



# **“Doing Business in Qatar”**

## A Country Commercial Guide for U.S. Companies: 2009 Edition

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# Chapter 1: Doing Business in Qatar

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## Market Overview

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- Qatar's economic performance is expected to remain strong in 2009, despite the current global economic downturn. Qatar's economy will continue to grow robustly because of planned increases in its gas production. Six new liquefied natural gas (LNG) super trains will come on line, fueling strong economic growth.
- Qatar's real GDP growth was 13% for 2008, and is projected to be around 10% for 2009. The decline in GDP is attributed to falling oil prices and world demand, compounded by the global economic crisis.
- Qatar's gross domestic product (GDP) rose to a record high of \$102 billion in 2008, compared to \$71 billion the previous year.
- From 2004 – 2008, Qatar's nominal GDP growth averaged 34%. The main drivers for this rapid growth are attributed to ongoing increases in production and exports of LNG, oil, petrochemicals and related industries. During the same period, the non-oil and gas sector has likewise surged, averaging 32% growth.
- In 2008, the oil and gas sector accounted for 61% of overall GDP, while the non-oil and gas sector accounted for 39%. Per capita GDP in Qatar is among the highest in the world: \$65,000. There is no personal income tax in Qatar.
- In 2008, Qatar was the United States' 5<sup>th</sup> largest export market in the Middle East, trailing behind the U.A.E., Israel, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.
- Commercial ties between the United States and Qatar have been expanding at a rapid pace over the last five years, with trade volumes growing by more than 340%, from \$738 million in 2003 to \$3.2 billion in 2008. Over the same period, U.S. exports increased 580 percent to \$2.7 billion, making the United States the largest import partner for Qatar.

## Market Challenges

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- **Foreign Investment:** With certain exceptions, Qatar's foreign investment law limits foreign ownership of local entities to 49% of the entity's capital. Foreign investors may own 100% of an entity's capital in sectors like agriculture, industry, health care, education, tourism and the exploitation and development of natural resources subject to approval by the Government of Qatar ("GOQ").
- **Foreign investors** must receive permission from the government to invest in the banking and insurance sectors. Foreign investment is not allowed in commercial agencies and real estate, although with respect to real estate there are limited opportunities for foreigners to own interests in select real estate projects in the West Bay Lagoon area, Al-Khor district, Pearl of the Gulf Development project and certain other designated zones.
- **Banking:** A total of 18 banks operate in Qatar, including 11 Qatari institutions and seven foreign branch banks. Out of the 11 Qatari banks, eight are

commercial institutions (Ahlibank, Al Khaliji Bank, Barwa Bank, Commercial Bank of Qatar, Doha Bank, International Bank of Qatar, Qatar Development Bank, and Qatar National Bank); the other three are Islamic institutions (Masraf Al Rayan, International Islamic and Qatar Islamic Bank). The seven foreign banks include: Arab Bank, Bank Saderat Iran, BNP Paribas, HSBC, Mashreq Bank, Standard Chartered, and United Bank.

- **Commercial Agents:** The Commercial Agents law requires all agency agreements to be exclusive arrangements.
- **Corporate Income Tax:** Foreign companies must pay corporate income taxes between five and 35%, while Qataris are exempted from this tax. New legislation is expected to be passed to reduce the corporate income tax rates for foreign companies to a flat rate of 10%. In certain circumstances foreign companies can obtain an exemption from income tax for periods of up to five years.
- **Government Procurement:** There are concerns about transparency in government procurement, particularly regarding the following: a lack of clarity in the conditions and criteria of tenders, improper notification or explanation to non-qualifying companies, irregularities in the awards process, and the inability to formally challenge awards.
- **Import Duties:** The import duty for most processed food products is a flat five percent ad valorem. There is no import duty for live animals, fresh fruits and vegetables, seafood, grains, flours, tea, sugar, spices and seeds for planting. The import duty on cigarettes and other tobacco product is 100 percent.
- **Import Restrictions:** Qatar has no import quotas. However, non-tariff barriers arise occasionally. For example, Qatar maintained a ban on imports of U.S. beef from 2005 until mid-2008. Imports of pork products are prohibited in Qatar for cultural reasons.
- **Inflation:** The booming economy in Qatar is leading to shortages of materials and labor. This is compounded by a rapidly growing population, which is approaching two million people, up from just 700,000 five years ago. This has an inflationary effect on the economy, with housing prices particularly hard hit. The cost of living is high by U.S. standards.
- **Standards and Labeling:** As part of the GCC Customs Union, the six Member States are working toward unifying their standards and conformity assessment regimes. However, each Member State applies its own standards until a uniform GCC standard has been set. Labeling and marking requirements are compulsory for any products exported to Qatar.
- **Food Labeling and Packaging:** Arabic or bilingual English and Arabic language labels (or stickers) are required for all food products. Production and expiry dates are required to be on all "original" food labels.
- **Travel Advisories:** Americans visiting Qatar are advised to check the website [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1003.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1003.html) for the latest information on travel to Qatar.

## Market Opportunities

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- The Government of Qatar has announced its intention to allocate a total expenditure of \$25 billion for the fiscal year 2009/10 despite projecting a budgetary deficit of \$1.5 billion (or 2% of GDP). Of the \$25 billion, 40% (or \$10.4 billion) will be allocated to non-oil and gas sectors, reflecting the Government of Qatar's strong commitment to invest in economic diversification through public

spending on transportation, health care, education and housing projects. This will create multiplier effects on the rest of the economy, contributing to increased consumption and demand for better quality housing, office and retail facilities.

- **Energy Sector:** Qatar has attracted an estimated \$100 billion in investment, with approximately \$60-70 billion coming from the U.S. It is estimated that Qatar will invest over \$120 billion in the energy sector in the next ten years.
- **Construction:** It is estimated that Qatar will invest \$60 billion in roads, infrastructure development, housing and real estate, health/medical and sanitation projects in the next decade. The GOQ and private sector are actively seeking project designers, engineers and managers, in addition to needed production inputs like cement and heavy machinery and equipment.
- **Qatar imports over 90 percent of its food.** Major food suppliers to the Qatar market include the EU, Australia and Saudi Arabia. Most of Qatar's food product imports transit through the United Arab Emirates.
- **Other sectors with significant opportunities include:** Education and Training Services, Information Communication Technologies, Architecture, Construction, Engineering Services, Air Conditioning Equipment, Safety and Security, Defense Sales, Oil and Gas Equipment and Services, Medical Equipment and Services, and other sectors. Please see [Chapter 4: Leading Sectors for U.S. Export and Investment](#)

## Market Entry Strategy

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- If you are a new-to-exporting company, first contact your local Export Assistance Center for free export counseling at [www.buyusa.gov/home/export.html](http://www.buyusa.gov/home/export.html)
- The Commercial Section of the United States Embassy can give you a balanced assessment of your company's chances for success in Qatar. For more information, please visit [www.buyusa.gov/qatar](http://www.buyusa.gov/qatar).
- **Come visit:** Qatar is like many Middle Eastern countries in that personal contact with potential agents and partners is key to successfully conducting business.
- **Get a lawyer:** Many U.S. companies advise that acquiring good legal representation is an important first step to entering the market. This helps you to establish and maintain good business relationships with Qatari partners. Hiring a lawyer is especially important before concluding commercial agreements. Occasionally, American firms, once their company starts making a profit, report difficulties with their Qatari sponsors and business partners. A good business lawyer can help you with such problems. The U.S. Embassy can provide you with a list of law firms currently operating in Qatar.
- **Feasibility study:** U.S. firms we interviewed recommend that you carefully conduct a feasibility study about your product or service's chances for success in the Qatari market. This study should be based on such factors as pre-existing competition, market channels, and local tastes. The Commercial Service offers various industry market research reports, as well as *Customized Market Research* that can form a strong basis for a viable feasibility study. Please contact the Commercial Section for more information.
- **Vet partners:** The Commercial Section at the U.S. Embassy offers several services to help you thoroughly vet prospective Qatari business partners and determine which Qatari companies would be best to work with. These services include the *International Company Profile*, the *International Partner Search*, and

the *Gold Key Service*. These services are described in more detail by visiting: [www.buyusa.gov/qatar](http://www.buyusa.gov/qatar)

- **Maintain independence:** Having a reliable local partner can mean the difference between success and failure in Qatar. However, U.S. firms advise not to rely too much on your local partner for all market intelligence and contacts affecting your business. We advise U.S. companies to negotiate expatriate labor visa issues with their sponsors, agents, and partners in the early stages of contract negotiation.
- **Adapt:** Successful U.S., European and other foreign companies understand that doing business internationally always creates challenges, and doing business in Qatar is no exception. Learn to live with new procedures and laws by injecting a healthy dose of flexibility into your business plan. The Commercial Service suggests U.S. firms insist on payment by letter of credit to avoid costly payment delays.
- Importers and distributors are most commonly used in the retail food business.
- Food processors and the hotel, restaurant, and institutional (HRI) sector may import directly or purchase goods locally from distributors.

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## Chapter 2: Political and Economic Environment

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

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

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### Using a Commercial Agent or Distributor

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In certain circumstances foreign companies doing business in Qatar may elect to have a local commercial agent. A commercial agent generally acts as the exclusive provider of services of the foreign principal or exclusive seller in Qatar for foreign produced goods. U.S. firms are strongly advised to avoid appointing one regional agent for a number of countries. U.S. companies having agency agreements or planning to have agency agreements with Qatari firms are encouraged to review Law No. 8/2002 (the "Commercial Agents Law"). The law consists of 28 articles, enshrining two basic principles:

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

It should be noted that the Commercial Agents Law mandates certain outcomes with respect to the expiration or termination of agency contracts and these provisions should be reviewed carefully when entering into an agency or distribution agreement.

When finally approved by both parties, the Arabic text of agency or representation agreements should be registered with the Commercial Affairs Department of the Ministry of Business & Trade (MOBT). Local agents usually follow up on the routine work required by the MOBT registration regulations. Disputes between parties in relation to an agency agreement are filed at the MOBT prior to referral to arbitration if appropriate. The local civil courts are the final course of action if the dispute cannot be resolved.

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

appointed local agent, unless otherwise agreed between the parties in a written agency agreement.

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

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

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

The commercial agency law can be complex in its application and U.S. companies are encouraged to consult counsel prior to hiring an agent or selling goods or services into Qatar.

### **Establishing an Office and Doing Business in Qatar**

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In order to do business in Qatar and establish a local office, foreign and local companies are required to obtain a commercial registration from the Ministry of Business and Trade. Qatar enacted Law No. 25/2005 (the "Commercial Registry Law") which states that no individual person or single entity may engage in commercial activity before registering in the Commercial Registry maintained by the MOBT. Any inquiries regarding the registration process should be directed to the Director of Commercial Affairs at the MOBT.

