

Gabon

RISK & COMPLIANCE REPORT

DATE: March 2018

Executive Summary - Gabon	
Sanctions:	None
FAFT list of AML Deficient Countries	No
Higher Risk Areas:	<p>Non - Compliance with FATF 40 + 9 recommendations</p> <p>Not on EU White list equivalent jurisdictions</p> <p>Corruption Index (Transparency International & W.G.I.)</p> <p>World Government Indicators (Average Score)</p> <p>Failed States Index (Average Score)</p>
Medium Risk Areas:	Weakness in Government Legislation to combat Money laundering
<p>Major Investment Areas:</p> <p>Agriculture - products:</p> <p>cocoa, coffee, sugar, palm oil, rubber; cattle; okoume (a tropical softwood); fish</p> <p>Industries:</p> <p>petroleum extraction and refining; manganese, gold; chemicals, ship repair, food and beverages, textiles, lumbering and plywood, cement</p> <p>Exports - commodities:</p> <p>crude oil, timber, manganese, uranium</p> <p>Exports - partners:</p> <p>Japan 23.9%, US 16.9%, Australia 11.2%, India 7.3%, China 5.4%, Spain 4.1% (2012)</p> <p>Imports - commodities:</p> <p>machinery and equipment, foodstuffs, chemicals, construction materials</p> <p>Imports - partners:</p> <p>France 28.1%, China 12.6%, US 9.4%, Belgium 5.8%, Cameroon 4.7% (2012)</p>	
Investment Restrictions:	

Gabon is actively encouraging foreign investment across a range of sectors; however the time it takes for many new entrants to finalize deals can be an impediment to increased U.S. private sector participation in the country. Foreign firms are active in the country's three main sources of income and exports: petroleum, mining, and timber. The Gabonese government is taking a more pro-active role to ensure transparency within these extractive industries through the creation of public-private partnerships and proposed revised mining, oil, and forest codes.

Any legal entity or person wishing to do business in Gabon must request prior permission from the Ministry of Economy. Foreign investors are largely treated in the same manner as their Gabonese counterparts with regard to the purchase of real estate, negotiation of licenses, and entering into commercial agreements.

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Section 1 - Background

El Hadj Omar BONGO Ondimba - one of the longest-serving heads of state in the world - dominated the country's political scene for four decades (1967-2009) following independence from France in 1960. President BONGO introduced a nominal multiparty system and a new constitution in the early 1990s. However, allegations of electoral fraud during local elections in 2002-03 and the presidential elections in 2005 exposed the weaknesses of formal political structures in Gabon. Following President BONGO's death in 2009, new elections brought Ali BONGO Ondimba, son of the former president, to power. Despite constrained political conditions, Gabon's small population, abundant natural resources, and considerable foreign support have helped make it one of the more prosperous and stable African countries.



Section 2 - Anti – Money Laundering / Terrorist Financing

FATF status

Gabon is not on the FATF List of Countries that have been identified as having strategic AML deficiencies

Compliance with FATF Recommendations

Gabon has not yet undertaken a Mutual Evaluation Report relating to the implementation of anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing standards.

US Department of State Money Laundering assessment (INCSR)

Gabon was deemed a 'Monitored' Jurisdiction by the US Department of State 2016 International Narcotics Control Strategy Report (INCSR).

Key Findings from the report are as follows: -

Perceived Risks:

Gabon is not a regional financial center. Gabon suffers from porous borders and smuggling, facilitated by organized criminal groups. Despite fiscal management reform efforts, systemic corruption persists. The embezzlement of state funds, including by politically exposed persons (PEPs), reportedly gives rise to money laundering. There is a large expatriate community in Gabon engaged in the oil and gas sector, the timber industry, construction, and general trade.

Money or value transfer services, such as hawala, are often used by those expatriates, particularly the large Lebanese community, to avoid strict controls on the repatriation of corporate profits.

The Bank of Central African States (BEAC), based in Cameroon, is a regional central bank that serves six Central African countries and supervises Gabon's banking system. BEAC's Economic Intervention Service harmonizes the regulation of currency exchanges in the member states of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community.

DO FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS ENGAGE IN CURRENCY TRANSACTIONS RELATED TO INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS TRAFFICKING THAT INCLUDE SIGNIFICANT AMOUNTS OF US CURRENCY; CURRENCY DERIVED FROM ILLEGAL SALES IN THE U.S.; OR ILLEGAL DRUG SALES THAT OTHERWISE SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECT THE U.S.: NO

CRIMINALIZATION OF MONEY LAUNDERING:

“All serious crimes” approach or “list” approach to predicate crimes: All serious crimes
Are legal persons covered: criminally: YES civilly: YES

KNOW-YOUR-CUSTOMER (KYC) RULES:

Enhanced due diligence procedures for PEPs: Foreign: YES Domestic: YES KYC covered entities: Banks, exchange houses, stock brokerages, casinos, insurance companies, lawyers, and accountants

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS:

Number of STRs received and time frame: Not available

Number of CTRs received and time frame: Not available

STR covered entities: Banks, exchange houses, stock brokerages, casinos, insurance companies, lawyers and accountants, jewelry shops, car dealers, and casinos

MONEY LAUNDERING CRIMINAL PROSECUTIONS/CONVICTIONS:

Prosecutions: Not available

Convictions: 0 in 2015

RECORDS EXCHANGE MECHANISM:

With U.S.: MLAT: NO Other mechanism: YES

With other governments/jurisdictions: YES

Gabon is a member of the Task Force on Money Laundering in Central Africa (GABAC), a FATF-style regional body.

ENFORCEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES AND COMMENTS:

The National Agency for Financial Investigation (ANIF), Gabon’s financial intelligence unit, is hampered by deficiencies in the law, which merges suspicious transaction reporting (STRs) with currency transaction reporting (CTRs). All transactions over 5,000,000 CFA (approximately \$8,200) are reported, regardless of whether such transactions are deemed suspicious by the reporting institution. Banks may report transactions to ANIF for sums under this threshold, but do so on a case-by-case basis. ANIF still lacks the staff necessary to carry out its essential functions, and existing ANIF staff members report they need more training to improve the agency’s effectiveness. In November, 2015, the Gabonese government announced the appointment of a new ANIF Director General, who will reportedly take office at the end of January 2016. During this interim period ANIF is not releasing any information on 2015 activities.

The Gabonese judicial system has been slow to process money laundering cases because the process itself is cumbersome, despite ongoing reform efforts, and because judges are not trained to hear such cases. Moreover, the judiciary remains generally inefficient and susceptible to undue influence.

