



VECTOR TRADE CAPITAL

# Caribbean Fuel & Commodity Import Playbook

2026

The definitive guide for Caribbean importers: procurement strategy, risk mitigation, regulatory compliance, and supply chain optimization.

**\$5B**

CARICOM Trade Finance Ceiling

**750K**

Guyana Barrels Per Day

**40%**

LNG Exports Up to Caribbean

**68%**

New Capacity Renewable

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## 01 THE CARIBBEAN IMPORT LANDSCAPE IN 2026



The Caribbean commodity import market in 2026 is defined by converging pressures: rising energy costs driven by Middle East instability, tightening shipping capacity, an evolving regulatory environment, and the accelerating energy transition. For importers, understanding these dynamics is no longer optional—it is the foundation of profitable procurement.

### Macro Trends Shaping 2026

**Geopolitical disruption and oil price volatility.** Disruptions around the Strait of Hormuz have constrained tanker traffic and reduced refining output from the Persian Gulf. For small, open, energy-importing economies across the Caribbean, every dollar increase in crude translates directly into higher import bills, pressure on foreign exchange reserves, and strained current accounts.

**Shipping cost escalation.** Major container carriers have introduced emergency fuel surcharges on long-haul routes. A tariff on ships made in China could add between \$1,500 to \$4,000 to the cost of importing a single container—a material impact for Caribbean buyers on thin margins.

**Expanded regional trade finance.** The African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank) raised its financing ceiling for CARICOM states from \$3 billion to \$5 billion in February 2026, signaling growing institutional support for Caribbean trade.

**Guyana’s production surge.** Guyana has ramped oil output to approximately 750,000 barrels per day—nearly tenfold growth since 2020. The new Vreed-en-Hoop Shore Base (\$300M) is transforming regional logistics infrastructure.

Indicator	2024	2026 (Est.)	Trend
Brent Crude (\$/bbl)	\$78–85	\$88–105	↑ Volatile
CARICOM Finance Ceiling	\$3B	\$5B	↑ Expanded
US LNG to Caribbean	Baseline	+40% YoY	↑ Growing
Guyana Production	~600K bpd	~750K bpd	↑ Surging
Container Surcharge	Moderate	+\$1.5–4K/TEU	↑ Elevated



Renewable New Capacity	55%	68%	↑ Accelerating
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**Caribbean nations imported an estimated \$14B+ in petroleum products in 2025. Strategic sourcing can reduce landed costs by 8–15%.**

## 02 FUEL PRODUCTS: SOURCING, SPECS & PRICING



Fuel procurement is the single largest import expenditure for most Caribbean economies. Understanding product specifications, sourcing origins, seasonal pricing patterns, and quality assurance protocols is critical to managing costs and ensuring supply reliability.

### Product Reference Guide

Product	Primary Source	Key Spec	Price Driver
ULSD Diesel	US Gulf Coast	15 ppm sulfur max	Crack spread + freight
Gasoline (UNL 87/93)	US Gulf Coast	ASTM D4814	RBOB + ethanol blend
Jet A-1 Aviation	US Gulf Coast	ASTM D1655	Kerosene crack + demand
LPG Propane	US Gulf / Trinidad	HD-5 grade	Mt. Belvieu index
Fuel Oil (HSFO/VLSFO)	US Gulf / Caribbean	3.5% / 0.5% sulfur	IMO 2020 + bunker
Marine Gas Oil	US Gulf Coast	ISO 8217 DMA	Diesel differential

### Sourcing Strategy: Why the US Gulf Coast Dominates

The US Gulf Coast refining complex is the world's largest and most efficient, with over 9 million barrels per day of capacity. For Caribbean importers, proximity translates to shorter transit times (3–7 days), lower freight costs, consistent product availability, and reliable quality certification. Vector Trade Capital maintains direct relationships with Gulf Coast refineries, eliminating broker markups and ensuring competitive pricing.

### Pricing Dynamics to Watch in 2026

- **Crack spreads** remain elevated due to refinery maintenance cycles and export demand
- **Bunker fuel surcharges** are adding \$8–12/MT to ocean freight rates
- **Hurricane season** (June–November) creates seasonal price spikes and supply disruptions
- **Geopolitical premiums** tied to Middle East tensions are embedded in forward curves
- **Venezuelan sanctions** continue to limit regional supply alternatives

**INSIDER TIP: Seasonal Procurement Strategy**

Lock in Q1/Q4 pricing for ULSD diesel when Gulf Coast inventories are typically highest. Avoid spot purchases during August–October when hurricane risk peaks. A 90-day forward purchase strategy can reduce annual fuel costs by 5–8%.