- The general rule under Law No. 13/2000 (the "Foreign Investment Law") is that non-Qataris, whether natural or juristic persons, may invest only through the medium of a joint venture company incorporated in Qatar in which one or more Qatari persons or 100 percent Qatari-owned entities hold no less than 51% of the share capital. Joint venture companies with Qatari partners are allowed in all sectors of the economy excluding commercial agencies and real estate. Establishing a joint venture in the banking and insurance sectors is possible with an approval from the Cabinet of Ministers.

Important exceptions to the general rule are as follows:

- 100 percent foreign investment: Subject to an exemption from the Ministry of Business & Trade, the Foreign Investment Law allows foreign firms 100 percent ownership of the share capital of companies developing projects in the fields of agriculture, industry, health, education and tourism sectors, as well as projects involved in the development and exploitation of natural resources or energy or mining, pending approval from the government. The law specifically prohibits foreign investment in banking, insurance, commercial agencies and procurement or purchase of real estate. However, Law No. 31/2004 allows foreign investment in the banking and insurance sectors upon approval of the Cabinet of Ministers. Each application is reviewed on a case-by-case basis and foreign firms working in sectors not specifically mentioned in these laws may be granted a 100 percent ownership on a case-by-case basis, upon approval of the Ministry of Business and Trade. Although there is paperwork to be filed, approvals to be obtained and registration fees assessed during this process, this mode of registration offers the opportunity for

foreign companies to operate independently. However, it should be noted that only a small number of foreign companies have received the necessary Ministerial resolution to operate as a 100% wholly owned subsidiary.

- Article 68 companies: The Foreign Investment Law provides that it shall not apply to companies and individuals whom the State entrusts with excavation, utilization or management of natural wealth resources under a concession or agreement, nor to companies that are established by the Government or in which the Government participates (so called “Article 68 Companies”). Special rules apply in these circumstances.
- Representational office: The Decision of the Minister of Economy and Commerce No. 142/2006 provides that foreign firms may open representational offices without a local partner. Such offices may not conduct any financial transactions related to the company’s commercial activities in Qatar and are therefore not subject to taxation. Though the representational office may be registered in the Commercial Registry and employ staff in its own name, it is really a “shop window” to source business. A representational office could be converted into a joint venture company or 100% foreign ownership at a later date.
- Branch registration: The Foreign Investment Law contains provisions that, subject to an exemption from the Minister of Business & Trade, allow a branch of a foreign company to be registered in Qatar if that foreign company has a contract in Qatar that results in facilitating the rendering of a service or implies a public benefit. This has generally been interpreted to mean engaging in a contract with the GOQ or a quasi-government entity. This registration does not allow the foreign company to conduct commercial activity that is not related to the subject of its registration. Foreign companies registered under this category do not need a sponsor or service agent.
- Service agents or sponsorship: In the past this type of agency consisted of appointing a Qatari entity to act as a service agent for a foreign firm. Specific services would be determined by the two parties and may include handling administrative and business matters in Qatar, including immigration procedures, import licenses, providing introductions to decision-makers, etc. Although the service agent remains a common business practice in the region, it is no longer appropriate as an option for doing business in Qatar, specifically in light of Law No. 25/2004 which is commonly known as the “Proxy Law”. The Proxy Law was enacted in Qatar to address the practice of concealing non-Qataris doing business in Qatar in violation of existing Qatari law. It prohibits natural or legal persons from concealing the business activities of non-Qataris, for example by allowing a non-Qatari to use the name, license or commercial registration of Qatari party. According to Law No. 25/2004, the service agent relationship is considered a form of proxy business and fines and imprisonment penalties can be imposed on whoever infringes the law.
- QFC, QSTP, and Free Zones: The State of Qatar has established the Qatar Financial Centre (QFC) and the Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP). Both provide environments for international companies and institutions to operate under certain free zone type conditions. The criteria and limitations to operate in these

environments are fairly stringent. The QFC is restricted to financial services and ancillary services companies and the QSTP is restricted to entities engaged in research and development activities in Qatar. Applications must be submitted by interested parties for both the QFC and the QSTP for assessment of eligibility to establish a corporate presence. Qatar is also developing additional investment free zones to attract investment in the industrial, agricultural, technical and tourism fields and other fields to be decided upon by the Cabinet of Ministers. These additional free zones are still in the developmental stage and it is not clear what rules and regulations will apply.

## Franchising

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

- One of the keys to success in franchise operations in Qatar is to use a local franchisee versus a regional master franchisee expanding to Qatar. Qataris are sensitive to businesses owned or operated in Qatar by neighboring countries' companies or nationals.
- U.S. fast food and casual dining restaurants are popular in Qatar, particularly with the younger generation.
- Most major U.S. fast food franchises are established in Qatar, with new ones opening regularly. A local sponsor is required to establish a franchise business.
- High per capita income, a rather young population, a high rate of unaccompanied expatriate population and the lack of alternate entertainment venues encourage out of home dining.

## Direct Marketing

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

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

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

## Joint Venture Companies

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

As mentioned above, joint ventures involving foreign partners primarily take the form of limited liability companies. Generally, foreign investors may own up to 49 percent and the Qatari partners no less than 51 percent of a limited liability concern. Foreign partners in partnerships organized as limited liability partnerships must pay the full amount of their contribution to authorized financial institutions in cash or in kind prior to the start of operations. These firms are normally required to set aside 10 percent of their profits each year in a statutory reserve, until it equals 50 percent of the venture's authorized capital.

## Selling to the Government

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The Qatari government is the biggest end-user of a wide range of products and services. In principle, all government procurement contracts are administered under provisions of bidding and tender regulations included in Law No. 26/2005. The Central Tenders Committee (CTC) of the Ministry of Economy & Finance is responsible for processing the majority of public sector tenders that are in excess of QR 1 million. The CTC applies standard tendering procedures and adheres to established performance practices. It also establishes the standards for rules that regulate bidding procedures.

Information on CTC tenders may be obtained from the CTC office in Doha or on the Internet at <http://www.ctc.gov.qa>. In tenders valued in excess of QR 50 million (USD 13.5 million), the approval of the Emir is required. Technical bids submitted to the CTC, or other specialized tenders committees as the case may be, are referred to the appropriate government end-user for short-listing. The CTC then opens the commercial bids and recommends the lowest priced technically qualified bidder to the entity concerned, who will make the final award decision. Inquiries about specific award decisions should be directed to the CTC.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **Distribution and Sales Channels**

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The GOQ is the biggest end user of a wide range of products and services. The government procurement process is based on standard tender procedures. A foreign supplier wishing to participate in government tenders may appoint a local commercial agent; however, as noted in the beginning of this chapter, appointing a commercial agent in Qatar raises specific legal and commercial issues that should be carefully considered by a foreign company or supplier. An effective agent in Qatar will have extensive contacts in both the public and private sectors, enabling the collection of valuable information for the business.

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

- Private supermarkets account for the vast majority of retail sales, and this sector is expanding.
- Consumer cooperative societies account for 20 percent of the food retail sales in Qatar.
- Institutional users account for 10 percent of food distributed.
- Wholesalers and small convenience stores account for the balance of 5 percent of food products marketed in Qatar.

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

### **Selling Factors/Techniques**

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

### **Electronic Commerce**

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

### **Trade Promotion and Advertising**

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

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

Arabic:

"Al-Sharq": P.O. Box 3488, Doha, State of Qatar, Phone: (974) 455-7731, Fax: (974) 455-7760, Email: [alsharq1@qaar.net.qa](mailto:alsharq1@qaar.net.qa); Website: <http://www.al-sharq.com>

"Al-Watan": P.O. Box 22345, Doha, State of Qatar, Phone: (974) 466-5933 Fax: (974) 466-4654482, Email: [alwatan3@qatar.net.qa](mailto:alwatan3@qatar.net.qa) Website: <http://www.al-watan.com>

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

Al-Arab: P.O. Box 22612, Doha, State of Qatar, Phone: (974) 499-7349, Fax: (974) 499-7417, Email: [alarab@alarab.com.qa](mailto:alarab@alarab.com.qa), Website: <http://www.alarab.com.qa>

English:

Gulf Times: P.O. Box 533, Doha, State of Qatar, Phone: (974) 446-6621, Fax: (974) 435-0474, Email: [editor@gulf-times.com](mailto:editor@gulf-times.com), Website: <http://www.gulf-times.com>

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

Qatar Tribune: P.O. Box 23493, Doha, State of Qatar, Phone: (974) 442-2077, Fax: (974) 441-6790, Email: [ajitkumariha@qatar-tribune.com](mailto:ajitkumariha@qatar-tribune.com); Website: <http://www.qatar-tribune.com/>

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

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

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

Al-Jazeera Satellite Channel with seven operational channels: Al-Jazeera Live, Al-Jazeera, Al-Jazeera Children, Al-Jazeera Sports 1 English and Al-Jazeera Documentary, P.O. Box 23123, Doha, Phone: (974) 489-7446 or 489-7451, Fax: (974) 489-7472. Website: <http://www.aljazeera.net/e-marketing-eng/>

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

## Pricing

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There is a large variety of local and foreign products in the Qatari market. Local consumers are very price conscious and actively seek out sales and promotions. Local distributors of international products often engage in promotions in order to attract consumers and gain market share. U.S. firms should work closely with their local distributor in order to determine appropriate pricing strategies.

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

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

## Sales Service and Customer Support

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

## Protecting Your Intellectual Property

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Several general principles are important for effective management of intellectual property rights (IPR) in Qatar. It is important to have an overall strategy to protect IPR. IPR is protected in Qatar by virtue of international treaties and agreements to which Qatar is a member. In addition, it is also possible and recommended that IPR owners register such rights locally for added protection against violations. Companies may wish to seek advice from local attorneys or IP consultants. The U.S. Commercial Service can often provide a list of local lawyers upon request.

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

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

create a solid contract that includes non-compete clauses, and confidentiality/non-disclosure provisions.

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

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

### **IPR Resources**

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

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

### **IPR Climate in Qatar**

In addition to international treaties and agreements to which Qatar is party, intellectual property rights in Qatar are protected by Law No. 7/2002 (Copyright and Neighboring Rights Law), Law No. 9/2002 (Trademarks and Geographical Indicators Law), Law No.5/2005 (Protection of Trade Secrets), and Law No. 6/2005 (Protection of Layout

Design of Integrated Circuits). Qatar has adopted the GCC Patent Law and created a GCC Patent Office. The Ministry of Business and Trade is responsible for enforcing these laws and other intellectual property rights matters.

