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Jamaica

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Doing Business in Jamaica

Market Overview

- Jamaica's economy has grown less than 1% per year for four decades.
- In May 2013, the GOJ entered into a US\$932 million 4-year Extended Fund Facility (EFF) with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to reduce its debt-to-GDP ratio, one of the highest in the world. In November 2016, the GOJ transitioned into a US\$1.7 billion 3-year IMF Stand-By Arrangement to signal its commitment to policy continuity.
- Jamaica restructured its domestic debt and undertook an ambitious legislative agenda to enact significant structural reforms. These included the elimination of sector-specific tax incentives and waivers, and improving the business climate. Through May 2017, Jamaica has successfully passed its IMF program reviews and was a top ten improver in World Bank's Doing Business report in 2015 and 2016.
- The country's macro-economic indicators have been improving since 2013: inflation moderated to a record low of 1.7% for 2016; the Net International Reserves jumped to US\$2.7 billion at end 2016, up from US\$989 million in March 2013; and, the current account deficit improved from 12.8% of GDP at March 2013 to around 2% at end 2016, the lowest result in almost two decades. On February 25, 2016, a new administration was voted into office on a one seat majority and has continued with the macroeconomic and structural reforms outlined in Jamaica's IMF reform.
- Bilateral relations between Jamaica and the United States are generally good.
- The United States remains Jamaica's main trading partner, accounting for almost 40% of the nation's total trade. Jamaica's other major trading partners include China, Japan, and Trinidad and Tobago.

Jamaica is attractive to U.S. exports due to its: (1) geographic proximity and access to shipping lanes; (2) relatively large English-speaking market; (3) strong commercial and cultural affinity to North America; (4) improving business climate as reflected in the World Bank 2016 Doing Business Report; and, (5) stable democracy.

Market Challenges

- Crime remains a significant concern and security measures add considerably to the cost of doing business in Jamaica.
- Jamaica's court system lacks resources and suffers from a major backlog of cases. Businesses seeking legal redress should be cognizant of the high costs of litigation and the slow pace of resolution. At least one American company has experienced difficulties in collecting on its debt even after a Jamaican court ruled in its favor.
- Conducting thorough due diligence on potential business partners in Jamaica is recommended.
- Corruption remains a major concern among Jamaicans. Despite numerous allegations of public corruption and a few arrests, there have been essentially

no convictions of high ranking public officials since 1962. Jamaica fell 14 spots in Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index, falling from 69 to 83 out of 175 from 2015 to 2016.

- While trade liberalization has made it easier to import into Jamaica, some technical barriers, particularly sanitary and phyto-sanitary restrictions, remain.
- Jamaica is a member of the Caribbean Common Market (CARICOM) and some goods imported from outside CARICOM are subject to a common external tariff (CET). Goods certified to be of CARICOM origin tend to enjoy duty-free status and are not subject to customs duty. However, these and other goods may be subject to a 16.5% General Consumption Tax (GCT) or sales tax in Jamaica. For more information visit the [CARICOM website](#).
- Imports attract a Customs User Fee and a Standards Compliance Fee (SCF). The SCF is 0.3% of the CIF value of the import and is collected on behalf of the Jamaica Bureau of Standards. Many items, such as motor vehicles and refined petroleum products, are subject to special consumption taxes. General Consumption Tax (GCT) is also imposed on imports but is passed directly on to the final consumer.
- High electricity costs remain a concern for energy-intensive businesses. Although Jamaica has made significant strides in reducing electricity costs by modernizing its generation, prices are still two to three times that of the United States. Projects are currently underway to diversify Jamaica's energy makeup, with outdated petroleum-fueled power plants being replaced by cheaper and more efficient renewable and liquified natural gas-fired plants.

Market Opportunities

- The quality and reliability of U.S. goods and services has encouraged Jamaican businesses and consumers to purchase from the United States. Jamaica has excellent air, sea, and underwater communications cable links with the United States and the rest of the world.
- Agricultural products, pharmaceuticals/chemicals, and machinery and transportation equipment remain important areas of demand in Jamaica. Opportunities also exist for products associated with hotel and housing construction, the tourism sector, logistics, mining, and business process outsourcing (BPO).

Market Entry Strategy

- Agents and distributors are commonly used as the conduit to enter the Jamaican market, but the U.S. Foreign Commercial Service also assists U.S. firms in their search for prospective partners. The U.S. Department of Commerce no longer has a presence in Jamaica but serves the region out of its office in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.
- Much of the trade between Jamaica and the United States is the result of longstanding business relationships. While business can be conducted over the internet or telephone, Jamaicans are more comfortable with face-to-face meetings when negotiating business arrangements. Relationship marketing is

also prevalent with distributors generally interested in visiting their suppliers to conduct due diligence. Exclusive arrangements, credit terms, and franchising arrangements are common business practices.

Political and Economic Environment

Political Environment

For background information on the political environment of the country, please review the [U.S. Department of State Background Notes on Jamaica](#).

The United States and Jamaica established diplomatic relations in 1962. Both countries maintain strong and productive relations based on trust and mutual interest. This close friendship is built on a foundation of people-to-people ties and a vibrant Jamaican-American community. The U.S. and Jamaica foster prosperity and stability within the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI).

Bilateral Economic Relations

The United States is Jamaica's most important trading partner. An important destination for U.S. investment, Jamaica has generally been a supportive partner in efforts – bilaterally, regionally, and globally – to liberalize trade. Under the Caribbean Basin Trade Partner Act and other trade measures, over 80% of Jamaican exports enter the U.S. market duty free. The United States provides over \$100 million in support through the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) for expanding and diversifying energy sources available on the island. The two countries have an investment treaty and a double taxation agreement. More than 80 U.S. firms have offices in the country and hundreds of other U.S. firms sell their products through local distributors. Over a million American tourists visit Jamaica each year, and hundreds of thousands of Jamaicans visit the United States. The large Jamaican-American community sends billions of dollars in remittances to Jamaica annually.

U.S. Assistance to Jamaica

The United States provides key assistance to Jamaica to help counter violent crime and transnational criminal activity. The partnership focuses on reducing corruption; increasing transparency and good governance; fostering Jamaican participation in regional security efforts; strengthening basic education; and increasing adaptation to climate change. Regional HIV/AIDS and security programs complement U.S. assistance.

Jamaica's Membership in International Organizations

Jamaica and the United States belong to a number of the same international organizations, including the United Nations (UN), Organization of American States (OAS), Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM), International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank (WB), and World Trade Organization (WTO).

Bilateral Representation

Jamaica maintains an [embassy](#) in the United States at 1520 New Hampshire Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20036 (tel. 202-452-0660).

More information about Jamaica is available from the Department of State and other sources, some of which are listed here:

- [Department of State Jamaica Page](#)
- [Department of State Key Officers List](#)
- [CIA World Factbook Jamaica Page](#)
- [U.S. Embassy](#)
- [USAID Jamaica Page](#)
- [History of U.S. Relations With Jamaica](#)
- [Human Rights Reports](#)
- [International Religious Freedom Reports](#)
- [Trafficking in Persons Reports](#)
- [Narcotics Control Reports](#)
- [Investment Climate Statements](#)
- [U.S. Census Bureau Foreign Trade Statistics](#)
- [Export.gov International Offices Page](#)
- [Travel Information](#)

Selling US Products & Services

Using an Agent to Sell US Products and Services

There are no laws in Jamaica that dictate contract terms for agents/ distributors. The parties involved formulate their own terms and conditions of agreement with or without the assistance of an attorney. However, regardless of contract terms, every supplier and agent/distributor must be aware of the Fair Competition Act (FCA), which is designed to foster competition. Under Jamaica's legal system, once an agreement is reached and signed, it becomes a binding document and breaches may be contested in a court of law. Potential sources for business partner leads include the American Chamber of Commerce of Jamaica (AmCham), the Private Sector Organization of Jamaica (PSOJ), the Jamaican Manufacturers' Association (JMA), and the Jamaica Chamber of Commerce (JCC).

Establishing an Office

The establishment of a local office is best approached with the assistance of Jamaica Trade and Invest (JAMPRO), the government's trade and investment promotion agency. Potential investors can also present project proposals to JAMPRO for assessment and guidance. Registration or incorporation of the business should be made with the Office of the Registrar of Companies (ORC).

Under the Companies Act of 2004, a single person may form a company and be its sole director and shareholder. Public companies are required to have a minimum share capital of J\$500,000.00 (the exchange rate was approximately J\$130 to US\$1 at end May 2017) and cannot borrow without first receiving certification from the Registrar. Although the head office of the company may be overseas, the company must now have a registered office in Jamaica.

Franchising

To establish a franchise arrangement in Jamaica, the franchisee is expected to register a local company to assume the rights to operate the franchise. There are no specific laws that regulate the operation of franchises and there is a normal business relationship with the locally registered entity and the headquarters of the franchise. The locally registered company is responsible for managing the operation and ensuring conformity to the franchise requirements. Major U.S. food franchises in Jamaica include Little Caesars, Popeyes, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Burger King, Wendy's, Dairy Queen, Subway, Pizza Hut, Domino Pizza and TGI Friday's. There are other types of franchises in areas such as accounting, automobile sales and rental, and training services.

Direct Marketing

Mail order sales and catalogs have historically not been popular, though moves towards deregulation and liberalization in Jamaica have compelled retailers to utilize additional ways of getting their message to customers and achieving sales growth. Some local firms use direct mailings of promotional materials and telephone

marketing. Local credit card companies sometimes target cardholders with direct mailing offering goods and services. Network marketing for the promotion of products has also been successful in Jamaica. Online direct marketing is becoming more popular, and social media is growing in popularity as a means for businesses to connect directly with customers.

Joint Ventures/Licensing

In a bid to stimulate economic activity, the Jamaican government has actively encouraged joint ventures and licensing. Major opportunities are publicized by the government agency or ministry involved. Non-resident partners are subject to Jamaican tax on their share of the partnership profits that accrue in or are derived from Jamaica. Non-resident foreign corporations pay tax on their share of profits at the same rates as resident corporations. Double taxation relief is available under the 1991 Convention for the Avoidance of Double Taxation.

Selling to the Government

Many governments finance public works projects through borrowing from the Multilateral Development Banks. Please refer to "Project Financing" Section in "Trade and Project Financing" for more information. Please see the Project Financing section on page 54.

Government procurement is generally done through open tenders, direct advertising, or by invitation to registered suppliers. The government of Jamaica developed a [central electronic portal to search government tenders](#), although the portal is currently underutilized. The National Contracts Commission (NCC) is responsible for reviewing and endorsing recommendations for the award of government contracts above approximately USD \$100,000 in value. The NCC registers and classifies contractors who respond to government contract tenders according to their size and capabilities. To respond to government office supplies tenders, companies must register with the Financial Management Division of the Ministry of Finance. Water supply and distribution equipment contracts require registration with the National Water Commission, and to supply medicines and medical supplies, potential bidders must contact the Pharmaceutical Division of the Ministry of Health and Health Corporation Limited. Jamaica does not have a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the U.S., but as a member of the WTO adheres to the Government Procurement Agreement.

U.S. Commercial Service Liaison Offices at the Multilateral Development Banks (Inter-American Development Bank, World Bank)

The Commercial Service maintains Commercial Liaison Offices in each of the main Multilateral Development Banks, including the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank. These institutions lend billions of dollars in developing countries on projects aimed at accelerating economic growth and social development by reducing poverty and inequality, improving health and education, and advancing infrastructure development. The Commercial Liaison Offices help American businesses learn how to get involved in bank-funded projects, and advocate on

behalf of American bidders. Learn more by contacting the [Commercial Liaison Offices to the Inter-American Development Bank](#) and the [World Bank](#).

Distribution & Sales Channels

Distribution and sales of imported merchandise in Jamaica are done principally through importers, distributors, and agents. A large share of materials and supplies including machinery and equipment is imported directly by end-user firms. Close contact with clients, delivery of quality products, after-sales service, and competitive prices are all useful business strategies to succeed in this market. Due to Jamaica's proximity to the United States, many Jamaicans importing materials and products interface directly with U.S. exporters and manufacturers' representatives, particularly in Florida. Most goods enter through the country's major port in Kingston and are distributed in smaller quantities by road. This mode of distribution is becoming more efficient with the construction of new four-lane highways across the country.