## 03 FOOD COMMODITIES: SUPPLY CHAIN ESSENTIALS



Caribbean nations rely heavily on imported food staples. Procurement of rice, sugar, wheat flour, cooking oil, frozen poultry, and legumes requires managing supplier quality, cold chain logistics, shelf life, and phytosanitary compliance—all while controlling costs in a volatile freight environment.

Commodity	Origin	Key Considerations	Volume Trend
Rice (Long Grain)	US / Guyana / Brazil	Grade certification, moisture content	Stable
Sugar (Raw/Refined)	Brazil / Guatemala	ICUMSA color, polarization specs	Growing
Wheat Flour	US / Canada	Protein content, fortification reqs	Stable
Cooking Oil	US / Malaysia / Brazil	FFA levels, packaging format	Growing
Frozen Poultry	US / Brazil	Cold chain integrity, USDA/HACCP	Growing
Legumes	US / Canada / Myanmar	Phytosanitary certs, GMO rules	Stable

### Cold Chain & Quality Assurance

Frozen poultry and perishable goods require unbroken cold chain management from origin to destination port. Key requirements include: pre-shipment inspection by accredited agencies, reefer container temperature monitoring (-18°C for frozen poultry), phytosanitary and health certificates from origin country authorities, and Bureau of Standards clearance at destination. Vector Trade Capital manages full CIF delivery with integrated inspection and documentation, eliminating gaps in the cold chain.

**COST OPTIMIZATION: Consolidation Strategy**  
 Combining fuel and food commodity orders on the same vessel route (US Gulf to Caribbean) can reduce per-unit freight costs by 12–18%. Ask about multi-commodity CIF pricing.



## 04 NAVIGATING REGULATORY & CUSTOMS FRAMEWORKS

Caribbean import regulations operate within the CARICOM Common External Tariff (CET) framework, supplemented by national-level duties, excise taxes, and environmental levies. Navigating this landscape requires understanding both regional harmonization and country-specific requirements.

### CARICOM Common External Tariff (CET)

The CET provides a unified tariff structure across CARICOM member states, with import duties typically ranging from 0–20%. However, petroleum products are subject to additional excise taxes that vary significantly by country, ranging from 5% to 60% depending on the product and jurisdiction.

Country	Gasoline Excise	Diesel Excise	Aviation Fuel	Notes
Jamaica	~SCT + GCT	~SCT + GCT	Varied	Special consumption tax
Trinidad & Tobago	Regulated	Subsidized	Market	Price controls in effect
Haiti	90% CIF	40% CIF	3% CIF	Among highest in region
Dominican Rep.	Ad val + ITBIS	Reduced rate	Reduced	Selective consumption
Guyana	Excise + VAT	Excise + VAT	Excise + VAT	Energy reform underway
Barbados	5–60% excise	5–60% excise	Varied	CET member rates

### Essential Documentation Checklist

- **Bill of Lading** — Original clean on-board B/L with consignee details
- **Commercial Invoice** — Full CIF value breakdown, product specs, HS codes
- **Certificate of Origin** — Required for preferential tariff treatment
- **Certificate of Quality/Analysis** — Independent lab results (SGS, Intertek, Bureau Veritas)
- **Insurance Certificate** — Marine cargo policy covering 110% CIF value
- **Packing List** — Weight, volume, and packaging specifications
- **Phytosanitary/Health Certificate** — For food commodities
- **Import License** — Some products require prior government approval

Vector Trade Capital provides full CIF documentation packages with every shipment—pre-cleared for customs compliance at your named Caribbean port.



## 05 CIF VS. FOB: CHOOSING THE RIGHT INCOTERM

The choice between CIF (Cost, Insurance, Freight) and FOB (Free on Board) fundamentally determines who controls—and who pays for—logistics, insurance, and risk during transit. For Caribbean importers, this decision has major financial and operational implications.

Factor	CIF (Recommended)	FOB
Cost Visibility	Single all-in price to port	Must source freight + ins separately
Risk Transfer	Seller bears risk to dest port	Buyer bears risk from loading port
Insurance	Included (min 110% CIF)	Buyer must arrange independently
Freight Negotiation	Seller leverages volume	Buyer exposed to spot rates
Documentation	Complete package from seller	Buyer manages shipping docs
Best For	Importers wanting simplicity	Large buyers w/ own logistics
Cash Flow	Predictable, single payment	Multiple payments, timing risk

### WHY CIF WINS FOR CARIBBEAN IMPORTERS

With volatile freight markets and limited local insurance options, CIF contracts shift risk to the seller. Vector Trade Capital's CIF model includes marine cargo insurance, ocean freight, and complete documentation—delivered to your named port with one firm quote.