ANIF conducts initial financial investigations and, if there is sufficient evidence, later refers the case to a magistrate for prosecution. ANIF reports that cases sent to the Attorney General in recent years were dropped for lack of evidence, dismissed on procedural grounds, or blocked administratively within the Gabonese government. Police inefficiency, corruption,

and impunity remain serious problems, although the government is stepping up its efforts against corrupt officials. Collection of evidence is also difficult. ANIF is working to raise awareness of money laundering, terrorist financing, and financial crimes among the judicial magistrates. In 2014, there were nine ongoing prosecutorial investigations. With international assistance, ANIF developed a strategy to combat money laundering and embezzlement in a more transparent manner, which it presented to the President and Minister of Economy in May 2015. There is no publically available information to indicate whether ANIF implemented the strategy.

In August 2015, the Gabonese government created a special court to adjudicate financial and economic crimes. In early December, Gabon's Constitutional Court declared the special court unconstitutional.

The Government of Gabon should continue working with regional and international organizations to establish a fully functioning AML/CFT regime in line with international standards.

Current Weaknesses in Government Legislation (2013 INCRS Comparative Tables):

According to the US State Department, Gabon does not conform with regard to the following government legislation: -

System for Identifying/Forfeiting Assets - The jurisdiction has enacted laws authorizing the tracing, freezing, seizure, and forfeiture of assets identified as relating to or generated by money laundering activities.

Arrangements for Asset Sharing - By law, regulation or bilateral agreement, the jurisdiction permits sharing of seized assets with third party jurisdictions that assisted in the conduct of the underlying investigation.

International Transportation of Currency - By law or regulation, the jurisdiction, in cooperation with banks, controls or monitors the flow of currency and monetary

Ability to freeze assets without delay - The government has an independent national system and mechanism for freezing terrorist assets in a timely manner (including but not limited to bank accounts, other financial assets, airplanes, autos, residences, and/or other property belonging to terrorists or terrorist organizations)

Disclosure Protection - "Safe Harbour" - By law, the jurisdiction provides a "safe harbour" defence to banks or other financial institutions and their employees who provide otherwise confidential banking data to authorities in pursuit of authorized investigations.

Criminalised Tipping Off - By law, disclosure of the reporting of suspicious or unusual activity to an individual who is the subject of such a report, or to a third party, is a criminal offense.

EU White list of Equivalent Jurisdictions

Gabon is not currently on the EU White list of Equivalent Jurisdictions

World Governance indicators

[To view historic Governance Indicators Ctrl + Click here and then select country](#)

Failed States Index

[To view Failed States Index Ctrl + Click here](#)

Offshore Financial Centre

Gabon is not considered to be an Offshore Financial Centre

US State Dept Narcotics Report

No report available

US State Dept Trafficking in Persons Report 2016 (introduction):

Gabon is classified a Tier 2 Watch List country - a country whose government does not fully comply with the Trafficking Victims Protection Act's minimum standards, but is making significant efforts to bring themselves into compliance with those standards.

Gabon is primarily a destination and transit country for West and Central African men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking and—to a lesser extent—a source country for children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking. Some victims transit Gabon en route to Equatorial Guinea. Boys are forced to work as street vendors, mechanics, or in the fishing sector. Girls are subjected to domestic servitude and forced labor in markets or roadside restaurants. West African women are forced into domestic servitude or prostitution in Gabon. Some foreign adults seek the help of smugglers for voluntary labor migration to Gabon but are subsequently subjected to forced labor or prostitution after arriving via plane or boat with falsified documents. During the reporting period, a Sao Tomean woman was subjected to domestic servitude in Gabon. Traffickers appear to operate in loose, ethnic-based criminal networks, at times involving female traffickers—some of whom are former trafficking victims—in the recruitment and transportation of victims from their countries of origin. In some cases, child victims report their families willingly gave them to intermediaries promising employment or education who instead subjected the children to trafficking. There is evidence some traffickers operate outside the capital to avoid detection by law enforcement.

The Government of Gabon does not fully meet the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; however, it is making significant efforts to do so. The government identified an increased number of trafficking victims, initiated more prosecutions than in the previous reporting period, and established two vigilance committees to monitor child trafficking in provincial capitals. Despite these measures, the government did not demonstrate overall increasing anti-trafficking efforts compared to the previous reporting period; therefore, Gabon is placed on Tier 2 Watch List for the second consecutive year. For the third consecutive year, the government did not convict any traffickers or enact a proposed amendment specifically to criminalize adult trafficking, and it decreased funding for victim shelters. The inter-ministerial child trafficking committee, which coordinates national anti-trafficking efforts, remained without sufficient funds to fulfill its mandate effectively, and there remained no such mechanism to coordinate national efforts to address adult trafficking.

US State Dept Terrorism Report 2009

Despite its lack of resources, Gabon cooperated with the United States in its efforts to combat terrorism, where possible, and participated in numerous training programs, seminars, and exercises offered by U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM). Gabon lacked the resources

necessary to protect its borders adequately and to monitor the movement of potential terrorists, especially along its unpatrolled land borders. Airfields in Gabon are unsecured and generally in need of significant security infrastructure improvements. The Government of Gabon made significant strides in improving its maritime security and restricting illegal access to the country via the Gulf of Guinea. Gabon has taken steps to upgrade security at its port facilities in Owendo, Port Mole, and Port Gentil.

International Sanctions

None Applicable

Bribery & Corruption

Index	Rating (100-Good / 0-Bad)
Transparency International Corruption Index	32
World Governance Indicator – Control of Corruption	25

Corruption in Gabon presents an obstacle for companies operating or planning to invest in the country. President Ali Bongo's government has engaged in curbing corruption, and breaking with patterns of patronage, clientelism and systemic corruption, which flourished under the former regime of Omar Bongo. Some successes have been recorded; nonetheless, some corruption investigations have been politically motivated. Corruption is still rampant in several sector of the economy, particularly with public procurement in the extractive industries. The Gabonese government has set up a strong anti-corruption legal framework, which mainly consists of the Penal Code (in French), under which passive and active bribery, gifts, embezzlement and other corruption offences are criminalized in the public sector. Enforcement has been moderate and bribery is a widespread practice. **Information provided by GAN Integrity.**

Corruption and Government Transparency - Report by US State Department

The government continues to take steps to identify and root out corruption in its own bureaucracies, contracting and procurement system, and the security forces. The government has sought the technical expertise of international organizations and corporations, including the IMF, the World Bank, the IFC, Olam, Bechtel, and Alex Stewart to audit procurement processes, make recommendations to enhance transparency, and advise on procedures to entice foreign investment. Gabon is aware of its existing capacity constraints and wants to ensure a sound, well-sequenced, and cost-efficient implementation of its plan. The government is seeking to implement anti-corruption measures and to change the way of doing business after former President Omar Bongo's 40 year rule of patronage and non-transparent management of natural resources. U.S. firms do at times report difficulty in dealing with lower levels of various ministries and in finding responsive interlocutors with which to negotiate and finalize agreements.