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

## Due Diligence

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

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

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

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

## Local Professional Services

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[Auditing](#)  
[Banking](#)  
[Freight Forwarding and Courier Services](#)  
[Insurance](#)  
[Law Firms](#)  
[Media](#)  
[Telecommunications](#)  
[Tenders](#)

### Auditing Firms:

[Deloitte & Touche](#)  
[Ernst & Young](#)  
[KPMG](#)  
[PricewaterhouseCoopers](#)

Banking:

***Qatari Banks:***

Ahlibank  
Al Khaliji Bank  
Barwa Bank  
Commercial Bank of Qatar  
Doha Bank  
International Bank of Qatar  
Masref Al Rayan  
Qatar Development Bank  
Qatar International Islamic Bank  
Qatar Islamic Bank  
Qatar National Bank

***Foreign Banks' Branches:***

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

Freight Forwarding and Courier Services:

Aramex  
DHL  
Federal Express  
TNT Express  
UPS  
Skynet

Hotels:

Al-Bustan Hotel  
Doha Sheraton Hotel and Resort  
Doha Palace  
Grand Hyatt Hotel  
Grand Regency Hotel Doha  
Hotel Souq Wakif  
InterContinental Doha  
La Cigale Hotel  
Marriott Hotel  
Mercure Grand Hotel  
Merweb Hotel  
Millennium Hotel  
Moevenpick Hotel  
New Capital Hotel  
Ramada Plaza Hotel  
Retaj Al Rayyan Hotel

Sealine Beach Resort  
Sharq Village & Spa, Doha Hotel  
Somerset West Bay, Doha  
The Ritz-Carlton Hotel  
Four Seasons Hotels & Resorts  
W Hotel

Insurance:

*Qatari Companies:*

Al-Khaleej Insurance Company  
Qatar General Insurance and Re-Insurance Company  
Qatar Insurance Company  
Qatar Islamic Insurance Company  
Qatar Islamic Insurance Company

*Foreign Companies:*

The American Life Insurance Company  
Libano-Suisse Insurance Company  
National Insurance Company of Egypt

Law Firms:

Lawyers

Media:

Al-Jazeera Satellite TV Station  
Al-Watan  
Al-Rayah  
AL-Sharq  
Gulf Times  
The Peninsula  
Qatar News Agency

Telecommunications:

Qatar Telecom

Tenders:

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

## [Qatar Petrochemical Company](#)

Contact the Commercial Section of the U.S. Embassy at:

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

### **Web Resources**

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[Local Professional Services](#)

[Tenders](#)

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

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

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

## Agricultural Sector

## Commercial Sectors

- Air-conditioning and Refrigeration Equipment
- Architectural/Construction/Engineering Services
- Automotive
- Construction Equipment and Tools
- Defense Sales
- Education and Training and Equipment
- Information and Communication Technology
- Medical Equipment and Services
- Oil & Gas Equipment and Services
- Security and Safety Equipment
- Travel and Tourism

**Agricultural Sector**[Return to top](#)**Best Prospects**[Return to top](#)

In 2008, the United States exported a record \$35 million in U.S. agricultural and forest products to Qatar. Leading U.S. exports to Qatar included poultry meat, processed fruits and vegetables, forest products and beef. Exporters of poultry should work to limit the amount of water in their products as a number of U.S. shipments have been detained because of concerns about shipments thawing during shipping. For more information about agricultural trade prospects in Qatar and the region, please visit [www.fas.usda.gov](http://www.fas.usda.gov)

**Resources**[Return to top](#)

Contact the U.S. Agricultural Trade Office in Dubai at:

[atodubai@usda.gov](mailto:atodubai@usda.gov).

## Commercial Sectors

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## Air-Conditioning and Refrigeration Equipment

### Overview

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	2006	2007	2008
Total Market Size*	194.13	232.36	278.11
Total Local Production	0	0	0
Total Exports	0.96	2.35	2.81
Total Imports	194.13	232.36	278.11
Total Imports from the US	4,66	13.14	31.75

Value: In millions of U.S. dollars

Source: Trade estimates, U.S. Census Bureau, Qatar Planning Council

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

### Best Prospects/Services

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

### Opportunities

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

### Resources

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

Contact the Commercial Section of the U.S. Embassy at:

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

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## Architecture Construction Engineering

### Overview

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(Services statistics are not available from the GOQ.)

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

### Best Products/Services

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- Engineering and Architectural Services
- Construction and Program Management Services

### Opportunities

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- North Road - Phase IV (Al Zabara to Ras Usheirej): Scope: 35 Km long project, which includes construction of a four-lane dual carriageway, services roads with six grade separated intersections, three camel crossing tunnels, infrastructure works and landscaping, Value USD 145 million, Client: Public Works Authority
- Road No 55 (Salwa - Mesaeed): Scope: 25 Km; Value: USD 103 million; Client: Public Works Authority
- Al Khor Environmental Park: Scope: 240,000 m<sup>2</sup>; Value: USD 50 million; Client: Public Works Authority
- C5/208 Maintenance of PS – 6th Phase: Scope: The project includes prequalification, maintenance and upgrading of electricity and mechanical system for a number of pumping stations until 2030, Value: Unknown
- Doha North STW: Scope: Doha North STW and associated works will serve an area north of the City of Doha including North of Gharafa, Umm Salal, Semeisma and Lusail areas. The PS will provide sewerage service to the areas in addition to the drainage area No 25, with an estimated power of 600,000 cubic meters per day during first phase. By the end of project, in addition to the areas mentioned, Pearl Island and North costal road will receive irrigation water. This project is strategically important to the infrastructural development of the country. The project work also comprises operation and maintenance of the plant for 10 years. Client: Public Works Authority
- New Doha Port: Scope: Construction of a new port with a container capacity of 6 million 20 foot equivalent units (TEUs) by 2030. Value: USD 2 billion, Client: New Doha Port Steering Committee.
- Energy City Qatar: Scope: Commercial Center for companies in the energy industry to be built in three phases. Value: USD 3.5 billion, Client: Energy City Development Company.
- Sidra Digital Medical Care & Research Center: Scope: 550-bed teaching hospital, which will serve as the primary teaching hospital for Weil Cornell Medical College. Value: USD 2.3 billion, Client: Qatar Foundation.

- Urjuan mixed-use development, Al-Khor City: Scope: Mixed use city for 63,000 residents north of Al-Khor city. Value: USD 10 billion. Client: Barwa Real Estate Development Company
- New Doha International Airport: Scope: 52 Contact Gates, Value USD 13 billion, Client: New Doha International Airport Steering Committee
- Qatar-Bahrain Causeway: Scope: 45 km long road and rail causeway linking Bahrain to Qatar; USD 4.2 billion; Client Qatar Bahrain Causeway Foundation.
- Lusail Development: Scope: Mixed-use Development – master plan by Bechtel for Qatari Diar Real Estate Investment Company. Value: USD 5 billion.

## Resources

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[Qatar Petroleum](#)  
[Central Tenders Committee](#)  
[Public Works Authority](#)  
[Hamad Medical Corporation](#)  
[The Pearl of the Gulf](#)  
[Projects Qatar 2009](#)  
[New Doha International Airport](#)  
[United Development Company](#)  
[Qatar National Bank](#)  
[Qatari Diar](#)

Contact the Commercial Section of the U.S. Embassy at:

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

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## Automotive

### Overview

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	2006	2007	2008
Total Market Size*	2473.03	2836.77	3252.86
Total Local Production	0	0	0
Total Exports	7.79	11.00	58.83
Total Imports	2473.03	2836.77	3252.86
Total Imports from the US	298.70	404.18	365.60

Value: In millions of U.S. dollars

Source: Trade estimates, U.S. Census Bureau, Qatar Planning Council

Given the increase of the population in Qatar, the need for means of transportation has increased tremendously in the last few years. Economic growth has contributed in an increase of personal wealth which leads to the purchase of additional, more expensive vehicles. On the industrial side, the need for trucks and utility vehicles has increased given the level of economic activity in all sectors. The demand for spare parts, car care products and accessories has likewise increased as the number of used vehicles has reached around 400,000 units.

### Best Prospects/Services

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- Sports Utility Vehicles (Gas guzzlers)
- Trucks, Vans and Buses
- All Terrain Vehicles (ATV), Utility Vehicles (UTVs)
- Specialized trucks and vehicles
- Car care products
- Aftermarket parts, accessories, and spare parts

### Opportunities

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- Tenders published by the different governmental institutions
- Market penetration through appointment of distributors

### Resources

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Contact the Commercial Section of the U.S. Embassy at:

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

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## Construction Equipment and Tools

### Overview

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	2006	2007	2008
Total Market Size*	661.95	498.69	500.76
Total Local Production	0	0	0
Total Exports	30.38	46.95	47.14
Total Imports	661.95	498.69	500.76
Total Imports from the US	104.84	155.82	156.44

Value: In millions of U.S. dollars

Source: Trade estimates, U.S. Census Bureau, Qatar Planning Council

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

### Best Prospects/Services

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- Heavy equipment (used and new)

### Opportunities

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

### Resources

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Contact the Commercial Section of the U.S. Embassy at:

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

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## Defense Sales

### Overview

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The U.S. Military strategic partnership in Qatar has made great strides since 1992 and become more robust since 9/11. The U.S. military commitment and relationship to Qatar is strong in view of its physical presence in Qatar, i.e., U.S. Central Command's Forward Headquarters and the Combined Air Operations Center.

Although the Qatari military has traditionally made acquisitions from Britain and France, in 2008 the Government of Qatar made its first major U.S. defense purchases. The recent contracts Qatar signed with Boeing and Lockheed-Martin bode well for U.S. defense sales. In addition, the future offers U.S. firms promise in military training, education, logistics and maintenance services. In the medium term, the total U.S. export value for the Qatari defense market is estimated to be \$5 to \$7 billion.

### Best Products/Services

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- Military aircraft (fixed- and rotary-wing)
- Small arms and ammunition
- Anti-tank weapons systems
- Integrated air and missile defense systems

### Opportunities

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- 2 Boeing C-17s, plus assorted logistics, training and maintenance
- 4 Lockheed-Martin 130Js, plus assorted logistics, training and maintenance
- 10-12 new fighter aircraft
- 10-12 new trainer aircraft
- 10-12 new multi-role capability helicopters
- Anti-tank weapons (Javelin or TOW) for all security services (Armed and Internal Security Forces, Special Forces, Coast Guard, and Emiri Guard)
- Integrated air and missile defense systems
- Command and Control architecture
- Logistics, maintenance, training and education across the spectrum

### Resources

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Contact the Office of Military Cooperation Qatar of the U.S. Embassy in Doha through

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

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## Education Training and Equipment

### Overview

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(Services statistics are not available from the GOQ.)

Qatar is using its hydrocarbon-fueled wealth in part to invest in educational reform. The Government of Qatar (GOQ) recognizes that it must develop a diversified, knowledge-based economy to ensure the country continues to thrive over the long-term. Seeing the failure of educational systems throughout the Arab world, Qatar is overhauling its primary and secondary schools along a U.S. model of competitive charter schools. For university education, they have imported not just the American model, but the U.S. universities themselves – six at last count, with others to come – with the goal of creating the best-educated citizens in the Middle East, fully prepared to participate in the global economy.

Qatar Foundation (QF) is a major vehicle for the GOQ for education. Qatar Foundation's flagship project is a 2,500 acre campus in Doha which hosts 6 U.S. universities: Weill-Cornell Medical College (medicine); Carnegie Mellon University (computer science, business); Georgetown School of Foreign Service (political science and international affairs); Virginia Commonwealth University (design); Texas A&M University (engineering); and Northwestern University (journalism). Qatar Foundation intends to import more U.S. universities in the future. The Supreme Education Council, through the Outstanding Schools Initiative, has imported one U.S. high school and plans to import more.

