

U.S. Country Commercial Guides



Qatar 2019

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Doing Business in Qatar

Market Overview

Qatar continues to be a resilient and diverse economy despite regional unrest and a two-year diplomatic and economic embargo imposed on it by some of its neighbors. In 2018, Qatar's real gross domestic product (GDP) grew at a rate of 1.8% and the government recorded its first budget surplus in three years. The economy is expected to experience similar stable growth in 2019; the International Monetary Fund estimates Qatar's real GDP will grow by 2.8 percent in 2019. Qatar projects a budget surplus in 2019, based on an oil price assumption of \$55 per barrel. Government spending in 2019 will increase modestly by 1.7% from 2018, totaling approximately \$56.8 billion. Qatar's 2019 budgetary spending is focused on infrastructure, health, education, manufacturing, and transportation. The U.S.-Qatar political, commercial, economic, and security relationship remains strong. U.S. exports to Qatar increased by 42% from 2017 to 2018, totaling \$4.4 billion in 2018. U.S. companies performed well in the market with awards in energy, defense, technology, and engineering among other sectors.

On June 5, 2017, the governments of Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, and Egypt severed diplomatic relations with the State of Qatar and imposed a series of economic restrictions, including shuttering the Saudi-Qatar land border, closing airspace to Qatari-registered aircraft, and limiting certain maritime traffic. Thus far, the impact on regional travel has been significant, with Qatar Airways forced to suspend all flights to the embargoing countries and many regional airlines blocked by their governments from flying to and from Qatar (e.g., Emirates, Etihad, Saudia, and Gulf Air). The movement of goods across land and sea borders continues to be impacted. In early February 2019, Emirati port authorities began allowing non-Qatari flagged or owned vessels destined for Qatar to transport goods through Emirati ports. U.S. companies, however, have largely continued to use diverted routes established after the onset of the embargo and are advised to confirm with Emirati authorities before unloading U.S. goods for shipment to Qatar directly from UAE ports. Post-embargo, Qatar moved quickly to establish other sources of imports and continues that effort today; in some cases, this has created new opportunities for American suppliers. Qatar has offset the loss of its former Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) trading partners by increasing trade with regional partners, notably Turkey, Oman, Kuwait, and India.

Qatar's national oil and gas company Qatar Petroleum (QP) nimbly rerouted its export routes following the onset of the embargo and to date has not missed a single outbound hydrocarbon shipment. In July 2017, QP announced it would boost North Field production with an aim of increasing Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) exports by 43 percent by 2024, creating significant opportunities for U.S. energy companies. A number of tenders related to this expansion have already been announced and awarded. Since the onset of the embargo, QP has inked several long-term supply agreements with companies in Bangladesh, China, Vietnam, Thailand, and Pakistan and announced a flurry of overseas acquisitions in hydrocarbon blocks in Brazil, Oman, Mexico, South Africa, Argentina, Cyprus, Morocco, and Mozambique and invested over \$10 billion in the Golden Pass Terminal in Sabine Pass, Texas.

Inflation rates averaged 0.22% in 2018. The Qatar Central Bank reported a year-on-year deflation rate of 0.3% in the fourth quarter of 2018, and a 1.3% deflation rate in the first quarter of 2019. The inflation rate average was higher in 2017, especially in the months following the onset of the regional embargo on Qatar, driven by rising food prices resulting from nearly a 40% drop in Qatar's imports. Food inflation was later offset by an 11% year-on-year drop in the real estate price index.

The Government of Qatar has undertaken several key measures, such as pledging to boost natural gas production by 43%, enacting new foreign direct investment and foreign real estate ownership legislation, raising \$12 billion in bond issuance in the international debt market in March 2019, and enforcing tighter monetary controls to moderate inflation. Oil and gas continue to constitute the largest sector contributor to GDP estimated at 36% in 2018, followed by construction at 15%, manufacturing at 9%, finance and insurance at 7.4%, whole and retail trade at 7%, public administration and defense at 7%, real estate at 6%, and transport and storage at 4%.

The government has continued its focus on initiatives and efforts to diversify the economy and reduce excessive spending, under the plan known as Qatar National Vision 2030. Qatar's infrastructure and transportation sector has been a key focus of spending, with projects such as expanding Hamad International Airport, concluding the last phase of the new Hamad Port, completing several road and highways projects, and debuting the first phases of the Doha Metro and the Lusail Light Rail transit project.

Qatar will host the 2022 FIFA World Cup, the world's largest sporting event, for which it is constructing eight soccer stadiums. Two stadiums have been completed to date. A draft law enabling Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), which could help facilitate further foreign investment in Qatar by supporting the ownership and operation of the stadiums, is awaiting final approval by state officials. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has led efforts on the PPP law, along with other agencies including the Ministry of Finance.

The country's sovereign wealth fund, the Qatar Investment Authority (QIA), reiterated its commitment to continue investing \$45 billion in the U.S. market, maintaining that approximately 60% of this amount has already been committed. In 2018, Qatar Petroleum announced a commitment of \$20 billion for investment in the U.S. energy sector.

The U.S. Embassy in Doha and the U.S. Commercial Service continue to closely monitor the embargo imposed on Qatar and provide guidance and support to U.S. companies wishing to enter the market as well as those already doing business in the country. U.S. companies are encouraged to engage directly with their local Qatari partners, representatives, or agents to ensure business continuity and alternatives for sourcing and shipping of U.S. goods into Qatar. For the most up-to-date information, please reach out to the U.S. Commercial Service at the U.S. Embassy in Doha.

Market Challenges

- **Limits to Foreign Ownership:** Qatar generally encourages foreign investment. As part of the government's efforts to attract more foreign companies and investors to the Qatari market, a new foreign investment law was approved in January 2019 (Law 1/2019). Whereas Qatar's former foreign investment law (Law 12/2000) generally limited foreign investment and ownership of local entities to 49% of capital, the new law, *upon enactment* (NB as of the writing of this document, the implementing regulations for this have not yet been issued. Thus, this remains a market challenge), will allow 100% foreign ownership in most sectors, with full repatriation of profits, protection from expropriation, and several other benefits. Excepted sectors include banking, insurance, and commercial agencies, where foreign capital investment remains limited at 49 percent, barring special dispensation from the Cabinet. Investors must obtain an exemption from Qatar's Council of Ministers prior to investing in the banking and insurance sectors. Additionally, to allow more foreign real estate investment, the government enacted a new law (Law 16/2018) to allow foreign individuals, companies, and real estate developers freehold ownership of real

estate in ten designated zones and usufructuary rights up to 99 years in 16 other zones. Foreign real estate investors and owners will also be granted residency in Qatar for as long as they own their property.

- **Banking:** A total of 178 banks operate in Qatar, including 101 Qatari institutions and seven foreign bank branches. Out of the 101 Qatari banks, seven are commercial institutions (Ahlibank, Al Khaliji Bank, Commercial Bank of Qatar, Doha Bank, International Bank of Qatar, Qatar Development Bank, and Qatar National Bank); the other four are Islamic banking institutions (Masraf Al Rayan, Qatar International Islamic Bank, Qatar Islamic Bank, and Barwa Bank). In 2019, International Bank of Qatar merged with Barwa Bank in the country's first bank consolidation. The seven foreign banks include: Arab Bank, Bank Saderat Iran, BNP Paribas, HSBC, Mashreq Bank, Standard Chartered and United Bank. Qatar National Bank represents 50% of the local banking market. It should be noted that while there is no restriction on the flow of capital, tightened liquidity within the local banking market exists. Bank loans are based on market terms with priority given to local organizations for the purpose of public development projects.
- **Commercial Agents:** The Commercial Agents law requires all agency agreements to be exclusive arrangements.
- **Payment Delays:** The U.S. Commercial Service and the U.S. Embassy have received some reports of payment delays by both Qatari private sector companies and the Government of Qatar after the completion of large and small purchases and/or services rendered by U.S. firms.
- **Government Procurement:** Procurement Law 24/2015 aims to promote a fair, transparent, simple and speedy tendering process. The law removed the Central Tendering Committee and created a Government Procurement Department within the Ministry of Finance which has oversight responsibility over the majority of government tenders. The law also called for the forming of committees for tender disputes resolution, allowing two-stage tendering, and providing performance bond waivers for SMEs. Nonetheless, there are some persistent concerns regarding transparency in procurement by government entities, particularly due to a lack of clarity in the conditions and criteria of tenders, improper notification or explanation to non-qualifying companies, and the inability of bidders to formally challenge awards. Qatar gives preferential treatment to suppliers using local content in bids for government procurement. Bids for government contracts that contain goods with Qatari content are discounted by 10%. Participation in tenders with a value of QAR 5,000,000 (\$1.37 million) or less is limited to locally registered contractors, suppliers and merchants. The Government Procurement Department also created a website, [Government Procurement Services](#), to consolidate all tenders with the goal of providing relevant information to interested bidders; unfortunately, not all government tenders are included in this portal. Qatar is not a signatory to the WTO Agreement on government procurement.
- **Import Duties:** The import duty for most processed food products is a flat 5% ad valorem. There are no import duties for live animals, fresh fruits and vegetables, seafood, grains, flours, tea, sugar, spices, and seeds for planting. As a GCC country, Qatar applies the Unified Customs Law. This includes the imposition of a 5% tariff on the cost, insurance, and freight values of products such as textiles, apparel, and travel goods. An excise tax of 50% was introduced on energy and sugary drinks on January 1, 2019. A 100% excise tax was also introduced on alcohol and "specialty" products, including tobacco and pork.
- **Import Restrictions:** Qatar has no import quotas. Non-tariff barriers, however, arise occasionally. For instance, unlicensed military and security items are not allowed. Furthermore, prior to 2012, the

government maintained a ban on pork imports. The sale of pork remains heavily regulated and sales are restricted to only one distribution point managed by the Qatar Distribution Company (QDC).

