



Doing Business in Suriname: 2013 Country

Commercial Guide for U.S. Companies

INTERNATIONAL COPYRIGHT, U.S. & FOREIGN COMMERCIAL SERVICE AND U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE, 2010. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED OUTSIDE OF THE UNITED STATES.

- [Chapter 1: Doing Business In ...](#)
- [Chapter 2: Political and Economic Environment](#)
- [Chapter 3: Selling U.S. Products and Services](#)
- [Chapter 4: Leading Sectors for U.S. Export and Investment](#)
- [Chapter 5: Trade Regulations, Customs and Standards](#)
- [Chapter 6: Investment Climate](#)
- [Chapter 7: Trade and Project Financing](#)
- [Chapter 8: Business Travel](#)
- [Chapter 9: Contacts, Market Research and Trade Events](#)
- [Chapter 10: Guide to Our Services](#)

[Return to table of contents](#)

Chapter 1: Doing Business In Suriname

- [Market Overview](#)
- [Market Challenges](#)
- [Market Opportunities](#)
- [Market Entry Strategy](#)
- [Market Fact Sheet link](#)

Market Overview

[Return to top](#)

Suriname has a population of approximately 534,000 (2012 census). The economy is small and depends highly on the extractive industries. The main export products are gold, oil and alumina, making up almost 95% of exports. Secondary exports include rice, bananas, lumber, and fish. Total exports in 2012 were valued at USD 2.563 billion. Although the country relies heavily on revenues from the mining sector, the government recognizes the need to further diversify the economy and has identified tourism, agriculture, and fresh water as candidate sectors for diversification. Further growth of the gold, oil and bauxite sectors is also expected.

Suriname relies heavily on imports for consumer items. In 2012 imports totaled USD 1.782 billion. Major imports from the United States included chemicals, consumer goods, industrial machinery, poultry, auto parts and accessories.

Suriname's main import trading partners are the United States, the Netherlands, Trinidad and Tobago, China and Brazil.

The United Arab Emirates is Suriname's biggest export partner due to the export of gold. Other main export partners include Switzerland, Canada, Belgium and Guyana.

According to the International Monetary Fund's 2012 estimate, the country may expect economic growth of approximately 4.5% in 2013.

The current exchange rate is SRD 3.35 to 1.00 USD and has remained stable following the Government of Suriname's devaluation of its currency in early 2011.

2012: U.S. trade in goods with Suriname

NOTE: All figures are in millions of U.S. dollars on a nominal basis, not seasonally adjusted unless otherwise specified. Details may not equal totals due to rounding.

Month	Exports	Imports	Balance
January 2012	31.2	28.0	3.2
February 2012	34.0	20.8	13.2
March 2012	34.1	27.9	6.2
April 2012	37.1	27.3	9.8
May 2012	56.3	16.8	39.5
June 2012	51.9	22.2	29.7
July 2012	49.7	24.3	25.4
August 2012	41.4	27.2	14.2
September 2012	38.4	19.7	18.7
October 2012	42.9	21.0	21.9
November 2012	40.0	19.1	20.8
December 2012	42.4	34.4	8.0
TOTAL 2012	499.3	288.6	210.7

Source: *U.S. Census Bureau, Foreign Trade Division, Data Dissemination Branch, Washington, D.C. 20233*

Market Challenges

[Return to top](#)

Starting a business or opening a branch office in Suriname is subject to various registrations and approval requirements depending on the legal structure of the company. All businesses are required to register with the Suriname Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KKF). Under normal circumstances approximately 21 days are required to start a business in Suriname.

Twenty-six sectors are legally required to obtain a business license from the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Applications must be submitted to the Business Licenses Department of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The waiting time from application to approval is 3 months. On average business licenses are issued approximately 21 days after approval.

These sectors are:

1. Construction companies and painting companies

2. Shopkeeper
3. Operator of a testing authority
4. Gold and Silversmith
5. Miller
6. Butcher
7. Architect
8. Banker
9. Exchange offices
10. Insurer
11. Hairdresser
12. Engineering company
13. Airline companies and shipping companies
14. Hotels, motels, guesthouses
15. Travel agencies
16. Gas stations
17. Spraying companies that use aircrafts
18. Entertainment companies
19. Pest control companies
20. Manufacturers of alcoholic and non alcoholic beverages
21. Manufacturers of oxygen, acetylene, liquid carbon dioxide, food, cement, soups, edible fats and oils, livestock feed, insecticides, weed and pesticide, fertilizers
22. Manufacturing and repair of steel and plastic vessels
23. Manufacturing of paint, varnish, wheat flour and wheat meal, processed meat, pharmaceuticals, bandages, articles for domestic use
24. Saw mills
25. Fruit, fish, fish products or other tissue processing company
26. Customs agents

Market Opportunities

[Return to top](#)

The Central Bank identified mining and oil as growth sectors, giving the investments that are taking place. Furthermore, import statistics and business organizations identified the following sectors as the most promising for foreign investment:

- Mining/Industry
- Oil, gas, mineral products
- Building products
- Consumer electronics
- Agricultural sector

- Automotive parts and services
- Forestry/Woodworking

Market Entry Strategy

[Return to top](#)

U.S. companies that are serious about entering the Surinamese market should consider hiring a reputable, well-connected agent or distributor. 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 Trade Information Center at (800) USA-trade, or consult the following website:

<http://www.export.gov>

[Return to table of contents](#)



COUNTRY FACT SHEET: SURINAME

PROFILE

Population in 2012 (Millions): 1

Capital: Paramaribo

Government: Republic

ECONOMY

	2010	2011	2012
Nominal GDP (Current Billions \$U.S.)	4.4	4.3	4.7
Nominal GDP Per Capita (Current \$US)	8,221	7,997	8,686
Real GDP Growth Rate (% change)	4.1	4.7	4.5
Real GDP Growth Rate Per Capita (% change)	2.7	3.3	3.1
Consumer Prices (% change)	6.9	17.7	5.0
Unemployment (% of labor force)	7.6		
Economic Mix in 2010: 37.8% All Industries; 22.7% Manufactures; 51.3% Services; 10.9% Agriculture			

FOREIGN MERCHANDISE TRADE (\$US Millions)

	2010	2011	2012
Suriname Exports to World	2,026	2,467	0
Suriname Imports from World	1,397	1,638	0
U.S. Exports to Suriname	362	433	499
U.S. Imports from Suriname	191	302	289
U.S. Trade Balance with Suriname	171	131	211
Position in U.S. Trade:			
Rank of Suriname in U.S. Exports	102	102	99
Rank of Suriname in U.S. Imports	110	108	103
Suriname Share (%) of U.S. Exports	0.03	0.03	0.03
Suriname Share (%) of U.S. Imports	0.01	0.01	0.01

Principal U.S. Exports to Suriname in 2012:

1. Machinery, Except Electrical (22.7%)
2. Chemicals (19.8%)
3. Transportation Equipment (10.1%)
4. Food & Kindred Products (9.8%)
5. Computer & Electronic Products (8.2%)

Principal U.S. Imports from Suriname in 2012:

1. Primary Metal Mfg (79.9%)
2. Fish, Fresh/Chilled/Frozen & Other Marine Products (8.9%)
3. Nonmetallic Mineral Products (4.4%)
4. Goods Returned (Exports For Canada Only) (3.2%)
5. Waste And Scrap (1.6%)

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT

	2009	2010	2011
U.S. FDI in Suriname (US \$Millions)			
FDI in U.S. by Suriname (US \$Millions)	7.0	7.0	8.0

DOING BUSINESS/ECONOMIC FREEDOM RANKINGS

World Bank Doing Business in 2012 Rank: 164 of 185

Heritage/WSJ 2012 Index of Freedom Rank: 133 of 179

Source: Created by USDOC/ITA/OTII-TPIS from many sources: FDI from USDOC, Bureau of Economic Analysis. US Trade from USDOC, Census Bureau, Foreign Trade Division. Suriname Trade with World from United Nations where available. National Macroeconomic data from IMF/World Bank databases including World Economic Outlook and World Development Indicators. .WORLD and other country aggregates are summaries of available UN COMTRADE, IMF and other data, and coverage varies over time and by source, but typically represents greater than 85 percent of world trade and production. Note: Principal U.S. Exports and Imports Are 3-digit NAICS Categories.

[Return to table of contents](#)

Chapter 2: Political and Economic Environment

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

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

<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/1893.htm>

[Return to table of contents](#)

[Return to table of contents](#)

Chapter 3: Selling U.S. Products and Services

- [Using an Agent or Distributor](#)
- [Establishing an Office](#)
- [Franchising](#)
- [Direct Marketing](#)
- [Joint Ventures/Licensing](#)
- [Selling to the Government](#)
- [Distribution and Sales Channels](#)
- [Selling Factors/Techniques](#)
- [Electronic Commerce](#)
- [Trade Promotion and Advertising](#)
- [Pricing](#)
- [Sales Service/Customer Support](#)
- [Protecting Your Intellectual Property](#)
- [Due Diligence](#)
- [Local Professional Services](#)
- [Web Resources](#)

Using an Agent or Distributor

[Return to top](#)

Many U.S. firms use agents or distributors as a common marketing and distribution strategy. The business community in Suriname is small and close-knit, and logistics may be difficult due to limited infrastructure and extreme weather patterns. Most foreign exporters find that building relationships directly with retail firms is more effective than establishing their own distribution systems.

The Business Education Resource Center (BERC) of the United States Embassy in Suriname can help identify local distributors:

Business Education Resource Center (BERC)
Commercial Assistant: Judith Dijks
Telephone: (597) 472-900 ext. 2267
Fax: (597) 425-690
E-mail: dijksjb@state.gov

Establishing an Office

[Return to top](#)

The law requires that all businesses in Suriname with the exception of public enterprises and enterprises conducting agriculture, horticulture, fishing or hunting exclusively are registered at the Trade Register of the Chamber of Commerce (KKF). Limited Liability Companies (LLCs), societies, foundations and enterprises belonging to minors are exempt. Foreign companies establishing offices in Suriname are considered branch

offices and are also required to register with the KKF. The following documents are required for registration:

- An copy of the registration from the Chamber of Commerce where the head offices is located;
- A letter of appointment (proxy) on behalf of the local representative (branch manager);
- A passport photo of the local representative and a copy of his/her passport;
- A copy of the license from the Ministry of Trade and Industry, if the branch office will carry out activities requiring a license.

Registration must be executed during the week prior to or the week immediately after the actual commencement of business activities.

Suriname Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KKF)
Telephone: (597) 530-311
Fax: (597) 437-971
Email: chamber@sr.net

Franchising

[Return to top](#)

Franchise opportunities range from soft-drink distributors to fast-food restaurants and hotel chains.

The first U.S. franchise, Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC), opened in the capital city of Paramaribo in 1996. Since that time, Pizza Hut, McDonald's, Power Smoothie, Western Union, Popeye's, and Money Gram have opened, among others. In September 2008, a Burger King franchise opened in the Paramaribo followed by a second restaurant in 2011. Subway opened its first restaurant in March 2012 in Paramaribo. The Best Western franchise hotel opened in 2008, followed by a Courtyard by Marriott franchise hotel in 2009. The Wyndham Hotel opened in 2011. A number of Caribbean and European franchises also operate in Suriname.

Direct Marketing

[Return to top](#)

Direct Marketing is a relatively new way of marketing products in Suriname. Local companies market directly through e-mails, SMS mobile messages, brochures, and advertisements to clients and potential consumers.

Joint Ventures/Licensing

[Return to top](#)

There is no legal requirement that foreign investors or businesspeople engage in joint ventures in order to access the Surinamese market.

