



# Doing Business in Qatar: A Country Commercial Guide for U.S. Companies – 2008 Edition

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## Chapter 1: Doing Business In Qatar

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### Market Overview

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- Qatar's real GDP growth is strong, at approximately 8 % in 2007, and a predicted 9.5% in 2008. As more LNG facilities come on-line in 2009, real GDP growth should be above 12%. Qatar's gross domestic product (GDP) rose to a record high of QR224.6bn in 2007, compared to QR191.9bn the previous year, according to preliminary estimates released by the Statistics Department of the Planning Council's General Secretariat.
- In the next ten years, it is estimated that Qatar will invest over \$120 billion dollars in the development of the energy and industrial sectors and \$60 billion in roads, infrastructure development, housing and real estate, health/medical and sanitation projects.
- Per capita income in Qatar is high, at over \$60,000 in 2007. There is no personal income tax in Qatar.
- The booming economy in Qatar is leading to shortages of materials and labor. This is compounded by a rapid growth of the population, which is by some estimates approaching 1.4 million people, up from just 600,000 five years ago. This is having an inflationary effect in the economy, with housing prices particularly hard hit. Rents are among the highest in the GCC, and the cost of living is high by American standards.
- Qatar imports over 90 percent of its food.
- Major food suppliers to the Qatar market include the EU, Australia and Saudi Arabia.
- Most of Qatar's food product imports transit through the United Arab Emirates.

### Market Challenges

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- Qatar's foreign investment law establishes limits on the amount that foreign investors are permitted to invest in all sectors of the economy (49%) provided they have a Qatari partner or partners whose share is not less than 51% of the capital.
- Foreign investors may own 100% of a project's capital in sectors like agriculture, industry, health care, education, tourism and the exploitation and development of natural resources pending approval by the GOQ.
- Foreign investors must receive permission from the government to invest the banking and insurance sectors. Foreign investment is not allowed in commercial agencies, telecommunications and real estate, although there are limited opportunities for foreigners to purchase property in select real estate projects in the West Bay Lagoon area, Al-Khor district and Pearl of the Gulf Development project.
- Most foreign investors are required to have a local agent and/or sponsor to engage in commercial activity except when authorized 100% foreign ownership. The commercial agencies law requires all agent agreements to be exclusive arrangements.
- Foreign companies may pay corporate income taxes between 5 and 35% while Qataris are exempted from this tax.
- There are concerns about transparency in government procurement, particularly regarding the following: a lack of clarity in the conditions/ criteria of the tender, improper notification or explanation to non-qualifying companies, the awards process, and the inability to challenge awards.
- Qatar has no import quotas. However, non-tariff barriers arise occasionally. Most recently, Qatar has maintained a ban on imports of U.S. beef.
- Local food production is limited to dates, seafood, vegetables, poultry and some dairy products.
- The import duty for most processed food products is a flat 5 percent ad valorem.
- There is no import duty for live animals, fresh fruits and vegetables, seafood, grains, flours, tea, sugar, spices and seeds for planting.
- Imports of pork products are prohibited in Qatar for cultural reasons.
- The import duty on cigarettes and other tobacco product is 100 percent.
- Arabic or bilingual English/Arabic language labels or stickers are required for all food products.
- Production and expiry dates are required to be on all "original" food labels.

- The food retail sector is developing rapidly with the arrival of hypermarkets from the United Arab Emirates, France, and Saudi Arabia. Traditional consumer cooperative societies now account for less than 10 percent of retail foods sales.

## Market Opportunities

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- Energy Sector: Qatar has attracted an estimated \$100 billion in investment, with approximately \$60-70 billion coming from the U.S. It is estimated that Qatar will invest over \$120 billion in the energy sector in the next ten years.
- Construction: It is estimated that Qatar will invest \$60 billion in roads, infrastructure development, housing and real estate, health/medical and sanitation projects. The GOQ and private sector are actively seeking project designers, engineers and managers, in addition to needed production inputs like cement and heavy machinery and equipment.
- Other sectors with significant opportunities include: ICT, ACE, HVAC, Safety and Security, Franchising, Medical Equipment and Services, Power Transmission Equipment, Consumer Electronics, and other sectors. Please see [Chapter 4: Leading Sectors for U.S. Export and Investment](#)

## Market Entry Strategy

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- If you are a new-to-exporting company, first contact your local Export Assistance Center for free counseling on exporting at [www.buyusa.gov/home/export.html](http://www.buyusa.gov/home/export.html).
- The Commercial Section of the American Embassy can give you a down-to-earth assessment of your company's chances for success in Qatar. For more information, please visit [www.buyusa.gov/qatar](http://www.buyusa.gov/qatar).
- Come visit: Qatar is like many Middle Eastern countries in that personal contact with potential agents and partners is key.
- Get a lawyer: Many U.S. companies advise that acquiring good legal representation is a very important first step. This helps you to establish and maintain good business relationships with Qatari partners. Hiring a lawyer is especially important before concluding commercial agreements. Occasionally American firms, once their company starts making a profit, report difficulties with their Qatari sponsors and business partners. A good business lawyer can help you with such problems. The U.S. Embassy can provide you with a list of law firms currently operating in Qatar.
- Feasibility study: U.S. firms we interviewed recommend that you carefully conduct a feasibility study about your product or service's chances for success in the Qatari market. This study should be based on such factors as pre-existing

competition, market channels, and local tastes. The Commercial Service offers various industry market research reports, as well as *Customized Market Research* that can form a strong basis for a viable feasibility study. Please contact the Commercial Section for more information.

- Vet partners: The Commercial Section at the U.S. Embassy also offers several services to help you thoroughly vet prospective Qatari business partners and determine which Qatari companies would be best to work with. These services include the *International Company Profile*, the *International Partner Search*, and the *Gold Key Service*. These services are described in more detail by visiting: [www.buyusa.gov/qatar](http://www.buyusa.gov/qatar)
- Maintain independence: Having a reliable local partner can mean the difference between success and failure in Qatar. However, U.S. firms advise not to rely too much on your local partner for all contacts and market information affecting your business. We advise U.S. companies to negotiate expatriate labor visa issues with their sponsors, agents, and partners in the early stages of contract negotiation.
- Adapt: Successful U.S., European and other foreign companies understand that doing business internationally always creates challenges, and doing business in Qatar is no exception. Learn to live with new procedures and laws by injecting a healthy dose of flexibility into your business plan. The Commercial Service suggests U.S. firms insist on payment by letter of credit to avoid costly payment delays.
- Importer/distributors are most commonly used in the retail food business.
- Food processors and HRI sector may import directly or purchase goods locally from distributors.

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## Chapter 2: Political and Economic Environment

For background information on the political and economic environment of the country, please click on the link below to the U.S. Department of State Background Notes.

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5437.htm>

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## Using an Agent or Distributor

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Most foreign companies doing business in Qatar are required to have a local agent. U.S. firms are strongly advised to avoid appointing one regional agent for a number of countries. U.S. companies having agency agreements or planning to have agency agreements with Qatari firms are encouraged to review Law No. 8/2002, the Commercial Agents Law. The law consists of 28 articles, encompassing two basic principles:

- The business of commercial agents is exclusively restricted to Qatari nationals or to companies wholly owned by Qatari nationals.
- Any Qatari agency is to be considered as an exclusive agency.

When finally approved by both parties, the Arabic text of agency or representation agreements should be registered with the Commercial Registration Department of the Ministry of Economy and Commerce (MOEC). Local agents usually follow up on the routine work required by MOEC regulations. The MOEC also has responsibility for arbitrating disputes between parties in relation to an agency agreement. The local civil courts are the next course of action if the dispute cannot be resolved by the Ministry.

The Commercial Agents Law allows the importation and sale of brand name products by other local entities, upon payment of a commission not to exceed 5 percent to the appointed local agent.

To find a good partner, US companies are encouraged to take advantage of services offered by the commercial section at the US Embassy in Doha. A hyperlink to a full description of those services is provided below:

<http://www.buyusa.gov/qatar/en/6.html>

Other alternative resources for finding a local agent could be the international auditing firms, accounting firms and law offices. Even in these cases a visit to the Commercial Section of the United States Embassy in Doha is encouraged for additional information and insight.

In order to establish a local office, foreign and local companies are required to obtain a commercial registration from the Ministry of Economy and Commerce. Any inquiries regarding the registration process should be directed to the Director of Commercial Affairs at the MOEC.

Commercial registrations may be roughly grouped into five categories: 100 percent foreign investment, joint venture, representational office, temporary registration or service agency.

- 100 percent foreign investment: According to Law No.13/2000, foreign firms are allowed 100 percent ownership in agriculture, industry, health, education and tourism sectors, as well as projects involved in the development and exploitation of natural resources or energy or mining, pending approval from the government. The law specifically prohibits foreign investment in banking, insurance, commercial agencies and procurement or purchase of real estate. However, Law No. 31/2004 allows foreign investment in the banking and insurance sectors by firms already active in these sectors upon approval of the Cabinet of Ministers. Each application is reviewed on a case-to-case basis and foreign firms already active in these sectors may be granted any form of registration. Foreign firms working in sectors not specifically mentioned in these laws may be granted a 100 percent ownership on a case-by-case basis, upon approval of the Ministry of Economy and Commerce and or the Ministry of Energy and Industry. Although there is paperwork to be filed and registration fees assessed during this process, this mode of registration offers the opportunity for foreign companies to operate independently. With the exception of import licenses, registered foreign firms handle all administrative and financial transactions independently. This type of registration is granted after providing a certificate of deposit from a local bank stating the total capital of the foreign firm.
- Joint venture: According to Law No. 13/2000, foreign firms may enter into joint ventures with Qatari partners provided the foreign equity does not exceed 49 percent of the total capital. Joint ventures are allowed in all sectors of the economy excluding commercial agencies and real estate. A joint venture in the banking and insurance sector is possible with an approval from the cabinet of ministers.
- Representational office: In 2003, the Minister of Economy and Commerce announced that foreign firms may open representational offices without a local partner. Such offices may not conduct any financial transactions related to the company's commercial activities in Qatar and are therefore not subject to taxation. However, a representational office can handle all administrative and financial transactions related to its representational operations in Qatar. A representational office could be converted into a joint venture or 100% foreign ownership at a later date.

- Temporary Registration: Foreign companies that have contracts with the GOQ may be granted temporary commercial registration to facilitate their operational transactions during the execution of their obligations. This registration does not allow the foreign company to conduct commercial activity that is not related to the subject of its registration. Most foreign companies registered under this category do not need a sponsor or service agent.
- Service agents or sponsorship: This type of agency consists of appointing a Qatari entity to act as a service agent for a foreign firm. Specific services would be determined by the two parties and may include handling administrative and business matters in Qatar, including immigration procedures, import licenses, providing introductions to decision-makers, etc. Although the service agent remains a common business practice in the region, it is no longer a requirement under Qatari law. U.S. firms should therefore determine if appointing a service agent is beneficial in their specific circumstances. This registration is under review and significant changes are expected to occur in the near future. According to Law No. 25/2004, the service agent relationship is considered a form of proxy business. The competent authorities are preparing the implementing regulations. Fines and imprisonment penalties are to be inflicted to whoever infringes the dispositions of the law. If foreign companies choose to have a service agent, U.S. firms are advised to appoint such agents on a project-to-project basis, since a local agent or representative may be very well-connected in some sectors or tenders, but not in others. Charges and honoraria for local service agents should be negotiated between the two parties from the very first day of their relationship. However, the standard service agent charges or honoraria vary from 0 to 10 per cent depending on the size of the project and the scope of the service provided by the agent.

## Franchising

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There are many businesses in Qatar besides fast food, or casual dining, which have introduced other franchises such as fitness center, car rental, computer learning centers, apparel shops, real estate brokerage, and language learning centers. The potential of growth in non-food franchises is significant. Some Qatari entities have a strong interest in investing in this business, given the ease of readymade business plans offered by franchises. A local sponsor is required to establish a business.

- One of the keys to success in franchise operations in Qatar is to use a local franchisee versus a regional master franchisee expanding to Qatar. Qataris are sensitive to businesses owned or operated in Qatar by neighboring countries' companies or nationals.
- U.S. fast food and casual dining restaurants are popular in Qatar, particularly with the younger generation.
- Most major U.S. fast food franchises are established in Qatar, with new ones opening regularly. A local sponsor is required to establish a business.



- High per capita income, a rather young population, a high rate of unaccompanied expatriate population and the lack of alternate entertainment venues encourage out of home dining.

## **Direct Marketing**

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Foreign companies are generally not allowed to market their products and services directly. A local agent or distributor is needed to do so. However, in cases where the foreign company is working on a major public project, direct marketing to the contractor is possible. Direct marketing is also possible through the representational office.

Direct marketing is possible in the food processing sector, particularly in vegetable oils, including corn oil, soybean and sunflower-seed oils, beverage bases, dried pulses and a variety of food ingredients, particularly for the snack food and bakery industries.

Also, the growing HRI sector, particularly the hotel and the U.S. fast food and casual dining restaurants sectors, provide opportunities for direct marketing.

## **Joint Ventures/Licensing**

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The Commercial Companies Law, Law No. 5/2002 (replacing Law No. 11/1981) controls the establishment of all private business concerns in Qatar. The updated law allows corporate mergers, corporate bonds, and the conversion of corporate partnerships into joint stock companies.

Joint ventures involving foreign partners primarily take the form of limited liability partnerships. In January 2005 the government announced that foreigners would be able to purchase up to 25 percent of the shares of any listed company on Doha Securities Market. The implementing regulations were issued in mid-2005, and foreigners are now trading shares in Doha Securities Market. Foreign investors may own up to 49 percent and the Qatari partners no less than 51 percent of a limited liability concern. Foreign partners in partnerships organized as limited liability partnerships must pay the full amount of their contribution to authorized financial institutions in cash or in kind prior to the start of operations. These firms are normally required to set aside 10 percent of their profits each year in a statutory reserve, until it equals 50 percent of the venture's authorized capital.

## **Selling to the Government**

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The Qatari government is the biggest end-user of a wide range of products and services. All government procurement contracts are administered under provisions of bidding and tender regulations included in Law No. 8/1976. The Central Tenders Committee (CTC)

of the Ministry of Finance is responsible for processing the majority of public sector tenders. The CTC applies standard tendering procedures and adheres to established performance practices. It also establishes the standards for rules that regulate bidding procedures.

Information on CTC tenders may be obtained from the CTC office in Doha or on the Internet at <http://www.ctc.gov.qa>. In tenders valued in excess of QR 100 million (USD 27 million), the CTC may invite and pre-qualify international firms to bid for a specific product or service. Technical bids submitted to the CTC are referred to the appropriate government end-user for short-listing. The CTC then opens the commercial bids and recommends the lowest priced technically qualified bidder to the entity concerned, who will make the final award decision. Inquiries about specific award decisions should be directed to the CTC.

Some governmental entities have internal tender committees. The Ministry of Energy and Industry and Qatar Petroleum process all tenders independently. Qatar Armed Forces and the Ministry of Interior are responsible for issuing tenders for classified materials and services. Public Works Authority and Urban Planning and Development Authority issue their tenders independently, as well.

Bid and performance bonds are required in the form of unconditional guarantees with a local bank. The standard bid bond is 5 percent and performance bond is 10 percent of the contract. However, the above rate can be larger for certain projects. Foreign architectural, contracting and engineering firms are not required to have a local agent for the bid process. However, by the time a contract is ready to be signed, participating foreign firms may need to have satisfied local agent requirements.

The State Purchase Office (SPO), a division of the CTC, handles all local purchase orders (LPOs) for equipment and supplies required by various government ministries. The SPO handles bids worth hundreds of millions of dollars every year. The period for preparation of quotations is usually 30 days, but very often less than three weeks after the announcement of tenders. Under these circumstances, an established local distributor is crucial for successful bidding.