- **Standards and Labeling:** As part of the GCC Customs Union, Qatar works with other member states toward unifying custom standards and conformity assessment regimes. Nonetheless, each member state is applying its own existing standards until a uniform GCC standard is set.
- **Food Labeling and Packaging:** Labeling and marking requirements are compulsory for any products exported to Qatar. Labels must be either be in Arabic only, or bilingual with Arabic as the second language. Labels must be applied prior to transportation. Production and expiration dates are required to be on all “original” food labels.
- **Corruption:** Corruption in Qatar does not generally affect business although the power of personal connections plays a major role in business culture. Qatar has risen in ranks to 30th on Transparency International’s 2018 Corruption Perceptions Index, with a score of 62/100 (with 100 being very transparent) and is one of the least corrupt countries in the MENA region.
- **Travel Advisories:** U.S. citizens visiting Qatar are advised to check the U.S. [Embassy’s website](#) for the latest information on travel to Qatar.

Market Opportunities

The U.S. Commercial Service assesses that the best market opportunities for American companies are in sectors such as infrastructure, ICT, food products, energy, healthcare, aviation, and defense.

The Government of Qatar budgeted \$56.8 billion for expenditures in 2019. Expected spending on infrastructure in 2019 is \$9 billion (16% of total expenditures); spending on healthcare is \$6.2 billion (11%); spending on education is \$5.3 billion (9.3%); and spending on transportation and communication is \$4.5 billion (7.9%). Government spending will continue to support the long-term strategic goals set forth under the Qatar National Vision 2030, which include developing a knowledge-based economy and increasing the share of GDP derived from non-extractive industries.

The government has taken several initiatives to encourage more foreign companies to do business and invest in Qatar over the past year. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) is leading the efforts on both the Foreign Direct Investment Law and Public Private Partnership (PPP) law. The PPP law draft has been finalized and received cabinet-level approval in 2018; it is anticipated that it will offer opportunities for U.S. companies in the fields of healthcare, sports, infrastructure, and education.

- **Infrastructure:** Near-term market opportunities still revolve around major infrastructure projects in the lead-up to the 2022 FIFA World Cup, mainly involving road, water, electricity and sewage networks, along with other public facilities. More than \$200 billion has been allocated by the government for construction, infrastructure development, public transportation, and logistics projects to meet and serve the demands of the country’s growing population and projected event spectators.
- **ICT:** The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector has also been a key focus of the government since the 2017 announcement of a “Smart Nation” program, which allocates more than \$1.5 billion for ICT solutions in the transport, logistics, health, sports, and environmental sectors and is aimed at

transforming Qatar into one of the most digitally-connected countries in the world. The Ministry of Transport and Communications has taken the lead on this program.

- **Food Products:** The embargo on Qatar significantly complicated food trade routes. Qatar imports over 90% of its food, and prior to the blockade, Qatar received nearly 40% of these shipments via Saudi Arabia. Major food suppliers to Qatar, which traditionally received shipments through Saudi Arabia and UAE, were forced to establish alternative trade routes. Food security has become a top priority, and the government continues to aggressively invest in local food production, which presents an array of opportunities for U.S. companies.
- **Energy:** The energy sector, specifically oil & gas production in Qatar, continues to present some of the greatest opportunities for American companies, especially with Qatar's North Field mega LNG expansion project which is set to increase natural gas production by 43% by 2024 from 77.1 million tons per annum (mtpa) to 110 mtpa. Qatar Petroleum has also invited bids from international firms to develop and operate a new petrochemical complex in Ras Laffan Industrial City, which will feature the region's largest ethane cracker. Such projects provide additional opportunities for American companies to consider. Recently, Qatar Petroleum invited investors to participate in the recently-announced Tawteen program, a localization initiative that aims to create domestic manufacturing and service opportunities for the energy sector supply chain. Applications will be accepted through June 15, 2019.
- **Healthcare:** Qatar has allocated \$6.2 billion to healthcare spending in its 2019 budget. Healthcare projects include expanding Hamad Medical Corporation facilities, establishing national laboratories, and building new health centers.
- **Aviation and Defense:** The growing strategic partnership between Qatar and the U.S. is demonstrated by the recent series of major U.S. arms sales to Qatar. Qatar's Foreign Military Sales portfolio is currently ranked 2nd in the world, with a total case value of over \$24 billion. Qatar's significant demand for aviation technology involves its continued global expansion plan for national carrier Qatar Airways and Hamad International Airport, in addition to military modernization initiatives. As demonstrated in recent years, Qatar's plan to expand and modernize its military will continue to provide opportunities for foreign military and direct commercial sales, especially training and capacity building programs across all branches of the Qatar Armed Forces.

Market Entry Strategy

- If you are a new-to-exporting company, contact your local Export Assistance Center first for free export counseling and a balanced assessment of your company's chances for success in Qatar. To find your local export assistance center, please visit Export.gov
- **Come visit:** As in many Middle Eastern countries, personal engagement with potential agents and partners is key to successfully conducting business in Qatar.
- **Get a lawyer:** Acquiring good legal representation is an important first step to entering the market. This helps establish and maintain good business relationships with Qatari partners. Hiring a lawyer is especially important before concluding commercial agreements. Occasionally, American firms report difficulties, including delayed payments with their local business partners once their company starts making a profit. A good business lawyer can help address such issues. The U.S. Embassy can provide you

with a list of law firms currently operating in Qatar. <https://qa.usembassy.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/136/2017/05/Local-Attorney-List-Qatar.pdf>

- **Feasibility study:** U.S. firms already established in the market recommend that new entrants carefully conduct a feasibility study. This study should be based on factors such as existing competition, market channels and local tastes. The Commercial Service offers various industry market research reports, as well as *Customized Market Research* that can form a strong basis for a viable feasibility study. Please contact the Commercial Section of the U.S. Embassy in Doha for more information.
- **Vet partners:** The Commercial Section at the U.S. Embassy offers several services to help you thoroughly vet and identify prospective Qatari business partners. These services include the *International Company Profile*, the *International Partner Search*, and the *Gold Key Service*. These services are described here in more detail: [U.S. Commercial Service Qatar](#).
- **Maintain independence:** Having a reliable local partner can mean the difference between success and failure in Qatar. However, U.S. firms advise not to rely too much on your local partner for all market intelligence and contacts affecting your business. For example, in the case of expatriate labor visa issues, these should be negotiated with sponsors, agents, and partners in the early stages of contract negotiation.
- **Adapt:** Successful U.S., European, and other foreign companies understand that doing business internationally always creates challenges and doing business in Qatar is no exception. Learn to live with new procedures and laws by injecting a healthy dose of flexibility into your business plan. The Commercial Service suggests U.S. firms insist on payment by letter of credit to avoid costly payment delays.

Political and Economic Environment

For background information on the political and economic environment of the country, please click on the link below to the [U.S. Department of State website](#).

Selling US Products & Services

Using an Agent to Sell US Products and Services

In certain circumstances, foreign companies doing business in Qatar may elect to have a local commercial agent. A commercial agent generally acts as the exclusive provider of services of the foreign principal or exclusive seller in Qatar for foreign produced goods. U.S. firms are strongly advised *to avoid* appointing one regional agent for a number of countries.

U.S. companies with agency agreements or planning agency agreements with Qatari firms are encouraged to review Law No. 8/2002 as amended by Law No. 2/2016 (the “Commercial Agents Law”). The law consists of 28 articles, enshrining two basic principles:

1. The business of commercial agents is exclusively restricted to Qatari nationals or to companies wholly owned by Qatari nationals, and they must be registered with the Qatari Commercial Agents Register to receive the benefits.
2. Any Qatari agency is to be considered as an exclusive agency.

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

When finally approved by both parties, the Arabic text of agency or representation agreements should be registered with the Commercial Affairs Department of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI). Local agents usually follow up on the routine work required by MoCI registration regulations. Article 23 of the law states that courts of the State of Qatar shall be competent to deal with any dispute arising between the principal and the agent for the execution of the agency contract, provided there is no agreement otherwise. In the event that the parties select arbitration, Article 24 of the law states that any arbitral award in the dispute arising out of the agency agreement shall be deemed final.

The Commercial Agents Law allows for the importation and sale of brand name products by other local entities; however, the commercial agent is permitted to request commission from the foreign principal in accordance with their commercial agency agreement where the products have been imported for the purpose of trading, as opposed to personal use or exportation, which are exempt from commission.

To find a reliable agent, U.S. companies are encouraged to take advantage of services offered by the Commercial Section at the [U.S. Embassy in Doha](#).

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

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

Establishing an Office

In order to do business in Qatar and establish a local office, foreign and local companies as well as service agencies are required to obtain commercial registration from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI). Qatar enacted Law No. 25/2005 (the “Commercial Registry Law”) which states that no individual person or

single entity may engage in commercial activity before registering in the Commercial Registry maintained by the MoCI. Any inquiries regarding the registration process should be directed to the Director of Commercial Affairs in the Commercial Registration and Licenses Department at the MoCI. Law No. 20/2014 amended certain provisions of the Commercial Registry Law to simplify and expedite the registration and appeals process.

In January 2019, Law No. 1/ 2019 regulating the investment of non-Qatari capital was signed by the Amir, repealing Law No. 13/2000 on the regulation of foreign investment. The new law permits foreign investors to invest up to 100% in nearly all sectors of the economy. Additionally, to allow more foreign real estate investment, the government enacted a new law (Law 16/2018) to allow foreign individuals, companies, and real estate developers freehold ownership of real estate in 10 designated zones and usufructuary rights up to 99 years in 16 other zones. Foreign real estate investors and owners will also be granted residency in Qatar for as long as they own their property.

