

Brazil Export Kit

São Paulo & Rio de Janeiro

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1. Short description of the market

1.1 Country overview

Table 1. Brazil overview (Brazil. Encyclopedia Britannica, 2023; Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 2023)

Capital	Brasília
Currency	Brazilian Real
Largest city by population	São Paulo
Largest city my metropolitan area	São Paulo
Population (country)	~216.000 million
Land area	~8500000 km ²
Government	Federal presidential representative democratic republic
Region	South America
Language	Portuguese

Table 2. São Paulo overview (International Monetary Fund, 2023)

Area	~250 km ²
Population	~123,000,00
GDP (2022)	550 B USD
GDP per capita	10.2 K USD
Annual GDP growth	2,4%
Land area	~7,951 km ²
Value added (in % GDP 2022)	Services 69.7 % Industry 22.6 % Agriculture 2.6 %
Best known for	Agriculture, mining, manufacturing

Table 3. Rio de Janeiro overview (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics , 2023; Schneider, Geiger, & Guimarães, 2023; Britto, 2023)

Area	~1,255 km ²
Population (2022)	~ 16,054,500
GDP (2022)	\$1920.10 billion
GDP per capita 2020	R\$49,094.4
Annual GDP growth	2,9%
Trade	~ 5,384 km ²
Best known for	Oil, gas, and telecommunications

2. Economic overview

The largest economy in Latin America is Brazil. It is even the 10th largest in the world. However, this does not come without a long economic history. One can say that the recent history can be divided into three main epochs. One of economic stabilisation, one of growth and reduction in inequality and one of crisis. These times laid the foundation for Brazil's economic growth, but also highlight strengths and vulnerabilities. (Delivorias, 2022)

In the 1990s, Brazil implemented economic reforms that brought inflation under control and stabilized the economy. However, growth remained modest in this decade due to the impact of these reforms. In the 2000s, Brazil experienced a resurgence in economic growth, driven by rising commodity prices, increased consumer spending, and government social programs that lifted millions out of poverty. Between 2003 and 2010, Brazil's GDP grew at an average annual rate of 4%. In the 2010s, Brazil's economic growth was hindered by a combination of factors, including a global commodity price slump, a slowdown in China, political instability, and corruption scandals (which crippled most of the construction sector). Brazil experienced several years of economic contraction, with GDP shrinking by 3.5% in 2015 and 3.3% in 2016. Since then, Brazil's economy has had a slow recovery, with GDP growth of 2,4% in 2022.

Two years of economic crisis and several public scandals, voters elected the far-right Jair Bolsonaro as president in 2018. Bolsonaro was also running in the re-election in 2022 and has pushed for a free-market agenda. This included an overhaul of the pension system and privatisation of government assets. Him and the government also tried to tackle the two-fold challenges that COVID-19 pandemic, and Russia's invasion in Ukraine has on the economy. It is estimated that this work has been somewhat effective – unemployment and inflation are decreasing, and gross domestic products are increasing. Despite this success, challenges remain in Brazil. This includes the income inequality that is still high, as well as the rise in poverty and food insecurity. Although the relationship between EU and Brazil is strong, where there are strong trade relations in several sectors. (Delivorias, 2022)

Overall, Brazil's GDP growth history has been marked by periods of both rapid expansion and economic hardship. Despite these challenges, Brazil remains one of the largest and most diversified economies in the world, with significant potential for future growth and development.

Brazil has implemented important economic reforms over the past few decades, including efforts to reduce inflation, modernize its financial system, and improve its trade and investment climate. Recent reforms are aimed at improving the country's business environment and creating more transparent and efficient regulatory policies. These efforts can help to attract foreign investment and make Brazil more competitive on the global stage.

Moreover, Brazil is investing heavily in new technologies like renewable energy, biotechnology, and information technology, which could help it become a hub for innovation in the coming years. Additionally, the country has been investing in improving its infrastructure to support economic growth, including building new ports, airports, and highways.

3. Global trade

As EU is Brazil's second largest trading partner, they have very significant trading relationship. EU accounts for 18.3% of its total trade. The products EU primarily receives from Brazil focuses on food, beverages, and tobacco. This makes up a total of 16.3% of products imported to EU. Additionally, mineral products lands on 21.8%, and vegetable products at 17.8%. EU exports mainly machinery and appliances, chemical products, and transport equipment to Brazil. This is mainly why EU holds a significant position as the largest foreign investor in Brazil. Where the investments spread across a wide range of sectors of the Brazilian economy. In 2021, 48.5% of EU total investments towards Latin America were directed to Brazil. Looking ahead, Brazil actively negotiates for a free trade agreement with the EU. This shall be as part of the EU's Association Agreement, scheduled for 2023. Although, since the new inauguration of Brazil's election in January, this is an ongoing process. Where Brazil and Argentina have been working together to strengthen trade ties. (Directorate-General for Communication, n.d.)

Despite the wish to strengthen the trade ties in Latin America, the president holds up the EU trade deal. The reasoning is to protect Brazil's domestic industry. Brazil's president Luis Inácio Lula da Silva is still refusing to sign the Mercosur agreement, unless Brussels steps down regarding foreign competition clause. The president has expressed his desire to modify the regulations that currently hinder signatories from handing government contracts to domestic companies. Without a competitive process that allows foreign firms to participate. This creates a fresh obstacle of the process that has been ongoing since a deal was agreed in 2019. And the EU trade commissioner suggests that the EU is unlikely to support the idea of loosening competition requirements, that can reopen an agreement that took more than 20 years to complete. (Bounds & Johnston, 2023)

Today, the EU has yet to finalise the long-delayed trade treaty with the Mercosur bloc. The set date is December 6th. The president of Paraguay has expressed his frustration of the long process and means that the time has come for Europe to take a politicians stand on where they wish to have a trade deal with the four full Mercosur member nations. These nations being Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Argentina. (Stott, 2023)