Qatar currently has almost 90 independent schools which function like charter schools in the United States. While the Government of Qatar (GOQ) requires all independent schools to comply with national curriculum standards in all core subjects, the GOQ is gradually modifying its educational curriculum to match international baccalaureate standards.

The Government of Qatar's senior leadership has enunciated a Qatarization strategy, which seeks to educate highly productive, skilled Qatari nationals to meet the demands of the labor market. "Qatarization" is designed to increase the number of Qatari nationals in all joint venture industries and government departments to assume key positions formerly occupied by expatriates. The target is 50% of the workforce in the industry and energy sector.

The Government of Qatar provides every citizen free education at the primary and secondary level. The Government of Qatar's Higher Education Institute (HEI) scholarship awards full scholarships to Qatari nationals admitted into a variety of designated undergraduate and graduate schools in the United States (as well as other countries). The goal is to provide these Qataris with the appropriate mix of skills in key sectors in support of Qatarization. According to the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, student visas issued to Qataris are up 35% from 2007-2008.

## Best Products/Services

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- **Language:** ESL and TOEFL
- **Undergraduate:** Business, Engineering, Communication
- **Certificate Programs:** Firefighting, Law Enforcement Forensics, Security Training, Ongoing Professional Development at Qatari state-owned enterprises
- **Post-Graduate:** Pharmacy, Dentistry, MBAs

## Opportunities

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

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

## Resources

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

Contact the Commercial Section of the U.S. Embassy at:

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

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## Information and Communication Technology

### Overview

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	2006	2007	2008
Total Market Size*	1698.19	2090.02	2572.26
Total Local Production	0	0	0
Total Exports	0.45	1.12	6
Total Imports	1698.19	2090.02	2572.26
Total Imports from the US	148.18	157.29	120.52

Value: In millions of U.S. dollars  
Source: Industry Sources

IT is at the center of the government's plans to create a diversified, knowledge-based economy in Qatar. A current priority of Government IT promotion agency "ict QATAR" is to increase ICT use by SMEs, which is seen as essential to the country's diversification efforts. In 2008, ict QATAR launched new programs targeted at SMEs, including the e-Business Pilot project, a program to help a selected group of SMEs maximize ICT use.

Qatar's Supreme Council for Information and Communication Technology (SCICT) was set up in 2005 to develop ICT in Qatar. At the launch of the new policy making and regulatory body – generally referred to as ict QATAR – Chairman Sheikh Tamim said that the aim was to implement more than 100 programs and initiatives during the coming five years.

Key objectives include skills development, the delivery of e-services and the establishment of a regulatory environment that promotes growth and benefits citizens, businesses and the government. Ict QATAR was established by Emiri Decree. ictQATAR's priority programs include 'Broadband for All', which aims to provide broadband access to the community at large, with high bandwidth and competitive tariffs, and leverage wired and wireless technologies.

In addition, the Qatari government has identified a number of priority R&D areas, including healthcare, environmental technology, computer science and nanotechnology. Qatar will invest target 2.8% of GDP in research projects in these areas. According to government officials, IT will be the central lever to trigger and accelerate the development of Qatar as a hub for research.

The projected IT market value to be spent from 2008-2012 is \$550 million.

**Computers Sales:** In 2008 – 2012, it is estimated that computer sales will increase. Notebook sales represent more than half of those sales. The computer market should have a 10% increase according to industry experts 2007-2012.

**Software Sales:** With the evolution of Qatar's IT market, a stronger strategic focus on software spending is underway, with most enterprise customers prioritizing affordability

and simplicity. Software spending's average growth is estimated at 13% for the period of 2007- 2012, according to industry experts.

**IT Services:** With IT services spending estimated to grow to \$94 million in 2008 there are significant export opportunities in sectors such as government, financial services and communications. Industry experts estimate that the average growth rate will be around 13% from 2007-2012, with strong demand by corporate and government clients.

#### **Best Prospects/Services**

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- Software and hardware security solutions
- E-commerce
- E-Education
- Electronic Archiving Systems

#### **Opportunities**

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- Tenders published by the different governmental institutions
- Market penetration through appointment of distributors

#### **Resources**

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[Qatar Telecom](#)

[Qatar E-Government](#)

[Vodafone Qatar](#)

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

Contact the Commercial Section of the U.S. Embassy at:

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

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## Medical Equipment and Services

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### Overview

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	2006	2007	2008
Total Market Size*	11.82	5.82	7.83
Total Local Production	0	0	0
Total Exports	0.02	0.07	0.09
Total Imports	11.82	5.82	7.83
Total Imports from the US	3.95	5.08	6.81

Value: In millions of U.S. dollars

Source: Trade estimates, U.S. Census Bureau, Qatar Planning Council

Note: The above figures relate only to equipment.

Health care is a priority concern for the Qatari leadership. The Qatari Government is constantly upgrading the quality health services using technology, international expertise and knowledge. In Qatar, healthcare services are either free or highly subsidized. According to industry estimates, the market for medical equipment will grow over the next five years. The market relies on imports from Europe, Asia and the United States. In fact, the U.S. is one of the leading exporters of medical equipment, medical supplies, medicines and pharmaceuticals to Qatar. Qatar's strong interest in importing medical equipment, health care technology and supplies from the U.S. is driven by two factors: (1) the rise of new construction projects for hospitals and health care centers; and (2) Qatar's lack of local production capacity in this area.

### Best Products/Services

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- Medical Equipment
- Medical Supplies
- Equipment and supplies for persons with special needs
- Specialized medical services
- Healthcare technology
- Books and publications
- Training

### Opportunities

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- Hamad Medical City, owned and funded by Hamad Medical Corporation, is a \$900 million integrated medical complex consisting of several specialty hospitals. Work is underway to build an associated medical complex that will consist of the following: a 338 bed-Pediatric Hospital, a 200-bed Orthopedic Hospital, a 230-bed Physical Medicine and Physiotherapy Hospital, a 40-bed Day Care Surgery Center, and a 228-room Home Care Center for the elderly.

- Sidra Medical and Research Facility, owned and funded by the Qatar Foundation with an \$8 billion endowment, Sidra will be the first academic medical center in Qatar based on a U.S. model. Working in partnership with the Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar and the Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC), the hospital's main focus will be to provide world-class medical care for women and children, to train medical students and clinicians, and to specialize in pregnancy health, infertility, genetic abnormalities, and other diseases specific to females.

## Resources

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

Contact the Commercial Section of the U.S. Embassy at:

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

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## Oil & Gas Field Machinery and Equipment

### Overview

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	2006	2007	2008
Total Market Size*	1382.26	1866.76	2520.84
Total Local Production	0	0	0
Total Exports	53.84	9.97	13.46
Total Imports	1,382.26	1,866.76	2520.84
Total Imports from the US	52.61	176.72	141.67

Value: In millions of U.S. dollars

Source: Trade estimates, U.S. Census Bureau, Qatar Planning Council

Note: The above figures relate only to equipment.

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

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

### Best Prospects/Services

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

### Opportunities

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Law No. 13-2000 permits foreigners, upon approval, to own up to 100 percent of any investment made in the energy and mining sectors.

1. Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG):
  - Train 4 and 5: Capacity: 7.8 million tons/year; Value: USD 4.6 billion; Client: Qatar Gas II
  - Sulphur Handling Facility: Capacity: 11,000 tons/day; Value: USD 360 million, Client: Qatar Gas II
  - Train 6 and 7: Capacity: 7.8 million tons/year each; Value: USD 22 billion; Client: Qatar Gas II
  - Train 6 and 7: Capacity: 7.8 million tons/year each; Value: USD 14 billion; Client : RasGas III

2. Gas To Liquid (GTL):
  - Integrated GTL Plant: Capacity 140,000 barrels/day; Value: USD 15 billion, Client: Pearl GTL
  - Phase 2 plant expansion: Capacity 66,000 barrels/day, Value USD 1,400 million; Client Oryx GTL
  - Integrated GTL Project: Capacity 130,000 barrels/day; Value USD 2,400 million; Client: SASOL/Chevron
3. Gas Pipeline:
  - Ras Laffan Messaieed ethylene pipeline: Scope: 130 km of 16 inch pipeline; Value: USD 300 million; Client: Qatar Chemical Company
  - Doha urban relocation pipeline: Scope: decommissioning of existing and construction of new pipelines; Value: USD 70 million; Client: Qatar Petroleum
4. Refining:
  - Ras Laffan Condensate Refinery: Capacity 140,000 barrels/day, Value: USD 400 million; Client: Qatar Petroleum/ExxonMobil/Total
  - Al Shaheen Refinery – Mesaieed: Capacity 200,000 barrels/day; Value USD 1,000 million; Client Qatar Petroleum
5. Petrochemicals:
  - Ras Laffan Ethylene Cracker: Capacity 1.3 million ton/ year, Value: USD 500 million; Client Ras Laffan Ethylene Company
  - Messaieed downstream units: Capacity 350,000 tons/year of HDPE and 350,000 tons/year of Alpha Olefins; Value: USD 600 million, Client Q-Chem II
  - Messaieed downstream units: Capacity 450,000 tons/year of LLDPE; Value: USD 550 million; Client: Qatofin
  - New Methanol Train: Capacity 6,750 tons/day; Value: USD 500 million, Client: QAFAC
  - Ras Laffan Methanol: Capacity 12,000 to 15,000 tons/day; Value under estimation; Client: Qatar Petroleum / Petro World
  - Worldscale olefins complex: On-going feasibility study; Client Qatar Petroleum / ExxonMobil
6. Industry:
  - Messaieed Plant Expansion: Capacity 500,000 tons/year; Value USD 600 million; Client: QASCO
  - Umm Bab Plant No. III: Capacity 3500 tons/day; Value: USD 150 million, Client Qatar National Cement Company.
  - Messaieed Aluminum Smelter: Capacity 570,000 tons/year; Value: USD 3 billion; Client QP-Norsk Hydro

## Resources

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[Qatar Petroleum](#)

Contact the Commercial Section of the U.S. Embassy at:

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

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## Safety and Security Equipment

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	2006	2007	2008
Total Market Size*	204.13	309.60	393.21
Total Local Production	0	0	0
Total Exports	0	0.03	0.08
Total Imports	204.13	309.60	393.21
Total Imports from the US	11.10	19.77	32.80

Value: In millions of U.S. dollars

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Qatar Planning Council

Note: The above figures relate only to equipment.