Government contracts normally include arbitration clauses. Unless stated otherwise in the contract, the standard clauses stipulate that disputes emanating from government contracts will be subject to arbitration in Qatar. U.S. firms are advised, whenever possible, to reserve the right to appeal local arbitration decisions abroad.

Foreign and local contractors are usually paid 20 percent of the contract awarded to them against unconditional bank guarantees. Further payments are made according to a standard payment schedule based on the progress of the project. It should be noted that the payment schedule almost always authorizes the government to retain portions of payments due until after the completion and acceptance of the project. Foreign and local contractors may experience delayed payments, which do not accrue interest, usually due to bureaucratic red tape.

Arabic is the official language in Qatar though English is widely used. Bids should be in Arabic unless the tender document specifically indicates that English is required or accepted. Specifications generally conform with British/European and, in recent years, American standards.

## **Distribution and Sales Channels**

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The government of Qatar is the biggest end user of a wide range of products and services. The government procurement process is based on standard tender procedures. A foreign supplier wishing to participate in government tenders may appoint a local commercial agent. An effective agent in Qatar will have extensive contacts in both the public and private sectors, enabling the collection of valuable information and influence on decision making.

Most Qatari trading entities represent a variety of foreign firms in the local market. To maximize their market penetration, U.S. firms planning to appoint a Qatari agent should ensure that the local partner does not represent any competitor.

- Private supermarkets account for 60 percent of all retail sales, and this sector is expanding.
- Consumer cooperative societies account for 20 percent of the food retail sales in Qatar.
- Institutional users account for 10 percent of food distributed.
- Wholesalers and small convenience stores account for the balance of 5 percent of food products marketed in Qatar.
- The distribution channel is as follows: importer/agent sells to private supermarkets (60 percent), cooperatives (20 percent), institutional users (10 percent) and wholesalers and convenience stores (5 percent).
- Wholesalers sell directly to consumers, to jobbers and small supermarkets and restaurants.
- Generic and brand supermarket promotions are common in Qatar and are commonly employed by both local and foreign companies.
- Newspaper advertisements and inserts are most commonly used for food and other products. TV advertising, while very effective, is expensive.
- Food product margins typically run 20-25 percent for distributors, 5 percent for wholesalers, when applicable, and 10-15 percent for retailers. Qatar does not apply a VAT.

## **Selling Factors/Techniques**

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U.S. suppliers should emphasize the competitive price, high quality, and, if applicable, the new-to-market status of their products. Initial face-to-face contact with importers will significantly increase a company's business prospects. Qatari companies distributing foreign products usually request marketing and advertising assistance from the principals to introduce a new product to the market or to improve sales of existing products.

## **Electronic Commerce**

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E-Commerce is still developing in Qatar since a significant number of Qataris and businesses are still learning to fully utilize computers and information technology. The majority of commercial banks and utility companies offer a wide range of services to their clients on their respective web sites. Qatar Central Bank (QCB) is drafting legislation to regulate e-commerce and electronic financial transactions. The GOQ is encouraging greater use of modern technology in government transactions. In fact, two major decisions were taken to promote and enhance E-Commerce. The first was the creation of E-Government Committee and the second was the creation of the Supreme Council for Telecommunications and Information Technology. Several government services and transactions are now possible through the Internet. The private sector however, has taken slow steps in developing its B2B and B2C portals. E-Commerce is expected to flourish given GOQ interest in enhancing this service throughout Qatar.

## **Trade Promotion and Advertising**

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Many advertising practices and strategies used by U.S. companies are familiar to Qatari firms. The most common forms of advertising are media announcements, billboards, and flyers. Local distributors generally develop advertising strategies in coordination with their principals. Several private advertising firms are equipped to handle promotional activities.

Most newspapers in Qatar, including three Arabic and two English dailies, have a large readership. These include the following:

### Arabic:

"Al-Sharq": P.O. Box 3488, Doha, State of Qatar, Phone: (974) 466-1354, Fax: (974) 466-2462, Email: [alsharq1@al-sharq.com](mailto:alsharq1@al-sharq.com), Website: <http://www.al-sharq.com>

"Al-Watan": P.O. Box 22345, Doha, State of Qatar, Phone: (974) 466-0810, Fax: (974) 466-4206, Email: [alwatan@qatar.net.qa](mailto:alwatan@qatar.net.qa), Website: <http://www.al-watan.com>

"Al-Rayah": P.O. Box 533, Doha, State of Qatar, Phone: (974) 446-6618, Fax: (974) 432-0080, Email: [edit@raya.com](mailto:edit@raya.com), Website: <http://www.raya.com>

#### English:

"Gulf Times": P.O. Box 2888, Doha, State of Qatar, Phone: (974) 446-6621, Fax: (974) 435-0474, Email: [editor@gulf-times.com](mailto:editor@gulf-times.com), Website: <http://www.gulf-times.com>

"The Peninsula": P.O. Box 3488, Doha, State of Qatar, Phone: (974) 466-3945, Fax: (974) 466-3965, Email: [penqatar@qatar.net.qa](mailto:penqatar@qatar.net.qa); Website: <http://www.thepeninsulaqatar.com>

The state-owned Qatar Radio and Television Corporation operates Qatar Television (QTV) and the radio station Qatar Broadcasting Service (QBS). QTV, comprising Arabic and English channels, broadcasts pre-recorded commercials. QBS also carries advertisements. The locally operated pan-Arab satellite channel Al-Jazeera receives some public funding but is independently owned and operated. It also broadcasts advertising for local and regional companies and products. There are no private radio stations.

Qatar Broadcasting Service (QBS), P.O. Box 1414, Doha, State of Qatar, Phone: (974) 849-4222, Fax: (974) 482-2888.

Qatar Television, P.O. Box 1944, Doha, State of Qatar, Phone: (974) 486-4575, Fax: (974) 486-4511.

Al-Jazeera Satellite TV Station with 5 operational channels (Al-Jazeera Live, Al-Jazeera, Al-Jazeera Children, Al-Jazeera Sports 1 and 2) and two being prepared for launching (Al-Jazeera International (English), Al-Jazeera Documentary), P.O. Box 23123, Doha, Phone: (974) 488-5666 or 489-4801, Fax: (974) 488-5333. Website: <http://www.aljazeera.net/e-marketing-eng/>

Al-Jazeera is an excellent means of promotion and advertising as lots of people in the region watch its channels.

## **Pricing**

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There are a large variety of local and foreign products in the Qatari market. Local consumers are very price conscious and actively seek out sales and promotions. Local distributors of international products often engage in promotions in order to attract

consumers and gain market share. U.S. firms should work closely with their local distributor in order to determine appropriate pricing strategies.

There is no VAT or sales tax in Qatar. However, the matter is being discussed in the Gulf Cooperation Council meetings and VAT could be implemented before 2010.

The average importer markup on food products is about 10-15 percent. Retail food prices are generally 25-30 percent above import prices.

### **Sales Service/Customer Support**

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After sales service and customer support is considered to be the responsibility of the local distributor. As a Qatari entity must obtain a license for all imports, local firms generally maintain a supply of spare parts for distributed products. Local distributors may also establish workshops for after sales support, as appropriate. Foreign principals often provide regional and international training for technical support staff.

### **Protecting Your Intellectual Property**

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Several general principles are important for effective management of intellectual property rights in Qatar. First, it is important to have an overall strategy to protect IPR. Second, IPR is protected differently in Qatar than in the U.S. Third, rights must be registered and enforced in Qatar under local laws. Companies may wish to seek advice from local attorneys or IP consultants. The U.S. Commercial Service can often provide a list of local lawyers upon request.

It is vital that companies understand that intellectual property is primarily a private right and that the US government generally cannot enforce rights for private individuals in Qatar. It is the responsibility of the rights' holders to register, protect, and enforce their rights where relevant, retaining their own counsel and advisors. While the U.S. Government is willing to assist, there is little it can do if the rights holders have not taken these fundamental steps necessary to securing and enforcing their IPR in a timely fashion. Moreover, in many countries, rights holders who delay enforcing their rights on a mistaken belief that the USG can provide a political resolution to a legal problem may find that their rights have been eroded or abrogated due to doctrines such as statutes of limitations, laches, estoppel, or unreasonable delay in prosecuting a law suit. In no instance should USG advice be seen as a substitute for the obligation of a rights holder to promptly pursue its case.

It is always advisable to conduct due diligence on partners. Negotiate from the position of your partner and give your partner clear incentives to honor the contract. A good partner is an important ally in protecting IP rights. Keep an eye on your cost structure and reduce the margins (and the incentive) of would-be bad actors. Projects and sales

in Qatar require constant attention. Work with legal counsel familiar Qatari laws to create a solid contract that includes non-compete clauses, and confidentiality/non-disclosure provisions.

It is also recommended that small and medium-size companies understand the importance of working together with trade associations and organizations to support efforts to protect IPR and stop counterfeiting. There are a number of these, including:

- The U.S. Chamber and local American Chambers of Commerce
- National Association of Manufacturers (NAM)
- International Intellectual Property Alliance (IIPA)
- International Trademark Association (INTA)
- The Coalition Against Counterfeiting and Piracy
- International Anti-Counterfeiting Coalition (IACC)
- Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA)
- Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO)

### **IPR Resources**

A wealth of information on protecting IPR is freely available to U.S. rights holders. Some excellent resources for companies regarding intellectual property include the following:

- For information about patent, trademark, or copyright issues -- including enforcement issues in the US and other countries -- call the STOP! Hotline: **1-866-999-HALT** or register at **www.StopFakes.gov**.
- For more information about registering trademarks and patents (both in the U.S. as well as in foreign countries), contact the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) at: **1-800-786-9199**.
- For more information about registering for copyright protection in the US, contact the US Copyright Office at: **1-202-707-5959**.
- For US small and medium-size companies, the Department of Commerce offers a "SME IPR Advisory Program" available through the American Bar Association that provides one hour of free IPR legal advice for companies with concerns in Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Russia, and Thailand. For details and to register, visit: **[http://www.abanet.org/intlaw/intlproj/iprprogram\\_consultation.html](http://www.abanet.org/intlaw/intlproj/iprprogram_consultation.html)**
- For information on obtaining and enforcing intellectual property rights and market-specific IP Toolkits visit: **www.StopFakes.gov** This site is linked to the USPTO website for registering trademarks and patents (both in the U.S. as well as in foreign countries), the U.S. Customs & Border Protection website to record registered trademarks and copyrighted works (to assist customs in blocking imports of IPR-infringing products) and allows you to register for Webinars on protecting IPR.

### **IPR Climate in Qatar**

Owners of trademarks and copyrights and holders of patents depend on Qatari laws and regulations for protection. Intellectual property rights in Qatar are protected by Law No. 7/2002 (Copyright and Neighboring Rights Law), Law No. 9/2002 (Trademarks and Geographical Indicators Law), Law No.5-2005 (Protection of Secrets of Trade), and Law No. 6-2005 (Protection of Layout Design of Integrated Circuits). Qatar has adopted the GCC Patent Law and created a GCC Patent Office. The Ministry of Economy and Commerce is responsible for enforcing these laws and other intellectual property rights

matters.

The National Health Authority (NHA) requires registration of all pharmaceutical products imported into the country and will not register unauthorized copies of products patented in other countries.

## Due Diligence

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In the absence of local credit rating companies, US companies are advised to perform due diligence checks prior to dealing with any local company. Due diligence checks on public companies can also be useful. US companies are encouraged to perform due diligence checks on privately owned companies to assure the following:

- The local company is not designated on a U.S. or United Nations watch list for terrorist financing activities.
- The local company is not involved in any bribery or corruption charges.
- The local company enjoys a certain financial stability enabling it to meet its financial obligations.
- The local company and its owners enjoy a sound business and professional reputation in Qatar.

The Embassy's Commercial Section offers U.S. companies the International Company Profile (ICP) as one due diligence tool to help the U.S. firms make assessments of potential local business partners. A description of the ICP service is provided by hyperlink below:

<http://www.buyusa.gov/qatar/en/21.html>

## Local Professional Services

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### Auditing Firms:

[Deloitte & Touche](#)  
[Ernst & Young](#)  
[KPMG](#)  
[Price Waterhouse and Coopers](#)

### Banking:



***Qatari Banks:***

Qatar Central Bank  
Commercial Bank  
Doha Bank  
Qatar Industrial Development Bank  
Qatar Islamic Bank  
International Islamic  
Qatar National Bank

***Foreign Banks' Branches:***

Arab Bank  
Bank Saderat Iran  
HSBC Bank Middle East  
B.N.P. Paribas  
Standard Chartered Bank  
United Bank Limited  
Mashreq Bank

**Freight Forwarding and Courier Services:**

Freight Forwarders

Aramex  
DHL  
Federal Express  
TNT Express  
UPS  
Skynet

**Hotels:**

Al-Bustan Hotel  
Doha Marriott Gulf Hotel  
Doha Sheraton Hotel and Resort  
Doha Palace  
InterContinental Doha  
Mercure Grand Hotel  
Merweb Hotel  
Moevenpick Hotel  
New Capital Hotel  
Oasis Hotel & Beach Club  
Ramada Hotel  
Regency Hotel  
Rydges Plaza  
Sealine Beach Resort  
The Ritz-Carlton Hotel  
Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts

**Insurance:**

*Qatari Companies:*

[Al-Khaleej Insurance Company](#)  
[Qatar General Insurance and Re-Insurance Company](#)  
[Qatar Insurance Company](#)  
[Qatar Islamic Insurance Company](#)  
[Qatar Islamic Insurance Company](#)

*Foreign Companies:*

[The American Life Insurance Company](#)  
[Libano-Suisse Insurance Company](#)  
[National Insurance Company of Egypt](#)

Law Firms:

[Lawyers](#)

Media:

[Al-Watan](#)  
[Al-Rayah](#)  
[AL-Sharq](#)  
[Gulf Times](#)  
[The Peninsula](#)  
[Al-Jazeera Satellite TV Station](#)  
[Qatar News Agency](#)

Telecommunications:

[Qatar Telecom](#)

Tenders:

[Central Tenders Committee](#)  
[Qatar Petrochemical Company](#)  
[Qatar Chemical Company](#)  
[QatarGas](#)  
[Qatar Steel Company](#)  
[Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation](#)  
[Qatar National Hotels Co.](#)  
[Qatar Telecom](#)  
[Hamad Medical Corporation](#)  
[Qatar Petroleum](#)  
[Public Works Authority](#)  
[New Doha International Airport](#)

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**Web Resources**

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[Local Professional Services](#)

Tenders:

## [Tenders](#)

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# Chapter 4: Leading Sectors for U.S. Export and Investment

## [Agricultural Sector](#)

- [Fresh/ Chilled/Frozen beef](#)
- [Poultry Meat \(FOD\)](#)

## **Commercial Sectors**

- [Architectural/Construction/Engineering Services](#)
- [Air-conditioning and Refrigeration Equipment](#)
- [Construction Equipment and Tools](#)
- [Oil & Gas Field Machinery and Equipment](#)
- [Telecommunications Equipment, Computers and Peripherals](#)
- [Education Services and Equipment](#)
- [Medical Equipment and Services](#)
- [Security and Safety Equipment](#)

## **Agricultural Sector**

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## **Best Prospects**

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U.S. food exports to Qatar continue to grow. They vary from prepared foodstuffs, from sauces and mustard to bakery ingredients and breakfast cereal to service the large influx of American technical personnel hired beginning in 2004 to bring the country's natural gas sector on-line. Other U.S. products witnessing a surge in demand are wood and lumber as the construction industry has mushroomed with this influx of personnel and support businesses.

