



## Doing Business in Burkina Faso:

### 2009 Country Commercial Guide for U.S. Companies

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## Chapter 1: Doing Business in Burkina Faso

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### Market Overview

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Burkina Faso is one of the poorest countries in the world, with a per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of \$428. More than 80% of the population relies on subsistence agriculture, with only a small fraction directly involved in industry and services. Although Burkina Faso is a small country with a low per capita income and a heavy reliance on subsistence-style agriculture, the prospects for expanded U.S. trade and investment opportunities are good. The public sector is being streamlined, privatization is continuing, most trade barriers have been lifted, and prices liberalized.

The export economy consists primarily of cotton. Other cash crops are oil seeds, leguminous vegetables, cane or beet sugar, peanuts, “karite” (shea nuts), cashews, mangos, and sesame seeds. With the largest concentration of shea nut trees in West Africa, the potential for exporting shea butter to markets in Europe and the United States is promising. Livestock, once a major export, has declined. Export-oriented light manufacturing industries are limited to cotton ginning, textiles, leather, agro foods production (e.g., sugar, wheat, and beer), and tobacco products. Some factories are privately owned, while others are in the process of privatization. Traditional handicrafts such as leather handbags, saddles, woven cotton fabrics, and decorative objects of bronze and wood are a growing sector. Burkina Faso hosts the well-known biennial Ouagadougou International Arts and Crafts Fair (SIAO), which gives local producers the opportunity to network, display, and sell their products to tourists and potential foreign investors and distributors. With geological formations similar to its gold and mineral producing neighbors, Burkina Faso is considered by mining experts to be the country with the greatest untested mining potential in West Africa. After the 2004 liberalization of the mining code, deposits of gold, manganese, zinc, and uranium have attracted significant interest from international mining firms. Tourism has grown in importance with events such as the biennial National Culture Week, the Pan-African Film Festival (the largest African film festival in the world); the SIAO international handicrafts fair; and scenic locations such as the country’s three national parks, offer a variety of activities and destinations for potential visitors. In recent years, Burkina Faso has been the site of several major international conferences; as a result, several new hotels, a conference center, and a video teleconferencing facility have been built in Ouagadougou.

Burkina Faso’s overall economic performance has remained basically sound despite several economic shocks during the past three years, including rising oil prices and food prices and a cotton sector crisis brought on in large part because of lower world cotton prices. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth was: 7.1 percent in 2005 and 5.5 percent in 2006. In 2007, higher costs of energy and imported foodstuffs, as well as low cotton

prices, dampened the GDP growth rate to 4.2 percent; it was 4 percent in 2008. Poor agricultural production during the 2006-07 growing season, a 40 percent decrease in cotton production in 2005-06, and the increase of cereal prices and oil prices in 2008 have led to a decrease in GDP by 4 percent and a 7.7 percent increase in inflation. Experts believe that a good cotton harvests and the opening of several gold mines will boost economic growth during the next few years.

Burkina Faso remains committed to its World Bank/International Monetary Fund (IMF) Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), and it was one of the first beneficiaries of the World Bank/IMF debt-relief and poverty reduction programs for highly indebted poor countries. At least 20 percent of the government's budget is financed from international aid, and the majority of infrastructure investments are externally financed.

### **Market Challenges**

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Because Burkina Faso is a landlocked country, it is greatly affected by political developments in neighboring countries. The country is connected by rail to Abidjan, 1,150 kilometers (712 mi) away, a modern port city and capital of the region's economic "elephant" - Cote d'Ivoire. In 2002, this railway was closed, as a result of the military rebellion in Cote d'Ivoire. The crisis in Cote d'Ivoire had a severe impact on the Burkinabe economy due to the closure of the railway as well as a reduction in the payment of remittances from the estimated 4 million Burkinabe working in Cote d'Ivoire. The railway reopened in 2004 and now offers cargo and limited passenger services. Burkina Faso imports fertilizers, cement, building materials, petroleum goods, and foodstuffs through the port of Abidjan and also uses the port to export cotton, shea nuts, leather and skins, and livestock. During the crisis, Burkina Faso was forced to diversify the ports used for international trade to include those in the neighboring countries of Benin (Cotonou), Togo (Lome), and Ghana (Tema).

### **Market Opportunities**

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Burkina Faso's limited market is offset by a stable commercial environment and the potential to exploit the larger West African francophone market. Burkina Faso is a member of the West African Monetary and Economic Union (WAEMU), and its currency is the Franc of the French Community of Africa (CFAF). The CFAF, backed by the French treasury, trades at a fixed rate with the Euro, and is fully convertible.

Foreign investment is welcome in Burkina Faso. Because of its numerous economic reforms, Burkina Faso was listed as one of the top ten reformers in the World Bank report "Doing Business 2009." Effective January 1, 2008, Burkina Faso reduced the corporate income tax rate from 35 percent to 30 percent and the tax on dividends from 15 percent to 12.5 percent. Investment and mining codes permit full repatriation of profits, 100 percent ownership of companies, and many tax exemptions. Investors have recently shown interest in the mining industry (particularly the gold sector) since Burkina Faso lies between the gold-rich countries of Mali and Ghana. Competitively-priced necessities such as generic pharmaceuticals, medical supplies, packaging equipment and materials, mining and road building equipment, fertilizers and chemical products, rice and wheat, are best poised to enter the market. Telecommunications, computer equipment, new and used clothing, and used civil engineering equipment are U.S. exports that have already captured significant market share.

U.S. trade with Burkina Faso is extremely limited -- \$32.321 million and \$21.481 million in U.S. exports in 2007 and 2008, and \$1.466 million and \$547,000 in Burkinabe imports to the U.S. in 2007 and 2008, but investment possibilities exist, especially in the mining and communications sectors. Burkina Faso has only marginally taken advantage of the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which allows selected African nations to sell most items to U.S. markets duty free.

U.S. firms are encouraged to submit competitive bids in several areas. Some foreign firms, primarily consulting agencies, and building and engineering contractors from the E.U., have already established offices in Burkina Faso. The establishment of a local branch office is not required, however, to do business in the country.

For more information on AGOA please visit: <http://www.agoa.gov/>

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## Chapter 2: Political and Economic Environment

Burkina Faso's current President, Blaise Compaore, first came to power in 1987, following a coup d'etat that ousted the popular leader, Thomas Sankara, and resulted in Sankara's death. In 1984 Compaore had helped Sankara come to power through a military coup with the goal of creating a new revolutionary regime. Compaore worked to create policies that reversed many of Sankara's policies, making them more center-leaning and under Compaore's leadership; Burkina Faso's citizens approved a democratic constitution in a 1991 referendum. In December 1991, Compaore was elected President, running unopposed after the opposition boycotted the election.

Burkina Faso held multiparty municipal elections in 1995, 2000, and 2006 and legislative elections in 1997, 2002, and 2007. Elections have been generally free, despite minor irregularities, but not entirely fair due to the ruling party's control of official resources. President Compaore's party, the Congress for Democracy and Progress (CDP), won overwhelming majorities in all the elections except for the 2002 legislative election, where the CDP won with a small majority of the 111 seats. However, following the 2007 legislative elections, the CDP won 73 seats and parties supporting the Presidential agenda won 27 seats, leaving a true opposition of only 11 members.

Given the fragile roots of democratic institutions, constitutional checks and balances are seldom effective in practice. The constitution was amended in 2000 to limit the president to a 5-year term, renewable once. The Constitutional Court interpreted this to begin with the November 2005 election. In October 2007, President Compaore celebrated his 20<sup>th</sup> year in power. He is a skilled politician and dominates the current cabinet and the CDP. The next presidential elections will be in 2010, at which time Compaore is expected to run again.

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

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2834.htm>

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### Using an Agent or Distributor

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There is no law in Burkina Faso requiring retention of an Agent/Distributor, but this is advisable. Selecting a capable local agent could be critical to the successful introduction of U.S. products into a market traditionally dominated by French goods.

There are a limited number of businesspeople in Burkina with the practical experience and financial capacity necessary to form a partnership with a U.S. firm. Most are active in import-substitution or local commerce. Like many businesspeople, the Burkinabe are hesitant to conduct business with people they do not know, so it is necessary to form relationships before one can successfully make inroads into the local market.