Important exceptions to the Foreign Investment Law are as follows:

- **100% Foreign Investment Law:** Excepted sectors include banking, insurance, and commercial agencies, where foreign capital investment remains limited at 49 percent, barring special dispensation from the Cabinet. Investors must obtain an exemption from Qatar’s Council of Ministers prior to investing in the banking and insurance sectors.
- **Article 68 Companies:** The Foreign Investment Law provides that it shall not apply to companies and individuals whom the government of Qatar entrusts with excavation, utilization or management of natural wealth resources under a concession or agreement, or to companies that are established by the government or public institutions or in which the government participates in partnership with foreign investors (so called “Article 68 Companies”). Special rules apply in these circumstances.
- **Representational trade office:** The decision of the MCI No. 142/2006 provides that foreign firms may open representational offices without a local partner. Such offices may not conduct any financial transactions related to the company’s commercial activities in Qatar and are therefore not subject to taxation however the office must be registered with the tax authorities. Though the representational office may be registered in the Commercial Registry and employ staff in its own name, it is really a “shop window” to source business. A representational office may be converted into a joint venture company or 100% foreign ownership at a later date.
- **Branch registration:** The Foreign Investment Law contains provisions that, subject to an exemption from the MoCI, allow a branch of a foreign company to be registered in Qatar if that foreign company has a contract in Qatar that results in facilitating the rendering of a service or implies a public benefit. This has generally been interpreted to mean engaging in a contract with the Government of Qatar or a quasi-governmental entity. This registration does not allow the foreign company to conduct commercial activity that is not related to the subject of its registration. Foreign companies registered under this category do not need a sponsor or service agent. As of the writing of this text, it is yet unclear whether the new law for 100% foreign investment will impact branch registration provisions.
- **Service agents or sponsorship:** In the past, this type of arrangement consisted of appointing a Qatari entity to act as a service agent for a foreign firm. Specific services would be determined by the two parties and could include handling administrative and business matters in Qatar, such as immigration

procedures, import licenses, providing introductions to decision makers, etc. Although the service agent remains a common business practice in the region, it is no longer an appropriate business option in Qatar in light of Law No. 25/2004, commonly known as the “Proxy Law.” The Proxy Law was enacted in Qatar to address the practice of concealing non-Qataris doing business in violation of existing Qatari law. It prohibits natural or legal persons from concealing the business activities of non-Qataris, for example by allowing a non-Qatari to use the name, license or commercial registration of Qatari party. According to Law No. 25/2004, the service agent relationship is considered a form of proxy business and fines and imprisonment can be imposed on anyone who infringes the law.

- **QFC, QSTP, Manateq, and Free Zones:** The Qatari government offers business incubator and free economic zone platforms to attract foreign direct investment. The Qatar Financial Centre (QFC) and the Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP) provide environments for international companies and institutions to operate under certain free zone-type conditions. The criteria and limitations to operate in these environments are fairly stringent. Foreign investors interested in setting up in the QFC must carry out specific permitted activities. On the other hand, the QSTP is restricted to entities engaged in research and development activities in Qatar. Interested parties must submit applications for both the QFC and the QSTP for assessment of eligibility to establish a corporate presence. In addition, Manateq, a national initiative encompassing special economic zones, industrial zones, logistics parks, and warehousing parks, aims to attract small, medium, and large enterprises with various infrastructure incentives. Recommended industries vary by zone, but generally include construction, building materials, metals, chemicals, plastics, petrochemicals, food manufacturing and storage. The Qatar Free Zones Authority, established in 2018, is accepting investment applications in two free economic zones, which are co-located with Qatar’s primary airport and seaport. Recommended industries include logistics, consumer products, light manufacturing, ICT, pharmaceuticals, maritime industries, and plastics. Incentives include tax exemptions, zero customs duties, full repatriation of profits, and potential access to a \$3 billion government-backed fund for strategic investments in the free zones. More information on Manateq and the Free Zones can be found here:

- Manateq.qa
- <https://fza.gov.qa/>

Franchising

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

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

There is no specific franchising legislation enacted in Qatar. Franchise structuring options and any actual franchise operations are dictated by, and need to comply with, a loose collection of laws and regulations which

structure general issues of commercial law and trade, commercial relationships, foreign investment, shareholder rights, and obligations.

Direct Marketing

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

Joint Ventures/Licensing

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

As mentioned above, joint ventures involving foreign partners primarily take the form of limited liability companies. Generally (see information about Law 1/2019 on foreign ownership), foreign investors may own up to 49% and the Qatari partners no less than 51% of a limited liability concern. Foreign partners in partnerships organized as limited liability partnerships must pay the full amount of their contribution to authorized financial institutions in cash or in kind prior to the start of operations. These firms are normally required to set aside 10% of their profits each year in a statutory reserve, until it equals 50% of the venture's authorized capital.

Selling to the Government

The Qatari government is the biggest end-user of a wide range of products and services. Previously, all government procurement contracts were previously administered under provisions of bidding and tender regulations included in Law No. 26/2005. The Central Tenders Committee (CTC) of the Ministry of Finance was formerly responsible for processing the majority of public sector tenders in excess of QR 5 million. The CTC applied standard tendering procedures and adhered to established performance practices and established standards that regulated bidding procedures.

In November 2015, the Amir issued a new procurement law No. 24/2015 which has been in effect since June 2016. The law disbanded the Central Tendering Committee and created a Government Procurement Department within the Ministry of Finance which has oversight of most government tenders. The new department also created a website to consolidate all tenders and provide relevant information to interested bidders, facilitating the process for overseas investors. The law aims to promote a fair, transparent, simple, and speedy tendering process, permitting each regulated government entity to create its own tender committee, whose members must include representatives from the Ministry of Finance and the Diwan Audit Bureau.

Bid and performance bonds are required in the form of unconditional bank guarantees with a local bank or certified local bank checks. The standard bid bond is 5% and performance bond is 10% of the contract. However, the above rate can be larger for certain projects. Foreign architectural, contracting, and engineering firms are not required to have a local presence for the bid process. However, by the time a contract is ready to be signed, participating foreign firms may need to have satisfied local establishment requirements. It is important to note that the government ministry requesting the bid has the right, during the contract period, to increase or decrease the required services, materials, or deliverables, after the committee's approval.

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

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

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

Advocacy

U.S. companies bidding on Government tenders may also qualify for U.S. Government advocacy. A unit of the U.S. Commerce Department's International Trade Administration, the Advocacy Center coordinates U.S. Government interagency advocacy efforts on behalf of U.S. exporters bidding on public sector contracts with international governments and government agencies.

The Advocacy Center works closely with our network of the U.S. Commercial Service worldwide and inter-agency partners to ensure that exporters of U.S. products and services have the best possible chance of winning government contracts. Advocacy assistance can take many forms but often involves the U.S. Embassy or other U.S. Government agencies expressing support for the U.S. bidders directly to the foreign government. Click here for more information: <https://2016.export.gov/advocacy/>.

Multilateral Development Banks and Financing Government Sales

Price, payment terms, and financing can be a significant factor in winning a government contract. Many governments finance public works projects through borrowing from the Multilateral Development Banks (MDB). Please refer to the Project Financing Section in Trade and Project Financing for more information. A helpful guide for working with the MDBs is the [Guide to Doing Business with the Multilateral Development Banks](#).

The U.S. Department of Commerce's (USDOC) International Trade Administration (ITA) has a Foreign Commercial Service Officer stationed at each of the five different Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs): the African Development Bank; the Asian Development Bank; the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; the Inter-American Development Bank; and the World Bank.

Distribution & Sales Channels

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

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

A variety of distribution and sales channels exist in Qatar including:

- Private supermarkets account for most of the retail sales. The distribution channel is as follows: importer/agent sells to private supermarkets (60%), cooperatives (20 %), institutional users (10%) and wholesalers and convenience stores (5%).
- Consumer cooperative societies account for 20% of the food retail sales in Qatar.
- Institutional users account for approximately 10% of food distributed.
- Wholesalers and small convenience stores account for the balance of 5% of food products marketed in Qatar. Wholesalers sell directly to consumers, to small supermarkets, and restaurants.
- Generic and brand supermarket promotions are common in Qatar and are commonly employed by both local and foreign companies.
- Newspaper advertisements and inserts are most commonly used for food and other products. TV advertising, while very effective, is expensive. For other products, social media is an important source of advertising.

Express Delivery

Postal services within Qatar are provided by Q-Post, the government monopoly. Reliable express delivery services are available throughout the country from such providers as FedEx, UPS, DHL, and Aramex.

Selling Factors & Techniques

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

eCommerce

Qatar boasts one of the highest Internet penetration rates in the world, exceeding 95%. A 2018 study conducted by Northwestern University in Qatar found that social media penetration was among the highest in the world, with 93% of Qatari nationals using WhatsApp, 70% using Instagram, and 64% using Snapchat. As of November 2018, approximately two-thirds of the population is within the 15-44 age group and has a great interest in online shopping. It is believed that only about 14% of the population, however, actually makes online purchases. The main reason appears to be that credit card penetration rates are still rather low at 14%, with debit cards being prevalent (and not always accepted on e-commerce platforms). Many transactions are still conducted as cash-on-delivery.

The country's Electronic Commerce and Transactions Law was enacted in 2010, providing legislation in areas such as e-signatures, e-documents, and authentication. Qatar Central Bank is primarily responsible for regulating electronic banking activities and electronic financial transactions. The Government of Qatar is encouraging greater use of modern technology in government transactions and service delivery. Since 2014, Qatar continues to implement its e-Government 2020 strategy which aims to provide enhance people's everyday lives through technology. This includes providing e-Government services to members of the public, as well as business and delivering administrative efficiency and increasing government openness. Several

government services and transactions are now possible through the Internet and the goal of putting 100% of key government services online is targeted to be completed by 2020. The private sector however, has taken slow steps in developing its B2B and B2C portals. E-Commerce is expected to flourish given the government's interest in enhancing this service throughout Qatar.

