

# Navigating International Trade Opportunities: AGOA & Other Resources from the U.S. Commercial Service

## U.S. Commercial Service

[www.trade.gov](http://www.trade.gov)

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**U.S.  
COMMERCIAL  
SERVICE**

United States of America  
Department of Commerce

# The U.S. COMMERCIAL SERVICE

[www.trade.gov](http://www.trade.gov)



- The [U.S. Commercial Service](http://www.trade.gov) is a part of the U.S. Dept. of Commerce and is the export-promotion branch of the U.S. Government.

## Our mission:

- ▶▶ To promote the *export* of goods & services from the United States, particularly of small- and medium-sized businesses.
  - ▶▶ To represent U.S. business interests internationally.
  - ▶▶ To help U.S. businesses *find qualified international partners (buyers)*.
- Our offices are located within U.S. Embassies and Consulates overseas and domestically.

# Are you export ready?

*Failing to prepare is preparing to fail.*

*-Coach John Wooden, UCLA*

## **A few things we look for to determine if a company can be a client.**

- 51%. Is the product or service at least 51% U.S. content?
- Company Website. Is it modern? Is it easy to understand and navigate? 10 second rule.
- Is the company already selling here in the United States? If they can sell here, they can sell “there”.
- Can the company commit sufficient production capacity to the export market?
- Does the company have the financial resources to actively support an international marketing strategy and offer same level of customer support?
- Can the company set reasonable expectations?
  - Tackle no more than two countries at a time.
  - Make sure you are seeing the right people, and they know why you are there. Also, plan a sensible schedule-traffic and logistics vary from city to city.
  - “When in Rome...” Work with the local business culture and modify your product (if necessary). Pay attention to local business norms.

NOTE: Does the company have a financial cushion? *Company should prepare trips for success or bust.*

# The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)

**The African Growth and Opportunity Act is a unilateral preference program, providing duty-free treatment to select products including most textile and apparel goods manufactured in a qualifying sub-Saharan African (SSA) country.**

- AGOA provides eligible sub-Saharan African countries with duty-free access to the U.S. market for over 1,800 products.
- To benefit from AGOA, a good must be either wholly obtained (grown, fished, mined, etc.) or sufficiently manufactured in an AGOA country.
- Entered into force October 1, 2000; expires September 30, 2025. Biden Administration committed to working with Congress for potential renewal, to evaluate the program, and how to increase bilateral trade between the U.S. and SSA and regional trade within SSA.

<https://www.trade.gov/agoa-trade-preference>

# Prosper Africa

<https://www.prosperafrica.gov/>

**Prosper Africa is a Presidential-level initiative aimed at strengthening the strategic and economic partnership between the U.S. and Africa by catalyzing transformative two-way trade and investment.**

**Prosper Africa brings together services from across the U.S. Government to help companies and investors do business in U.S. and African markets.**

- Export to Africa
- Invest in Africa
- Export to the USA.
- Invest in the USA
- Attract U.S. Investment

Participating US Gov agencies include USAID, USDOC, US. Dept. of State, EXIM Bank, US Dept. of Energy, US Africa Development Foundation (USADF) and more.

<https://www.prosperafrica.gov/>

# U.S. Commercial Service Resources

**Learning how to Export:** A series of export tools and resources to get started

## **Export Process Overview.**

Online assessments for new and expanding exporters, including videos.

<https://www.trade.gov/exporter-assessments>

## **Export Plans.**

A good export plan describes the steps needed for your company to develop global sales. Online tools include sample plans and videos.

<https://www.trade.gov/develop-export-plan>

## **Export-U**

A partner resource to help you succeed in the global marketplace.

<https://export-u.com/>

## **A Basic Guide to Exporting**

A free downloadable manual for new exporters and published by the U.S. Commercial Service.

[https://legacy.trade.gov/Guide To Exporting.pdf](https://legacy.trade.gov/Guide_To_Exporting.pdf)

# U.S. Commercial Service Resources

## International Market Research: Using U.S. Government resources to plan your next exporting step

### **Country Commercial Guides.**

Research on market conditions, opportunities, regulations, and customs from over 70 U.S. Embassies worldwide.

<https://www.trade.gov/country-commercial-guides>

### **Industry Research.**

Find the latest market intelligence, trade events, and trade leads for your industry.

19 Categories include: Aerospace, Automotive, Healthcare, Education, Environment, ICT, Safety & Security, etc.

<https://www.trade.gov/industries>

### **Free Trade Agreements**

Free trade agreements (FTA) between the U.S. and select trading partners provide low or duty-free access and other benefits.

<https://www.trade.gov/free-trade-agreements-help-center>

### **Customized Services**

**Initial Market Check.** Gathers feedback from up to five industry participants and provides written recommendations on whether to pursue the target market.

<https://www.trade.gov/initial-market-check-0>

# Additional Market Research Links

International Market Research: Using U.S. Government resources to plan your next exporting step

## **CIA World Factbook.**

*The World Factbook* provides basic intelligence on a country's history, people, government, economy, energy, geography, environment, communications and more.

<https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/>

## **U.S. Dept of State Integrated Country Strategies.**

U.S. Policy priorities in different countries. Useful for additional background information.

<https://www.state.gov/integrated-country-strategies/>

## **U.S. Dept. of State Travel Advisories**

Travel advisories from Normal Precautions to Do Not Travel Warnings.

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html/>

## **Southern US Trade Association (SUSTA).**

**For Food Exports.** Funded by the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, SUSTA helps small companies in the Southern United States sell U.S. food products abroad.

<https://www.susta.org/>



# U.S. Commercial Service Resources

## Finding Buyers and Partners

### **Business Matchmaking: Gold Key Service.**

We identify, vet and arrange up to five meetings with interested partners in a foreign market. We attend the meetings with you and assist with follow up.

Requires travel.

<https://www.trade.gov/gold-key-service>

### **International Partner Search**

We vet and identify prospects that match your needs and then prepare a profile of interested firms for you to follow up.

<https://www.trade.gov/international-partner-search>

### **International Partner Search with Virtual Introductions.**

Identical to the International Partner Search with the added benefit of virtual introductions.

<https://www.trade.gov/international-partner-search>

### **Trade Shows & Trade Missions**

We encourage you to attend trade shows and trade missions where we have a presence and can introduce you to potential partners.

<https://www.trade.gov/trade-shows>  
<https://www.trade.gov/trade-missions>

# U.S. Commercial Service Resources

## International Market Research: Additional Services

### eCommerce Resources

Export resources for your ecommerce channels. Outside parties vetted by us to assist with SEO, cybersecurity, online payments, etc.

<https://www.trade.gov/ecommerce-bsp-directory>

### Due Diligence

If you need a background check on a potential buyer, we offer an International Company Profile to vet the company and help determine their suitability.

<https://www.trade.gov/international-company-profile-0>

### Intellectual Property

Several U.S. Government agencies are tasked with protecting IP. Please visit Stop Fakes to determine the right agency or simply email the main site and they will return to you.

<https://www.stopfakes.gov/IPR-Assistance>

### Compliance

The majority of products do not require an export license. To ensure compliance with US and foreign regulations, visit:

<https://www.trade.gov/comply-us-and-foreign-regulations>

To apply for a License:

<https://www.bis.doc.gov/>

# U.S. Commercial Service

## Connecting you to Global Markets

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