

## Overview

The Dominican Republic generally accepts U.S. certifications and standards. The Dominican Standardization System follows international guidelines and it is compatible with the purposes of General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) Code of Standards. DIGENOR (Dirección General de Normas & Sistemas de Calidad, in Spanish) is the Dominican governmental body overseeing the formulation, publication, and implementation of quality norms in the Dominican Republic. DIGENOR was created on May 20, 1997, in accordance with Law 602. Rather than creating new standards specific to the Dominican Republic, DIGENOR follows international standards. The Dominican Standardization System (NORDOM, or Normas Dominicanas in Spanish) consists of 619 mandatory and voluntary standards.

The U.S. **National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)**, via its Notify U.S. Service, notifies the Dominican Republic and all other World Trade Organization (WTO) Member countries, as required under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement). All Members must notify proposed technical regulations that could affect trade with other Member countries. **Notify U.S.** is a free, web-based e-mail subscription service that offers an opportunity to review and comment on proposed foreign technical regulations that can affect access to international markets and online registration is available via: <http://www.nist.gov/notifyus/>

## Standards Organizations

DIGENOR is the only national institution that compiles and publishes standards in the Dominican Republic. It is the center for information for international standards and serves as:

- The National Inquiry Point under the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade;
  - The Contact Point for Codex Alimentarius Commission (international standardsetting body for food standards); and
  - The Local Agent for the International Organization for Standardization (ISO),
- DIGENOR also has membership in the Pan-American Standards Commission (COPANT) and receives assistance from the National Association of Drinking Water Supplier Agencies (ANDESAPA), and the Wastewater Equipment Manufacturers Association (CAPRA).

For the inclusion of standards for healthcare products, such as cosmetics and pharmaceuticals, DIGENOR has created a joint commission with the Drugs and Pharmacy Directorate of the Ministry of Public Health.

## Conformity Assessment

Due to a lack of resources at DIGENOR, products are typically tested in private foreign laboratories.

## Product Certification

DIGENOR is the institution authorized to provide product certification. The DIGENOR Seal of Compliance (Sello de Calidad DIGENOR, in Spanish) is the certification that DIGENOR provides to manufactured products that meet Dominican standards. Any company interested in obtaining this certification for its product should present documentation indicating that an internationally accredited laboratory has tested and approved the product. In the case of pharmaceuticals and cosmetics, the products must also receive a certification of approval ("Registro Sanitario," in Spanish) from the Directorate of Drugs and Pharmacies of the Ministry of Public Health. This is a straightforward process, which requires only the presentation of documents from an accredited international organization, such as the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Without this "Registro Sanitario", pharmaceutical and cosmetic products are not allowed to enter the Dominican Republic. For more information on the "Registro Sanitario" please visit the website of the Directorate of Drugs and Pharmacies: <http://www.drogasyfarmacias.gov.do>.

### **Accreditation**

There are no testing laboratories in the Dominican Republic. Therefore, DIGENOR will accept documents and assessments prepared by internationally accredited bodies or testing laboratories. However, the Dominican government has indicated that they are in the process of accrediting one laboratory. The laboratory was scheduled to start operations in 2009, but the DIGENOR has experienced budget problems that have hindered the project, thus preventing it from operating to date.

### **Publication of Technical Regulations**

In the Dominican Republic, the most up-to-date regulations are published and available to the general public for a small fee. Because the country does not create new standards, but follows international standards, there is no need for public discussion of any technical regulations.

### **Labeling and Marking**

The Dominican Republic has two standards on labeling, NORDOM 53 relating to food, and NORDOM 407 relating to medication, which are in line with international practices (ISO 750). These norms follow the *Codex Alimentarius* standard, as well. According to NORDOM 53, the following must be in Spanish:

1. Name of the food product
2. Ingredient list
3. Net and drained weight using the Metric system (grams, kg, etc.)
4. Industrial and Sanitary registration number or its equivalent
5. Usage instructions
6. Name and address of manufacturer/distributor

Article 112 of the General Law of Health Law (42-01) indicates that the following products must be labeled in Spanish: cosmetics, medical equipment, tobacco products, agricultural chemicals, and any other substance that may represent a risk to human health.

### **Contacts**

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## **Trade Agreements**

### **CAFTA-DR**

On September 6, 2005, the Dominican Congress ratified the United States-Dominican Republic-Central America Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR). Implementation occurred on March 1, 2007. More information on CAFTA-DR is found in earlier chapters of this document.

### **Other DR preferential trade agreements**

The Dominican Republic has bilateral investment treaties with Chile, Ecuador, France, Spain, Taiwan, Switzerland, Morocco, Finland, the Netherlands, Italy, and South Korea. However, these do not provide the level of protection to investors generally offered by U.S. bilateral investment treaties.

It also has trade agreements with the Central American countries, the Caribbean countries (CARICOM), and a partial trade agreement with Panamá. An agreement for

the exchange of tax information between the United States and Dominican Republic has been in effect since 1989.

The Dominican government also signed an Economic Partnership Agreement with the European Union as part of CARIFORUM in December 2007 that entered into force in 2008.

Trade agreements under negotiation

In 2007, the Dominican government started negotiating bilateral agreements with Canada. Initial rounds of negotiations on bilateral free trade agreements were held with Venezuela in 2003 and with Taiwan in 2006, but neither of these negotiations have resumed.

### **Web Resources**

U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service: <http://www.BuyUSA.gov/caribbean>

U.S. Foreign Agricultural Service: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/posthome/santodomingo/>