Since his election in 2009, President Bongo Ondimba has launched a number of reforms aimed at reducing corruption, including demoting or stripping ministers of responsibilities when corruption allegations surfaced, arresting several high-profile officials for corruption, conducting an audit of all government ministries to identify ghost workers, consolidating miscellaneous "slush" funds from ministries into the central treasury, and increasing oversight of government infrastructure projects. He is auditing the oil sector (although results have still not been published several years into the audit), and he reshuffled his cabinet in February 2012 to drop corrupt ministers. President Bongo Ondimba reshuffled his cabinet again in

January 2014, in a move he framed as reorienting his government to focus more on social issues, specifically to combat poverty.

The Commission to Combat Illicit Enrichment (CNLCEI), established in 2004 and charged with publishing quarterly and annual reports on its activities, has done little to increase transparency. Corruption is rarely, if ever, prosecuted in Gabon. As previously stated, Transparency International's 2013 Corruption Perceptions Index ranked Gabon at 106, a slight decrease from the previous year. CNLCEI identified 92 cases of potential enrichment in 2013, 42 such cases in 2012, and 100 cases in 2011. To date, no one has been brought to trial, and no trials are immediately forthcoming since the Gabonese government has not yet appointed the members of the criminal court that will be charged with investigating and hearing those cases. While the CNLCEI's leadership maintains that they are making strong progress on corruption, they do not release details of the corruption cases they are investigating.

Gabon was a candidate for the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) beginning in 2007. At its meeting in Amsterdam in June 2011, the EITI International Board decided to renew Gabon's EITI Candidate status for 18 months (until December 2012), by which time Gabon was required to have completed an EITI Validation that demonstrates compliance with the EITI rules. Gabon did not approve, publish and submit to the EITI Board a final EITI validation report by the deadline of December 9, 2012. Due to the non-respect of deadlines and the non-performance of the National EITI Committee, the International Council of the EITI voted on February 27, 2013 to exclude Gabon from the application process. While Gabon is no longer an EITI candidate country, they have the ability to re-apply in the future. Furthermore, the EITI Board President did note Gabon's progress on transparency and reforms in natural resource management, despite its failure to meet the required EITI demands. Although Gabon did not make any firm progress in 2013 towards once again becoming an EITI candidate country, in December 2013, the Gabonese Minister of Industry and Mines announced that Gabon will work with the World Bank and KPMG to develop a new action plan to restart the process of joining EITI. Despite their lack of progress, Gabonese authorities state that they are committed to the EITI principles.

As a BEAC country, the government of Gabon has a National Financial Investigations Agency (ANIF). ANIF serves to investigate domestic corruption and money laundering issues while maintaining contact and collaboration with its regional counterparts. While functional, ANIF lacks the necessary human resources to be effective in its mission. Gabon's legal system also lacks the capacity to effectively prosecute money laundering cases. The legal process is slow and cumbersome, judges are not trained to hear money laundering cases, evidence collection is inadequate, and the judiciary remains inefficient and susceptible to inappropriate influence. In June 2012, Gabon joined the Egmont Group, an international network of Financial Intelligence Units. Gabon is a signatory to the United Nations Convention against Corruption and is a member of the Central African Action Group against Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing (GABAC).

No international or regional watchdog organizations operate in Gabon, and local civil society lacks capacity to play a significant role in highlighting cases of corruption.

Section 3 - Economy

Gabon enjoys a per capita income four times that of most sub-Saharan African nations, but because of high income inequality, a large proportion of the population remains poor. Gabon relied on timber and manganese exports until oil was discovered offshore in the early 1970s. From 2010 to 2014, oil accounted for approximately 80% of Gabon's exports, 45% of its GDP, and 60% of its state budget revenues.

Gabon faces fluctuating prices for its oil, timber, and manganese exports. A rebound of oil prices from 2001 to 2013 helped growth, but declining production, as some fields passed their peak production, has hampered Gabon from fully realizing potential gains. GDP grew nearly 6% per year over the 2010-14 period, but slowed significantly in 2015 as oil prices declined. Low oil prices also weakened government revenue and negatively affected the trade and current account balances.

Despite an abundance of natural wealth, poor fiscal management and over-reliance on oil has stifled the economy. There are frequent power cuts and water shortages. However, President BONGO has made efforts to increase transparency and is taking steps to make Gabon a more attractive investment destination to diversify the economy. BONGO has attempted to boost growth by increasing government investment in human resources and infrastructure.

Agriculture - products:

cocoa, coffee, sugar, palm oil, rubber; cattle; okoume (a tropical softwood); fish

Industries:

petroleum extraction and refining; manganese, gold; chemicals, ship repair, food and beverages, textiles, lumbering and plywood, cement

Exports - commodities:

crude oil, timber, manganese, uranium

Exports - partners:

China 15.5%, Italy 7.3%, Trinidad and Tobago 7.2%, Australia 7%, Spain 6.3%, South Korea 5.4%, Netherlands 5%, US 4.7% (2015)

Imports - commodities:

machinery and equipment, foodstuffs, chemicals, construction materials

Imports - partners:

China 21.4%, France 19.6%, US 6.6%, Benin 4.7%, Netherlands 4% (2015)

Banking

The Bank of the Central African States (BEAC), headquartered in Cameroon, regulates the banking system. Overall authority for Gabon's banking system rests with the Ministry of Finance. Gabon's banking system includes one development bank known as Banque Gabonaise de Development (BGD) and five commercial banks. The BGD normally lends to small and medium sized companies. One of the five commercial banks is affiliated with a French bank (Credit Agricole), owned now by a Moroccan company, one is an American bank (Citigroup). In 2009, two new banks opened in Libreville: United Bank of Africa (UBA) of Nigeria and Eco Bank of Benin.

Commercial banks offer most corporate banking services, or can procure them from overseas. Local credit to the private sector is limited and expensive, but available to both foreign and local investors on equal terms. The country's main economic actors, the oil companies, finance themselves outside Gabon. Commercial banks have transferred excess liquidity to correspondent banks outside the region.