These joint ventures and production under license arrangements with foreign companies are permitted under Surinamese law, and are encouraged by the current government.

There is increasing interest from local entrepreneurs in manufacturing licensing arrangements. A number of SMEs are closing licensing agreements to produce end products (e.g., PVC panels) in Suriname.

Selling to the Government

[Return to top](#)

In general, government procurement in Suriname takes place on the basis of open tendering, but selective tendering procedures are sometimes used. Participants in the tendering procedures must hold a valid business license and must be registered with the Suriname Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KKF). The provisions do not differentiate between domestic and foreign-owned enterprises.

Tenders in the oil sector are considered by international businesses to be transparent. The State oil company publishes information regarding tenders on their website. Tenders in the gold and lumber sector, however, are less transparent. Announcement about tender opportunities rarely take place in these sectors.

Procurement actions are executed by government ministries and agencies. There is no single agency with a mandate for formulating procurement policies, monitoring compliance, or ensuring enforceable sanctions and enforcement mechanisms.

There is no standard bidding documentation used by ministries or agencies. In cases where external donors or organizations are financing the procurement, their source-bidding documents may be used.

Business opportunities exist for projects funded by multilateral financial institutions, such as the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB).

Distribution and Sales Channels

[Return to top](#)

Foreign companies often make use of local agents or distributors to sell their products on the Surinamese market. Paramaribo, the capital, is the site of the Nieuwe Haven Port, which serves as the primary entry point for imports into Suriname.

Selling Factors/Techniques

[Return to top](#)

Most importers and wholesalers employ sales representatives to sell and deliver products to retailers.

There are no requirements for advertising materials to be in Dutch, and most Surinamers speak English as a second language.

Electronic Commerce

[Return to top](#)

E-commerce is not yet widely used in Suriname. Local businesses do not use e-commerce as a marketing tool on a large scale due to limited bandwidth and internet penetration and usage among the public. However, a few companies do provide some e-

commerce services to customers, and the technique is on the rise. These companies may function as intermediaries offering consumers online ordering options.

The use of credit cards, such as American Express, Visa, and MasterCard, is limited to a small group of business people, businesses, and foreign visitors. Cash transactions are common.

Trade Promotion and Advertising

[Return to top](#)

Advertising in Suriname is mainly done through newspapers, radio, television and billboards. Direct advertisement can be expensive.

There are four daily national newspapers: de West, de Ware Tijd, The Times of Suriname, and Dagblad Suriname, all of which are in Dutch. The Times of Suriname publishes two pages of English-language news and Dagblad Suriname publishes one English page daily. In 2011, de Ware Tijd began to publish its main articles and editorials in English. It also publishes an online English bulletin available daily on a subscription basis. It is not unusual to see advertisements in all newspapers or to hear radio and television advertisements in English.

Dagblad Suriname: <http://www.dbsuriname.com>

De Ware Tijd: <http://www.dwtoline.com>

De West: <http://www.dewestonline.cq-link.sr>

Times of Suriname: <http://www.surinametimes.com>

There are approximately twenty AM and FM radio stations and nineteen television stations. All stations accept commercial advertising.

As a non-CS post, the embassy doesn't offer BSP fuse or single company promotion services.

Pricing

[Return to top](#)

Under the Price Setting and Monitoring Law, the Minister of Trade and Industry is authorized to determine the maximum price or mark-up for any good or service sold in Suriname.

Government authorities indicate that mark-ups are determined on the basis of the factory cost for goods produced domestically. Mark-ups on imported goods are calculated on the basis of the C.I.F. (Cost Insurance and Freight) value, plus customs duties and other taxes. Maximum permitted mark-ups range from 10 to 22 percent at the wholesale level and from 15 to 35 percent at the retail level.

The government sets prices for certain basic food and household items, such as butane gas, milk, and formula.

The government also regulates prices for public utilities. The Ministry of Natural Resources is responsible for setting power and water prices, while the Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Tourism sets the prices for telephone services.

Sales Service/Customer Support

[Return to top](#)

Customers expect after-sales services on goods, meaning a sales price with tax included. Customers also expect spare parts to be available for a particular item. This is particularly important in Suriname because consumers rely heavily on imported goods.

Intellectual Property Rights

[Return to top](#)

Chapter 6 provides more information regarding intellectual property rights in Suriname.

Intellectual Property Rights in Suriname

Intellectual property (IP) is protected differently in Suriname than in the United States. Rights must be registered and enforced in Suriname, under local laws. U.S. trademark and patent registrations will not protect U.S. businesses in Suriname. Suriname has not ratified many of the accepted international agreements on intellectual property rights. The current legal framework for copyrights, patents and trademarks dates back to 1912 and 1913.

There is widespread piracy of television programs, DVDs, and CDs. In May, 2013, the Ministry of Justice and Police, responsible for intellectual property protection, revoked the authority of SASUR, the country's body that protects and enforces music copyrights, and this area of IP enforcement is particularly weak at this time.

However, Suriname-based trademarks may receive some protection by the government and should be registered with the Office of the Public Prosecutor of the Attorney General.

Intellectual Property Office
Mr. J. Lachmonstraat 187
Telephone: (597) 531-491

Registration of patents and trademarks with the Ministry of Justice and Police is on a first-in-time, first-in-right basis, so businesses should consider applying for trademark and patent protection before selling products or services in Suriname.

Intellectual property is primarily a private right and the U.S. government cannot enforce rights for private individuals in Surinamese territory. Copyright holders should take steps to register, protect, and enforce their rights where relevant, retaining their own counsel and advisors. Companies may wish to seek advice from local attorneys or IP consultants

who are experts in Surinamese law. The U.S. Commercial Service can provide a list of local lawyers upon request. <http://suriname.usembassy.gov/service/list-of-attorneys.html>

For additional information on IPR, copyright, and industrial property issues, please contact:

The Ministry of Justice and Police
Intellectual Property Office
Gravenstraat 1 (for mail: P.O. BOX 291)
Paramaribo, Suriname
Telephone: (597) 475 805
Fax: (597) 412 109
E-mail: ipoffsur@sr.net

IP Resources

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

- For information about patent, trademark, or copyright issues -- including enforcement issues in the U.S. and other countries -- call the STOP! Hotline: **1-866-999-HALT** or register at www.StopFakes.gov. This website also offers a free online training program on evaluating, enforcing, and protecting intellectual property.
- For more information about registering trademarks and patents (both in the U.S. as well as in foreign countries), contact the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) at: **1-800-786-9199**.
- For more information about registering for copyright protection in the U.S., contact the U.S. Copyright Office at: **1-202-707-5959**.

Due Diligence

[Return to top](#)

U.S. investors or companies planning to open a business, sell products or services, or buy property in Suriname may want to seek the services of a lawyer to assist with filings, registrations, licenses or legal paperwork due to possible language barriers.

Business owners should also take care to register trademarks with the Attorney General's Office. This can be done directly by the business owner.

Prospective investors should check a local partner's background and legal status of a property before completing a business transaction.

The Suriname Chamber of Commerce and Industry can provide general information, such as the names of registered company owners and business resources.

www.surinamechamber.com

Local Professional Services

[Return to top](#)

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry website has information on business services providers that can be of assistance to U.S. companies.

www.surinamechamber.com

The Business Education Resource Center at the U.S. Embassy can assist in identifying local professional services.

Business Education Resource Center (BERC)

Commercial Assistant Judith Dijks

Telephone: (597) 472-500 ext. 2267

Fax: (597) 425-690

Email: Dijksjb@state.gov

The American Chamber of Commerce in Suriname can assist businesses that do business with the U.S.

www.amchamsuriname.org

Web Resources

[Return to top](#)

<http://www.dbsuriname.com>

<http://www.dewestinline.cq-link.sr>

<http://www.dwtonline.com>

<http://www.surinamedirectory.biz>

<http://www.surinametimes.com>

[Return to table of contents](#)

[Return to table of contents](#)

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

Commercial Sectors

- [Gold mining Sector #1](#)
- [Oil & Gas Sector #2](#)
- [Bauxite Sector #3](#)
- [Construction Sector #4](#)
- [Forestry/Woodworking Sector #5](#)

Agricultural Sectors

- [Banana Sector #1](#)
- [Rice Sector #2](#)
- [Palm Oil Sector #3](#)
- [Fishery Sector #4](#)

Gold mining Sector #1

Newmont Mining Company and Alcoa, both U.S. companies, are working together in a joint venture company, the Suriname Gold Company, LLC (Surgold), for exploration and exploitation of gold in east central Suriname. Newmont Mining Company, the lead company, and the GOS signed a mining services agreement to begin gold extraction. The National Assembly recently approved the agreement between Newmont and the GOS. If fully realized, the agreement would lead to an approximate USD \$1.2 billion investment in the Merian area in eastern Suriname. The GOS plans to invest capital to take a 25% stake in the joint venture.

Gold production from the formal sector at the Rosebel Gold Mines, a subsidiary of Canadian company Iamgold, started in 2004. Current production capacity averages about 365,000 ounces a year, with reserves to last at least 20 years. Rosebel Gold Mines and the government reached an agreement in 2013 to expand the Rosebel Gold Mine in Brokopondo. The total investment is approximately USD \$1.5 billion. The GOS plans to invest capital to purchase a 25% ownership position in the expanded portion of the gold mining operation.

Small-scale gold mining in the interior increased rapidly since the 1990s. Small-scale gold miners generally use hydraulic equipment and mercury, which damage the environment. According to some estimates, small-scale gold mining may account for as much as 60 percent of Suriname's total gold production.

Gold exports totaled US\$ 1.71 million in 2012. Gold production from January through June 2012 was estimated at approximately 511,000 troy ounces.

Overview

[Return to top](#)

Unit: troy ounces

Rosebel Gold mines production	2011	2012	2013 (estimated)	2014 (estimated)
Total Market Size				
Total Local Production	385,000	382,000		
Total Exports				
Total Imports				
Imports from the U.S.				
Exchange Rate: 1 USD	3.35	3.35		

Source: www.iamgold.com

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

[Return to top](#)

The anticipated need for heavy equipment and supplies for the bauxite and gold mining industries may be an opportunity for U.S. companies.

Opportunities

[Return to top](#)

Opportunities may exist for suppliers to deliver equipment and services for the mining sector.

Web Resources

[Return to top](#)

<http://www.iamgold.com>

<http://www.newmont.com>

Oil & Gas Sector #2

The state-owned oil company Staatsolie has sole rights to the exploitation of all fossil fuels in Suriname. To increase capacity, it enters into production and exploration partnership agreements with foreign companies. Staatsolie currently partners with U.S. companies Murphy Oil and Kosmos Energy for off-shore exploration, as well as other international companies.

The average local production in 2012 was 16,200 barrels oil per day. According to estimates from the Central Bank, domestic oil consumption averages approximately 14,000 barrels a day.

Total crude oil production in 2012 was 5.94 MMBLS. Staatsolie is in the process of expanding refinery capacity from 7,000 to 15,000 barrels a day. The project is scheduled to be completed by 2014. The refinery will produce premium quality diesel fuel and gasoline.

Staatsolie began a pilot sugarcane ethanol project in 2010. Based on positive results, the company intends to move forward with an additional investment in ethanol in the second half of 2013.

The Staatsolie Power Company Suriname, a subsidiary of Staatsolie, is preparing to expand Staatsolie's electricity-generating capacity from the current 28 MW to 62 MW. Preparations started in 2012 and are expected to be completed in 2014.

Overview

[Return to top](#)

Unit: USD

	2011	2012	2013 (estimated)	2014 (estimated)
Total Market Size				
Total Local Production				
Total Exports		US\$365 million		
Total Imports				
Imports from the U.S.				
Exchange Rate: 1 USD		3.35		

Data Sources: <http://www.staatsolie.com>

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

[Return to top](#)

Need may exist for equipment and supplies for expansion of the power plant.