## Overview

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

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

## Best Products/Services

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

## Opportunities

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

## Resources

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### [Ministry of Interior](#)

Contact the Commercial Section of the U.S. Embassy at:

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

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## Travel and Tourism

### Overview

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Qatar's \$140 million U.S.-bound market holds enormous potential for the domestic U.S. travel industry. In order to increase market share, U.S. travel entities are encouraged to promote their products and services directly to Qatar's consumers and travel agents. Doha's strategic location and its massive international airport under construction mean Qatar will become a major transit point for people in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. Qatar Airways flies to three destinations in America: Washington, DC, New York, and Houston 21 times per week.

2008 witnessed a record of 20,813 air departures by passengers on Qatar Airways to the United States. Other airlines have transported 12,829 passengers from Qatar to the United States. The U.S. Department of Commerce's Office of Tourism Industries recorded a 10% growth rate in the number of Middle East travelers to the United States in 2007 to 2008, totaling 681,000 visitors. According to industry sources, the number of outbound passengers from Qatar to the United States will witness an increase of at least 14% in 2009. Most Qataris who travel to the United States are business travelers, though considerable numbers of individuals, tour groups and families also visit the United States.

The average expense per person each day in the United States is approximately \$4,168 including accommodations, meals, and shopping (excluding airfare). Industry experts report over \$140 million in expenditures per year by inbound travelers from Qatar within the United States on travel-related services, excluding airfare.

In addition to Qatar Airways, the Emirates, Ettihad, Royal Air Jordan, Egypt Air and Turkish Airlines fly directly to several U.S. destinations, including New York, Houston, Los Angeles and Chicago. United Airlines and Delta are flying directly to cities in the Gulf Cooperation Council. European carriers such as Lufthansa, Air-France-KLM-Northwest and British airways are also carrying passengers from Qatar to different destinations in the United States, leveraging their network and daily flights to the region.

### Best Products/Services

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Over 70 travel agents and 12 tour operators work in the Qatari outbound travel market. This market is fast-paced and competitive. Operators and airlines advertise special packages and seasonal deals on an almost daily basis, especially during summer vacation between July and August and Qatar's holidays in the months of September and December. Tour operators specialize in market segments rather than in specific destinations and most operators are conservative when selecting new travel products.

U.S. passenger service companies, travel attractions, restaurants, outlet shopping and family travel destinations may find opportunities in Qatar, especially by offering new travel products and a high level of services.

## Opportunities

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The Commercial Service is implementing a Discover America initiative, which consists of a group of private airline carriers, travel agents and tour operators seeking to promote the United States as a destination for travel and tourism among families and businesses resident in Qatar.

For more information please contact the Commercial Service at:

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

You can also contact us for customized, individualized or standard information on the Qatari travel market, responding with specific information relevant to your products or services. We can provide answers regarding the overall marketability of a product or service, market size and trends, customary distribution and promotion practices, market entry requirements and potential agents, distributors, or strategic partners.

## Resources

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[U.S. Dept. of Commerce Office of Travel & Tourism Industries](#)  
[Amadeus Market Information](#)  
[Qatar Airways](#)  
[Qatar Tourism & Exhibitions Authority](#)

Contact the Commercial Section of the U.S. Embassy at:

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

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## Chapter 5: Trade Regulations and Standards

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

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In accordance with the GCC Customs Union, outlined in Law No. 41/2002 and implemented as the GCC Unified Customs Law on January 1, 2003, Qatar imposes a five percent ad valorem tariff on the cost, insurance and freight (C.I.F.) invoice value of most imported products, including food products. The GCC has approved exemptions for approximately 400 goods (including basic food products such as live animals, fresh fruit and vegetables, seafood, wheat, flour, rice, feed grains, spices, seeds for planting and powdered milk), diplomatic and consular imports, military and security products, civilian aviation, personal effects and used household items, passenger accompanied luggage and gifts, goods destined for charitable use, ships and other vessels for the transport of passengers and floating platforms, and products to be used for industrial projects. Qatar also has a 20 percent tariff on iron bars and rods, non-alloy hot-rolled steel and 12 millimeter steel bars as well as cement. 30 percent customs duties are levied on imports of urea and 15 percent are levied on imports of records and musical instruments. Pork and pork products are illegal under Qatari law. Tobacco products and alcoholic beverages are subject to a 100 percent import duty. Projects funded by the Qatar Industrial Development Bank (QIDB) can be granted a customs duty waiver for the import of machinery, raw materials, and other industrial inputs.

### Trade Barriers

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

### Import Requirements and Documentation

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All importers are required by law to have an import license. Import licenses are issued only to Qatari nationals, or to the Qatari partner in a limited liability partnership, and must be registered with the Ministry of Business and Trade. This regulation also applies to wholly foreign owned entities operating in Qatar.

Import Licenses: All imported meats, including beef and poultry products, require a health certificate issued by the country of export and a "Halal" slaughter certificate

issued by an approved Islamic center in that country.

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

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

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

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

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

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A variety of sensitive items may not be imported into Qatar. The Qatar Distribution Company monopolizes the importation of alcohol. Pork and pornographic items may not be imported. Military and security items are forbidden unless licensed by local authorities. Narcotics, flammable and radioactive products are also banned, as are any products that violate trademarks or originate in boycotted countries.

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

## **Temporary Entry**

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

## Labeling and Marking Requirements

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

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

Qatar enforces GCC shelf-life standards GS 150/1993, Part I and II, which combined affect 170 food products. The manufacturer's established shelf life is accepted for other food products. Production and expiry dates must be printed on the original label or container by the manufacturer. Dates cannot be added after the fact via a sticker. Products must arrive at destination with at least half the shelf-life duration remaining. The U.S. supplier should work closely with the importer to ensure compliance with local shelf-life requirements. Food labels must include product and brand names, production and expiry dates, country of origin, name and address of the manufacturer, net weight in metric units, and a list of the ingredients in descending order of importance. All fats and oils used as ingredients must be specifically identified on the label. Labels must be in Arabic only or in Arabic/English. Arabic stickers are accepted.

## Prohibited and Restricted Imports

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Pork, pork products and pornographic material are illegal in Qatar. The Qatar Distribution Company monopolizes the importation of alcohol. Military and security items are forbidden unless licensed by local authorities. Narcotics, flammable and radioactive products are also banned. Any products that violate trademarks are also banned. Qatar participates in the primary aspects of the Israel boycott but there is an Israeli Trade Representative Office located in Doha.

## Customs Regulations and Contact Information

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

## Standards

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- [Product Certification](#)
- [Accreditation](#)

- [Publication of Technical Regulations](#)
- [Labeling and Marking](#)
- [Contacts](#)

## Overview

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The Government is currently developing its standards regime to meet internationally and regionally-recognized norms and practices, such as the ISSO standards. The Qatar General Organization for Standards and Metrology, an independent organization under the supervision of the Minister of Business and Trade, is the standard-developing and conformity assessment body for Qatar. However, Qatari government ministries such as the National Health Authority (NHA), the Ministry of Energy and Industry and Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture provide recommendations for standards. The Qatar General Organization for Standards and Metrology continually develops new standards and criteria for various items and merchandize.

## Standards Organizations

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

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

Member countries of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are required under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement) to report to the WTO all proposed technical regulations that could affect trade with other Member countries. **Notify U.S.** is a free, web-based e-mail subscription service that offers an opportunity to review and comment on proposed foreign technical regulations that can affect your access to international markets. Register online at: <http://www.nist.gov/notifyus/>

## Conformity Assessment

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Qatar has laboratories to test construction materials, food and calibration scales. The Qatar General Organization for Standards and Metrology is charged with the task of developing laboratories and facilities to test electrical equipment and supplies, toys and oil fabrication equipment as well as other items and merchandize. The Departments of Central Laboratories, and Quality and Standards, which are under the supervision of the General Organization for Standards and Metrology, are the primary testing facilities for Qatar. There are no conformity assessment bodies in Qatar.

## Product Certification

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

## Accreditation

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There are no accreditation organizations in Qatar.

## Publication of Technical Regulations

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The name of the national gazette is the Government Official Gazette. Proposed regulations are currently not published but final regulations are published and are considered law once listed in the Official Gazette. The General Organization for Standards and Metrology has developed a website that lists all Qatari standards and allows for governments and the private sector to make comments on draft legislation for 60 days. More information can be found at: [www.qs.org.qa](http://www.qs.org.qa)

## **Labeling and Marking**

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

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## **Contacts**

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

Dr. Mohammed bin Saif Al-Kuwari  
General Manager  
Qatar General Organization for Standards and Metrology  
P.O. Box 23277  
Doha, State of Qatar  
Tel: (974) 447-9805; (974) 440-8686  
Fax: (974) 447-9052

## **Trade Agreements**

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

As a member of the GCC, Qatar is a signatory to the GCC Free Trade Agreement. This agreement provides duty free access to all goods produced in the GCC States, provided that the goods meet the content requirements (at least 40 percent value added within GCC factories, which are at least 50 percent owned by GCC entities). In January 2003,

the GCC implemented a unified customs tariff to facilitate regional trade. The GCC aims to adopt a common currency.

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

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## Chapter 6: Investment Climate

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- [Expropriation and Compensation](#)
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- [Right to Private Ownership and Establishment](#)
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### Openness to Foreign Investment

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Qatar has one of the fastest growing economies in the world, with nominal gross domestic product (GDP) growth averaging 24 percent annually over the past four years. Its estimated 2008 gross domestic product (GDP) was USD 86.1 billion. Inflation remained high at about 14 percent through 2008, mostly due to high demand in the housing sector and for imported products.

The government is heavily involved in Qatar's economy, although it strongly encourages international investment in certain sectors such as energy. Qatar's investment liberalization policies proceed on a gradual basis, based on a desire to protect local companies from rapid competition.

The main economic stimuli in Qatar are oil, gas, and related industries, in particular the development of the North Field, the largest non-associated natural gas field in the world. Qatar's liquefied natural gas (LNG) industry has attracted tens of billions of dollars in foreign investment. The energy industry will continue to be the most attractive sector for foreign investors, though significant opportunities exist for foreign investment in infrastructure development, medical, safety and security, education, and franchising.

The Organization of Foreign Capital Investment Law (Law No. 13/2000) is the primary legislation governing foreign investment. Foreign investment is generally limited to 49 percent of the capital for most business activities, with a Qatari partner(s) holding at least 51 percent. However, the law allows, upon special government approval, up to 100 percent ownership by foreign investors in certain sectors, including: agriculture, industry, health, education, tourism, development and exploitation of natural resources, energy, or mining.

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

International firms must apply for local registration through the Ministry of Business and Trade. About a dozen U.S. firms have received commercial registration allowing 100 percent foreign ownership in recent years.

Law No. 31/2004 further liberalized the investment regime and allows foreign investment in the banking and insurance sectors upon approval of the Cabinet of Ministers. It also allows foreigners to own residential property in a limited number of select projects. Law No. 23/2006 allows international law firms to operate in Qatar.

Foreign firms are required to use a local agent for matters related to sponsorship and residence of employees.

Although there is no income tax on salaries in Qatar, foreign investors are subject to taxation on their investment income. Qataris are not subject to any kind of corporate tax.