4. Foreign investment

For a long time, Brazil's industrial policy was focused on attracting foreign investment, by opening its borders. This set them apart from Europe and Asia. However, in the early 1970s the expansion took a turn, as the country was pushed into stagflation, with towering levels of debt and interest rates. Only when the dictatorship led by the military ended, and democracy returned the focus shifted. To fight inflation and develop the economy. On the other hand, by now the competition was brutish, especially with China surpassing most developed markets in the world, combined. In the 1980's markets were emerging rapidly, and Brazil was too young to reap the benefits by the globalisation. This could be measured and compared with different countries' economic complicity indexes. Brazil moved from 24th, to 49th in the world, from 1998 to 2019. Despite the numbers, Brazil still made themselves competitive. Ever since 2011, the cost of labour has decreased. In comparison to Mexico, Brazil stays as one of the most cost-competitive markets regarding labour. Brazil is also an attractive country to benefit from international net-zero emission goals and sustainability megatrends. The world is moving towards net-zero, and with that the policies are increasing, such as carbon border adjustment tax. This tax then means that the goods that are produced in countries where the majority of electricity is generated from carbon-based fuels will be more expensive for producers. Countries that have majority renewable electricity shall benefit from this, with increased capital inflows. Brazil needs to improve its economy if it wishes to compete with other major countries. The country ranked quite low in both regarding ease of doing business, registering property, and starting a new business. It also ranks low regarding paying taxes and construction permits. (Nascimento, 2021)

The Brazilian Government actively supports and fosters Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) within the country. The National Investment Bank (BNDES), renowned as one of the largest development banks, plays a major role in promoting foreign investment. During the past 15 years, numerous barriers to foreign investors have been eliminated, especially in the stock market. This is due to privatization of many public companies across various sectors. On the other hand, it is important to know that certain protective measures such as taxes on imports, are implemented to work as a safeguard for the domestic market. (Lloyds Bank, 2023)

To ensure that foreign direct investments are done with compliance and transparency, it is mandatory, including capital contributors and loans, to be officially registered with the Brazilian Central Bank. For investments specifically in the securities market, registration with the Brazilian Securities Commission is also a requirement. Foreign investors are obligated to enrol in the taxpayer registry of the Brazilian Federal Revenue Office and designate a representative who resides within the country. (Dourado, et al., 2022)

In July 2023 it was even created a Congress Front to support foreign investment. (Teixeira, 2023) Brazil has double taxation agreements with Finland and Sweden but not with Estonia and Latvia. (gov.br, 2022)

4.1 What to consider if you invest in Brazil

Strong points

Advantages for FDI in Brazil:

- Extensive natural resources.
- A large middle-class and a large domestic market.
- A strategic geographic location.
- Strong influence in the other South American countries. (Santander, 2023)
- Digital business is favored by the internet (90% of population, being the 5th biggest online presence in the world) and mobile penetration (also the 5th biggest number of users worldwide) (Duarte, 2023; gov.br, 2022)
- The Brazilian economy is diversified and strongly connected to global trade networks.
- Depreciated real exchange rates offer investment opportunities in export sectors. (Santander, 2023)

Weak points

Despite being open to international trade, some of the barriers to FDI in Brazil include:

- Onerous labour laws, resulting in high costs to companies and keeping a good part of local business in the informal sector.
- High costs of production
- Insufficiently developed infrastructure – most internal logistics relies on roads, with a very poor rail grid.
- High level of regulatory risk
- High exposure to changes in commodity prices on international markets
- Shortage of qualified labour (Santander, 2023)

5. Legal environment

Brazil's legal system is based on civil law principles/system, which means that its laws are primarily codified in written statutes and regulations (it follows the Franco-German system also called "Continental European"). (Deffenti, n.d.)

Therefore, Brazil relies primarily on statute, rather than on case law – legal precedents are not binding but can still be persuasive in court decisions; except for certain 'repetitive' and 'binding' decisions issued by the Supreme/Superior Courts (see organization below).

The Brazilian Federation consist of the federal government, federal districts, municipalities, and states. In each, there is individual authority to create laws. That are defined by the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Brazil. Overall, subjects that concern the corporate law and foreign investment fall under the legislative jurisdiction of the federal government. (Dourado, et al., 2022)

The current Constitution has been enacted in 1988 (after decades of a dictatorial regime, overthrown by popular movements that were reflected in the Constitution), it is the main source of law and establish the country as a Federal Republic. It provides for a separation of powers among the Executive, Legislative and Judicial branches. (Fuentes, 2023)

Judiciary is independent, guarantees a fair trial to foreign nationals (being granted an interpreter if the party don't speak Portuguese) and consists of Federal and State courts. Usually disputes are settle by a single judge on the 'first instance', being appeals granted to the 'second instance' judged by a collegiate; after the second instance, in certain conditions (which lawyers always make sure to provide), cases may be taken to The Superior Court of Justice (STJ) and/or the Federal Supreme Court (STF), the highest courts in Brazil, being the first responsible for non-constitutional federal law matters and the later for interpreting the constitution and resolving constitutional disputes. (Dourado, et al., 2022; Fuentes, 2023)

Court disputes can be common to be very long processes as they take time to finalize, even over a decade. This is due to Brazil being a great bureaucracy nation. A lot of times the court proceedings can rely on many written materials and are very formalistic. Brazil is not affected by predominant corruption since the justice system is much more stable than in the other BRICS countries. (Deffenti, n.d.)

There are ongoing efforts to reduce judicial disputes backlog, aiming to streamline court procedures, promote alternative dispute resolution methods and enhance judicial transparency. However, progress in these areas has been slow, and challenges persist. Whilst the government states it wishes to create a more favourable business and investment environment, it still faces challenges related to corruption, complex tax systems, and political instability.

The legal system in Brazil is presidential. Where the President is the commander-in-chief. Not only for the government, but also of the armed forces and head of the state. Every fourth year the president is directly elected by the people. A consecutive re-election is allowed once. (Fuentes, 2023)

6. Business relations with Sweden, Finland, Latvia, and Estonia

6.1 Business relations with Sweden

As Brazil economy is growing, being the seventh largest country in the world, with 210 million inhabitants, new opportunities are growing with it. The rich natural resources and fertile land makes Brazil turn into a new horizon for Swedish export and trade. The keyword is change. The country has been through a few very turbulent years. With events such as trials against the nation's leaders and impeachment. However, this has led the country to turn into a whole new direction. In June 2019, The European Union-Mercosur Free Trade Agreement was confirmed. Since, this has played a great role in the development of the trade barriers. As it has made them disappear, which opened the possibilities for Swedish companies. Brazil has well-established sectors that includes mining, agriculture, food, pulp, paper and automotive. Today, Sweden has over 250 established companies. That all has proceeded through Brazilian subsidiaries or local partners. (Rentner, n.d.)