### Establishing an Office

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According to a 2008 report prepared by the World Bank, the time required to start a limited liability company, locally known as a Societe a Responsabilitie Limitee (SARL), in Burkina Faso is approximately 18 days. The process includes the deposit of capital in a local bank, registration of articles of incorporation with the Director General of Imports; authentication of documents by a registered notary; registration of tax number (IFU) with the Centre des Formalites de Enterprise (CEFORE), and publication of a notice of incorporation in local newspapers.

Burkina Faso's regulations governing the establishment of businesses include most forms of companies admissible under French business law. These include: public corporations, limited liability companies, limited share partnerships, sole proprietorships, subsidiaries and affiliates of foreign enterprises. With each of these options, there is a

corresponding set of related preferences, duty exceptions, corporate tax exemptions, and operation-related taxes.

### **Franchising**

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Franchising has not yet been assimilated into locally accepted distribution techniques. Local businessmen usually ask for an exclusive agent distributor contract.

### **Direct Marketing**

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Direct marketing is a possible tool, especially for selling to wholesalers (e.g. pharmaceutical), but it is used infrequently in Burkina Faso. In the case of foreign party bids, a competing U.S. firm should hire a local contact for direct follow-up.

### **Joint Ventures/Licensing**

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There are several Burkinabe joint ventures in the mining sector involving companies with partial U.S. ownership. The Burkinabe business community is anxious to pursue joint ventures with foreign investors in the food processing, telecommunications, construction, tourism, and cosmetics industries.

### **Selling to the Government**

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The government of Burkina Faso spends most of its budget on social aid programs; sales possibilities remain limited to information technology/telecommunications, heavy equipment, and healthcare-related products.

### **Distribution and Sales Channels**

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Distribution and sales channels are concentrated in Burkina Faso's two largest cities - Ouagadougou (2006 est. 1,273,355 inhabitants) and Bobo-Dioulasso (2006 est. 435,543 inhabitants). Secondary urban areas could be considered for distribution of consumables such as dairy products, edible oils, and batteries, although they are already well served by the country's two largest cities. Distribution and sales entities operate under various forms, ranging from modern mini-markets, shops, and warehouses to informal sector market stands.

### **Selling Factors/Techniques**

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Burkinabe usually do business based on established professional relationships, so it is important to establish a good working relationship with potential clientele.

### **Electronic Commerce**

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The use of electronic commerce for business purposes is not commonplace in Burkina Faso because Internet availability is relatively new and the country lacks the technical expertise to take advantage of this medium. Internet use is growing and some businesses have informational websites, however, they are almost exclusively in French.

## Trade Promotion and Advertising

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Local papers are published daily and weekly in French in Ouagadougou. Several radio stations broadcast news and music in French and local languages. There are also three TV stations, one of which is operated by the national government. Finally, TV 5 Monde, a French channel, is widely available in Burkina Faso and other countries in West Africa via cable.

### Local Newspapers:

Sidwaya

01 BP 507 Ouagadougou 01

Tel: 226 5030 6306; fax: 226 5031 0362

Contact: Jean-Paul Konseibo, Directeur Général des Editions Sidwaya

Website: [www.sidwaya.bf](http://www.sidwaya.bf)

L'Observateur Paalga

01 BP 584 Ouagadougou 01

Tel: 226 5033 2705; fax: 226 5031 4579

Contact: Edouard Ouédraogo, Directeur Général

Website: [www.lobservateur.bf](http://www.lobservateur.bf)

Le Pays

01 BP 4577 Ouagadougou

Tel: 226 5036 2046; fax: 5036 0378

Contact: Jérémie SIGUE, Directeur Général

E-mail: [ed.lepays@cenatrin.bf](mailto:ed.lepays@cenatrin.bf)/[lepays91@yahoo.fr](mailto:lepays91@yahoo.fr)

Website: [www.lepays.bf](http://www.lepays.bf)

## Pricing

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Recent declines in the value of the dollar have made American products less expensive than they were previously.

## Sales Service/Customer Support

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The concept of customer service and support is not well-established, but because most businesses are small, consumers expect some sort of informal customer support.

## Protecting Your Intellectual Property

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Legal protection exists for intellectual property, patents, copyrights, trademarks, trade secrets, and semiconductor chip design 37. Burkina Faso belongs to the African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), which officially protects members' trademarks, patents, and industrial designs. Patents are valid in member countries for 20 years, with licensing possible three years after issuance of the patent. Trademarks are valid for 20 years and are renewable. The national investment code guarantees foreign investors the same rights and protection as Burkinabe enterprises for trademarks, patent rights, labels, copyrights, and licenses.



Contact: Balamine Ouattara  
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## Due Diligence

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Because information is often out-of-date and scams occasionally occur, particularly in the mining sector, it is important to investigate carefully all business ventures before entering into any kind of transaction.

## Local Professional Services

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A local attorney and/or notary may be required to secure or close a contract. There are about 30 practicing law firms and eight public notaries registered in Burkina Faso. The Embassy Commercial Section maintains a list of registered lawyers who have indicated that they are willing to work with American clients.

Most lawyers do not speak English, but translation services are available. Upon request, the embassy can provide the names and addresses of the most experienced bookkeepers, notaries public, engineering consulting offices, and translation services. Such inquiries can be made by contacting the Embassy's Commercial Assistant at:  
Telephone: (226) 50-30-67-23  
E-mail: [amembouaga@state.gov](mailto:amembouaga@state.gov)

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The Government of Burkina Faso: [www.primature.gov.bf](http://www.primature.gov.bf)

The World Bank: [www.doingbusiness.org](http://www.doingbusiness.org)

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## Telecommunications Equipment

The telecommunications field remains perhaps the best trade prospect for U.S. companies. Since the late 1980s, U.S. firms have supplied Burkina Faso's national telephone company (Onatel) with telecommunications equipment. The newly privatized companies Onatel, Zain, and Telecel currently manage projects aimed at increasing Burkina Faso's telephone network.

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	2006	2007
Total Market Size	na	na
Total Local Production	0	0
Total Exports	\$307,828	\$209,075
Total Imports	\$27,126,631	\$23,517,753
Imports from the U.S.	\$2,065,690	\$1,954,097

(Information provided by Burkina Faso Customs Office)

### Best Prospects/Services

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The mobile phone market is currently experiencing a boom in Burkina Faso. This quick growth is the result of an increase of competition, the diversification of offers and the extension of the network. By the end of 2007, the number of mobile phone customers had reached 1.858 million subscribers. It is expected that this increase will continue for the next five years. The government parastatal, Onatel, recently sold 51 percent of its land and mobile phone service to Maroc Telecom.

### Opportunities

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There is renewed Burkinabe interest in U.S. manufactured telecommunications equipment. U.S. firms interested in entering this market should consider possible credit financing arrangements and appoint a local partner/representative.

### Resources

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Onatel: [www.onatel.bf](http://www.onatel.bf)

International Finance Corporation (IFC): [www.ifc.org](http://www.ifc.org)

## Generic Pharmaceuticals

There is a market for competitively priced generic pharmaceuticals in Burkina Faso. France traditionally supplied the nation with brand-name pharmaceuticals, but Burkina Faso has also started to substitute imported drugs along with local and traditional medicines. Pharmacies are allowed to substitute brand-name goods with generic products, as long as the product is cheaper and of comparable quality.

### Overview

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	2006	2007
Total Market Size	na	na
Total Local Production	0	0
Total Exports	\$57,454	\$51,950,390
Total Imports	\$59,149,790	\$51,950,390
Imports from the U.S.	\$91,800	\$5,312,843

(Information provided by the Burkina Faso Customs Office)

U.S. firms hoping to enter this market should satisfy the following conditions: registration of their products in the official nomenclature, inclusion of French-labels/packaging, and maintenance or development of local sales channels.

### Best Prospects/Services

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CAMEG is the country's major supplier of affordable generic drugs and other health commodities to publicly owned health facilities and non-profit private agencies.

### Opportunities

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Recent declines in the value of the dollar have made American pharmaceutical products less expensive than they were previously.

