

From Idea to First Container: An Example Import Journey

An illustrative example of how a first-time importer goes from a product idea to a delivered shipment, and where help makes the biggest difference.

By the Made in China Easy team, Guangzhou · 31 October 2026

This is an illustrative example, not a real client. It shows a typical path and the decisions along the way. Real client stories will be added here with their permission.

The idea

Amina runs a small electrical shop. Her customers keep asking for solar lights, and she believes she can sell them at a good margin if she imports directly instead of buying from a local wholesaler.

Step 1: A clear brief

She writes one page: the type of light, battery size, brightness, the quantity she can sell in three months, her target price and the certifications her country needs. This brief goes to every supplier, so the quotes can be compared.

Step 2: A shortlist

Four suppliers quote. One is far cheaper than the others. A business registration check shows it is a trading company with a short history and a bank account in a different name, so it is dropped. Two factories remain.

Step 3: Samples and a factory video

Both factories send samples. Amina tests them for a week: one has a weaker battery than stated. A live video walkthrough of the other factory shows the production line and the testing area. She chooses it.

Step 4: The order

The purchase agreement lists the approved sample, quantity, packaging, labels, a deposit before production and the balance after inspection.

Step 5: Inspection

Before the balance is paid, an inspector checks quantity, function, labels and packing. A small number of units have a loose switch; the factory fixes them before shipping.

Step 6: Shipping

The order fills less than a full container, so it ships in a shared container. Because the lights contain batteries, the shipment needs special paperwork, which is arranged in advance. Customs clearance and delivery to her shop are added to the quote.

What made the difference

- A clear brief gave comparable quotes
- A registration check removed the riskiest supplier
- Testing samples revealed a real quality gap
- Paying the balance only after inspection protected her money

Your turn

Tell us about your idea and we'll suggest the steps that fit. Get started.

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