Opportunities

[Return to top](#)

Business opportunities may exist for suppliers related to the oil industry. Staatsolie is also looking for partners for the bio fuel project.

Web Resources

[Return to top](#)

[Http://www.staatsolie.com](http://www.staatsolie.com)

Bauxite Sector #3

Suralco, a subsidiary of U.S. company Alcoa, is the largest and oldest bauxite producer in Suriname, with a 90-year history in country. Recently, production levels have dropped due to the exhaustion of bauxite reserves in the Paranam area, a drop in the worldwide price in bauxite, and significant increases for the energy necessary to run the Suralco industrial operation. Suralco is considering the development of a mine in the eastern Nassau region, with estimated reserves of 10 years.

Suralco partnered with BHP Billiton until the latter's decision to withdraw its operations from Suriname by 2010, when Suralco bought out BHP Billiton's share in their joint venture.

Negotiations are also ongoing between the government of Suriname and various companies over the exploitation of potentially large bauxite deposits in the Bakhuis Mountains in western Suriname.

Alumina exports in 2012 amounted USD \$373 million.

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

[Return to top](#)

Prospects may exist for heavy equipment and related supplies for exploitation activities.

Opportunities

[Return to top](#)

Business opportunities may exist for suppliers related to the mining industry.

Web Resources

[Return to top](#)

[Http://www. www.alcoa.com/suriname](http://www.www.alcoa.com/suriname)

Construction sector # 4

Suriname is experiencing a residential and commercial property boom. Property values are increasing and construction is spurred by the government's plan to building 5,000 new low-income houses by 2014.

Many Dutch nationals of Surinamese origin build vacation and rental property, and this is a booming sector.

New housing and businesses are constructed primarily from concrete.

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

[Return to top](#)

- Concrete
- Construction Equipment
- Ceramic tiles
- Locks and Locksets
- Faucets
- Electrical Equipment
- Plumbing Equipment and Materials
- Copper Products
- Bathroom Accessories

Opportunities

[Return to top](#)

Business prospects may exist for suppliers of many types of construction materials and equipment.

Forestry/Woodworking Sector # 4

Suriname's abundant rainforest contains many valuable hardwood tree species. A sizeable portion of production remains in the local market as the industry has been unable to compete in quantity, quality, or price with large logging companies in the region. The Hong Kong-based Greenheart Group is the largest company in the country that exports timber.

Greenheart reported that its hardwood revenue increased 67% from USD3.2 million in 2011 to USD 5.4 million in 2012.

In 2012 Suriname hardwoods were exported to Europe, Asia, the Caribbean region, and South America with Asia representing the largest market.

Overview

[Return to top](#)

Unit: USD thousands

	2011	2012	2013 (estimated)	2014 (estimated)
Total Market Size				
Total Local Production				
Total Exports	USD14,2 million	USD 9 million First half 2012		
Total Imports				
Imports from the U.S.				
Exchange Rate: 1 USD	3.35	3.35		

Data Sources: <http://www.sbbsur.org>

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

[Return to top](#)

Best prospect for equipment used in the forestry sector.

Opportunities

[Return to top](#)

There are opportunities to access specialty markets by emphasizing the unique properties of these rare tropical species.

Web Resources

[Return to top](#)

<http://www.sbbsur.org>

Suriname has abundant natural resources including land, water, tropical forests, and fish. Agricultural production and exports are limited and concentrated on a few products, primarily rice and bananas. However, the government of Suriname is promoting the expansion of agriculture and animal husbandry with the goal of capturing a greater share of the CARICOM market.

Banana sector #1

The state-owned banana company, Surland, closed in April 2002. It reopened in 2004 as the Foundation for the Preservation of the Banana Sector in Suriname (SBBS), after a robust restructuring plan co-funded by the European Union.

The Economic Partnership Agreement between CARICOM and the EU, which went into force in October 2008, enables Suriname's bananas to enter the European market duty and quota free. In December 2010, SBBS started exporting bananas to Trinidad. In 2012, SBBS produced 80,000 tons of bananas, a record production so far. The European Union recently announced that it has nine million Euros for improving the Suriname banana sector.

In 2008, the government issued a public tender for the purchase of SBBS. Two international companies expressed interest, including Belgian company UNIVEG, which is currently in charge of SBBS' management, and French Company Fruitiere. The government is currently working on the third international tender.

Rice sector #2

The rice sector has experienced difficulties in past decades, but the government hopes to boost this once-thriving industry.

Palm oil sector #3

The cultivation of palm oil in Suriname began in the 1970s, and production both met domestic needs and provided export earnings. The sector was destroyed during the civil war of 1987-92. The current government has taken steps to revitalize Suriname's once thriving palm oil industry by reaching out to foreign investors.

Fishery sector #4

Suriname exports wild-harvested shrimp. The Southern Pink Shrimp is primarily exported to Japan, while the Seabob Shrimp is exported to the United States and Europe. Two small-scale aquaculture enterprises farm Pacific White Shrimp in the Commewijne district east of Paramaribo.

Opportunities exist for “fresh catch” seafood and aquaculture. There are many fish species in Suriname’s coastal waters, and some -- including Red Snapper, Mackerel and Yellowfin Tuna -- are exported to the United States. The export value of fish and shrimp in 2011 amounted to USD \$40 million. The United States certified that Suriname is Turtle Exclusionary Device (TEDS) compliant during regular assessments.

[Return to table of contents](#)

[Return to table of contents](#)

Chapter 5: Trade Regulations, Customs and Standards

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

Import Tariffs

[Return to top](#)

Suriname's tariff schedule comprises nine bands between zero and 50 percent. Import tariffs from CARICOM member states range between zero and 20 percent. Import tariffs from the United States range between zero and 50 percent.

Goods such as juices and non-alcoholic beverages from CARICOM member states have zero tariff, while raw materials are subject to a rate of five percent. The tariff for these goods from other countries is ten percent.

Semi-manufactured articles are subject to a ten percent tariff, while tariffs on finished products range from 15 to 20 percent.

Products subject to the highest tariffs (40 and 50 percent) include alcoholic beverages, beer, tobacco and cigarettes, live animals, fish, eggs, honey, vegetables, fruit, coffee, cereals, precious or semi-precious stones, and some motor vehicles.

In addition to the tariff, the government charges a statistical fee of 0.5 percent and a consent right fee of 1.5 percent of the C.I.F (Cost Insurance and Freight).

Trade Barriers

[Return to top](#)

In September 1999, Suriname liberalized its trade control system by introducing a new system under which an import license would no longer be required for most products, unless they were specified on a “negative list.”

The Law on the Movement of Goods, which entered into force in October 2003, declared imports of goods into Suriname free of (non-tariff) restrictions, except those restrictions that protect public order; public morality; state security; public safety; international law and

order; the health and life of persons, animals or plants; the environment; national artistic possessions; and industrial and commercial property.

Non-tariff barriers include proof of residency, registration with the Chamber of Commerce, registration numbers from the Inspectorate of Customs, and tax identification numbers from the Tax Authority of the ministry of Finance.

Import Requirements and Documentation

[Return to top](#)

Imports

Companies that want to import goods that require a license should apply for the license with an H-99 Form at the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Licensing certificates are provided by the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries, depending on area of responsibility.

Import, Export and Currency Control Department
Ministry of Trade and Industry
Telephone: (597) 402-889

Some imported goods may require a health certificate. These include but are not limited to:

- Medicines for people (Ministry of Health)
- Medicines for animals and plants (Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries)
- Micro-organisms (e.g., bacteria, yeast, must) (Ministry of Health)
- All products containing chlorofluorocarbons (Ministry of Health)

For goods that do not require a license for importation, the importer must complete the International Trade Form for Goods and Services (IT form) and the Single Administrative Document. (Note: The Single Administrative Document is a standard application form which is also referred to as the Enig Document.) The IT form and Single Administrative Document are sold at bookstores and at:

Prodimex International
Telephone: (597) 402-727
Fax: (597) 404-977
E-mail: prodimex@sr.net

Once goods have arrived in Suriname, the IT form, the Single Administrative Document, original invoice from the supplier, bill of lading, import license (H-99 form) (if required), and health certificate (if required) should be presented to the Customs Office.

Customs Office
Telephone: (597) 402-626
Fax: (597) 403-164

E-mail: asycursur@sr.net

Goods that enter Suriname under CARICOM's free trade regime must be accompanied by a certificate of origin and a CARICOM invoice.

Exports

Some exports require a license, which can be obtained from the Ministry of Trade and Industry using license application form (H-99 form). The Ministry of Trade and Industry is also empowered to grant exceptions for the export of "forbidden" goods, such as antiques, chemical weapons, wild animals and plants.

The exporter should also complete the International Trade Form for Goods and Services (IT-form). This IT-form is supported by the Single Administrative Document. If required, a health certificate should be presented to the customs department. Exports that require a license or health certificate include but are not limited to:

- Medicinal herbs and plants
- Roundlogs, barkwood, letterwood
- Explosives
- Gold (final products) and precious metals (final products).

U.S. Export Controls

[Return to top](#)

Steps U.S. companies need to take to process their exports:

- Ensure that the export is under U.S. Department of Commerce jurisdiction.
- Classify the item by reviewing the Commerce Control List;
- If the item is classified by an Export Control Classification Number (ECCN), identify the Reasons for Control on the Commerce Control List.
- Cross-reference the ECCN Control against the Commerce Country Chart to see if a license is required. If yes, determine if a license exception is available before applying for a license.
- Ensure that there are no proscribed end-users or end-uses involved with the export transaction. If proscribed end-users or end-uses are involved, the exporter should determine if it can proceed with the transaction or must apply for a license.
- Export your item using the correct ECCN and the appropriate symbol (e.g., NLR, license exception, or license number and expiration date) on your export documentation (e.g., Shipper's Export Declaration).

For the latest in U.S. export and re-export control regulations please contact the Department of Commerce Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) at:

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

For defense-related articles, contact the Department of State Office of Defense Trade Controls at: <http://www.pmdtc.state.gov>

Temporary Entry

[Return to top](#)

Temporary entry of goods into Suriname is permissible. The importer must make arrangements with customs to take advantage of temporary entry of goods. Items such as advertising materials and professional equipment can enter Suriname under temporary entry procedures and then be re-exported.

Labeling and Marking Requirements

[Return to top](#)

The Standards Bureau is in the process of enacting labeling requirements for prepackaged food and other commodities.

The guidelines the Chamber of Commerce and Industry have provided regarding labeling are in place. A label should contain the brand, name of the product, ingredients, production date, expiration date, and address and telephone number of the producer. Labels are not required to be in Dutch and may appear in English.

Prohibited and Restricted Imports

[Return to top](#)

In 1999, the government liberalized its import system by removing the requirement for import licenses for most products. At the same time, it published a “negative list” of goods that still require an import license. The following is an example of types of items on the “negative list” but it is not all-inclusive. Importers should contact the Customs Office to obtain the full list.

- Pesticides
- Chemicals
- Used vehicles(cars should not be older than 8 years; busses not more than 10 years)
- weapons and ammunition
- mercury
- medicines
- second hand tires
- animals on the Convention on International Trade and Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna list(CITES)
- seeds
- fireworks

Customs Regulations and Contact Information

[Return to top](#)

Customs Office
Mr. August van Hamme
Chief of Customs

Phone: (597) 402-778
Fax: (597) 403-164
Email: asycursur@sr.net

Standards

[Return to top](#)

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

Overview

[Return to top](#)

After adopting the Standards Law in 2004 and installing the oversight committee in 2006, the Standards Bureau was officially established in 2007. This bureau is responsible for the development of import and export standards in Suriname. Other standards-developing organizations and conformity assessment bodies are not present.