The Bank of the Central African States (BEAC), headquartered in Cameroon, regulates the banking system. Within the BEAC is the Banking Commission of Central African States (COBAC), which ensures the legality of the operations carried out by financial institutions. BEAC issues the currency and controls liquidity within the zone. The interest rate structure is common to all member countries of the zone. Within the CEMAC zone, the CFA franc circulates freely and may be freely converted to other currencies through the banking system.

Credit cards are used infrequently. Foreign-issued credit cards may not work in Gabon. VISA is the most universally accepted, but there is no guarantee that U.S.-issued card chips will be compatible with local vendors.

Stock Exchange

In August 2008, the Central African Regional Stock Exchange BVMAC was officially launched in Libreville. However, it is still in its embryonic stage, and currently operates only one day per week for a few hours. The Department of Economic Control and External Finance within the Ministry of Finance exert overall authority for Gabon's exchange control system.

BVMAC currently is active. In November 2009 the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group, became the first non-local financial institution to issue a Central African franc-denominated (XAF) bond.

Executive Summary

Gabon is a historically stable country located in a volatile region of the world and has significant economic advantages: a small population (roughly 1.8 million) with many well-educated elites, an abundance of natural resources, and a strategic location along the Gulf of Guinea. After taking office in 2009, President Ali Bongo Ondimba introduced reforms to diversify Gabon's economy away from oil and from traditional investment partners (mainly France), and to position Gabon as an emerging economy. In his Emergent Gabon strategic plan, he laid out a vision for sustainable development by 2025 through creating domestic industrial capacity to process primary materials and by becoming a regional leader in service industries including financial services, ICT, education, and healthcare. Gabon is also promoting foreign investment across a range of sectors, particularly in the oil and gas, infrastructure, timber, ecotourism, and mining sectors. Despite these efforts, Gabon's economy remains dependent on revenue generated by the exportation of hydrocarbons. Gabon's commercial ties with France remain very strong, but the government continues to seek to diversify its sources by courting investors from the rest of the world.

Although Gabon is taking steps towards making the country a more attractive destination for foreign investment, it remains a difficult place to do business. Foreign firms are active in the country, particularly in the extractive industries, but the difficulty involved in establishing a new business and the time it takes many new entrants to finalize deals are impediments to increased U.S. private sector investment. Although the Gabonese government is taking a more active role to ensure transparency in extractive industries, investors are still waiting for key reforms to be established in law and in practice. Gabon finalized new hydrocarbon and mining codes in 2014 and 2015. A Special Economic Zone located at Nkok began operations in September 2014. Gabon is making progress towards rejoining the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) after it failed to submit reports required to continue along the path to membership in 2013. In 2015, Gabon approved an action plan to renew its membership and appointed a president of the group that will implement the plan. Increased investment is constrained due to limited bureaucratic capacity, unclear lines of decision-making authority, a lack of a clearly-established and consistent process for companies to enter the market, lengthy bureaucratic delays, high production costs, a small domestic market, rigid labor laws, limited and poor infrastructure, a cumbersome judicial system, and inconsistent application of customs regulations.

Economic conditions in Gabon weakened throughout 2015 and into 2016 as the government adjusted its budget to account for the steep drop in oil prices. Many international companies, including U.S. firms, continue to have difficulties collecting timely payments from the Gabonese government and some companies in the oil sector are closing down operations. Since January 2016 an estimated 900 jobs have been lost in the oil and gas sector. While opportunities exist, the investment climate in Gabon will remain difficult until after the presidential election in August 2016 and the government resolves its budgetary problems.

Table 1

Measure	Year	Index or Rank	Website Address
TI Corruption Perceptions index	2014	94 of 175	transparency.org/cpi2014/results
World Bank's Doing Business Report "Ease of Doing Business"	2015	162 of 189	doingbusiness.org/rankings
Global Innovation Index	2015	Not ranked	globalinnovationindex.org/content/page/data-analysis
U.S. FDI in partner country (\$M USD, stock positions)	2014	USD -11 Million	http://bea.gov/international/factsheet/factsheet.cfm?Area=413
World Bank GNI per capita	2014	USD 9,710	data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GNP.PCAP.CD

1. Openness To, and Restrictions Upon, Foreign Investment

Attitude toward Foreign Direct Investment

Gabon's government is anxious to attract foreign direct investment. In July, 2012 Gabon released President Ali Bongo Ondimba's, Strategic Plan for an Emerging Gabon (PSGE / Plan Strategique Gabon Emergent), an ambitious blueprint for developing Gabon into an emerging economy by 2025 by diversifying the country away from its reliance on energy exports and transforming Gabon into an internationally competitive investment destination. The plan calls for increased public and private investment, modernized infrastructure, and improved human capital. The government understands that foreign direct investment will help it achieve its developmental goals.

The Gabonese government has taken several measures to strengthen public investment management and the transparency of infrastructure development. Priority sectors for the government include transportation, housing, public facilities, tourism, energy, education, health, ports, and other large infrastructure projects. The National Agency for Public Works (ANGT) was set up to manage the identification, planning, management, and implementation of large public infrastructure projects. U.S. engineering corporation Bechtel assisted the government in forming ANGT and initially ran the agency. ANGT became a legally separate organization on January 1, 2013 and on January 29, 2015 it merged with the Road Fund, the body responsible for construction and maintenance of roads, to become the National Agency for Public Infrastructure Works (ANGTI). In addition to assisting the government by executing policy for major infrastructure projects, the ANGTI's mission is to implement Gabon's national infrastructure master plan and to lower costs, guarantee quality of work, and meet deadlines. Bechtel employees continue to play a role in ANGTI's operations.

Other Investment Policy Reviews

Gabon has been a World Trade Organization (WTO) member since 1995. In June, 2013, Gabon's government conducted an investment policy review with the WTO. The government

has not conducted any investment policy reviews through the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) or the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in the past three years.

Laws/Regulations on Foreign Direct Investment

Gabon's 1998 investment code conforms to Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) investment regulations, providing the same rights to foreign companies operating in Gabon as to domestic firms. Businesses are protected from expropriation or nationalization without appropriate compensation, as determined by an independent third party. Certain sectors, such as mining, forestry, petroleum, agriculture and tourism, have specific investment codes, which encourage investment through customs and tax incentives.