For the full strategy, please visit: <https://portal.www.gov.qa/wps/wcm/connect/2a283be5-6199-4d9b-841a-c984536d0799/Qatar+e-Government+2020+Strategy+Executive+Summary+English.pdf?MOD=AJPERES>

eCommerce guidelines can be found here: <http://www.motc.gov.qa/en/documents/document/qatar-e-commerce-guidelines>

Trade Promotion & Advertising

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

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

Arabic:

[Al-Sharq](#)

P.O. Box 3488, Doha, State of Qatar

Tel: (+974) 44557780

Fax: (+974) 44557864

Email: adv@al-sharq.com

[Al-Watan](#)

P.O. Box 22345, Doha, State of Qatar,

Tel: (+974) 40002121

Fax: (+974) 40002230

Email: alwatan@qatar.net.qa

[Al-Raya](#)

P.O. Box 533, Doha, State of Qatar, Office of the Editorial President

Tel: (+974) 44466566 or 4437 1353

Fax: (+974) 4435 0476

Email: Editor@raya.com

[Al-Arab](#)

P.O. Box 22612, Doha, State of Qatar

Tel: (+974) 4499 7333

Email: alarab@alarab.qa

English:

[Gulf Times](#)

P.O. Box 533, Doha, State of Qatar

Tel: (+974) 4435 0478(News) 4446 6404(Sports)

4446 6609(Advertising) 4 44411300(Home delivery)
Fax: (+974) 4435 0474(Editorial) 44418811(Advertising)
Email: editor@gulf-times.com,

The Peninsula

P.O. Box 3488, D-Ring Road Doha, State of Qatar

Editorial:

Tel: (+974) 4455 7739/41/47/48

Fax: (+974) 4455 7746

E-mail: editor@pen.com.qa

Advertising:

Tel: (+974) 4455 7837 or (+974) 4455 7852 or (+974) 4455 7780

Fax: (+974) 4455 7870 or (+974) 4455 7898

E-mail: adv@pen.com.qa

PenMag:

Tel: (+974) 4455 7837 or (+974) 4455 7780

Fax: (+974) 4455 7870 or (+974) 4455 7898

E-mail: penmag@pen.com.qa

Classifieds:

Tel: (+974) 4455 7857

E-mail: adv@pen.com.qa

Subscriptions / Home Delivery

Tel: (+974) 4455 7809/810

Fax: (+974) 4455 7819

E-mail: distribution@pen.com.qa / distribution@al-sharq.com

Public Relations

Tel: (+974) 4455 7728/52

Fax: (+974) 4455 7758

E-mail: pr@pen.com.qa

Qatar Tribune:

P.O. Box 23493, Doha, State of Qatar

Tel: (+974) 4442 2077/4466 6810/ 4455 4333

Fax: (+974) 4441 6790

Email: editor@qatar-tribune.com

The state-owned Qatar Radio and Television Corporation operates Qatar Television (QTV) and the radio station Qatar Broadcasting Service (QBS). QTV, comprising Arabic and English channels, broadcasts pre-recorded commercials. QBS also carries advertisements.

The locally operated pan-Arab satellite channel Al-Jazeera receives some public funding but is independently owned and operated. It also broadcasts advertising for local and regional companies and products. The Al-Jazeera network of channels is carried by Qatar's satellites, Es'hailSat 1 and 2.

[Al Rayyan Satellite Channel](#) is a diversified channel operated by Al Rayyan Media and Marketing. The channel targets the Qatari audience. Al Rayyan is as a familiar news service at the national and regional levels.

General Enquiries: +974 44240515

Advertising and Marketing: +974 44240271 / +974 44243160

Fax Nos.: +974 44413311 / +974 44245794

Email: advertising.marketing@alrayyan.qa

Qatar Broadcasting Service (QBS)/ Qatar News Agency

P.O. Box 1414, Doha, State of Qatar,

Tel: (+974) 4489 4444, Fax: (+974) 4487 0712

Aljazeera Network Al-Jazeera Satellite Channel with a number of operational channels: Al-Jazeera Live, Al-Jazeera, Al-Jazeera America and Al-Jazeera Documentary,
P.O. Box 23123, Doha, Tel: (+974) 40158585

Email: advertising@aljazeera.net

Al-Jazeera is an excellent means of promotion and advertising, as it broadcasts to more than 310 million households in more than 100 countries, with extensive coverage across the Middle East and North Africa, especially.

Pricing

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

There is currently no value-added tax (VAT) or sales tax in Qatar. However, the government is considering introducing a 5% VAT in 2020.

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

Sales Service/Customer Support

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

Due Diligence

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

<https://www.export.gov/International-Company-Profile>

Local Professional Services

Auditing Firms

- Deloitte & Touche
- Ernst & Young

- [KPMG](#)
- PricewaterhouseCoopers

Banking

Qatari Banks:

- [Al Ahli Bank of Qatar](#)
- [Al Khaliji Bank](#)
- [Barwa Bank](#)
- [Commercial Bank of Qatar](#)
- [Doha Bank](#)
- [International Bank of Qatar](#)
- [Masraf Al Rayan](#)
- [Qatar Development Bank](#)
- [Qatar International Islamic Bank](#)
- [Qatar Islamic Bank](#)
- [Qatar National Bank](#)

Foreign Banks' Branches:

- [Arab Bank](#)
- [Bank Saderat Iran](#)
- [B.N.P. Paribas](#)
- [Citibank](#) [HSBC](#)
- [Mashreq Bank](#)
- [Standard Chartered Bank](#)
- [United Bank](#)

Freight Forwarding and Courier Services:

- [Aramex](#)
- [DHL](#)
- [Federal Express](#)
- [TNT Express](#)
- [UPS](#)
- [Skynet](#)

Hotels

Major Hotel Chains in Qatar:

- [The Ritz Carlton Doha](#)
- [W Doha](#)
- [Grand Hyatt Doha](#)
- [The St Regis Doha](#)
- [InterContinental Doha](#)
- [Kempinski Residences and Suites Doha](#)
- [Four Seasons Hotel Doha](#)
- [Mondrian Hotel](#)
- [Mandarin Oriental](#)
- [The Torch Doha](#)
- [Movenpick Tower Doha](#)

- [Sharq Village & Spa Doha](#)
- [Kempinski at the Pearl](#)
- [Marriott City Center](#)
- [IW Marriott](#)
- [Doha Marriott Hotel](#)
- [La Cigale Hotel](#)
- [Millennium Hotel](#)
- [Radisson Blu Hotel Doha](#)
- [Oryx Doha](#)
- [Hilton](#)
- [Crowne Plaza](#)
- [M Doha Hotel](#)
- [Sealine Beach Resort](#)
- [Sheraton Doha Resort & Convention Hotel](#)
- [Wyndham Grand Regency Doha](#)

Insurance Companies

- [Al-Khaleej Insurance Company](#)
- [Al Koot Insurance and Reinsurance Co](#)
- [Allianz Takaful QFC](#)
- [Arabia Insurance Co](#)
- [AXA Insurance \(Gulf\) BSC \(C\)](#)
- [Capital Insurance Brokers LLC](#)
- [Ceylinco Insurance](#)
- [Doha Bank Assurance Company LLC](#)
- [Doha Insurance Co \(QSC\)](#)
- [General Takaful](#)
- [Libano-Suisse Insurance Company](#)
- [Life Insurance Corporation \(LIC\) International](#)
- [Qatar General Insurance and Re-Insurance Company](#)
- [Qatar Insurance Company](#)
- [Qatar Islamic Insurance Company](#)
- [SEIB Insurance & Reinsurance Co LLC](#)
- [Tazur Company BSC](#)
- [The American Life Insurance Company](#)

Local Attorney List

Please see [U.S. Embassy Doha's list of local attorneys](#)

Media

- [Al-Jazeera Satellite TV Station](#)
- [Al-Watan](#)
- [Al-Rayah](#)
- [AL-Sharq](#)
- [Gulf Times](#)
- [The Peninsula](#)

- [Qatar News Agency](#)

Telecommunications

- Ooredoo
- [Vodafone](#)

Principal Business Associations

The American Chamber of Commerce in Qatar is the first legally-established foreign Chamber of Commerce in Qatar. AmCham Qatar was first launched February 2010 and is registered as a private institution for public benefit. AmCham Qatar is a non-profit, non-governmental, and non-political organization dedicated to fostering mutual cooperation and understanding between Qatar and the United States through trade, commerce, and investment.

Its main objectives are to:

- Promote the expansion of trade and investment between the United States and Qatar
- Serve as a forum in which American business people in Qatar can identify, discuss and pursue common commercial interests
- Work with organizations in Qatar and internationally on matters of mutual interest
- Serve as a conduit of information to the governments and publics of the United States and Qatar concerning the improvement of business conditions
- Maintain relations with chambers of commerce in the United States and other chambers of commerce or commercial organizations
- Contribute to the development of a vibrant private sector in Qatar and uphold the highest standards of corporate and commercial practice

For additional information, please see the [AmCham's website](#).

Web Resources

Contact the Commercial Section of the [U.S. Embassy](#)

Leading Sectors for US Exports & Investments

Aviation & Defense

Overview

Aviation

Given Qatar Airways' continued global growth strategy, especially with adding more direct routes to the United States (10 as of June 2018), aviation is an active industry in Qatar for U.S. suppliers. Boeing and Gulf Stream dominate the market as a result of the nature of their aircraft offerings, but other U.S. suppliers provide information technology, ground support equipment, and similar services to Qatar Airways Group and Hamad International Airport. Qatar Airways Group maintains one of the most rigorous approved vendor lists and processes in Qatar.

