watchman aboard.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Cotonou International Airport is 05 Kilometers from Cotonou port; regular air transport services are offered to all countries from this airport.

## **COTONOU PORT CUSTOMS OFFICE**

Secretary's office: (229) 21-31-05-75 / 21-31-05-71 / 21-31-22-36

Customs revenue officer: Mrs Felicité DAN ZINSOU.

## **COTONOU PORT CUSTOMS BRIGADE HEAD OFFICER**

Customs officers are located in the harbour.

Brigade Head Officer Secretary's office: (229) 21-31-22-69

Customs Brigade Head Officer: Colonel Marcellin ZANNOU;

Mobile phone (229) 95-95-71-95

## **DANGEROUS CARGO REGULATIONS**

Dangerous cargo regulations are in force.

## **RESTRICTED CARGO**

Cargo of class 7, IMDG code (Radioactive materials) must not be imported to Benin.

## **PRECAUTIONS**

Two (02) days before vessel arrives, she must provide the harbour authorities with the manifests and the documents relating to the dangerous cargo by specifying the classes, the quantities and the consignees.

Steps are to be taken by the vessel consignment company so that the cargo could be collected under hoist ; no dangerous cargo is allowed to stay inside the port.

Cargos of class 1, IMDG code (explosives and ammunitions) are transported to their destination under police force and port security agents' control.

## **SPECIAL AREA FOR DANGEROUS CARGO**

The port new zoning plan provides a special designed area for IMDG code goods.

## **DOCUMENTS**

Names of list or certificates.....Number of copies

Crew	7
Passengers	7
Stowaways	7
Tobacco/Spirits (bonded stores)	4
Ship's provision	2
Weapons and ammunitions	7
Dangerous cargo	7
Animals list	7
Narcotics	4
Health documents or certificate	2
Deratting Certificate	2
Personnal effects	2
Bill of lading	1
Manifest of goods in transit (in charge of the agent)	
Manifest of the goods to be unloaded (in charge of the agent)	

## **ENTERING THE PORT OF COTONOU**

The entrance to Cotonou Port occurs after the boarding of the pilot at the landing buoy located at one nautical mile of the West break water pierhead.

The access channel of one nautical mile long and 180 m wide is dredged to a depth varying between 11 and 12 m.

## **ESTIMATED TIME OF ARRIVAL (ETA)**

An estimated time of arrival (ETA) notice is sent two days in advance to the shipping agent who informs the assistance at the harbour conference.

The allocation of berths is made at the harbour conference which gathers agents of the harbour master office, the ships agent and handling companies' agents (SOBEMAP, SMTC, and COMAN)

This conference which takes place every day at 11 am from Monday to Friday is headed by the duty pilot assisted by the port officer on duty. The schedules for Saturday and Sunday are planned in advance on Friday.

Apart from tramp steamers (oil tankers, bulk carriers) the ship arrival schedule is known at least two weeks in advance, and at each meeting the adjustment is made till the arrival day when the Estimated Time of Arrival (ETA) is updated.

When the ship is within the VHF range (30 nautical miles), she tries to get with Cotonou port's control in order to get berthing instructions after giving her particulars.

## **FIRE FIGHTING SYSTEM**

There is a firemen base within the port, which is equipped with two fire-fighting trucks and other safety equipments as well as three (03) tugs equipped with foam guns; these fire equipments are under the harbour master control.

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## **GARBAGES REMOVAL**

In accordance with the provisions of the MARPOL convention, contact should be made with the ship's agent so as to take suitable steps.

The removal of garbages is carried out by private companies.

## **HEALTH AND MEDICAL MEANS**

Hospitals and efficient health centres with various specialists as well as drugstores are available. Beninese Company of Port Handling Operations (SOBEMAP) owns an ambulance designed for sick and injured people evacuation.

## **LIGHTS AND LIGHTHOUSES**

The port areas are enlightened at night by a set of lights and signals such as :

- Cotonou lighthouse
  - Position : 06°21'02" N ; 002°26'03"E
  - Focal plan altitude: Z = 30.97 meters high above the sea level.
  - Characteristics: flashing light : white Colour ; rate : 05 seconds.
  - Nominal range: 26 nautical miles
- Landing buoy
  - Position: 06°20'02"N ; 002°26'08"E
  - Characteristics: White light, Morse letter : A, every 10 seconds
- Port entrance green light: It is located on the East jetty head. It is a fixed green light of one (01) nautical mile range.
- Port entrance red light: It is located on the East pierhead of the west jetty. It is a fixed red light of one nautical mile range.
- Sand trap jetty light: It is located in the extreme South of the sand stopping groyne. It is a fixed red light of one nautical mile range.
- Positioning light: It is located on the West jetty head and approximately on the central axis of the entrance channel. It is a fixed white light of one nautical mile range.
- Port basin entrance light: It is located in the extreme North of the West jetty head. It is a fixed red light of 0.5 nautical mile range.
- End of basin light: It is located on the beach in the extreme West of the port basin and on its central axis. It is a fixed white light of 0.5 nautical mile range.