Bureau of Standards

Address: Leysweg 10, Paramaribo

Phone: (597) 499-928/ 499-929

Fax: (597)499-926

Email: dirssb@gmail.com

The Law on the Movement of Goods provides for the introduction of import measures on the basis of "technical regulations and international standards," with a view to protect national security; the quality of goods; human, animal, and plant life and health; and the environment.

Standards Organizations

[Return to top](#)

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

[Return to top](#)

N/A

Product Certification

[Return to top](#)

N/A

Accreditation

[Return to top](#)

N/A

Publication of Technical Regulations

[Return to top](#)

N/A

Labeling and Marking

[Return to top](#)

Suriname has no specific laws regarding labeling and marketing requirements, but the Chamber of Commerce and Industry have produced guidelines. A label should contain the brand, name of the product, ingredients, production date, expiration date, and address and telephone number of the producer. Labels are not required to be in Dutch and may appear in English. The Standards Bureau is in the process of enacting labeling requirements for prepackaged food and other commodities.

Contacts

[Return to top](#)

U.S. Embassy point of contact:
Mr. John Gorkowski
Political/Economic Chief
Email: GorkowskiJ@state.gov

Trade Agreements

[Return to top](#)

Suriname officially became a full member of the Caribbean Common Market, CARICOM, on July 4, 1995. Suriname eliminated tariffs on CARICOM products on January 1, 1996, and fully adheres to CARICOM's common external tariff regime (with most rates in the 5 to 20 percent range). CARICOM membership has increased Suriname's regional economic activity. The Government of Suriname regards CARICOM membership as a counterweight to U.S. influence in the region, but acknowledges it as an important stepping-stone toward participation in a Free Trade Area of the Americas.

As of January 1, 2008, many goods imported from the European Union may enter the Surinamese market duty free due to the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the E.U. and the CARICOM countries. The reduction of tariffs will be carried out in a phased approach.

Suriname is also a member of the Amazon Charter with Brazil, and the Association of Caribbean Producers. Suriname is a member of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), but thus far there have been no trade implications.

Web Resources

[Return to top](#)

(Insert text here)

[Return to table of contents](#)

[Return to table of contents](#)

Chapter 6: Investment Climate

- [Openness to Foreign Investment](#)
- [Conversion and Transfer Policies](#)
- [Expropriation and Compensation](#)
- [Dispute Settlement](#)
- [Performance Requirements and Incentives](#)
- [Right to Private Ownership and Establishment](#)
- [Protection of Property Rights](#)
- [Transparency of Regulatory System](#)
- [Efficient Capital Markets and Portfolio Investment](#)
- [Competition from State Owned Enterprises](#)
- [Corporate Social Responsibility](#)
- [Political Violence](#)
- [Corruption](#)
- [Bilateral Investment Agreements](#)
- [OPIC and Other Investment Insurance Programs](#)
- [Labor](#)
- [Foreign-Trade Zones/Free Ports](#)
- [Foreign Direct Investment Statistics](#)
- [Web Resources](#)

Openness to Foreign Investment

[Return to top](#)

The Government of Suriname (GOS) identified foreign direct investment as the primary vehicle for future economic development. The Suriname Investment and Development Corporation (IDCS) is a government initiative administered by the Cabinet of the President. IDCS supports and encourages business development through foreign and local investment in a number of different sectors. In addition, the GOS Development Plan for 2012-2016 identifies international partnerships as a particularly important means to help develop the economy. This includes both bilateral and multilateral partners, as well as private foreign investors. The GOS focuses on developing the mining, tourism, forestry, and agriculture sectors.

The judicial system is largely independent and upholds the sanctity of contracts, and enforces them in accordance with their terms. When a business disputes a signed contract, it has the right to take the case to court. The judiciary consistently upholds local law, applies it, and enforces it for local and international businesses. However, processing of cases is slow, bureaucratic, and inefficient, hampered by a high caseload, corruption, and not enough judges to address the judiciary's workload effectively. There is no economic or industrial policy that has a discriminatory effect on foreign investors or foreign-owned investments, except the oil sector. In this sector, ownership is limited by law to the State Oil Company Suriname (Staatsolie). Staatsolie has sole

ownership of all oil-related activities. Access to this sector is possible through Exploration and Production Sharing Agreements in partnership with Staatsolie. Oil exploration agreements with foreign firms are established through fair competitive bidding. All other sectors are open to foreign ownership. In those cases, foreign companies, like local companies, are required to register with and join the Suriname Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KKF), and obtain appropriate licenses as necessary.

Unless requesting special investment incentives, smaller foreign investments are not subject to more screening processes than local companies. Standard screening is usually done by the KKF. Each Ministry oversees major investments for the specific sectors within its purview. In these cases, a special commission screens the potential investment and all necessary financial and legal documentation must be presented for review. Major investments, particularly in the mining sector, go through extensive negotiation processes to determine the terms of investment. In all cases, small or large, filing is mandatory. The purposes and criteria for screening of investments vary depending on the nature of the investment, but are primarily meant to assure that the investment is within the legal parameters of trade legislation. This screening process usually takes place at the beginning of the investment process. Once the business is running, secondary screening is unlikely.

Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME) countries have favored status over other foreign investors; however, in light of the need for foreign investment in most Caribbean economies, it is unlikely that, in practice, larger international firms would be denied investment opportunities. The Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) signed with the European Union provides European companies better market access to the CARIFORUM countries. The GOS does not regulate competition within Suriname; however, the State Council is reviewing draft legislation on competition. The CARICOM Competition Commission is based in Paramaribo. This Commission monitors potential anti-competitive practices for enterprises operating within the CSME and provides support to member states in promoting and protecting consumer welfare. The Commission also investigates and arbitrates cross-border disputes.

There is no discrimination specifically targeted at foreign investors at the time of the initial investment or after the investment is made, such as through special tax treatment, access to licenses, approvals or procurement. In practice, different investors (both foreign and local) are offered different deals at the discretion of the GOS, represented by the Ministry negotiating the deal. Furthermore, in major investments, investment benefits are usually obtained through negotiations with the government and can change depending on the sector and the company's negotiating strength.

There is no law requiring that Surinamese nationals own a share of foreign investments, nor is there a requirement that the share of foreign equity be reduced over time. In an effort to maximize the country's income, the GOS plans to participate in investments in the mining sector. The GOS negotiated an option with Iamgold to participate directly in the expansion of the Rosebel Gold Mine through an equity stake, and with the Suriname Gold Company, LLC (Surgold) (whose largest stakeholder is Newmont Mining) for the

similar stake in its operations, requiring a total government investment, for both agreements, of about USD \$402 million. The deal with Rosebel was ratified by the Parliament and entered into force in 2013; The National Assembly approved the Newmont deal in June 2013. There are no laws or regulations specifically authorizing private firms to adopt articles of incorporation or association which limit or prohibit foreign investment, participation or control. There are no other practices by private firms to restrict foreign investment, participate in, or control domestic enterprises. To the contrary, business owners claim that the government gives preference to foreign companies over local companies in the same sectors. There have been particularly vocal objections in cases involving Chinese companies.

Table 1: The following chart summarizes well-regarded indexes and rankings of Suriname

Measure	Year	Index or Rank
TI Corruption Index	2012	Ranked 88 th out of 176 countries
Heritage Foundation's Economic Freedom index	2012	Ranked 133 rd out of 179 countries
World Bank's Doing Business Report	2013	Ranked 164 th out of 185 countries

Suriname is not a Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Country.

Conversion and Transfer Policies

[Return to top](#)

There are no restrictions on converting or transferring funds associated with an investment (including remittances of investment capital, earnings, loan repayments, lease payments) into a freely usable currency at a legal market clearing rate. Permission is required from the Foreign Exchange Commission to transfer any funds associated with a business or investment out of Suriname. There were no changes in remittance policies pertaining to the access to foreign exchange. The Central Bank is working to update the Exchange Law to ensure that foreign exchange takes place through the Central Bank in order to increase transparency. The government does not manipulate the currency to promote investment at the expense of firms not producing in the country.

General Decree 217 permits banking institutions to open accounts for non-residents, and conduct transactions on behalf of these non-residents, in all foreign currencies for which the Central Bank of Suriname has an official exchange rate vis-a-vis the Suriname Dollar. Account documents must clearly indicate the country of residency and the country of residency of the headquarters of the parent company. The general license does not apply to transactions of foreign currencies originating from the exports of minerals and/or transactions that are the result of such an export, unless a special license is granted or another law so permits. Banking institutions are required to provide the Central Bank of Suriname all necessary information regarding any transactions in order to assist in the Central Bank's oversight responsibilities of foreign exchange transfers to and from Suriname, as well as ease the balance of payments with other countries.

In 2011, the National Assembly approved legislation giving the Central Bank greater oversight authority over the commercial banks, cambios (privately owned foreign exchange businesses), insurance companies, and other credit institutions under its supervision. The legislation gave the Central Bank greater oversight over the issuance of licenses to new financial institutions. In 2012, Suriname passed additional legislation regulating oversight of money transfer offices and bank and credit system supervision. The legislation builds upon other measures passed to combat money laundering and terrorism financing and brings Suriname more in line with the standards of the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force.

The delay period varies for remitting investment returns such as dividends, return of capital, interest and principal on private foreign debt, lease payments, royalties and management fees, but it is relatively short. The Foreign Exchange Commission must give its permission. The time needed to process the request depends on the sector and the amount to be transferred. Transfers through the banking system can range from same-day transfers to one week. Investors can remit through the legal parallel market. A source of origin must be declared in cases where the incoming or outgoing amount exceeds US\$5,000 or €5,000. There is no limitation on the inflow or outflow of funds.

Expropriation and Compensation

[Return to top](#)

Article 34 of Suriname's Constitution states that expropriation will take place only for reasons of public utility, according to the rules to be laid down by the law and against previously assured compensation. Compensation need not be previously assured if, in case of emergency, immediate compensation is required. There is a right to compensation if the competent authority destroys or renders property unserviceable or restricts the exercise of property rights.

No single sector is at a greater risk of expropriation than others; although Article 41 of the Constitution specifically refers to all natural resources as being the property of the nation, and states that the nation has inalienable rights to take complete possession of all natural resources in order to utilize them for the needs of the economic, social, and cultural development of Suriname. While the Bouterse government said several times in 2010 and 2011 that it wanted to nationalize the Afobaka Hydro Dam from Suralco (Alcoa) for the symbolic amount of SRD1.00, the government took no action, and is currently negotiating with Suralco for additional bauxite exploration rights in new concession areas.

Dispute Settlement

[Return to top](#)

Suriname's legal system is based on the Dutch Civil System. Laws are laid down in criminal, civil, and commercial codes and verdicts are based on the judge's interpretation of these codes. Article 131 of the Constitution prohibits interference with active court cases and this is generally followed in practice. Judges are considered to be impartial.

Every effort is made to settle investment disputes outside the court system or via appointed arbitrators. There have been no publicly known investment disputes over the past few years involving U.S. or other foreign investors or contractors in Suriname. Local dispute resolution proceedings typically last between one month and three years, depending on the complexity of the case and the willingness of parties to cooperate.

Judgments of foreign courts are accepted and enforced by the local courts only if Suriname has a legal treaty of jurisprudence with the foreign country involved. If not, the foreign judgment can be brought before the Surinamese court for consideration as long as the court determines it has jurisdiction and doing so does not otherwise violate any Surinamese laws. Suriname has no legal treaty of jurisprudence with the United States. With Suriname's participation and membership in the Caribbean Court of Justice, judgments from this court are also binding for local courts.