Defense

As Qatar manages one of the most ambitious military modernization programs in the world, the Qatar Armed Forces will continue to rely on foreign military and direct commercial sales. Major purchases since 2014 include Apache helicopters, Javelin missiles, Early Warning Radar, PAC 3 Patriot systems, and F-15 aircraft. The Qatari military is also sponsoring an initiative to create a vast network of military training facilities and programs focused on supporting their recent defense acquisitions.

Major Purchases:

Purchase/Project	Entity	US Supplier	Sale Amount & Date
PAC 3 Patriot Systems	Ministry of Defense, Qatar Amiri Air Defense Forces	Raytheon	\$7.3B, December 2017
F-15 Fighter Aircraft (48)	Ministry of Defense, Qatar Amiri Air Forces	Boeing (Prime)	\$11B, June 2017
100 Aircraft Order 30 787-9, 10 777-300ER LOI for 60 additional aircrafts	Qatar Airways	Boeing	\$18.6B, October 2016
Early Warning Radar System	Ministry of Defense, Qatar Amiri Air Defense Forces	Raytheon	\$1.6B, September 2016
Apache Helicopters (24)	Ministry of Defense, Qatar Amiri Air Forces	Boeing	\$2.4B, March 2014
Javelin Missiles	Ministry of Defense, Qatar Amiri Land Forces	Lockheed Martin	\$128M, 2014

The U.S. Military strategic partnership in Qatar has made great strides since 1992. Qatar has proven to be a reliable partner in the region and has hosted approximately ten thousand U.S. military troops and forward headquarters for U.S. Central and Air Force Central Commands at Al Udeid Air Base—the largest U.S. air base outside the continental U.S. The U.S. and Qatar also signed a Defense Cooperation Agreement in 1992, which was renewed in 2013 for an additional ten years.

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

Most commonly bought items include ballistic anti-missile systems and a new generation of warplanes. Military electronics and cyber systems, helicopters for special forces teams, light tactical armored vehicles with weapons systems, GBU-35 bunker-buster ammunition to be used against concrete-protected nuclear facilities, guided air-to-air and air-to-ground missiles, Apache attack helicopters, and Patriot and Javelin air defense systems are also common purchases.

Best Opportunities:

- Training and capacity building programs
- Cyber Security and Electronic Warfare Systems
- Anti-tank weapons systems
- Integrated air and missile defense systems
- Navy & Marine defense systems

Web Resources

Contact the [Office of Military Cooperation Qatar](#) of the U.S. Embassy in Doha.

Architecture Engineering & Construction

Overview

The architecture, engineering, and construction sectors continue to experience a slow-down, despite the government's continued plan for the Qatar National Vision 2030 and World Cup 2022 development. Stagnant low oil prices over recent years have led to budget cuts across all government agencies, in addition to the Amir's focus on austerity measures. Total government spending in 2018 on construction was \$9 billion, mostly on infrastructure developments (highways, port development, and new military base development). The largest anticipated projects for construction in 2019 are the Hamad International Airport expansion and Qatar Petroleum's LNG production projects.

Opportunities with Major Government Agencies

- Ministry of Municipality and Environment
- Public Works Authority (Ashghal)
- Ministry of Transport and Communications
 - Qatar Rail
 - Hamad International Airport
 - Hamad Port
 - Qatar Ports Management Company (Mwani)
- Qatari Diar/Lusail Real Estate Development Company
- Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy
- Private Engineering Office
- Qatar Foundation
- Qatar Petroleum

The public and private sectors rely heavily on international expertise in the areas of architectural, construction, and engineering services, creating opportunities in this sector for U.S. firms. U.S. firms are largely present in the design, project, and construction management/supervision services field.

Current Largest Projects

Project	Total Value of Project Billion USD	Expected Completion Date	Details
Lusail	45.0	2019	Mixed-use development
Qatar Rail	40.0	2026	Metro and rail links
Major Expressway Program	20.0	Ongoing	Ashghal expressways
New Airport - Terminal 2 Expansion	15.5	2020	Hamad International Airport
Local Roads	14.6	2018	Ashghal roads and drainage
Barwa Al Khor	10.0	2025	Mixed-use development
Barwa City	8.3	Completed 2015	Mixed-use development
Education City	7.5	Completed 2014	Universities and colleges
Hamad Port	7.4	2020, two container	New port south of Doha

		terminals open	
Msheireb Properties	5.5	2019, partially open	Mixed-use development
Sharq Crossing (Currently on hold)	5.0	2021	Crossing for Doha bay

2022 World Cup Stadiums

Stadium	Status	Contractor	Seat Capacity
Khalifa Stadium Renovation	Completed	MIDMAC-Six Construct JV	40,000
Al Janoub (al Wakra)	Completed	MIDMAC/Porr/Six Construct JV	45,000
Al Bayt	Commissioned	Salini Impregilo/Galfar Engineering/Cimolai	60,000
Al Rayyan	Commissioned	Al Balagh – Larsen & Toubrou	40,000
Qatar Foundation	Commissioned	J&P Qatar, Conspel, and J&P Avax	40,000
Lusail City	Commissioned	HBK Contracting - China Railway Construction Company (CRCC)	80,000
Al Thumama Stadium	Commissioned	Al Jaber Engineering – Tekfen Construction	40,000

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

- Building materials
- Engineering and architectural services
- Construction and project management services
- Specialized contractors and service providers for education, healthcare, and sports facilities

Trade Shows

- Tenders published by the different governmental institutions (comprehensive list provided in Qatar Business Tenders List section)
- Project Qatar 2019
- Big 5 Qatar

Web Resources

- Comprehensive list provided in Qatar Business Tenders List section

Automotive Overview

The automotive industry continued to experience a slowdown in 2018 as the ongoing trade embargo held back consumers and businesses from purchasing new vehicles. Given the country's extensive infrastructure projects in preparation for the upcoming 2022 FIFA World Cup and North Field LNG expansion, 2019 is forecasted to be more robust for both commercial and passenger vehicles.

Despite Qatar's 6% decline in 2018 new vehicle sales, Asian brands dominated the market with the following market share: Toyota (33.1%), Nissan (15%), Mitsubishi (8.4%), Kia (7.1%), Lexus (6.3%) Hyundai (3.1%) and Honda (3.2%). American brands follow with an approximate market share of 13% split among Chevrolet, GMC, Cadillac, and Ford as the most popular American brands. The luxury car market appears to still be growing while electric vehicles (EVs) are still rarely seen in the country and EV charging stations remain limited.

Over the past few years, Qatar has been progressively upgrading public transportation and making it more accessible to commuters. There is an increase in the number of buses and private car services that cater to various routes and locations. In May 2019, Qatar Rail opened its first metro line with other lines to follow in 2019-2020.

It is expected that demand for spare parts will continue to grow in the next few years as people look to repair, modify, or upgrade their vehicles. High demand for used spare parts such as brake pads, transmission controls, AC functions, coolant, wipers, and belts continue to prevail in 2019 because of the overall economic cycle. Aftermarket parts manufactured in the United States for European models are an opportunity for U.S. suppliers. The demand for spare parts, car care products, and accessories has likewise increased as the number of used vehicles grows every year. Counterfeit parts remain a concern in Qatar.

Qatar does not have domestic auto production, but it has automotive investments in several countries, including bus production in Oman and vehicle production in Turkey. The Qatar Investment Authority also owns a 17% stake in German carmaker, Volkswagen.

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

- Sports utility vehicles
- Trucks, vans and buses
- All-Terrain vehicles (ATV), utility vehicles (UTVs)
- Specialized trucks and vehicles
- Car care products
- Aftermarket parts, accessories, and spare parts

Opportunities

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

Web Resources

Contact the [Commercial Section of the U.S. Embassy](#)

Education Training and Equipment

Overview

(Services statistics are not available.)

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

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

Qatar has almost 250 independent schools which function like charter schools in the United States. While the Government of Qatar requires all independent schools to comply with national curriculum standards in all core subjects, the government is gradually modifying its educational curriculum to match international baccalaureate standards. The government continues to look to expand the number of primary and secondary private schools, particularly high-quality ones, to cater to the growing population of foreign professionals working in Qatar and provide options to its citizens. With the country growing at a fast pace the shortage of private international schools is becoming an issue that directly affects the families of the foreigners joining the work force. Waitlists can sometimes be long, and options limited. The education sector is striving to keep up with increasing market demands. Several new international schools are opening but more institutions are still needed. The Supreme Education Council is making great efforts to promote the establishment of top international institutions in Qatar.

In April of 2017, Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF), a member of Qatar Foundation for Education Science and Community Development, and Texas A&M University at Qatar signed an agreement to create an innovation laboratory to support outreach and academic enrichment initiatives in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) for schoolchildren in Qatar. Under the agreement QNRF will provide funds to build the lab for K-12 student programs. The STEM Hub was launched in January 2019.

The Government of Qatar provides every citizen free education at the primary and secondary level. The Government of Qatar’s Higher Education Institute (HEI) scholarship awards full scholarships to Qatari nationals admitted into a variety of designated undergraduate and graduate schools in the United States (as well as other countries). The goal is to provide these Qataris with the appropriate mix of skills in key sectors in support of Qatarization.

Qatar’s senior leadership, as part of the vision 2030, established a strategy, which seeks to educate highly productive, skilled Qatari nationals to meet the demands of the labor market. This strategy is known as “Qatarization” and is designed to increase the number of Qatari nationals in all joint venture industries and government departments to assume key positions formerly occupied by expatriates. The target is 50% of the workforce in the industry and energy sectors.

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

- **Language:** ESL and TOEFL
- **Undergraduate:** Business Administration, Engineering and Communication
- **STEM programs**
- **Post-Graduate:** Pharmacy, Dentistry, MBAs

Opportunities

This sector is open for new opportunities but must fit into the educational and economic goals of the Qatar Foundation and national plans. The country is investing significant resources to train Qatari youth to enable them to become entrepreneurs and qualified professionals for the economy.