Other best prospects for US agricultural exports are as follows:

## **Fresh/Chilled/Frozen beef**

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## Overview

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The traditional Qatari market preference is for lamb, mutton and goat meat. Prior to the market closure in December 2003 due to discovery of a BSE case in the United States, US beef exported to Qatar had been mostly US choice cuts for 5-star hotel restaurant use and more processed meat for the casual dining and quick service restaurants spread out across Doha. Beef now entering Qatar goes directly to the U.S. military. With the U.S. beef ban expected to be lifted in the summer of 2008, U.S. beef should be in high demand given the market has had to make do with red meat supplied by India, Australia and New Zealand at prices comparable to premium U.S. beef. Qatar local red meat production is negligible.

## Poultry Meat (FOD)

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## Overview

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U.S. poultry meat, particularly chicken parts and to a lesser degree whole chickens and turkeys, are well known for their high quality. Consumer demand for poultry remains strong despite global concerns about Avian Influenza. Brazil, Saudi Arabia, France and Denmark dominate the market for frozen whole chickens. Brazil and the U.S. are the principle suppliers of chicken parts. Whole chickens represent 90 percent of total chicken meat imports. The preferred size for whole chicken ranges from 900-1,200 grams per bird. Chicken parts are imported in two-pound trays. The presence of allied forces in the Gulf Region, commercial interests along with aid shipments to Iraq should continue to generate strong demand from all sources, including the United States.

## Architectural/Construction/Engineering Services

### Overview

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(Services statistics are not available from the government of Qatar)

It is estimated that more than USD 60 billion will be invested in infrastructure development over the next ten years. The public and private sectors rely heavily on international expertise in the area of architectural, construction and engineering services and there are a number of opportunities in this sector for U.S. firms.

## Best Products/Services

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Engineering and Architectural Services  
Construction Management Services

## Opportunities

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- North Highway Upgrade: Scope 150 km; Value USD 350 million; Client: Public Works Authority
- Dukhan Highway Upgrade: Scope 78 Km; Value: USD 330 million; Client: Public Works Authority
- Doha Expressway: Scope: highway+24 interchanges; Value: USD 800 million; Client: Public Works Authority
- Qatar National Library: Scope: 120m high building with 27,000 sq meters built-up area; Value: USD 125 million; Client: Qatar Petroleum
- Qatar Broadcasting Complex: Scope: 65,000 sq meters built-up area, Value USD 65 million; Client: Public Works Authority
- Hamad Medical City: Scope: 300-550 beds, Value: USD 600 million; Client: Public Works Authority
- New Doha International Airport: Scope: 52 Contact Gates, Value USD 2,500 million, Client: New Doha International Airport Steering Committee
- Education City: Scope: Education complex; Value: USD 1,000 million, Client: Qatar Foundation and Qatar Petroleum
- Pearl of the Gulf: Scope: Creation of 3.2 million sq meters for residential and commercial buildings; Value: USD 2,500 million; Client: United Development Company
- Qatar National Bank Headquarters: Scope: 91.5 meters high building; Value: USD 55 million; Client: Qatar National Bank
- Qatar Petroleum Headquarters Complex: Value: USD 150 million; Client: Qatar Petroleum
- Qatar-Bahrain Causeway: Scope: 22 km causeway; USD 3,000 million; Client Public Works Authority.
- Lusail Development: Scope: Mixed-use Development – master plan by Bechtel for Qatari Diar Real Estate Investment Company. Value: USD 5000 million.

## Resources

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[Qatar Petroleum](#)  
[Central Tenders Committee](#)  
[Public Works Authority](#)  
[The Pearl of the Gulf](#)  
[Projects Qatar 2007](#)  
[New Doha International Airport](#)  
[United Development Company](#)

Qatar National Bank  
Qatari Diar

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## Air-conditioning and Refrigeration Equipment

### Overview

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	2004	2004	2005
Total Market Size*	95.6	73.86	203.93
Total Local Production	0	0	0
Total Exports	1.3	1.83	2
Total Imports	73.8	73.86	203.92
Total Imports from the US	15.1	14.30	24.29

(All figures are in US\$ million. The exchange rate is US\$1.00=QR3.64. The exchange rate is US\$1.00=QR3.64. The source is Qatar Planning Council. The above figures relate only to equipment, as the government of Qatar does not publish data for services).

Given the high temperatures prevalent in the Arabian Gulf, the infrastructure development mentioned above will create increased demand for air conditioning systems.

### Best Prospects/Services

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- Central Air-Conditioning Units equipment and supplies
- District cooling equipment and supplies

### Opportunities

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- All the projects mentioned in Architecture/ Construction and Engineering services
- Two District cooling plants: Combined capacity of 55000 tons, Value: USD 90 million, Client: Qatar Cool.

### Resources

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[Qatar Cool](#)  
[ASHRAE](#)

Contact the Commercial Section of the United States Embassy in Doha through:

<http://www.buyusa.gov/qatar/>

## Construction Equipment and Tools

### Overview

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	2003	2004	2005
Total Market Size*	331.6	307.89	316.61
Total Local Production	0	0	0
Total Exports	25	26.03	26
Total Imports	331.6	307.89	369.46
Total Imports from the US	68.2	92.88	114.9

(All figures are in US\$ million. The exchange rate is US\$1.00=QR3.64. The exchange rate is US\$1.00=QR3.64. The source is Qatar Planning Council. The above figures relate only to equipment, as the government of Qatar does not publish data for services).

Given the magnitude and schedule of the construction projects planned, there is an increased need for new construction equipment. Local contractors recognize the superior quality and performance of U.S. construction equipment.

### Best Prospects/Services

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Heavy equipment (used and new)

### Opportunities

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- All the projects mentioned in Architecture/ Construction and Engineering services
- Other projects in the Oil & Gas sector

### Resources

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<http://www.buyusa.gov/qatar/en/47.html>



## Oil & Gas Field Machinery and Equipment

### Overview

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	2003	2004	2005
Total Market Size*	424.3	1,400.5	2375.9
Total Local Production	0	0	0
Total Exports	5.0	4.56	5.0
Total Imports	424.3	1,400.5	2375.9
Total Imports from the US	74.3	24.88	43.57

(All figures are in US\$ million. The exchange rate is US\$1.00=QR3.64. The exchange rate is US\$1.00=QR3.64. The source is Qatar Planning Council. The above figures relate only to equipment, as the government of Qatar does not publish data for services).

Qatar enjoys a reserve of approximately 14.6 billion barrels of crude oil and 910 trillion of cubic feet of natural gas.

The State-owned Qatar Petroleum expects that more than USD 100 billion will be invested in Qatar's energy sector in the next ten years. Projects currently under consideration include the construction of additional liquefied natural gas trains, multiple gas-to-liquids plants, new petrochemical facilities, regional gas pipelines, aluminum smelter, condensates refinery, new refined products service stations, and additional onshore and offshore exploration and production, among others. U.S. standards and procedures prevail in the local energy sector and there is always strong demand for U.S. products.

### Best Prospects/Services

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- Oil & Gas Field Machinery, Equipment and Supplies
- Oil & Gas Field Services

### Opportunities

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Law No. 13-2000 may allow foreigners to own up to 100 percent of any investment made in the energy and mining sectors.

#### 1. Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG):

- Train 4 and 5: Capacity: 7.8 million tons/year; Value: USD 4,660 million; Client: Qatar Gas II
- Sulphar Handling Facility: Capacity: 11,000 tons/day; Value: USD 360 million, Client: Qatar Gas II
- Train 6 and 7: Capacity: 7.8 million tons/year each; Value: USD 22,000 million; Client: Qatar Gas II

- Train 6 and 7: Capacity: 7.8 million tons/year each; Value: 14,000 million; Client : RasGas III

## 2. Gas To Liquid (GTL):

- Integrated GTL Plant: Capacity 140,000 barrels/day; Value: USD 5,000 million, Client: Pearl GTL
- Integrated GTL Plant: Capacity 154,000 barrels/day; Value USD 7,000 million; Client ExxonMobil
- Integrated GTL Plant: Capacity 240,000 barrels/day; \$ 9,000 million; Client: ConocoPhillips (2010) – Under study
- Integrated GTL Plant: Capacity 90 to 120,000 barrels/day; Value under estimation; Client Marathon (2010)- Planned
- Phase 2 plant expansion: Capacity 66,000 barrels/day, Value \$1,400 million; Client Oryx GTL
- Integrated GTL Project: Capacity 130,000 barrels/day; Value \$ 2,400; Client: SASOL/Chevron

## 3. Gas Pipeline:

- Qatar/Bahrain/Kuwait pipeline (Al-Khaleej): Capacity 1,000 million cubic feet/day of gas; Value under estimation; Client: Qatar Petroleum/ExxonMobil/Kuwait Petroleum Company - Pending
- Ras Laffan Messaieed ethylene pipeline: Scope: 130 km of 16 inch pipeline; Value: USD 300 million; Client: Qatar Chemical Company (Q-Chem II)
- Doha urban relocation pipeline: Scope: decommissioning of existing and construction of new pipelines; Value: USD 70 million; Client: Qatar Petroleum

## 4. Refining:

- Ras Laffan Condensate Refinery: Capacity 140,000 barrels/day, Value: USD 400 million; Client: Qatar Petroleum/ExxonMobil/Total
- Al Shaheen Refinery – Mesaieed: Capacity 200,000 barrels/day; Value USD 1,000 million; Client Qatar Petroleum

## 5. Petrochemicals:

- Ras Laffan Ethylene Cracker: Capacity 1.3 million ton/ year, Value: USD 500 million; Client Ras Laffan Ethylene Company
- Messaieed downstream units: Capacity 350,000 tons/yer of HDPE and 350,000 tons/year of Alpha Olefins; Value: USD 600 million, Client Q-Chem II
- Messaieed downstream units: Capacity 450,000 tons/year of LLDPE; Value: USD 550 million; Client: Qatofin
- New Methanol Train: Capacity 6,750 tons/day; Value: USD 500 million, Client: QAFAC
- Ras Laffan Methanol: Capacity 12,000 to 15,000 tons/day; Value under estimation; Client: Qatar Petroleum /Petro World

- Worldscale olefins complex: On-going feasibility study; Client Qatar Petroleum / ExxonMobil
- QAFCO V: On-going feasibility study.

6. Industry:

- Messaieed Plant Expansion: Capacity 500,000 tons/year; Value USD 600 million; Client: QASCO
- Umm Bab Plant No. III: Capacity 3500 tons/day; Value: USD 150 million, Client Qatar National Cement Company.
- Messaieed Aluminum Smelter: Capacity 570,000 tons/year; Value 3,000 USD; Client QP-Norsk Hydro

**Resources**

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[Qatar Petroleum](#)

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<http://www.buyusa.gov/qatar/>

## Telecommunications Equipment, Computers and Peripherals

### Overview

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	2003	2004	2005
Total Market Size*	63.8	91.17	100.28
Total Local Production	0	0	0
Total Exports	8.1	5.52	6
Total Imports	63.8	91.17	100.28
Total Imports from the US	5.7	10.20	15

(All figures are in US\$ million. The exchange rate is US\$1.00=QR3.64. The above information was supplied by the Qatar Planning Council, and relate only to equipment, as the government of Qatar does not publish data for services).

In the last five years Qatar's public and private sector have increasingly applied modern technologies in daily activities. The demand for these technologies will continue to grow as the Qatar economy liberalizes and modernizes. The partially privatized Telecommunications monopoly Qatar Telecom (Q-Tel) is constantly striving to upgrade and improve services to international standards. The Supreme Council for Information and Communication Technology (ICTQatar) has ambitious plans to increase IT awareness and use in Qatar as well as play the role of regulator for the IT and Telecom sectors. Qatar has also begun a wide variety of educational reform projects, which will make increased use of modern technologies. The government has embarked upon a program to implement e-government. Given the dominance of U.S. firms in international telecommunications, there is a growing opportunity for U.S. firms to enter the local market. In 2004 Qatar Telecom won a second license for GSM network in Oman. Q-Tel is also looking into expanding to other markets in the Middle East and African region.

### Best Prospects/Services

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- GSM network equipment and supplies
- Internet solutions

### Opportunities

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The population in Qatar is growing and expected to double by 2010. As the needs in telecommunications emanating from the public and private sector are increasing, the growth in this sector is going to be tremendous in the short, medium and long terms.

- Al-Nawras GSM License in Oman
- Expansion of land phone network
- Expansion of the GSM network
- Multiplication of Internet users.

- Infrastructure for 3G mobile phones
- Expansion of wireless internet service
- Equipment for 140 public schools with the latest IT and telecommunications equipment

## Resources

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[Qatar Telecom](#)

[Qatar E-Government](#)

[The Supreme Council for Information & Communication Technology](#)

Contact the Commercial Section of the United States Embassy in Doha through:

<http://www.buyusa.gov/qatar/>

## Education Services and Equipment

### Overview

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(Services statistics are not available from the government of Qatar)

The Rand Corporation was contracted in 2003 to revise the curriculum, textbooks, and training for teachers in Qatar's public schools within the framework of establishing a model charter school system within five years (2008). In an effort to improve university education, the Qatar Foundation for Education, founded by the Emir's wife, Sheikha Mozzah bint Nasser Al-Misnad, established "Education City" to attract world class universities such as Weill-Cornell Medical School, Virginia Commonwealth University, Texas A&M and Carnegie Mellon and George Town University. The Qatari government has also established a new Supreme Council for Education that will oversee reform in the educational system. Many of these initiatives are based on U.S. models and expertise, presenting a multitude of opportunities for U.S. educational entities.

### Best Products/Services

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- Higher Education Services
- Training and Personal Development Services

### Opportunities

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This sector is open for new opportunities but must fit into the educational and economic goals of the Qatar Foundation and the government of Qatar. Qatar Foundation continues to look for US universities to join the Education City. The GOQ is investing significant resources to train Qatari youth to enable them to become entrepreneurs and qualified professionals for the economy.

Law No. 13-2000 allows 100 percent foreign ownership in the education sector pending approval from the government.

### Resources

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[Qatar Foundation](#)  
[Ministry of Education](#)  
[Supreme Education Council](#)

Contact the Commercial Section of the United States Embassy in Doha through:

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## Medical Equipment and Services

### Overview

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	2003	2004	2005
Total Market Size*	58.8	41.60	55.62
Total Local Production	0	0	0
Total Exports	2.0	1.49	1.5
Total Imports	58.8	41.60	55.62
Total Imports from the US	25.4	14.13	19.07

(All figures are in US\$ million. The exchange rate is US\$1.00=QR3.64. The exchange rate is US\$1.00=QR3.64. The source is Qatar Planning Council. The above figures relate only to equipment, as the government of Qatar does not publish data for services).

The U.S. is one of the leading exporters of medical equipment, medical supplies, medicines and pharmaceuticals to Qatar. With more Qatari medical staff receiving training in the U.S. and the establishment of Weill-Cornell Medical School in Qatar, there is increasing interest in importing medical equipment and supplies from the U.S. There are three new hospitals under construction and an increasing need for all types of medical equipment and supplies, trained staff and further training for staff. U.S. firms wishing to invest in the health sector in Qatar should note that Qatar's Law No. 13 of the year 2000 allows 100 percent foreign investment in the health sector, pending approval from the government.

### Best Products/Services

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- Medical Equipment
- Medical Supplies
- Equipment and supplies for persons with special needs

### Opportunities

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**Hamad Medical City:** Scope: 300-550 beds, Value: USD 600 million; Client: Public Works Authority

### Resources

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[Central Tenders Committee](#)  
[Hamad Medical Corporation](#)

Private opportunities:

Contact the commercial section of the United States Embassy in Doha through:

<http://www.buyusa.gov/qatar/>

## Security and Safety Equipment

### Overview

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Comprehensive statistics for the sector are not available as the government of Qatar does not publish trade data for all military and security items.

High economic and demographic growth and the changing geopolitical climate have made Qatar focus on security. There has been a noticeable increase in security procedures in private and government establishments. Private and semi-private entities are upgrading existing security and safety equipment to keep ahead of changing security situations. Given the high regard local consumers have for U.S. expertise in the security sector and the favorable exchange rate compared to other hard currencies, U.S. exports of security related equipment and systems are expected to increase in coming years.