Plaintiffs have successfully filed suit against Suriname in the Inter-American Court of Justice of the Organization of American States. The Surinamese legal system upheld these verdicts.

Suriname consistently applies its commercial and bankruptcy laws. Companies have a right to file for bankruptcy with the courts. All records of debts are subsequently filed with a trustee as appointed by the court. The judge may declare bankruptcy in cases where there are a minimum of two creditors. In cases where there is a loan from a commercial bank, payment on this loan takes precedence. Monetary judgments are made in local currency, unless the contract or agreement stipulates otherwise.

The government accepts binding international arbitration only if it is stipulated in the contract or agreement and if it does not contradict any local laws. International arbitration is an accepted means for settling disputes between private parties, but only if local alternatives are exhausted. Most agreements involving foreign companies have clauses that clearly stipulate the laws applicable to the agreement.

Suriname has been a member of the 1958 New York Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards since 1964, when the country was still a Dutch territory. At independence in 1975, Suriname automatically continued its membership in international conventions and treaties.

Performance Requirements and Incentives

[Return to top](#)

Suriname is a member of the World Trade Organization. Suriname does not impose any performance requirements, nor does it provide any performance incentives, that are inconsistent with Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMS) requirements.

The government does not impose performance requirements as a condition for establishing, maintaining, or expanding investments, or for access to tax and investment incentives. There are no requirements that investors purchase from local sources or export a certain percentage of output. Both local and foreign investors, however, have found it useful to purchase from local sources and import only those goods unavailable

on the local market. Larger companies (e.g., in the extractive industries) have signed contracts for the delivery of products that are not readily available on the market. In the case of foreign investments, no requirements exist that nationals own shares or that the share of foreign equity be reduced over time, or that technology be transferred. Suriname does not impose any “offset” requirements, which would force foreign suppliers to invest in manufacturing, R&D, or service facilities in order to receive procurement approvals. With regard to the telecommunications sector, the government required companies Digicel and Uniqqa to deposit US\$1 million each in a performance bond as a guarantee that the companies would provide the services for which they had requested licenses.

Under current regulations, investors can benefit from both tax- and non-tax-based incentives. Tax-based incentives include a nine-year tax holiday that can be extended by one year if the investment is at least US \$13 million, accelerated depreciation of assets, and tax consolidation. Under the Raw Minerals Act an exemption of import duties is granted for the import of raw materials from CARICOM member countries. Exemptions are also granted for the food industry, the soft drinks industry, and the fruit juice industry. In 2011 the government eliminated import duties on computers and related items.

In order to operate a company, investors must obtain a special industry license. There are no special requirements on percentage of local content or equity. No requirements exist for substitution for imports, nor for export targets. Investors are not required to use specific employment agencies, nor to transfer technology or use local sources of finance. In order for an investor to receive permission to hire a foreign national, the investor needs to show the Ministry of Labor that every effort was made to hire a host country national first. The rule does not, however, apply to specialists; in that case the company is free to use whomever it deems necessary for the operation of the company. The specialists must obtain work permits.

There are exceptions to the requirement that Surinamers must be hired first. For example, the GOS signed contracts with Chinese companies for construction and infrastructure projects which, through negotiations, included a stipulation that Chinese nationals may enter Suriname to work in jobs that host country nationals could have performed, including construction and engineering.

U.S. and other foreign firms are welcome to participate in research and development. Larger foreign investors, such as the Alcoa subsidiary Suralco, have played a major role in the establishment and maintenance of research facilities at the Anton de Kom University.

In 2009 Suriname’s National Assembly passed legislation regarding the issuance of work permits to foreigners. Although the procedures remain the same, a foreign worker must apply first for a residency permit at the Ministry of Justice and Police, after which s/he can apply for a work permit at the Ministry of Labor. The legislation limits the term of a work permit to three years to better track the movement of foreign workers in Suriname and to prevent foreign workers from obtaining employment that could be performed by

Surinamese citizens. The legislation also introduced a permit requirement for interns to prevent interns from holding positions that could be regularly done by Surinamers. Companies or organizations that want to employ interns are required to request the permit on behalf of the intern. CSME regulations assure the free movement of artists, university graduates, media workers, musicians, and athletes of CARICOM origin. CSME regulations also provide for the free movement of those who want to establish or conduct business in CARICOM nations.

Non-tariff barriers on both imports and exports include: proof of residency, registration with the Chamber of Commerce (KKF), Customs' import registration numbers, and tax identification numbers from the Tax Office of the Ministry of Finance. Under the 2003 Law on the Movement of Goods, the Ministry of Trade and Industry created "negative lists" for both imports and exports. Anything not on the "negative list" can be imported or exported without a license. Items included on the "negative lists" may only be imported or exported with special permission from the government. Examples of goods on the negative list for imports are: chemicals, pesticides, and animals on the Convention of Endangered Species and Faunas List. Examples of goods on the negative list for exports are: bark wood, explosives, gold, and other precious metals.

Tariff barriers include consent and statistical fees charged in addition to regulatory import duties. Suriname's tariff schedule comprises nine bands between 0 and 50 percent. Import tariffs from CARICOM member states range between 0 and 20 percent. In 2008, the Foreign Exchange Commission, through General Decree 216, began waiving consent fees in cases where the Ministry of Finance already exempted or suspended import duties. Imports from countries outside CARICOM, except the European Union, are subject to increased import duties due to the Common External Tariff (CET) adopted by CARICOM members. Imports are subject to a seven percent turnover tax as stipulated under the 1997 Law on Turnover Tax. Exports are subject to consent and statistical fees. Companies in the bauxite sector pay a two percent statistical fee on both imports and exports. In the gold sector, Iamgold pays royalties of 2.25 percent, with an additional 6.25 percent if the price of gold exceeds US \$425 per troy ounce. A statistical fee of 0.5 percent is also applied on timber exports (except to CARICOM countries).

CSME regulations prevent members from importing products from outside of CARICOM if the same quality goods can be produced or delivered by fellow member states by a pre-set deadline, not taking price into account. Violations can lead to legal action at the CARICOM Secretariat. CARICOM grants suspension of the CET to member states when a commodity is not produced in a Member State or is produced in insufficient quantities to satisfy the requirements of the Common Market. When the CARICOM Secretariat grants a suspension to a member country, the country may then import a product from outside CARICOM at a rate lower than the CET. In 2008 the CARICOM Secretary General, based on a decision by the 19th Inter-Sessional Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, gave member countries permission to partially or completely suspend import duties on products from outside the Community for one year. In 2009 the GOS extended this suspension for another year. The Trinidadian cement producer TCL and a Trinidadian grain miller filed

cases against Suriname due to Suriname's import of cement and flour from non-CARICOM countries. In both cases the court ordered Suriname to reinstate the CET.

In October 2008, Suriname, as a member of the CARIFORUM, signed an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the European Union. Under this agreement the CARIFORUM countries agreed that all goods, except rice and sugar, enter their markets duty and quota-free. Suriname's National Assembly never ratified the agreement and it is not yet in effect.

Right to Private Ownership and Establishment

[Return to top](#)

Foreign and domestic private entities have the right to establish and own business enterprises and engage in all forms of remunerative activity. Once private entities register a business with the KKF, they have the right to freely acquire and dispose of interests as they see fit.

Protection of Property Rights

[Return to top](#)

Secured interest in property, both movable and real, is recognized and enforced. Mortgages are common and are registered by the Mortgage Office. Acquisition and disposition of all property rights are protected and facilitated by law.

Even though Suriname is a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO) and, since 1975, a member of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), it has not ratified the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement. While Suriname is officially party to the following international agreements on intellectual property rights, which came into force while it was still a colony of the Netherlands, there is little or no adherence to these agreements, as they are not incorporated into the country's domestic legislation:

- The Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property (1883)
- The Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Work (1886)
- The Hague Convention concerning the International Deposit of Industrial Designs (1925)
- The Nice Agreement concerning the International Classification of Goods and Services for the Purpose of Registration of Marks (1957)
- The Strasbourg Agreement concerning the International Patent Classification (1971)

The current legal framework for discussing copyrights, patents, and trademarks dates back to 1912 and 1913, and is an amendment to a previously written law. Neighboring rights (related rights) in copyrights, geographical indications, industrial designs, and utility models, layout designs of integrated circuits, undisclosed information, or new plant varieties remain unprotected. The WTO TRIPS agreement has not been implemented or enforced. Suriname signed the WIPO Internet Treaties, but has not ratified them.

The Ministry of Justice and Police presides over the Bureau for Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and publicly stated its intention to improve the country's IPR legislation, but has not moved draft legislation forward to Parliament. The Bureau for Intellectual Property Rights drafted three pieces of IPR legislation, including an updated copyrights law, which is being evaluated by the legal department of the Ministry of Justice and Police. More advanced and specialized legislation (e.g., brand and music piracy, industrial property and associated rights) is slated to be added to the basic legislation once it is approved. Investors can register brands at the Bureau for Intellectual Property Rights and the Surinamese court system has a successful record of handling cases of brand infringement.

Transparency of Regulatory System

[Return to top](#)

No tax, labor, environment, health and safety, or other laws or policies are purposely used to impede investments. This does not, however, mean that they do not form obstacles to investment. Labor laws, for instance, prohibit employers from firing an employee without the permission of the Ministry of Labor, once the employee has fulfilled his or her probationary period, which by law is limited to two months. Tax laws are criticized as overburdening the formal business sector while there is a large informal sector, estimated to be roughly twice the size of the formal economy, which goes untaxed. As discussed below, lack of financial and accounting standards and poor government enforcement of existing regulations permits unscrupulous companies to avoid paying legitimate taxes and tariffs, thereby gaining competitive advantage over law-abiding firms, through measures such as under-invoicing and presenting fraudulent accounting records. In 2011 the government took its first step towards overhauling the tax system. The new system will be consumption-based rather than income-based. The government plans to implement a value-added tax in 2013. The Tax Department estimates that a full overhaul of the system could take up to five years and has proposed a phased introduction of modifications. Other proposed changes include the introduction of a real estate tax in place of the current rental value tax, an environmental tax, and a gold tax for gold buyers.

Bureaucratic procedures, including those for licenses and permits, are neither sufficiently streamlined nor transparent. The large number of civil servants involved in the process of granting licenses makes it a lengthy process that invites corruption. Both the World Bank, through its "Doing Business Report," and Standard & Poor's identify government involvement in the real economy to be a continued burden that undermines transparency and gives rise to corruption. In 2011 the government liberalized the licensing system so that applications for licenses only need to be submitted to the Business License Department of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. The government also reduced the number of business categories requiring a license to 26. These changes reduced the time and required steps necessary to establish a business; however the system continues to be overburdened and lacks sufficient transparency.

Laws and regulations are drafted in consultation with the relevant stakeholders in both the public and private sectors. After this, they are presented to the Council of Ministers for discussion and approval. Once approved, they are sent to the President's advisory body, the State Council, for approval before being presented to the National Assembly for discussion, amendment, and approval.

Suriname's legal, regulatory, and accounting systems are based on Dutch standards. However, they are outdated and inconsistent with current international norms.

The Trade Law of 1936 governs the formation of companies in Suriname and provides the basis for accounting and reporting requirements for companies and partnerships. There is no overarching accounting and auditing legislation to regulate the accountancy profession. The legal and regulatory framework for corporate financial reporting, accounting, and auditing should be strengthened to promote greater accuracy and transparency. Currently there is no requirement for specific accounting standards, nor a requirement for auditing, unless specifically mentioned in the articles of association of the company. The Central Bank is considering draft legislation and regulations to reform the accounting system and bring it into greater conformance with international norms.