Import licenses are issued only to individuals with Qatari nationality, or companies owned or controlled by Qataris. In practice, exceptions are sometimes made for foreign companies, such as those with government contracts.

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

Foreigners are allowed to own up to 25 percent of the capital of companies listed on the Doha Securities Market. Foreign investors are not allowed to participate in any initial public offering (IPO) -- only Qatari and sometimes Gulf Cooperation Council citizens have that privilege.

Qatari regulations for local and foreign banks are the same, with new licenses available through application to the Qatar Central Bank. There are 18 licensed banks, including three Islamic banks and a specialized bank, the Qatar Industrial Development Bank. Qatar has 20 exchange houses, three investment companies and two commercial finance companies.

There is a separate Qatar Financial Center (QFC) that allows major international financial institutions and corporations to set up offices with 100 percent foreign ownership. There are currently 96 firms authorized to operate in the QFC, representing a spectrum of banks, investment companies, insurance houses, and related professional services. QFC firms are limited to providing services to wholesale clients, except for insurance companies, which can provide services to both wholesale and retail clients.

Certain sectors are not open for domestic or foreign competition, including public transportation, steel, cement, and fuel distribution. In these sectors, a single semi-public company has complete or predominant control.

Qatar has begun to liberalize its telecommunications sector to permit outside private investment, starting with the issuance in December 2007 of a second mobile license to a consortium including Vodafone and the Qatar Foundation. The same consortium was awarded the country's second fixed-line license in September 2008.

## **Conversion and Transfer Policies**

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Due to minimal demand for the Qatari riyal outside Qatar and the national economy's dependence on oil and gas revenues, which are priced in dollars, the government has pegged the riyal to the U.S. currency. The official peg is QR 1.00 per USD 0.27 or USD 1.00 per QR 3.64, as set by the government in June 1980 and reaffirmed by an Emiri decree issued July 9, 2001. Officially, the GCC states are harmonizing their monetary policies and intend to implement a common currency in 2010, though questions remain over whether they will be able to meet the current timeline. Despite a number of recent private sector analyses suggesting Qatar may reassess its dollar peg policy, the government has maintained the exchange rate and apparently plans to do so for the foreseeable future. Any future revaluation or monetary policy change would likely occur in concert with the other GCC states.

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

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

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

## **Expropriation and Compensation**

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Law No. 13/2000, Article 8 states: 1) Foreign investment shall neither directly nor indirectly be subject to expropriation unless such measures are for the public welfare and implemented in a non-discriminatory way, against a prompt and reasonable compensation; 2) Compensation shall be equal to the market value of the investment at the time of expropriation, and shall be paid without undue delay.

There have been no cases of expropriation or sequestration of foreign investment in Qatar since the nationalization in the mid-1970s of Shell and Dukhan Services (the latter was a combination of six international oil companies handling Qatar's onshore operations on the country's west coast). The foreign interests were compensated promptly.

## **Dispute Settlement**

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Qatar is not a member of the International Center for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID). In March 2003, Qatar became a signatory to the New York Convention of 1958. If investment disputes occur, Qatar accepts binding international arbitration between the government and foreign investors. However, Qatari courts do not enforce judgments of other courts in disputes emanating from investment agreements made under the jurisdiction of other nations.

In July 2006, the government issued Law No. 27 which included a chapter of 240 articles devoted to bankruptcy. However, the implementing regulations have not yet been formulated, and it is unclear when the law will come into force. Qataris generally find it unacceptable to announce publicly the bankruptcy of a Qatari citizen or a Qatari-owned company and the Government sometimes plays the role of guarantor to keep the bankrupt business running and safeguard creditors' rights.

In order to protect their interests, U.S. firms are advised to consult with a Qatari or foreign-based law firm when executing contracts with local parties.

## **Performance Requirements and Incentives**

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Performance requirements for foreign investment in Qatar, including a counter-trade offset program, do not exist. While screening investment proposals, the government may indicate preferences for locating facilities, capital investments and other matters. Disclosure of financial and employment data is required, but proprietary information is not.

Qatar levies corporate income taxes on foreign firms at rates between five to 35 percent of net profits exceeding 100,000 Qatari riyals (USD 27,473). All Qatari owned firms are exempt from corporate income taxes. Under Law No. 13 of 2002, the Ministry of Economy and Finance may grant a tax holiday of up to 10 years for new foreign investments in key sectors. Companies established in the QFC have enjoyed a tax exemption since the start of operations in 2005, though up to a 10 per cent rate may be imposed in the future. Other foreign companies may be granted tax exemptions by Emiri Decree on a case-by-case basis.

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

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

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

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

The Ministry of Energy and Industry determines the amount of foreign equity and the extent of incentives for industrial projects. Industrial projects can be established only in designated industrial zones. Necessary investment approvals may be required from the Ministry of Health, Qatar Tourism Authority, Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Agriculture, Ministry of Business and Trade, Supreme Education Council, and Ministry of Environment.

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

## Right to Private Ownership and Establishment

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

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

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

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

## Protection of Property Rights

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Within Qatar, owners of trademarks, copyrights and patents depend on Qatari laws and regulations for protection. Intellectual property rights in Qatar are protected by Law No. 7/2002 (Copyright and Neighboring Rights Law), Law No. 9/2002 (Trademarks and Geographical Indicators Law), Law No.5/2005 (Protection of Trade Secrets), and Law No. 6/2005 (Protection of Layout Design of Integrated Circuits). Qatar has adopted the GCC Patent Law and has offices for patents, industrial property rights, and copyrights within the Ministry of Business and Trade. The Ministry of Health requires registration of all pharmaceutical products imported into the country and will not register unauthorized copies of products patented in other countries.

Patents may be registered for an initial period of 10 years, with one 5-year renewal possible. A trademark may be registered for 10 years and renewed indefinitely for further 10-year periods.

The 2002 copyright law does not explicitly provide for national treatment or coverage of unpublished works and does not criminalize end-user piracy. However, Qatar became party to the Berne Convention in 2000 which provides for these protections. In 2003, Qatar authorized government officials responsible for IPR enforcement to conduct raids and seize pirated material.

The Copyright Office works with law enforcement authorities to prosecute resellers of unlicensed video and software. In 2008, the Copyright Office conducted 97 raids on suspected IPR violators, reached 28 settlements with violators, and confiscated material worth approximately 3 million QR (USD 824,000). The Ministry works with Public Prosecution and the Ministry of Interior to investigate and prosecute copyright infringement and forwarded 31 cases to the prosecutor's office for further action.

Qatar uses the GCC patent law with derogations as needed to comply with its obligations under the TRIPS Agreement. It also established a joint committee between the Ministry of Business and Trade and Ministry of Health to coordinate their efforts and ensure that only patented products or authorized copies of pharmaceutical products are registered for sale. In 2006, an Emiri Decree on patents was issued requiring that: (1) only inventions of industrial use can be registered as a patent; (2) an industrial product or means or process of production must have something innovative about it to merit patent registration; (3) inventions in health, agriculture, plants and software development are not eligible for patent; (4) only Qatari citizens or foreigners of WTO signatory countries will be allowed to register a patent; (5) the Ministry of Business and Trade will frame and implement executive regulations to help enforce the law; and (6) the Ministry of Business and Trade will set up a patent registration office. This office has not yet been established.

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

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

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

There are four regulatory bodies in Qatar, though plans are underway to create a unified regulatory authority for the country. It remains unclear when the necessary legislation and oversight board will be in place. Current regulatory entities include:

- 1) The Qatar Financial Market Authority regulates the Doha Securities Market.
- 2) The Central Bank regulates locally registered banks.
- 3) The QFC Regulatory Authority has a separate, independent regulatory authority for QFC-registered firms.
- 4) The Ministry of Business and Trade regulates the local insurance sector.

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

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

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

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

Foreign firms wishing to participate in government procurement programs may be required to have a local agent and provide bid and performance bonds. International bidders should contact end-users directly for information on local agent requirements. Other regulatory policies do not significantly affect foreign investment decisions. Some U.S. companies have expressed concerns about the lack of transparency in government procurement.

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

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

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

Qatar's banking sector assets were estimated at USD 79.86 billion at the end of 2007, up 56 percent from the previous year. 91 percent of these assets were held by Qatari banks. Qatar National Bank (QNB), 50 percent state-owned, is the largest bank in the country, with total assets equal to 39 percent of the total assets of all Qatari commercial banks. Foreign banks hold around nine percent of all assets, or USD 7.2 billion.

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

Although most of the shares on the Qatar Exchange (formerly known as the Doha Securities Market) are owned by Qatari citizens, Qatar's current regulations allow foreigners to invest in all Qatar Exchange listed companies. The total of foreign investments cannot exceed 25 percent of the capital of any listed company except Qatar Telecom and Salam International Investment, where foreign investment share may be higher. Foreign ownership of shares usually hovers around 8 percent, with most owned by other GCC citizens or local expatriates. The Mutual Fund Law (Law No 25/2002) allows expatriates to invest indirectly in the stock market. No bonds have been traded on the Qatar Exchange.

## **Political Violence**

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

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

## **Corruption**

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

Qatari officials say they would like to eliminate corruption in government procurement, and are working to establish a more open and transparent system.

By Emiri Decree No. 17/2007, Qatar ratified the UN Convention for Combating Corruption, and Emiri Decree No. 84/2007 established a National Committee for Integrity and Transparency. The permanent committee is headed by the Heir Apparent and is tasked with combating corruption in Qatar. Qatar is not a party to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials. Qatar is not a participant in regional anti-corruption initiatives. No regional or local watchdog organization operates in this country. In 2008, Qatar's standing improved by moving up to 28<sup>th</sup> from 32<sup>nd</sup> in the previous year, out of 180 countries rated in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index. Qatar also scored a respectable 6.5, the top spot for a Middle Eastern country. U.S. investors and Qatari nationals are subject to the provisions of the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

### **Bilateral Investment Agreements**

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

On November 5, 2005, Qatar and Singapore signed a free trade agreement. Both countries continue to work to finalize the text of the agreement. Qatar has signed many agreements with other countries on the avoidance of double taxation.

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

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

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

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

### **Labor**

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Qatar's labor force consists primarily of expatriate workers. Qatar's current population is estimated at 1.7 million, a doubling in the last four years. Qatari citizens are estimated to number only 225,000 - less than one-sixth of the total population. The largest group of foreign workers comes from the Indian sub-continent. The Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs regulate recruitment of expatriate labor, but Qatar's plan to develop its own manpower resources continues to receive attention at all government levels.

A 2004 labor law and subsequent regulations provide for the right of workers' association for citizens over 18 years of age in private enterprises with more than 100 Qatari citizen workers. Noncitizens are not eligible to form worker committees. Foreign workers can only be members of joint labor-management committees. Those working in the government sector are prohibited from joining unions. Further, the law and regulations permit only a single national trade union structure and forbid affiliation with groups outside the country.

