

U.S. SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
U.S. CUSTOMS & BORDER PROTECTION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
SMALL BUSINESS RESOURCES



SBA Resources for Small Business Traders

Trade Tools & International Trade Hotline

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) Trade Tools site is a one-stop shop for identifying resources across the U.S. Government for small business selling internationally, including exploring opportunities in other markets, learning about U.S. trade agreements, and exploring programs and services for small businesses who want to go global and trade sustainably. It is available in English and Spanish. Trade Tools also hosts information on SBA's International Trade Hotline that provides free counseling and referrals to help small businesses export. Contact the hotline via email at international@sba.gov.

www.sba.gov/tradetools

Made in America Manufacturing Initiative

SBA's Made in America Manufacturing Initiative commits to a deeper collaboration and coordination of federal agency resources designed to: increase access to capital; improve opportunities for public and private investments in support of manufacturing in America; and help small businesses export their products on a global scale.

www.sba.gov/manufacturing

Red Tape Hotline

As part of the Made in America Manufacturing Initiative, the SBA encourages small business owners and manufacturers to share feedback and submit onerous regulations for review. If you have a concern with a federal regulation, please reach out and let SBA's Office of Advocacy know through the Red Tape Hotline. Contact the hotline via email at redtape@sba.gov.

<https://advocacy.sba.gov/hotline>

Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs)

SBA's Small Business Development Centers provide counseling and training to small businesses. SBDCs help entrepreneurs develop business start-ups and provide

informational tools to support existing businesses in their expansions. Find your local SBDC counselor to make an appointment:

www.sba.gov/sbdc

Service Corps of Retired Executives (SCORE)

Through a network of 10,000 dedicated volunteers, SCORE provides business mentoring and most services at no cost. Find a mentor specialized in your area of focus at

www.score.org/find-mentor

www.score.org

SME Trade Financing

SBA's loan portfolio features a variety of export financing products that provide lenders with up to a 90 percent guaranty, and can cover things like day-to-day operations, advance orders with suppliers, and refinancing existing debts. Find your local SBA Export Finance Manager:

www.sba.gov/local-assistance/export-trade-assistance/export-finance-managers

Commerce Resources for Small Business Exporters

The [International Trade Administration's \(ITA\) website](http://www.trade.gov) is the U.S. government resource for export promotion tools, industry competitiveness data and analysis, and global trade and investment information. Trade.gov offers a comprehensive suite of online roadmaps tailored for both new and experienced exporters, guiding small and medium-sized businesses through the export journey.

www.trade.gov

Trade Data and Analysis

Explore a wealth of trade data, innovative tools, and analysis provided by experts at ITA's Industry & Analysis unit. Gain insights to help businesses, policymakers, and other stakeholders navigate international markets, identify emerging trends, and strengthen global competitiveness.

Advocacy Center Services

Improve your chances of winning a foreign government procurement by working early in the process with the Advocacy Center. Assistance is available to U.S. businesses across industry for projects ranging from small contracts to large multi-year efforts. Each year, trillions of dollars in foreign government procurement opportunities are put out for competitive bidding.

[Report a trade barrier](#)

Foreign trade barriers are broadly defined as a foreign government policy, practice or procedure that unfairly or unnecessarily restricts U.S. exports. In U.S. trade agreements, foreign governments agree to eliminate these trade barriers and TANC works to ensure countries live up to their agreement obligations. TANC classifies foreign trade barriers within four broad types: Border Barriers, Technical Barriers to Trade, Government Influence Barriers, and Business Environment Barriers.

[How to File a scope ruling](#)

Unfair foreign pricing and government subsidies distort the free flow of goods and adversely affect American business in the global marketplace. Enforcement and Compliance, within the International Trade Administration of the Department of Commerce, enforces laws and agreements to protect U.S. businesses from unfair competition within the United States, resulting from unfair pricing by foreign companies and unfair subsidies to foreign companies by their governments.