Sweden and Brazil's relationship can be dated long back and has developed over time. Machines is the most frequent Swedish export, and nowadays Brazil is in the top of destinations for exports in Latin America. This includes multinational companies such as Electrolux, SKF, ABB, SAAB, Volvo and Scania. (Team Sweden Brazil, 2022)

The latest major event happened in September 2019 when the Minister of Defence Fernando Azevedo e Silva visited Sweden unofficially. Where he took part in the delivery ceremony for the first of 36 Gripen NG fighter jets, that will join the Brazilian air force. This event was held in Linköping, where a flight exhibition was included. (gov.br , 2014)

6.2 Business relations with Finland

Brazil and Finland established their diplomatic relations in 1929. The two countries align on various international issues and share the view of global governance. Finland also supports Brazil's aspiration for a permanent seat on a reformed United Nations Security Council. As Finland's primary trading partner, Brazil plays a crucial role in bilateral trade. In 2019, the trade flow amounted to over \$680 million, with Brazil importing over \$470 million and exporting \$210 million. Cooperation in science, technology, and innovation serves as a cornerstone of the bilateral relationship. Finland, with its focus on knowledge generation and innovation, actively contributes to Brazil's research efforts, fostering coordination with productive sectors to enhance competitiveness. (gov.br, 2015)

As Brazil is one of the largest economies, it also offers numerous business opportunities for Finnish companies. It boasts a large and unified market operating under a democratic regime, with relatively low geopolitical risks. However, the performance of the Brazilian economy in 2023 is influenced by the rest of the world. This leads to new priorities by the new administration. These challenges include fiscal consolidation and tax reform, which are expected to be top priorities. The bilateral trade is characterized by complementarity, with

Finland exporting mechanical appliances, fertilizers, electrical machinery, pharmaceutical products, paper, and vehicles. Finland is also a significant source of foreign direct investment in sectors such as telecommunications, paper and forest product manufacturing, metals, packaging, and information technology. (Ulkoministeriö Utrikesministeriet, 2023)

6.3 Business relations with Latvia

The Brazilian and Latvians began their relationships in 1890, during the Latvian immigration in Brazil. Which was followed by the Latvian independence, where they established diplomatic relations in 1992. Brazil and Latvia have a long history of diplomatic relations, but their economic ties are not very strong. There are some cultural and social links between the two countries, as well as common international interests and values. However, there is need for more dialogue and cooperation, to enhance the mutual understanding and benefit of both nations. It is interesting to note that in 2019, Latvian exports to Brazil totaled 14.2 million EUR (mainly fuels, machines, and fertilizers). Whilst imports from Brazil totalled 75.4 million EUR (mainly inorganic chemicals, food, and coffee). Unlike the interwar period, Latvia has a positive trade balance with Brazil. Again, unlike the interwar period there are minor Latvian investments in Brazil (totaling some 1 million EUR). Similarly, there is some minor Brazilian foreign direct investments in Latvia to a value of 0.24 million EUR in 2019. (gov.br, 2022)

6.4 Business relations with Estonia

Estonia's independence was recognized by Brazil in 1921, and the country supported its admission to the League of Nations. (gov.br , 2014)

Among the Latin American countries, Brazil holds the position of being Estonia's most significant trade partner. Foreign Minister Urmás Paet emphasized in 2010 that Brazil's significance as one of the European Union's key partners in Latin America. He also highlighted the importance in both political and economic cooperation. Furthermore, Paet acknowledged Brazil's influential role in the broader international context. (Ministry of Foreign Affairs Spokesperson's office, 2010)

The Brazilian Embassy in Tallin opened in 2011, and both countries maintain a robust political dialogue with reciprocal support in multilateral forums. In 2019, bilateral trade between Brazil and Estonia amounted to \$38.8 million, with Brazil exporting iron ore and importing electric machinery. Cooperation in information and communication technologies (ICT) is a promising aspect of their relationship, with Brazil showing interest in Estonia's expertise in e-government, systems integration, defence, cyber security, and education. (gov.br, 2014)

7. Soft landing services

Some of the challenges that foreign (and even local) companies may face in Brazil are corruption avoidance, navigation of the tax system and compliance with the regulatory framework (especially innovative start-ups on this last one). To overcome these challenges, it is important to have local and reliable partners and professionals. Soft landing services help companies and other stakeholders to navigate the first steps in the new business environment and to connect with the local business networks. Key public soft-landing services for EU companies are:

Table 4. Soft landing services for Swedish companies

Embassy of Sweden	<p>Address: Av. das Nações, Qd. 807, Lote 29, ZIP Code 70419-900, Brasília - DF</p> <p>Telephone: +55 (61) 3442-5200</p> <p>Email: ambassaden.brasilia@gov.se</p> <p>Website: www.swedenabroad.com/brasilia</p>
Business Sweden	<p>Address: Rua Joaquim Floriano 466 - Cj. 1908, BR-04534-002 Sao Paulo, Brasília</p> <p>Telephone: +55 11 2137-4400</p> <p>Fax: +55 11 2137-4425</p> <p>Website: https://www.business-sweden.com/sv/</p>
Swedcham – Brazil	<p>Address: R. Oscar Freire, 379 - Jardim Paulista, São Paulo - SP, 01426-001, Brasília</p> <p>Telephone: +55 11 3066-2550 +55 11 3066-2598</p> <p>Email: brazil@swedcham.com.br</p> <p>Website: https://www.swedcham.com.br/en/</p>

Table 5. Soft landing services for Finnish companies

Embassy of Finland	<p>Address: Av. das Nações, SES-Qd. 807, Lt. 27, ZIP Code 70417-900, Brasília - DF</p> <p>Telephone: +55 (61) 3443-7151</p> <p>Email: consular.bra@gov.fi</p> <p>Website: finlandabroad.fi/brasil</p>
Finnish-Brazilian Chamber of Commerce	<p>Address: Al. Campinas, 463, 15o floor, ZIP Code 01404-902, São Paulo - SP Contact: Francisco Teixeira, All-round Assistant</p> <p>Telephone: +55 (11) 97087-6632</p> <p>Email: francisco.teixeira@finncham.org.br</p> <p>Website: https://www.finncham.org.br/portal/</p>

Table 6. Soft landing services for Latvian companies

The Portuguese embassy is responsible for both Portugal and Brazil business; there is also one honorary consul located in Brazil.