Gabon is affiliated with the Organization for Business Law Harmonization in Africa (OHADA). Legislation allows foreign investors to choose freely from a wide selection of legal business structures, such as a private limited liability company or public limited liability company. The distinctions arise primarily from the minimum capital requirements and the conditions under which shares may be re-sold. Foreign investment in Gabon is subject to local law that is in many instances unsettled or unclear, and in certain cases Gabonese law may require local majority ownership of businesses. The State reserves the right to invest in the equity capital of ventures established in certain sectors (e.g., petroleum and mining). There are no known systemic practices by private firms to restrict foreign investment, participation, or control.

Although neither site is regularly updated, <http://www.en.legabon.org/invest-gabon> and <http://www.gaboninvest.org/> contain some information on investing in Gabon.

Business Registration

Gabon established the Investment Promotion Agency (ANPI-Gabon) with the assistance of the World Bank in April 2014. The ANPI-Gabon's mission is to promote investments and exports, support small and medium-sized enterprises, manage public-private partnerships, and help companies to set up. The agency is supposed to act as the gateway for investment into the country and reduce administrative procedures, costs, and waiting periods. As of April, 2016, the ANPI-Gabon was not yet fully operational.

Gabon defines micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) by ownership interest and the amount of capital invested. A Gabonese citizen must retain a 51 percent ownership interest and the enterprises are categorized as follows:

- 1) Microenterprise – up to USD 174, 000 invested;
- 2) Small enterprise – up to USD 500,000 invested; and
- 3) Medium enterprise – up to USD 1.0 million invested.

MSMEs receive a tax discount for their first two years of operation.

Industrial Promotion

There are no sectors that have formal government programs to attract investment. A Special Economic Zone (SEZ) at Nkok just outside of Libreville was originally aimed at attracting investment in the timber sector but insufficient investor interest led the administrators of the SEZ to seek out investment from investors in a broader range of sectors. The SEZ provides a

single-window business service to participants and provides new investors with beneficial fiscal incentives, including tax-free operation for 25 years, no custom duties on imported machinery and parts, and 100 percent repatriation of funds.

Limits on Foreign Control and Right to Private Ownership and Establishment

There are no limits on foreign ownership or control except for discrete activities customarily reserved for the state, including military and paramilitary activities.

Any legal entity or person wishing to do business in Gabon must request prior permission from the Ministry of Economy. Foreign investors are largely treated in the same manner as their Gabonese counterparts with regard to the purchase of real estate, negotiation of licenses, and entering into commercial agreements. There is no general requirement for local participation in investments. Many businesses find it useful to have a local partner who can help navigate the subjective factors in the business environment.

Gabon Oil Company, a state-owned enterprise created in 2011, has an automatic right to purchase a 15 percent share in any hydrocarbon contract at market price.

Privatization Program

Gabon does not have an active privatization program.

Screening of FDI

The standard practice is for the Presidency to review foreign investment contracts after ministerial-level negotiations are completed. There are instances in practice where the Presidency gets involved to push along negotiations stalled at the ministerial level. The Presidency takes a very active role in meeting with investors with the aim of ensuring that investments are in line with the strategic vision of the government's "Emerging Gabon" initiative. The lack of a standardized procedure for new entrants to negotiate deals with the government can lead to confusion and time-consuming negotiations. Moreover, the centralization of decision-making with a few senior officials who are exceedingly busy can delay the process. As a result, new entrants often find the process of finalizing deals time-consuming and difficult to navigate.

Competition Law

The relevant ministry reviews transactions for competition-related concerns.

2. Conversion and Transfer Policies

Foreign Exchange

Gabon is a member of CEMAC and the Bank of Central African States (BEAC). The other members in these organizations are Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Congo-Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea, and Chad. Gabon's currency is the franc of the Communauté Financière Africaine (CFA). The CFA is convertible and tied to the euro; EUR 1 equals CFA 656. As of April 2016, 1 U.S. dollar is roughly equivalent to CFA 575.

Foreign investors have the option of opening local bank accounts in CFA, U.S. dollars, or euros. There is no difficulty obtaining foreign exchange, with the three main commercial banks providing currency exchange services at non-prohibitive rates.

There are no legal restrictions on converting or transferring funds associated with an investment, including the inflow or outflow of funds for remittances of investment capital, earnings, profits, etc. CEMAC regulations require banks to record and report the identity of customers engaging in transactions over USD 10,000. Additionally, financial institutions must maintain records of large transactions for five years. CEMAC regulations do not stipulate a threshold amount for transactions to be reported. Under Gabonese law, however, documentation is required to substantiate the need for any foreign exchange over CFA one million (approximately USD 1,715). Transfers within the CEMAC zone are not restricted.

Remittance Policies

There are no recent changes or plans to change investment remittance policies that either tighten or relax access to foreign exchange for investment remittances. On average, the delay for remitting investment returns is between three and six months, depending on the type of contract that is signed. There is no limitation on inflows or outflows. Investors may remit on a legal parallel market so long as they justify the reasons for the transaction and respect the signed contract.

Gabon is a member of the Central African Action Group against Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing (GABAC), a Financial Action Task Force (FATF) observer organization.

3. Expropriation and Compensation

Foreign firms established in Gabon operate on an equal legal basis with national companies. Under Gabonese law, business investments that are expropriated must be adequately compensated. Compensation is determined by an independent third party. The Gabonese government has not exhibited any tendency to discriminate against U.S. investments, companies, or representatives in expropriation, nor have there been any indications or reports of incidences of indirect expropriation, such as through confiscatory tax regimes.

In December, 2013, the Gabonese government renegotiated a mining permit with a Chinese company. In June, 2006, the government awarded the China National Machinery and Equipment Import and Export Corporation (CMEC) the mining rights to the Belinga iron ore mine. In 2011, the Gabonese government asked CMEC to come up with a new proposal for the Belinga project due to lack of performance and environmental concerns. In 2012, the Gabonese government put the mining project on hold in order to complete a year-long audit. Due to ongoing environmental concerns and questions about CMEC's ability to perform regarding the terms of its contract, in December 2013, Gabon amicably reacquired the rights to the Belinga mine. In order to terminate the contract, Gabon agreed to reimburse CMEC roughly USD 34 million.

Gabon continued to audit foreign oil companies throughout 2015 over suspicions that oil companies were not fulfilling contractual obligations to the government. Many oil companies view these audits, performed by the U.K. firm Alex Stewart International, as a simple attempt to extract more money from international firms. In November, 2012, a Chinese company, Addax, lost its drilling rights to the Obangue oil field after an audit revealed a

series of breaches to the contract. In January, 2014, Addax agreed to pay Gabon approximately USD 400 million to settle the dispute. In February, 2014, Gabon demanded tax arrears of USD 805 million from France's Total S.A. The claim was settled in November of the same year for an undisclosed amount.