### Best Products/Services

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- Access control
- Asset tracking
- Chemical trace detection
- Computer security
- Forgery/ Fraud
- Integrated security systems/ Building management systems
- Intrusion detection equipment
- Perimeter protection
- Protective barriers
- Travel safety and security
- Electronic safety and fire detection
- Metal detection
- Communications systems

### Opportunities

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Qatar has embarked a vast program to reform its police and military units. Information about projects with the Ministry of Interior, Qatar Armed Forces or any other security agency is considered sensitive.

### Resources

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#### [Ministry of Interior](#)

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## Chapter 5: Trade Regulations and Standards

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- [Trade Barriers](#)
- [Import Requirements and Documentation](#)
- [U.S. Export Controls](#)
- [Temporary Entry](#)
- [Labeling and Marking Requirements](#)
- [Prohibited and Restricted Imports](#)
- [Customs Regulations and Contact Information](#)
- [Standards](#)
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### Import Tariffs

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In accordance with the GCC Customs Union, outlined in Law No. 41/2002 and implemented as the GCC Unified Customs Law on January 1, 2003, Qatar imposes a five percent ad valorem tariff on the c.i.f. invoice value of most imported products, including food products. The GCC has approved exemptions for approximately four hundred goods, (including basic food products such as live animals, fresh fruit and vegetables, seafood, wheat, flour, rice, feed grains, spices, seeds for planting and powdered milk), diplomatic and consular imports, military and security products, civilian aviation, personal effects and used household items, passenger accompanied luggage and gifts, goods destined for charitable use, ships and other vessels for the transport of passengers and floating platforms, and products to be used for industrial projects. Qatar also has a 20 percent tariff on iron bars and rods, non-alloy hot-rolled steel and 12 millimeter steel bars as well as cement. 30 percent customs duties are levied on imports of urea and 15 percent are levied on imports of records and musical instruments. Pork and pork products are illegal under Qatari law. Tobacco products and alcoholic beverages are subject to 100 percent import duty. Projects funded by the Qatar Industrial Development Bank (QIDB) can be granted a customs duty waiver for the import of machinery, raw materials, and other industrial inputs.

### Trade Barriers

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Qatar has no trade barriers regarding the exportation and importation of goods and products. Qatar adheres to the WTO agreements for customs valuation and trade facilitation.

### Import Requirements and Documentation

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All importers are required by law to have an import license. Import licenses are issued only to Qatari nationals and must be registered with the Ministry of Economy and

Commerce. This regulation also applies to wholly foreign owned entities operating in Qatar.

Import Licenses: All imported meats, including beef and poultry products, require a health certificate issued by the country of export and a “Halal” slaughter certificate issued by an approved Islamic center in that country.

In order to clear goods from customs zones at ports or land boundaries in Qatar, importers must submit a variety of documents, including a detailed customs declaration, bill of landing, certificate of origin, pro forma invoice and import license. Information on specific requirements should be obtained from the Customs and Ports General Authority. Inspection of goods is generally conducted at the customs station, or as directed by the Director General, in the presence of the owner or his representative

Customs and Ports General Authority  
P.O. Box 81, Doha, State of Qatar  
Phone: (974) 441-1149  
Fax: (974) 441-4959  
Contact: Sheikh Hassan Bin Nasser Bin Jassim Al-Thani, Director General  
Mr. Essa Jassim Mohammed, Office Director

In Qatar, the letter of credit (L/C) is the most common instrument for controlling exports and imports. When an L/C is opened, the supplier is required to provide a certificate of origin, and a certificate from the captain of the ship or from the shipping agency stating that the ship is allowed to enter Arab ports. An Arab Embassy or Consulate or an Arab Chamber of Commerce should notarize both documents in the exporting country.

A letter of credit initiated in Qatar is usually endorsed with transshipment clauses. Most of the goods imported into Qatar from the U.S. and elsewhere come via the nearby ports of Dubai and Sharjah, both in the United Arab Emirates (U.A.E.). Transshipment clauses serve the purpose of advancing those goods from the U.A.E. to Qatar by land (by truck) and/or sea (by barge). It is customary in Qatar for importers to build their L/C's computations on “cost and freight (C&F)” basis, and not “cost, insurance and freight (C.I.F.)”. Qatari merchants prefer to have insurance coverage provided by local and international insurance companies, to cover damage in transit to the goods covered under the L/C.

## **U.S. Export Controls**

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A variety of sensitive items may not be imported into Qatar. The Qatar Distribution Company monopolizes the importation of alcohol. Pork and pornographic items may not be imported. Military and security items are forbidden unless licensed by local authorities. Qatar health authorities continue to uphold a ban on the import of U.S. beef based upon BSE being detected in a single cow in the state of Washington. Narcotics, flammable and radioactive products are also banned, as are any products that violate trademarks or originate in boycotted countries. Qatar participates in the primary Israeli boycott; however, an Israeli Trade Representative Office is located in Doha.

Standard U.S. export controls and licensing procedures are applicable to Qatar.

## **Temporary Entry**

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Some categories of goods may be temporarily admitted without collection of customs duties. These include: heavy machinery and equipment for project execution, semi-finished products, use in exhibitions and temporary events and machinery, equipment imported for repair, containers and materials for refilling, animals for grazing, and commercial samples.

## **Labeling and Marking Requirements**

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Current laws and regulations of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture and the National Health Authority (NHA) require labeling and marking requirements to be honored, especially where import of foodstuffs is concerned.

All imported meats - beef and poultry products, require a health certificate issued by the country of export and a Halal slaughter certificate issued by an approved Islamic center in that country.

Qatar enforces GCC shelf-life standards GS 150/1993, Part I and II, which combined affect 170 food products. The manufacturer established shelf life is accepted for other food products. Production and expiry dates must be printed on the original label or container by the manufacturer. Dates cannot be added after the fact via a sticker. Products must arrive at destination with at least half the shelf-life duration remaining. The U.S. supplier should work closely with the importer to ensure compliance with local shelf-life requirements. Products must arrive at destination with at least half the shelf life duration remaining. The U.S. supplier should work closely with the importer to ensure compliance with local shelf-life requirements.

Food labels must include product and brand names, production and expiry dates, country of origin, name and address of the manufacturer, net weight in metric units, and a list of the ingredients in descending order of importance. All fats and oils used as ingredients must be specifically identified on the label. Labels must be in Arabic only or in Arabic/English. Arabic stickers are accepted.

## **Prohibited and Restricted Imports**

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Pork, pork products and pornographic material are illegal in Qatar. The Qatar Distribution Company monopolizes the importation of alcohol. Military and security items are forbidden unless licensed by local authorities. Narcotics, flammable and radioactive products are also banned. Any products that violate trademarks are also banned. Currently, Qatar has banned U.S. beef products due to bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) detected in one cow in Washington State in December 2003. Qatar participates in the primary aspects of the Israel boycott but there is an Israeli Trade Representative Office located in Doha.

## **Customs Regulations and Contact Information**

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Qatar is a member of the GCC Customs Union which came into effect in 2003. In accordance to the GCC Customs Union, Qatar maintains a five percent tariff on a wide range of products. Basic food products such as wheat, flour, rice, feed grains and powdered milk are exempted from tariffs. The tariff on alcoholic beverages and tobacco products is 100 percent. Qatar also has a 20 percent tariff on iron bars and rods, non-alloy hot-rolled steel and 12 millimeter steel bars. Qatar maintains a five percent tariff on all textile imports. Projects funded by the Qatar Industrial Development Bank (QIDB) can be granted a customs duty waiver for the import of machinery, raw materials and other industrial inputs.

## Standards

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- [Accreditation](#)
- [Publication of Technical Regulations](#)
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- [Contacts](#)

## Overview

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The government of Qatar is currently developing its standards regime to meet internationally and regionally-recognized norms and practices, such as the ISSO standards. The Qatar General Organization for Standards and Metrology, an independent organization under the supervision of the Minister of Economy and Commerce, is the standard-developing and conformity assessment body for Qatar. However, Qatari government ministries such as the National Health Authority (NHA), the Ministry of Energy and Industry and Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture provide recommendations for standards. The Qatar General Organization for Standards and Metrology is developing an annual plan for new standards which should be available by 2005.

## Standards Organizations

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The only standards organization in Qatar is the Qatar General Organization for Standards and Metrology.

### **NIST Notify U.S. Service**

Member countries of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are required under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement) to report to the WTO all 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 your access to international markets. Register online at Internet URL: <http://www.nist.gov/notifyus/>

## **Conformity Assessment**

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Qatar has laboratories to test construction materials, food and calibration scales. The Qatar General Organization for Standards and Metrology would like to develop new laboratories and facilities to test electrical equipment and supplies, toys and oil fabrication equipment. The Departments of Central Laboratories, Quality and Standards, which are under the supervision of the General Organization for Standards and Metrology, are the primary testing facilities for Qatar. There are no conformity assessment bodies in Qatar.

## **Product Certification**

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Qatar's applies product certification according to ISSO standards 22 and 28. Product certification takes place by way of a conformity certificate from manufacturer, self-declaration or tests reported by accredited laboratories from exporting country.

## **Accreditation**

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There are no accreditation organizations in Qatar.

## **Publication of Technical Regulations**

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The name of the national gazette is the government of Qatar Official Gazette. Proposed regulations are currently not published but final regulations are published and are considered law once listed in the Official Gazette. The General Organization for Standards and Metrology is planning to develop a website in 2005 to list all standards and allow for governments and the private sector to make comments on draft legislation for sixty days.

## **Labeling and Marking**

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Qatar enforces GCC shelf-life standards GS 150/1993, Part I and II, which combined affect 170 food products. The manufacturer established shelf life is accepted for other food products. Production and expiry dates must be printed on the original label or container by the manufacturer. Dates cannot be added after the fact via a sticker. Products must arrive at destination with at least half the shelf-life duration remaining. The U.S. supplier should work closely with the importer to ensure compliance with local shelf-life requirements.

Food labels must include product and brand names, production and expiry dates, country of origin, name and address of the manufacturer, net weight in metric units, and a list of the ingredients in descending order of importance. All fats and oils used as ingredients must be specifically identified on the label. Labels for food must be in Arabic or Arabic/English. Arabic stickers are accepted.

## **Contacts**

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Qatar's primary point of contact for matters on standards is the following:

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General Manager

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## Trade Agreements

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Qatar is a strong supporter of regional integration and has ties with several Arab League member states. Qatar has signed several bilateral agreements to ease trade and investment restrictions with Arab countries in the Gulf and North Africa. Over the past ten years, Qatar has signed bilateral investment protection agreements with several countries, including Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, China, Croatia, Cuba, Finland, France, Germany, India, Iran, South Korea, Morocco, Pakistan, Romania, Senegal, Sudan, Switzerland and Turkey.

As a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Qatar is a signatory to the GCC Free Trade Agreement. This agreement provides duty free access to all goods produced in the GCC States, provided that the goods meet the content requirements (at least 40 percent value added within GCC factories, which are at least 50 percent owned by GCC entities). In January 2003, the GCC implemented a unified customs tariff to facilitate regional trade. The GCC aims to adopt a common currency.

Qatar has not entered into a bilateral investment or taxation treaty with the United States, although there is ongoing to explore a U.S.-Qatar free trade agreement.

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## Chapter 6: Investment Climate

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The Government of Qatar, under the leadership of the Amir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, strongly encourages international investment in Qatar. The main economic stimulus in Qatar is the development of its huge natural gas reserves in the North Field, the largest non-associated natural gas reservoir in the world. Qatar's liquefied natural gas (LNG) industry has attracted foreign investment worth nearly USD 70 billion. The oil and gas industry will continue to be the most attractive sector for foreign investors, as Qatar Petroleum expects investments in upcoming projects will exceed USD 100 billion by 2010.

Law No. 13/2000 allows up to 100 percent ownership by foreign investors in certain sectors, including agriculture, industry, health, education, tourism, development and exploitation of natural resources, energy or mining upon approval by decree from the government. Law No. 31/2004 allows foreign investment in the banking and insurance sectors upon a decision of the Cabinet of Ministers. The same law stipulates that foreign investment is not allowed in commercial agencies and trading in real estate. Law No. 23/2006 allows international law firms to operate in Qatar.

When approving majority foreign ownership in a project, Law No. 13/2000 states that the project should fit into the country's development plans. Law No. 13/2000 adds that preference should be given to projects that use raw materials available in the local market, manufacture products for export, produce a new product or use of advanced technology, facilitate the transfer of technology and know-how in Qatar, and promote the development of national human resources.

Judicial decisions in commercial disputes are primarily based on contractual agreements, provided these agreements are not in conflict with applicable Qatari laws. U.S. firms are strongly encouraged to consult a local attorney before concluding any commercial agreement with a local entity.

Law 17 of 2004 allows foreigners to own residential property in select projects. International firms interested in obtaining commercial registration under the provisions of laws No. 13/2000 and 17/2004 should make an application to the Department of Commercial Affairs at the Ministry of Economy and Commerce. U.S. firms have received commercial registration allowing 100 percent foreign ownership in recent years.

The Government of Qatar has embarked on a privatization program designed to encourage and strengthen the Qatari private sector. The government allows foreigners to own up to 25 percent of the capital of companies listed on the Doha Securities Market. Foreign investors are not allowed to participate in any initial public offering (IPO); only Qatari and sometimes Gulf Cooperation Council citizens have that privilege. The privatization program has only been conducted through IPOs.

In general, foreign investment is limited to 49 percent, with the Qatari partner(s) holding at least 51 percent. Foreign firms continue to be required to use a local agent for matters related to immigration (sponsorship and residence of employees). Although there is no income tax on salaries in Qatar, foreign investors are subject to taxation on their income from investment. Conversely, Qataris are not subject to any kind of corporate or income tax. Import licenses are issued only to Qatari entities.



In 2003, the Qatar Central Bank allowed foreign banks to establish representative offices and, in the case of existing foreign banks, to open new branches by means of a case-by-case waiver granted by Amiri Decree. In 2004, Law No. 31 amended the Organization of Foreign Capital Investment Law to allow foreign investment in the banking sector, with approval by decree from the Cabinet of Ministers. Qatari regulations for local and foreign bank practices make the same provision, with new licenses available through the Qatar Central Bank application process.

There are 17 licensed banks, including three Islamic banks and a specialized bank, the Qatar Industrial Development Bank. A separate Qatar Financial Center (QFC) allows major international financial institutions and corporations to establish offices with 100 percent foreign ownership; the ceiling for most business sectors elsewhere in Qatar is much lower. There are currently 18 banks, six investment banks, five asset management companies, and seven insurance companies authorized to operate in the QFC. Foreign banks are authorized to conduct all types of business out of the QFC, including provision of Islamic banking services, but are informally “advised” to stay out of the retail banking business.

Certain sectors are not open for domestic or foreign competition, including: public transportation, steel, cement, and fuel distribution. In these sectors, a single semi-public company has complete or predominant control, and enjoys a de facto monopoly by force of law. The state public transportation company, Mowasalat, plans to license three new private companies to provide taxi services in the coming year.

Qatar Telecommunications (Q-Tel), which is 55 percent government-owned, was the sole telecommunications provider until Law No. 34, issued by Amiri Decree on November 6, 2006, provided the legal framework to liberalize the telecommunications sector. In December 2007, a second mobile license was issued to a consortium including Vodafone and the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development. The 2006 decree allows foreign telecommunications companies to enter the local market as Internet Service Providers and cable television providers, as well as to establish mobile phone networks. The law also restructured the telecommunications industry by granting authority to the Supreme Council for Communications and Information Technology (ictQatar) to issue, amend, cancel, or renew all individual licenses in this sector. ictQatar is also responsible for adopting and implementing a comprehensive national plan for the telecommunications sector, including furthering policies that promote competition. ictQatar plans to award a second fixed-line telephone license in April 2008.