Most financial statements prepared in Suriname are based on The Netherlands' Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (NL GAAP). However, the government does not mandate that companies use a particular financial reporting standard, and companies use various methods, such as International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), mainly used by multinational companies operating in Suriname. There is no government body responsible for auditing private firms and no requirement for independent audits. Suriname's major domestic corporations and other multinational companies operating in Suriname often apply their own standards. Many use one of the resident internationally-accepted firms such as Deloitte Consulting or BDO International, Ltd. for their accounting needs.

The government officially established a Standards Bureau in 2007. It works with local businesses on identifying needs for standards. Companies also hire international consultants or private firms to assist in certifying processes based on the ISO system. The Standards Bureau is working with stakeholders from different sectors on starting the process for developing standards for these sectors.

There are no private sector or government efforts to restrict foreign participation in industry standard-setting consortia. In most instances, foreign participation is not only welcomed, but requested in order to bring standards in Suriname up to international norms.

Efficient Capital Markets and Portfolio Investment

[Return to top](#)

The government has sufficient policies in place to support the free flow of financial resources in the product and factor markets. Credit is allocated on market terms and at market rates. Once established as a business in Suriname, foreign investors are able to get credit on the local market, usually with a payment guarantee from the parent

company. The private sector has access to a variety of credit instruments. Larger companies can obtain customized credit products. There is, however, a Central Bank regulation that limits commercial banks' credit exposure to a single client. In March 2012, the Central Bank Governor witnessed the Trade Finance Facilitation Program Agreement (TTFP) between De Surinaamsche Bank (DSB) and the Inter-American Development Bank. The agreement should foster economic growth by guaranteeing stable and reliable sources of trade finance.

Lending rates for local currency are between 11 and 15 percent. The lending rates for U.S. Dollars and Euro loans are between 11 and 16 percent. The IMF has found the banking system to be strong, well capitalized, and profitable, but finds that compliance with prudential norms remains uneven.

The Central Bank of Suriname kept the effective reserve requirement for local currency at 25 percent. In 2011, the authorities increased the reserve on foreign currency denominated deposits at the commercial banks from 33 percent to 40 percent to stabilize the exchange rate and discourage dollarization in the immediate aftermath of the Surinamese dollar devaluation. At the same time, the Central Bank implemented measures such as higher provisioning requirements for foreign currency loans and established limits on open foreign currency positions.

The 2012 IMF Article IV Consultation Report outlook confirms relative stability in the foreign exchange market, while moderate growth in net credit to the private sector is indicative of continued robust activity in primary and non-primary sectors. The combined ratio of non-performing loans has continued to come down. For foreign currency loans the ratio continues to fluctuate.

In September 2011 Suriname signed on to become the 183rd member of the International Financing Corporation (IFC) of the World Bank. Through this membership, the government hopes to gain access to cheaper, long term funding for the private sector and assistance in the identification and development of new investment possibilities. In April 2012, the Central Bank Governor witnessed a cooperation agreement between the DSB and the IFC to provide partial or full IFC guarantees for individual trade transactions. The program allows the Central Bank to expand trade finance solutions for companies operating in the import/export sector.

The estimated assets of the country largest banks were

- DSB Bank (per June 30, 2012) US\$ 877.5 million
 - Hakrinbank (June 30, 2012) US\$ 493.8 million
 - RBC-RBTT (per October 3, 2012) US\$ 825 billion
- (In 2008 the Royal Bank of Canada took over the Royal Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, parent company of RBTT Bank Suriname. Financial figures for this entire group are consolidated into the financial figures of RBC. Above asset

figures reported are the assets in international holdings, other than U.S. RBC is Suriname's third largest commercial bank.)

Competition from State Owned Enterprises

[Return to top](#)

Private firms compete under the same terms and conditions as public firms for access to markets and credit. Due to a lack of transparency, there is little information about the finances of existing state enterprises. State Owned Enterprises (SOE) have an advantage for resources such as land. Public sector enterprises in Suriname are established by special laws, or as public limited liability companies or foundations under the Commercial Code. Some of these enterprises receive subsidies from the government, which may be in the form of loans, but which (as in the case of utilities) are unlikely to be repaid.

State business and operations tend to be less transparent than private firms. Many do not file audited accounts or other official financial documentation, even though they receive transfers from the Government. Although every state-owned enterprise must send financial reports to the Court of Auditors, only about a quarter of state-owned enterprises have done so in the past.

SOE are active in the oil sector, airline sector, electricity and gas supply, water, bananas, rice, telecommunication, banking, and transport sectors. The government also owns several "authorities" that operate like regular businesses. The only SOE with private capital invested is Staatsolie that, through bond issuance in 2010, borrowed US\$55 million from private investors.

These companies are in most cases managed like a regular company with a Supervisory Board, whose members are appointed by the government. These companies consult with the respective ministry presiding over the sector on business decisions, and major decisions require government approval or consent.

In 2011, the government announced its intention to start an interim Sovereign Wealth Fund. The Central Bank prepared a draft legal framework for the establishment of this fund, which will be submitted to the authorities and presented to the public at large in 2013. The fund will reportedly have US\$20 million drawn from income from the extractive industries and will be managed by monetary authorities.

Corporate Social Responsibility

[Return to top](#)

There is a growing awareness of corporate social responsibility (CSR) among both producers and consumers. Alcoa subsidiary Suralco was the leader on CSR issues in Suriname, and other companies have followed. Consumers took note of this trend and, nongovernmental organizations continue to benefit from CSR-funded programs. Firms that participate in CSR activities are viewed more favorably, though they are not required to publicly disclose their efforts. Locally-owned companies that stand out for their

corporate social responsibility include: Staatsolie, Surinam Airways, Telesur, Fernandes Group of Companies (the largest local soft drinks bottler), and McDonalds Suriname.

The GOS realizes the benefits of CSR and incorporates it into some partnerships and agreements. For example, recent agreements between Staatsolie and foreign companies for off-shore oil drilling include stipulations for CSR spending. However, the GOS allows companies to develop their own policies and standards while encouraging local community members to negotiate with larger companies directly. The government enforces existing domestic laws with respect to labor and employment rights, and is drafting an environmental protection law and a consumer protection law.

Political Violence

[Return to top](#)

There have been no incidents over the past few years involving politically motivated damage to projects and/or installations. In November 2007, 25 defendants, including current President Desiré Bouterse, went on trial for the December 8, 1982 murders of 15 prominent democracy activists. The judge suspended the case in 2012, pending constitutional review of recently-passed amnesty legislation by a yet-to-be installed Constitutional Court.

Corruption

[Return to top](#)

Corruption, including bribery, raises the costs and risks of doing business. Corruption has a corrosive impact on both market opportunities overseas for U.S. companies and the broader business climate. It also deters international investment, stifles economic growth and development, distorts prices, and undermines the rule of law.

It is important for U.S. companies, irrespective of their size, to assess the business climate in the relevant market in which they will be operating or investing, and to have an effective compliance program or measures to prevent and detect corruption, including foreign bribery. U.S. individuals and firms operating or investing in foreign markets should take the time to become familiar with the relevant anticorruption laws of both the foreign country and the United States in order to properly comply with them, and where appropriate, they should seek the advice of legal counsel.

The U.S. Government seeks to level the global playing field for U.S. businesses by encouraging other countries to take steps to criminalize their own companies' acts of corruption, including bribery of foreign public officials, by requiring them to uphold their obligations under relevant international conventions. A U. S. firm that believes a competitor is seeking to use bribery of a foreign public official to secure a contract should bring this to the attention of appropriate U.S. agencies, as noted below.

U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act: In 1977, the United States enacted the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), which makes it unlawful for a U.S. person, and certain foreign issuers of securities, to make a corrupt payment to foreign public officials for the purpose of obtaining or retaining business for or with, or directing business to, any person. The FCPA also applies to foreign firms and persons who take any act in

furtherance of such a corrupt payment while in the United States. For more detailed information on the FCPA, see the FCPA Lay-Person's Guide at: <http://www.justice.gov/crimina/fraud/>

Other Instruments: It is U.S. Government policy to promote good governance, including host country implementation and enforcement of anti-corruption laws and policies pursuant to their obligations under international agreements. Since enactment of the FCPA, the United States has been instrumental to the expansion of the international framework to fight corruption. Several significant components of this framework are the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions (OECD Antibribery Convention), the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UN Convention), the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (OAS Convention), the Council of Europe Criminal and Civil Law Conventions, and a growing list of U.S. free trade agreements. This country is party to the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption, but generally all countries prohibit the bribery and solicitation of their public officials.

OECD Antibribery Convention: The OECD Antibribery Convention entered into force in February 1999. As of March 2009, there are 38 parties to the Convention including the United States (see <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/59/13/40272933.pdf>). Major exporters China, India, and Russia are not parties, although the U.S. Government strongly endorses their eventual accession to the Convention. The Convention obligates the Parties to criminalize bribery of foreign public officials in the conduct of international business. The United States meets its international obligations under the OECD Antibribery Convention through the U.S. FCPA. Suriname is not a party to the OECD Convention.

UN Convention: The UN Anticorruption Convention entered into force on December 14, 2005, and there are 158 parties to it as of November 2011 (see <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CAC/signatories.html>). The UN Convention is the first global comprehensive international anticorruption agreement. The UN Convention requires countries to establish criminal and other offences to cover a wide range of acts of corruption. The UN Convention goes beyond previous anticorruption instruments, covering a broad range of issues ranging from basic forms of corruption such as bribery and solicitation, embezzlement, trading in influence to the concealment and laundering of the proceeds of corruption. The Convention contains transnational business bribery provisions that are functionally similar to those in the OECD Antibribery Convention and contains provisions on private sector auditing and books and records requirements. Other provisions address matters such as prevention, international cooperation, and asset recovery. Suriname has not signed or ratified the UN Convention.

OAS Convention: In 1996, the Member States of the Organization of American States (OAS) adopted the first international anticorruption legal instrument, the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (OAS Convention), which entered into force in March 1997. The OAS Convention, among other things, establishes a set of preventive measures against corruption, provides for the criminalization of certain acts of corruption, including transnational bribery and illicit enrichment, and contains a series of provisions

to strengthen the cooperation between its States Parties in areas such as mutual legal assistance and technical cooperation. As of December 2009, the OAS Convention has 34 parties (see <http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/Sigs/b-58.html>) Suriname has signed and ratified the OAS Convention.

Council of Europe Criminal Law and Civil Law Conventions: Many European countries are parties to either the Council of Europe (CoE) Criminal Law Convention on Corruption, the Civil Law Convention, or both. The Criminal Law Convention requires criminalization of a wide range of national and transnational conduct, including bribery, money-laundering, and account offenses. It also incorporates provisions on liability of legal persons and witness protection. The Civil Law Convention includes provisions on compensation for damage relating to corrupt acts, whistleblower protection, and validity of contracts, inter alia. The Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) was established in 1999 by the CoE to monitor compliance with these and related anti-corruption standards. Currently, GRECO comprises 49 member States (48 European countries and the United States). As of December 2011, the Criminal Law Convention has 43 parties and the Civil Law Convention has 34 (see www.coe.int/greco.) Suriname is not a party to the Council of Europe Conventions.

Free Trade Agreements: While it is U.S. Government policy to include anticorruption provisions in free trade agreements (FTAs) that it negotiates with its trading partners, the anticorruption provisions have evolved over time. The most recent FTAs negotiated now require trading partners to criminalize “active bribery” of public officials (offering bribes to any public official must be made a criminal offense, both domestically and trans-nationally) as well as domestic “passive bribery” (solicitation of a bribe by a domestic official). All U.S. FTAs may be found at the U.S. Trade Representative Website: <http://www.ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements>. Consult USTR Website for date: <http://www.ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements>.