### Resources

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CAMEG: [www.cameg.com](http://www.cameg.com)

## Personal Computers, Accessories and Supplies

Due to price advantages, good opportunities exist for U.S. suppliers of computer hardware and software, and related products and accessories. The market remains small, but is beginning to show signs of expansion.

### Overview

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	2006	2007
Total Market Size	Na	na
Total Local Production	0	0
Total Exports	\$40,246	\$80,944
Total Imports	\$16,940,554	\$10,593,315
Imports from the U.S.	\$1,202,451	\$561,995

(Information provided by the Burkina Faso Customs Office)

### Best Prospects/Services

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There are good prospects for suppliers who can sell in small quantities. Fasonet is the major supplier of Internet services and software in Burkina Faso.

### Opportunities

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Direct sales of equipment by U.S. firms to Burkina Faso are encouraged since French firms generally mark-up the price of re-exported U.S. equipment, making the goods more expensive for the Burkinabe.

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Cenatrin: [www.cenatrin.bf](http://www.cenatrin.bf)

## Fertilizers and Chemicals

There continues to be high demand and strong sales in the chemical and fertilizer market. U.S. companies should explore this potentially lucrative opportunity.

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	2006	2007
Total Market Size	na	na
Total Local Production	0	0
Total Exports	\$2,021,205	\$1,436,042
Total Imports	\$60,921,628	\$46,667,648
Imports from the U.S.	\$709,945	\$654,019

(Information provided by Burkina Faso Customs Office)

### Best Prospects/Services

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The Government of Burkina Faso has recently announced its decision to authorize the commercial cultivation of genetically modified or "Bt" cotton for the 2008-2009 growing season.

### Opportunities

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The Union Nationale des Producteurs de Coton du Burkina (UNPCB) has recently expressed an interest in importing fertilizers from the U.S.

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Association of African Cotton Producers: [www.aproca.net](http://www.aproca.net)

U.S. Department of Agriculture: [www.usda.gov](http://www.usda.gov)

## Heavy Works Contracts (roads, dam construction, electricity projects)

The value of the heavy works contracts market is estimated at 5 billion CFAF per year (about USD 9.7 million) and is expected to increase with the newly-awarded Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) compact, the Samandéni dam, the construction of a free trade zone and possibly a new airport on the outskirts of Ouagadougou. The \$481 million MCC compact includes approximately \$195 million in road construction.

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	2006	2007
Total Market Size	na	na
Total Local Production	0	0
Total Exports	\$3,509,367	\$8,789,160
Total Imports	\$17,934,130	\$
Imports from the U.S.	\$3,509,367	\$5,426,074

(Information provided by Burkina Faso Customs Office)

### Best Prospects/Services

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Local companies usually contract assistance from foreign companies through government tenders. American suppliers of used equipment can directly sell their products to civil engineering companies.

### Opportunities

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Plans are currently underway for a free trade zone or “Zone d'Activites Commerciales et Administratives” (ZACA) (about USD 60 million), construction of a new international airport and free trade zone in Ouagadougou (about USD 218 million) and Samandéni dam (about USD 672 million), one of the most ambitious projects ever undertaken by Burkina Faso.

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Burkina Faso Chamber of Commerce and Industry: [www.ccia.bf](http://www.ccia.bf)

Millennium Challenge Account: [www.mcaburkina.bf](http://www.mcaburkina.bf)

## Used Clothing, Fabric Material, and Textile Remnants

The U.S. is well placed to maintain its competitive edge in this market.

### Overview

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	2006	2007
Total Market Size	na	na
Total Local Production	0	0
Total Exports	\$2,213,088	\$1,229,680
Total Imports	\$7,713,874	\$8,514,780
Imports from the U.S.	\$326,995	\$267,973

(Information provided by Burkina Faso Customs Office)

### Best Products/Services

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There are many small and medium-size companies that import used clothing. The Chamber of Commerce is an excellent resource for locating local merchants.

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Burkina Faso Customs Office: [www.douanes.bf](http://www.douanes.bf)

Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Handicrafts of Burkina Faso: <http://www.ccia.bf>



## **Consultant Services**

The demand for consultants is expected to rise as Burkina Faso's economy increasingly welcomes foreign investment and multilateral aid agencies play a greater role within the country. French, Dutch, Canadian consulting companies are already operating in this market through local branches and as individual consultants.

## **Opportunities**

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These services involve projects ranging from natural resource development studies to rural development issues and mining sector strategies.

## **Resources**

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Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Burkina Faso: <http://www.ccia.bf>

The National Office of Foreign Trade: [www.tradepoint.bf](http://www.tradepoint.bf)

Excellent opportunities exist for U.S. firms to expand their market share in the following commodities: wheat and wheat flour, yellow corn, semolina, and rice.

- Rice: The Burkinabe consume more than 120,000 tons of rice annually, but only 30,000 tons are cultivated locally. Burkina Faso imported from Thailand, Pakistan, and Taiwan approximately USD 83,270,364 of rice in 2005, USD 85,540,955 in 2006, and USD 74,671,844 in 2007. U.S. firms that can supply rice for popular consumption at competitive prices may tap this market.

- Wheat and wheat flour: Burkina Faso imports 3.040 million tons of wheat per year of U.S. wheat flour from European wholesalers, so the direct sale of wheat by U.S. suppliers represents another option to be pursued. Burkina Faso imported USD 7,506,970 of wheat in 2006 and USD 23,065,590 in 2007. Bakers buy much of their wheat flour from the national milling company the "Grands Moulins du Faso," a Lebanese-owned company. The company imports from the U.S., and Europe (France). The Grands Moulins du Faso has indicated that it is willing to import competitively priced flour from the United States.

- Dairy products (milk, butter, and cheese): The Netherlands and France dominate the market controlling 41.6 percent and 25 percent respectively. However, relatively few brands of butter or milk products are marketed. U.S. brands may be able to gain market share by increasing the variety of products available to consumers. Market penetration by U.S. firms depends on their ability to identify and conform to local consumer preferences.

- Other food products: Vegetable and other cooking oils are a staple in Burkinabe diets. Burkina Faso imported USD 16,798,412 of vegetable oil in 2005, USD 14,773,710 in 2006, and USD 17,282,893 in 2007.

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### **Import Tariffs**

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Burkina Faso is a member of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), which has imposed an External Common Tariff (Tarif Extérieur Commun) with four rates: 0 percent, 5 percent, 10 percent, and 20 percent since January 2000. Other barriers take the form of supplementary taxes on imports, targeted import bans, licenses, and other miscellaneous barriers.

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A certificate of conformity requiring the payment of a fee is required for the importation of some products including rice and batteries. The fact that the fee is based on the quantity imported makes this requirement comparable to a protective measure.

### **Import Requirements and Documentation**

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Importing and exporting goods to Burkina Faso is free unless the good is subject to an import title or authorization as determined by the ministry of Commerce, Enterprise Promotion, and Handicrafts. Authorization needs to be acquired beforehand, is valid for six months for imports, and three months for exports, and may be renewed. Special authorization is required for imports of: pharmaceuticals, arms, ammunition, uniforms, and products classified as toxic. The export of ivory is strictly forbidden.

The pre-shipment inspection of imports over CFAF 1,500,000 (about USD 2,900) by the Société Générale de Surveillance (SGS), an international verification and control service, is still required.

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

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There are no tariff or non-tariff barriers specifically against U.S. products. Once WAEMU has adopted the external common tariff (Tarif Extérieur Commun), each member state will be able to adjust tariffs in response to specific market conditions within

limits authorized by the World Trade Organization (WTO). U.S. exports to Burkina Faso are subject to the same controls as products coming from WAEMU and ECOWAS member-countries.

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Burkina Faso grants Normal Temporary Entry to raw materials imported for the processing, manufacturing or assembling of finished products. Burkina Faso also grants Exceptional Temporary entry to products that are temporarily imported for maintenance, trials, or exhibitions, as well as empty packing materials intended to be re-exported, research material, and all machines intended for public works.

## Labeling and Marking Requirements

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With the exception of pharmaceuticals, Burkina Faso has no special regulations for product labeling and marking. Only products imported from WAEMU and ECOWAS regions and registered for Common Preferential Tax are subject to marking.