School operators are in high demand as the country tries to cope with the growing education need. Several projects such as Lusail City are contemplating to build schools to cater their residents. [Register for tender opportunities.](#)

Web Resources

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

Contact the [Commercial Section of the U.S. Embassy.](#)

Information, and Communication Technology

Overview

MOTC's largest focus continues to be the Qatar Smart Nation program, a five-year \$1.64 billion initiative launched in 2017 to develop Qatar's ICT infrastructure and transform Doha into one of most connected cities globally.

The Qatar Smart Nation Program aims to harness technology and innovation to improve quality of life and help drive sustainable economic development across five priority sectors:

- Transportation
- Logistics
- Environment
- Healthcare
- Sports

The program was announced during the fourth edition of the [QITCOM](#) exhibition on March 6, 2017, with MOTC leading a government task force with other stakeholders to manage the program's objectives.

Individual government agencies including the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Finance, and Ministry of Municipality and Environment continue their respective "digitization" strategies, as part of Qatar's E-government 2020 objective, creating several opportunities for U.S. companies.

Total ICT spending in Qatar stood at \$1.8 billion in 2018, largely due to the government's increasing requirement for ICT services.

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

- Smart City Solutions
- Cyber Security
- E-commerce
- E-Education
- E-Health
- Financial Technology
- E-Government Solutions

Opportunities & Major Trade Shows

- Tenders published by the different governmental institutions (comprehensive list available in Qatar Business Tenders List section)
- Partnering with local distributors
- [QITCOM](#)
- Arab Future Cities Summit, www.arabfuturecities.com
- Milipol Qatar

Web Resources

- [Ministry of Transport and Communications](#)
- [Ooredoo](#)
- [Vodafone](#)

Contact the [Commercial Section of the U.S. Embassy](#)

Medical Equipment and Services

Overview

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

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

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

Opportunities

- Under the Qatar Healthcare Facilities Master Plan, Qatar will be establishing 31 health centers between the years of 2016-2020 leading up to the 2022 World Cup. The full plan aims to deliver 48 new facilities that range from health centers, diagnostic and treatment centers, hospital expansions and the building of both a general hospital and a specialized hospital.
- Hamad Medical Cooperation has unveiled a new 15-year master plan that includes doubling the number of hospital beds and operating theaters in the country and tripling car parking provisions by 2030.
- In December 2015, the Government of Qatar ended its existing health insurance program and since then, has relied on private sector insurance companies to fill the gap as it develops a tender allowing local firms to bid to become the firm to provide new national insurance coverage. Foreign firms will be encouraged to partner with local insurance companies to provide coverage.
- The healthcare sector is witnessing reform initiatives. One of the reforms includes broadening public-private partnerships and giving the private sector a larger role in the provision of healthcare services.

Web Resources

[Hamad Medical Corporation](#)

[Sidra Foundation](#)

Contact the [Commercial Section of the U.S. Embassy](#)

Oil & Gas Field Machinery and Equipment

Overview

The State of Qatar is the second largest global exporter of LNG after Australia. The country's exports of LNG, crude oil, and petroleum products contribute the majority of revenue to government coffers. Despite the government's concerted diversification efforts, Qatar's earnings from its hydrocarbons sector still account for more than 50% of the country's total government revenues.

Qatar holds the third largest proven reserve of natural gas in the world after Russia and Iran. Qatar has existing reserves of approximately 25 billion barrels of crude oil and 23.7 trillion cubic meters of natural gas. It is also one of the world's major fertilizer producers and top 15 oil exporting countries. State-owned Qatar Petroleum (QP) oversees the oil, gas, fertilizer, petrochemicals and refining operations in the country and has multi-billion interests abroad. QP has developed the sector through key partnerships with international companies, promoting the transfer of knowledge as many foreign companies have invested in Qatar's oil and gas sector specifically to purchase the natural gas or oil developed from these projects.

Qatar's natural gas production costs are among the lowest in the world, enabling a cost-effective, LNG and GTL Gas-To-Liquid (GTL) technology. The Pearl GTL plant is the world's largest facility which produces 140,000 b/d and is notable as the first to integrate upstream natural gas production with the downstream conversion facility.

In May 2017, the 12-year moratorium on further developing the North Field was lifted. The North Field expansion project will have 4 mega LNG trains to increase its production by 43% from 77.1 million tons per year (mtpa) to 110 mtpa by 2024. The country is also planning to build a Petrochemical Complex that will have ethane capacity of 1.6 mtpa. Qatar's crude oil refining capacity is approximately 393.7 billion per day (b/d) and it is expected to increase to 484.7 b/d in the next 3 years.

The ongoing land and air blockade imposed on Qatar in June 2017 by Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain and Egypt has not interrupted LNG gas supply to UAE through the Dolphin sub-sea pipeline which provides 40% of UAE's power generation.

Qatar Petroleum, with international partners, continues to invest heavily and broaden its exploration and discovery portfolio in South Africa, Cyprus, Morocco, Mozambique, Brazil, including making a \$10 billion investment in the Golden Pass terminal in the United States.

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

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

Opportunities

Qatar is poised to increase its LNG capacity and diversify products, projecting high growth in the coming years. QPs focus on major contracts for the North Field expansion along with the upcoming development of the Petrochemical complex/ethane cracker are likely to be key drivers of business activities in the energy sector.

Web Resources

Contact the [Commercial Section of the U.S. Embassy](#)

Safety & Security

Overview

The safety and security sector, despite the slow-down the sector has experienced due to delays in a majority of construction and infrastructure projects, is still set to experience high levels of growth with the upcoming security requirements for the World Cup in 2022. U.S. exports continue to provide several technologies to the local market such as CCTV surveillance, fire panels, communication systems, and recent cyber-attacks (Al-Jazeera 2017, Qatar National Bank 2016, Qatar Foundation Social Media Accounts 2013, and RasGas 2012) continue to drive the government's focus on boosting its offensive and defensive cyber-capabilities. The Ministry of Interior established a Cyber Security Committee to identify and determine the best technological and legal approach to ensure National Security and Cyber Defense. Q-CERT (Qatar's Computer Emergency Response Team) since its establishment in 2006 is ranked as one of the leading centers of its kind in the region, most recently hosting the fifth regional Cyber Drill for Arab Countries, organized by the ITU-Arab Regional Cybersecurity Center (ARCC).

Like many other countries, Qatar wants to improve its national cyber defense infrastructure in the face of a growing network warfare threat. This creates several opportunities for U.S. technology firms specialized in the field of cyberwarfare and cyber defense.

Sub-Sector Best Prospects

- CCTV Surveillance & Access control
- Asset tracking
- Chemical trace detection
- Cyber Security
- Forgery/ Fraud
- Integrated security systems, Building management systems
- Intrusion detection equipment
- Perimeter protection
- Protective barriers
- Sports safety and security
- Electronic safety and fire detection
- Communications systems
- Fire protection equipment and supplies

Opportunities

- Ministry of Interior
- Internal Security Forces
- Civil Defense Authority
- Communications Regulatory Authority
- Ministry of Transportation and Communications
- Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy

Web Resources

Ministry of Interior

[Q-CERT](#)

Contact the [Commercial Section of the U.S. Embassy](#)

Qatari Business Tender List

[Ashghal](#)

Public Works Authority “Ashghal” was established in 2004 as an autonomous body to oversee all infrastructure related projects, as well as public amenities of the State, and is under the Ministry of Municipality and Environment.

[Civil Aviation Authority](#)

The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) is the national aviation authority of Qatar. The CAA comprises five departments: Air Navigation, Air Safety, Air Transportation and Airport Affairs, Meteorology, and Joint Services in order to promote civil aviation and weather forecasts in terms of efficiency, accuracy and security.

[New Hamad Port Project](#)

Gained full operational readiness in 2018 (phase 1). Preparing for 2020 (phase 2), the Port will eventually comprise three container terminals with a combined annual capacity in excess of six million containers.

[Qatar Rail](#)

Qatar’s Rail Company was established to design and implement an integrated world-class railway system in the Qatar. The company is aiming to be an essential part of Qatar’s urban infrastructure and to be recognized as one of the most successful, safe and environmentally-friendly railway systems in the world. This system is expected to meet the demands of Qatar’s dynamic growing population.

Companies can submit their profiles to supplychainregistration@sc-pmc.qa

Tenders are also published in some of the following publications:

International Publications

- Estate Gazette
- MEED.com
- New Civil Engineer
- Building Design
- Building Magazine
- Digital Media
- Nce.co.uk
- Estesgazette.com
- Constructionweekonline.com
- Building.co.uk

Basic Material

[QAFCO](#)

The country’s first large-scale venture in the petrochemical sector, the Qatar Fertilizer Company (QAFCO) was established with a view to diversify the economy and utilize the nation’s enormous gas reserve.

[Q-Chem](#)

Company Ltd. (Q-Chem) is a Qatari company owned by Qatar Petroleum (QP) and Chevron Phillips Chemical International Qatar Holdings LLC (CPCIQ). The Q-Chem facility is an integrated petrochemical plant capable of producing high-density and medium-density polyethylene (HDPE & MDPE), 1-hexene and other products.

[Qatar Steel](#)

Qatar Steel Company was formed in 1974 as the first integrated steel plant in the Arabian Gulf. Today, Qatar Steel is widely recognized as a foremost leader in the steel industry, extending its pioneering commitment from an expansive mill site located in the heart of the Mesaieed industrial area. The company also operates a UAE-based subsidiary, Qatar Steel Company FZE.

Education

[Qatar Foundation](#)

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF) aims to support Qatar on its journey from a carbon economy to a knowledge-based economy by “unlocking human potential.” QF aims to bring world-class education, work experience and career opportunities to Qatar’s youth.