Local Laws: U.S. firms should familiarize themselves with local anticorruption laws, and, where appropriate, seek legal counsel. While the U.S. Department of Commerce cannot provide legal advice on local laws, the Department’s U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service can provide assistance with navigating the host country’s legal system and obtaining a list of local legal counsel.

Assistance for U.S. Businesses: The U.S. Department of Commerce offers several services to aid U.S. businesses seeking to address business-related corruption issues. For example, the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service can provide services that may assist U.S. companies in conducting their due diligence as part of the company’s overarching compliance program when choosing business partners or agents overseas. The U.S. Foreign and Commercial Service can be reached directly through its offices in every major U.S. and foreign city, or through its Website at www.trade.gov/cs.

The Departments of Commerce and State provide worldwide support for qualified U.S. companies bidding on foreign government contracts through the Commerce Department’s Advocacy Center and State’s Office of Commercial and Business Affairs.

Problems, including alleged corruption by foreign governments or competitors, encountered by U.S. companies in seeking such foreign business opportunities can be brought to the attention of appropriate U.S. government officials, including local embassy personnel and through the Department of Commerce Trade Compliance Center “Report A Trade Barrier” Website at tcc.export.gov/Report_a_Barrier/index.asp.

Guidance on the U.S. FCPA: The Department of Justice’s (DOJ) FCPA Opinion Procedure enables U.S. firms and individuals to request a statement of the Justice Department’s present enforcement intentions under the anti-bribery provisions of the FCPA regarding any proposed business conduct. The details of the opinion procedure are available on DOJ’s Fraud Section Website at www.justice.gov/criminal/fraud/fcpa. Although the Department of Commerce has no enforcement role with respect to the FCPA, it supplies general guidance to U.S. exporters who have questions about the FCPA and about international developments concerning the FCPA. For further information, see the Office of the Chief Counsel for International Counsel, U.S. Department of Commerce, Website, at http://www.ogc.doc.gov/trans_anti_bribery.html. More general information on the FCPA is available at the Websites listed below.

Exporters and investors should be aware that generally all countries prohibit the bribery of their public officials, and prohibit their officials from soliciting bribes under domestic laws. Most countries are required to criminalize such bribery and other acts of corruption by virtue of being parties to various international conventions discussed above.

No U.S. firms have reported corruption as a major obstacle to foreign direct investment. Suriname has signed and ratified the Inter-American Convention against Corruption. Suriname has not yet signed or ratified the UN Anti-Corruption Convention. The country is not a signatory to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Convention on Combating Bribery.

The Ministry of Justice and Police is responsible for combating corruption. The Fraud Department of the National Police is in charge of investigating corruption cases. The government has also established an Anti-Corruption Working Group at the ministerial and technical levels to assist the police in combating corruption. No international, regional, or local nongovernmental anti-corruption “watchdog” organization operates in Suriname. Suriname ranked 88 out of 174 countries on the 2012 Transparency International Corruption Index. It was ranked 100 out of 182 countries in 2011.

Suriname does not have special anti-corruption legislation in place, but the penal code refers to anti-corruption. Under the previous government the Ministry of Justice and Police drafted anti-corruption legislation, but it has not been addressed by the National Assembly. In 2012, opposition Parliamentarians introduced new anti-corruption legislation, but it has not been placed on the legislative agenda.

Anti-corruption measures in the penal code are enforced, and the majority of those prosecuted to date have been civil servants. Corruption is most pervasive in the areas of government procurement, license issuance, land policy, and taxation.

Accepting or giving a bribe is a criminal act, which is punishable by a fine or a prison sentence of three months to five years, depending on the severity and/or amount of the bribe.

Although senior government officials state that they take anti-corruption efforts seriously, there is a widespread public perception of corruption in parts of the government structure, and there have been incidents of corruption uncovered by the current and previous governments.

Anti-Corruption Resources

Some useful resources for individuals and companies regarding combating corruption in global markets include the following:

- Information about the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), including a “Lay-Person’s Guide to the FCPA” is available at the U.S. Department of Justice’s Website at: <http://www.justice.gov/criminal/fraud/fcpa>.
- Information about the OECD Antibribery Convention including links to national implementing legislation and country monitoring reports is available at: http://www.oecd.org/departement/0,3355,en_2649_34859_1_1_1_1_1,00.html. See also new Antibribery Recommendation and Good Practice Guidance Annex for companies: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/40/44176910.pdf>.
- General information about anticorruption initiatives, such as the OECD Convention and the FCPA, including translations of the statute into several languages, is available at the Department of Commerce Office of the Chief Counsel for International Commerce Website: http://www.ogc.doc.gov/trans_anti_bribery.html.
- Transparency International (TI) publishes an annual Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). The CPI measures the perceived level of public-sector corruption in 180 countries and territories around the world. The CPI is available at: http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2009. TI also publishes an annual *Global Corruption Report* which provides a systematic evaluation of the state of corruption around the world. It includes an in-depth analysis of a focal theme, a series of country reports that document major corruption related events and developments from all continents and an overview of the latest research findings on anti-corruption diagnostics and tools. See <http://www.transparency.org/publications/gcr>.
- The World Bank Institute publishes Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI). These indicators assess six dimensions of governance in 213 countries, including Voice and Accountability, Political Stability and Absence of Violence, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law and Control of Corruption. See <http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.asp>. The World Bank Business

Environment and Enterprise Performance Surveys may also be of interest and are available at: <http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/BEEPS>.

- The World Economic Forum publishes the *Global Enabling Trade Report*, which presents the rankings of the Enabling Trade Index, and includes an assessment of the transparency of border administration (focused on bribe payments and corruption) and a separate segment on corruption and the regulatory environment. See <http://www.weforum.org/s?s=global+enabling+trade+report>.
- Additional country information related to corruption can be found in the U.S. State Department's annual *Human Rights Report* available at <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/>.
- Global Integrity, a nonprofit organization, publishes its annual *Global Integrity Report*, which provides indicators for 106 countries with respect to governance and anti-corruption. The report highlights the strengths and weaknesses of national level anti-corruption systems. The report is available at: <http://report.globalintegrity.org/>.

Bilateral Investment Agreements

[Return to top](#)

Suriname has bilateral investment treaties with Indonesia and the Czech Republic. Suriname is an original Member of the WTO and grants MFN treatment to all its trading partners. It has General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) commitments in 12 sectors. In 1993, Suriname signed an Agreement on Bilateral Trade Relations with the United States; however, the agreement has not been ratified by the National Assembly.

Other international agreements into which Suriname has entered are:

- A double taxation treaty with the Netherlands
- A trade agreement with the People's Republic of China (1998)
- The Treaty of Chaguaramas, which established the CARICOM and subsequently led to the creation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy.
- Trade agreements by virtue of CARICOM membership with Venezuela, Costa Rica, Brazil, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, and Colombia.
- Trade promotion treaties with Indonesia, India, and China.
- CARIFORUM – E.U. Economic Partnership Agreement (This EPA also has some provisions for investment between the two regions.)

OPIC and Other Investment Insurance Programs

[Return to top](#)

Suriname is a party to the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency Convention (MIGA Convention), but not to the Convention on the Settlement of Investment Disputes between States and Nationals of other States (ICSID Convention). While Suriname

signed an Investment Incentive Agreement with the United States in 1993, there currently are no Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) programs in operation in Suriname. In the event OPIC should pay an inconvertibility claim, the official currency exchange rate for the U.S. Dollar is SRD 3.35 for USD \$1.00. This is the same rate used by the U.S. Embassy. The estimated annual dollar value of local currency used by the Embassy is USD \$ 410,000. According to the 2012 IMF Article IV Consultation Report, the de facto exchange rate arrangement is considered “stabilized.”

Labor

[Return to top](#)

Labor unions in Suriname are independent of the government, but play an active role in politics.

Some sectors in Suriname are more prone to labor shortages than others, such as the agricultural and service sectors. In the technical sector there is a shortage of skilled technicians to operate and repair heavy equipment commonly used in the extractive industries. The government continues to be the largest employer in country. Suriname is a member of the ILO and adheres to ILO conventions. The Ministry of Labor has for some years worked to implement a minimum wage system, but this did not move forward in 2012. Actual implementation continues to be hampered by lack of an agreement between all stakeholders. The Ministry of Labor announced that it will conduct a wage study in 2013 in all sectors of the economy.

In 2009, Suriname implemented the Civil Service Wage Reform Program (FISO) system for government workers, which reclassified each position in government to streamline categories of workers and their pay rates. The government implemented Phase II of FISO in 2010 and 2011, which included a wage increase for approximately 45 percent of civil servants.

Foreign companies are required to give preference to hiring Surinamese nationals, although this does not always happen in practice as noted in this Chapter under subsection Performance Requirements and Incentives. Foreigners require both a residence permit and a work permit to work in Suriname.

Foreign-Trade Zones/Free Ports

[Return to top](#)

There are no duty free trade zones, duty free import zones, or duty free ports in Suriname.

Foreign Direct Investment Statistics

[Return to top](#)

Recent data for foreign direct investment—Source for the data is:

http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.KLT.DINV.CD.WD?order=wbapi_data_value_2011%20wbapi_data_value%20wbapi_data_value-last&sort=asc

FDI Inflow in Millions of US\$

2007	2008	2009	2010	2012
246.7	231.4	93.4	247.7	145.2

A list of foreign direct major investments in Suriname:

- Iamgold and the GOS reached an agreement, ratified in the National Assembly in early 2013, regarding the expansion of the Rosebel Gold Mine in Brokopondo. The total investment is approximately USD \$1.5 billion.
- The Suriname Gold Company, LLC (Surgold) (a multi-partner firm controlled by Newmont Mining) and the GOS signed a mining services agreement approved by the National Assembly. The company will invest approximately USD \$1.2 billion in the Merian area in eastern Suriname.
- U.S. firms Kosmos Energy and Murphy Oil will continue exploration activities for offshore oil along Suriname's northern coast according to a 2010 agreement with Staatsolie.
- U.S. firm Apache Corporation signed an exploration contract with Staatsolie for offshore oil exploration in 2012. Total investment is approximately US\$ 230 million.
- United Arab Emirates-based DW World acquired a 51 percent stake in two port operating companies in Suriname.
- Hong Kong-based Greenheart Group Ltd. invested in two giant saw mills in Suriname's interior and announced plans to construct a bio energy plant which will generate power for the processing facility in West Suriname from its own wood waste.
- The government extended two licenses for Orion Resources, a subsidiary of Canadian-based Suparna Gold, for gold exploration activities in the Sara Creek area.

Web Resources

[Return to top](#)

(Insert text here)

[Return to table of contents](#)

[Return to table of contents](#)

Chapter 7: Trade and Project Financing

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

How Do I Get Paid (Methods of Payment)

[Return to top](#)

Common methods of payment include a letter of credit or documentary credit (both accepted payment methods in international trade).

How Does the Banking System Operate

[Return to top](#)

Suriname's banking system consists of three major commercial banks: the Royal Bank of Canada (formerly the Royal Bank of Trinidad and Tobago, and the only foreign-owned bank), DSB Bank, and Hakrinbank. The government is currently a part owner of Hakrinbank but has announced that it will sell off its shares. Eighty percent Suriname's banking in Suriname is shared between these banks. There are also five smaller local banks.

Banks have correspondent arrangements with US banks. Bank transfers occur through the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) system. The RBTT Bank also sponsors credit cards. All above mentioned banks offer electronic banking services.