[Export Solutions Roadmaps](#)

The Export Solutions Roadmap (<https://www.trade.gov/export-solutions>) offers online resources and tools to unlock the knowledge exporters need to begin, grow, and finance international sales. Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) new to exporting can follow a three-phased journey to export success, from business planning and negotiating sales contracts, to export financing options and shipping documents. The guided experience ensures users have the knowledge and skillsets needed to be a successful exporter. Experienced exporters can browse the most popular tools and topics exporters use every day to streamline their export processes. Topics include: researching international markets, finding buyers and partners, payments and financing, documents and shipping, U.S. and foreign regulations and standards and resolving trade disputes. Included are the business tools that active exporters use every day, including: Harmonized System (HS) product classification, Consolidated Screening List (CSL) of restricted parties, Incoterms and foreign tariffs. Businesses can also use the Global Business Navigator Chatbot, which employs AI to answer questions about exporting processes.

www.trade.gov/export-solutions

www.trade.gov/learn-how-export (new exporters)

<https://www.trade.gov/for-experienced-exporters> (experienced exporters)

<https://global-business-navigator-chatbot.trade.gov/>

Online Foreign Market Research

On Trade.gov SMEs can find a wide range of ITA trade market research resources, including interactive trade data, Country Commercial Guides on country-by-country market conditions, opportunities, regulations, and customs from U.S. Embassies worldwide, Market Intelligence articles on the latest trade opportunities and changes in market conditions, and Top Export Market Rankings for with leading markets for export success by industry.

www.trade.gov/market-intelligence

www.trade.gov/top-export-market-rankings

Identify Promising Export Markets in Minutes

The Market Diversification Tool can help you identify and compare potential markets by scoring and ranking them based on your inputs, such as your products and markets. Use this tool as a starting point in your research to explore promising export opportunities.

www.trade.gov/research-center

Country Commercial Guides

Reports on market conditions, opportunities, regulations, and business customs prepared at U.S. Embassies worldwide by Commerce Department, State Department and other U.S. agencies' professionals.

SME Participation in International Trade Events

SME's can also join ITA trade events to connect with trade experts, other U.S. businesses and service providers, and potential foreign business partners. Participation in trade shows and missions provide cost-effective ways to find new customers.

Trade Missions

With the visibility of a government-led mission and support on the ground, SMEs have a unique opportunity to develop business in foreign countries.

www.trade.gov/trade-missions

Trade Shows

SMEs can participate in domestic and international trade shows to exhibit their products or services and meet potential foreign buyers.

<https://www.trade.gov/trade-shows>

Direct Assistance Entering Markets and Finding Buyers

The International Trade Administration's network of U.S. Commercial Service offices are located in more than 100 cities across the United States. They are staffed by international trade specialists who can help SMEs develop an export strategy. Some locations include Export-Import Bank of the United States (EXIM) and SBA trade finance specialists.

U.S. Commercial Service

An SME can use the office look-up tool to find a location for free counseling or fee-based customized services to sell their products and services in international markets. These specialists offer personalized guidance and local support to help businesses succeed in international trade. The U.S. Commercial Service's eCommerce resources provide assistance with improving a business' global online presence and digital strategy.

www.trade.gov/commercial-services-offices-us

www.trade.gov/ecommerce

Rural Export Center

Our mission is to empower rural U.S. companies to thrive in international markets through actionable market intelligence and global connections. Our National REC, located in Fargo, North Dakota, specializes in conducting customized market research designed to guide rural U.S. companies toward the most opportune exporting markets.

Customized Services

Commercial Service programs serve small businesses by helping identify new customers and foreign partners. Introductory services help SMEs plan and assess prior to entering a market, including developing an export strategy, choosing the best markets, and evaluating potential business partners. For exporters already in a market, the Commercial Service can help SMEs increase foreign market brand awareness and market exposure and to find and establish relationships with potential overseas business partners.

<https://www.trade.gov/services-current-exporters>

www.trade.gov/introductory-services-exporters-plan-and-assess

<https://www.trade.gov/virtual-services>

Manufacturing Supplier Scouting

The U.S. Department of Commerce's [Supplier Scouting](#) service assists U.S. small businesses in identifying domestic suppliers with capabilities from across the country. If your small business could benefit from a no-cost national search to identify a new supplier or contract manufacturer, please complete the Supplier [Scouting Opportunity Synopsis Form](#). Instructions are available in the [Supplier Scouting Playbook](#) and upon request at Scouting@NIST.gov.