Latvian Embassy in Lisbon	<p>Address: Rua do Sacramento à Lapa, no 50 a 52, ZIP Code 1200-794, Lisbon</p> <p>Telephone: +351 21340-7170 // +351 21346-9045 (fax)</p> <p>Email: embassy.portugal@mfa.gov.lv</p> <p>Website: http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/portugal/</p>
Latvian Honorary Consul Ms. Patricia Viana	<p>Address: SHIS QI 13, Conj. 11, No 20, Lago Sul, ZIP Code 71365-110, Brasília - DF</p> <p>Telephone: +55 (61) 3248-2419</p> <p>E-mail: patricia@vianaturismo.com.br</p>

Table 7. Soft landing services for Estonian companies

Estonia closed its General Consulate in Brazil 2016, working with representatives that act as Honorary Counsels.

Estonian Honorary Consul Mr. Jüri Saukas	<p>Address: Av. 15 de Novembro, 314, ZIP Code 06850-100, Itapeperica da Serra - SP</p> <p>Telephone: +55 (11) 4667-1529 / +55 (11) 4667-1530</p> <p>Email: injk@terra.com.br</p>
Estonian Honorary Consul Mr. Almir Maestri	<p>Address: R. Bento Gonçalves, 700, ZIP Code 89216-110, Joinville - SC</p> <p>Telephone: +55 (47) 3025-2880</p> <p>E-mail: almirmaestri@gmail.com</p>

Table 8. Other soft-landing service

The Brazilian Export and Investment Promotion Agency (Apex-Brasil)	<p>Address: SAUN Quadra 05, Bloco C, Torre II, salas 1201 a 1701, Centro Empresarial CNC Asa Norte, Brasília – DF, PO Box 70040-250</p> <p>Telephone: +55 (61) 2027-0202</p> <p>Email: investinbrasil@apexbrasil.com.br</p> <p>Website: https://apexbrasil.com.br/br/en.html</p>
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7.1 Annual business events in Brazil

The most important business events tend to be held in São Paulo. Due to Brazil's importance in Latin America, it is safe to say that all industries and sectors promote important events in the country. Below there is a list covering a range of industries although many others are left out.

- **Feira Internacional de São Paulo (FISP):** FISP is one of the largest safety and protection trade fairs in Latin America. It focuses on occupational health, safety, and fire prevention.
- **Web Summit Rio** One of the largest technology and innovation events in the world. In 2023, Web Summit Rio brought together 21,000+ people and the companies redefining the tech industry.
- **ABF Franchising Expo:** This event is a major gathering for the franchising industry in Brazil. It brings together franchisors, investors, and entrepreneurs to explore franchising opportunities.
- **ExpoCenter Norte Trade Shows and São Paulo Expo:** Those exposition centers host various trade shows and events throughout the year, covering sectors like technology, agriculture, healthcare and more.
- **Fintech Revolution Xperience:** Considered the largest in the fintech market, aimed mainly at those who want to be up to date with content about innovation, technologies, new management models.
- **Expo Revestir:** This is the leading trade show for the tile and covers furnishings industry in Latin America. It showcases the latest trends and innovations in the construction and architecture sectors.
- **Rio Oil & Gas:** As one of the world's largest oil and gas events, this conference and exhibition attract professionals and companies from the energy sector, including oil, gas, and renewables.
- **Futurecom:** Futurecom is Latin America's largest telecommunications and technology event, bringing together industry leaders to discuss innovations in IT and telecom.
- **BIO Brazil Fair:** This is the largest organic products trade fair in Latin America, promoting sustainable and organic agriculture practices.
- **Brazil Game Show (BGS):** The largest video game and electronic entertainment event in Latin America, featuring gaming exhibitions, product launches, and esports tournaments.
- **Feira Internacional de Máquinas e Equipamentos (FEIMEC):** One of the Latin America largest events in the machinery and equipment industry.
- **FIEE Smart Future:** This event showcases innovations in the electrical and electronics industry.
- **Hospitalar:** Hospitalar is one of the largest healthcare exhibitions in Latin America, focusing on medical equipment, products, and services.
- **FENATRAN:** This international transport industry fair features the latest developments in commercial vehicles and logistics.

8. Cultural environment

In Brazil's recent history, the transformation from economic isolation to global integration was perhaps the most important change. The tenets of these changes were the renegotiation, the wide-range privatization program, the signing of the Common Market of the South Treaty, the extensive import tariff reductions, and foreign debt. Often there is a misconception of Brazil being far from the "new frontier". As well as the underestimation of the strength of the local industry, long standing presence of multinationals manufacturing and providing services, within the country. A reason for this misunderstanding is generally the excessive bureaucracy and complex legal environment. As well as the culture differences that are influenced by the large size of Brazil and regional differences. These are often the key hurdles for foreigners that are seeking to do business in Brazil. (Deffenti, n.d.)

Be aware of cultural differences and avoid appearing overly reserved or formal. Brazilians are known for their informality, so try to adapt to their more relaxed style. Also, Brazil is a culturally diverse country with influences from Africa, all Europe, and indigenous cultures. Learn about the specific regional culture where you are doing business to show respect and cultural awareness.

The Southeast Region (mostly Sao Paulo) is the country's financial and industrial hub, so business etiquette is generally more formal; punctuality is more valued and business meetings tend to be more straightforward. Rio de Janeiro also has a big economy but has a more relaxed business culture. Relationships and networking are vital, and business attire may be slightly less formal (the shoreline/beach is very inviting for them). The climate is temperate so check temperatures before traveling.

The Northeast Region has a more laid-back approach to business and relationships are crucial – it is near impossible to do business without a strong relationship with a local partner. Business meetings can be less structured, and people may arrive late. The climate is usually hot and dry.