In April, 2015, the Gabonese began an audit of Royal Dutch Shell. The audit is ongoing and the Minister of Petroleum has claimed Shell might owe as much as USD 100 million in back taxes.

4. Dispute Settlement

Legal System, Specialized Courts, Judicial Independence, Judgments of Foreign Courts

Gabon's legal system is based on the French Civil Law model. Gabon has codified its commercial law. Regular courts handle commercial disputes in compliance with the Organization for Business Law Harmonization in Africa (OHADA). Courts do not apply the law consistently, and delays are frequent in the judicial system. Lack of transparency in administrative processes and lengthy bureaucratic delays occasionally raise questions about fair treatment and the sanctity of contracts. Judicial capacity is weak, and many government contacts underscore the need for specialized training in technical issues such as money laundering and environmental crimes. Foreign court and international arbitration decisions are accepted, but enforcement may be difficult.

Bankruptcy

Gabon has a bankruptcy law but it is not well developed. In the World Bank's Doing Business Report, Gabon ranks 120 out of 189 economies on the ease of resolving insolvency.

Investment Disputes

There are few recent cases of investment disputes involving U.S. companies. There is no pattern of investment disputes.

International Arbitration

Gabon does not have a Bilateral Investment Treaty with the United States.

ICSID Convention and New York Convention

Gabon is a member state to the International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID Convention) and a signatory to convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards (1958 New York Convention). Gabon is also a party to the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA), and OHADA, which provides an International Court of Justice and Arbitration (CCJA) common to its 16 member countries for the settlement of conflicts related to business law implementation.

Duration of Dispute Resolution – Local Courts

There is no public information available on any recent investment disputes being litigated in the local courts.

5. Performance Requirements and Investment Incentives

WTO/TRIMS

Gabon is a member to the World Trade Organization (WTO). It has not notified any measures as being inconsistent with Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMs) requirements.

Investment Incentives

Some of Gabon's main industries – including oil and gas, mining, and timber – encourage investment through customs and tax incentives. For example, oil and mining companies are exempt from customs duty on imported working equipment. The government has attempted to promote tourism in the past with the Tourism Investment Code of 2000, which provides tax exemptions to foreign tourism investors during the first eight years of operation, tax-free imports, and other administrative incentives. The Gabonese authorities continue to work on developing the country's ecotourism landscape and have signed deals with some high-end hotel chains, including the Aman Resorts Group of Singapore. To date, ecotourism exists only on a small-scale and is very expensive. Further development of the tourism sector is one of Gabon's top economic priorities.

President Ali Bongo Ondimba outlawed the export of unprocessed wood in 2009 to boost Gabon's capacity to enjoy more domestic benefits from one of its top exports. The government and Singaporean-based firm Olam set up a Special Economic Zone (SEZ) to process timber, but later expanded the mandate of the SEZ to open it to a broader range of businesses. The SEZ provides a single-window business service to participants and provides new investors with beneficial fiscal incentives, including tax-free operation for 25 years, no custom duties on imported machinery and parts, and 100 percent repatriation of funds.

Gabon's agriculture code of 2008 gives tax and customs incentives to agricultural operators with a particular focus on small and medium-sized enterprises. Land used for agriculture and farm exploitation is exonerated of fiscal tax. All imported fertilizers and food for ranch exploitation are additionally exempt from custom duties.

As a member of CEMAC, Gabon's trade with other member countries (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of Congo, and Equatorial Guinea) is subject to low or no customs duties.

Research and Development

There is no known obstacle to U.S. firm participation in government financed and/or subsidized research and development programs

Performance Requirements

There are no specific performance requirements imposed as a condition for establishing, maintaining, or expanding investment. There are no requirements for investors to buy local products, to export a certain percentage of output, or to invest in a specific geographical area. There is no blanket requirement that nationals own shares in foreign investments in Gabon or that the share of foreign equity be reduced over time, or that technology be transferred on certain terms. Nonetheless, many investors find it useful to have a local partner who can help navigate the business environment.

According to two governmental decrees, firms should obtain prior authorization from the Ministry of Labor before hiring foreigners. Pursuant to the first of these decrees, foreign workers must obtain permits before working in Gabon, and the availability of a permit for a job depends on the availability of Gabonese nationals to fill the job in question. That same decree states that quotas for the number of foreign workers may be set. A second decree states that when hiring workers, firms must give priority to Gabonese nationals. If no Gabonese worker with the appropriate qualifications can be found, this second decree states that a firm should hire a Gabonese to work along with the foreigner and, within a reasonable time, the Gabonese worker should replace that foreigner. In late 2010, the Gabonese government agreed to National Organization of Petroleum Workers (ONEP) demands to limit foreign workers in the oil sector to 10 percent of a company's workforce and to require that Gabonese occupy all executive posts. Foreign firms maintain there is a lack of qualified Gabonese workers, requiring companies to often request authorization to hire foreigners. Non-Gabonese Africans find it increasingly difficult to obtain employment authorization; non-African expatriates have less difficulty. Chinese industry in Gabon historically imports its labor force and management.

Data Storage

There is no known forced localization requirement and no known requirement for foreign IT providers to turn over source code.

6. Protection of Property Rights

Real Property

Secured interest in property is recognized, and the recording system is fairly reliable. Under the 1998 investment code, no investment can be expropriated without prior just compensation as determined by an independent third party.

Intellectual Property Rights

As a member of CEMAC and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Gabon adheres to the laws of the African Intellectual Property Office (OAPI). Based in Yaoundé, Cameroon, OAPI aims to ensure the publication and protection of patent rights, encourage creativity and transfer of technology, and create favorable conditions for research. As a member of OAPI, Gabon acceded to a number of international agreements on patents and intellectual property, including the Paris Convention, the Berne Convention and the Convention Establishing the World Intellectual Property Organization. As a member of WTO, Gabon is also a signatory of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). U.S. companies have not raised intellectual property rights concerns with the Embassy.

For additional information about treaty obligations and points of contact at local IP offices, please see the World Intellectual Property Organization's (WIPO) country profiles at <http://www.wipo.int/directory/en/>.