Express Delivery

Three major U.S. based companies offer express delivery service to Jamaica. Deliveries from the U.S. take between one and four days for quantities ranging from 30 kilograms for documents to 300 kilograms for non-documents. A few local companies have entered the express delivery space whereby small quantities ordered online are first delivered to a Miami address before being air freighted to Jamaica. Customs costs for goods valued below US\$50 tend to be insignificant but rise as the value of shipments increase.

Selling Factors & Techniques

Carrying out due diligence on customers is advised before selling to Jamaican clients directly or through agents and distributors. Several large, established distribution companies in Jamaica import and distribute a range of products. Smaller companies may be suitable as agents for some products. Demand and markups for products vary. Some companies specialize in high volume and low markups while others only distribute goods that ensure a high markup. Due to Jamaica's proximity and strong cultural affinity to North America, successful business strategies in North America are generally successful in Jamaica.

eCommerce

In 2007, the E-transaction Act came into effect, providing the legal framework for secured electronic commerce. Since then, e-commerce has grown in significance, with a growing number of businesses (particularly utilities) offering the option to pay bills online or via credit card using a telephone. Jamaicans with U.S. dollar credit cards also make online purchases from U.S. based companies.

Jamaica enjoys relatively good telecommunications infrastructure and has one of the highest mobile phone penetrations in the world. The country has therefore become an attractive location for information and communications technology firms to set-

up business process outsourcing operations. While internet access is increasing, a “digital divide” still exists.

The latest census conducted in 2011 found that 24 percent of Jamaicans have access to computers and 100 percent of households have mobile phones. Access to internet is on an upward trend, with Jamaica’s ranking in the Global Economic Forum’s 2016-17 Global Competitiveness Index at 89 out of 138 for internet users as a percentage of the population, 82 for fixed broadband internet connections, and 66 for mobile broadband internet connections.

Online commerce is becoming more common, particularly amongst larger companies. Larger companies are more likely to have a web presence to market their products or services, in addition to using social media channels. Small and medium sized companies, however, tend to either not have a web presence, or rely solely on free social media platforms to market themselves. There are companies offering ecommerce domestically, as well as for cross-border sales. For those companies offering online commerce, online payments can be made via credit card, paypal, online banking, or bill payment services.

A number of mobile payments services have entered the market in the past five years. The Bank of Jamaica’s regulatory framework for mobile payments, called “Guidelines for Electronic Retail Payment Services,” came into effect April 2013.

Trade Promotion & Advertising

Advertising is primarily done through radio, television, the press and billboards, including electronic billboards. A number of advertising agencies have national coverage, and Jamaica has a wide range of companies licensed to offer broadcast media services and Subscriber Television (STV or Cable), including a wireless, multi-point, multi-channel, licensee. There are also several Internet service providers.

Radio is the most wide-reaching mass communication medium. The two major free-to-air local TV networks are:

- [Television Jamaica \(TVJ\)](#)
- [CVM](#)

The country also has two morning dailies, one afternoon tabloid, and several periodicals and magazines. These include:

- [The Gleaner Newspaper](#), 7 North Street, Kingston
Tel: (876) 922-3400;
- [The Jamaica Observer Newspaper](#), 40-421/2 Beechwood Avenue, Kingston 8
Tel: (876) 931-7825/7832;
- [The Star Newspaper](#) (afternoon tabloid), 7 North St., Kingston
Tel: (876) 922-3400;

Pricing

Prices are largely market-based, with the Fair Trading Commission (FTC) and the Consumer Affairs Commission (CAC) responsible for monitoring prices. The CAC plays a role in conducting research and informing the public of price variations. The National Consumer League, a local NGO, plays a watchdog role. Most goods and services attract a sales tax called the General Consumption Tax (GCT), while goods such as alcohol, cigarettes and fuel attract Special Consumption Taxes (SCT). Utility services, such as electricity, telephone, and water are regulated by the Office of Utilities Regulation, which must approve price increases.

Sales Service/Customer Support

After-sales service is an important competitive advantage in the Jamaican market and a requirement for an effective sales operator. If a U.S. firm has difficulty setting up its own distribution system, a local agent or distributor may be retained to maintain a trained service staff with a reasonable stock of spare parts. Alternatively, the supplier could offer the customer rapid service from the United States.

Protecting Intellectual Property

Jamaica has one of the stronger intellectual property (IP) protection regimes in the Caribbean, although legislative and enforcement gaps still exist. Jamaica is a member of a number of multilateral IP regimes, and has signed bilateral agreements with the United States which provide assurances to protect IP (see Investment Climate Statement section on “Intellectual Property Rights” for more details). U.S. companies can register patents and trademarks through the Jamaica Intellectual Property Office (JIPO), which also supports investors’ efforts to enforce their rights.

In any foreign market companies should consider several general principles for effective management of their intellectual property. For background on these principles please link to our article on [Protecting Intellectual Property](#) and also [Corruption](#).

IP Attaché Contact

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Due Diligence

U.S. companies planning to do business in Jamaica are advised to conduct thorough due diligence on potential business partners. This is particularly important as while the court system is fair, litigation can be expensive and the pace of resolution is slow.

Local Professional Services

It is advisable to retain professional advice at an early stage of a business venture to ensure a smooth start-up and compliance with local laws. [The Jamaica Bar Association](#) has a large list of members. Other professional service organizations include the:

1. [General Legal Council](#)
2. [Institute of Chartered Accountants of Jamaica](#)
3. [Incorporated Masterbuilders Association of Jamaica](#)
4. [Jamaica Bankers Association](#)
5. [Jamaica Institute of Architects](#)
6. [Jamaica Institute of Engineers](#)
7. [Jamaica Institute of Environmental Professionals](#)
8. [Jamaica Institute of Quantity Surveyors](#)
9. [Realtors Association of Jamaica](#)

The [U.S. Embassy's list of local attorneys](#) is available online.

Principle Business Associations

[American Chamber of Commerce of Jamaica](#) – the largest association of U.S. companies, which promotes investment and trade between the U.S., Jamaica, and the wider Caribbean region.

[Jamaica Chamber of Commerce](#) – assists companies doing business in Jamaica and has influenced the passage of legislation and regulations.

[Jamaica Exporters Association](#) – responsible for the dissemination of market and other trade related information as well as assisting members with market research.

[Jamaica Hotel and Tourism Association](#) – promotes the development of Jamaica's hospitality industry and represent the interests of its members with government and its agencies and in forums locally, regionally, and internationally.

[Jamaica Manufacturers' Association](#) – represents manufacturers and organizations providing services to these sectors.

[Private Sector Organization of Jamaica](#) – a grouping of private sector associations, companies, and individuals. The organization influences national policy by promoting discussions with the country's political directorate.

All the aforementioned associations are open to membership from U.S. companies.

Limitations on Selling US Products and Services

There are no areas of the manufacturing or services sectors restricting ownership or business opportunities to locals.

Web Resources

- [Jamaica Trade and Invest \(JAMPRO\)](#)
- [National Contracts Commission](#)
- [U.S. Commercial Service Caribbean](#)
- [Small Business Association of Jamaica](#)
- [MSME Alliance Jamaica](#)
- [Jamaica Business Development Center](#)

- [Commercial Liaison Office to the Inter-American Development Bank](#)
- [Commercial Liaison Office to the World Bank](#)

Leading Sectors for US Exports & Investments

Agricultural Sector

Overview

This Jamaica's agriculture (food and beverage) market represents good business opportunities for United States suppliers, particularly as the island's tropical climate and diversified topography incentivize the production of crops that are largely different than those grown in the cooler climates of the United States.

During 2015, the total value of food imports to Jamaica was US\$841 million, with approximately 41 percent of these imports supplied via sources in the United States. The majority of Jamaica's total food imports, or 60 percent, are directed to the hotel, restaurant and institutional (HRI) sector. The remaining imports are channeled to consumers via retail outlets such as supermarkets, convenience stores, and small "mom-and-pop" shops.

According to estimates based on GCT data¹, agriculture, food, beverage and tobacco categories of goods accounted for 20.1 percent of total wholesale and retail sales in Jamaica during 2015, and 20.2 percent of such sales in 2014. The following charts provide estimates of the trade in food and agricultural products with Jamaica:

Food/Animals (\$ Millions)	2014	2015	2016	2017 (Estimated)
Total Local Production	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Exports	240	220	229	N/A
Total Imports	919	841	841	N/A
Imports from the US	434	376	380	N/A
Total Market Size	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Exchange Rates	110.74	116.68	125.14	N/A

Total market size = (Total local production + Imports) - Exports

Source: Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN)

Beverage/Tobacco (\$ Millions)	2014	2015	2016	2017 (Estimated)
Total Local Production	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Exports	81	61	89	N/A
Total Imports	73	72	72	N/A
Imports from the US	12	11	13	N/A

Beverage/Tobacco (\$ Millions)	2014	2015	2016	2017 (Estimated)
Total Market Size	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Exchange Rates	110.74	116.68	125.14	N/A

Total market size = (Total local production + Imports) - Exports

Source: Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN)

General information on Jamaica's retail and hotel sectors and the demand for U.S. food and beverages is available at the [U.S. Department of Agriculture website](#).

Leading Sub-Sectors

Grains & Soybeans

Wheat flour is a major staple in Jamaica, with the country listed among the highest per capita consumers of flour and flour based products, providing an important market for U.S. suppliers. The sole mill in Jamaica is owned by ADM Milling, giving U.S. wheat an advantage in the market. However, wheat flour from Canada competes with U.S. imports in the fine bakery segment of the market.

The exposure to U.S. culture has created a demand for U.S. products, including breakfast cereal. This combined with the trend to a more healthy diet has led to increased consumption of breakfast cereals and non-dairy milk substitutes (such as soy milk). Higher priced U.S. cereals are positioned in the less price sensitive market segments on the basis of quality. Breakfast cereals from Trinidad and Tobago, a major supplier, are positioned in the lower priced category.

Demand for soybean and meal and coarse grain is largely driven by the livestock sub-sector, particularly the poultry industry. Imports of these products are expected to be strong as Jamaican demand for poultry is high, with chicken remaining a core Jamaican food.

Fruits & Vegetables

Importation of fruits and vegetables continues to be popular, as demand within the hotel/restaurant and retail sectors remain high. Some fruits (apples, pears, strawberries, plums, kiwis) and vegetables (broccoli, asparagus, spinach) will continue to grow because very small (if any) areas in Jamaica are suitable for producing these crops. However, products such as tomatoes, carrots, cabbages, melons, lettuce, and other fruits and vegetables that compete directly with local products are less competitive, and Jamaica's Safeguard Act of 2001 further advantages local producers. Imports of these products, however, can increase during periods of shortages. Imported garlic and capsicums will remain competitive since local production is on a limited scale.

Meats

Demand for prime beef cuts comes primarily from the hotel industry since per capita beef consumption remains relatively low among Jamaicans. On the other hand, Jamaicans are one of the highest per capita consumers of chicken. Chicken is primarily produced locally due to high import duties, although lower quality cuts may enter duty-free. Goat meat is a principal component of local cuisine. Mutton and goat imports have been growing in importance among Jamaicans, but this market is generally price sensitive.

According to a statement from the Jamaica Pig Farmers Association in 2008, Jamaican pork consumption is roughly one-seventh of the global average per capita pork consumption. At present, the Government of Jamaica bans the importation of most pork from the United States, and cites concerns about pseudo-rabies as the reason for the ban. Commercial swine herds in the United States have been declared free of pseudorabies since 2004, but the Jamaican ban still remains in place. The U.S. government, therefore, has been encouraging the ban's removal. Import of processed U.S. pork that has been "hermetically sealed" is permitted.

Alcohol

The demand for wines and spirits in Jamaica is driven by the hotel and restaurant sub-sector. The presence of all-inclusive hotels in Jamaica favors low cost producers, such as South American wines. In recent years, U.S. brands have made small gains in market share and their consumption can be expected to increase in the medium to long term. The United States competes with European producers in Jamaica's sparkling wine market, and with producers from Australia, Europe and South America in the market for other wine products. Jamaica annually imports over one million liters of vodka, brandy, gin, and other spirits. The Jamaican consumer generally has shown a preference for local rum over imported spirits. Diageo, which owns locally-produced Red Stripe beer, is the dominant player in beer, offering Heineken and Guinness as well.

Prepared Snacks

Trinidad and Tobago and Barbados are major suppliers of snack foods to the Jamaican market, protected by a 20 percent CET on all snack products originating outside of CARICOM. However, U.S. products do compete based on quality and strong brand identification. Grocery stores across Jamaica carry a wide range of U.S. brand foodstuffs, and hoteliers in Jamaica's tourist centers routinely purchase U.S. food products to satisfy guests' expectations.