## Prohibited and Restricted Imports

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Burkina Faso has removed most import/export restrictions and streamlined taxation and other administrative procedures. With the notable exception of petroleum products, which maintain a 150 percent tariff, quantitative restrictions on imports have been lifted, and tariffs reduced from 200 percent to a maximum of 66 percent. Restrictions still remain on the importation of drugs, asbestos and other products considered dangerous to public health and security.

## Customs Regulations and Contact Information

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Direction Generale des Douanes  
01 BP 506 Ouagadougou 01 - Burkina Faso  
Tel: 226 50 32 47 56/57/58  
Fax: 226 50 31 42 13 and 226 50 31 12 04  
E-mail: [dg.douanes.bf@cenatrin.bf](mailto:dg.douanes.bf@cenatrin.bf)  
Website: [www.douanes.bf](http://www.douanes.bf)

## Standards

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- [Overview](#)
- [Standards Organizations](#)
- [Conformity Assessment](#)
- [Product Certification](#)
- [Accreditation](#)
- [Publication of Technical Regulations](#)
- [Labeling and Marking](#)
- [Contacts](#)

## Overview

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Burkina Faso has no special regulations except those on import tariffs. In 1994, Burkina Faso issued a decree that instituted a national conformity certificate for products intended for consumption in Burkina Faso. There is no organization in charge of conformity assessment, and Burkina Faso has no special certification, accreditation, technical, or labeling/marketing regulations.

## Standards Organizations

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There are no standards organizations in Burkina Faso.

## 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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There is no organization in charge of conformity assessment in Burkina Faso.

## Product Certification

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There is no organization in charge of product certification in Burkina Faso.

## Accreditation

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There is no organization in charge of accreditation in Burkina Faso.

## Publication of Technical Regulations

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There are no published technical regulations in Burkina Faso.

## Labeling and Marking

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With the exception of pharmaceuticals, there are no labeling or marking regulations in Burkina Faso. Firms who wish to enter the pharmaceuticals market should register their products in the official nomenclature, and include labels/packaging in French.

## Contacts

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Direction Generale des Douanes  
01 BP 506 Ouagadougou 01 - Burkina Faso  
Tel: 226 50 32 47 56/57/58  
Fax: 226 50 31 42 13 and 226 50 31 12 04

E-mail: [dg.douanes.bf@cenatrin.bf](mailto:dg.douanes.bf@cenatrin.bf)  
Website: [www.douanes.bf](http://www.douanes.bf)

## **Trade Agreements**

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Burkina Faso has signed agreements and is a member of the Union Economique et Monetaire Ouest Africain (UEMOA) and the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO).

## **Web Resources**

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The National Office of Foreign Trade: [www.tradepoint.bf](http://www.tradepoint.bf)

Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Burkina Faso: [www.ccia.bf](http://www.ccia.bf)

World Bank: The following link provides information about tender offers by the Bank; one can register for industry specific alerts: <http://www.dgmarket.com/>

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## Chapter 6: Investment Climate

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### Openness to Foreign Investment

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The Government of Burkina Faso (GOBF) wishes to attract more Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and has recently had success in doing so, primarily in the mining sector. The GOBF overhauled its investment code in 2004 with the hope that new FDI would boost Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and help diversify its economy, which is based heavily on subsistence agriculture and cotton production for world markets. The World Bank's "Doing Business 2009" rated Burkina Faso amongst the world's top ten economic reformers.

The government has extended the responsibilities of its newly developed Enterprise Registration Centers (Centres de Formalites des Entreprises) by simplifying registration formalities and eliminating obstacles to opening a business (such as eliminating the need to provide copies of any criminal records or leasing contracts). This one-stop shop for company registration cut registration time to 18 days. To further improve the business climate in Burkina Faso, the government is working with the World Bank to reduce the time needed to meet all formalities in bankruptcy cases. In 2008, Burkina Faso improved its ranking on the Transparency International Corruption Perceptions index to 80th in 2008 from 105th worldwide in 2007; this dramatic improvement reflects the country's successful efforts to create an environment conducive to business growth.

The 2004 Investment Code demonstrates the government's interest in attracting FDI to create industries that produce export goods and provide training and jobs for its domestic workforce. The Code provides standardized guaranties to all legally established firms, whether foreign or domestic, operating in Burkina Faso. It contains six investment and operations preference options, which are equally applicable to all greenfield investments, mergers, and acquisitions. Burkina Faso's regulations governing

the establishment of businesses include most forms of companies admissible under French business law, including: public corporations, limited liability companies, limited share partnerships, sole proprietorships, subsidiaries, and affiliates of foreign enterprises. With each option there is a corresponding set of related preferences, duty exceptions, corporate tax exemptions, and operation-related taxes.

The Burkinabe Investment Code prohibits discrimination against foreigners. American firms not registered in Burkina Faso can compete for contracts on projects financed by international sources such as the World Bank, U.N. organizations, or the African Development Bank. According to the 2004 Investment Code, all personal and legal entities lawfully established in Burkina Faso, both local and foreign, are entitled to the following rights: fixed property, forest and industrial rights; concessions; administrative authorizations; access to permits; and participation in state contracts.

### **Conversion and Transfer Policies**

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Burkina Faso's investment code guarantees foreign investors the right to overseas transfer of any funds associated with an investment, including dividends, receipts from liquidation, assets, and salaries. Such transfers are authorized in the original currency of the investment. Once the interested party presents the request for transfer, accompanied by all relevant bank documents, Burkinabe banks transfer the funds directly to the recipient banking institution. The government is not expected in the foreseeable future to change its current remittance policy concerning purchasing foreign currency in order to repatriate profits or other earnings. Foreign exchange is readily available at all banks and most hotels in the main cities including Ouagadougou and Bobo Dioulasso, Burkina Faso's second largest city and economic capital.

Burkina Faso is a member of the West African Monetary and Economic Union (WAEMU), whose currency is the CFA franc, or "CFA." The CFA is freely convertible into Euros at a fixed rate of 655.957 CFA to 1 EURO. Investors should consider the advantages offered by the WAEMU, which allows CFA to be freely used between all member countries. WAEMU countries include: Senegal, Togo, Cote d'Ivoire, Mali, Benin, Guinea Bissau, Niger and Burkina Faso.

### **Expropriation and Compensation**

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The Burkinabe constitution guarantees basic property rights. These rights cannot be infringed upon except in the case of public necessity, as defined by the government. This has rarely occurred. Until 2007, all land belonged to the government, but could be leased to interested parties. The government reserves the right to expropriate land at any time for public use. In instances where property is expropriated, the government must compensate the property holder in advance, except in the event of an emergency. In 2007, Burkina Faso drafted a national land reform policy that recognizes and protects the rights of all rural and urban stakeholders to land and natural resources; clarifies the institutional framework for conflict resolution at a local level; establishes a viable institutional framework for land management; as well as strengthens the general capacities of the government; the local communities and the civil society on land issues. That policy stated that new land reforms were necessary to ensure equitable access to land for all rural stakeholders, preserve investments, and manage potential land



conflicts. The National Assembly is expected to adopt this law in 2009. In 2009, Burkina Faso made it easier to transfer property by eliminating the requirement for authorization from the municipality, merging two taxes at the Land Registry (Conservation Foncière), and reducing the transfer tax. The changes reduced the time required by 46 days and the cost by two percent of the property value.

## **Dispute Settlement**

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The Civil Code provides legal language that works to protect property and contractual rights. Government interference in the court system occurs less frequently in Burkina Faso than in most African countries, and judgments from foreign courts are accepted and enforced by local courts. It should be noted, however, that the World Bank ranked Burkina Faso as 144th in the world for its ability to enforce contracts because fees, number of required procedures, and the amount of time needed to resolve disputes are all abnormally high.

Burkina Faso is a party to the Washington Convention of 1958 on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards and recommends arbitration procedures in its investment code. Burkinabe courts accept international arbitration as a means for settling investment disputes between private parties. Longstanding disputes that remain unresolved after administrative jurisdictional hearings are required to be submitted to arbitration. Burkinabe courts recognize and enforce foreign arbitral awards.