Government Agencies

[Central Planning Office](#)

The Qatar Central Planning Office coordinates all major infrastructure projects.

[Ministry of Culture, Arts, and Heritage](#)

Established in 2008, the Ministry strives to make Qatar the “capital of Arab culture.”

[Ministry of Commerce and Industry](#)

Established in 2009, this Ministry executes policies related to the development of business and trade. Among other things, this includes monitoring business activities, as well as proposing and implementing policies and programs that aim to attract investments and develop exports.

[Ministry of Education and Higher Education](#)

Established in November 2002, the Supreme Education Council (SEC) directs the nation’s education policy. It plays an integral role in the development and implementation of the education reform effort.

[Ministry of the Environment](#)

The Ministry of Environment is striving to achieve several goals, most importantly, protecting the environment through inclusive and sustainable growth for future generations to achieve the vision of 2030.

[Ministry of Interior](#)

The Ministry of Interior’s functions and missions are to provide peace and security and organizing police forces guaranteeing the protection of national security and maintaining safety and security of nationals and expatriates as well as to prevent crime. Additionally, the MOI is charged with issuing travel documents, organizing expatriates’ entry to the country and housing, and organizing the prison.

National Tourism Council (NTC)

The NTC is a new governing body, replacing the Qatar Tourism Authority. NTC will carry out core functions such as strategic industry planning and policy development, the development and implementation of a comprehensive plan to promote investment opportunities in the tourism sector, as well as destination marketing and promotion for both leisure and business events, the enhancement of the visitor experience. In addition, NTC is responsible for the management of regulatory affairs, including the execution of all tourism licenses and similar services. The organization also has oversight on three new entities that include: Qatar Tourism Promotion, Qatar Development and Qatar Business events company.

[Ministry of Municipality and Environment](#)

The Ministry of Municipality & Environment serves the public in all issues related to urban planning. It oversees the maintenance and beautification of public facilities and provides municipal services to citizens and residents across the various municipalities.

[Ministry of Public Health](#)

The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) aims to promote public health, encourage healthy lifestyles, and to provide community-based primary care with world class medical facilities. These facilities will not only provide quality care but also are expected to be research leaders on the frontiers of science.

[Qatar Museum Authority](#)

The QMA was founded in 2005 to manage the resources of all museums in the State of Qatar, to develop cultural institutions, such as museums and galleries, and to provide an effective system for collecting, protecting, preserving and interpreting historic sites, monuments and artifacts.

[SIDRA Foundation](#)

With its inpatient hospital launching in January 2018, Sidra Medical and Research Center is an ultra-modern, all-digital academic medical center that offers specialty healthcare for women and children.

[KATARAH Hospitality](#)

Katarah Hospitality, previously known as Qatar National Hotels Company is a hotel and resort owner, manager and developer, aiming to become one of the leading hospitality organizations in the world.

Media

[Al Jazeera](#)

Al Jazeera is an independent broadcaster owned by the State of Qatar through the Qatar Media Corporation and headquartered in Doha.

Oil and Gas

[Qatar Petroleum](#)

Qatar Petroleum (QP), a state-owned corporation established in 1974, is responsible for all phases of the oil and gas industry in Qatar. The principal activities of QP and its subsidiaries and joint ventures cover exploration, drilling and production operations, transport, storage, marketing and sale of crude oil, natural gas liquids, liquefied natural gas, gas-to-liquids, refined products, petrochemicals and fertilizers, and helicopter and financial services.

[Qatar Gas](#)

Qatar Gas established in 1984, pioneered the liquefied natural gas (LNG) industry in Qatar. Today, Qatargas is the largest LNG producer in the world, with an annual LNG production capacity of 77.1 million tonnes per annum (mtpa).

Real Estate and Development

[Msheireb](#)

Msheireb Properties is a real estate company and a subsidiary of Qatar Foundation. The company was established as a commercial venture to support the Foundation's aims of creating leading edge urban living concepts that build on traditional Arabian architecture and design and contribute to the social and cultural heritage of Doha.

[Qatari Diar](#)

Qatari Diar Real Estate Company was established in 2005 by the Qatar Investment Authority, the sovereign wealth fund of the State of Qatar. Headquartered in Doha, Qatari Diar is entrusted to support Qatar's growing economy and to coordinate the country's real estate development priorities.

Sports

[Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy](#)

The 2022 FIFA World Cup, an international association football tournament is scheduled to take place in Qatar in 2022. As of May 2019, FIFA announced that the tournament will involve 32 national teams, including that of the host nation.

[ASPIRE](#)

The Aspire Academy is a national sports academy for the development of Qatar's athletically talented youth. The Academy provides integrated sports development, sports science and academics in addition to providing an ambitious health and lifestyle program for the community that delivers over 25,000 education and classes per year.

[Qatar Olympic Committee](#)

The Qatar Olympic Committee is Qatar's National Olympic Committee. The committee's vision is to promote "Sport for Life," and to become "a leading nation in bringing the world together through sport."

Customs, Regulations & Standards

Trade Barriers

Qatar adheres to the WTO agreements for customs valuation and trade facilitation.

Import Tariffs

In accordance with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Customs Union, outlined in Law No. 41/2002 and implemented as the GCC Unified Customs Law on January 1, 2003, Qatar imposes a 5% ad valorem tariff on the cost, insurance and freight (C.I.F.) invoice value of most imported products, including food products. The GCC has approved exemptions for approximately 400 goods (including basic food products, such as live animals, fresh fruit and vegetables, seafood, wheat, flour, rice, feed grains, spices, seeds for planting and powdered milk), diplomatic and consular imports, military and security products, civilian aviation, personal effects and used household items, passenger accompanied luggage and gifts, goods destined for charitable use, ships and other vessels for the transport of passengers and floating platforms, and products to be used for industrial projects. Qatar also has a 20% tariff on iron bars and rods, non-alloy hot-rolled steel and 12 millimeter steel bars as well as cement. Customs duties of 30% are levied on imports of urea and 15% on imports of records and musical instruments. The sale of pork and pork products is strictly regulated, only available at one store for non-Muslim residents of Qatar. Pork, pork products, tobacco products, and alcoholic beverages are subject to a 100% import duty. Projects funded by the Qatar Industrial Development Bank (QIDB) can be granted a customs duty waiver for the import of machinery, raw materials, and other industrial inputs.

Import Requirements & Documentation

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

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

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

Additional Import Regulations:

Effective April 1, 2011, Qatar Customs imposed the following new rules & regulations for imported shipments heading to Qatar and entering through Doha's airport and Seaport:

Qatar Customs will only accept official invoices, official certificate of origin (COO) & packing lists; these are now mandatory. Shipment without these documents will not be cleared under any circumstances and shall be returned back to origin.

It is mandatory to write the HS CODE of the commodity in the official invoices and COO; otherwise shipment will not be accepted for clearance.

'COUNTRY OF ORIGIN' OR 'MADE IN' fields are mandatory for each piece, on materials, and on cartons.

The 'COUNTRY OF ORIGIN' OR 'MADE IN MARK' details on the shipment should match the information on the official invoice, COO, and on the materials (Any discrepancies will cause the shipment to be returned to the origin).

For goods originating from Europe: mention clearly on the COO the country of origin. Example: 'Country of Origin: European Community – UK'. If the products are made in 2 different countries, the country of origin should be both countries in the COO, invoice, and on the materials. Example: 'European Community – UK & POLAND'."

General Authority of Customs

P.O. Box 81, Doha, State of Qatar

Phone: (974) 4441-1149

Fax: (974) 4441-4959

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

A letter of credit initiated in Qatar is usually endorsed with transshipment clauses. It is customary in Qatar for importers to build their L/C's computations on "cost and freight (C&F)" basis, and not C.I.F. Qatari merchants prefer to have insurance coverage provided by local and international insurance companies, to cover damage in transit to the goods covered under the L/C.

U.S. Export Controls

The U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) is responsible for implementing and enforcing the Export Administration Regulations (EAR), which regulate the export and re-export of some commercial items, including "production" and "development" technology.

The items that BIS regulates are often referred to as "dual use" since they have both commercial and military applications. The Commerce Control list categories include Nuclear & Miscellaneous, Chemicals, Microorganisms and Toxins, Electronics, Computers, Telecommunications, Information Security, Sensors and Lasers, Navigation and Avionics, Marine, and Aerospace and Propulsion.

Further information on export controls is available at: BIS.GOV

BIS has developed a list of "red flags," or warning signs, intended to discover possible violations of the EAR. These are posted at: BIS.GOV

Also, BIS has "Know Your Customer" guidance at: BIS.GOV

If there is reason to believe a violation is taking place or has occurred, report it to the Department of Commerce by calling the 24-hour hotline at 1(800) 424-2980, or via the confidential lead page at: BIS.GOV

The EAR does not control all goods, services, and technologies. Other U.S. government agencies regulate more specialized exports. For example, the U.S. Department of State has authority over defense articles and services. A list of other agencies involved in export control can be found on the BIS web.

It is important to note that in August 2009, the government launched the Export Control Reform Initiative (ECR Initiative) which is designed to enhance U.S. national security and strengthen the United States' ability to counter threats such as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The Administration is implementing the reform in three phases. Phases I and II reconcile various definitions, regulations, and policies for export controls, all the while building toward Phase III, which will create a single control list, single licensing agency, unified information technology system, and enforcement coordination center.

For additional information on ECR see: EXPORT.GOV

BIS provides a variety of training sessions to U.S. exporters throughout the year. These sessions range from one- to two-day seminars and focus on the basics of exporting as well as more advanced topics. A list of upcoming seminars can be found at: BIS.DOC

For further details about the Bureau of Industry and Security and its programs, please visit the BIS website at: BIS.GOV

Temporary Entry

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

Labeling/Marking Requirements

Current laws and regulations of the Ministry of Municipality and Environment and the Ministry of Public Health require labeling and marking requirements to be honored, especially where the import of foodstuffs is concerned.