Opportunities

Jamaica's agriculture policy seeks to diversify the production of agricultural goods to build self-sufficiency, promote exports, and service the growing tourism industry. Jamaica is currently challenged with the inability to produce significant quantities of consistent high quality agricultural goods, however. There are opportunities in agricultural innovation and developing the supply chain to counter these challenges. JAMPRO specifically facilitates investment in key goods, including rice, yam, turmeric, Irish potato, sheep, cocoa, coffee, pineapple, onion, ginger, and honey as strategic products.

Web Resources

- [Jamaica Trade and Invest \(JAMPRO\)](#)
- [Jamaica Tourism Board](#)
- [Jamaica Hotel and Tourist Association](#)

Chemicals and Related Products

Overview

Imports of chemicals and related imports from the U.S. have been driven by demand for ethanol to satisfy Jamaica's E10 fuel program and sodium hydroxide for the matured bauxite industry. There is also increasing demand for pharmaceuticals, cosmetics and jewelry. Growth in pharmaceuticals has been driven by increased access to healthcare through the government's no-user fee policy, an aging population, and increased lifestyle diseases.

Chemicals & Related Products (\$ M)	2014	2015	2016	2017 (Estimated)
Total Local Production	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Exports	28	25	29	N/A
Total Imports	749	602	557	N/A
Imports from the US	319	272	282	N/A
Total Market Size	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Exchange Rates	110.74	116.68	125.14	xxx

Total market size = Total local production + imports) - Exports

Source: Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN)

Leading Sub-Sectors

Best prospects include medications for hypertension, respiratory diseases, sexually transmitted diseases, and diabetes. Beauty products, jewelry, disinfectants, and agricultural chemicals provide some scope for growth.

Opportunities

Exporters to Jamaica will find growing opportunities for pharmaceuticals as the population ages and lifestyle diseases become more prevalent. Demand for pharmaceuticals could also be driven by increased subscription to a National Health Fund and free access to healthcare. Health Corporation Limited, the government company responsible for sourcing and distributing products to the public health sector, is a major importer of pharmaceuticals.

Web Resources

- [Pharmaceutical Society of Jamaica](#)
- [Ministry of Health](#)
- [Petrojam](#)

Machinery and Transport Equipment

Overview

U.S. brands enjoy significant goodwill in the Jamaican market, underpinned by a long tradition of safety and quality. However, Jamaicans are increasingly price sensitive, leading to a diversion of trade to cheaper competitors. Notwithstanding, machinery built in the U.S. remains visible at construction sites, large farms, and industrial facilities and there has been an uptick in imports from the U.S. during the last two years. There is still a strong market for telecommunications and data related products, batteries and electrical components. Right-handed vehicles out of Japan and Europe continue to dominate the market, but the U.S. remains a major source market for auto parts and accessories.

Machinery & Transport Equipment (\$M)	2014	2015	2016	2017 (Estimated)
Total Local Production	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Exports	22	20	42	N/A
Total Imports	1,448	1,263	1,242	N/A
Imports from the US	333	367	394	N/A
Total Market Size	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Exchange Rates	110.74	116.68	125.14	N/A

Total market size = (Total local production + Imports) - Exports

Source: Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN)

Leading Sub-Sectors

Best prospects include wheel rims, shock absorbers, clutch parts, brake parts, tires, and other general accessories.

Opportunities

Jamaican authorities monitor the quality of the imports and this scrutiny increases opportunities for new higher quality aftermarket auto parts. The introduction of LNG into the energy mix may also provide additional opportunities for products associated with this industry.

Web Resources

- [Ministry of Industry, Investment and Commerce](#)
- [Trade Board](#)
- [Jamaica Customs](#)

Minerals, Lubricants and Related Materials

Overview

The U.S now provides Jamaica with over 25 percent of its mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials needs.

Mineral, Lubricants & Related Materials (\$M)	2014	2015	2016	2017 (Estimated)
Total Local Production	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Exports	301	194	173	N/A
Total Imports	1 972	1 147	935	N/A
Imports from the US	622	340	321	N/A
Total Market Size	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Exchange Rates	110.74	116.68	125.14	N/A

Total market size = (Total local production + Imports) - Exports

Source: Statistical Institute of Jamaica (STATIN)

Leading Sub-Sectors

Best prospects in this category include lubricating oils and motor spirits (gasoline).

Opportunities

With the country in the process of changing its fuel source for generating electricity to gases, liquid natural gas (LNG) and related products should grow in importance in the next two to three years.

Web Resources

- [Ministry of Science, Technology, Energy and Mining](#)
- [Petrojam](#)

Customs, Regulations & Standards

Trade Barriers

In order to protect local producers, significant import duties remain on certain agricultural products (such as chicken and vegetables) and consumer goods. Certain items such as beverages and tobacco, motor vehicles, and some agricultural products carry an additional stamp duty (ASD) and special consumption taxes (SCT). Most imported items, in commercial quantity, are also subject to a 21.5 percent General Consumption Tax (GCT).

There is a Standards Compliance Fee (SCF) of 0.3 percent, collected by Jamaica Customs on behalf of the Jamaica Bureau of Standards. The Bureau verifies product requirements, including labeling standards. There is an Environmental Levy of 0.5 percent on the cost, insurance, freight (CIF) value on imports to Jamaica.

Strict regulations govern the importation of drugs and pharmaceuticals for safety, efficacy, and quality. The Food and Drug Act requires all drugs distributed or sold in Jamaica to be assessed and registered. Clinical tests of drug uses and side effects are reviewed with special attention paid to stability under high temperatures and humidity typical of the tropics. Typically, a drug will not be admitted for use in Jamaica until it has been safely used in the country of origin for a period of more than one year.

For more information and help with trade barriers please contact:

[International Trade Administration](#)
[Enforcement and Compliance](#)

(202) 482-0063

ECCommunications@trade.gov

Import Tariff

Jamaica Customs Agency is one of the major revenue-generating entities of the Jamaican government, accounting for over 30 percent of taxes. Still, the government has committed to gradually reducing duties, some as high as 180 percent. As a CARICOM member state, Jamaica applies a Common External Tariff (CET) to imports from other countries. The CET typically ranges from 10 - 20 percent.

Import Requirements & Documentation

A number of items require an import license in order to export to Jamaica. Some of these items include: milk powder, refined sugar, plants and parts of plants for perfume or pharmaceutical purposes, gum-resins, vegetable saps and extracts, certain chemicals, motor vehicles and parts, arms and ammunition, and certain toys, such as water pistols and gaming machines. The Trade Board, which falls under the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture, and Fisheries (MICAFA), is responsible for granting licenses, which must be obtained before an item can be sold.

The documents required for the importation of goods are: (1) a supplier invoice; (2) certificate of origin; (3) bill of lading; (4) airway bill; and, (5) other shipping documents to include a declaration of value and an import license, if necessary. Certain products may also require a sanitary or phytosanitary certification.

Upon arrival of the goods in Jamaica, the documents are submitted to the Customs authorities and relevant duties must be paid before the goods are cleared. The importer may also be required to present a tax compliance certificate, a Business Enterprise Number (BENO), and a Taxpayer Registration Number (TRN).

Labeling/Marking Requirements

The Jamaican Bureau of Standards administers the Standards, Processed Food, and Weights and Measures Acts, to which products entering Jamaica are subjected. It is the responsibility of importers and distributors to ensure that goods sold in Jamaica are properly labeled as required by the labeling standards. The Jamaica Bureau of Standards stringently exercises its judicial authority and is known to block the entry and sale of goods that are improperly labeled. Improper labeling may occur in several ways such as incorrect date format, non-English language, and other impediments of clarity. A full description of labeling requirements is to be found in Labeling Standards JS1 Parts 1 to 29.

The smallest individual unit of a pre-packaged good should be labeled in English and should include the proper name of the product, an accurate declaration of the contents, an accurate description of the ingredients, a date mark or date of minimum durability, as well as the name and traceable business address of the processor, manufacturer, packer, importer or distributor and the country of origin. Manufactured, expiration, and other date marks must conform to the traditional European "dd/mm/yy" or ISO's "yy/mm/dd" date formats. The United States' conventional "mm/dd/yy" or the five-digit Julian "day-of-year year," "year day-of-year" or other such modifications of the Julian system are not accepted for the purpose of trade and commerce in Jamaica. Jamaica has not developed a definitive standard for the labeling of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) and Living Modified Organisms, but present directions favor adopting language developed by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

U.S. Export Controls

U.S. Department of Commerce

- [Export Controls](#)
- [Consolidated Screening List](#)

Temporary Entry

Importers may obtain authorization for temporary admission of products for a period of three or four months. To claim temporary admission of merchandise, regular import documentation and the C25 Form, with customs authorization, must be presented by the importer upon the arrival of the merchandise. In addition, the

importer is required to deposit or place in bond up to one and a half times the applicable duty, which is refunded on exit of the merchandise.

Prohibited & Restricted Imports

- Live pigs, fresh pork, and other pork products from the United States;
- Dogs for racing and dog racing equipment;
- Tablets containing a combination of methaqualone and diphenhydramine hydrochloride;
- Certain brands of crayons from China and Thailand;
- All items banned under the Customs Act and the Plants Protection from Disease Act;
- All goods prohibited entry into the United Kingdom under the Anthrax Prevention Act 1919;
- Animals and carcasses of animals prohibited under the Animals Diseases and Importation Act;
- Arms and ammunition, except with an export license from the U.S. Department of State and an import permit from the Ministry of National Security;
- Brandy of a lower strength than 30 degrees per centum under proof, unless it is proved that it has been matured for a period not less than ten years;
- Base or counterfeit imitation coin of any country;
- Coin, silver, or any money not of the established standard in weight and fineness;
- Opium and dangerous drugs;
- Essence of brandy or whisky or flavoring essences except as approved by the Minister;
- Indecent or obscene prints, paintings, photographs, books, films, etc.;
- Oil of gin or cognac, except as approved by the Minister;
- Rum coloring solutions;
- Spirits and wine, unless specifically imported with casks or other vessels of at least nine gallons content or in glass or stone bottles with each case containing not less than one gallon;
- Fictitious stamps and instruments; and
- Sugar, except under license; and
- Honey.

Customs Regulations

[Jamaica Customs](#)

Newport East, Kingston 15

(876) 922-5140

Standards for Trade

Overview

The Jamaica Bureau of Standards (“The Bureau”) is a statutory body established by the Standards Act of 1968. The Bureau of Standards is controlled by a Standards Council, which is responsible for policymaking and general administration. Standards are developed by standing committees representing varied interests, such as consumer groups, the manufacturing sector and the public in general. The Bureau’s main functions are formulating, promoting, and implementing standards for goods, services, and processes. It develops and enforces technical regulations for those commodities and practices which affect health and safety.

The Bureau also facilitates trade and protects Jamaican consumers with the timely development and promulgation of national standards. The Standards and Certification department seeks industry participation in allowing the development of new standards and new markets both locally and regionally. The Bureau’s mandate includes (i) preparing standards for particular products, practices, and processes and (ii) checking products against claims of conformity to published standards.

Standards

Standards Organizations

The Jamaica Bureau of Standards is the main standards development organization in Jamaica. At the Bureau, the preparation of standards is authorized by the Standards Council following representations from national organizations or from committees and staff of the Bureau of Standards. When the final draft of the standard is ready, it is sent to the Minister of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture, and Fisheries for approval after which it is made available to the public for comment. After consideration of the comments, a final document is prepared and the Standards Council recommends the document to the Minister for approval. The declaration of the standard is published and copies are made available for sale. Standards are revised every five years, while the Catalogue of Jamaican Standards is updated every six months. It includes a listing of all standards published to date as well as those approved by the Minister awaiting publication. The National Environment and Planning Agency (NEPA), the National Council on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (NCTVET), private companies, and government agencies and ministries also have a limited role in standards development.

Conformity Assessment

The Jamaica Bureau of Standards is responsible for issuing licenses to use the Bureau’s Certification Mark (Mark of Conformity). A number of laboratories carry out tests in such areas as food analysis, chemistry, metallurgy, microbiology, building materials, furniture, packaging, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, weights and measures. Private companies involved in conformity assessment are Technological Solutions Limited and SGS Limited.