Resources for Rights Holders

Shana Sherry
Economic and Commercial Officer
U.S. Embassy Libreville
+241 0145 7000

SherrySY@state.gov

A list of local attorneys is available at http://libreville.usembassy.gov/attorneys_gabon.html

7. Transparency of the Regulatory System

Government policies and laws often do not establish clear rules of the game, and foreign firms can have difficulty navigating the bureaucracy. Despite reform efforts, hurdles and red tape remain, especially at the lower and mid-levels of the ministries. Lack of transparency in administrative processes and lengthy bureaucratic delays occasionally raise questions for companies about fair treatment and the sanctity of contracts. Additionally, as a former French colony, Gabon maintains strong economic ties with France. Lack of French language skills can put American or non-Francophone firms at a disadvantage.

Environment, health, and safety laws and policies are transparent and consistent with international norms, and do not impede investment. There are incidents of tax disputes between the government and international energy firms, including U.S. firms, related to audits conducted by Alex Stewart International. Many investors consider labor laws to be unusually weighted toward workers' interests.

There are no informal or non-governmental regulatory procedures in place. The government does not publish proposed laws and regulations in draft form for public comment.

8. Efficient Capital Markets and Portfolio Investment

The government encourages and supports foreign portfolio investment but Gabon's capital markets are poorly developed. The Central Africa Regional Stock Exchange (BVMAC) began operation in August 2008.

Money and Banking System, Hostile Takeovers

BEAC, headquartered in Cameroon, regulates the banking system. Gabon's banking system includes one development bank, the Gabonese Development Bank (BGD), and eight commercial banks. The BGD normally lends to small and medium-sized companies. There is one U.S. bank (Citigroup) present in Gabon.

Commercial banks offer most corporate banking services or can procure them from overseas. Local credit to the private sector is limited and expensive but available to both foreign and local investors on equal terms. The country's main economic actors, the oil companies, finance themselves outside Gabon. Commercial banks have transferred excess liquidity to correspondent banks outside the region.

9. Competition from State-Owned Enterprises

Government-appointed civil servants manage Gabonese state-owned enterprises (SOEs), which work primarily in industries including energy, extractive industries, and public utilities. While private enterprises may compete with public enterprises under open market access conditions, SOEs often have a competitive advantage in the industries in which they

operate. This is because public enterprises may receive priority over private enterprises, and typically private enterprises will pay more and wait longer for the same services and licenses. There are no specific laws or rules that offer preferential treatment to SOEs. There is no published list of SOEs.

OECD Guidelines on Corporate Governance of SOEs

SOEs generally follow OECD guidelines on corporate governance. Corporate governance of SOEs usually consists of a board of directors under the authority of the related ministry. Each ministry chooses the members of the board. The ministry does not allocate board seats specifically to government officials and may choose members from the general public. The SOEs often consult with their ministry before undertaking any important business decisions. The corresponding ministry in each sector prepares and submits the budget of each SOE each year. Independent auditors such as PricewaterhouseCoopers or Ernest and Young examine the activities of SOEs each year, conducting the audit according to international standards. Auditors do not publish their reports, but rather submit them to the relevant ministry.

Sovereign Wealth Funds

Gabon created a Sovereign Wealth Fund (SWF) in 2008. Initially called the Fund for Future Generations (Fonds des Générations Futures – FGF) and later the Sovereign Funds of the Gabonese Republic (Fonds Souverain de la République Gabonaise – FSRG), the current iteration of Gabon's SWF is referred to as Gabon's Strategic Investment Funds (FGIS – Fonds Gabonaise d'Investissements Stratégiques). As of September, 2013, the most recent report, the FGIS had a reported USD 2.4 billion in assets and was actively making investments. The FGIS has the goals of allowing future generations to share income derived from the exploitation of Gabon's natural resources, diversifying risk by investing surplus revenue, contributing to economic development, and encouraging investment in strategic sectors of Gabon's economy. Officially, 10 percent Gabon's oil revenues are dedicated to the sovereign wealth fund. Details regarding the FGIS' assets and investments are not publicly available.

10. Responsible Business Conduct

There is a general awareness of responsible business conduct (RBC) among both producers and consumers. There are no formal rules or regulations pertaining to RBC in Gabon.

Gabonese authorities state that they are committed to Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) principles. Gabon was a candidate for the EITI beginning in 2007. At its meeting in Amsterdam in June 2011, the EITI International Board renewed Gabon's EITI Candidate status for 18 months (until December 2012), by which time Gabon was required to have completed an EITI Validation that demonstrates compliance with the EITI rules. Gabon did not approve, publish and submit to the EITI Board a final EITI validation report by the deadline of December 9, 2012. Due to the non-respect of deadlines and the non-performance of the National EITI Committee, the International Council of the EITI voted on February 27, 2013 to exclude Gabon from the application process. While Gabon is no longer an EITI candidate country, it has the ability to re-apply in the future and is making progress towards rejoining the EITI. The Gabonese Minister of Industry and Mines announced in 2014 that Gabon would

work with the World Bank and KPMG to develop a new action plan to restart the process of joining the EITI. In 2015 Gabon approved the plan and appointed a president of the group that will implement it.

11. Political Violence

Violence related to politics is relatively rare in Gabon, although elections can be a time of heightened tensions. Municipal elections on December 14, 2013 were held without incident. University students have a history of holding protests to express grievances over unpaid stipends, curriculum reforms, and student expulsions (for participation in previous protests). High school and middle school students also have a history of gathering for street protests in Libreville and other cities due to public schoolteachers' strikes that periodically shut down Gabonese schools. As recently as early 2015, there were instances of students throwing rocks and police using tear gas to disperse crowds, but reports of serious injuries are rare. In one notable exception, a December 20, 2014 opposition rally resulted in violence and one confirmed death.

Partly in response to conciliatory moves from the government, including the lifting of a ban on the opposition Union Nationale party in February, 2015, the opposition adopted more moderate tactics in early 2015. As Gabon approaches Presidential elections in 2016, however, political tensions and the possibility of renewed protests might increase.

12. Corruption

The government continues to take steps to identify and root out corruption in its own bureaucracies, contracting and procurement system, and the security forces. The government has sought the technical expertise of international organizations and corporations, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, International Finance Corporation (IFC), Olam, Bechtel, and Alex Stewart to audit procurement processes, make recommendations to enhance transparency, and advise on procedures to entice foreign investment. Gabon is aware of its existing capacity constraints and wants to ensure a sound, well-sequenced, and cost-efficient implementation of its strategic development plan. The government of Ali Bongo Ondimba has sought to distance itself from the style of his father, former President Omar Bongo, known for relying heavily on the distribution of patronage and non-transparent management of natural resources during his 42 years in power. U.S. firms do at times report difficulty in dealing with lower levels of various ministries and in finding responsive interlocutors with which to negotiate and finalize agreements.