In the event that an amicable settlement of a dispute between the government and an investor cannot be reached, the Investment Code requires that arbitration procedures be submitted to international arbitration under the rules outlined by the 1965 Convention of the International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). In cases where the enterprise of a national does not meet nationality conditions stipulated by article 25 of the Convention, the Code specifies that the dispute be resolved in accordance with the dispositions of the supplementary mechanisms approved by ICSID in 1978.

In 2006, Burkina Faso introduced specialized commercial chambers in the general courts and lowered enforcement costs by cutting the related registration tax from 4 to 2 percent of the judgment amount. In December 2007, an organization, "Doing Business Better in Burkina," and the government jointly held a workshop to discuss the efficiency of the Burkinabe judicial system in settling commercial disputes. Workshop attendees included judges, lawyers, university teachers, donors, and private sector representatives. The goal of the workshop was to raise the business community's confidence in the Burkinabe judicial system and its capacity to implement decisions relating to agreements and property, as well as to introduce the idea of specialized courts to deal commercial matters.

In 2007, Burkina Faso opened the Arbitration and Commercial Dispute Resolution Center (Centre d'Arbitrage et de Reglement des Litiges Commerciaux) under the auspices of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Over the last several years, Burkina Faso has not been involved in investment disputes with U.S. or any other foreign investors or contractors.

## **Performance Requirements and Incentives**

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All investment specific incentives are outlined in the 2004 Investment Code. Additionally, all companies that use at least 50 percent locally supplied raw materials are exempted from trading taxes and receive a 50 percent reduction in customs taxes in addition to the elimination of other duties. These companies are also eligible to waive excise duties on production equipment and spare parts.

The government does not require investors to purchase materials from local sources or to export a certain percentage of output. Foreign investors are not limited access to foreign exchange commensurate with their level of exports. Local law does not impose "offset" requirements, which dictate that major procurements are approved only if the foreign supplier invests in Burkinabe manufacturing, R&D, or service facilities in areas related to the items being procured.

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

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The CFA franc or "CFA" may be freely used in all West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) member countries. The rights of foreign and domestic private entities to establish and own enterprises, and engage in all forms of remunerative activities, are guaranteed by the constitution and the investment code. Businesses can be freely established and sold. Although in the past public enterprises enjoyed a monopoly in their markets, the government is currently implementing structural reforms to liberalize most of the monopolies. Foreign investors are encouraged to participate in the privatization of state-run enterprises.

## **Protection of Property Rights**

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The government recognizes interests in property, both movable and fixed, and has adopted international, regional, and local laws that work to protect property. In practice, however, government enforcement of intellectual property law is lax. Despite government efforts, counterfeited goods can readily be found and purchased on the street in Ouagadougou and Bobo-Dioulasso.

As a member of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Burkina Faso adheres to the Treaty on the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA). This 1993 treaty created an intergovernmental organization to encourage foreign investment and economic development in the 16 member states that have ratified it. The treaty creates institutions that harmonize laws for contracts, businesses, securities, and bankruptcies; it also established a Common Court of Justice and Arbitrage based in Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire. Since its inception, the government has adopted several uniform acts including an act relating to commercial law.

Legal protection exists for intellectual property, patents, copyrights, trademarks, trade secrets, and semiconductor chip design. The government of Burkina Faso has issued a number of decrees to protect other forms of property. These decrees include: Decree No 2000-577 on the collection and remuneration on reprography of works set on graphic support or similar; Decree No 2000-143 creating the Bureau Burkinabe des Droits d'Auteur (BBDA); Decree No 2001-259 setting up and organizing the National

Committee for the Fight against Piracy of Literacy and Artistic Works; Decision No 01-052 Price Fixing for Works Protected in Burkina Faso; Decision on the Collection of Remuneration for Private Copy; Decision No 01-053 on the Collection of Rights Payment; Decision No 01-50 on Stamping Disks, Audio and Video Cassettes that contain Literary and Artistic Works; Decision on Protection Modalities for Delivering Import Visas on Literacy, Artistic Works and Bank Supports.

Burkina Faso has a legal system that protects and facilitates acquisition and disposition of all property rights, including intellectual property. It is a member of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the African Intellectual Property Organization (AIPO). The national investment code guarantees foreign investors the same rights and protection as Burkinabe enterprises for trademarks, patent rights, labels, copyrights, and licenses.

In 1999, the government ratified both the WIPO Copyrights Treaty (WCT) and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT). In 2002, Burkina Faso was one of 30 countries that put the WCT and WPPT treaties into force. The government has also issued several decrees and rules to implement the two treaties.

### **Transparency of Regulatory System**

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Burkina Faso's legal, regulatory, and accounting systems are transparent and consistent with international norms. It adheres to the West African Economic and Monetary Union's accounting system, Systeme Comptable Ouest Africain (SYSCOA). Introduced in 1998, SYSCOA allows enterprises to use the same accounting system. SYSCOA complies with international norms in force and is a source of economic and financial data.

The government of Burkina Faso uses transparent policies and effective laws to foster competition. According to National Assembly Law No 15-94, "prices of products, goods, and services must be established according to fair and sound competition." The government believes that cartels, the abuse of a position of superiority, restrictive practices, refusal to sell to consumers, discriminatory practices, unauthorized sales, and selling at a loss are practices that distort free competition.

Although some price controls have been lifted, the price of oil, essential generic drugs, tobacco, cotton, school supplies, water, electricity, and telecommunications are still regulated by the government.

The government does not use tax, labor, environmental, health and safety standards, or other laws and policies to impede entrance of foreign investors into the marketplace.

### **Political Violence**

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Within weeks of President Compaore's 1998 successful re-election for a second 7-year term against two minor-party candidates, domestic opposition members took to the streets to protest the murder of leading independent journalist Norbert Zongo, whose investigations of the death of the President's brother's chauffeur suggested involvement of the Compaore family. The Zongo killing still resonates in Burkina politics, though not as strongly as in the past. More than ten years after Zongo's death, there has been no significant progress on the investigation of the case.

Although Burkina Faso means "land of the honest men," many believe that corruption is still a problem for this West African nation. The main challenges the country currently faces are poor access to information, a weak judiciary, limited enforcement powers of anti-corruption institutions, misappropriation of public funds, and the separation of powers. Civil servants who most commonly engage in corruption include: members of the police force and gendarmerie, customs officials, political groups, justice officials, healthcare workers, educators, tax collectors, and the media.

There are several anti-corruption groups, both governmental and non-governmental that monitor corruption in Burkina Faso. In 2001, the President established a National Ethics Committee whose main task is to "bring morality" to public life. In 2002, the government established the High Commission of Coordination for the Fight against Corruption (HCFAC). This government body evaluates the performance of private and public sector administrations. Another internal mechanism is the State General Inspection (SGI), which closely monitors government management. Though SGI is not directly linked to the National Gendarmerie, the two groups are known to collaborate their anticorruption efforts. For example, it is not uncommon for the National Gendarmerie to assist with the investigation of corruption-related incidents brought to the attention of SGI. These government-controlled structures lack independent oversight and enforcement power, resulting in anti-corruption laws which are largely ignored. In November 2007, the National Assembly adopted a bill creating a new anti-corruption structure called the Superior Authority of State Control (ASCE), an entity that will be under the authority of the Prime Minister and will merge most existing anti-corruption entities. In November 2008, the GOBF held a workshop in Ouagadougou to train ASCE members. In January 2008, the government established a new 11-member Gold Anti-fraud Squad (BNAF) and issued laws that allow BNAF to regulate gold marketing and curb fraud cases. In April 2008, the GOBF created the Autorité de Regulation des Marches Publics (ARMP), a regulatory oversight body to ensure transparency in the bidding process by monitoring the execution of all government contracts. The ARMP is vested with the authority to impose sanctions, initiate lawsuits, and publish the names of fraudulent or delinquent businesses. It will also educate communities benefiting from public investment monies to take a more active part in monitoring contractors.

Private Citizens have also established a non-governmental organization (NGO) called Réseau National de Lutte contre la Corruption (RENLAC). This NGO looks broadly at the management of private and public sector entities. It publishes reports on the state of corruption in the country and has established a wide range of anti-corruption initiatives and tools. African Parliamentarians' Network against Corruption has a local chapter in Burkina Faso and cooperates with RENLAC.