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

Qatar enforces GCC shelf-life standards through GS 150/2013 (previously GS 150/1993 and GS 150/2007), Part I and II. Part I lists products with mandatory shelf lives, while Part II lists products with recommended shelf lives. Copies of the standards may be purchased from the GSO webpage.

Production and expiry dates must be printed on the original label or container by the manufacturer. Dates cannot be added after the fact via a sticker. Products must arrive at destination with at least half the shelf-life duration remaining. The U.S. supplier should work closely with the importer to ensure compliance with local shelf-life requirements. Food labels must include product and brand names, production and expiry dates, country of origin, name and address of the manufacturer, net weight in metric units, and a list of the ingredients in descending order of importance. All fats and oils used as ingredients must be specifically identified on the label. Labels must be in Arabic only or in Arabic/English. Arabic stickers are accepted.

Prohibited & Restricted Imports

The Qatar Distribution Company is the only source for the importation of alcohol, pork, and pork products. Military and security items are forbidden unless licensed by local authorities. Narcotics, flammable and radioactive products are also banned. Any products that violate trademarks are also banned.

Customs Regulations

Qatar is a member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Customs Union which came into effect in 2003. In accordance with the GCC Customs Union, Qatar maintains a 5% tariff on a wide range of products. Basic food products such as wheat, flour, rice, feed grains and powdered milk are exempted from tariffs. The tariff on alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, pork, and pork products is 100%. Qatar also has a 20% tariff on iron bars and rods, non-alloy hot-rolled steel and 12 millimeter steel bars. Qatar maintains a 5% tariff on all textile imports. Projects funded by the Qatar Industrial Development Bank can be granted a customs duty waiver for the import of machinery, raw materials and other industrial inputs.

Standards for Trade

Overview

The Government of Qatar continues to develop its standards regime to meet internationally and regionally-recognized norms and practices, such as the International Standardization Systems Organization (ISSO). The Qatar Laboratories and Standardization Affairs is in charge of developing and conformity assessment body for Qatar. However, Qatari government ministries such as the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and Ministry of Municipality and Environment provide recommendations for standards. The Qatar Laboratories and Standardization Affairs continually develop new standards and criteria for various items and merchandize.

Standards

The only standards organization in Qatar is the Qatar Laboratories and Standardization Affairs.

NIST Notify U.S. Service

Member countries of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are required under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade to report to the WTO all proposed technical regulations that could affect trade with other member countries.

[Notify U.S.](#) is a free, web-based e-mail subscription service that offers an opportunity to review and comment on proposed foreign technical regulations that can affect your access to international markets.

Conformity Assessment

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

Product Certification

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

Accreditation

There are no accreditation organizations in Qatar.

Publication of technical regulations

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

Trade Agreements

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

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

Web Resources

Contact the Commercial Section of the [U.S. Embassy](#)

Investment Climate Statement

The U.S. Department of State's Investment Climate Statements, prepared annually by U.S. embassies and diplomatic missions abroad, provide country-specific information and assessments of the investment climate in foreign markets. Topics include: market barriers, business risk, legal and regulatory system, dispute resolution, corruption, political violence, labor issues, and intellectual property rights. Visit the U.S. Department of State's [Investment Climate Statement](https://state.gov/reports/2019-investment-climate-statements/) website. The Qatar specific ICS is found here: <https://state.gov/reports/2019-investment-climate-statements/Qatar>.

Telecommunications

[Ooredoo Group](#)

Ooredoo Group is one of the world's largest mobile telecommunication companies, with a customer base of 115 million across 10 countries, including: Algeria (33% of the market), Indonesia (22%), Iraq (37%), Kuwait (32%), Myanmar (18%), the Maldives (50%), Oman (43%), the West Bank and Gaza (30%), and Tunisia (41%). Over two thirds of Qatari residents use Ooredoo. Ooredoo Group is 68% owned by the GoQ, with the remaining share listed on the Qatar Stock Exchange and Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange.

[Vodafone](#)

Vodafone Global Enterprise division provides telecommunications and IT services to multinational corporate clients in over 65 countries, partly owned by the Qatar Foundation.

Transportation

[Qatar Airways](#)

Qatar Airways is the state-owned flag carrier of Qatar. Headquartered in the Qatar Airways Tower in Doha, it operates a hub-and-spoke network, linking over 100 international destinations from its base in Doha, using a fleet of over 100 aircraft.

[Hamad International Airport](#)

Formerly known as New Doha International Airport (NDIA), the airport opened on April 30, 2014. It has become a major international gateway to the region.

[Mowasalat](#)

Mowasalat, popularly known as the "The Transport Company" in Qatar, started its activities by providing land transport services and solutions in October 2004.

Utilities

[Kahramaa](#)

Qatar General Electricity & Water Corporation "Kahramaa" is the sole transmission and distribution system owner and operator (TDSOO) for the electricity and water sector in Qatar.

Bilateral Business Councils

[American Arab Chamber of Commerce](#)

12740 West Warren, Suite 101
Dearborn, MI 48126 USA
Phone: (313) 945-1700
Fax: (313) 945-6697
Contact: Fay Beydoun, Executive Director
Email: sbazzi@americanarab.com, faybeydoun@americanarab.com

[U.S.-Qatar Business Council](#)

1341 Connecticut Ave NW, Suite 4A
Washington, DC 20036
Phone: (202) 457-8555
Fax: (202) 457-1919
Contact: Ambassador Anne W. Patterson
Email: programs@usqbc.org

[National U.S. -Arab Chamber of Commerce](#)

1023 15th Street, N.W., Suite 400
Washington, DC 20005
Phone: (202) 289-5920
Fax: (202) 289-5938
President: Mr. David Hamod
Email: INFO@NUSACC.ORG

[Branch Offices of National U.S. -Arab Chamber of Commerce](#)

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

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

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

[Bilateral U.S. Arab Chamber of Commerce](#)

5721 Memorial Dr. Suite 206
Houston, TX US 77007
Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 571870
Houston, TX US 77257-1870
Phone: 713-880-8168
Fax: 713-880-8278
Contact: Aida Araissi, Founder and Managing Director
Email: info@arabuschamber.org, aida@bilateralchamber.org

Washington Contact Information

Trade Assistance and Promotion Office (TAPO)

[Foreign Agricultural Service \(FAS\)](#)

U.S. Department of Agriculture

Ag Box 1052
1400 Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C. 20250
Tel: 202-720-7420
Fax: 202-690-4374

Country Trade or Industry Associations in Key Sectors

[American Chamber of Commerce Qatar](#)

2nd floor, Al Ghassar Tower, St. Regis Complex, Katara
Doha, Qatar
Tel: +974 4496-819
Contact: Lisa Saad
Email: lisa.saad@amchamqatar.org

[Qatar Chamber of Commerce & Industry \(QCCI, includes International Chamber of Commerce\)](#)

P.O. Box 402, Doha, Qatar
Tel: (+974) 4455 9111
Fax: (+974) 4466 1693; 4466 1728
Contact: Sheikh Khalifa Bin Jassim Bin Mohammed Al Thani, Chairman
Email: info@qcci.org, qcci@qatar.net.qa

[Qatari Businessmen Association](#)

P.O. Box 24475, Doha, State of Qatar
Tel: (+974) 4435 3120
Fax: (+974) 4435 3834 / 4435 3847
Contact: Sheikh Faisal Bin Qasim Al Thani, Chairman
Email: qba@qataribusinessmen.org

[Country Government Offices Relating to Key Sectors and/or Significant Trade Related Activities](#)

General Authority of Customs –
P.O. Box 81, Doha, State of Qatar
Tel: (+974) 4445 7457
Fax: (+974) 4441 4959
Contact: Mr. Ahmad Al Jamal, President
Email: questions@customs.gov.qa

[Civil Aviation Authority](#)

P.O. Box 3000, Doha, State of Qatar
Tel: (+974) 4455 7333
Fax: (+974) 4455 7105
Contact: Mr. Abdullah Al-Subaey, President
Email: info@caa.gov.qa

[Ministry of Commerce and Industry](#)

P.O. Box 1968, Doha, State of Qatar
Tel: (+974) 4494 5001, 4494 5555
Fax: (+974) 4494 5000
Minister: Mr. Ali bin Ahmed Al-Kuwari

Laboratories and Standardization

P. O. Box 23277

Tel: (+974) 4413 9400 / 4413 9401

Fax: (+974) 4413 9411

Contact: Mr. Ibrahim Al Mana

Assistant Undersecretary for Laboratories and Standardization Affairs

Email: info@qs.org.qa

Ministry of Finance

P.O. Box 83, Doha, State of Qatar

Phone: (974) 4441 3300/3131

Fax: (+974) 4443 1177 / 4443 5370

Minister: Mr. Ali Sharif Al Emadi

Ministry of Energy

P.O. Box 3212, Doha, State of Qatar

Phone: (+974) 4484 6444 / 4449 1444

Fax: (+974) 4483 2024

Minister: H.E. Saad Sherida Al Kaabi, Minister of State for Energy Affairs

Department of Industrial Development:

(+974) 4484 6444 | did@mei.gov.qa

Department of Industrial Zones:

(+974) 4423 4111 | dihe@mei.gov.qa

Department of Common Services:

(+974) 4484 6444 | djs@mei.gov.qa

Department of Energy

(+974) 4484 6444 | dae@mei.gov.qa

Public Relations and Communications Unit

(+974) 4484 6577 | relation@mei.gov.qa

Ministry of Interior

P.O. Box 2433, Doha, State of Qatar

Tel: (+974) 4434 8070 / 4434 8888

Fax: (+974) 4472 7828

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Minister: Prime Minister, Minister of Interior Abdullah bin Nasser bin Khalifa Al Thani

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