<https://www.nist.gov/mep/supply-chain/supplier-scouting>

USDA Resources for Small Business Traders

State Regional Trade Groups

The USDA Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) supports four State Regional Trade Groups (SRTGs), which in turn assist U.S. companies with creating and expanding export markets for value-added food and agricultural products. These non-profit organizations work closely with state Departments of Agriculture and offer services including:

- Exporter training and education;
- Analysis of export markets and opportunities
- Trade shows and buying missions
- Support for international marketing and product promotion

All promotional activities conducted by the SRTGs are coordinated with the USDA/FAS Washington and overseas offices. Most are funded through the [Market Access Program](#).
<https://www.fas.usda.gov/topics/getting-started/state-regional-trade-groups>

USDA Agricultural Trade Missions

FAS-sponsored international trade missions open doors and deliver results for U.S. exporters, giving them the opportunity to forge relationships with potential customers, gather market intelligence, and, most importantly, generate sales.

[Frequently asked questions](#) about our agricultural trade missions.

For more information, please contact trademissions@usda.gov.

<https://www.fas.usda.gov/topics/trade-missions>

Foreign Market Development Program (FMD)

The Foreign Market Development (FMD) Program, also known as the Cooperator Program, helps create, expand and maintain long-term export markets for U.S. agricultural products. Under the program, FAS partners with U.S. agricultural producers and processors, who are represented by non-profit commodity or trade associations called “cooperators,” to promote U.S. commodities overseas.

The FMD program focuses on generic promotion of U.S. commodities, rather than consumer-oriented promotion of branded products. Preference is given to organizations that represent an entire industry or are nationwide in membership and scope.

FMD-funded projects generally address long-term opportunities to reduce foreign import constraints or expand export growth opportunities.

<https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/foreign-market-development-program-fmd>

Emerging Markets Program (EMP)

The Emerging Markets Program (EMP) helps U.S. organizations promote exports of U.S. agricultural products to countries that have -- or are developing -- market-oriented economies and that have the potential to be viable commercial markets.

Through the EMP, FAS provides cost-share funding for technical assistance activities such as feasibility studies, market research, sectorial assessments, orientation visits, specialized training and business workshops.

The EMP supports exports of generic U.S. agricultural commodities and products, meaning projects that endorse or promote branded products or specific companies are not eligible.

<https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/emerging-markets-program-emp>

Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops (TASC)

The Technical Assistance for Specialty Crops (TASC) program funds projects that address sanitary, phytosanitary, and technical barriers that prohibit or threaten the export of U.S. specialty crops. Eligible activities include seminars and workshops, study tours, field surveys, pest and disease research, and pre-clearance programs. Eligible crops include all cultivated plants and their products produced in the United States except wheat, feed grains, oilseeds, cotton, rice, peanuts, sugar, and tobacco. Awards are for a maximum of \$500,000 per year and for projects of up to five years.

The TASC program is intended to benefit an entire industry or commodity rather than a specific company or brand. U.S. non-profit, for-profit, and government entities are eligible to apply. Proposals may target individual countries or reasonable regional

groupings of countries. Each year, FAS announces the TASC application period and criteria on its website and via Grants.gov.

<https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/technical-assistance-specialty-crops-tasc>

Quality Samples Program (QSP)

The Quality Samples Program (QSP) enables potential customers around the world to discover the quality and benefits of U.S. agricultural products. The program focuses on processors and manufacturers rather than consumers, and QSP projects should benefit an entire industry or commodity rather than a specific company or product. Projects should focus on developing a new market or promoting a new use for the U.S. product.

QSP participants obtain commodity samples, export them, and provide the recipient with guidance on how to use the samples. When a project is finished, USDA reimburses the participant for the costs of procuring and transporting the sample. Although all program participants are required to provide technical assistance to the recipients of their commodity samples, the costs for this assistance are not reimbursable.

Any U.S. private or government entity with an interest in exporting U.S. agricultural products may apply to the program. Each year, FAS announces the QSP application period and criteria on its website and via Grants.gov.

<https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/quality-samples-program-qsp>

Regional Agricultural Promotion Program (RAPP)

APP aims to diversify and expand market opportunities for U.S. food and agricultural products beyond the traditional top customers. Instead, RAPP will focus on enhancing U.S. exports to new markets in parts of the world – including South and Southeast Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Africa, and others – where the middle class is growing and the desire for high-quality food and farm products is increasing. Gaining market share in these diverse and dynamic markets will help U.S. exporters better weather global shocks and better compete in an increasingly volatile global marketplace.