Product Certification

The National Certification Mark issued by the Bureau is a mark of quality awarded to products, processes, and practices, which conform to relevant standards. Products, which are proven to be of consistent and reliable quality, are granted the National

Certification Mark. The Bureau encourages consumers to purchase products which bear this mark, as it guarantees consistent product quality. All manufacturers have the right to apply for the mark. The Bureau's team of analysts and specialists examines the manufacturers' processes, equipment, records, raw material, quality control systems, and the finished product to ensure good quality.

The Product Certification offered by the Bureau is voluntary (and at a cost to the applicant). Plans are being developed for the establishment of a National Certification body. Also being planned is a Compliance Sticker Program, which will allow local products of a suitable standard to bear a Compliance Sticker. The program will also extend to compliant imported products. There is a mutual recognition agreement between the Bureau and the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM).

Accreditation

The Bureau offers laboratory accreditation to Chemical and Microbiological Laboratories, which apply for this recognition. Accreditation services may also be obtained from International agencies. Plans are in place for the development of a National Accreditation Body (separate from the Bureau of Standards), which will take over this function.

The Bureau's Technical Information Center is the only national standards library in Jamaica. It is the center of the international standards information network and serves as:

- The National Enquiry Point under the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT)
- Contact Point for Codex Alimentarius Commission in Jamaica
- Local Agent for International Organization for Standardization (ISO), British Standards Institution (BSI), and American National Standards Institution (ANSI).
- The Bureau has membership in the following regional and international organizations:
 - International Electro-Technical Commission (IEC)
 - Caribbean Regional Organization for Standards and Quality (CROSQ)
 - Inter-American Metrology System (SIM)
 - Pan-American Standards Commission (COPANT) (an ISO Commission)
 - Caribbean Metrology Sub-Region (CARIMET)
- Additionally, the Bureau cooperates with several other regional and international standards and metrology institutions such as the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), National Center for Metrology-Mexico (CENAM), Physikalisch Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB), American Society for Mechanical Engineers (ASME), National Office of Standards-Cuba (NC), Columbian Institute of Certification and Technical Standards (ICONTEC), Barbados national Standards Institute (BNSI), Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards (TTBS), and the Guyana National Bureau of Standards (GNBS).

Testing, Inspection and Certification

The Jamaica National Agency for Accreditation (JANAAC) is the national accreditation body of Jamaica. JANAAC is an agency of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture, and Fisheries (MICAF), was incorporated in March 2007, and officially began operations on April 1, 2008.

JANAAC is a member of the International Laboratory Accreditation Corporation (ILAC) and the Inter-American Accreditation Corporation (IAAC).

Test certificates from foreign laboratories are accepted, assuming that the foreign laboratories are ILAC mutual recognition agreement (MRA) signatories. In addition, U.S. testing laboratories can operate in Jamaica and test U.S. products to comply with domestic regulatory requirements if the laboratories are ILAC MRA signatories.

Publication of technical regulations

Proposed Technical Regulations are made available to the public for comment. A 30-day period is allowed before publication. Any entity, including U.S. companies, may comment on the proposals before they are published. The Bureau has a Technical Information Center, which has information on standards being developed. Final Technical Regulations are published in the Jamaica Gazette Supplement - Proclamations, Rules and Regulations.

Product labeling is one of the more important and topical matters handled by the Jamaica Bureau of Standards. The Catalogue of Jamaican Standards lists requirements for over 30 different commodities. The list is wide and varied and includes items such as footwear, precious metals, household appliances, panty hose, thread, animal feeds, toys, furniture, and various packaged goods.

Labeling requirements are contained in a series of mandatory standards for the Labeling of Commodities (JS 1: Part 1 through to JS 1: Part 30). Adherence to these requirements is closely monitored by the Bureau. Monitoring entails verification of labels against the specifications outlined in the particular labeling standard.

It is critical for the Bureau to develop a system that will allow the organization to exercise its duty with increased efficiency and effectiveness with respect to compliance to compulsory standards (technical regulations). The Label Registration Program was therefore proposed. This program aims to prevent labeling violations both at the Ports of Entry and in the Domestic Marketplace. Labels of each product can therefore be registered with the Bureau under this program. This registration program is voluntary and will assist the speedy processing of goods through Customs (using a database) for importers who have their labels registered with the Bureau.

The steps required for this process are:

1. The completion of the Label Registration Form
2. Submitting the form along with the labels of the products to be registered (preferably on line) to the Bureau of Standards

3. Make payment using either the e-commerce facility or the other means available and showing proof of payment
4. The label is assessed and a report done
5. If the label is in conformance with the standards, the registration will be approved and a registration number assigned and added to list of compliant labels
6. Where a labeling non-conformance is identified, the report shall indicate the areas of non-conformance, and make recommendation to effect corrections
7. The applicant will be required to implement the recommendations and re-submit the corrected label and proceed again
8. Label registration number now used by Customs to process imports
9. Routine periodic verification conducted by Bureau Inspectors/Officers to identify continued compliance
10. If non-compliance is identified, registration is withdrawn and distributor advised to re-register the label(s).

Contact Information

Bureau of Standards Jamaica
6 Winchester Road, P.O Box 113
Kingston 10
Tel: (876) 632-4275 or (876) 618-1534; Fax: (876) 929-4736
Email: info@bsj.org.jm

Trade Agreements

Preferential Tariff Arrangements

Jamaica has enjoyed preferential tariff arrangements with: the United States under the Caribbean Basin Economic Recovery Act (CBERA); the European Union under the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA); with Canada under CARIBCAN (a negotiations for successor agreement has stalled); and with other English-speaking Caribbean states under CARICOM. CARICOM has bilateral trade agreements with Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Colombia, and Venezuela.

CBERA, commonly referred to as the Caribbean Basin Initiative (CBI), provides duty-free entry to the United States to qualifying products of Jamaican origin (except textiles, footwear, handbags, luggage, work gloves, leather apparel, tuna fish, petroleum and petroleum products, and watches and watch parts from countries that do not enjoy Most Favored Nation status). An amendment was made to CBI provisions in 1990 (CBI II) allowing additional duty reduction on certain leather-related products, including handbags, luggage, flat goods, work gloves, and wearing apparel. To meet CBI eligibility standards, products must contain at least 35 percent value added in Jamaica, of which U.S. materials must comprise 15 percent of the value of the finished product. Articles assembled in Jamaica from 100 percent U.S. components are also given duty-free treatment (with certain exceptions, including textiles/apparel for which the U.S. duty is levied only on the value-added in Jamaica).

CBERA was substantially expanded in 2000 through the Caribbean Basin Trade Partnership Act (CBTPA) and further in 2002 through the Trade Act. The changes

restore the margin of preferences CBI countries enjoyed prior to the implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), as well as improve the range of economic opportunities available to the countries. The Jamaican garment industry has not expanded under CBTPA as predicted due to: (1) the removal of preferential access to key markets following the removal of the quota system; (2) competition from low cost producers; (3) a large untrained labor force; (4) small factories that inhibit the achievement of economies of scale; (5) dependence on a few markets and on imported inputs; and, high overhead costs. Jamaica also signed a Tax Information Exchange Agreement (TIEA) with the United States, allowing U.S. taxpayers to deduct legitimate business expenses incurred in attending business meetings and conventions in Jamaica.

CARICOM and Canada commenced negotiations for a free trade agreement in 2007 to replace the existing non-reciprocal Caribbean-Canada Trade Agreement known as CARIBCAN. However, after seven rounds of negotiations, both parties have not been able to reach an agreement and no further negotiations are planned. Jamaica has been exporting certain items duty-free to Canada once eligible items meet a national-origin standard of 60 percent of the factory price originating in Jamaica, Commonwealth Caribbean countries, or Canada. Textiles, garments, lubricating oils, clothing, footwear, luggage, handbags, and leather garments are excluded. Processed and fresh vegetables comprise most of the trade under CARIBCAN. Alumina, representing approximately 80 percent of all exports to Canada, was already admitted duty-free prior to the establishment of CARIBCAN.

The Economic Partnership Agreement or EPA, a trade partnership required by the Cotonou Agreement to replace the trade component of Lome IV, was signed in January 2008. The EPA is expected to help ACP countries, including CARIFORUM, reduce poverty and achieve economic growth through sustainable trade with Europe. Jamaica has been a leading member of the Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM) since 1973, when four countries signed the Treaty of Chaguaramas. Over the years membership has grown to 15. There are also five (5) associate members, and The Bahamas is a member of the community, but not the common market. In 1989, the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). was established to create a single economic space for the free movement of people, goods, services, and capital. To effect the CSME, a Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas was signed in 2002. In January 2006, CARICOM Heads of Government signed the single market aspect of the CSME, although at the time only six member countries had completed the process to bring the CSM into being. Six other countries have subsequently joined the CSM and the economic integration aspect of the CSME commenced in 2008.

Licensing Requirements for Professional Services

The General Legal Council (GLC) is responsible for organizing legal education and upholding the standards of professional conduct. In addition to upholding the ethics of the legal profession to which registered attorneys are expected to adhere, the GLC also plays an integral role in the admission of attorneys being enrolled to practice in the courts of Jamaica.

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Jamaica was incorporated under the Public Accountancy Act (PAA) to regulate the accountancy profession in Jamaica as well as the use of accountancy designations.

A real estate practitioner is expected to complete a one month, 100 hour salesman course; registration with a Real Estate Board; and, “attachment” to a licensed Real Estate Broker. Practitioners are also expected to apply for a license from the Real Estate Board of Jamaica, which has to be renewed annually.

Web Resources

- [Customs Act](#)
- [Customs Regulations](#)
- [Customs Duty](#)
- [Prohibited Items](#)
- [Restricted Items](#)
- [CARICOM Secretariat](#)
- [Jamaica Bureau of Standards](#)
- [Economic Partnership Agreement](#)
- [Caribbean Basin initiative](#)
- [Treaty of Chaguaramas \(CARICOM\)](#)

Investment Climate Statement

Executive Summary

The Government of Jamaica (GOJ) considers foreign direct investment (FDI) a key driver for economic growth and is undertaking significant structural reforms to improve its investment climate. After suffering from a stagnant economy for more than two decades and accumulating one of the highest debt-to-GDP ratios in the world, the GOJ committed to ongoing macroeconomic reform, starting with an International Monetary Fund (IMF) program starting in May 2013. Under the IMF program, the GOJ replaced its discretionary investment incentives with legislation that simplifies the income tax regime and codifies tax benefits for all investors. Despite this and other measures, Jamaica fell two places on the World Bank's Doing Business Indicators, from number 67 to 65 this year, and, due to red tape and bureaucracy, it can be challenging to register property, pay taxes, and enforce contracts.

Jamaica received almost USD800 million in FDI in 2015, up from the USD 218 million registered in 2011. Investment from the United States, China, Mexico, and Spain continued to drive FDI in 2016. Business process outsourcing (BPO), including call centers and other remote technical support, drew local and overseas investment – most prominently from the United States – and the government recently approved a five-year plan to encourage expansion. One drawback is Jamaica's high cost of energy – considerably higher than in the United States – primarily due to a dependence on inefficient petroleum-based power plants and outdated electricity infrastructure, though electricity prices fell somewhat in recent years. Jamaica's ongoing energy sector modernization became increasingly attractive to U.S. investors.

The primary investment barrier in Jamaica is crime, both as a risk and expense, due to the fact that security is required to protect the physical infrastructure of most properties; the country's murder rate worsened in 2016 and remains one of the highest in the hemisphere. Additional challenges include an inefficient government bureaucracy, the stagnant and price-sensitive economy, and low labor productivity, although in response the GOJ has enacted legislation to permit flexible work arrangements as a means of improving productivity. In addition, public perception of corruption is high and remains a consideration for investors. Successive administrations attempted to address corruption by enacting legislation and signing various international conventions, but to date there were no high-level convictions. Jamaica's ranking in the 2016 Transparency International Corruption Perception Index fell from 69 to 83 of the 175 countries surveyed.

A transition of government followed the Jamaica Labour Party's (JLP) narrow victory over the People's National Party in national elections on February 25, 2016. The new administration continued the economic reform program initiated under the 2013 IMF Extended Fund Facility and transitioned to a Stand By Agreement in 2016 to signal its commitment to policy continuity.

