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INVEST

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT

According to UNCTAD's [World Investment Report 2023](#), FDI inflows into Gabon totaled USD 1.1 billion in 2022, compared to 1.53 billion one year earlier. In the same period, the FDI stock was estimated at USD 16.59 billion, around 75.6% of the country's GDP. Historically, the mining, oil and gas, and wood sectors have attracted the most investment in Gabon, but foreign investment is promoted across a range of sectors, including infrastructure and ecotourism. However, FDI inflows will probably be hindered by the military coup that took place in August 2023. According to IMF data, Gabon's main investors are Mauritius, India, the USA, China, Morocco, the Netherlands, Italy, and France. In recent years, China and Morocco have gradually become significant investors in Gabon. The stock of Chinese investments in Gabon has exceeded one billion dollars. Approximately 60 Chinese companies are established on-site, including around thirty large state-owned enterprises. The main Chinese investments are targeted in the oil sector (Addax (Sinopec)), the timber sector (Chinese companies exploit 55% of the Gabonese forest), and mining, with the Huazhou Industrial and Commercial Mining Company extracting 9% of Gabon's manganese ore. Morocco, the 7th supplier to Gabon, also has investments in numerous sectors, amounting to an estimated total of around USD 600 million (data French Ministry of Economy).

The government has been actively trying to attract FDI in recent years. Its development strategy (Plan Stratégique Gabon Emergent – PSGE) aimed at developing Gabon into an emerging economy by 2025 by diversifying the country and transforming Gabon into an internationally competitive investment destination. The plan called for increased public and private investment, modernized infrastructure, and improved human capital. Recently, the public-private partnership (PPP) agricultural program (GRAINE) was launched, providing new oil palm plantations and the development of food crops. Changes in hydrocarbon legislation should also help to accelerate private investment flows. However, such progress and targets may be affected by the 2023 military coup, which caused uncertainty among foreign investors. The country has special economic zones where companies have tax advantages, preferential customs duties, and simplified customs procedures. Gabon also enjoys a relatively high purchasing power compared to other Sub-Saharan African countries. However, limited market potential, bureaucracy, weak contract enforcement, an unskilled and expensive workforce, as well as poor infrastructure all constitute barriers to FDI inflows. Lastly, Gabon ranks 136th among the 180 economies on the [2023 Corruption Perception Index](#) and 100th out of 184 countries on the latest [Index of Economic Freedom](#).

| Foreign Direct Investment | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|--|--------|--------|--------|
| FDI Inward Flow <i>(million USD)</i> | 1,717 | 1,529 | 1,105 |
| FDI Stock <i>(million USD)</i> | 13,957 | 15,486 | 16,591 |
| Number of Greenfield Investments* | 5 | 5 | 2 |
| Value of Greenfield Investments (million USD) | 2,479 | 2,120 | 209 |

Source: UNCTAD - Latest available data.

*Note: * Greenfield Investments are a form of Foreign Direct Investment where a parent company starts a new venture in a foreign country by constructing new operational facilities from the ground up.*

| Country Comparison For the Protection of Investors | Gabon | Sub-Saharan Africa | United States | Germany |
|--|-------|--------------------|---------------|---------|
| Index of Transaction Transparency* | 7.0 | 5.5 | 7.0 | 5.0 |
| Index of Manager's Responsibility** | 1.0 | 3.5 | 9.0 | 5.0 |
| Index of Shareholders' Power*** | 4.0 | 5.5 | 9.0 | 5.0 |

Source: Doing Business - Latest available data.

*Note: *The Greater the Index, the More Transparent the Conditions of Transactions. **The Greater the Index, the More the Manager is Personally Responsible. *** The Greater the Index, the Easier it Will Be For Shareholders to Take Legal Action.*

WHAT TO CONSIDER IF YOU INVEST IN GABON

Strong Points

Among the factors that make Gabon an attractive destination for FDIs, there are:

- an abundance of natural resources
- the country's strategic location along the Gulf of Guinea
- political stability
- its membership of the CEMAC and several other international organizations
- the government's plan to diversify the economy (Emerging Gabon Strategic Plan)
- the fact that Gabon is the 5th oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa; Africa's 2nd largest producer of wood, with a plan to become the world's leading producer of manganese
- no restrictions or limitations for foreign investors concerning converting, transferring or repatriating funds associated with an investment in Gabon
- free convertibility of its currency with foreign currencies by being part of the franc zone

Weak Points

Several factors still hinder Gabon's FDI inflows:

- the country's economy remains dependent on revenue generated by the exportation of hydrocarbons,
- high cost of production factors (often linked to inadequate transport and energy infrastructure),
- high unemployment and levels of poverty (around one-third of the population lives below the poverty line - World Bank, latest data available),
- burdensome bureaucratic procedures,
- a lack of a clearly established and consistent process for companies to enter the market, a small domestic market,
- relatively rigid labour laws,
- inconsistent application of customs regulations,
- high risk of corruption,

- the stock of domestic and external arrears is not cleared yet,
- reliance on imports of food and capital goods.

Government Measures to Motivate or Restrict FDI

The Gabonese government is trying to implement several reforms with the objective of diversifying the country's economy away from oil and from traditional investment partners ("Emerging Gabon 2025" plan).

Gabon has established the Investment Promotion Agency (ANPI-Gabon), which is meant to act as the gateway for investment into the country and reduce administrative procedures, costs, and waiting periods. The country also established a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) located at Nkok, which became operational in 2014. In 2017, the High Council for Investment was established to promote investment and boost the economy by increasing the dialogue between the public and private sectors.

The government encourages investments in some of Gabon's main industries (oil and gas, mining, and timber) through customs and tax incentives (for example, oil and mining companies are exempt from customs duties on imported working equipment). Gabon is also promoting FDIs across a range of sectors, particularly infrastructure and ecotourism. The new Tourism Investment Code passed in 2019 provides tax incentives to foreign tourism investors during the first eight years of operation.

Gabon's agriculture code also provides tax and customs incentives to agricultural operators (especially for small and medium-sized enterprises). In this context, land used for agriculture and farm exploitation is exonerated from fiscal tax, and all imported fertilizers and food for ranch exploitation are exempt from customs duties.

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Tenders, Projects and Public Procurement

[Global Tenders Gabon](#)

[Tenders Info Gabon](#)

[Africa Gateway Gabon](#)

Finding Assistance For Further Information

Investment Aid Agency

[National Investment Promotion Agency of Gabon](#)

Other Useful Resources

[Invest in Gabon - Gabon Special Economic Zone](#)

Doing Business Guides

[U.S. Bureau of Economic and Business Affairs' Gabon Investment Climate Statement](#)

[Doing Business Guide Gabon - World Bank](#)