*[Handwritten signatures and marks at the bottom of the page]*

## **MAXIMUM SIZE OF VESSELS ADMITTED TO COTONOU PORT**

	<u>TANKERS</u>	<u>OTHER SHIPS</u>
MAX LOA	200 meters	225 meters
MAX BEAM	30 meters	35 meters
MAX DRAFT	10 meters	10 meters (at high water)

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

Free access to ships during their stay at berth is forbidden to people.

## **OBSTRUCTIONS**

Pleasure or fishing boats, tugs and various boats should respect the following instructions:

- Stopping in the channel is prohibited,
- Trawling and fishing in the channel and inside the port is forbidden,
- Those boats should sharply manoeuvring near merchant ships and other big vessels without blocking their way.

## **PILOTAGE AT COTONOU PORT**

Pilotage is compulsory for all ships entering or leaving the port, and as well as for any ship movement inside the pilotage area. excepted vessels are:

- Warships
- Ships of less than 100 barrels net tonnage,
- Hydrographical and oceanographic research ships
- Port service craft in general.

The pilotage area includes: dock within breakwaters and circular area radius one nautical mile centred on pierhead of West jetty.

The pilots operate under twenty four (24) hours service, except for tankers and ships with big aircraft such as ro-ro vessels, and bulk carriers drawing more than 9 meters.

The pilots boarding area is around the landing buoy.

Ships departures should be confirmed at least one (01) hour in advance to allow tugs and mooring agents to be ready.

## **PORT FACILITIES SECURITY**

The ISPS code is in force at Cotonou Port.

## **THE PORT AREA CONTROL**

The control of port area is under the responsibility of the harbour master's office which employs in fact harbour officers and security agents for the enforcement of the police regulations of Cotonou port. The harbour master's office is helped in this duty by:

The Port Special Squad of Gendarme that guarantees security and safety inside the port area with the support of the port security and safety agents in accordance with the police regulations and on the instructions of the Harbour Master.

Any offence or common law crime committed inside the port comes within the competence of the Port Special Squad of Gendarme that should undertake every necessary detective action so as to bring possibly before the state prosecutor, any infringer to the laws and regulations of the Republic.

The Port Special Police Station: It guarantees safety and security outside the customs areas with the support of safety and security agents, in accordance with the provisions of the police regulations and on the instructions of Harbour Master.

Ship boarding examination for immigration, emigration and border police matters also come within its competences.

It must deal with any offence or common law crimes committed outside the customs fences, and undertake all necessary detective actions so as to bring possibly before the state prosecutor, any infringer to the laws and regulations of the republic.

Roadstead and territorial waters control in Benin is under the responsibility of the Beninese Navy.

Berthing and & sailing formalities are arranged by vessel's Agent in relation with Port Special Police Station and harbour Master's office.

## **RADIO**

The port control tower is provided with:

- Fixed VHF equipments
- Mobile VHF equipments
- HF radios equipments

Control tower phone number: (229) 21- 31- 40 - 33

## **VTS CENTRE IN THE PORT**

The radar and the whole VTS system are currently inoperative.

## **WATCHKEEPING CHANNELS**

A permanent watch is kept at the control tower through channels 16 and 14. Channel 12 is for pilots.

## **SAFETY RULES AND INSPECTIONS**

Safety rules are written down in the police, pilotage and towing regulations of Cotonou Port Authority.

The Merchant Marine Office is in charge of port state control on ships when they are drawn alongside in order to make sure that, conventions and provisions of the national and international maritime regulations are respected.

### **SLOPS RECEPTION**

In accordance with the provisions of the MARPOL regulations, contact should be made with marine agent for suitable actions.

Slops reception is carried out by private companies.

### **SHIPCHANDLING**

The bunkering and other ship's supply is offered by private companies; mainly by ORYX as far as bunkering is concerned.

Fresh water is supplied by the Harbour Master's Office; fresh water is available at all wharfs of the port.

### **TOWING SERVICE AT THE PORT OF COTONOU**

The use of tugs is compulsory in the pilotage area for any ship of more than 100 barrels of net tonnage.

One (01) tug is compulsory for ships having 100 meters length overall.

Two (02) tugs are compulsory for ships having an overall length equal or superior to 100 meters.

Two (02) tugs are compulsory for tankers carrying dangerous products whatever their lengths are.

Three types of tugs are available:

- One tug with two engines, 1 500 HP each (3,000 HP).
- One tug of 2 000 HP.
- One tug of 1 500 HP.

### **PORT AUTHORITY WEB SITE :**

[www.portdecotonou.com](http://www.portdecotonou.com)

## OTHER PIECES INFORMATION

- The berths designed for container ships are: Q6 and Q8 of 440 meters long.
- The width of the entrance channel is 180 meters and the practicable width is 130 meters.
- The bollards capacity is 40 tonnes inside the old harbour and 50 tonnes in the new basin.
- Non operational berths due to engines breakdown/ship's arrest: NIL at this day.
- Holidays when port's operations are stopped :
  - January 1<sup>st</sup>
  - May 1<sup>st</sup> (labour day)
  - August 1<sup>st</sup> (independence day)
  - December 25<sup>th</sup> (Christmas)

**Completed in Cotonou on 24<sup>th</sup> of may 2007**

  
**Christophe V.C. AGUESSY**

General Manager of Cotonou Port Authority