

COALITION OF

CONCERNED EXPORTERS, IMPORTERS & TRADERS

PRESS RELEASE

January 15, 2026

RE: ROLLOUT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SPN: THE GHANA SHIPPERS' AUTHORITY HAS YET TO JUSTIFY ITS POLICY UNDERTAKING PROJECTED TO COST GHANAIAN HOUSEHOLDS AT LEAST €187.2 MILLION EVERY YEAR

On 23rd December, 2025, the Ghana Shippers' Authority (GSA), through a public notice, announced the implementation of the Smart Port Note (SPN) effective 1st February, 2026. Since then, the trading community has raised serious concerns regarding the justification for this measure and the anticipated adverse effects it will have on Ghana's trade architecture, the cost of doing business, prices of commodities on the market, and overall national development.

Based on a conservative analysis, the implementation of the Smart Port Note (SPN) in Ghana is projected to cost Ghanaian shippers and by extension, Ghanaian households between **€187.2 million** and **€382.8 million** per annum.

This financial burden represents a direct transfer of wealth to the service provider, Inter-Ocean Maritime and Logistics Institute and its Belgium-based technical partner, Antaser Afrique. The estimate is derived from the following:

- **Traffic Volume:** The total container traffic of 1,701,246 TEUs (Twenty-Foot Equivalent Units), as per 2024 port statistics.
- **Fee Basis:** The proposed SPN fee structure from the previous rollout attempt.
- **Scope:** This calculation includes Full Container Load (FCL) traffic only and does not account for other types of cargo, meaning the total economic impact could be significantly higher.

In light of the above, it is of grave concern to the Coalition of Concerned Exporters, Importers and Traders that despite the multiplicity of issues raised, the Ghana Shippers' Authority has made no meaningful effort to provide clarity on this policy measure. This lack of clarity is particularly troubling given that even groups purportedly in favour of the policy continue to present conflicting and inconsistent accounts of the policy's structure, scope, operational framework, and intended outcomes.

This situation clearly points to the absence of adequate stakeholder consultation and sensitisation, which constitutes the most basic and indispensable step in sound policy formulation. The inability of the management of the Ghana Shippers' Authority to undertake this elementary process of policy implementation reflects poorly on the Authority, being the body legally mandated to protect the interests of the Ghanaian shipper.



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Significantly, the Coalition is aware that since the Authority's announcement, the Association of Customs House Agents of Ghana (ACHAG) and other associations, whom it cited in its public notice as having consulted, have written to dissociate themselves from the policy. Interestingly, the Ship Owners and Agents Association of Ghana (SOAAG), which represents sea carriers (who are expected to play a key role in the implementation), has also indicated that it has not been consulted on this.

This opaque situation is worsened by the GSA's persistent refusal to engage the public on the SPN, which only reinforces the perception that it lacks a coherent, evidence-based justification for the policy. A policy of this scale, with far-reaching implications for trade facilitation, competitiveness, and consumer prices, cannot be imposed through administrative fiat without transparent explanation, rigorous impact assessment, and broad stakeholder buy-in. The Smart Port Note (SPN) is, by all assessments, not yet ready for implementation. Accordingly, the Coalition has formally requested that the Ghana Shippers' Authority provide a comprehensive position paper. This document must clearly articulate the policy's rationale, its practical implementation model, the associated fee structure, and an assessment of how it integrates with Ghana's existing trade architecture—all for the thorough scrutiny of the trading community.

In the absence of a clear problem statement, cost-benefit analysis, or demonstration of how the SPN adds value beyond existing trade facilitation mechanisms, the policy appears arbitrary, duplicative, and counterproductive. Rather than facilitating trade, the SPN risks introducing an additional layer of bureaucracy, increasing transaction costs, and undermining Ghana's commitment to trade facilitation under regional and international frameworks.

The Coalition, therefore, maintains that until the proper policy leadership and implementation deficiencies are resolved and the Ghana Shippers' Authority publicly articulates the necessity, structure, legal basis, and economic justification for the SPN backed by verifiable data and inclusive stakeholder consultation, the rollout of the policy remains unjustifiable and must be suspended accordingly.

Signed

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Convenor