RAPP funds are available to U.S. agricultural trade organizations, state regional trade groups, agricultural cooperatives, and state agencies that conduct approved market development activities to expand exports, address trade barriers, and showcase American agricultural products in new and diverse markets. [FY2025](#) RAPP funding allocations is available on the USDA website.

<https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/regional-agricultural-promotion-program>

Global Agricultural Information Network (GAIN) Reports

GAIN consists of reports compiled by FAS Foreign Service Officers and staff around the world. They provide agricultural market intelligence, insight and analysis of interest to exporters of U.S. agriculture. FAS currently generates more than 2,000 reports a year that serve as timely insights on foreign agricultural markets and export opportunities.

<https://gain.fas.usda.gov/#/home>

Export Credit Guarantee Program (GSM-102)

The GSM-102 program provides credit guarantees to encourage financing of commercial exports of U.S. agricultural products. By reducing financial risk to lenders, credit guarantees encourage exports to buyers in countries — mainly developing countries — that have sufficient financial strength to have foreign exchange available for scheduled payments.

The program is available to exporters of high-value, consumer-oriented, processed products such as frozen foods, fresh produce, meats, condiments, wine and beer; intermediate products such as hides, flour and paper products; and bulk products such as grains, oilseeds and rice.

<https://www.fas.usda.gov/programs/export-credit-guarantee-program-gsm-102>

U.S. Department of State

Direct Line for American Businesses

The Direct Line program provides a unique opportunity for American businesses, particularly small- and medium-sized enterprises, to engage directly via webcast with U.S. ambassadors overseas.

www.state.gov/direct-line-for-american-business

U.S. Customs and Border Protection Resources for Small Business Traders

U.S. Customs and Border Protection Updates and Information

The U.S. Customs and Border Protection's (CBP's) Cargo Systems Messaging Service (CSMS) is one of CBP's methods for communicating news and updates. To receive the CSMS messages via email, please register at [CBP.gov](https://www.cbp.gov).

As a service to the trade community, CBP maintains an [archive of trade-related Federal Register Notices](#) that provide the public with additional guidance.

CBP has a number of Informed Compliance Publications (ICPs) in the "What Every Member of the Trade Community Should Know About: ..." series.

www.cbp.gov/trade/rulings/informed-compliance-publications

Additional Import/Export Resources

CBP publishes [Tips for New Importers and Exporters](#) and the [Basics of Importing and Exporting](#).

Small businesses can reach out to the relevant U.S. government teams for additional information. Below are relevant inquiry points:

- Section 301 and Section 232 tariff implementation: [CBP Office of Trade](#), traderemedycbp@dhs.gov.
- International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA) tariffs: CBP Office of Trade, traderemedycbp@dhs.gov.
- Free Trade Agreements: CBP Office of Trade, fta@cbp.dhs.gov.
- General U.S. small business importation questions: Send questions to CBP Small Business Relations at cbpsbrelations@cbp.dhs.gov.

Importers and exporters looking for customs related assistance in the United States can visit help.cbp.gov. [CBP also provides Centers of Excellence Industry Specific Centers](#) with experts at each port that can be contacted with questions. Centers are aligned by 10 key industry sectors in strategic locations at Ports of Entry across the U.S. and are the strategic point of connectivity between the trade community and CBP operations.

Information on bonds and customs brokers can be found at CBP.gov at:

<https://www.cbp.gov/trade/priority-issues/revenue/bonds>

<https://www.cbp.gov/document/report/surety-names-and-codes>

<https://www.cbp.gov/about/contact/brokers-listing>

Priority Trade Issues

Priority Trade Issues (PTIs) represent high-risk areas that can cause significant revenue loss, harm the U.S. economy, or threaten the health and safety of the American people. CBP Office of Trade administers trade policy by collecting duties and enforcing remedies

to create a level playing field for American businesses. Small business can find information regarding these PTIs and how to ensure they are complying with U.S. import and export laws at:

<https://www.cbp.gov/trade/priority-issues>