



Frequently Asked Questions About Doing Business in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Are there visa requirements for U.S. citizens to travel to Bosnia and Herzegovina?

U.S. citizens possessing a valid passport do not need a visa to enter BiH for stays of up to three months while visiting for business or tourism. Stays beyond three months (education, scientific research, employment, engagement in a professional activity, medical treatment, tourism, other justified reasons, or because of marriage to a BiH citizen) require a temporary resident permit, and visitors must apply for the permit before the end of their initial three months in BiH. Foreigners must state the reason for the extended visit and submit evidence of adequate financial support for the duration of their stay in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

What are the potential sectors for U.S. exports and investment?

- **Energy Generation and Transmission Equipment** for planned construction and upgrading of hydropower plants, thermal power plants, and electrical power distribution projects. BiH is one of only two energy exporters in the region and has the potential to expand this sector.
- **Telecommunications Equipment and Services** for the expansion of existing networks including mobile, fixed line, and broadband. Telecom privatization, not currently planned, could further spur growth in this sector.
- **Transport Infrastructure Engineering and Construction Services** for the Corridor 5c highway construction project and upgrading of the existing local road and railroad infrastructure. Many of these projects are financed by international development banks.
- **Construction Equipment** to support the commercial construction needs from the activities listed above.
- **Medical Equipment** for the public health-care systems and private practices, to include sophisticated diagnostic equipment.
- **Agricultural Sector** opportunities include prospects related to meat and livestock, milk and dairy, fruits and vegetables, and fisheries.

How do I find an agent or distributor?

Finding a good agent or distributor is one of the most effective means of market entry in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Reliable and capable partners can be found, but it may take some time and effort to locate them. Local partners can be located through the Foreign Trade Chamber of BiH, which maintains a business registry. However, it is strongly recommended that the creditworthiness and local reputation of your future partner be verified before signing legal documents and/or conducting any business transactions. The U.S. Embassy offers a number of services that can assist firms in this due diligence.

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How long does it take to register a business in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

Establishing a business in BiH can be an extremely burdensome and time-consuming process for investors. The World Bank estimates that there are an average of 11 procedures, taking a total of 37 days, to complete registration of a new business (source: 2014 World Bank "Doing Business" report). Registration can sometimes be expedited if a local lawyer is retained to follow up at each step of the process. Businesses must register in each entity in which they wish to conduct operations. Certain administrative procedures can be especially time-consuming.

Which countries are major foreign investors in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

Over the past fifteen years, Austria has been the largest investor (20 percent), followed by Serbia (18 percent), Croatia (14 percent), Slovenia (11 percent), Russia (9 percent) and Germany (6 percent).

Which countries have signed free trade agreement with Bosnia and Herzegovina?

BiH has signed free trade agreements with Albania, Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo. It has preferential export regimes with the United States, New Zealand, Switzerland, Norway and Japan. In 2008, Bosnia and Herzegovina signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with the European Union, a step towards EU membership, but it has not yet entered into force.

Does Bosnia and Herzegovina have a bilateral investment treaty with the U.S.?

BiH does not have a bilateral investment treaty with the United States.

How many U.S. companies operate in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

There are approximately 50 U.S. and U.S.-affiliated companies that have established a full-time presence in the market.

Does Bosnia and Herzegovina effectively protect intellectual property rights?

The BiH Government is strengthening its intellectual property rights laws in preparation for eventual membership in the European Union and the World Trade Organization. The U.S. Government, in conjunction with local partners, has made IPR awareness within the enforcement community a priority through training programs, partnerships in campaigns run by the American Chamber of Commerce, and a recent IPR program to build the capacity of BiH's IPR Institute by improving efficiencies in the IPR application process.

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