In April 2008, the GOBF created the Autorité de Regulation des Marches Publics (ARMP), a regulatory oversight body to watch over the tender process for government contracts. Officially installed by the Prime Minister in July 2008, the ARMP is meant to ensure transparency in the bidding process by monitoring the execution of all government contracts. The ARMP is vested with the authority to impose sanctions, initiate lawsuits, and publish the names of fraudulent or delinquent businesses. It will also educate communities benefiting from public investment monies to take a more active part in monitoring contractors.

The GOBF has also recently created the Autorité Supérieure de Contrôle de l'Etat (ASCE) to consolidate existing state-controlled anti-corruption organizations. ASCE merges the Haute Autorité de Coordination de la Lutte Contre la Corruption (HACLC), one of two anti-corruption institutions created in 2001, with the vital functions of the Commission Nationale de Lutte Contre la Fraude and the General Inspectorate of the State (IGE). In addition to releasing annual reports from auditing entities, ASCE will prosecute ethics breaches committed by members of the public sector including state civil service employees, local and public authorities, state-owned companies and all national organizations invested with public service missions.

Burkina Faso has also ratified several international agreements on corruption including the United Nations Convention against Corruption, the African Union Convention for the Prevention and Fight against Corruption, and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) anti-corruption protocols. As a member of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), Burkina Faso has agreed to enforce a regional law against money laundering and has issued a national law against money laundering and financial crimes.

While the government has identified corruption as an obstacle to doing business, the World Bank ranked Burkina Faso as the fourth best Sub-Saharan African country in the area of corruption control, trailing only South Africa, Madagascar and Ghana. According to the 2008 Transparency International Corruption Perceptions Index, Burkina Faso has reduced its perceived levels of corruption in the public sector and improved its worldwide ranking from 105th in 2007 to 80th in 2008 and its regional ranking from 17th to 9th within Sub-Saharan Africa.

## **Bilateral Investment Agreements**

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In 1961, Burkina Faso signed a cooperation treaty with France allowing funds to be transferred freely between the two countries. A trade, investment protection and technical cooperation agreement was signed between Burkina Faso and Switzerland in 1969. This agreement continues to provide for free transfer of corporate earnings, interests, dividends, etc. between the two countries. Burkina Faso has also signed and ratified investment promotion and mutual protection agreements with Germany, the Netherlands, Malaysia, Belgium, Guinea, Ghana, Benin, and is in the process of signing one with Italy.

The Burkinabe investment code provides the right to transfer capital and revenues secured by alien personal and legal entities, which invest in Burkina Faso in foreign currencies. Foreign investors have the right, subject to foreign exchange regulations, to transfer dividends, any returns on the capital invested, the liquidating or conclusion proceeds of assets, in the same currency used in the initial investment.

Burkina Faso has also signed various multilateral investment agreements including the former Lome Convention and the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU).

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

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U.S. companies doing business with Burkina Faso may use the services of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC). OPIC is a U.S. government agency that helps businesses invest overseas by providing financing and insuring eligible projects against political risk.

## **Labor**

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The Burkinabe labor code is effectively enforced by a labor court. Unions are well organized and defend employee interests in industrial disputes. Workers know their rights, and do not hesitate to seek redress of grievances.

According to the World Bank, Burkina Faso improved its ranking to 57 from 125 for the ease of hiring and firing workers in 2008. A new labor code, approved in May 2008, makes hiring workers easier by allowing employers to use fixed-term contracts for permanent tasks, removing the 48-month limit on the duration of such contracts, and easing restrictions on determining the weekly rest day. Requirements for redundancy dismissals were also eased: third-party notification and consent are no longer required for dismissal of a single worker, and priority rules for dismissals were abolished.

Burkinabe workers have a reputation as hardworking and dedicated employees. While unskilled labor is abundantly available, skilled labor resources are limited. Construction, civil engineering, mining, and manufacturing industries employ the majority of the formal labor force. In general, the government generally encourages companies to hire Burkinabe employees.

To promote local employment, the government has established three financing instruments targeted at firms interested in obtaining start-up monies. These instruments include: the "Fonds National d'Appui a la Promotion de l'Emploi" (FONAPE), the "Fonds d'Appui au Secteur Informel" (FASI), and the "Fonds d'Appui aux Activités Génératrices de Revenus des Femmes."

To date, Burkina Faso has approved and ratified a myriad of conventions issued by the International Labor Organization. These conventions include Freedom for Union and Protection of Rights to Union, Abolition of Hard Labor, and the Worst Forms of Child Labor.

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

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The government of Burkina Faso, which hopes to take advantage of its central location in West Africa, has recently announced the development of a foreign trade zone or "free port" in Samandéni, in the western region of Burkina Faso.

## **Foreign Direct Investment**

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Recent examples of Foreign Direct Investment in Burkina Faso include:

French, Indian, Canadian, Belgian, and American investors have established greenfield firms and obtained enterprises through acquisition. French investment in Burkina Faso currently accounts for about 70 percent of total foreign direct investment. Partially

French-owned firms include CFAO, DAGRIS, CASTEL, TOTAL, BOLORE, SOUCOM, and SOUSICOM, which is the largest foreign investor in Burkina Faso.

In 2000, Telecel International and Mobile System International/Cellular Investments Holding BV invested about USD 19 million to operate mobile phone services in Burkina Faso. The Ivorian group, Atlantique Telecom, currently operates Telecel International.

In 2006, 51 percent of the shares of ONATEL telecommunications were sold to Maroc Telecom for USD 315 million; another 20 percent of the shares have been floated on the regional exchange. Maroc Telecom plans to invest approximately USD 90 million annually in ONATEL.

In 2007, Celtel International invested USD 57 million in Celtel Burkina.

In 2007, a Canadian company, High River Gold Mines Ltd (HRG), with significant U.S. investment through its local subsidiary SOMITA SA, opened Burkina Faso's first commercial gold mine. HRG's next project will be the Bissa gold mine in the north-central Burkinabe province of Bam and will also process gold from nearby Bouroum. It is estimated that these two sites have combined reserves of approximately 8.8 million tons of ore, averaging 2.99 grams per ton, and an estimated gold production of 3.5 tons per year. Burkina Faso expects these new gold mines to attract USD 260 million in new investments.

Burkina Faso announced three more mines slated for development in the next two years and it will soon welcome bids for the reopening of the Poura gold mine. Poura opened in the southern province of Mouhoun in the 1950's, but was forced to close in 1999 because of low gold prices. At its closure, it was estimated that this mine still contained 450,000 tons of ore at a grade of 12 grams of gold per ton. Burkina Faso is home to one of the highest-grade manganese deposits in the world near Tambao, in Oudalan province in the north. Recent studies by Coronation International Mining, a Johannesburg-based mineral consulting group, have identified a proven reserve of 4.6 million tons at 56.8 percent manganese. A small-scale manganese mine opened in late 2008 near Kiere, in Tuy Province, in the southwest.

An Australian mining company, Aim Resources, has been developing the Perkoa zinc deposit, in Sanguie Province, which it asserts is one of the richest zinc properties in the world. Progress on the mine has recently been halted due to a drop in world zinc prices.

Burkina Manganese, a company with significant U.S. investment, opened Kiere mine in December 2008. The Kiere mine has estimated reserves of at least 600,000 tons of manganese at grades of 44-45 percent.

In December 2007, 38 percent of the shares of Burkina Faso's most important bank, Banque Internationale du Burkina, were sold to Nigeria's United Bank for Africa.

Burkina Faso is a member of the Multilateral Investment Guaranty Agency (MIGA). In 2005, MIGA issued guarantees totaling USD 38 million to Dagriss for its investment in the Societe Cotonniere du Gourma (SOCOMA). This project supports the liberalization of the cotton sector.

In 2007, MIGA granted the Societe Malienne de Promotion Hoteliere of Mali USD 2.9 million to cover its equity investment in Societe de Promotion Hoteliere du Burkina Faso, Hotel Independence (Azalai Hotel).

There are only two wholly-owned American firms in Burkina Faso: AMERITEL, a telecommunications firm that sells transmission equipment and maintenance services, and TRADE, an English language service.