The North Region is known for its diverse culture, with indigenous and Amazonian influences. Business practices can vary widely, but personal relationships remain essential. The climate is generally hot and humid.

Finally, the South Region has a strong European influence, resulting in a more reserved and formal business culture, but relationships are still very important to soften their natural suspicion from outsiders. Punctuality and professionalism are highly regarded. The climate is usually colder (not as Europe though).

In general, building strong personal relationships is crucial in Brazilian business culture. Brazilians prefer to do business with those they trust and feel comfortable with, which is the first barrier to foreign business. Invest time in getting to know your Brazilian counterparts and consider socializing outside of work to create empathy.

Brazilians are warm and expressive: handshakes are the rule for business environment; friends and colleagues commonly hug and kiss on one or both cheeks (depending on the country's

region; there is variations from touching the corner of closed lips to the cheek up to only a cheek-to-cheek contact with just the sound of a kiss), except between men (which is rarer and only between closest friends).

Note that some people may try to treat you more warmly even in a first business scenario as a way to soften the conversation or to gain leverage; you can embrace it as a sign of friendliness or (if you prefer to preserve personal space – a concept generally not recognized by Brazilians) you may avoid it literally keeping an arm's length distance when greeting and saying goodbye only with handshakes. The most usual way to address people is by their first name in conversations and by titles, first and surnames in writing. Maintain eye contact during conversations as a sign of engagement.

The sole lingua franca is Brazilian Portuguese. However, the sophisticated elite, highly educated at successful companies and young executives speak some English Often Spanish is also understood and can be used for foreigners to “get by”, but speaking Brazilian Portuguese or having some kind of translator is a definitive advantage. Many times, foreigners can be surprised of how little the English and Spanish language is used in Brazil, especially when visiting the outside capitals. Even so that few bureaucrats speak English. If English is spoken in any correspondence, it will most likely be ignored. So, by knowing some phrases in Portuguese can be useful and often appreciated. (Deffenti, n.d.)

While punctuality is valued in business, it's essential to be flexible as meetings may start late. However, it's advisable to be on time for business appointments, especially in larger cities like São Paulo (and remember to consider that traffic jams are common). In more relaxed environments (out of work), being fashionably late may be acceptable.

Dressing well is essential in Brazilian business culture. In formal business settings, men typically wear from suits and ties (more formal workplaces) to jeans/shirt/blazer (more informal workplaces), while women wear from conservative to casual business attire.

Brazilians say they value clear and open communication while they prefer to approach most topics indirectly, by hedges or after caveats and polite statements to ‘sweeten the pill’ – indirect language is used both to soften criticism and requests, so it's essential to read between the lines. Maintain a respectful and polite tone, it is completely acceptable to confirm if you got the correct understanding from what you've heard.

For this very reason (how communication in general works), negotiations in Brazil can be lengthy and involve multiple meetings. Be patient and prepared for extensive discussions. Bargaining is common, so be prepared for lengthy discussions and avoid rushing the process. Building trust is often more important than reaching quick agreements.

Many times, personal recommendations and connections are common and often encouraged. However, always make sure to do backgrounds checks and due diligence, because one must be aware not to cross the threshold to corruption. This is due to Brazilian businesspeople are much more susceptible, than perhaps their western counterparts. This can be due to the mistrust of

Brazil's institutions. So, a closed deal always must be in written form, even if verbal agreements are important as well. (Deffenti, n.d.)

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Canada Export Kit

Great Lakes Area

16.11.2023

Kristiina-Maria Ploom – Tehnopol

Kristin Puusepp – Tehnopol

Mehdi Attarha – Emerging Health Solutions

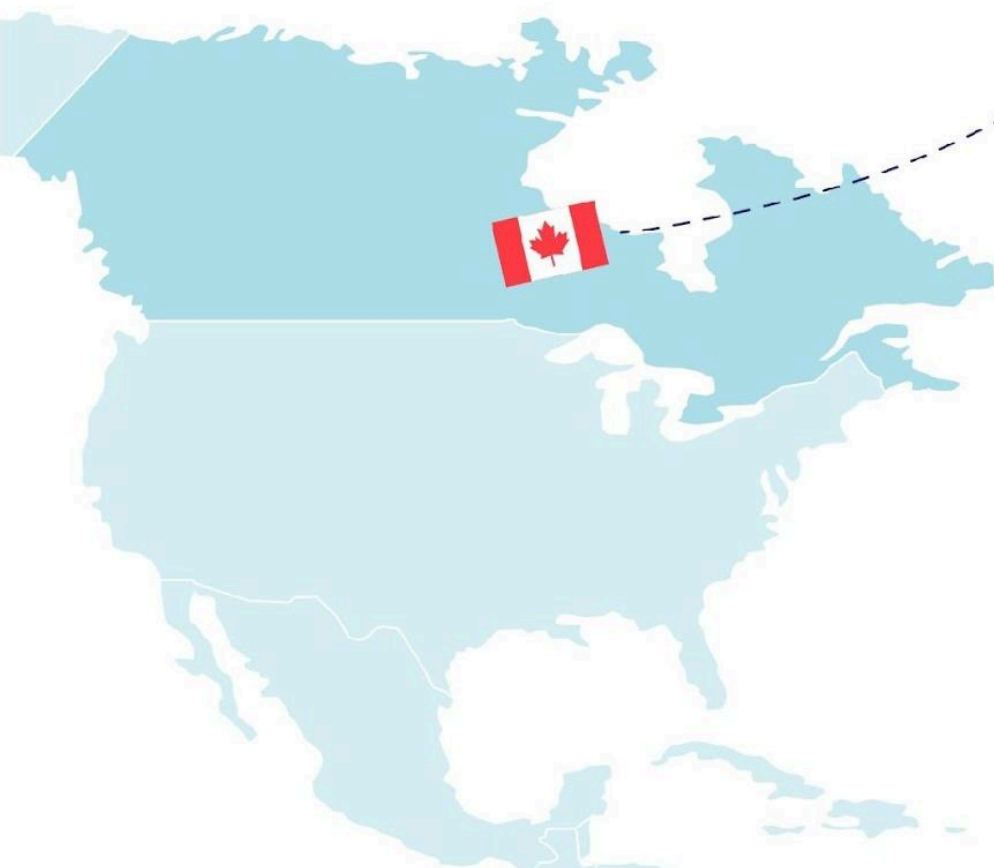


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1. Short description of the market

1.1 Country overview

Canada is a vast country, the second largest in the world, with a relatively small population of 40 million proportionate to its size and neighbour to the South. It features a range of landscapes including mountains, plains, and forests. The far north of the country is mostly frozen, making it unsuitable for farming and potentially most commercial activities.