Table 1

Measure	Year	Index/Rank	Website Address
TI Corruption Perception Index	2016	83 of 176	http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview
World Bank's Doing Business	2016	67 of 190	doingbusiness.org/rankings
Global Innovation Index	2016	89 of 128	https://www.globalinnovationindex.org/analysis-indicator
U.S. FDI in partner country (\$M USD, stock positions)	2015	USD 205	http://www.bea.gov/international/factsheet/
World Bank GNI per capita	2015	USD 5050	http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GNP.PCA.P.CD

Openness To, & Restrictions Upon, Foreign Investment

Policies Towards Foreign Direct Investments

The Government of Jamaica (GOJ) is open to foreign investment in all sectors of its economy, and under International Monetary Fund (IMF) guidance, the GOJ made significant structural reforms to its economy over the past five years. In 2013, Jamaica's Parliament passed 11 pieces of legislation to improve the business environment and support economic growth through a simplified tax system and broadened tax base. During 2014 the government passed an Insolvency Act to make bankruptcy proceedings more efficient. The establishment of credit bureaus and a Collateral Registry under the Secured Interest in Personal Property (SIPP) legislation are improving access to credit. Jamaica made starting a business easier by consolidating forms and made electricity less expensive by reducing the cost of external connection works. The government implemented an electronic platform for the payment of taxes and has established a 90 day window for development approvals. New Electricity and Procurement Acts were also passed and should positively impact the investment climate.

Jamaica's commitment to regulatory reform is an intentional effort to become a more attractive destination for foreign investment. According to the World Bank's "Doing Business 2017" report, Jamaica fell two places, from 65 to 67, after improving by seven places in 2016. That said, Jamaica still boasts the highest ranking in the Caribbean and sixth place in Latin America and the Caribbean. The country made significant improvement in resolving insolvency, following the passage of new bankruptcy legislation and now ranks in the top 20 in starting a

business and getting credit. Jamaica improved 8 spots on the Global Competitiveness Index and is ranked 86 out of 144 countries for 2015/16. The country is ranked the third best country to do business in Latin America and the Caribbean according to the 2016 Forbes Best Countries for Business Report. Bureaucracy remains a major impediment, with the country continuing to underperform in the areas of getting electricity, registering property, paying taxes and enforcing contracts.

Jamaica trade and investment promotion agency JAMPRO is the government agency responsible for promoting business opportunities to local and foreign investors. While JAMPRO does not institute general criteria for investors, the institution targets specific sectors as well as export generating investment. For more information, please visit the [JAMPRO website](#).

Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSME) in Jamaica tend to employ less than ten employees and are assisted by JAMPRO and the Jamaica Business Development Corporation primarily through business facilitation and capacity building. Such fee-based services would be made available to foreign-owned MSMEs. For more information, please visit the [JBDC website](#).

Bilateral Investment Agreements & Taxation Treaties

Jamaica has bilateral investment treaties (BIT) in force with Argentina, China, France, Germany, Italy, Republic of Korea, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and the United States. Jamaica has signed, but not yet into force, BITs with Cuba, Egypt, Indonesia, Kuwait, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe.

Jamaica has preferential trading agreements with CARICOM members and through CARICOM, it has preferential trade agreements with the European Union, Canada, the United States, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, and Venezuela.

Jamaica has a Bilateral Investment Treaty with the United States. According to the OAS Foreign Trade Information System, Jamaica also signed bilateral investment treaties with Argentina, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Netherlands, Nigeria, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and Zimbabwe. Jamaica signed a bilateral Income Tax Convention with the United States in 1981, which seeks to avoid double taxation while preventing income tax evasion. Jamaica also has double taxation agreements with Canada, CARICOM, China, Denmark, France, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Jamaica has not signed a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the United States, but CARICOM signed a Trade and Investment Framework (TIFA) with the United States in 2013. In 2014, Jamaica and the United States signed an inter-government agreement for reciprocal information sharing as part of the implementation of the U.S. Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA).

Limits on Foreign Control and Right to Private Ownership and Establishment

All private entities, foreign and domestic, are entitled to establish and own business enterprises and engage in all forms of remunerative activity, subject to, inter alia, labor, registration and environmental requirements. Jamaica does not impose limits on foreign ownership or control, and local laws do not distinguish between local and

foreign investors. There are no sector-specific restrictions that discriminate against market access.

The U.S. Government is not aware of any discrimination against foreign investors at the time of initial investment or after the investment is made. However, under the Companies Act investors are required to either establish a local company or register a branch office of a foreign-owned enterprise. Branches of companies incorporated abroad must also register with the Registrar of Companies if they intend to operate in Jamaica. There are no laws or regulations requiring firms to adopt articles of incorporation or association that limit or prohibit foreign investment, participation or control.

Other Investment Policy Reviews

Jamaica has not undertaken any investment policy reviews within the last three years in conjunction with the World Trade Organization (WTO), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), or United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The government last conducted a WTO review in January 2011 and an OECD review in 2004. The country is set to conduct another WTO review in the second half of 2017. JAMPRO published a summary of Jamaica's economic and political landscape for potential investors. It is available at [JAMPRO website](#).

With Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) funding, a Tholons Report published in July 2012 evaluates opportunities in [Jamaica's Business Process Outsourcing \(BPO\) sector](#).

Business Registration

Businesses can register using the "Super Form," a single *Business Registration Form for New Companies and Business Names*. The Companies Office of Jamaica (ORC) acts as a "one-stop-shop," effectively reducing the registration time to between one and three days. Foreign companies can register using these forms, with or without the assistance of an attorney/notary. The "Super Form" can be accessed under [Forms at the Companies Office of Jamaica's website](#).

Outward Investment

While the Government of Jamaica does not actively promote an outward investment program, it does not restrict domestic investors from investing abroad.

Legal Regime

Transparency of the Regulatory System

Jamaica's legal, regulatory and accounting systems are transparent and consistent with international norms, and Jamaica adopted the new International Financial Reporting System. Proposed legislation is available for public comment, and submissions are generally invited from members of the public for items considered to be controversial. A Fair Competition Act (FCA) was implemented in 1993, administered by the Fair Trading Commission (FTC). The main objective of the FCA is to prevent business interests and government policies from hindering the efficiencies to be gained from a competitive system (See section on Competition and

Anti-Trust Laws). The U.S. government is not aware of any informal regulatory processes managed by NGOs or private sector associations or of any private sector and/or GOJ effort to restrict foreign participation in industry standards-setting consortia or organizations.

International Regulatory Considerations

Jamaica is a part of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). CARICOM was established in 1973, with the main pillars of cooperation envisioned to be economic integration, foreign policy coordination, human and social development, and security. Despite the intent for CARICOM to harmonize regulatory systems regionally, they are not harmonized. The CARICOM members do, however, have a common external tariff.

The GOJ tends to adopt commonwealth standards for its regulatory system, especially from Canada and the United Kingdom. Jamaica is a full member of the WTO, and is required to notify all draft technical regulations to the WTO Committee of Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT).

Legal System and Judicial Independence

Jamaica has a common law legal system and court decisions are generally based on past judicial declarations. The Jamaican Constitution provides for an independent judiciary with a three-tier court structure. A party seeking to enforce ownership or contractual rights can file a claim in the Resident Magistrate or Supreme Court. Appeals on decisions made in these courts can be taken before the Court of Appeal and then to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in the United Kingdom. The Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) hears appeals in civil and criminal matters from common law courts within CARICOM member states such as Jamaica.

Jamaica does not have a single written commercial or contractual law, and case law is therefore supplemented by the following pieces of legislation: (1) Arbitration (Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Awards) Act; (2) Companies Act; (3) Consumer Protection Act; (4) Fair Competition Act; (5) Investment Disputes Awards (Enforcement) Act; (6) Judgment (Foreign) (Reciprocal Enforcement) Act; (7) Law Reform (Frustrated Contracts) Act; (8) Loans (Equity Investment Bonds) Act; (9) Partnership (Limited) Act; (10) Registration of Business Names Act; (11) Sale of Goods Act; (12) Standards Act; and, (13) Trade Act. The commercial and civil divisions of the Supreme Court have jurisdiction to hear intellectual property claims.

Jamaica enforces the judgments of foreign courts through: (1) The Judgment and Awards (Reciprocal Enforcement) Act; (2) The Judgment (Foreign) (Reciprocal Enforcement) Act; and, (3) The Maintenance Orders (Facilities for Enforcement) Act. Under these acts, judgments of foreign courts are accepted where there is a reciprocal enforcement of judgment treaty with the relevant foreign state. International arbitration is also accepted as a means for settling investment disputes between private parties. Jamaica is a signatory to the New York Convention (the Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards) which governs the recognition and enforcement of foreign arbitration awards. The Jamaican Arbitration (Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Awards) Act enables foreign arbitral awards under the New York Convention to be enforced in Jamaica.

The system has a long tradition of being fair, but court cases can take years or even decades to resolve. Challenges with dispute resolution usually reflect broader problems within the court system including long delays and resource constraints. Subsequent enforcement of court decisions or arbitration awards is usually adequate, and the local court will recognize the enforcement of an international arbitration award.

A specialized Commercial Court was established in 2001 to expedite the resolution of commercial cases. The rules do not make it mandatory for commercial cases to be filed in the Commercial Court and the Court is largely underutilized by litigants.

Subsequent enforcement of court decisions or arbitration awards is usually adequate, and the local courts will recognize the enforcement of an international arbitration award.

Jamaica ranked 117 in the 2016 Doing Business Report for the length of time taken for the enforcement of contracts in the courts.

Laws and Regulations on Foreign Direct Investment

There are no specific laws or regulations specifically related to foreign investment.

Competition and Anti-Trust Laws

The Fair Trading Commission (FTC), an agency of the Ministry of Industry, Commerce, Agriculture and Fisheries (MICAFA), administers Jamaica's Fair Competition Act (FCA). The major objective of the FCA is to foster competitive behavior and provide consumer protection. The Act therefore forbids arrangements that substantially lessen competition or behavior that results in the abuse of a dominant position. The Act proscribes the following anti-competitive practices: resale price maintenance; tied selling; price fixing; collusion and cartels; and bid rigging. The act does not prohibit mergers or acquisitions that could lead to the creation of a monopoly. However, the government raised the possibility of enacting antitrust legislation. The FTC is empowered to investigate breaches of the Act. Businesses or individuals in breach can be taken to court if they fail to take corrective measures outlined by the FTC.

Expropriation and Compensation

Expropriation is generally not an issue in Jamaica, and there are no outstanding cases. However, expropriation of land may take place for national development under the Land Acquisition Act, which provides for compensation on the basis of market value. The U.S. government is not aware of any expropriation-related litigation ongoing between the Jamaican government and any private individual or company. However, the U.S. government assisted investors who had property expropriated during the 1970's socialist regime, with a payment in one such case received as recently as 2010.

Dispute Settlement

ICSID Convention and New York Convention

Jamaica became a signatory to the International Center for Settlement of Disputes (ICSID) in 1965. Jamaica is a signatory to the New York Convention (the Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards), which governs the recognition and enforcement of foreign arbitration awards. The Jamaican Arbitration (Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Awards) Act enables foreign arbitral awards under the New York Convention to be enforced in Jamaica.

Investor-State Dispute Settlement

International arbitration is also accepted as a means for settling investment disputes between private parties. Jamaica enforces the judgments of foreign courts through: (1) The Judgment and Awards (Reciprocal Enforcement) Act; (2) The Judgment (Foreign) (Reciprocal Enforcement) Act; and, (3) The Maintenance Orders (Facilities for Enforcement) Act. Under these acts, judgments of foreign courts are accepted where there is a reciprocal enforcement of judgment treaty with the relevant foreign state. Jamaica does not have a history of extrajudicial action against foreign investors.

International Commercial Arbitration and Foreign Courts

Jamaica accepts international arbitration of investment disputes between foreign investors and the government as well as with private parties. Local courts recognize and enforce foreign arbitral awards. The Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ) serves as the international tribunal for disputes within the CARICOM Single Market and Economy. The Dispute Resolution Foundation and the Caribbean Branch of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators both facilitate arbitration. For countries such as the United States that have a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) with Jamaica, the rules of this treaty apply for qualifying investors. Other foreign investors are given national treatment and civil procedures apply. Disputes between enterprises are handled in the local courts, but foreign investors can refer cases to ICSID. There were cases of trademark infringements in which U.S. firms took action and were granted restitution in the local courts. While restitution is slow, it tends to be fair and transparent. The U.S. government is not aware of any cases in which SOEs have been involved in investment disputes.

