



Telecommunications Services and Equipment A Top Export Prospect for Haiti

September 2013

Overview

	2010	2011	2012
Total Market Size	95.8	196.6	**
Total Local Production	0	0	0
Total Exports	0	0	0
Total Imports	95.8	196.6	**
Imports from the U.S.	47.2	47.5	27.2

** : Not available

Figures in million USD. All figures derived from the U.S. Census Bureau and the International Trade Center.

The government's telecommunications regulatory agency, Conseil National des Telecommunications (CONATEL -- equivalent to the FCC) regulates the telecommunications sector. CONATEL assigns frequencies and issues operating licenses to all telecommunication companies.

Prior to the earthquake in January 2010, Haiti's fixed-line penetration was only 1.8 percent - the lowest in Latin America and the Caribbean, while internet penetration remained below 1 percent. However, as a result of major investments in wireless telephone communications since 2007, by 2012 Haiti boasted five million mobile telephone subscribers, a substantial figure given only 6.4 million Haitians are aged 15 and older.

The largest telecoms providers are Digicel (private Irish ownership) and Natcom (jointly owned by the Vietnamese and Haitian governments). Haiti's main suppliers for telecommunications services and equipment are the U.S., China and Sweden. In 2012, U.S. exports of telecommunications equipment represented 3 percent of total U.S. exports to Haiti (USD 1.06 billion).

In recent years, the mobile telephone market has reached further into small cities and rural areas. In 2012, internet penetration was 15 percent, but estimated to rise to 25 percent in the short term. Internet service is more common in large cities. Smart phones and tablets

with mobile data connectivity are the most common means of internet access. Wired or satellite based internet connections are limited to larger cities, often to businesses.

In June 2011, the Government of Haiti had begun collecting a 5 cents/minute fee on all international calls into Haiti to finance a free compulsory education program across the country. The levy on international phone calls with Digicel and Natcom has raised USD 53 million.

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

The telecommunications sector is a growing. The rapid expansion of the telecommunications market has been accompanied by a growing demand for diversified telecommunications services. Approximately 10 firms offer Internet access and data transmission services, which are leading to the growth of a computer culture.

NATCOM provides fiber optic cable internet, which facilitates improved internet connection speeds and allow for Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP).

Opportunities

The existence of two GSM cellular companies in the telecommunications market opens opportunities for other investors, which may result in higher competition. An expanded market for internet services is also a viable opportunity.

Web Resources

CONATEL
4, Ave Christophe, B.P. 2002,
Port-au-Prince, HAITI
Tel: (509) 2511-3940
<http://www.conatel.gouv.ht>

Access Haiti:
www.accesshaiti.com

Natcom:
www.natcom.com.ht

Digicel:
www.digicelhaiti.com

For More Information

Economic/Commercial Officer
Skye Justice
U.S. Embassy Port-au-Prince
Tabarre 41, Route de Tabarre

Port-au-Prince, Haiti
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