Figure 1.1 Map of Canada (Government of Canada, 2023)

Canada, a nation comprised of ten provinces and three territories, operates under a federal system where legislative powers are shared between the federal and provincial governments. The federal government handles national interests like trade regulation, unemployment insurance, postal service, defence, and criminal law. Provinces, on the other hand, have jurisdiction over areas such as direct taxation, public lands, education, and civil and criminal justice. This distribution of powers ensures a balance between national consistency and regional autonomy (The Travel, 2023).

When engaging in business activities in Canada, it's important to recognize the potential distinct cultural influences in English-speaking and French-speaking regions of the country, which continue to be strongly shaped by their historical ties to Great Britain and the Commonwealth (Business Finland, 2023). Canada is characterized by a diverse linguistic landscape, with English and French as its two official languages. While Quebec is predominantly French speaking, with approximately 80% of its population speaking French at

home, it's the only province with French as its sole official language. New Brunswick is the only officially bilingual province, with a significant French-speaking population. Other provinces, though predominantly English-speaking, also have French-speaking communities, albeit in smaller proportions. This linguistic diversity reflects Canada's rich cultural heritage and the country's commitment to preserving both English and French as integral components of its national identity (The Travel, 2023).

Each province and territory in Canada boast distinct industries, shaping their economic landscapes. For instance, Alberta is known for its aerospace, agriculture, and natural resources sectors, while British Columbia focuses on services, construction, and healthcare. Ontario and Quebec, being larger provinces, have a wide range of industries including construction, education, financial services, and technology. In terms of technology, cities like Toronto, Ottawa, Vancouver, Montreal, and Calgary are recognized as major tech hubs, contributing significantly to the nation's tech sector growth. This industrial and technological diversity underpins Canada's economic strength, reflecting the country's vast natural resources and skilled workforce (The Travel, 2023).

Tables 1, 2, and 3 below provide some basic facts about Canada and two of its major cities, Toronto and Montreal. Table 1 (Statistics Canada, 2023) provides basic facts about Canada, Table 2 (Statistics Canada, 2023) shows basic facts about Toronto which is the largest city and metropolitan area in Canada, and in Table 3 (Statistics Canada, 2023) are basic facts about Montreal, the second biggest city in Canada.

Table 1. Canada overview

Capital	Ottawa
Currency	Canadian dollar (CAD)
Largest city by population	Toronto
Largest city my metropolitan area	Toronto
Population (Jul. 2023)	40.1 million
Land area	9,984,679 km ²
Government	Federal parliamentary constitutional monarchy
Region	North America
Language	English, French

Table 2. Toronto overview

Land area	5,905.7 km ²
Province	Ontario
Population – Greater Toronto Area (GTA) – (2023)	6.40 million (2023)
GDP (2019)	442.2 billion CAD
GDP per capita (2019)	62,873 CAD
Annual GDP growth	2.4 %
Best known for	Finance, banking, technology

Table 3. Montreal overview

Land area	4,604.3 km ²
Province	Quebec
Population (2023)	4.3 million (2023)
GDP (2019)	233.9 billion CAD (2019)
GDP per capita (2022)	48,289 CAD
Annual GDP growth	
Best known for	Aerospace, pharmaceuticals, software engineering

2. Economic overview

Canada's economy is vibrant, competitive, and with a transparent regulatory framework. Canada scores highly both on the World Bank as well as the Index of Economic Freedom. According to the World Bank's report "Ease of Doing Business" in 2019 which ranks economies based on their ease of doing business, Canada ranks 23 out of 190 economies. The standard of living in Canada is high while the country's fair legal system and governmental policies neither hinder foreign investors' interests. In general Canada's main industries are mining, insurance, telecommunications, as well as manufacturing, technology, energy, and agriculture. By GDP, Canada is the world's 8th largest economy. In 2021, its GDP per capita was estimated at \$51,987 USD. Canada is a member of the OECD, G7, and G8, making it one of the world's top ten trading nations. It is the only G7 country that has free trade agreements with every single G7 country. Altogether, Canada has 15 free trade agreements with 51 countries (Government of Canada, 2023; Business Finland, 2023).

More information about trade and investment agreements in Canada can be found in [Government of Canada](#) website.

According to the Embassy of Estonia in Ottawa (personal communication (September 21, 2023), [Invest Canada](#) can be the first contact point for business with a desire to gain a better understanding about the market in Canada. The first consultations with Invest Canada are free and can lead to reliable business partners. In Quebec the French counterpart of the same institution can be found - [Investissement Quebec](#). [Atlantic Canada Opportunitites Agency](#) and [CanNor](#) support businesses in the Atlantic and north provinces. These organizations provide certain soft-landing programs for start-ups.

Trends that have affected changes in key consumer behaviour in Canada (Business Finland, 2023):

- 1) ageing population and thus greater reliance on immigration,
- 2) pandemic,
- 3) climate change,
- 4) digitalisation,
- 5) increasing proportion of remote work,
- 6) increase in services making it the biggest industry of the country.

2.1 Main economic sectors

The accelerated adoption of **circular bioeconomy** is an important part of Canada's net-zero economy which is projected to have a market size of \$240 billion by 2030. Corporations such as IKEA, Ford Motor Company, and Lafarge Canada are increasingly including renewable-based materials in their products to meet the demand of eco-conscious consumers, the net-zero targets, and to protect the environment (Business Finland, 2023).

Cleantech: by 2050 Canada aims to reach net zero emissions. Also, adoption of technologies that address climate change and contribute to energy transition are main focal points. To that end, Canada has launched the \$8 billion **net zero accelerator fund** that, at its core, has various focuses such as **smart cities challenge**. Each municipality has a dedicated office and program towards this goal (Business Finland, 2023).