## 06 TRADE FINANCE & WORKING CAPITAL SOLUTIONS

Access to trade finance remains one of the biggest barriers for Caribbean commodity importers. Traditional banking channels often impose restrictive terms, lengthy approval processes, and high collateral requirements. Understanding the full spectrum of financing options—and working with capital-backed trading partners—can transform procurement economics.

### Financing Structures for Commodity Imports

Structure	How It Works	Best For	Typical Terms
Letter of Credit	Bank guarantees payment on doc presentation	Large, established importers	60–90 day tenor
Pre-Export Finance	Advance against confirmed PO	Exporters w/ offtake agreements	30–120 days
Capital-Backed Trading	Trading firm deploys own capital	Importers needing speed + flexibility	Per-transaction
Supply Chain Finance	Buyer's bank pays supplier early	Importers w/ strong bank relationships	30–90 day payable
Afreximbank Facilities	Regional dev finance for CARICOM trade	Government / large importers	Project-specific

### The Capital-Backed Advantage

Unlike brokers who merely connect buyers and sellers, capital-backed trading firms like Vector Trade Capital deploy internal capital to finance every transaction. This means faster execution (48-hour quote turnaround), no dependency on third-party bank approvals, firm pricing that does not shift between quote and delivery, and the ability to handle transactions that traditional banks may decline due to perceived country risk.

**Every Vector Trade Capital transaction is financed with internal capital. No broker fees. No bank delays. Firm CIF pricing within 48 hours.**

## 07 LOGISTICS & SHIPPING: US GULF TO CARIBBEAN



Efficient logistics is the bridge between a competitive price and profitable delivery. Caribbean shipping from the US Gulf Coast involves vessel selection, port capacity constraints, weather routing, and tight coordination with customs authorities.

### Transit Times: US Gulf Coast to Caribbean Ports

Destination	Transit (Days)	Primary Port	Draft Limit
Jamaica	3–4	Kingston / Montego Bay	12–15m
Dominican Republic	3–5	Santo Domingo / Haina	10–12m
Trinidad & Tobago	5–7	Port of Spain / Pt. Lisas	12–14m
Haiti	3–4	Port-au-Prince	8–10m
Guyana	6–8	Georgetown	6–8m
Bahamas	2–3	Nassau / Freeport	10–12m
Barbados	5–7	Bridgetown	10–11m
Suriname	7–9	Paramaribo	7–9m

### Vessel Types & Cargo Considerations

- **MR Tankers (25–55K DWT)** — Standard for Caribbean fuel deliveries; deep-draft ports
- **Handysize Tankers (10–25K DWT)** — Smaller ports with draft restrictions
- **Coastal/Barge** — Inter-island distribution and shallow-draft destinations
- **Container (20/40ft)** — Food commodities, packaged goods, vehicles
- **Reefer Container** — Frozen poultry and perishable food products

**HURRICANE SEASON PLANNING**

June through November requires proactive inventory management. Pre-position 30–45 days of critical fuel supply before June 1. Build contingency clauses into CIF contracts for weather-related delays. Consider split shipments to reduce single-voyage exposure.

## 08 RISK MANAGEMENT & PRICE HEDGING

Caribbean importers face a convergence of risks: commodity price volatility, currency fluctuations, geopolitical disruption, weather events, and counterparty exposure. A structured risk management approach is essential for protecting margins and ensuring supply continuity.

### Risk Matrix for Caribbean Commodity Imports

Risk Category	Severity	2026 Outlook	Mitigation
Oil Price Volatility	<b>HIGH</b>	Elevated — Middle East tensions	Forward contracts, price caps, hedging
Currency (FX) Risk	<b>HIGH</b>	USD strength vs. Caribbean currencies	FX forwards, natural hedging, USD invoicing
Supply Disruption	<b>MED-HIGH</b>	Hurricane + geopolitical risk combined	Multiple sourcing, safety stock, insurance
Freight Rate Spikes	<b>MEDIUM</b>	Surcharges and vessel shortages persist	COA contracts, advance booking, CIF terms
Counterparty Default	<b>MEDIUM</b>	Credit stress in smaller Caribbean economies	L/C protection, credit insurance, capital-backed
Regulatory Change	<b>LOW-MED</b>	CET amendments, new enviro levies	Compliance monitoring, flexible contracts

### Practical Hedging Tools

- **Fixed-price forward contracts** — Lock in commodity + freight for 30–90 days
- **Price cap/collar structures** — Set a ceiling while retaining downside benefit
- **Inventory management** — Strategic stockpiling during low-price windows
- **Supplier diversification** — Multiple origins to reduce single-source dependency
- **Marine cargo insurance** — Coverage of 110%+ CIF value with war risk riders

## 09 THE ENERGY TRANSITION: LNG, RENEWABLES & YOUR PORTFOLIO



The Caribbean energy landscape is undergoing a structural shift. While petroleum imports remain essential today, the accelerating adoption of LNG, solar, wind, and battery storage is reshaping long-term demand patterns. Smart importers are positioning now for a hybrid energy future.