These restrictions mean that, in practice no labor unions currently exist. Under the labor law, workers are granted the right to bargain collectively and to sign joint agreements, i.e., agreements reached between employer and worker regarding a work-related issue. The right is circumscribed by the government's control over the rules and procedures of the bargaining and agreement processes. Collective bargaining is not freely practiced, and there are no workers employed under collective bargaining contracts. The law also grants workers the right to strike, but the restrictive conditions imposed by the statute make the likelihood of an approved strike extremely remote. Unapproved and spontaneous strikes are a frequent occurrence, though they are typically confined to the industrial areas, and resolved with intervention by the embassies or communities of the involved workers and/or shows of force by Qatari security forces. Leaders of such disturbances are routinely deported.

Employers set wages unilaterally without government involvement. Local courts handle disputes between workers and employers; however, foreign workers avoid drawing attention to problems with their employers for fear of repatriation. According to source country embassies and some migrant workers, the Labor Department was widely perceived to be objective within its narrow mandate when dealing with the nonpayment of wages. The Labor Department claimed that it resolves the vast majority of worker complaints amicably, with a very small percentage referred to the labor courts for judgment.

A new secretariat for labor relations was recently established and charged with overseeing collective bargaining and labor relations. The Labor Inspection Section has been restructured and staffed with sufficient numbers of trained inspectors who are provided with the power of law enforcement. Labor camps have been closed and forced to comply with minimum standards by the labor inspectors.

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

It is common practice in Qatar for expatriate workers to be provided accommodation, end of service benefits and homeward passage allowance, in addition to salaries. Qatar does not have a minimum wage regulation. However, the Labor Department has set

some minimum wages for domestic helpers, drivers and construction workers in coordination with sending countries. While salaries and wages are negotiable, end of service benefits are subject to three different laws.

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

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

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Companies operating at the Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP) can import goods and services duty free. Foreign entities wishing to invest in the QSTP apply for a license with the Park's managing board. No other licensing rules prevalent in the country will apply to the above businesses, although individuals will be subject to the criminal and civil laws of the state. Licensed foreign companies can enjoy 100 percent ownership and full capital and income repatriation benefits.

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

Qatar has a 2005 law regulating the establishment of free trade zones. Qatar is planning to establish three free-trade zones, but no definite time frame has been announced for their establishment. One zone would be established near the New Doha International Airport (currently under construction with an estimated opening of mid-2011) and would house light industries, financial services, and legal, trade and engineering consultancies. A second zone for the industrial area of Doha would cater to manufacturing and transport companies. The third zone, near Mesaieed Industrial City, would house petrochemical and other downstream-related businesses in the energy sector.

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

### **Foreign Direct Investment Statistics**

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The Government of Qatar does not publish detailed statistics for foreign direct investment (FDI) in Qatar or the government's direct investments overseas. According to the latest data available from the Bureau of Economic Analysis, U.S. FDI in Qatar totaled USD 7.1 billion in 2007 on an historical-cost basis, or approximately 24 percent of all reported U.S. FDI in the Middle East and second only to Israel in the region. (Note: This data does not include the reporting of specific investments which were not reported

to the U.S. government and likely does not include the full amount of U.S. investment in Qatar). According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Qatar's total stock of inward FDI in 2006 was USD 7.25 billion, with a total FDI inflow in 2007 of USD 1.1 billion. (Note: The total stock of FDI would, according to these figures, represent about 8.4 percent of Qatar's GDP. These statistics are clearly incomplete, as non-U.S. firms also hold major investments in Qatar.)

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

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

#### Petrochemicals:

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

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

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

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

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

Qatar Chemical Company II (Q-Chem II): Equity Share Capital: Unknown. Shareholders: Qatar Petroleum 51 percent and ChevronPhillips 49 percent. Year

Established: 2002. End-users: Local and international. Commencement of commercial production: 2007. Current value of foreign equity: Unknown.

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

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

#### Liquefied Natural Gas Projects:

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

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

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

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

Ras Laffan Liquefied Natural Gas Co. (RasGas) II (RasGas II): Equity Share Capital: USD 550 million. Shareholders: QP 70 percent and ExxonMobil 30 percent. Year Established: 2001. End-users: India, Italy, Spain, Taiwan. Commencement of commercial production: 2004 (Train 3). Current value of foreign equity: Unknown.

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

#### Gas-TO-Liquids Projects:

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

Pearl GTL Project: Equity Share Capital: Unknown. Shareholders: Qatar Petroleum and Royal Dutch Shell Group. Year Established: 2004. Commencement of commercial production: unknown. Current value of foreign equity: Unknown.

#### Other Gas Projects:

Dolphin Gas Project: Equity Share Capital: Unknown. Shareholders: Mubadala Development Company (Abu Dhabi) 51 percent, Occidental Petroleum 24.5 percent, Total 24.5 percent, End-users: UAE and Oman. Commencement of commercial production: 2007. Current value of foreign equity: Unknown.

Al-Khaleej Gas Project: Equity Share Capital: Unknown. Shareholders: Qatar Petroleum, ExxonMobil. End-users: Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain. Commencement of commercial production: Unknown. Current value of foreign equity: Unknown.

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

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

#### Power & Utilities

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

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

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## Chapter 7: Trade and Project Financing

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### How Do I Get Paid (Methods of Payment)

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Standard Letters of Credit processed by local banks and corresponding banks in the exporting countries control almost all import transactions. In accordance with QCB policy, merchants in Qatar make use of the credit facilities provided by banks to facilitate their imports. Letters of Credit are the safest means of payment that protect the rights of the Qatari importer and the foreign exporter.

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

Banks in Qatar also provide short-term overdrafts and loans to their customers and issue Performance Bonds, Bid Bonds and Advance Payment guarantees on behalf of their customers to support local contracting activities. They can also facilitate foreign exchange transactions and most banks are able to structure basic derivatives such as Interest Rate Swaps to hedge interest rate risk.

Opening an account in Qatar is usually subject to “Know Your Customer” and Anti-Money Laundering due diligence common in developed countries, requiring proof of identity and ascertaining the source of funds. Cash is more widely used in local commercial transactions compared to some western countries. However, checks are also a common method of payment, especially for larger sums. It is important to note that a ‘bounced’ check is a criminal offence in Qatar and can attract stiff penalties including a prison sentence for the account holder.

To date, there is no factoring company in Qatar. Also there is no credit rating agency in Qatar.

### How Does the Banking System Operate

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There are a total of nine local banks operating in Qatar: Ahlibank, Al Khaliji Bank, Barwa Bank, Commercial Bank of Qatar, Doha Bank, International Bank of Qatar, Qatar Development Bank, Qatar Islamic Bank, and Qatar National Bank. Seven foreign banks also work in the local market: HSBC, Mashreq Bank, Arab Bank, BNP Paribas, Standard Chartered Bank, United Bank and Bank Saderat Iran. The Qatari banking sector is dominated by Qatar National Bank (QNB, 50% state-owned), which is the oldest and largest Qatari bank and has over 40% share of the banking sector’s total

assets as of 2007. QNB is followed by Commercial Bank with 16% of assets and Doha Bank with 11%.

Additionally, the Qatar Financial Centre, established in 2005 to attract international banks, law firms and insurance companies to Qatar by offering a streamlined and modern regulatory framework, has so far attracted over 80 institutions, including a branch of Citibank N.A. offering Corporate and Investment Banking services (no retail banking), and investment banks such as Goldman Sachs. Other banks in QFC include Credit Suisse, Bank Audi and Arab Jordanian Investment Bank. Institutions residing in the QFC are regulated by the Qatar Financial Centre Regulatory Authority (QFCRA).

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

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

The banking sector in Qatar has grown very rapidly over the past few years on the back of a robust economy with high rates of GDP growth. From 2005-2008, total assets of the banking sector grew at a compounded average growth rate (CAGR) of almost 47% whereas loans grew by 48% during the same period.

## Foreign-Exchange Controls

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

## U.S. Banks and Local Correspondent Banks

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Ahlibank

Bank of America, New York, NY

Union Bank of California International, New York, NY

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

## **Project Financing**

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Commercial banks in Qatar, both local and foreign, are the main source of financing for individuals and companies operating locally. In 2007, personal / retail loans accounted for the largest share of domestic loans at 32%, followed by the Public Sector at 25% and Land, Housing and Construction at 19%. Trade-related loans were relatively modest at 12%. These figures, however, do not capture the large project financing facilities raised by the State of Qatar in the international loans and bonds markets over the years to finance the massive gas infrastructure.

Commercial banks actively provide long-term financing for local projects, based on the merit of each proposal. U.S. firms interested in seeking financing for projects or local operations in Qatar should enquire with the leading banks in Qatar. An easier route may be to enquire with international banks with branches in Qatar, either in QFC or outside, with whom the borrower may already have a relationship overseas.

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

U.S. Export-Import Bank (Ex-Im Bank) participated in the finance package for the Ras Laffan Liquefied Natural Gas Company. Other U.S. firms are encouraged to seek Ex-Im

Bank financing for industrial projects, medical, environmental and transportation security initiatives, and major construction projects.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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### Business Customs

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

### Travel Advisory

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The State Department Consular Information Sheet for Qatar is available at:

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1003.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1003.html)

### Visa Requirements

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All travelers to Qatar should have passports valid for at least six months. It is best to obtain Qatari visas in advance from the Qatari Embassy in Washington, DC, the Qatari Consulate in Houston, Texas, or the Qatari Mission to the United Nations in New York. Qatari Embassies in other countries also provide this service to foreign nationals. Four passport-sized photographs, a visa application and a letter from the sponsor in Qatar should be submitted for this purpose. A sponsorship letter, however, is not always a basic requirement. This procedure usually takes at least four working days. The U.S. and the Qatari governments have a reciprocal arrangement by which Qatar issues U.S. businessmen a multiple-entry visa for 10 years. This type of entry visa does not entitle visitors and/or businessmen to work in Qatar, unless it is exchanged for a residence permit. A U.S. Citizen is entitled to a multiple entry visa valid for 10 years. However, the maximum length of stay in the country is 6 months after which the holder of the visa

must leave the country. The application for a multiple entry visa must be made to a Qatari Diplomatic mission outside Qatar. The visa is valid for business and tourism purposes.

Tourist visas valid for 14 days, extendable for another 14 days, are available upon arrival for nationals of 33 different countries (USA , Britain, France, Italy, Germany, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Austria, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Portugal, Ireland, Greece, Finland, Spain, Monaco, Vatican, Iceland, Andorra, San Marino, Liechtenstein, Brunei, Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong and South Korea). A 14 day visa costs QR 55 (\$15). Foreigners with valid residence permits from other Gulf Cooperation Council countries do not require a visitor's visa. Upon arrival to Qatar they will be granted an entry visa valid for 14 days, provided the residence permit stamped on their passports would be valid for at least one month.

However, U.S. businesspersons are advised to obtain a visa prior to arrival, since it will enable them to go through Qatari immigration more quickly.