Qatar has one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Its 2006 gross domestic product (GDP) of USD 52.7 billion, or USD 62,914 per capita, was one of the highest in the world. The economy grew by 24 percent in 2006, after averaging 15 percent growth over the past five years. Qatar’s economy is projected to grow by 8.3 percent in 2007, as heavy investment in the LNG industry expands production capacity. Inflation remained high at about 14 percent throughout 2007, mostly due to high demand in the housing sector and the weakness of the U.S. dollar (to which the national currency is pegged). High oil prices have increased the country’s cash flow and offered alternate options for foreign investment. Foreign investment is highly encouraged in sectors such as high technology, where know-how is paramount. The Government of Qatar’s investment liberalization policy proceeds on a gradual basis, based on a desire to

protect the local public and private companies from the arduous competition of wealthy and experienced foreign companies.

## **Conversion and Transfer Policies**

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Due to minimal demand for the Qatari riyal outside Qatar and the national economy's dependence on oil and gas revenues, which are priced in dollars, the government has pegged the riyal to the U.S. currency. The official peg is QR 1.00 per USD 0.27 or USD 1.00 per QR 3.64, as set by the government in June 1980 and reaffirmed by an Amiri decree issued July 9, 2001, as a step towards the establishment of a common currency for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries. Officially, the GCC intends to implement a common currency in 2010, though questions remain over whether it will be able to meet the current timeline. Despite the prevalence of high inflation and recent press speculation that Qatar would revalue its currency or depeg it from the U.S. dollar, the Government of Qatar confirmed in December 2007 its commitment to maintaining the current peg. Any future revaluation or monetary policy change would likely occur in concert with the other GCC states.

Qatar neither delays remittance of foreign investment returns nor restricts transfer of funds associated with an investment, such as return on dividends, return of capital, interest and principal payments on private foreign debt, lease payments, royalties and management fees. Similarly, there are no limitations on the inflow or outflow of funds for remittances of profits, debt services, capital, capital gains or other returns. However, local as well as foreign contractors may face delays of over three months in receiving the amount, without interest, due to them. Normally, such delays are attributed to bureaucratic red tape. Foreign exchange is readily available through banks and branches of exchange companies.

Article 9 of Law 13-2000 allows foreign investors the right to deposit revenues from their investments into Qatari banks. Law 13-2000 also allows foreign investors to transfer investment revenues, amounts generated from sale or liquidation, amounts garnered from settlements and disputes, and compensation from expropriation to financial institutions outside Qatar without undue delay.

In accordance with government regulations to combat money laundering and terrorist financing, all financial transactions in excess of QR 100,000 (USD 27,472) must be reported to the Qatar Central Bank. Any repeated cash transactions of QR 30,000 (approximately USD 8,200) or higher made by an individual or entity must also be reported. Any transfer of funds into Qatar in excess of QR 100,000 must be accompanied by valid documentation regarding the use of these funds. For other cross-border financial transactions such as those involving cash couriers, Qatar does not yet have mandatory reporting requirements. Customs officials are given authority under the law, in suspicious cases, to require that travelers declare in writing all cash currency or other negotiable financial instruments in their possession.

## **Expropriation and Compensation**

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Law number 13-2000, Article 8 states: 1) Foreign investment shall neither directly nor indirectly be subject to expropriation unless such measures are for the public welfare and implemented in a non-discriminatory way, against a prompt and reasonable compensation. 2) Compensation shall be equal to the market value of the investment at time of expropriation, and shall be paid without undue delay.

There have been no cases of expropriation or sequestration of foreign investment in Qatar since the nationalization in the mid-1970s of Shell and Dukhan Services (the latter was a combination of six international oil companies handling Qatar's onshore operations on the country's West Coast.). The foreign interests were compensated promptly and fairly, in an act the government refers to as negotiation, as opposed to nationalization or sequestration.

The Organization of Foreign Capital Investment Law (Law No. 13/2000) permits foreign investors to lease land for up to 50 years, renewable upon government approval. In most instances, ownership of real estate is limited to Qatari nationals, except as noted below in the "Right to Private Ownership and Establishment" section.

## **Dispute Settlement**

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Qatar is not a member of the International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). In March 2003, Qatar became a signatory to the New York Convention of 1958. If investment disputes occur, Qatar accepts binding international arbitration between the government and foreign investors. However, Qatari courts do not enforce judgments of other courts in disputes emanating from investment agreements made under the jurisdiction of other nations. Since 2000, Qatar has produced written laws covering a variety of investment and commercial matters. In July 2006, the government issued Law No. 27 which included a chapter of 240 articles devoted to bankruptcy. However, the implementing regulations have not yet been formulated, and it is unclear when or if the law will come into force. Currently Qatari society finds it unacceptable to announce publicly the bankruptcy of a Qatari citizen or a Qatari-owned company. Such an act is considered to be disgraceful to the person, his family, and the tribe to which he belongs. The Government of Qatar sometimes plays the role of guarantor to keep the bankrupt business running and safeguard creditors' rights.

In order to protect their interests, U.S. firms are advised to consult with a Qatari or foreign-based law firm when executing contracts with local parties. Contracts between local and foreign parties serve as the basis for resolving any future commercial disputes. The process of resolving disputes can be time consuming in the Qatari legal system. Pursuant to Law No. 23 of 2006, the government of Qatar permitted foreign law firms to operate in Qatar, subject to cabinet approval and other conditions.

## **Performance Requirements and Incentives**

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Performance requirements for foreign investment in Qatar, including a counter-trade offset program, do not exist. While screening investment proposals, the government may indicate preferences for locating facilities, capital investments and other matters.

Disclosure of financial and employment data is required, but proprietary information is not.

Qatar levies corporate income taxes on foreign firms at rates between five percent to 35 percent of net profits, including profits from majority-owned Qatari joint ventures exceeding 100,000 Qatari riyals (\$27,000). All Qatari owned firms and joint ventures are exempt from corporate income taxes. Under Law No. 13 of 2002, the Ministry of Finance may grant a tax holiday of up to 10 years for new foreign investments in key sectors. Companies established in the Qatar Financial Center are exempt from taxes until April 30, 2008 (in accordance with the law establishing the center, which provided a three-year tax-free period after the start of operations). The future tax rate is still being finalized but will tax local business profits at no more than 10 percent. Other foreign companies may be granted tax exemptions by Amiri Decree on a case-by-case basis.

The government offers a variety of incentives to foreign investors which may include tax exemptions, property grants, energy subsidies, and low-cost financing. The following is a list of possible incentives offered to foreign investors:

- Natural gas priced at 60-75 U.S. cents per MBTU (Million British Thermal Units);
- Electricity offered at less than two U.S. cents per KWH (Kilowatt Hour);
- Industrial land offered at 27 U.S. cents per square meter per year for a period of 50 years, including options for renewing the lease;
- Exemption from customs duties on imports of machinery, equipment and spare parts;
- Exemption on export duties;
- Exemption from corporate earnings taxes for five years, extendable to ten years;
- Exemption from income taxes;
- Absence of quotas on imports;
- Low cost financing through Qatar Industrial Development Bank;
- Flexible immigration and employment rules to enable the import of foreign labor.

The same incentives are offered to Qatari investors. Qataris are exempt from payment of corporate income tax.

Qatar does not maintain measures inconsistent with the Agreement on Trade-Related Investment Measures (TRIMs).

The Ministry of Energy and Industry determines the amount of foreign equity and the extent of incentives for industrial projects. For logistical reasons, industrial projects should be established in designated industrial zones. For other types of investments, there is no limitation on location. Necessary investment approvals may be required from the National Health Authority, Qatar Tourism Authority, Ministry of Municipal Affairs &

Agriculture, Ministry of Economy and Commerce, Supreme Education Council, and Supreme Council for Environment and Natural Reserves.

The Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP), located in Doha's Education City complex, offers U.S. and other foreign investors an opportunity to start up a research and development facility that could also engage in commercial activity. Participating companies are allowed 100 percent foreign ownership commercial registration, and a 20-year exemption from payment of income tax.

## **Right to Private Ownership and Establishment**

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The Commercial Companies Law, Law No. 5/2002, controls the establishment of all private business concerns in Qatar. The updated law provides for corporate mergers, corporate bonds, and the conversion of corporate partnerships into joint stock companies.

Joint ventures involving foreign partners usually take the form of limited liability partnerships. Law No. 15/1990, which controls foreign investment in commercial companies, does not allow foreign investors to enter into a joint stock company with Qatari partners. Foreign investors may own up to 49 percent, and the Qatari partners no less than 51 percent, of a limited liability partnership. Foreign partners in ventures organized as limited liability partnerships must pay the full amount of their contribution to capital in cash, or in kind, prior to the start of operations. Usually, such firms are required to set aside 10 percent of profits each year in a statutory reserve until it equals 50 percent of the venture's authorized capital.

Foreigners are generally not allowed to own property. However, a law enacted in 2004 allows foreigners to own residential property in select projects including the Pearl (the largest real estate development project in Qatar), the West Bay Lagoon, and the Al-Khor resort project. Non-Qataris may also have the right of usufruct over real estate for a term of 99 years in Cabinet-designated "investment areas." A 2006 law further clarifies that non-Qataris can be issued residency permits without a local sponsor if they own residential or business property in the designated districts.

Several state-owned companies in Qatar, such as Qatar Postal Corporation and Qatar Airways, dominate services activities and still operate under monopoly, or hold exclusive rights in some economic sectors.

## **Protection of Property Rights**

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Within Qatar, owners of trademarks, copyrights and patents depend on Qatari laws and regulations for protection. Intellectual property rights in Qatar are protected by Law No. 7/2002 (Copyright and Neighboring Rights Law) and Law No. 9/2002 (Trademarks and Geographical Indicators Law). Qatar has adopted the GCC Patent Law and has offices for patents, industrial property rights, and copyrights within the Ministry of Economy and Commerce. The National Health Authority requires registration of all pharmaceutical products imported into the country and will not register unauthorized copies of products patented in other countries.

Qatar is a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), and is a signatory to the following WIPO Treaties:

- WIPO Convention, since September 1976;
  - Paris Convention (Industrial Property), since July 2000;
  - Berne Convention (Literary and Artistic Works), since July 2000;
  - Nairobi Treaty (Olympic Symbol), since July 1983;
  - WCT (WIPO Copyright Treaty), since October 2005;
  - WPPT (WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty), since October 2005.
- Qatar has also been a member and signatory to the TRIPS Agreement since January 1996.

Qatar was removed from the Special 301 "Watch List" in 2003 in recognition of the passage of the 2002 Copyright Law and the government's improved, sustained enforcement actions against copyright infringement. The copyright law provides a series of important changes to Qatar's legal framework. The law does not explicitly provide for national treatment or coverage of unpublished works and does not criminalize end-user piracy. However, Qatar became party to the Berne Convention in 2000 which provides for these protections. In 2003, Qatar authorized government officials responsible for IPR enforcement to conduct raids and seize pirated material independently and without Ministry of Interior officials. The Copyright Office continues to prosecute resellers of unlicensed video and software. Successful raids, seizures and prosecutions of IPR violators have increased substantially in recent years, and these efforts have significantly helped to reduce piracy in Qatar.

In recent years, the government of Qatar has committed to enforcing IPR pursuant to its WIPO and WTO obligations. In 2007, the Copyright Office conducted approximately 55 raids on suspected IPR violators and reached 13 settlements with violators. The Ministry continues to work with the prosecutor's office and the Ministry of Interior to investigate and prosecute copyright infringement and forwarded 31 cases to the prosecutor's office for further action. In early 2008, the government plans to establish an office within the Customs and Ports General Authority to prevent counterfeit goods from being brought into Qatar.

Qatar uses the GCC patent law with derogations as needed to comply with its obligations under the TRIPS Agreement. It also established a joint committee between the Ministry of Economy and Commerce and the National Health Authority to coordinate their efforts and ensure that only patented products or authorized copies of pharmaceutical products are registered for sale. In 2006, an Amiri Decree on patents was issued requiring that: (1) only inventions of industrial use can be registered as a patent; (2) an industrial product or means or process of production must have something innovative about it to merit patent registration; (3) inventions in health, agriculture, plants and software development are not eligible for patent; (4) only Qatari citizens or foreigners of WTO signatory countries will be allowed to register a patent; (5) the

Ministry of Economy and Commerce will frame and implement executive regulations to help enforce the law; and (6) the Ministry of Economy and Commerce will set up a patent registration office. This office will reportedly be established in 2008 as part of the pending ministry reorganization.

As part of the GCC Customs Union, the six Member States are working toward unifying their intellectual property regimes. In this respect, the GCC has recently approved a common trademark law. All six Member States are expected to adopt this law as national legislation in order to implement it. However, the new law raises questions about consistency with GCC Member State obligations under the TRIPS Agreement and U.S. free trade agreements with Bahrain and Oman.

## **Transparency of Regulatory System**

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The Doha Securities Market is regulated by the Qatar Financial Market Authority. While the Central Bank regulates Qatari banks, laws and regulations applied to foreign banks registered in the Qatar Financial Center (QFC) are different and more closely follow international standards than those adopted by the Central Bank. The QFC tribunal is completely independent of the existing Qatari legal system and has jurisdiction over any dispute involving a registered QFC business. Qatar plans to establish an overarching independent, unified financial regulator in 2008 that would assume regulatory duties from the Central Bank and Qatar Financial Center.

In Qatar, the government is the major buyer and end-user of a wide range of products and services. Government procurement regulations provide a ten-percent preference for Qatari bidders and five-percent for GCC bidders.

The Central Tenders Committee (CTC) of the Ministry of Finance is responsible for processing the majority of public sector tenders. The CTC applies standard tendering procedures and adheres to established performance norms. It also sets the standards for rules and regulations for bidding procedures.

Information on CTC tenders may be obtained from the CTC office in Doha or on the Internet at <http://www.ctc.gov.qa>. In tenders valued in excess of QR 100 million (USD 27 million), the CTC may invite and pre-qualify international firms to bid for a specific product or service. Technical bids submitted to the CTC are referred to the appropriate government end-user for short-listing. The CTC then opens the commercial bids and recommends the lowest priced, technically qualified bidder to the entity concerned, which will make the final award decision. Inquiries about specific award decisions should be directed to the CTC.

Some governmental entities have established internal tender committees. The Ministry of Energy and Industry, Qatar Petroleum, Urban Planning and Development Authority, and Public Works Authority process all tenders independently. Qatar Armed Forces and the Ministry of Interior are responsible for issuing tenders for classified materials and services.

Foreign firms wishing to participate in government procurement programs may be required to have a local agent and provide bid and performance bonds. International bidders should contact end-users directly for information on local agent requirements.

Other regulatory policies do not significantly affect foreign investment decisions. The government continues to strive to facilitate private investment (foreign and national) in the Qatari economy.

The lack of transparency in Qatari government procurement has become a major issue. Some U.S. companies have expressed concerns about the lack of transparency in government procurement. The government of Qatar is aware of these concerns and the United States continues to engage Qatar on this issue.

## **Efficient Capital Markets and Portfolio Investment**

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In Qatar, there are no restrictions on the free flow of capital.

The Qatar Central Bank (QCB) adheres to conservative policies aimed at maintaining steady economic growth and a prudent and responsible banking sector.

Loans are allocated on market terms, and foreign companies are essentially treated the same as local companies.

Qatar's banking sector assets were estimated at USD 51.24 billion at the end of 2006, up 45.3 percent from the previous year. Qatar National Bank (QNB), 50 percent state-owned, is the largest bank in the country, with total assets equal to 38 percent of the total assets of all Qatari commercial banks. Foreign banks hold around 10 percent of all assets, or USD 5.1 billion.