### The LNG Opportunity

US LNG exports to Latin America and the Caribbean climbed roughly 40% in 2024, with the Dominican Republic ranking among the top island importers. Trinidad and Tobago's National Gas Company is evaluating small-scale LNG infrastructure to service regional demand, while the Caribbean LNG terminal in Antigua is positioning to supply the Eastern Caribbean. For importers currently reliant on heavy fuel oil or diesel for power generation, LNG offers a lower-emission, increasingly cost-competitive bridge fuel.

### Renewable Energy: The Long-Term View

In 2025, 68% of newly installed electricity capacity in the region was renewable. Analysis from RMI suggests that solar + battery, onshore wind + battery, and geothermal all become cheaper than both liquid fuel oil and natural gas by 2027. A 100% renewable energy target by 2035 has been identified as both achievable and affordable for the region.

### What This Means for Commodity Importers

- **Short-term (2026–2028):** Petroleum demand remains strong; diesel and fuel oil still dominate
- **Medium-term (2028–2032):** LNG displaces some HFO/diesel; renewables gain grid share
- **Long-term (2032+):** Renewable + storage becomes primary; petroleum imports decline
- **Transport fuel:** Gasoline and diesel for vehicles remains robust through 2035+
- **Food imports:** Unaffected by energy transition; volume growth continues

#### STRATEGIC POSITIONING

Diversify your commodity portfolio now. Importers who build relationships with fuel, food, and LNG suppliers today will be best positioned for the hybrid energy economy of 2028–2035. Vector Trade Capital can structure multi-commodity CIF programs that evolve with your needs.

## 10 YOUR IMPORT CHECKLIST & NEXT STEPS

Whether you are an established importer optimizing your supply chain or entering the Caribbean commodity market for the first time, this actionable checklist covers the essential steps from initial requirement to port delivery.

### PRE-PROCUREMENT CHECKLIST

- 1 Define Requirements**  
Specify product, grade, volume, delivery port, and timeline. Include quality specs.
- 2 Assess Regulatory Requirements**  
Confirm import licenses, duty rates, excise taxes, and documentation requirements.
- 3 Evaluate Financing Options**  
Determine whether to use L/C, pre-export finance, or capital-backed trading.
- 4 Request CIF Quotations**  
Obtain firm all-in pricing including product, freight, and insurance to your named port.
- 5 Review Contract Terms**  
Verify Incoterms, payment terms, quality clauses, force majeure, dispute resolution.
- 6 Arrange Pre-Shipment Inspection**  
Engage independent surveyor (SGS, Intertek, Bureau Veritas) at loading port.
- 7 Confirm Insurance Coverage**  
Marine cargo insurance: minimum 110% CIF value with war risk endorsements.
- 8 Coordinate Port Logistics**  
Confirm berth availability, draft clearance, storage capacity, customs broker readiness.
- 9 Execute Customs Clearance**  
Submit full doc package: B/L, invoice, COO, quality cert, insurance, packing list.
- 10 Post-Delivery Reconciliation**  
Verify quantity (outturn), confirm quality, reconcile docs, process payment.

**Ready to streamline your Caribbean commodity imports? Contact Vector Trade Capital for a firm CIF quotation within 48 hours.**



# Partner With Vector Trade Capital

Vector Trade Capital is a Houston-based commodity trading firm specializing in CIF delivery of fuel, food commodities, and vehicles to Caribbean importers. We source, finance, and deliver—backed by internal capital, direct supplier relationships, and a commitment to transparent, competitive pricing.

<p><b>Capital-Backed Execution</b> Every transaction financed with internal capital. No broker delays.</p>	<p><b>Direct Supplier Access</b> Relationships with US Gulf Coast refineries. No broker markups.</p>
<p><b>48-Hour Firm Quotes</b> Submit requirements and receive a firm CIF price within two business days.</p>	<p><b>Full CIF Documentation</b> Complete documentation packages pre-cleared for customs compliance.</p>

## MARKETS WE SERVE

**Active:** Jamaica, Dominican Republic, Trinidad & Tobago, Haiti, Guyana

**Expanding:** Bahamas, Barbados, Curaçao, St. Lucia, Antigua & Barbuda, Suriname, Belize, Honduras

## GET STARTED

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<b>Quote Turnaround</b>	48 hours from requirement submission

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