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

#### [Business Visa](#)

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

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

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

## **Telecommunications**

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

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

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

## Transportation

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Transportation options for business travelers are basically limited to car rentals or private taxi. Most major international rental firms are represented in Qatar, including Avis, Budget, Eurodollar, Hertz, Thrifty, etc. Private cars and drivers can be hired from a number of local firms and at hotels. In 2005, Mowasalat (Transportation in Arabic), a wholly owned government entity, launched the first public bus service in Qatar. Taxi service is operated by a sister company called Karwa. The service is not always reliable or on time for pick-ups, and bookings should be made in advance (local number 458-8888). It is usually not possible to hail a taxi in Doha, even in high traffic areas. All 4 and 5 star hotels can also arrange transportation via private vehicle.

## Language

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

## Health

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Qatari nationals receive free State-provided medical care ranging from outpatient clinics to hospitalization. Medical fees for expatriate residents holding a government health card vary according to the type of service provided. The price of a health card is QR 100 (USD 27) and is only valid in governmental health care facilities. While medicines are generally dispensed free of charge for Qatari patients, expatriates pay a nominal charge. Visitors to Qatar are required to pay for all medical services throughout their visit to Qatar.

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

## Local Time, Business Hours, and Holidays

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

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

Officially, Qatar uses the Gregorian calendar, with corresponding dates in the Hijra (Islamic) calendar. There are two major religious holidays that vary from year to year, as they are based on the lunar calendar. Eid Al-Fitr marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadan (during which business hours are restricted to five hours per day) and Eid Al-Adha marks the conclusion of the pilgrimage (Hajj) to Mecca. The exact dates of these holidays are determined by the government shortly in advance of their observance. Government ministries are generally closed for a longer period than private and partially private entities. The only fixed holiday is the Qatar's National Day, which is celebrated on December 18.

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

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

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

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

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

### **Web Resources**

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

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

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

### Contacts

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

#### Bilateral Business Councils

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

U.S.-Qatar Business Council  
1341 Connecticut Ave NW, Suite 4A  
Washington, DC 20036  
Phone: (202) 457-8555  
Fax: (202) 457-1919  
Contact: Elie Haddad, Managing Director  
Email: [haddadnet@aol.com](mailto:haddadnet@aol.com), [info@usbc.org](mailto:info@usbc.org)  
Website: [www.usqbc.org](http://www.usqbc.org)

National U.S. -Arab Chamber of Commerce  
1023 15th Street, N.W., Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20005  
Phone: (202) 289-5920  
Fax: (202) 289-5938  
President: Mr. David Hamod  
Email: [INFO@NUSACC.ORG](mailto:INFO@NUSACC.ORG)  
Website: [www.nusacc.org](http://www.nusacc.org)

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

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

E-mail: [rzalzalalah@nusacc.org](mailto:rzalzalalah@nusacc.org)  
Website: [www.nusacc.org](http://www.nusacc.org)

New York Office  
420 Lexington Avenue, Suite 2034  
New York, NY 10170  
Tel: (212) 986-8024  
Fax: (212) 986-0216 Contact: Mr. Gilbert Hage  
E-mail: [ghage@nusacc.org](mailto:ghage@nusacc.org)  
Website: [www.nusacc.org](http://www.nusacc.org)

Los Angeles Office  
8921 S. Sepulveda Boulevard, Suite 206  
Los Angeles, CA 90045  
Phone: (310) 646-1499  
Fax: (310) 646-2462  
E-mail: [eatallah@nusacc.org](mailto:eatallah@nusacc.org)  
Website: [www.nusacc.org](http://www.nusacc.org)

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

### **USDA -- Washington Contact Information**

Trade Assistance and Promotion Office (TAPO)  
Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS)  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
Ag Box 1052  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250  
Tel: 202-720-7420  
Fax: 202-690-4374  
The FAS Home Page address on Internet is [www.fas.usda.gov](http://www.fas.usda.gov)

### **Country Trade or Industry Associations in Key Sectors**

Qatar Chamber of Commerce & Industry (QCCI)  
P.O. Box 402, Doha, Qatar  
Tel: (974) 455-9111  
Fax: (974) 466-1693; (974) 466-1697  
Contact: Khalifa Bin Jassim Bin Mohammed Al Thani, Chairman  
Email: [info@qcci.org](mailto:info@qcci.org), [qcci@qatar.net.qa](mailto:qcci@qatar.net.qa)  
Website: [www.qcci.org](http://www.qcci.org)

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

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

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

Customs and Ports Authority  
P.O. Box 81, Doha, State of Qatar  
Phone: (974) 4457457  
Fax: (974) 441-4959  
Contact: Ahmad Ali Mohammad Al Mohannadi, Chairman  
Email: [questions@customs.gov.qa](mailto:questions@customs.gov.qa)  
Website: <http://www.customs.gov.qa>

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

Ministry of Business and Trade  
P.O. Box 1986, Doha, State of Qatar  
Phone: (974) 494-5555  
Fax: (974) 495 0000  
Contact: Mr. Khalid Al Atiyah, Acting Minister of Business and Trade  
Mr. Mohammed Al-Saadi, Under Secretary of Ministry of Business and Trade  
Phone: (974) 4461444/4432103  
Fax: (974) 493-4110  
Email : [webmaster@mec.gov.qa](mailto:webmaster@mec.gov.qa)  
Website: <http://mbt.gov.qa/en>

Qatar General Organization for Standards and Metrology  
P.O. Box 23277  
Phone: (+974) 4139 400 / 4139550  
Fax: (+974) 4139411 / (+974) 4139543  
Contact: Dr. Mohamed Seif Al-Kuwari, Director-General  
Email: [info@qs.org.qa](mailto:info@qs.org.qa) / [dr.malkuwari@qs.org.qa](mailto:dr.malkuwari@qs.org.qa)  
Website: [www.qs.org.qa](http://www.qs.org.qa)

Ministry of Finance  
P.O. Box 83, Doha, State of Qatar  
Phone: (974) 4414944  
Fax: (974) 4431177 / 4435370  
Contact: H.E. Yousef Hussain Kamal, Minister;  
Mr. Abdulrahman Al-Dashti, Office Director  
Phone: (974) 446-1512  
Fax: (974) 441-4418  
Mr. Mofteh Al Mofteh, Director of Public Revenues and Taxes Department  
Phone: (974) 433-2808

Ministry of Energy and Industry  
P.O. Box 3212, Doha, State of Qatar  
Phone: (974) 4846444 / 449-1444  
Fax: (974) 4832024  
Contact: H.E. Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, Minister (Also Chairman, Qatar  
Petroleum);  
Mr. Abdulaziz Al-Malki, Office Director  
Email: [did@mei.gov.qa](mailto:did@mei.gov.qa)  
Website: [www.mei.gov.qa](http://www.mei.gov.qa)

Ministry of Energy and Industry  
Department of Industrial Development  
P.O. Box 2599  
Doha, State of Qatar  
Phone: (974) 484-6444  
Fax: (974) 483-2024  
Contact: Mr. Abdullah Bin Hamad Al-Attiyah, Deputy Prime Minister  
H.E. Dr. Mohammed Saleh Al-Sada, Minister  
Email: [did@mei.gov.qa](mailto:did@mei.gov.qa)  
Website: [www.mei.gov.qa](http://www.mei.gov.qa)

Ministry of Interior  
P.O. Box 2433, Doha, State of Qatar  
Phone: (974) 4849444 / 4330000  
Fax: (974) 444-9228  
Contact: H.E. Sheikh Abdullah Bin Khalid Al-Thani,  
Email: [info@moi.gov.qa](mailto:info@moi.gov.qa)  
Website: <http://www.moi.gov.qa/English/index.htm>

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Agriculture  
P.O. Box 22332, Doha, State of Qatar  
Phone: (974) 4336254  
Fax: (974) 4430239  
Contact: Dr. Abdulla O Al-Hamaq, Assistant Director for Health Affairs, Doha Municipality (In-country food inspection; food regulations)

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

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

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

Ministry of Public Health  
H.E. Abdallah Al-Qahtani, Minister  
P.O. Box 42  
Doha, Qatar  
Tel: +974 447-3111; 447-3235, 4473237  
Fax: +974-442-9786; +974-441-4777 (direct); +974-442-9565; +974-443-3019

Qatar Armed Forces  
P.O. Box 37, Doha, State of Qatar  
Phone: (974) 461-2400  
Fax: (974) 450 4228/4229  
Contact: Director of Procurement, General Headquarters

## **Government and Quasi-Government Organizations**

Hamad Medical Corporation  
P.O. Box 3050, Doha, State of Qatar  
Phone: (974) 4394444/4396666  
Fax: (974) 4392604  
Contact: Dr. Saad Rashid Al-Kaabi, Medical Director  
Dr. Pete Hill, Medical Director  
Mr. Mahmoud Al-Mahmoud, Director, Materials Management Department  
Phone: (974) 439-2262, Fax: (974) 442-3399  
Website: <http://www.hmc.org.qa/hmcnewsite/>

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development  
P.O. Box 5825, Doha, State of Qatar  
Phone: (974) 4540000 Fax: (974) 480-6117  
Chairperson: HH Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Misnad  
Acting Managing Director: Dr. Saif Al Hajari  
Email: [info@qf.org.qa](mailto:info@qf.org.qa)  
Website: <http://www.qf.edu.qa>

Qatar General Electricity and Water Corporation (Kahramaa)  
P.O. Box 41  
Doha, State of Qatar  
Phone: (974) 484-5555/5484  
Fax: (974) 484-5496  
Contact: H.E. Abdullah Bin Hamad Al Attiyah, Chairman of the Board  
Email: [kmcontact@km.com.qa](mailto:kmcontact@km.com.qa)  
Website: <http://www.kahramaa.com.qa/kahramaa>

Qatar Electricity and Water Company (QEWG)  
P.O. Box 22046  
Doha, State of Qatar  
Phone: (974) 485-8585  
Fax: (974) 483-1116  
Contact: H.E. Essa Shaheen Al-Ghanim, Vice Chairman  
Email: [welcome@qewg.com](mailto:welcome@qewg.com)  
Website: <http://www.qewg.com>

Qatar Telecom (Q-Tel)  
P.O. Box 217  
Doha, State of Qatar  
Phone: (974) 4400088 / 4400400  
Fax: (974) 4830011/ 4476231 / 4475273  
Contact: Dr. Nasser Marafih, Chief Executive Officer  
Email: [investor@qtel.com.qa](mailto:investor@qtel.com.qa)  
Website: <http://www.qtel.com.qa>

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, but free of charge.

List of Agricultural Reports:

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

Note: Agricultural reports are available via the Reports Office, USDA/FAS, Ag Box 1052, Washington, D.C. 20250-1052 and via the FAS Home Page on the Internet at the following URL:

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

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

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

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

[Project Qatar 2009](#)  
[Made in USA – Qatar 2009](#)  
[QMedec 2009](#)  
[Diyafa 2009](#)  
[Milipol Qatar 2010](#)  
[DIMDEX 2010](#)

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## Chapter 10: Guide to Our Services

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

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

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

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

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

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