Foreign investment opportunities still exist in two big projects: the development of the Zone d'Activites Commerciales et Administratives (ZACA) (about USD 60 million), and the construction of a new international airport and free trade zone in Ouagadougou (about USD 218 million).

## **Web Resources**

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Overseas Private Investment Corporation: <http://www.opic.gov>

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## Chapter 7: Trade and Project Financing

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- [How Does the Banking System Operate](#)
- [U.S. Banks and Local Correspondent Banks](#)
- [Project Financing](#)
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### **How Do I Get Paid (Methods of Payment)**

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The Burkinabe investment code provides the right to transfer capital and revenues secured by alien personal and legal entities, which invest in Burkina Faso in foreign currencies. Foreign investors have the right, subject to foreign exchange regulations, to transfer dividends, any returns on the capital invested, the liquidating or conclusion proceeds of assets, in the same currency used in the initial investment.

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

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Though Burkinabe banks continue to have high levels of cash reserves their credit financing is limited to short-term credit, which constitutes about 60% of their financing portfolio. Thus, few manufacturing and trading companies benefit from long-term financing, which impedes economic growth. Small to medium-sized entrepreneurs still have difficulty accessing credit.

The traditional banking sector is composed of 11 commercial banks and three specialized credit institutions called, "Etablissements Financiers." Banks include: the Banque Internationale pour le Commerce, l'Industrie et l'Agriculture du Burkina Faso (BICIA-B), the Banque Internationale du Burkina (BIB), the Societe Generale de Banques du Burkina (SGBB), the Banque Commerciale du Burkina (Arabo-Libyan), (BCB), the Banque Agricole et Commerciale du Burkina (BACB), Ecobank, Bank of Africa, and Banque Sahelo-Sahelienne pour l'Investissement et le Commerce (BSIC), and Coris Banque International, Banque Atlantique. A network of microfinance institutions and credit unions has also grown rapidly; and more than 300 credit unions are registered domestically.

Three specialized credit institutions or "Etablissements Financiers" finance the majority of home, furniture, car, and moped acquisitions: la Société Burkinabe d'Equiptement (S.B.E.), la Société Burkinabe de Crédit Automobile (SOBCA), and la Financière du Burkina (FIB). Two additional credit institutions make specialized loans to small and medium-scale enterprises: the "Projet d'Apui à Création des Petites et Moyennes Entreprises (PAPME)" and "Burkina-Bail," which finance the acquisition of equipment by lease.

Questions and inquiries regarding Burkina's banking system can be addressed to:

Association Professionnelle des Banques et Etablissements Financiers du Burkina (APBEF-B)

01 B.P. 6215 Ouagadougou 01, Burkina Faso  
Tel: 226-31.20.65, Fax: 226-31.20.66  
E-mail: [apbef-b@cenatrin.bf](mailto:apbef-b@cenatrin.bf)

## **U.S. Banks and Local Correspondent Banks**

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Burkina Faso's main commercial banks are linked to Citibank in the U.S.:

Citibank N.A.  
111 Wall Street, 28<sup>th</sup> Floor, Zone 4  
New York, NY 10043  
[www.citibank.com](http://www.citibank.com)

Local correspondent banks are:

Banque Commerciale et Agricole du Burkina (BACB)  
2, Avenue Gamal Abdel Nasser, Secteur 3  
01 BP 1844 Ouagadougou 01  
Tel: 226 50 33 33 33  
Fax: 226 50 31 43 52  
E-mail: [bacb@bacb.bf](mailto:bacb@bacb.bf)

Banque Commerciale du Burkina (BCB)  
653, Avenue du Docteur Kwame Nkrumah, Secteur 4  
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Fax: 226 50 31 06 28  
E-mail: [bcb@fasonet.bf](mailto:bcb@fasonet.bf)

Banque Internationale pour le Commerce, l'Industrie et l'Artisanat du Burkina (BICIA-B)  
479, Avenue du Docteur Kwame Nkrumah, Secteur 4  
01 BP 8 Ouagadougou 01  
Tel: 226 50 31 19 55  
Fax: 226 50 31 11 16  
E-mail: [info@biciab.bf](mailto:info@biciab.bf)

Banque Internationale du Burkina (BIB)  
69, Avenue Dimdolobsom, Secteur 3  
01 BP 362 Ouagadougou 01  
Tel: 226 50 30 00 00  
Fax: 226 50 31 00 94  
E-mail: [bibouaga@fasonet.bf](mailto:bibouaga@fasonet.bf)

Bank of Africa  
770, Avenue de la résistance du 17 mai, Secteur 3  
01 BP 1319 Ouagadougou 01  
Tel: 226 50 30 88 71  
Fax: 226 50 30 88 74  
E-mail: [boadg@fasonet.bf](mailto:boadg@fasonet.bf)

Ecobank Burkina  
633, Avenue de la Resistance du 17 mai, Secteur 4

01 BP 145 Ouagadougou 01  
Tel: 226 50 31 89 75  
Fax: 226 50 31 89 81  
E-mail: [ecobankbf@ecobank.com](mailto:ecobankbf@ecobank.com)

Societe Generale de Banques du Burkina (SGBB)  
4, Rue de l'Hôtel de Ville, Secteur 1  
01 BP 585 Ouagadougou 01  
Tel: 226 50 32 32 32  
Fax: 226 50 31 05 61  
E-mail: [sgbb@liptinfor.bf](mailto:sgbb@liptinfor.bf)

## **Project Financing**

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Several U.S. government agencies offer financing and insurance options to assist U.S. exporters with business relations in Burkina Faso.

The most notable is the Export-Import Bank of the United States (Ex-Im Bank), the official export credit agency of the United States. Ex-Im Bank's mission is to assist in financing the export of U.S. goods and services to international markets.

## **Web Resources**

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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/cc/default.htm>

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

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## Chapter 8: Business Travel

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### **Business Customs**

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Business is conducted very formally in Burkina Faso. Greetings and titles are part of the formalities. No verbal transaction between two people takes place unless greetings have been exchanged, including the shaking of hands. It is polite to greet an official or send correspondence using a title rather than a proper name.

The telephone has made inroads in Burkinabe daily life, especially among civil servants in the capital, but most business transactions are still conducted face-to-face. Meetings may involve a large number of people who speak formally and at length on a given subject. Meetings between a handful of people usually conclude with the formal exchange of business cards. Organizational hierarchies are widely respected, and accomplishing a task or getting information quickly requires approaching the appropriate person.

### **Travel Advisory**

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At the time this document was prepared, there is no advisory warning against travel in Burkina Faso. Visitors are encouraged to verify that there are no new travel advisories prior to their departure.

### **Visa Requirements**

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Visas and proof of yellow fever inoculations are required for entry.

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/>

U.S. Embassy Ouagadougou: [http://ouagadougou.usembassy.gov/on\\_reg.html](http://ouagadougou.usembassy.gov/on_reg.html)

## Telecommunications

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Telephone and Internet service providers are relatively reliable, but the cost of utilities is very high. Cellular service is widely used throughout the country and, the number of mobile telephone users has increased, from nearly one million in 2006 to over two million in 2007, covering 228 zones.

## Transportation

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Public transportation, even in the capital, is unreliable since buses, and taxis are run-down. Rental cars and all-terrain vehicles with and without drivers are expensive but available, usually at hotels that cater to businesspeople and tourists. Primary roads between most main the main commercial centers are paved, but travelers are strongly advised to remain within city limits after dark. Two passenger trains leave Ouagadougou each week for Côte d'Ivoire, and freight trains leave daily.

Ouagadougou's international airport is served by several weekly domestic and international flights. Domestic air service and flights between Burkina Faso and other African nations are relatively limited. At the beginning of 2009, there were eight airlines servicing the capital city, Ouagadougou, with approximately 35 commercial flights per week. Below are the carriers and their routes:

**Royal Air Maroc service to:** Casablanca, Paris, connecting service to New York

**Afriqiyah Airways service to:** Tripoli and Paris

**Air Ivoire service to:** Abidjan, Niamey, and Accra

**Air Burkina service to:** Accra, Bobo Dioulasso, Bamako, Dakar, Cotonou, Lome, and Niamey

**Air Senegal International service to:** Dakar, and Bamako

**Air France service to:** Paris, connecting service to European cities and the U.S.

**Ethiopian Airlines service to:** Addis Ababa

**Compagnie Aérienne du Mali service to:** Bamako, Abidjan, and Accra

Because carriers frequently change their routes it is advisable to contact the airlines for more up-to-date information.