Bankruptcy Regulations

Jamaica enacted new insolvency legislation in 2014 that replaced the Bankruptcy Act of 1880 and seeks to make the insolvency process more efficient. The act prescribes the circumstances under which bankruptcy is committed; the procedure for filing a bankruptcy petition; and the procedures to be followed in the administration of the estates of bankrupts. The reform addresses bankruptcy; insolvency, receiverships; provisional supervision; and winding up proceedings. The law addresses corporate and individual insolvency and facilitates the rehabilitation of insolvent debtors, while removing the stigma formerly associated with either form of insolvency. Both insolvents and “looming insolvents” (persons who will become insolvent within twelve months of the filing of the proposal if corrective or preventative action is not taken) are addressed in the reforms.

The act contains provision for debtors to make proposal to their creditors for the restructuring of debts, subject to acceptance by the creditor. Creditors can also invoke bankruptcy proceedings against the debtor if the amount owed is not less than the prescribed threshold, or the debtor has committed an act of bankruptcy. The filing of a proposal or notice of intention to file a proposal creates a temporary stay of proceedings. During this period, the creditor is precluded from enforcing claims against the debtor. The stay does not apply to secured creditors who take possession of secured assets before the proposal is filed; gives notice of intention to enforce against a security at least ten days before the notice of intention or actual proposal is filed; or, rejects the proposal. The 2014 legislation makes it a criminal offence if a bankrupt defaults on certain obligations set out in the legislation.

Jamaica moved up over 20 places to 38 on the *Resolving Insolvency* ranking of the 2016 Doing Business Report due to new legislation. Bankruptcy proceedings now take about a year to resolve; costing 18 percent of the estate value; with an average recovery rate of 64 percent.

The text of the Bankruptcy and Insolvency Act can be found in [The Insolvency Act of 2014](#).

Industrial Policies

Investment Incentives

The Fiscal Incentives (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2013 repeals most of the legacy incentive legislation and provides flexibility for new tax incentives to only be granted in relation to the bauxite sector, export free zone activities, the relocation of corporate headquarters, and Junior Stock Exchange listings. The Act also outlines the arrangement for transitioning to the new regime. Continuing beneficiaries may elect to keep old incentives such as relief from income tax and customs duty as well as zero-rated GCT status for imports.

Below are short descriptions of notable, recently-enacted investment incentives.

Omnibus legislation - Provides tax relief on customs duties, additional stamp duties and corporate income tax. These benefits are granted under the following four areas:

- (1) *The Fiscal Incentives Act*: Targets small and medium size businesses and reduces the effective corporate income tax rate by applying: (a) an Employment Tax Credit (ETC) at a maximum value of 30 percent; and (b) a capital allowance applicable to a broadened definition of industrial buildings.
- (2) *The Income Tax Relief (Large-Scale Projects and Pioneer Industries) Act*: Targets large-scale projects and/or pioneering projects and provides for an improved and more attractive rate for the ETC. Projects will be designated either as large-scale or pioneer, based on a decision by Parliament and subject to an Economic Impact Assessment.
- (3) *Revised Customs Tariff*: Provides for the duty free importation of capital equipment and raw material for the productive sectors.
- (4) *Revised Stamp Duty Act*: Provides exemption from additional stamp duty on raw materials and non-consumer goods for the manufacturing sectors.

Urban Renewal Act: Companies that undertake development within Special Development Areas can benefit from Urban Renewal Bonds, a 33.3 percent investment tax credit, tax free rental income and the exemption from transfer tax and stamp duties on the ‘improved’ value of the property.

Bauxite and Alumina Act: Under this act, bauxite/alumina producers are allowed to import all productive inputs free of import duties, VAT and other port related taxes and charges.

The Foreign Sales Corporation Act: This act exempts income tax for five years for qualified income arising from foreign trade. U.S. law through the Tax Information Exchange Agreement (TIEA) reinforces this incentive.

The Jamaican EX-IM Bank provides concessionary interest rate loans for trade financing, while the Development Bank of Jamaica offers reduced lending rates to the productive sectors. Special tax incentives exist for companies that register on the junior stock market.

Income Tax Act (Junior Stock Exchange): As of January 1, 2014, companies listed on the Junior Stock Exchange are not required to pay income tax in the first five years.

Special Economic Zone Act: In 2015, Jamaica passed legislation for the setting up and operation of Special Economic Zones (SEZs). The SEZ Act repeals the Jamaica Free Zone Act, making way for; (1) the designation; promotion; development; operation; and, management of Special Economic Zones; (2) the establishment of a SEZ Authority; and, (3) the granting of benefits and other measures in order to attract domestic and foreign investments. The SEZ Act also ensured that Jamaica came into conformity with the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures.

Research and Development

Foreign firms are allowed to participate in GOJ-financed or subsidized research and development programs on the basis of national treatment. However, few opportunities exist for such programs.

Foreign Trade Zones/Free Ports/Trade Facilitation

Jamaica has about 130 free zone entities operating in areas such as business process outsourcing (BPO); warehousing and distribution; manufacturing; and, merchandising. However, following the passage of a new Special Economic Zone Act in 2015, existing free zone entities have a four year period to transition to the new regime. As of the writing of this report, no entities have transitioned to the new regime. The old legislation allowed investors to operate solely with foreign exchange in activities such as warehousing, refining, manufacturing, redistribution, processing, assembling, packaging, and services, including insurance and banking. Incentives offered include a 100 percent tax holiday in perpetuity, no import licensing requirements, and exemption from customs duties on construction and raw materials, capital goods, and office equipment. Manufacturing companies operating in the Free Zones are allowed to sell 15 percent of their production on the

local market with the approval of the responsible minister. Capital income tax is 12.5 percent, compared to 25 percent in the domestic economy.

Duty-free zones are primarily found in airports, hotels, and tourist centers and, as with free zone activities, do not discriminate on the basis of nationality. The Kingston and Montego Bay Free Zones provide factory space for the above listed activities. Amendments have also been made to the Export Free Zones Act to allow for the establishment of Single Entity Free Zones, with individual companies now designated as free zones. The Kingston Free Zone has an Informatics Park. Free trade zone contact information is available to potential investors upon request.

The government's transition of free zone operations to special economic zones (SEZs) to comply with WTO rules for middle-income countries under the WTO Agreement on Export Subsidies and Countervailing Measures is underway.

Performance and Data Localization Requirements

No performance requirements are generally imposed as a condition for investing in Jamaica, and government-imposed conditions to invest are not overly burdensome. The government does not mandate local employment, although the use of foreign workers to fill semi-skilled and unskilled jobs is generally frowned upon, especially by trade unions. When requesting work permits for foreign workers, both local and foreign employers must describe efforts to recruit locally.

The Government of Jamaica does not follow "forced localization," requiring domestic content in goods or technology. There are no requirements to provide the government access to surveillance of data, and there are no restrictions on maintaining certain amounts of data storage within the country.

Protection of Property Rights

Private entities, whether foreign or domestic, generally have the right to freely establish, own, acquire, and dispose of business enterprises and may engage in all forms of remunerative activity.

Real Property

Property rights are guaranteed by the Constitution. Jamaica's Registration of Titles Act recognizes and provides for the enforcement of secured interests in property by way of mortgage. It also facilitates and protects the acquisition and disposition of all property rights, though working through Jamaica's bureaucracy can result in significant delays. In particular, it sometimes takes a long time for landowners to secure titles.

Approximately 55 percent of the land in Jamaica is registered, although a large percentage of those properties do not have current title, as many families who pass land ownership from parent to child often do not go through the proper legal channels due to the cost and time involved. The government has made an effort to improve the percentage of land with clear title, but much work is left to be done.

Squatting is also a major challenge in Jamaica, where nearly 20 percent of the

population lives as squatters. Three-quarters of squatters reside on government lands. Under the Registration of Titles Act, a squatter can claim a property by adverse possession (without compensating the owner for the land) if a person can demonstrate that he has lived on government land for more than 60 years, or on private property for more than 12 years undisturbed (including without any payment to the land owner). There are no specific regulations regarding land lease or acquisition by foreign and/or non-resident investors.

The country's Doing Business Report ranking for ease of “registering property” was 123 in 2016 due largely to the number of procedures and high costs involved. Jamaica continues to outperform other Latin America and Caribbean countries in the time required to close a property transaction. [Registration of Titles Act](#).

Intellectual Property Rights

Jamaica has one of the stronger IP protection regimes in the Caribbean, although legislative and enforcement gaps still exist. Jamaica is a member of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and is a signatory of the Berne Convention. Jamaica and the U.S. have an Intellectual Property Rights Agreement and a BIT, which provide assurances to protect intellectual property. It is relatively easy to register IP, and The Jamaica Intellectual Property Office (JIPO) provides good assistance to parties interested in registering IP, and supports investors' efforts to enforce their rights. Overall, protections across all types of IP are improving.

Law enforcement efforts to combat counterfeit and pirated goods are adequate on the ground, but border enforcement remains a challenge. IP violations tend to be more in relation to physical goods, while electronic IP theft is less common.

The country's trademark and copyright regimes already satisfy the WTO's Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), although the patent and design law is not yet TRIPS compliant. A new Patent & Designs Bill, including new rules and fee structures, has been drafted and has been under review by the Chief Parliamentary Council of Jamaica for many years. The Geographical Indications Act (GI) of 2004 is now fully in force and TRIPS compliant, protecting products whose particular quality or reputation is attributable to its geographical origin. General law provides protection for trade secrets, and protection against unfair competition is guaranteed under the Fair Competition Act.

In the area of copyright protection, amendments to the Copyright Act passed in June 2015 fulfilled Jamaica's obligations under the WIPO Internet Treaties and extended copyright protection term from 50 to 95 years. The Copyright Act complies with the TRIPS Agreement and adheres to the principles of the Berne Convention, and covers works ranging from books and music to computer programs. Amendments in June 1999 explicitly provide copyright protection on compilations of works such as databases and make it an offense for a person to manufacture or trade in decoders of encrypted transmissions. It also gives persons rights in encrypted transmissions or in broadcasting or cable program services a right of action against persons who infringe upon their rights.

Jamaica, along with several other Caribbean countries, have been cited in the last several years' Special 301 Report for the absence of compensation to performance rights organizations as well as due to concerns regarding unlicensed cable and satellite broadcasting of copyrighted network programming.

Enforcement

A special unit of the police with support from Customs tracks and reports seizures of counterfeit goods, valued at USD15 million between April 2013 and April 2014. The most commonly counterfeited goods include CDs/DVDs, alcohol, cigarettes, clothing, handbags, pharmaceuticals, and lotions/creams. However, border enforcement remains a challenge, as customs officers do not exercise ex officio authority to seize and destroy counterfeit goods and rights holders must first be provided with visual samples of the suspect merchandise to verify the item as counterfeit, submit a declaration indicating the differences between the fake from the actual product, and provide an authorization to seize the merchandise. The Jamaica Constabulary Force (JCF) established a specialized anti-trafficking in persons-intellectual property (A-TIP-IP) vice-squad within its counter terrorism and organized crime branch (C-TOC) in 2015 to boost IP enforcement.

Rights holders are responsible for paying the costs associated with storage and destruction of counterfeit goods. Presently the Commissioner may grant up to ten days for a right holder to produce the required evidence and commitments before releasing suspected counterfeit goods that are in transit.

For additional information about treaty obligations and points of contact at local IP offices, please see [WIPO's country profiles](#).

Financial Sector

Capital Markets and Portfolio Investment

Credit is available on market terms, and foreigners are allowed to borrow freely on the local market at market-determined rates of interest. A relatively effective regulatory system was established to encourage and facilitate portfolio investment. The Financial Services Commission and the Bank of Jamaica (BOJ), the central bank, regulate these activities.

Money and Banking System

At the end of 2016, there were 11 supervised deposit-taking institutions consisting of seven commercial banks, two merchant banks (Licensed under the Financial Institutions Act) and two building societies. The number of credit unions shrank from 47 at the end of 2009 to 34 at the end of 2015. At the end of 2016, commercial banks held assets of USD 8.5 billion. Non-performing loans were just over USD 108 million, or 1.3 percent of total assets. Two of the country's seven commercial banks are foreign-owned. After a financial sector crisis in the mid-1990s led to consolidations, the sector has remained largely stable. The regulatory framework is now in line with international standards and legislation passed in 2013 has enhanced the BOJ's regulatory powers.