Almost all import transactions are controlled by standard letters of credit processed by local banks and their correspondent banks in the exporting countries. Credit facilities are provided to local and foreign investors within the framework of standard international banking practices. Foreign investors are usually required to have a guarantee from their local sponsor/local equity partner. However, in accordance with QCB guidelines, banks operating in Qatar give priority to Qataris and to public development projects in their financing operations. Moreover, QCB prohibits banks from lending an amount greater than seven percent of a bank's capital base to any single customer. In addition, the Qatar Central Bank does not allow cross-sharing and stable shareholder arrangements among banks and other business concerns that result in fewer shares of some corporations actually trading freely in the market.

The Doha Securities Market (DSM) recovered from its 2006 fall and the DSM index surpassed 9,600 in December 2007, compared to levels under 6,000 a year earlier. (The DSM index had grown from 6493 points in 2004 to 11,053 at the end of 2005). Doha Securities Market (DSM) officials and Doha-based investment analysts believe that the main reason for high volatility on the DSM is that 90 percent of investors have received no financial education. Other reasons given for the swings include high liquidity and a pack mentality in relation to other GCC stock markets. Most of the shares on the DSM are owned by Qatari citizens. Foreign ownership of shares usually hovers around 8 percent, with most owned by other GCC citizens or local expatriates.



Qatar's current regulations allow foreigners to invest in all DSM listed companies stock options. The total of foreign investments cannot exceed 25 percent of the capital of any listed company except Qatar Telecom and Salam International Investment, where foreign investment share may be higher. The Mutual Fund Law (Law. No 25/2002) allows expatriates to invest indirectly in the stock market. No bond loans have been traded on the DSM.

International credit rating companies have recognized Qatar's management of its economy, banking and finance sectors, and rewarded it with top grades. For example, Standard and Poor's and Moody's give Qatar an "AA-,"

## **Political Violence**

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Qatar is politically stable. The crime rate is low. There are no political parties, labor unions or trade associations. There is no known organized domestic political opposition. These facts combine to minimize organized dissent.

With regard to possible terrorist attacks, the U.S. government believes the potential exists for acts of transnational terrorism to occur in Qatar. Potential investors and U.S. citizens are encouraged to stay in close contact with the Embassy for up-to-date threat information.

## **Corruption**

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Bribery is a crime in Qatar and the law imposes penalties for public officials convicted of taking action in return for monetary or personal gain, or for other parties who take actions to influence or attempt to influence a public official through monetary or personal gain. The current Penal Code (Law No. 11/2004) governs corruption law and stipulates that individuals convicted of corruption may receive up to ten years' imprisonment and/or a fine of 5,000 Qatari riyals (about \$1,374). Corruption investigations are handled by the Qatar State Security Bureau (QSS) and Public Prosecution, which is under the Attorney General's authority. Final judgments are made by the criminal court.

Qatari officials claim they would like to eliminate corruption in government procurement, and are working to establish a more open and transparent system. The Amir, the Heir Apparent, and Deputy Prime Minister/Minister of Energy and Industry are the most determined government officials in the battle against corruption. Government corruption issues are also a high priority for both the Attorney General's office and QSS, while public corruption is one of the top three law enforcement training priorities identified by the government. However, corruption still exists in government procurement, and the process is still neither open nor transparent. Lack of transparency, favoritism and political connections are the major cause of the problem.

By Amiri Decree (No. 17/2007), Qatar ratified the UN Convention for Combating Corruption, and on December 4, 2007, the Amir issued Decree No. 84/2007 establishing a National Committee for Integrity and Transparency. The permanent committee is

headed by the Heir Apparent and is tasked with combating corruption in Qatar. Qatar is not a party to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials. Qatar is not a participant in regional anti-corruption initiatives. No regional or local watchdog organization operates in this country. In 2007, Qatar ranked 32nd out of 163 countries rated in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index and scored a respectable 6.0, second out of 14 Middle Eastern countries. U.S. investors are subject to the provisions of the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

## **Bilateral Investment Agreements**

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Over the past ten years, Qatar has signed bilateral investment protection agreements with several countries, including Belarus (2001), Bosnia and Herzegovina (1998), China (1999), Croatia (2001), Cuba (2001), Finland (2001), France (1996), Germany (1996), India (1999), Iran (1999), South Korea (1999), Morocco(1999), Pakistan (1999), Romania (1996), Senegal (1998), Sudan (1998), Switzerland (2001), and Turkey (2001).

On November 5, 2005, Qatar and Singapore signed a free trade agreement (QSFTA). Both countries continue to work to finalize the text of the agreement.

Qatar has not entered into a bilateral investment, trade or taxation treaty with the U.S. However, Qatar and the U.S. did sign a Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) in April 2004.

## **OPIC and Other Investment Insurance Programs**

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Due to concerns about labor practices in Qatar, OPIC suspended its operations in Qatar in 1995. However, Qatar is working to improve its labor standards in order to reinstate OPIC coverage.

Qatar has no plans to become a member of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA).

## **Labor**

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Qatar's labor force consists primarily of expatriate workers. Qatar's current population is estimated at 900,000. Qatari citizens are estimated to number only 182,000 - less than a quarter of the total population. The largest group of foreign workers comes from the Indian sub-continent. The Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs' Department of Labor regulate recruitment of expatriate labor, but Qatar's plan to develop its own manpower resources continues to receive attention at all government levels.

The 2004 labor law and subsequent regulations provides for the right of workers' association for citizens over 18 years of age in private enterprises with more than 100 Qatari citizen workers. Non-citizens are not eligible to form worker committees. Foreign workers can only be members of joint labor-management committees. Those working in

the government sector are prohibited from joining unions. Further, the law and regulations permit only a single national trade union structure and forbid affiliation with groups outside the country.

No labor unions currently exist. Under the labor law, workers are granted the right to bargain collectively and to sign joint agreements, i.e., agreements reached between employer and worker regarding a work-related issue. The right is circumscribed by the government's control over the rules and procedures of the bargaining and agreement processes. Collective bargaining is not freely practiced, and there are no workers under collective bargaining contracts. The law also grants workers the right to strike, but the restrictive conditions imposed by the statute make the likelihood of a legal strike extremely remote. Nevertheless, expatriate workers staged several strikes and work stoppages during the last year as a means of seeking redress and improvement in their work situation from employers. In most cases, organizers of the illegal strikes were identified and summarily deported from Qatar.

Government employees, domestic servants, and those in the public utility, health, and security services are prohibited from striking. However, they can seek permission to hold a public gathering under Law 18 of 2004. Employers set wages unilaterally without government involvement. Local courts handle disputes between workers and employers; however, foreign workers avoid drawing attention to problems with their employers for fear of repatriation. According to source country embassies and some migrant workers, the Labor Department was widely perceived to be objective within its narrow mandate when dealing with the nonpayment of wages. The Labor Department claimed that it resolves the vast majority of worker complaints amicably, with a very small percentage referred to the labor courts for judgment.

A new secretariat for labor relations was recently established and charged with overseeing collective bargaining and labor relations. The Labor Inspection Section has been restructured and staffed with an increased number of trained inspectors who are provided with the power of law enforcement. Some labor camps have been temporarily closed and forced to comply with minimum standards by the labor inspectors. There are no export processing zones.

All expatriate labor must have a Qatari sponsor. Therefore, foreign investors are urged to negotiate labor visa issues with their sponsors/local agents/partners in the early stages of contract negotiation. The Ministry of Interior and the current sponsor must approve all transfers of sponsorship of an expatriate from one Qatari national or firm to another. With the approval of the Ministry of Interior, sponsorship of employees who filed valid complaints of abuse by employers can be transferred without the current employer's agreement. By law, an expatriate hired locally is only entitled to three sponsorship transfers during his/her residence in Qatar, provided he/she is below 60 years of age. If for any reason a residence permit is canceled, the expatriate is not allowed to return to Qatar on a work visa for a period of two years without an Interior Ministry exception.

It is common practice in Qatar for expatriate workers to be provided accommodation, end of service benefits and homeward passage allowance, in addition to salaries. Qatar does not have a minimum wage regulation. While salaries and wages are negotiable, end of service benefits are subject to law.

Qatar is a member of the International Labor Organization (ILO). Generally, labor experts believe that Qatar's labor law does not meet ILO minimum requirements.

## **Foreign-Trade Zones/Free Ports**

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Companies operating at the Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP) can import goods and services duty free. Qatar is also planning to establish three free-trade zones, but no definite time frame has been announced for their establishment. An outside firm is conducting a feasibility study for the government on the proposed zones and is expected to submit its report by the end of 2007. One zone would be established near the future Doha International Airport and house light industries, financial services, and legal, trade and engineering consultancies. A second zone for the industrial area of Doha would cater to manufacturing and transport companies. The third zone, near Mesaieed Industrial City, would house petrochemical and other downstream-related businesses in the energy sector.

Foreign entities wishing to invest in the QSTP should apply for a license with the Park's managing board. No other licensing rules prevalent in the country will apply to the above businesses, although individuals will be subject to the criminal and civil laws of the state. Licensed foreign companies can enjoy 100 percent ownership and full capital and income repatriation benefits.

Any business in the QSTP will be exempt from all taxes, including income tax. The property of such a business is not to be seized under any circumstance, but capital and other cash can be seized on the orders of a local court. Equipment, machineries or any other goods being imported for use by an entity doing business in STP will be exempt from customs duty, and goods produced in the Park will not be subject to export tax. Goods being sold within the Qatar, but outside the QSTP, will attract the normal customs duty that is applicable to imported products. Flammable materials and those dealing with radiation, drugs, weapons, and explosives are banned from import by any of the licensed businesses.

Qatar is also building Energy City to centralize real estate and services for oil and gas companies. The QSTP free zone advantages will apply to Energy City companies. The first buildings are slated for completion in mid-2009, with the entire development being finished by 2012. Education City, while not technically a free zone, provides branch campuses of five U.S. universities with free physical infrastructure and many other perks.

Priority in employment is given to Qatari nationals. Resident expatriates will be allowed to join a licensed company if there is no objection from the Ministry of Interior. Conditions governing sponsorship change, including nationality quotas, will not apply to expatriates being recruited by a licensed company provided there is no objection from the Ministry of Interior.

## **Foreign Direct Investment Statistics**

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The Government of Qatar does not publish detailed statistics for foreign direct investment (FDI) in Qatar or the government's direct investments overseas. According to the Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. FDI in Qatar totaled USD 5.08 billion in 2006 on an historical-cost basis, or approximately 19 percent of all U.S. FDI in the Middle East and second only to Israel in the region. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Qatar's stock of inward FDI in 2006 was \$7.6 billion, with a total FDI inflow in 2006 of \$1.8 billion.

The true amount of U.S. and other FDI in Qatar is probably much larger than either of these estimates, however, as U.S. energy companies have invested heavily in joint ventures and other oil and gas-related projects in recent years. For example, the U.S. firm ExxonMobil alone has invested approximately USD 10 billion, in part as equity shareholder in Qatar Liquefied Natural Gas Company (Qatargas) (10 percent) and Ras Laffan Liquefied Natural Gas Co. (RasGas) (26.5 percent).

In recent years, Qatar has attracted sizeable investments in the areas of enhanced oil recovery and production, as well as the development of Qatar's gas industry. During the past ten years, QP and its partners have invested an estimated USD 100 billion in upstream and downstream operations. The development of Qatar's offshore natural gas reserves in the North Field will continue to dominate all other sectors in attracting foreign investors. Qatar's gas industry has attracted investors/creditors from around the world.

The following is a list of foreign equity participation investors, U.S. firms included, in some major state-owned industrial/petroleum related industries:

#### Petrochemicals:

Qatar Fertilizer Company (QAFCO) is jointly owned by Industries Qatar (IQ) (75 percent), Yara Nederland BV (15 percent) and Fertilizer Holdings AS (10 percent) - Year established: 1969. Commencement of commercial production: 1974. Total Shareholders Equity end 2004 is USD 791.5 million.

Qatar Petrochemical Company (QAPCO) is jointly owned by Industries Qatar (IQ) (80 percent), Total Petrochemicals (20 percent) – Equity share capital: QR 360 million (USD 99 million) - Year established: 1975. Commencement of commercial production: 1981- Total Shareholders Equity: USD777.5 million.

Qatar Fuel Additives Company Ltd. (QAFAC) is jointly owned by Industries Qatar (IQ) (50 percent), Chinese Petroleum Corporation (CPC) (20 percent), Lee Chang Yung Chemical Industry Corporation (LCYCIC) (15 percent) and International Octane Limited (15 percent).- Total capital QR 2.5 billion (USD 687 million. Year established: 1992. End-users: Far East, India, Europe and Arabian Gulf. Commencement of commercial production: 2001. Total Shareholders Equity: Unknown.

Qatar Vinyl Company (QVC) is jointly owned by Qatar Petroleum (25.5 percent), QAPCO (31.9 percent), Norsk Hydro (Norway) (29.7 percent) and Total Petrochemicals (formally Atofina) (France) (12.9 percent). Year established: 1996. End-users: Asian countries. Commencement of commercial production: Mid-2001. Total Shareholders Equity: Unknown.

Qatar Chemical Company (Q-Chem): Equity Share Capital: Unknown. Shareholders: Qatar Petroleum (QP) 51 percent; Chevron-Phillips Chemical Company (USA) 49 percent. Year established: 1997. End-users: Asia, Europe, Middle East and Africa. Commencement of commercial production: 2003. Current value of foreign equity: Unknown.

Qatar Chemical Company II (Q-Chem II): Equity Share Capital: Unknown. Shareholders: Qatar Petroleum 51 percent and ChevronPhillips 49 percent. Year Established: 2002. End-users: Local and international. Commencement of commercial production: 2007. Current value of foreign equity: Unknown.

Qatofin: Equity Share Capital: Unknown. Shareholders: QAPCO 63 percent, Total Petrochemicals (formally Atofina) 36 percent and QP 1 percent. Year Established: 2002. End-users: Asia and Europe. Commencement of commercial production: 2007. Current value of foreign equity: Unknown.

Ras Laffan Ethylene Cracker: Equity Share Capital: Unknown. Shareholders: Q-Chem II 53.31 percent, Qatofin 45.69 percent and QP 1 percent. Year Established: 2002. End-users: Domestic. Commencement of commercial production: 2007. Current value of foreign equity: Unknown.

#### Liquefied Natural Gas Projects:

Qatar Liquefied Gas Company (Qatargas): Equity share capital: QR 500 million (USD 137 million). Shareholders: Upstream: Qatar Petroleum (QP) 65 percent, Total (France) 10 percent, Marubeni Corporation (Japan) and Mitsui and Company Ltd. (Japan) 7.5 percent each and ExxonMobil Oil (USA) 10 percent. Shareholders: Downstream: Qatar Petroleum 65.0 percent, Totalfinaelf 20.0 percent, Exxonmobil 10.0 percent, Mitsui 2.5 percent, Marubeni 2.5 percent. Year established: 1984. End-users of LNG: Worldwide. Commencement of commercial production: December 1996. Current value of foreign equity: Unknown.

Qatar Liquefied Gas Company (Qatargas) II (Qatargas II): Equity share capital: Unknown. Shareholders: Qatar Petroleum 70 percent and ExxonMobil 30 percent. Year Established: 2002. End-users: U.K. Commencement of commercial production: 2007. Current value of foreign equity: Unknown.

Qatar Liquefied Gas Company (Qatargas) III (Qatargas III): Equity Share Capital: USD 5 billion; Shareholders: Qatar Petroleum (QP) 70 percent and ConocoPhillips 30 percent. Year Established: 2003. End-users: USA Commencement of commercial production: 2009. Current value of foreign equity: Unknown.

Ras Laffan Liquefied Natural Gas Co. (RasGas): Equity share capital: QR 7.28 billion (USD 2 billion). Shareholders: Qatar Petroleum (QP) 63 percent, Mobil QM Gas Inc. 25 percent, Itochu Corporation 4 percent, Nissho Iwai Corporation 3 percent and KOGAS 5 percent. Year established: 1993. End-users of LNG: South Korea 91 percent, Spain 6 percent and the U.S. 3 percent. Commencement of commercial production: 1999. Current value of foreign equity: Unknown.