The Commission to Combat Illicit Enrichment (CNLCEI), established in 2004 and charged with publishing quarterly and annual reports on its activities, has done little to increase transparency. Corruption is rarely, if ever, prosecuted in Gabon. To date, CNLCEI has brought no one to trial.

As a BEAC country, the government of Gabon has a National Financial Investigations Agency (ANIF). ANIF serves to investigate domestic corruption and money laundering issues while maintaining contact and collaboration with its regional counterparts. While functional, ANIF lacks the necessary human resources to be effective in its mission. Gabon's legal system also lacks the capacity to effectively prosecute money laundering cases. The legal process is slow and cumbersome, judges are not trained to hear money laundering cases, evidence

collection is inadequate, and the judiciary remains inefficient and susceptible to inappropriate influence.

No international or regional watchdog organizations operate in Gabon, and local civil society lacks capacity to play a significant role in highlighting cases of corruption.

UN Anticorruption Convention, OECD Convention on Combatting Bribery

Gabon is a signatory to the United Nations Convention against Corruption and is a member of GABAC.

Resources to Report Corruption

Dieudonné Odounga Awassi
Director General
The Commission to Combat Illicit Enrichment (CNLCEI)
P. O. Box: 4044
Tel : +241 0765 7902 / +241 0244 4896
Libreville, Gabon
<http://www.cnlcei.ga.ipaddress.com>

National Financial Investigations Agency (ANIF)
Tel: +241 0176 1773
Agence Nationale d'Investigation Financière
Immeuble Arambo, Boulevard Triomphal
BP:189
Libreville, Gabon
contact@anif.ga

13. Bilateral Investment Agreements

Gabon has concluded bilateral investment treaties (BITs) with the Belgium-Luxembourg Economic Union, China, Germany, Italy, Morocco, Romania, Spain, and Switzerland. Gabon has not signed a BIT with the United States.

Bilateral Taxation Treaties

Gabon has not signed a bilateral taxation treaty with the United States.

14. Foreign Trade Zones/Free Ports/Trade Facilitation

The Gabonese government inaugurated an SEZ at Nkok near Libreville in 2011. The construction is a joint partnership between the government of Gabon and Olam, a Singapore-based corporation with interests in Gabonese timber, palm oil, and rubber. Olam has completed the infrastructure phase for the Nkok SEZ and multiple companies are actively operating there. Olam has plans to build two more SEZs: one in Port Gentil focused on chemical engineering and another in Franceville for agriculture products. All the SEZs will offer tax and customs incentives to attract foreign investors.

15. Foreign Direct Investment and Foreign Portfolio Investment Statistics

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

	Host Country Statistical source*		USG or international statistical source		USG or International Source of Data: BEA; IMF; Eurostat; UNCTAD, Other
Economic Data	Year	Amount	Year	Amount	
Host Country Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (\$M USD)	Not Available	N/A	2014	18.180	www.worldbank.org/en/country
Foreign Direct Investment	Host Country Statistical source*		USG or international statistical source		USG or international Source of data: BEA; IMF; Eurostat; UNCTAD, Other
U.S. FDI in partner country (\$M USD, stock positions)	N/A	Not Available	2014	- 11.0	http://bea.gov/international/factsheet/factsheet.cfm?Area=413
Host country's FDI in the United States (\$M USD, stock positions)	N/A	Not Available	2014	- 9.0	http://bea.gov/international/factsheet/factsheet.cfm?Area=413
Total inbound stock of FDI as % host GDP	N/A	Not Available	N/A	Not Available	N/A

*Host Country data is not available

Table 3: Sources and Destination of FDI

Foreign direct investment position data are not available for Gabon.

Table 4: Sources of Portfolio Investment

Portfolio investment data are not available for Gabon.

Section 5 - Government

Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members:

For the current list of Chief of State and Cabinet Members, please access the following - [Central Intelligence Agency online directory of Chiefs of State and Cabinet Members of Foreign Governments](#)

Legal system:

Mixed legal system of French civil law and customary law

International organization participation:

ACP, AfDB, AU, BDEAC, CEMAC, EITI (candidate country), FAO, FZ, G-24, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, ICRM, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, IFRC, ILO, IMF, IMO, IMSO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ISO, ITSO, ITU, ITUC (NGOs), MIGA, NAM, OIC, OIF, OPCW, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

Section 6 - Tax

Exchange control

Overall authority for Gabon's exchange control system rests with the Department of Economic Control and External Finance within the Ministry of Economy.

Treaty and non-treaty withholding tax rates

For further information - <http://www.en.legabon.org/>

Methodology and Sources

Section 1 - General Background Report and Map

(Source: [CIA World Factbook](#))

Section 2 - Anti – Money Laundering / Terrorist Financing

	Lower Risk	Medium Risk	Higher Risk
FATF List of Countries identified with strategic AML deficiencies	Not Listed	AML Deficient but Committed	High Risk
Compliance with FATF 40 + 9 recommendations	>69% Compliant or Fully Compliant	35 – 69% Compliant or Fully Compliant	<35% Compliant or Fully Compliant
US Dept of State Money Laundering assessment (INCSR)	Monitored	Concern	Primary Concern
INCSR - Weakness in Government Legislation	<2	2-4	5-20
US Sec of State supporter of / Safe Haven for International Terrorism	No	Safe Haven for Terrorism	State Supporter of Terrorism
EU White list equivalent jurisdictions	Yes		No
International Sanctions UN Sanctions / US Sanctions / EU Sanctions	None	Arab League / Other	UN , EU or US
Corruption Index (Transparency International) Control of corruption (WGI) Global Advice Network	>69%	35 – 69%	<35%
World government Indicators (Average)	>69%	35 – 69%	<35%
Failed States Index (Average)	>69%	35 – 69%	<35%
Offshore Finance Centre	No		Yes

Section 3 - Economy

General Information on the current economic climate in the country and information on imports, exports, main industries and trading partners.

(Source: [CIA World Factbook](#))

Section 4 - Foreign Investment

Information on the openness of foreign investment into the country and the foreign investment markets.

(Source: [US State Department](#))

Section 5 - Government

Names of Government Ministers and general information on political matters.

(Source: [CIA World Factbook](#) / <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/world-leaders-1/index.html>)

Section 6 - Tax

Information on Tax Information Exchange Agreements entered into, Double Tax Agreements and Exchange Controls.

(Sources: [OECD Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes](#) [PKF International](#))

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