Foreign Exchange and Remittances

Foreign Exchange

There are no restrictions on holding funds or on converting, transferring, or repatriating funds associated with an investment. The central bank, Bank of Jamaica (BOJ), manages a floating exchange rate of the Jamaican Dollar with no pre-determined path. The BOJ may intervene with the sales and purchases of foreign currency to smooth out demand and supply. Investment-related funds are freely convertible to regularly traded currencies, particularly into United States and Canadian Dollars and the Great Britain Pound. However, foreign exchange transactions must be conducted through authorized foreign exchange dealers, “cambios,” and bureau de change. Foreign exchange is generally available and investors are free to remit their investment returns.

Remittance Policies

The country's financial system is fully liberalized and subject to market conditions. There is no required waiting period for the remittance of investment returns. Any person or company can purchase instruments denominated in foreign currency. There are no restrictions or limitations on the inflow or outflow of funds for the remittance of profits or revenue. The country does not possess the financial muscle to engage in currency manipulation.

According to the 2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR), Jamaica is a country “of concern” for Money Laundering and Financial Crimes. The Financial Action Task Force commended the country for making significant progress in addressing deficiencies identified in their 2005 Mutual Evaluation Report and exited the follow up process in 2014. [Jamaica’s fourth round Mutual Evaluation Report](#) was made available in January 2017.

Sovereign Wealth Funds

Jamaica does not have a sovereign wealth fund or an asset management bureau.

State-Owned Enterprises

As a condition of Jamaica’s Stand-By Agreement with the IMF, the Government of Jamaica is reviewing the possibility of significant reform of Jamaican State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs). Jamaican SOEs are most active in the agriculture, mining, energy and transport sectors of the economy. Of 190 public bodies listed, 80 are self-financing and are therefore considered SOEs as either limited liability entities established under the Companies Act of Jamaica or statutory bodies created by individual enabling legislation. SOEs generally do not receive preferential access to government contracts. SOEs must adhere to the provisions of the GOJ (Revised) Handbook of Public Sector Procurement Procedures and are expected to participate in a bidding process to provide goods and services to the government. SOEs also provide services to private sector firms. SOEs must report quarterly on all contracts above a prescribed limit to the Office of the Contractor General. Since 2002, SOEs have been subject to the same tax requirements as private enterprises. SOEs are also required to purchase government-owned land and raw material and execute these transactions on similar terms as private entities would.

Jamaica's Public Bodies Management and Accountability Act (PBMA) requires SOEs to prepare annual corporate plans and budgets, which must be debated and approved by Parliament. As part of the government's economic reform agenda, SOE performance is monitored against agreed targets and goals, with oversight provided by stakeholders including representatives of civil society. The GOJ prioritized divestment of SOEs, particularly the most inefficient. Private firms compete with SOEs on fair terms and SOEs generally lack the same profitability motives as private enterprises, leading to the GOJ absorbing the debt of loss-making public sector enterprises.

In 2012, the government approved a Corporate Governance Framework (CGF) to promote improved performance by SOEs. While Jamaican SOEs are not required to adhere to OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance, the CGF is based on international best practices and principles of corporate governance.

Jamaica's public bodies report to a Board of Directors appointed by the responsible portfolio minister. No general rules guide the allocation of SOE board positions, but some entities may allocate seats to specific stakeholders. Under the CGF, persons appointed to boards should possess the skills and competencies required for the effective functioning of the entity. However, some board members are selected due to political considerations. The Jamaican court system, while notoriously slow, is respected for being fair and balanced and in many cases has ruled against the Government of Jamaica and its agents.

Privatization Program

Jamaica actively courted foreign investors as part of its divestment strategy. In certain instances the government encourages local participation, and restrictions may be placed on certain assets due to national security concerns. Privatization can occur through sale, lease, or concession. Transactions are generally executed through public tenders, but the government reserves the right to accept unsolicited proposals for project deemed to be strategic. The Development Bank of Jamaica, which oversees the privatization program, is mandated to ensure that the process is fair and transparent. When some entities are being privatized, advertisements are placed locally and through international publications, such as the Financial Times, New York Times, and Wall Street Journal, to attract foreign investors. Requests for proposals normally include the specific requirements under which bidders are allowed to participate and the criteria by which proposals will be evaluated. Foreign investors won most of the privatization bids in the last decade.

As a condition of Jamaica's Stand-By Agreement with the IMF, the government identified dozens of public assets to be privatized, drawing from various sectors. While the time taken to divest assets depends on state of readiness and complexity, on average, transactions take between 18 and 24 months. The process involves pre-feasibility and due diligence assessments; feasibility studies; pre-qualification of bidders; and a public tender. In April 2015, the government signed a 30-year concession agreement for operation of the Kingston Container Terminal port facility. The Urban Development Corporation manages many assets available for privatization. Other assets to be privatized include Norman Manley International Airport and Petroleum Company of Jamaica.

List of current privatization transactions can be found at the [Development Bank of Jamaica website](#).

Responsible Business Conduct

Responsible Business Conduct (RBC) among many Jamaican companies remains a nascent concept. In 2013, the government provided additional financial incentives for corporations to support charity work through the Charities Act, under which corporations and individuals can claim a tax deduction on contributions made to registered charitable organizations. Quite a few large publicly listed companies and multinational corporations in Jamaica maintain their own foundations that carry out social and community projects to support youth employment, reduce crime and fight corruption.

OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises

Jamaica is not an adhering government to the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. However, the GOJ is in general agreement with such concepts.

Corruption

Under the Corruption Prevention Act, public servants can be imprisoned for up to ten years and fined as much as USD 100,000 if found guilty of engaging in acts of bribery, including bribes to foreign public officials. The Major Organized Crime and Anticorruption Agency (MOCA) independently investigates official corruption and organized crime. The Corruption Prevention Commission (CPC) oversees statutory financial declarations of public sector workers and investigates alleged acts of corruption. The Integrity Commission investigates corruption allegations for members of Parliament, and the Office of the Contractor General (OCG) seeks to ensure transparency and efficiency in government procurement. A key area of concern for corruption is in government procurement, on which the OCG serves as a watchdog. However, successful prosecutions – particularly for high-level corruption – are rare, and the compliance rate for mandatory financial reports is around 52 percent.

The Jamaican Parliament is currently reviewing the Integrity Commission Act, which would establish an independent Commission with prosecutorial powers. Many Jamaicans believe that corruption is one of the root causes of Jamaica's high crime rate and economic stagnation. In 2016, Transparency International gave Jamaica a score of 39 out of a possible 100 on the Corruption Perception Index (CPI), falling 14 positions from 2015, but more or less in line with the score from 2012–2014. According to the CPI, 85 percent of respondents in Jamaica felt that political parties were corrupt/extremely corrupt. That figure was 74 percent for parliament and 86 percent for the police force. While U.S. firms operating in Jamaica express concern about corruption generally, the U.S. Government does not see evidence of disproportionate application of corruption measures against foreign investors.

UN Anticorruption Convention, OECD Convention on Combatting Bribery

Jamaica ratified major international corruption instruments, including the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption. Jamaica is not party to the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions.

Resources to Report Corruption

Major Organised Crime and Anti-Corruption Agency (MOCA)

24hr Hotline: 1-800-CORRUPT (1-800-267-7878)

Email: info@moca.gov.jm

National Integrity Action

Phone: +1 876 906 4371/ Fax: 876-754-7951

Email: info@nationalintegrityaction.org

Political & Security Environment

Crime poses a greater threat to foreign investments in Jamaica than political violence. Violent crime, rooted in poverty, unemployment, and drug trafficking, is a serious problem in Jamaica, particularly in urban areas. Sporadic gang violence and shootings are concentrated in specific inner city neighborhoods, but can occur elsewhere. Extortion is a serious problem in certain urban commercial areas, and although rare, has also been known to occur on large construction project sites. In 2014, four employees of China Harbor Engineering Company (CHEC) were killed while transporting a USD 20,000 payroll for workers. Tax increases in 2016 and 2017 affecting a number of industries, however, have not spurred any disturbances or violence.

Labor Policies & Practices

Jamaica had an estimated labor force of 1.35 million as of October 2016 with 12.9 percent unemployment. Women make up less than half of the labor force and have an unemployment rate of 17.5 percent. The unemployment level for 14-24 year olds is 32.4 percent. Most Jamaicans are employed in services including retail and tourism sectors, followed by construction, transport and communications. Since 1999 more Jamaicans have become trained in information technology, and the business process outsourcing (BPO) industry currently employs about 22,000 people. No law requires hiring locals, but foreign investors are expected to hire locals, especially for unskilled and lower skilled jobs. The security guard industry adopted the practice of employing workers on extended contracts to avoid some of the cost, including severance, associated with direct employment. Jamaica does not have a history of waiving labor laws to retain or attract investment and these laws tend to be uniform across the economy.

There are no restrictions on employers adjusting employment to respond to market conditions, but there will be severance payment requirements if a position is made redundant. Under the law, there is a distinction between a layoff and a redundancy. A layoff allows a temporary period without employment for up to four months. In the latter, the Employment (Termination and Redundancy Payments) Act provides

redundancy pay to employees who are let go with at least two years of continuous employment. Workers with up to ten years of employment are entitled to two weeks payment for every year worked, while workers with over ten years employment are entitled to three weeks payment except in cases such as firing for cause. There are no unemployment benefits in Jamaica, but low income Jamaicans have the option of applying for social benefits under a conditional cash transfer program referred to as PATH.

The law provides for the rights of workers to form or join unions and to bargain collectively, but it does not protect the right to strike. Trade union membership accounts for 20 percent of the labor force, although the movement weakened in recent years. The law prohibits antiunion discrimination, although it is not uncommon for private sector employers to lay off union workers and rehire them as contractors. Labor law entitles protections to all persons categorized as workers, although it denies contract workers coverage under certain statutory provisions, such as redundancy benefits.

Jamaica has an Industrial Disputes Tribunal (IDT) to which the Minister of Labor may refer disputes that cannot otherwise be settled, and arbitrators' decisions are final. The law denies collective bargaining if no single union represents at least 40 percent of the workers in the unit. Little unionized labor exists in Jamaica's free zones.

Jamaica ratified most International Labor Organization (ILO) Conventions and international labor rights are recognized within domestic law. The government is committed to enforcing its child labor laws, although a lack of resources remains a challenge. Work is ongoing with ILO support to collect data on incidents of child labor, the majority of which occur in the informal sector. The government is under-resourced for investigations on worker abuse as well as on occupational safety and health checks. Still, incidents of these labor-related issues are not considered to be at alarming levels.

Jamaica's workplace policy incorporates all of the recommended practices of the ILO code of practice on HIV/AIDS, but the legislation to regulate enforcement is not yet ratified. In conjunction with the ILO and local stakeholders, the government passed legislation guiding flexible working arrangements. Under the Work Permit Act, a foreign national who wishes to work in Jamaica must first apply for a permit issued by the Ministry of Labor. The law, which seeks to give first preference to Jamaicans, requires organizations planning to employ foreign nationals to prove that attempts were made to employ a Jamaican national.

OPIC

The Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) targeted infrastructure, telecommunications, construction, tourism, and energy as priority sectors to support in Jamaica. OPIC provides medium to long-term financing to ventures with significant U.S. participation with guarantees or loans between USD 100,000 and USD 250 million per project. OPIC political risk insurance can insure projects up to USD 40 million. Historically, OPIC financed many projects in Jamaica. OPIC recently

provided financing and political risk insurance for two large clean energy projects. Jamaica is a member of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA).

Foreign Direct Investment and Foreign Portfolio Investment Statistics

Table 2: Key Macroeconomic Data, U.S. FDI in Host Country/Economy

	Host Country Statistical source		USG or international statistical source		USG or International Source of Data: BEA; IMF; Eurostat; UNCTAD, Other
Economic Data	Year	Amount	Year	Amount	
Host Country Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (\$M USD)	2015	\$14,200	2015	\$14,260	www.worldbank.org/en/country
Foreign Direct Investment	Host Country Statistical source		USG or international statistical source		USG or international Source of data: BEA; IMF; Eurostat; UNCTAD, Other
U.S. FDI in partner country (\$M USD, stock positions)	N/A	N/A	2015	\$204	https://www.bea.gov/international/factsheet/factsheet.cfm
Host country's FDI in the United States (\$M USD, stock positions)	N/A	N/A	2015	\$4	https://www.bea.gov/international/factsheet/factsheet.cfm
Total inbound stock of FDI as % host GDP	N/A	N/A	2015	1.4%	

**Jamaica does not disaggregate its FDI data by country.*

Table 3: Sources and Destination of FDI

Data is unavailable for Jamaica.