Ras Laffan Liquefied Natural Gas Co. (RasGas) II (RasGas II): Equity Share Capital: USD 550 million. Shareholders: QP 70 percent and ExxonMobil 30 percent. Year

Established: 2001. End-users: India, Italy, Spain, Taiwan. Commencement of commercial production: 2004 (Train 3). Current value of foreign equity: Unknown.

Ras Laffan Liquefied Natural Gas Co. (RasGas) III (RasGas III): Equity Share: Unknown. Capital: USD 12-14 million. Shareholders: QP 70 percent stake and ExxonMobil 30 percent. Year Established: 2003. End-users: USA Commencement of commercial production: 2010. Current value of foreign equity: Unknown.

#### Gas-TO-Liquids Projects:

Oryx GTL Project: Equity Share Capital: Unknown. Shareholders: Qatar Petroleum 51 percent and Sasol 49 percent. Year Established: 2003. End-users: Singapore, Japan and Europe. Commencement of commercial production: 2006. Current value of foreign equity: Unknown.

#### Other Oil and Gas-Based Industries:

Gulf International Drilling: Equity Share Capital: USD 258 million. Shareholders: Qatar Petroleum 60 percent and JDC 40 percent. Year Established: 2004. End-users: TBD Commencement of commercial operations: 2004. Current value of foreign equity: Unknown.

#### Power & Utilities

Ras Laffan Independent Water and Power Project: Equity Share Capital: USD572 million. Shareholders: AES Corporation 55 percent, Qatar Electricity and Water Company 25 percent, Qatar Petroleum 10 percent and Gulf Investment Corporation 10 percent. Year Established: 2001. End-users: Local. Commencement of commercial production: 2004. Current value of foreign equity: Unknown.

Q Power Company: Equity Share Capital: Unknown. Shareholders: Qatar Electricity & Water Co. – 55 percent, International Power Plc (UK) – 40 percent Chubu Electric Power Company (Japan) 5 percent.

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## Chapter 7: Trade and Project Financing

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- [How Does the Banking System Operate](#)
- [Foreign-Exchange Controls](#)
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- [Project Financing](#)
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Standard Letters of Credit processed by local banks and corresponding banks in the exporting countries control almost all import transactions. In accordance with QCB policy, merchants in Qatar make use of the overdraft facilities provided by banks to process their import operations. Most banks in Qatar provide short-term credit facilities of up to 75 percent of letter of credit values. Letters of Credit are the safest means of payment that protects the rights of the Qatari importer and the foreign exporter.

Qatari companies also use other methods of payment such as advanced payment and opening accounts via banks, but these options all depend on the relationship established with the foreign principal.

To date, there is no factoring company in Qatar and the documentary credit is not commonly used. Also there is no credit rating agency in Qatar.

### **How Does the Banking System Operate**

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There are seven local banks operating in Qatar: Qatar National Bank, Doha Bank, Commercialbank, Al Ahli Bank, Qatar Islamic Bank, International Islamic, and International Bank of Qatar. Seven foreign banks also work in the local market: HSBC, Mashreq Bank, Arab Bank, BNP Paribas, Standard Chartered Bank, United Bank and Bank Saderat Iran. The Qatari banking sector is dominated by Qatar National Bank (QNB, 50% state-owned), which is the oldest and largest Qatari bank.

Qatar Central Bank (QCB) supervises all banks, financial institutions and exchange houses in Qatar. In addition to its normal responsibilities, which include issuance/redemption of Qatar's currency, control of monetary policy and monitoring of the banking system, QCB requires all banks to meet the standards of the Bank of International Settlement (BIS), a council of worldwide central bank governors. Most banks in Doha have maintained a comfortable capital adequacy ratio above the 8 percent level required by the BIS. This is a ratio between total equity plus reserves and total risk weighed assets, i.e., loans and investments of a bank not including loans to the GOQ.

The GOQ ensures that the banking sector continues to enjoy depositors' confidence, despite the fact that no deposit insurance exists. QCB also ensures that annual financial statements of all banks operating in Qatar comply with international standards and that the auditing process is carried out by internally recognized auditors. QCB requires that auditors be changed every three or four years.

### **Foreign-Exchange Controls**

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The Qatari Riyal (QR) is fixed to the U.S. Dollar (USD) at USD 1: 00 = QR 3.64. Qatar has no restrictions on foreign exchange and money transfer. However, some restrictions exist when transferring in excess of QR 100,000 (USD 27,472), as well as in cases where suspicion of money laundering calls for official intervention.

## U.S. Banks and Local Correspondent Banks

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Al-Ahli Bank	Bank of America, New York, NY Union Bank of California International, New York, NY
Commercialbank	American Express Bank, New York, NY First Union Bank International, New York, NY The Chase Manhattan Bank, New York, NY Citibank, New York, NY
Doha Bank	Doha Bank, New York, NY
International Bank of Qatar	Standard Chartered Bank, New York, NY
International Islamic	Dutch Bankers Trust, New York, NY Wachovia Bank, New York, NY
Qatar Islamic Bank	American Express Bank, New York, NY JP Morgan Chase Bank, New York, NY Wachovia Bank, New York Int'l Branch, New York, NY
Qatar National Bank	JP Morgan Chase Bank, New York, NY

## Project Financing

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Given the absence of governmental finance programs for exports, banks in Qatar continue to be the main source of financing. In Qatar, the government is usually the primary end-user of the banking sector credit facilities. In 2004, the public sector accounted for 61.8 percent of domestic loans, with the private sector receiving 38.2 percent. Personal loans accounted for 29.2 per cent of total loans in 2004. Other borrowers included the government (28.7%), government institutions (4.9%), semi-government institutions (4.7%), general trade (12.7%), services (4.9%) and real estate

(11.8%). U.S. firms interested in seeking finance for products or projects in Qatar should inquire with leading banks in Qatar.

Established in 1997, state-owned Qatar Industrial Development Bank (QIDB) encourages industrial and economic development and diversification of the State of Qatar through financing small to medium sized joint venture industrial projects. In addition to financing, QIDB provides assistance with project development, including project assessments and feasibility studies, obtaining legal documentation and government approvals, etc.

U.S. Export-Import Bank (Ex-Im Bank) participated in the finance package for the Ras Laffan Liquefied Natural Gas Company. Other U.S. firms are encouraged to seek Ex-Im Bank financing for industrial projects, medical, environmental and transportation security initiatives, and major construction projects.

Due to concerns about labor practices in Qatar, OPIC suspended its operations in Qatar in 1995. However, Qatar is working diligently to improve its labor standards in order to reinstate OPIC coverage. In May 2004, Qatar passed a new labor law which provides more rights and protections for Qataris and non-Qataris.

In August 1998, the Qatar Central Bank decreed that banks operating in Qatar are not allowed to provide loans more than 20 percent of their equity (capital plus reserves) to a single customer (the government excluded). The QCB also discourages local banks from financing stock market operations.

The current interest rates charged by the banking system on general credit facilities are in line with interest rates prevailing in the international markets. In addition to the usual insurance, foreign firms operating in Qatar may be required to provide guarantees signed by their Qatari agents/sponsors to have access to credit facilities from the local banks.

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Export-Import Bank of the United States: <http://www.exim.gov>

Country Limitation Schedule: [http://www.exim.gov/tools/country/country\\_limits.html](http://www.exim.gov/tools/country/country_limits.html)

OPIC: <http://www.opic.gov>

Trade and Development Agency: <http://www.tda.gov/>

SBA's Office of International Trade: <http://www.sba.gov/oit/>

USDA Commodity Credit Corporation: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ccc/default.htm>

U.S. Agency for International Development: <http://www.usaid.gov>

Qatar Financial Center: [www.qfc.com.qa](http://www.qfc.com.qa)

Qatar Financial Center Regulatory Authority: [www.qfcra.com](http://www.qfcra.com)

[Qatari Banks](#)

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### **Business Customs**

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U.S. citizens should expect to have meetings in the morning or evening. The ability to say a few Arabic greetings or words will impress Qatari contacts. Always use the right hand when shaking hands and eating. Do not show the palms of your hands or the soles of your feet/shoes. Be prepared for small talk and then business discussion. Always accept tea, coffee or other refreshments during meetings. Invitations to lunch, dinner, receptions and other hospitalities are normally offered and should always be accepted. Dress should be business attire. It is advisable to print business cards with one side in English and the other side in Arabic. It is advisable to have at least a temporary local or international mobile phone. Giving gifts depends on the closeness of the relationship but it is advisable to not give gifts during the first meeting.

### **Travel Advisory**

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The State Department Consular Information Sheet for Qatar is available at:  
[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1003.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1003.html)

### **Visa Requirements**

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All travelers to Qatar should have passports valid for at least six months. It is best to obtain Qatari visas in advance from the Qatari Embassy in Washington, DC, the Qatari Consulate in Houston, Texas, and the Qatari Mission to the United Nations in New York. Qatari Embassies in other countries also provide this service to foreign nationals. Four passport-sized photographs, a visa application and a letter from the sponsor in Qatar should be submitted for this purpose. A sponsorship letter, however, is not always a basic requirement. This procedure usually takes at least four working days. The U.S. and the Qatari governments have a reciprocal arrangement by which Qatar issues U.S. businessmen a multiple-entry visa for 10 years. This type of entry visa does not entitle visitors and/or businessmen to work in Qatar, unless it is exchanged for a residence permit.

Citizens of certain countries, including the U.S., may obtain visas at the airport upon arrival for a fee of QR 55 (USD 15). These visas, which are valid for 14 days, may be extended for an additional 14-day stay. However, U.S. businessmen are advised to obtain a visa prior to arrival, since it will enable them to go through Qatari immigration more quickly.

The same visa can also be obtained online at the following address:

<http://www.e.gov.qa/eGovPortal/visaservice/visaservicedetails.jsp?ServicePortal=VV>

U.S. Companies that require travel of foreign businesspersons to the United States should be advised that security options are handled via an interagency process. Visa applicants should go to the following links.

State Department Visa Website: <http://travel.state.gov/visa/index.html>

United States Visas.gov: <http://www.unitedstatesvisas.gov/>

## **Telecommunications**

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Qatar enjoys good local and international telecommunications facilities. Automatic telephone and fax dialing is available to more than 150 countries worldwide. Internal calls are free of charge if conducted through regular telephones. U.S. calling cards are not accepted in Qatar.

Prepaid cellular (mobile) phones may be rented locally for a small fee. There are charges for all calls made to and from mobile telephones. "World phones" do not provide reliable local service.

Qatar's Internet service is run by partially state-owned Qatar Telecom (Q-Tel). In 2003, Q-Tel introduced ADSL high-speed internet access. Most hotels offer in-room Internet access and there are a number of Internet cafes in Doha. In 2005, Q-Tel introduced wireless internet services. Hotspots are available in several hotels and trendy coffee-shops of Doha.

VoIP service is not available in Qatar. Q-Tel, the Qatari Telecom monopoly is attempting to ban access to voice and video communication over the internet in an effort to regain market share lost due to widespread VoIP use. However, VoIP is becoming easier and should continue to grow over the coming years.

## **Transportation**

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Transportation options for business travelers are basically limited to car rentals or private taxi. Most major international rental firms are represented in Qatar, including Avis, Budget, Eurodollar, Hertz, Thrifty, etc. Private cars and drivers can be hired from a number of local firms. Orange and white private taxis can be hailed in high traffic areas. In 2005, Mowasalat (Transportation in Arabic), a wholly owned government entity, launched the first public bus service in Qatar. Mowasalat also has started to gradually replace gradually the well-worn orange-and-white private taxis with new high-quality green-and-grey vehicles. These are operated by a sister company called Karwa. The service is not always reliable or on time for pick-ups, and bookings should be made in advance (local number 458-8888). All 4 and 5 star hotels can also arrange transportation via private vehicle.

## **Language**

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Although Arabic is the official language in Qatar, English is widely spoken in business.

## **Health**

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Qatari nationals receive free State-provided medical care ranging from outpatient clinics to hospitalization. Medical fees for expatriate residents holding a government health card vary according to the type of service provided. While medicines are generally dispersed free of charge for Qatari patients, expatriates pay a nominal charge. Visitors to Qatar are required to pay for all medical services throughout their visit to Qatar.

There are numerous private clinics and small hospitals, all licensed by the State through the National Health Authority (NHA).

## **Local Time, Business Hours, and Holidays**

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Qatar local time is GMT plus 3 hours. Qatar is 8 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time, except during Daylight Saving Time, when it is 7 hours ahead.

The government of Qatar's official working hours are 7: 00 AM to 2: 00 PM, Sunday through Thursday. Banking hours are 8: 00 AM to 1: 30 PM, Sunday through Thursday, while private sector hours are generally 8: 00 AM to 12: 30 PM and 4: 00 PM to 7: 30 PM, Saturday through Thursday. Friday, the Muslim holy day, is a day of rest for all sectors; however, shops and shopping malls are open on Friday evenings. The U.S. Embassy hours are 8: 00 AM to 4: 30 PM, Sunday through Thursday.

Officially, Qatar uses the Gregorian calendar, with corresponding dates in the Hijra (Islamic) calendar. There are two major religious holidays that vary from year to year, as they are based on the lunar calendar. Eid Al-Fitr marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadan (during which business hours are restricted to 5 hours per day) and Eid Al-Adha marks the conclusion of the pilgrimage (Hajj) to Mecca. The exact dates of these holidays are determined by the government shortly in advance of their observance. Government ministries are generally closed for a longer period than private and partially private entities. The only fixed holiday is the Qatari Independence Day on September 3.

The months from October through June are generally considered the best period for foreign business representatives to visit Qatar. Public and private sector officials usually vacation during some part of the period July to September. Business trips during the fasting month of Ramadan are not advisable as most Qatari businessmen focus on family and worship.

The U.S. Embassy closes for Qatari and American Holidays.  
Embassy schedule: <http://qatar.usembassy.gov/holidays.html>

## **Temporary Entry of Materials and Personal Belongings**

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Most standard business equipment for individual use may be brought into Qatar temporarily without incurring customs duties. Exhibition materials may be imported for temporary use. However, if these items are sold in Qatar, customs duties will be applicable. Exhibition organizers generally appoint an exclusive local freight forwarder and clearing agent for specific events to assist foreign exhibitors with entry procedures.

Communications, military or security equipment may require prior approval from the relevant authority in Qatar.

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[State Department Consular Information Sheet for Qatar](#)  
[Travel Info for U.S. Businesspersons](#)  
[State Department Visa Website](#)  
[United States Visas.gov](#)  
[U.S. Embassy Qatar Consular Section](#)  
[Qatar E-Government On-line Visa](#)  
[Qatar Telecom](#)

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## Chapter 9: Contacts, Market Research, and Trade Events

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## Contacts

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Note: The country code for Qatar is 974 for all telephone and fax numbers. There are no area codes within Qatar.