Fintech: Canada's Fintech Ecosystem is evolving. Since 2020, there is a noticeable increase in fintech-incumbent partnerships (Business Finland, 2023).

Advanced Mining & Green Mining Innovation: Canada is home to over 1,500 exploration and production companies which operate both domestically and globally. Mining companies are open to cutting-edge disruptive technologies with the aim to increase production and address sustainability (Business Finland, 2023).

2.2 Agreements and acts

Below is a list of agreements and acts that might be useful for organizations to wish to enter the market in Canada.

- 1) July 1, 2020 – **CUSMA** (new Canada-US-Mexico Agreement) entered into force, replacing NAFTA (Government of Canada, 2023)
- 2) Sept 21, 2017 – **CETA** (EU-Canada Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement) came provisionally into force. With this agreement the EU's geographical indications are safe as well EU's companies' access to the Canadian services market is improved and secured (Business Finland, 2023)
- 3) **Canada Business Corporation Act** (Justice Laws Website, 2023)
- 4) [EU - Canada free trade agreement](#)

2.3 Useful information and links

Below is a list useful links that help with starting a business in Canada:

- 1) [The free trade contract between Canada's provinces](#)
- 2) [Trademark legislation](#)
- 3) [Company registration in Ontario](#)
- 4) [Invest Ontario information about various incentive programs and services](#)
- 5) [Product import controls](#)
- 6) [The European Commission website that presents information about the criteria for each product segment together with references to EU - CA free trade agreement CETA provisions](#)
- 7) [Federal and province tenders](#)
- 8) [Public Services and Procurement Canada offers free webinars and private counselling](#)

3. Legal environment

The main source of law is the Canadian Constitution. Foreigners benefit from the same treatment as citizens of the country, including in cases of commercial disputes. Thus, Canada is considered as one of the least corrupt countries in the world (Santander Trade, 2023). For more

information about import controls, permits, licences, regulations, and intellectual property that is important to know before starting a business in Canada it is useful to check out the following websites: [Government of Canada](#), [Santander Trade](#), and [Trade Commissioner Service](#).

4. Business relations with Sweden, Finland, Latvia, and Estonia

4.1 Business relations with Sweden

The relationship between Canada and Sweden is mainly based on people-to-people ties and economic partnerships that are mutually beneficial for both. An example is the cooperation in the Arctic (Arctic Council) for the region's sustainable development or work towards strengthening transatlantic relations to protect and develop collective security and prosperity (UN, OSCE). Canada and Sweden also work closely in many economic forums where both countries are a member such as EU, OECD, WTO. Both countries cherish democratic principles, rules-based international order, multilateralism, rule of law, and human rights (Government of Canada, 2023).

Canada and Sweden have a strong commercial relationship. Comprehensive Economic and Trade agreement (CETA) was ratified by Sweden in May 2018 and since then businesses from both countries compete on mutual grounds - offer better predictability, protection, and transparency which results in significant trade flows. Thanks to CETA, most exports from Sweden to Canada are tariff free, including automotive products, chemicals and plastics, and furniture. The main articles of trade are in the sectors of mining, water, forestry, energy, oil, and gas. Also, there are opportunities in the health-tech field for business between Canada and Sweden, as the two face the same challenges in their societies, namely population that is aging and increased costs of the sector. Sweden has many digital health solutions and products to offer to Canada with the aim to provide equal healthcare to all, especially in remote areas. Since ratification of CETA, trade has increased by 19%, i.e., bilateral trade was valued at more than \$3.74 billion in 2022 (Business Sweden, 2023; Embassy of Sweden, 2023). In Table 4 the soft-landing contacts for Swedish companies in Canada are provided.

4.2 Business relations with Finland

Similarly, Canada-Finland relationship is also based on people-to-people contacts and mutual values. The countries have similar geography, climate, natural resources, and economies that are driven by tech. The bilateral commercial relationship is mainly in such sectors as science, technology, and innovation. Finland is active in developing carbon-neutral and circular economy that focuses on emerging battery technologies and forest-based bio industries that match Canada's priorities. Since ratification of CETA (August 2018), bilateral trade has increased 33.8%. In 2022 it was estimated at \$2.34 billion.

Canada and Finland work closely together in the Arctic Council. As Finland has extensive expertise and experience in the Arctic, both countries exchange best practices. On the other hand, Canada has a huge number of mining companies present in the north of Finland. Companies from Canada and Finland collaborate in fields such as winter navigation,

icebreaking, and shipbuilding (Business Finland, 2023). In Table 5 the soft-landing contacts for Finnish companies in Canada are provided.

4.3 Business relations with Latvia

Bilateral meetings and exchanges happen regularly between Canada and Latvia. Canada never recognised the Soviet annexation of the Baltic States and was the first G7 country who recognised the re-independence of Latvia in 1991. In February 2017, Latvia was the first EU Member State to ratify the CETA and the Strategic Partnership Agreement. In 2022, bilateral trade between Canada and Latvia was estimated at \$484.5 million. Canada and Latvia have strong military cooperation – there are more than 700 Canadian troops present in Latvia. Also, the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence is located in Riga to which Canada actively contributes (Government of Canada, 2023). In Table 6 the soft-landing contacts for Latvian companies in Canada are provided.

4.4 Business relations with Estonia

Similarly, Canada never recognised Estonia's occupation by the Soviet Union, and was one of the first countries that recognised the re-independence/the restored de facto independence in 1991. Estonian diaspora is approximately 24,000 people (one of the largest Estonian diasporas in the world). After 1945, when the Soviet annexation of Baltic countries, many Estonians migrated to Canada as refugees and settled there. (Government of Canada, 2023).

Canada is 29th export partner for Estonia. Since September 2017, and the ratification of CETA, the trade relations between Estonia and Canada have become more dynamic and invigorated. In 2022, goods exported to Canada was € 96.5 million. Compared to earlier years, export from Estonia to Canada decreased by 29.4%. Main trade articles include refined petroleum products (35%), prefabricated buildings, furniture, lights (10,7%), mineral products, machines, and devices, industrial goods, groceries, and beverages (yeasts) (Eesti suursaatkond, 2023).

