

Simandou iron ore: a new African flow

*Dr Alexander Ressos, TEP
Attorney-at-Law (Switzerland), Solicitor (Hong Kong),
Solicitor (England & Wales)*

The Simandou project in Guinea shows the scale on which African flows can be created. After decades of delays, disputes and changes of shareholders, the project was officially launched on 11 November 2025. A first shipment of around 200,000 tonnes of iron ore arrived on 17 January 2026 at the Chinese port of Majishan, after a crossing of forty-six days. The project brings together Rio Tinto, the Winning consortium, the steelmaker Baowu and Chinalco. It relies on a railway of more than 600 kilometres to the Atlantic coast and is eventually to produce some 120 million tonnes a year of ore with an iron content of more than 65 per cent.¹ Such a volume would make Guinea one of the world's leading exporters of iron ore and would alter the maritime flows between West Africa and Asia.

Geneva is involved in this type of project in several capacities. Metals and freight traders, the banks that finance the cargoes, the inspection companies that certify the grades, the insurers and the arbitrators who handle the disputes all find business in it. *Family offices* and asset managers, for their part, find exposure through the bonds and shares of the companies concerned. The project also illustrates the competition described in Chapter III: the capital, the builders and the buyers are Chinese. The Geneva financial centre, which did not finance the infrastructure, will trade its flows. The question whether Geneva can be anything other than an intermediary for African flows financed by others runs through this Part. Simandou poses it on the scale of an entire country.

1 Notes

1. “Guinea ships first Simandou iron ore, ending decades of delays”, Ecofin Agency, 19 January 2026. ↩

For general information only. This article does not constitute legal or tax advice, does not replace advice on an individual case and creates no lawyer-client relationship. It reflects the legal position as of September 2026.

Online version: helveticaregister.com/geneva-simandou-iron-ore-a-new-african-flow