### Amcham and/or Bilateral Business Councils

American Arab Chamber of Commerce  
12740 West Warren, Suite 101  
Dearborn, MI 48126 USA  
Phone: (313) 945-1700  
Fax: (313) 945-6697  
Contact: Susan Bazzi, Managing Director  
Email: [sbazzi@americanarab.com](mailto:sbazzi@americanarab.com)  
Website: <http://www.americanarab.com>

U.S.-Qatar Business Council  
1341 Connecticut Ave NW, Suite 4A  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: (202) 457-8555  
Fax: (202) 457-1919  
Email: [eric@usqbc.org](mailto:eric@usqbc.org)  
Website: <http://www.qatarbusinesscouncil.org>

National U.S. -Arab Chamber of Commerce  
1023 15th Street, N.W., Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20005  
Phone: (202) 289-5920  
Fax: (202) 289-5938  
President: Mr. David Hamod

Email: [INFO@NUSACC.ORG](mailto:INFO@NUSACC.ORG)  
Website: <http://www.nusacc.org>

Branch Offices of National U.S. -Arab Chamber of Commerce:

Houston Office  
1330 Post Oak Boulevard  
Suite 1600  
Houston, TX 77056  
Phone: (713) 963-4620  
Fax: (713) 963-4609  
Contact: Ms. Rand Zalzal

New York Office  
420 Lexington Avenue, Suite 2034  
New York, NY 10170  
Tel: (212) 986-8024  
Fax: (212) 986-0216  
Contact: Mr. Gilbert Hage

Los Angeles Office  
8921 S. Sepulveda Boulevard, Suite 206  
Los Angeles, CA 90045  
Phone: (310) 646-1499  
Fax: (310) 646-2462

Bilateral U.S. Arab Chamber of Commerce  
5721 Memorial Dr. Suite 206  
Houston, TX US 77007  
Mailing Address:  
P.O. Box 571870  
Houston, TX US 77257-1870  
Phone: 713-880-8168  
Fax: 713-880-8278  
Email: [info@arabuschamber.org](mailto:info@arabuschamber.org)  
URL: <http://www.bilateralchamber.org/>

American Business Council of Qatar  
P.O. Box 10861, Doha, State of Qatar  
Contact: Ms. Stephanie Carvel, Coordinator  
Email: [gmcavel@qatar.net.qa](mailto:gmcavel@qatar.net.qa)

**USDA/Washington Contact Information**

Trade Assistance and Promotion Office (TAPO)  
Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Ag Box 1052  
Washington, D.C. 20250-1052  
Tel: 202-720-7420  
Fax: 202-690-4374

Importer lists  
Export assistance  
programs

The FAS Home Page address on Internet is <http://www.fas.usda.gov>



## Country Trade or Industry Associations in Key Sectors

Qatar Chamber of Commerce & Industry (QCCI)  
P.O. Box 402, Doha, Qatar  
Tel: (974) 455-9111  
Fax: (974) 466-1693 ; (974) 466-1697  
Contact: Dr. Khalid Al Hazri, General Manager  
Email: [info@qcci.org](mailto:info@qcci.org) / [qcci@qatar.net.qa](mailto:qcci@qatar.net.qa)  
Website: <http://www.qcci.org>

International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) Qatar  
PO Box 15213  
Doha, State of Qatar  
Tel. (974) 441-8181  
Fax: (974) 480-9775  
Chairman: Hassan Ali Bin Ali  
E-mail: [iccqatar@qatar.net.qa](mailto:iccqatar@qatar.net.qa)  
Website: <http://www.iccwbo.org/id15450/index.html>

Qatari Businessmen Association  
P.O. Box 24475  
Doha, State of Qatar  
Phone: (974) 435-3120  
Fax: (974) 435-3834  
General Manager: Khalifa Abdullah Al Subaey  
Email: [qba@qataribusinessmen.org](mailto:qba@qataribusinessmen.org)  
Website: <http://www.qataribusinessmen.org/Support/home.htm>

## Country Government Offices Relating to Key Sectors and/or Significant Trade Related Activities

Customs and Ports Authority  
P.O. Box 81, Doha, State of Qatar  
Phone: (974) 441-1149  
Fax: (974) 441-4959  
Contact: Sheikh Ahmed Hussain Al Haiki, Chairman and Director-General  
Email: [questions@customs.gov.qa](mailto:questions@customs.gov.qa)  
Website: <http://www.customs.gov.qa>

Civil Aviation Authority  
P.O. Box 3000, Doha, State of Qatar  
Phone: (974) 455-7333  
Fax: (974) 455-7105  
Contact: Mr. Abdulaziz Al-Noaimi, Chairman & Managing Director  
Email: [info@caa.gov.qa](mailto:info@caa.gov.qa)  
Website: <http://www.caa.gov.qa/english/index.html>

Ministry of Economy and Commerce  
P.O. Box 22966, Doha, State of Qatar  
Phone: (974) 494-5555  
Fax: (974) 493-2111  
Contact: H.E. Youssif Hussain Kamal, Minister of Finance  
Mr. Mohammed Al-Saadi, Director, Department of Commercial Affairs  
Phone: (974) 493-4108; (974) 493-4109; (974) 494-5204 (Assistant)

Fax: (974) 493-4110  
Email : [webmaster@mec.gov.qa](mailto:webmaster@mec.gov.qa)  
Website: <http://www.mec.gov.qa/en/index.php>

Qatar General Organization for Standards and Metrology  
P.O. Box 23277  
Phone: (+974) 4139 400 / 4139 401 / 4139 402 / 4139 403  
Fax: (+974) 4139 413  
Contact: Dr. Mohamed Seif Al-Kuwari, Director-General  
Email: [standard@qatar.net.qa](mailto:standard@qatar.net.qa)  
Website: [www.qs.org.qa](http://www.qs.org.qa)

Ministry of Finance  
P.O. Box 83, Doha, State of Qatar  
Phone: (974) 446-1444  
Fax: (974) 441-3617  
Contact: H.E. Yousef Hussain Kamal, Minister; Mr. Abdulrahman Al-Dashti, Office Director  
Phone: (974) 446-1512 Fax: (974) 441-4418  
Mr. Moftah Al Moftah, Director of Public Revenues and Taxes Department Phone: (974) 433-2808

Ministry of Energy and Industry  
P.O. Box 3212, Doha, State of Qatar  
Phone: (974) 4846444 / 449-1444  
Fax: (974) 483-6999  
Contact: H.E. Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, Minister (Also Chairman, Qatar Petroleum);  
Mr. Abdulaziz Al-Malki, Office Director  
Email: [did@mei.gov.qa](mailto:did@mei.gov.qa)  
Website:  
[http://www.mei.gov.qa/portal/page?\\_pageid=36,250066&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://www.mei.gov.qa/portal/page?_pageid=36,250066&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

Ministry of Energy and Industry  
Department of Industrial Development  
P.O. Box 2599, Doha, State of Qatar  
Phone: +974-4846444  
Fax: +974-4832024  
Contact: Mr. Abdulwahid Al-Mashadi, Deputy Director  
Email: <http://www.qp.com.qa>  
Website:  
[http://www.mei.gov.qa/portal/page?\\_pageid=36,250066&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://www.mei.gov.qa/portal/page?_pageid=36,250066&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

Ministry of Interior  
P.O. Box 4020, Doha, State of Qatar  
Phone: (974) 443-3964/484-444 / 4330000  
Fax: (974) 444-9228  
Contact: Mr. Abdul Azeez Abdullah Al Ansari, Director of Procurement Dept.  
Email: [info@moi.gov.qa](mailto:info@moi.gov.qa)  
Website: <http://www.moi.gov.qa/English/index.htm>

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture  
P.O. Box 22456, Doha, State of Qatar  
Phone: (974) 4684448 / 4684800  
Fax: (974) 4684980

Contact: Dr. Abdulla O Al-Hamaq, Assistant Director for Health Affairs, Doha Municipality (In-country food inspection; food regulations)  
Email: [webmaster@mmaa.gov.qa](mailto:webmaster@mmaa.gov.qa)  
Website: <http://www.mmaa.gov.qa/>

U.S. Agriculture Trade Office - Dubai  
American Consulate General  
P.O. Box 9343  
Dubai, U.A.E.  
Tel: +971 4 311 6183  
Fax: +971 4 311 6189  
Contact: Mr. David Williams  
E-mail: [atodubai@usda.gov](mailto:atodubai@usda.gov)  
Web Page: <http://www.usembabu.gov.ae/atodubai.htm>

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture  
P.O. Box 1966, Doha, State of Qatar  
Phone: (974) 465-3083  
Fax: (974) 466-3163  
Contact: Dr. Majid R. Al-Kuwari, Assistant Director for Animal Health Affairs, Agricultural Development Department (Live animal and pet import regulations)

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture  
P.O. Box 1966, Doha, State of Qatar  
Phone: (974) 449-2666  
Fax: (974) 432-2002  
Contact: Mr. Ali Al-Kobeisi, Director of Agricultural Development Department (Live plants and pesticide import regulations)

National Health Authority  
H.E. Dr Ghalia Mohammed Al-Thani  
Chairperson, National Health Authority  
P.O.Box 42  
Doha, Qatar  
Tel: +974-444-3271; +974-441-7733 (direct); +974 441-7111; +974-444-1555; +974-446-8468  
Fax: +974-442-9786; +974-441-4777 (direct); +974-442-9565; +974-443-3019  
E-mail [info@nha.org.qa](mailto:info@nha.org.qa)  
Internet: <http://www.nha.org.qa/index.jsp>

**Note:**

The National Health Authority (NHA) was established in 2005, and replaces the Ministry of Health, which was abolished by Emiri Decree. The NHA assumes authority over matters related to health care in Qatar. The NHA has a corporate status and a budget within the State's general budget. The NHA is affiliated with the Council of Ministers.

The NHA seeks to provide high quality health care and medical treatment services, including preventative medicine. The NHA supervises public health services in Qatar, and also oversees medical treatment of Qatari nationals abroad. The NHA also regulates the marketing and manufacturing of pharmaceutical drugs in accordance with international standards, within the frame work of the public policy of the State and in accordance with a national strategy aimed at realizing the above-mentioned objectives.

The NHA also supervises oversees operations at Hamad Medical Corporation, Hamad Specialist and Educational Hospital, private medical facilities, laboratories, pharmacies, councils

of auxiliary medical professions, hospitals, primary health care centers and other public medical treatment utilities. The NHA undertakes the organization of the medical private sector and it acts in coordination with the Health Insurance System to upgrade the level of health service and disseminate health education and awareness.

The National Health Authority comprises the following units:

1. Department of Health Research.
2. Department of Health Information Technology.
3. Department of Health Care Funding.
4. Public Health Department.
5. Quality Management.
6. Planning and Evaluation Department.
7. Department of Foreign Health Relations.
8. Department of legal Affairs.
9. Department of Administrative and Financial Affairs.

Qatar Armed Forces

P.O. Box 37, Doha, State of Qatar

Phone: (974) 461-2400

Fax: (974) 450 4228/4229

Contact: Director of Procurement, General Headquarters

### **Government/Quasi-Government Organizations**

Hamad Medical Corporation

P.O. Box 3050, Doha, State of Qatar

Phone: (974) 439-2222

Fax: (974) 444-3099

Contact: Dr. Saad Rashid Al-Kaabi, Medical Director

Mr. Mahmoud Al-Mahmoud, Director, Materials Management Department

Phone: (974) 439-2262, Fax: (974) 442-3399

Website: <http://www.hmc.org.qa/hmcnewsite/>

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development

P.O. Box 5825, Doha, State of Qatar

Phone: (974) 492-7000

Fax: (974) 480-6117

Chairperson: HH Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Misnad

Acting Managing Director: Dr. Saif Al Hajari

Deputy Managing Director: Mr. Yo Maruno

Email: [info@qf.org.qa](mailto:info@qf.org.qa)

Website: <http://www.qf.edu.qa>

Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation (Kahramaa)

P.O. Box 41, Doha, State of Qatar

Phone: (974) 484-5555/5484

Fax: (974) 484-5496

Contact: Mr. Issa Shaheen Al-Ghanim, Vice-Chairman of the Board

Email: [kmcontact@km.com.qa](mailto:kmcontact@km.com.qa)

Website: <http://www.kahramaa.com.qa/kahramaa>

Qatar Electricity and Water Company (QEWC)

P.O. Box 22046, Doha, State of Qatar  
Phone: (974) 485-8585  
Fax: (974) 483-1116  
Contact: Mr. Hamza Mohammad Al-Kuwari, Vice-Chairman of the Board  
Email: [welcome@qewc.com](mailto:welcome@qewc.com)  
Website: <http://www.qewc.com>

Qatar Telecom (Q-Tel)  
P.O. Box 217, Doha, State of Qatar  
Phone: (974) 440-0333  
Fax: (974) 483-0003  
Contact: Dr. Nasser Marafih, Chief Executive Officer  
Email: [investor@qtel.com.qa](mailto:investor@qtel.com.qa)  
Website: <http://www.qtel.com.qa>

## Market Research

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To view market research reports produced by the U.S. Commercial Service please go to the following website: <http://www.export.gov/marketresearch.html> and click on Country and Industry Market Reports.

Please note that these reports are only available to U.S. citizens and U.S. companies. Registration to the site is required, but free of charge.

List of Agricultural Reports:

- American Food Directory for the GCC-5 Countries (2004-2005 Edition)
- Guide for Doing Business in the Gulf
- Update of U.S. Agricultural Exports to the GCC-5
- Qatar Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards (FAIRS)
- GCC-5 Food Retail Sector Report
- Hotels and Restaurants Sector in the Gulf Region

Note: Agricultural reports are available via the Reports Office, USDA/FAS, Ag Box 1052, Washington, D.C. 20250-1052 and via the FAS Home Page on the Internet at the following URL: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/scriptsw/attacherep/default.asp>

## Trade Events

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Please click on the link below for information on upcoming trade events in the **US**.

<http://www.export.gov/tradeevents.html>

Please click on the link below for information on upcoming trade events in the **Qatar**.

[Comit Qatar 2006](#)  
[Project Qatar 2006](#)  
[Diyafa 2006](#)  
[Milipol Qatar 2006](#)  
[International Tourism & Travel Exhibition 2006](#)

International Franchising & Branding Exhibition 2006  
World LNG Shipping Summit 2006

The following are Food and Agriculture related trade events:

AgriteQ 2006

Event: Gulf Food 2006 Food & Equipment Exhibition (Regional-Annual)

Sector: FOD

Date: February 19-22, 2006

Location: Dubai, U.A.E.

USG involvement in recruiting/promoting: Yes

Event: The FMI 2006 Supermarket Industry Convention & Educational  
Exposition/NASDA U.S. Food Export Showcase/Fancy Food Show-Spring Sector:  
FOD

Date: May 7-9, 2006

Location: Chicago, IL

USG involvement in recruiting/promoting: Yes

Event: The NRA 2006 Restaurant, Hotel, and Motel Show

Sector: FOD

Date: May 20-23, 2006

Location: Chicago, IL

USG involvement in recruiting/promoting: Yes

Note: All major U.S. food and agricultural exhibitions are listed on the FAS Home Page on the Internet at the following URL: [http://www.fas.usda.gov/agx/trade\\_events/us\\_trade\\_shows.asp](http://www.fas.usda.gov/agx/trade_events/us_trade_shows.asp)

Note: All major international food and agricultural exhibitions with endorsed or sponsored USA Pavilion participation are listed on the FAS Home Page on the internet at the following URL: <http://www.fas.usda.gov/agexport/shows/TradeShowCalendar05-06.pdf>

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## Chapter 10: Guide to Our Services

The U.S. Commercial Service offers customized solutions to help your business enter and succeed in markets worldwide. Our global network of trade specialists will work one-on-one with you through every step of the exporting process, helping you to:

- Target the best markets with our world-class research
- Promote your products and services to qualified buyers
- Meet the best distributors and agents for your products and services
- Overcome potential challenges or trade barriers

For more information on the services the U.S. Commercial Service offers U.S. businesses, please click on the link below.

[www.buyusa.gov/qatar](http://www.buyusa.gov/qatar)

U.S. exporters seeking general export information/assistance or country-specific commercial information should consult with their nearest **Export Assistance Center** or the **U.S. Department of Commerce's Trade Information Center** at **(800) USA-TRADE**, or go to the following website: <http://www.export.gov>

To the best of our knowledge, the information contained in this report is accurate as of the date published. However, **The Department of Commerce** does not take responsibility for actions readers may take based on the information contained herein. Readers should always conduct their own due diligence before entering into business ventures or other commercial arrangements. **The Department of Commerce** can assist companies in these endeavors.