DSB Bank

Address: Henck Arronstraat 26-30 Paramaribo

Phone: (597) 471100

Fax: (597)411750

Email: info@dsbbank.sr

Website: <http://www.dsbbank.sr>

RBC Bank

Address: Kerkplein 1, Paramaribo

Phone: (597) 471555

Fax: (597)411325

Hakrinbank

Address: Dr. Sophie Redmondstraat 11-13

Phone: (597) 477722

Fax: (597) 472066
Email: hakrindp@sr.net
Website: <http://www.hakrinbank.com>

Foreign-Exchange Controls

[Return to top](#)

Permission is required from the Foreign Exchange Commission to transfer any funds associated with a business or investment out of Suriname. The delay period varies for remitting investment returns such as dividends, return of capital, interest and principal on private foreign debt, lease payments, royalties and management fees. Permission must first be obtained from the Foreign Exchange Commission and the time needed to process the request depends on the sector and the amount to be transferred. Transfers through the banking system range from same-day to one week transfers. A source of origin must be declared in cases where the incoming or outgoing amount exceeds US\$5,000 or €5,000. No limitation exists on the inflow or outflow of funds.

The Central Bank publishes exchange rates for 22 different currencies. The U.S. dollar exchange rate published in January 2011 amounted to 3.35 SRD per US\$1.00, which is the ceiling rate established by the Central Bank for foreign exchange transactions by a commercial bank and.

U.S. Banks and Local Correspondent Banks

[Return to top](#)

There are no U.S. banks operating directly in Suriname. Suriname's banks hold U.S. bank accounts for U.S. currency business and transactions. The RBC works with Wachovia Bank, the DSB Bank works with Citibank, and Hakrinbank works with HSBC Bank.

Project Financing

[Return to top](#)

Development projects receive the majority of their financing from the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). The IDB has endorsed its re-engagement with the government by approving the 2011-2015 Country Strategy with Suriname.

Dutch Treaty Funds have largely come to an end.

The government of China is a large source of grant and loan programs to Suriname.

The Export-Import Bank of the United States of America offers limited financing for American businesses interested in doing business with the private sector in Suriname.

Local banks may also be approached for loans. Suriname regulations, however, require banks to maintain 27 percent of their SRD currency and 45 percent of their foreign exchange in their reserves, which limits their lending power. Rates for business loans have come down considerably in recent years. Loans must be 100 percent secured, which means banks prefer to use a mortgage on local real estate when lending. Loans to

foreigners are permissible by law but the bank must first receive approval from the Foreign Exchange Commission.

Web Resources

[Return to top](#)

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

Country Limitation Schedule: 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/ccr/default.htm>

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

Inter-American Development Bank: <http://www.iadb.org>

[Return to table of contents](#)

[Return to table of contents](#)

Chapter 8: Business Travel

- [Business Customs](#)
- [Travel Advisory](#)
- [Visa Requirements](#)
- [Telecommunications](#)
- [Transportation](#)
- [Language](#)
- [Health](#)
- [Local Time, Business Hours and Holidays](#)
- [Temporary Entry of Materials and Personal Belongings](#)
- [Web Resources](#)

Business Customs

[Return to top](#)

Business customs in Suriname do not differ significantly from those in the U.S., although the pace can be more leisurely.

Government offices generally are open from 7 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Meetings with government officials are best arranged in the morning although many officials are hard to reach before 10 a.m. Government offices close early on Fridays and before holidays.

Business entertainment largely takes place at dinners and cocktail parties which begin late. Business lunches do take place, but not on the same scale as in the U.S. Working breakfasts are rare and not advised.

Business suits are worn, but due to the tropical climate casual clothing is often acceptable at most business meetings (except those with senior government officials.)

Surinamers prefer establishing a comfortable working relationship first, as opposed to directly tackling business. Given the consensual nature of the Surinamese government, there is often a lengthy consultation process before a decision is reached.

Suriname is two hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time (and one hour ahead of Eastern Daylight Savings Time. Driving is on the left-hand side of the road.

Travel Advisory

[Return to top](#)

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1030.html

Visa Requirements

[Return to top](#)

A passport and a visa are required for entry into the Republic of Suriname. Visa requests may be made in person or by mail. For the latter method, passports and application materials should be submitted to the Embassy with sufficient time for the visa to be processed. Visas may be obtained at the following Surinamese diplomatic and consular missions:

Embassy of the Republic of Suriname
Washington, D.C.
4301 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 108
Washington D.C. 20008
Embassy website: <http://www.surinameembassy.org>

Consulate of Suriname, Miami
7235 NW 19th Street, Suite A
Miami, FL

To promote tourism the government introduced the tourist card on November 25, 2011. This card can be purchased at the embassies and consulates of the Republic of Suriname by nationals of 37 countries including the United States.

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

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

Telecommunications

[Return to top](#)

The telecommunication sector is partially deregulated. Telecommunication infrastructure and fixed-line services are state-owned, whereas mobile telecom has been deregulated. Telesur is the state-owned telecom company and has exclusivity of fixed-line services.

Telephone and fax connections with the United States are good. Suriname is part of AT&T's World Connect Service and "USA Direct." In addition, a number of call centers have been established, including the Rosheuvel & Partners Business Group (RPGB), Transglobe N.V., and Callfactory Suriname, providing services to mainly Dutch companies.

Internet access is possible via the state telephone company, Telesur, as well as through the private company CQ-Link, but is expensive and can take a week to set up. There are several internet cafes in Paramaribo where access is provided at a reasonable price. Fees are usually charged in half-hour increments.

Public phones are not widely available on the streets in Paramaribo or in the districts. Cell phones are widely available and often inexpensive compared to U.S. prices. Telecom companies also offer cell phones on a rental basis.

Transportation

[Return to top](#)

Travelers to Suriname may experience disruptions in travel plans because of the unreliability of scheduled air service, both in international and domestic flights. International flights are often overbooked, often delayed, and sometimes arrive without luggage. Domestic flights to the interior are often delayed, sometimes for days, due to mechanical difficulties, fuel shortages, weather, and runway conditions.

Surinam Airways (SLM), the national airline, flies to Port of Spain (Trinidad and Tobago), Curacao, Cayenne (French Guyana) and Belem (Brazil), where connections can be made with other airlines. SLM also flies to Miami via Aruba or Georgetown, Guyana. GUM Air and Blue Wing Airlines also offer service between Paramaribo and Georgetown; however, private travel on Blue Wing Airlines is discouraged for safety reasons (official travel is prohibited). Suriname is also served from the United States by Caribbean Airlines via Trinidad and Tobago. KLM Royal Dutch Airlines and SLM also provide service between Amsterdam (the Netherlands) and Paramaribo. Insel Air and Dutch Antilles Airlines (DAE) provide service to Curacao and other destinations within the region.

Traffic moves on the left in Suriname; both right-hand and left-hand-drive cars are allowed on the roads.

An international driver's license (obtainable from AAA) may be used to drive a car in Suriname.

Local Suriname drivers' licenses are also available. The U.S. Embassy's Consular section provides notary services for validating U.S. drivers' licenses (for use in the application process.) The Embassy phone number is: (597) 472-900.

Language

[Return to top](#)

Dutch is the official language of Suriname but almost all business contacts in the capital speak English as well. Other languages spoken include Sranan Tongo, Hindi, and Javanese.

Health

[Return to top](#)

Medical care is limited and does not fully meet U.S. standards.

Doctors and hospitals expect immediate cash payment for access to health services, which are inexpensive when compared to U.S. facilities. Americans visiting Suriname who are injured or become ill during their visit will not be admitted to the only hospital with emergency and intensive care facilities unless an advance payment deposit is made (payable only in U.S. dollars) or proof of adequate insurance coverage is provided in a form acceptable to the hospital.

Academisch Ziekenhuis

Flustra
Telephone: (597) 442-222
Fax: (597) 440-022

Diakonessenhuis
Zinniastraat 64
Telephone: (597) 427-288
Fax: (597) 499-224
E-mail: diakonessenhus@sr.net

Sint Vincentius Ziekenhuis
Koningenstraat
Telephone: (597) 471-212
Fax: (597) 473-148

Business travelers should consult their health insurance company for information about reimbursement of medical expenses incurred outside the United States and, if advisable, obtain traveler's insurance.

Malaria is not present in Paramaribo but is endemic in much of the interior. Overnight trips to certain sections of the interior require the use of anti-malarial prophylactics.

Dengue is present in Paramaribo and is especially prevalent during the rainy season.

Local Time , Business Hours, and Holidays

[Return to top](#)

The time zone for Suriname is UTC/GTM -3 hours. There is no Daylight Savings Time.

Most businesses are open from 8-4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 8-1 p.m. on Saturdays. In addition, some retail businesses have extended Friday business hours until 7 p.m.

Suriname's 2013 holidays

January 01	New Years day
February 02	Holy Phagwa
March 29	Good Friday
April 01	Easter Monday
May 01	Labor Day
July 01	Emancipation Day
August 09	Indigenous People's Day/Eid al Fitr (tentative)
October 10	Maroon Day
October 15(tentative)	Eid al Adha
November 23	Divali
November 25	Independence Day
December 25	Christmas Day
December 26	Boxing Day

Temporary Entry of Materials and Personal Belongings

[Return to top](#)

Temporary entry of goods in Suriname is permissible. The importer is required to notify customs. For further information about temporary entry of materials and belongings, please contact the customs office.

Customs Office

Telephone: (597) 402-626

Fax: (597) 403-164

Web Resources

[Return to top](#)

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1030.html

<http://www.surinameembassy.org>

<http://travel.state.gov/visa/>

<http://travel.state.gov/visa/>

[Return to table of contents](#)

[Return to table of contents](#)

Chapter 9: Contacts, Market Research and Trade Events

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

Contacts

[Return to top](#)

Ministry of Trade and Industry
Phone: (597) 402080

American Chamber of Commerce
Email: amchamsuriname@sr.net
Phone: (597) 521465

Suriname Trade and Industry Association
Phone: (597) 475-286
E-mail: vsbstia@sr.net
Website: <http://www.vsbstia.org>

Association of Small and Medium Enterprises in Suriname
Phone: (597) 420-557
E-mail: jinglesco@sr.net

Suriname Chamber of Commerce and Industry
Telephone: (597) 530-311
E-mail: Chamber@sr.net
Website: <http://surinamechamber.com>

Market Research

[Return to top](#)

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

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

Trade Events

[Return to top](#)

Please click on the link below for information on upcoming trade events
<http://www.export.gov/tradeevents/index.asp>

[Return to table of contents](#)

[Return to table of contents](#)

Chapter 10: Guide to Our Services

The President's 2010 National Export Initiative aims to double exports over five years by marshaling federal agencies to **prepare U.S. companies to export successfully, connect them with trade opportunities and support them once they do have exporting opportunities.**

The U.S. Commercial Service offers customized solutions to help U.S. exporters, particularly small and medium sized businesses, successfully expand exports to new markets. Our global network of trade specialists will work one-on-one with you through every step of the exporting process, helping you to:

- Target the best markets with our world-class research
- Promote your products and services to qualified buyers
- Meet the best distributors and agents for your products and services
- Overcome potential challenges or trade barriers
- Gain access to the full range of U.S. government trade promotion agencies and their services, including export training and potential trade financing sources

To learn more about the U.S. federal government's trade promotion resources for new and experienced exporters, please click on the following link: www.export.gov

For more information on the services the U.S. Commercial Service offers to U.S. exporters, please click on the following link: (Insert link to Products and Services section of local buyusa.gov website here.)

U.S. exporters seeking general export information/assistance or country-specific commercial information can also contact the **U.S. Department of Commerce's Trade Information Center** at **(800) USA-TRAD(E)**.

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.

[Return to table of contents](#)