## Language

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French is Burkina Faso's official language. The local language, Moore, is widely spoken in Ouagadougou, with Dioula, the common trade language of West Africa, being widely spoken in Bobo-Dioulasso.

## Health

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Local medical services are limited. Unwashed fruits and vegetables and undercooked meats are not safe to eat. Tap water is not potable. Bottled mineral water is available at hotels, restaurants, and some retail shops. Chloroquine-resistant malaria is prevalent in Burkina Faso, and malaria suppressants should be taken prior to arrival in country.

Vaccinations and precautions against other illnesses are recommended for travel in rural areas and a Yellow Fever immunization is required to enter into the country.

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

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Burkina Faso is on GMT. Many local businesses and government offices close between 1:00 and 3:00 pm and most businesses tend to close on Sunday. The following local and international holidays will be observed in 2009, please note that those listed as "TDB" are lunar holidays and will announced a day or two in advance of the actual holiday:

January 1:	New Year's Day
January 3:	Revolution Day
March TBD:	Mouloud
March 8:	Women's Day
April 12:	Easter
April 13:	Easter Monday
May 1:	Labor Day
May 21:	Ascension Day
August 5:	Independence Day
October TBD:	Eid Al Fitr
November 1:	All Saints' Day
December 11:	Proclamation of the Republic/National Day
December TBD:	Tabaski
December 25:	Christmas Day

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

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Burkina Faso grants Normal Temporary Entry to raw materials imported for the processing or manufacturing of finished products. It also covers assembling operations. Burkina Faso also grants Exceptional Temporary entry to products that are temporarily imported for maintenance, trials, or exhibitions, as well as empty packing materials intended to be re-exported, research material, and all machines intended for public works.

### **Web Resources**

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U.S. Embassy Ouagadougou: [http://ouagadougou.usembassy.gov/on\\_reg.html](http://ouagadougou.usembassy.gov/on_reg.html)

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

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- [Market Research](#)
- [Trade Events](#)

### Contacts

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Below is a list of Principal Government Officials and U.S. Government agencies. For more information, please contact the U.S. Mission of Commercial Service.

President	Blaise Compaoré
Prime Minister	Tertius Zongo
Minister of State, Minister of Agriculture	Laurent Sedego
Minister of state, minister of Health	Seydou Bouda
Minister of Economy and Finance	Lucien Marie N. Bembamba
Minister of Justice	Zakalia Kote
Minster of Defense	Yero Boly
Minister of Foreign Affairs	Bedouma Alain Yoda
Minister of Transportation	Gilbert N. Ouedraogo
Minister of Civil Service	Soungalo Ouattara
Minster of Territorial Administration	Clement Sawadogo
Minster of Security	Emile Ouedraogo
Minister of Mines and Energy	Abdoulaye A. Cisse
Minister of Commerce	Mamadou Sanou
Minister of Culture, Tourism, and communication	Fillipe Savadogo
Minister of Infrastructures	Seydou Kabore
Minister of Secondary Education	Joseph Pare
Minister of Basic Education	Marie Odile Bonkoungou
Minister of the Environment	Salifou Sawadogo
Minister of Work and Social Security	Jerome Bougouma
Minister of Analysis and Prospective	Jacques Ouedraogo
Minister of Youth and Employment	Justin Koutaba
Minister of National Solidarity	Pascaline Tamini
Minister of Animal Resources	Sekou Ba
Minister of Human Rights	Salamata Sawadogo
Minister of Communication Technology	Noel Kabore
Minster of the Promotion of Women	Celine M. Yoda
Minister of Housing and Urbanization	Vincent T. Dabilgou
Minister of Sports and Leisure	Jean-Pierre Palm
Minister of Relation with the Parliament	Celine Beloum
Deputy Minster for Budget	Marie Therese Drabo
Deputy Minister of Regional Cooperation	Minata Sanate
Deputy Minister of Decentralization	Toussaint Abel Coulibaly
Deputy Minister of Agriculture	Abdoulaye Kombary
Deputy Minister of Non Formal Education	Ousseni Tamboura
Deputy Minister of Vocational Training	Maxime Some

Contacts in Washington, D.C.:

**Embassy of Burkina Faso**

2340 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W.

Washington, D.C. 20008

E-Mail: [ambawdc@verizon.net](mailto:ambawdc@verizon.net)

Tel: (202) 332.5577/6895

Fax: (202) 667.1882

Web: <http://www.burkinaembassy-usa.org/embassy.html>

**U.S. Department of Commerce**

International Trade Administration /Office of Africa

14<sup>th</sup> Street and Constitution Ave., NW

Washington, D.C. 20230

Tel: (202) 482-4388

Fax: (202) 482-5198

Web: <http://www.commerce.gov/>

**The Trade Information Center (TIC)**

U.S. Department of Commerce

ITA/Office of Export Promotion Coordination

Washington, D.C. 20230

Tel: (202) 482-0543 or 1-800-USA-TRADE

Fax: (202) 482-4473

Web: <http://web.ita.doc.gov/ticwebsite/afweb.nsf>

**U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)**

**U.S. Foreign Agriculture Services**

Trade Assistance and Promotion Office

14<sup>th</sup> and Independence Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20250-1052

Tel: (202) 720-7420

Fax: (202) 690-4374 or 205 9728

Web: <http://www.fas/usda.gov>

**U.S. Department of State**

Africa Bureau-AF-W, Room 4250

Washington, D.C. 20520

Tel: (202) 647-2214

Fax: (202) 312-9734

Web: <http://www.state.gov>

**U.S. Department of Treasury**

Office of International Affairs

1500 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington, D.C. 20220

Tel: (202) 622-1234



Web: <http://www.treas.gov/offices/international-affairs/>

**United States Agency for International Development (USAID)**

1300 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW

Washington, DC 20523

Tel: (202) 712-4810

Fax: (202) 216-3524

Web: [http://www.usaid.gov/locations/sub-saharan\\_africa](http://www.usaid.gov/locations/sub-saharan_africa)

**Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC)**

1100 New York Avenue, NW

Washington, D.C. 20527

Tel: (202) 336-8799

Fax: (202) 336-8700

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

**U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA)**

1000 Wilson Blvd., Suite 1600

Arlington, VA 22209-3901

Tel: (703) 875-4357

Fax: (703) 875-4009

E-mail: [info@tda.gov](mailto:info@tda.gov)

Web: <http://www.ustda.gov/USTDA/USTDA%20By%20Region/subsaharanafrika>

**Export Import Bank of the United States (EXIMBANK)**

811 Vermont Avenue, NW, 7th Floor

Washington, D.C. 20571

Tel: (202) 566-8008

Fax: (202) 566-7524

Web: <http://www.exim.gov>

**U.S. Based Multilateral Financial Institutions**

**The World Bank**

1818 H Street, NW

Washington, DC 20433

Tel: (202) 477-1234

Fax: (202) 477-6391

Web: <http://www.worldbank.org>

**The International Finance Corporation**

1818 N Street, NW

Washington, DC 20433

Tel: (202) 477-1234

Fax: (202) 477-3112

Web: <http://www.ifc.org>

**Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA)**

1818 H Street, NW

Washington, DC 20433

Tel: (202) 473-3075

Fax: (202) 872-1521

Web: <http://www.miga.org>

**Africa Growth Fund**

1850 K Street, NW, Suite 390  
Washington, DC 20006  
Tel: (202) 293-1860  
Fax: (202) 872-1521  
Web: <http://www.ifc.org>

**The Corporate Council on Africa**

1660 L Street, NW, Suite 301  
Washington, DC 20036  
Tel: 202-835-1115  
Fax: 202-835-1117  
Web: <http://www.africacncl.org>

**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 on the site is required, but information is free of charge.

**Trade Events**

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

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

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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 export 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](http://www.buyusa.gov)

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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.