Direct Investment from/in Counterpart Economy Data					
From Top Five Sources/To Top Five Destinations (US Dollars, Millions)					
Inward Direct Investment			Outward Direct Investment		
Total Inward	Amount	100%	Total Outward	Amount	100%
N/A			N/A		
N/A			N/A		
N/A			N/A		
N/A			N/A		
N/A			N/A		

"0" reflects amounts rounded to +/- USD 500,000.

Table 4: Sources of Portfolio Investment

Data is unavailable for Jamaica.

Portfolio Investment Assets								
Top Five Partners (Millions, US Dollars)								
Total			Equity Securities			Total Debt Securities		
All Countries	Amount	100%	All Countries	Amount	100%	All Countries	Amount	100%
N/A			N/A			N/A		
N/A			N/A			N/A		
N/A			N/A			N/A		
N/A			N/A			N/A		
N/A			N/A			N/A		

Contact Information

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Trade & Project Financing

Methods of Payment

Letters of credit are a common method of payment in Jamaica. Prior to the establishment of a solid business relationship, upfront payment should be requested, although many Jamaican companies dislike this approach. Once a good business relationship has been formed, companies in good standing may move towards trading on an open account. In 2010 the Parliament of Jamaica approved the Credit Reporting Act and in March 2012, the government approved and granted a license to Creditinfo Jamaica, the country's first credit bureau. A second credit reporting agency, Crif NM Credit Assure has also received a license. There is also a regional entity, Caribbean Information and Credit Ratings Services Limited (CariCRIS), formed in 2004. Occasionally, U.S. firms register trade complaints for non-payment by local buyers.

Banking Systems

Financial institutions in Jamaica provide a range of services for individual and business/ corporate banking. These include current accounts, savings accounts, loans, credit cards, and internet banking. Some credit cards issued by local banks are for use in Jamaica only, but international credit cards have grown in importance.

The Bank of Jamaica regulates deposit-taking institutions, money services businesses (e.g., cambios and remittance companies), and credit reporting agencies. According to the Bank of Jamaica, credit unions are designated by the Ministry of Finance as "specified financial institutions" under the Bank of Jamaica Act, enabling the Bank of Jamaica to obtain information on their operations. Regulations to establish a formal supervisory framework for these entities are being finalized. The Financial Services Commission regulates insurance companies, securities firms/dealers, unit trusts, private pension funds, and mutual funds. At the end of 2016, there were 11 supervised deposit-taking institutions consisting of seven commercial banks, two merchant banks (Licensed under the Financial Institutions Act) and two building societies. The number of credit unions shrank from 47 at the end of 2009 to 34 at the end of 2015. At the end of 2016, commercial banks held assets of USD 8.5 billion.

Following a crisis in the financial sector in the 1990s, the GOJ increased the prudential and supervisory powers of the BOJ by passing the Financial Institutions Act and the Banking Act. Amendments were also made to the regulations governing Building Societies. The Banking Services Act passed in 2013 aimed to consolidate regulations. Credit Unions are now designated as 'specified financial institutions' under the Bank of Jamaica Act, bringing them under the supervision of the central bank. The Jamaica Deposit Insurance Corporation (JDIC) and a FSC were introduced to protect depositors and regulate institutions and brokers outside the scope of the Central Bank's oversight. These adjustments have brought the regulatory standards governing the financial sector up to international standards and should therefore aid, rather than impede, businesses.

Foreign Exchange Controls

Since liberalization of the financial and capital accounts in the 1990s, foreign exchange controls have been removed, but the BOJ still regulates activities in the foreign exchange market. Per Jamaica's IMF Stand-By Arrangement signed in November 2016, the government of Jamaica is moving towards a more market-based exchange rate. Foreign currency can be accessed through a network of authorized foreign exchange dealers, cambios, and bureaux de change at market-determined rates.

US Banks & Local Correspondent Banks

Canadian banks are the dominant players in the banking sector. Citigroup currently operates in Jamaica, but it does not offer retail-banking services. The Jamaica National Building Society and Victoria Mutual Building Society are Jamaican financial institutions with offices in the U.S. All Jamaican commercial banks have correspondent U.S. banking arrangements.

Project Financing

Major projects are financed by one or a combination of the following methods: private and debt equity; bank loans; retained earnings; development bank financing; international private capital; bonds; and bilateral and multilateral loans and grants. The U.S. government has received reports from U.S. businesspeople noting difficulties in securing domestic financing in Jamaica. Local banks will often request several years of financial statements audited by Jamaican auditors, which newcomers to Jamaica are generally unable to provide. The Overseas Private Investment Corporation, the U.S. Government's Development Finance Institution, currently finances projects in Jamaica.

Multilateral Development Banks:

U.S. Commercial Service Liaison Offices at the Multilateral Development Banks (Inter-American Development Bank, World Bank)

The Commercial Service maintains Commercial Liaison Offices in each of the main Multilateral Development Banks, including the Inter-American Development Bank and the World Bank. These institutions lend billions of dollars in developing countries on projects aimed at accelerating economic growth and social development by reducing poverty and inequality, improving health and education, and advancing infrastructure development. The Commercial Liaison Offices help American businesses learn how to get involved in bank-funded projects, and advocate on behalf of American bidders. Learn more by contacting the [Commercial Liaison Offices to the Inter-American Development Bank](#) and the [World Bank](#).

Web Resources

Agencies of the United States Government:

- [Export-Import Bank \(ExIm Bank\) of the United States](#)
- [Overseas Private Investment Corporation \(OPIC\)](#)

- [SBA's Office of International Trade](#)
- [USDA Commodity Credit Corporation](#)
- [U.S. Agency for International Development](#)
- [U.S. Trade and Development Agency](#)
- [U.S. Commercial Service](#)
- [Commercial Liaison Office to the IADB](#)
- [Commercial Liaison Office to the World Bank](#)
- [Commercial Liaison Office to the Inter-American Development Bank](#)

Others, including multilaterals:

- [Development Bank of Jamaica](#)
- [Inter-American Development Bank \(IADB\)](#)
- [World Bank](#)
- [International Finance Corporation](#)
- [Commercial Liaison Office to the World Bank](#)

Business Travel

Business Customs

Jamaica, a former British colony, gained independence in 1962. U.S. visitors will notice British some business practices, traditions, and customs. In Kingston, a business suit or blazer may be advisable, especially for the first engagement. Dress tends to be less formal in resort areas such as Montego Bay and Ocho Rios.

Travel Advisory

Embassy notices to U.S. citizens in Jamaica can be accessed at the [U.S. Embassy in Jamaica website](#).

Visa Requirements

All U.S. citizens traveling by air outside of the United States are required to present a passport or other valid travel document to exit or enter the United States. U.S. citizens traveling by sea must present a [Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative \(WHTI\) compliant document](#) such as a passport or a passport card for entry to the United States. Passport cards are an acceptable travel document for entry into Jamaica for sea travelers only.

Visitors to Jamaica must have a return ticket and be able to show sufficient funds for their visit. U.S. citizens traveling to Jamaica for work or extended stays are required to have a current U.S. passport and a visa issued by the Jamaican Embassy or a Jamaican Consulate. There is a departure tax for travelers, which is generally included in the airfare.

Effective 2005, foreign nationals who are conducting business on short-term basis will not require a business visa once they will be in Jamaica for a period not exceeding thirty days. However, foreign nationals will need a business visa to enter Jamaica if they are conducting business for periods exceeding thirty days. Foreign nationals who need visas for entry to Jamaica will require a business visa to conduct business. Affidavits will not be accepted by the immigration office.

Currency

The Bank of Jamaica has the sole authority to issue notes and coins in Jamaica. Jamaican dollars are issued in denominations of \$50, \$100, \$500 and \$1000. While the Jamaican dollar is the official currency, the United States dollar is generally accepted as a form of payment, particularly in tourist resorts, where prices are sometimes quoted in both currencies. In 2015, over 800 ATMs were available across the country. There were also approximately 30,000 point-of-sale terminals of which over 10,000 were deployed. This network allows for the use of a wide variety of debit and credit cards, including international cards. These transactions generally attract a fee. Traveler's checks are accepted by financial entities, most hotels and larger commercial entities.

Telecommunications/Electric

Jamaica has a modern and fully liberalized telecommunications system, which has seen significant expansion since 2001. There are two primary mobile providers, former monopoly full-service provider, FLOW, and Digicel. The government has approved a third cellular license to a new player, Caricel. Digicel is the largest provider of cellular telecommunications in Jamaica and the Caribbean. Jamaica's tele-density now exceeds 100%, with many subscribers maintaining accounts with both providers. FLOW also operates a fixed line system. FLOW was acquired by Liberty Global in May 2016. While Jamaica continues to lag in broadband mobile and fixed internet penetration, Wi-Fi technology is prevalent in hotels, and starting to be rolled out in limited public spaces. Jamaica has submarine communications cables with the United States, Cayman Islands, Colombia, Cuba and the Dominican Republic. The Jamaican country code is 1-876. Electrical equipment in Jamaica operates on 110-120 volts at 50 Hertz (Hz), while in the United States the standard is 60 Hz. However, most small electrical appliances, such as mobile phones, battery chargers and hairdryers will work. Jamaica and the United States use types A and B receptacles.

Transportation

Jamaica has two major international airports. Kingston's Norman Manley International Airport receives flights from Air Canada, American Airlines, British Airways, Caribbean Airlines, Cayman Airways, Copa, Delta, Fly Jamaica, JetBlue, Spirit, and WestJet. Sangster International Airport in the resort town of Montego Bay is served by over 30 airlines and a number of charters. Major cruise ship terminals in Jamaica are located in Falmouth, Montego Bay and Ocho Rios.

Ground transportation options include taxis, car rental, and luxury coach services. Allowance should be made for possible delay arising from traffic congestion, particularly in the capital city, Kingston. Public transportation is not recommended, as public buses can be overcrowded and can be susceptible to crime. Travelers who use taxicabs should take only licensed operators or those recommended by their hotels.

A new highway linking Kingston and the resort town of Ocho Rios was opened at the beginning of 2016. However, A1, A2, and A3 highways remain the primary links between the most important cities and tourist destinations on the island. Most of these roads are not comparable to American highways, and road conditions can be hazardous due to disrepair, inadequate signage and poor traffic control markings. The B highways and rural roads are often very narrow and frequented by large trucks, buses, pedestrians, cyclists, and open range livestock. Highways are traveled at high speeds, but are not limited-access. Nighttime driving is especially dangerous and should be avoided whenever possible. U.S. Embassy personnel are prohibited from driving at night outside of the cities of Kingston, Ocho Rios, Montego Bay, and Negril.

Language

Jamaica's official language is English, but there is a local dialect known as patois.

Health

Jamaica has a number of public and private hospitals. Most public hospitals have deteriorated over time due to underinvestment. One major public hospital operates a private wing, which provides more personalized service and a Spanish chain is currently operates a hospital in Montego Bay. While there is significant room for improvement, the existing state of the health sector compares favorably with other developing countries. Apart from the recent introduction of mosquito borne diseases, the Embassy is not aware of any potential health risks of which businesspersons should be notified.

Local Time, Business Hours and Holidays

The normal working day for government offices and factories is 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday, and 8:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Fridays. Government offices are generally closed on Saturday and Sunday. Almost all commercial businesses are open on Saturday, but only few open on Sunday. Jamaica is on Eastern Standard Time (EST) year round and does not observe daylight savings time. Holidays observed in Jamaica are the following:

- New Year's Day - January 1
- Ash Wednesday - Variable
- Good Friday - Variable
- Easter Monday - Variable
- National Labor Day - May 23
- Emancipation Day - August 1
- Independence Day - August 6
- National Heroes Day - October (Variable)
- Christmas Day - December 25
- Boxing Day - December 26

Temporary Entry of Materials or Personal Belongings

Those who wish to bring in items temporarily such as software, exhibit material, etc., are required to identify the items at Customs, pay the required duty and General Consumption Tax (as security), and collect a refundable revenue deposit receipt. On exit from the country, the Customs authority refunds the entire amount paid as security. When importing machinery for between three and six months, the above procedure applies in addition to a completed Customs Form C25. Laptop computers can be brought in duty free.

Web Resources

Jamaican Diplomatic Posts in the United States:

- [Jamaican Embassy, Washington, D.C.](#)
- [Jamaican Consulate, Miami](#)

- [Jamaican Consulate, New York](#)
- [Jamaica Passport, Immigration, and Citizenship Agency](#)
- [Embassy of the United States, Kingston](#)