More detailed information about export articles can be found here on the [Trading Economics](#) website. Canada has also been very interested in e-government and e-health systems, logistics and tourism sector (Statistics Estonia, 2023; Government of Canada, 2023).

The biggest cooperation between Estonia and Canada is in the field of defence through the NATO framework (e.g., NATO's enhanced Forward Presence (eFP). Canada has offered Estonian military officers English/French language training and trained their peacekeeping skills. In addition, Canadian officers have both attended the courses in the Baltic Defence College in Estonia as well as been lecturers there and assisted the development of courses of the institution since 2001. Canada has also been active in contributing to the NATO Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in Tallinn (Government of Canada, 2023). In Table 7 the soft-landing contacts for Latvian companies in Canada are provided.

5. Soft landing services

5.1 Soft landing contacts

Table 4. Soft landing contacts for Swedish companies in Canada

Embassy of Sweden in Ottawa	Address: 377 Dalhousie Street, 3 rd floor, Ottawa, ON, Canada Telephone: +1 613 244-8200 Email: ambassaden.ottawa@jgov.se Website: Embassy of Sweden
Business Sweden	Address: 2 Bloor Street West, Suite 2120, Toronto, ON M4W 3E2 Telephone: +1 416 922-8152 Email: Contact Business Sweden in Canada Website: Business Sweden
Swedish honorary consulates in Canada	Website: Embassy of Sweden

Table 5. Soft landing contacts for Finnish companies in Canada

Embassy of Finland in Ottawa	Address: 55 Metcalfe Street, Suite 850 Ottawa, ON, Canada Telephone: +1 613 288 2233 Email: Embassy.OTT@gov.fi Website: Finland in Canada
Business Finland	Address: 2 Bloor Street West, Suite 2120 ON M4W 3E2, Canada Telephone: +1 647 242-6454 Email: katerina.ioannou@businessfinland.fi Website: Business Finland
Finnish honorary consulates in Canada	Website: Finland in Canada

Table 6. Soft landing contacts for Latvian companies in Canada

Embassy of Latvia in Ottawa	Address: 350 Sparks St, Suite 1200, Ottawa, ON K1R 7S8, Canada Telephone: +1 613 238-6014 Email: embassy.canada@mfa.gov.lv Website: Embassy of Latvia in Canada
Latvian honorary consulates in Canada	Website: Latvian Honorary Consuls in Canada

Table 7. Soft landing contacts for Estonian companies in Canada

Embassy of Estonia in Ottawa	Address: 168 Daly Avenue, Ottawa, ON K1N 6E9, Canada Telephone: +1 613 789-4222 Email: embassy.ottawa@mfa.ee Website: Embassy of Estonia
Estonian honorary consulates in Canada	Website: Embassy of Estonia

5.2 Annual business events in Canada

In Canada, the most pivotal business events often take place in Toronto, given its status as the country's financial and business capital. Due to Canada's significant role in North America and globally, it's accurate to say that all industries and sectors host important gatherings and events throughout the country. Toronto is especially known for hosting events in finance, technology, healthcare, and education, among others. Other cities like Vancouver, Calgary, and Montreal also hold notable events, particularly in sectors like natural resources, technology, and arts and culture. Overall, Canada's diverse range of industries ensures a comprehensive slate of important business events that resonate both nationally and globally.

- [Collision Conference](#): One of the largest tech-conferences in North America, featuring key players in the tech industry, takes place annually around May-June in Toronto.
- [Globe Forum](#): Focused on sustainable business and environmental solutions, this conference attracts business leaders and policymakers, takes places annually in Vancouver.
- [The Art of Leadership](#): A series of leadership conferences across Canada that bring together some of the best thinkers in the realm of business leadership, takes place annually and varies by time throughout the year in various cities, including Toronto, and Vancouver.
- [Startupfest](#): An annual event for aspiring entrepreneurs and startups to network, learn, and pitch for investment. Takes place in July in Montreal
- [Canadian Innovation Exchange Summit \(CIX\)](#): This event brings together technology innovators and investors for networking, learning, and deal-making. Takes place annually in Toronto.
- [CPA Canada Conference](#): The event focuses on accounting, finance, and business strategy, bringing together professionals in the field.
- [Banff World Media Festival](#): An event that focuses on media and content creation, attracting a global audience of professionals in the field. Takes place annually in June in Banff, Alberta.

6. Cultural environment

In Canada, it's crucial to recognize and respect the unique blend of various cultures that make up Canada. There are unifying principles such as respect for diverse opinions, equality, diversity, and justice regardless of religion, ethnic background, and sexual orientation that govern business interactions across Canada. Appreciating this intricate balance between localized identities and overarching ethical norms is key to successfully navigating the complexities of doing business in Canada (Santander Trade, 2023).

Canada's culture is a mix of many ethnicities that make up the mosaic of the Society. One should expect to interact, at any level, with individuals from various ethnic and gender in any industry from various backgrounds such as Indigenous, Asian, European, Middle Eastern, South American etc. Understanding, respecting, and being able to navigate this cultural blend is a major determinant in conducting successful business in Canada (Britannica, 2023).

The U.S. and Canada enjoy a special trade relationship due to their proximity. Even though it might seem from abroad that the two are alike in terms of market access, it is important to remember that Canadians vary considerably from the Americans. For example, the business meetings in Canada tend to be more formal than those in the States, and the Canadians' communication style is usually more reserved and courteous. It is expected that presentations are short, straight to the point with facts and figures. One is expected to be polite, confident, make eye contact, to be smiling but not overly intimate and limit humorous comments. (Santander Trade, 2023; Business Finland, 2023).

Although, as already mentioned, one expects foreigners to go straight to the point in business meetings, communication in general can be moderately indirect. Thus, when coming from a culture with very direct communication style, one must pay attention to tone of voice, cultural sensitivities, level of directness as not to come across as aggressive or insensitive. There also seems to be some differences between English speaking and French speaking provinces in style of communication and formalities that require attention. (Commisceo Global, 2023).

With time, the hierarchy of Canadian businesses has flattened. Even though the managers are those making the final decision, they also consult their subordinate colleagues. According to the Bank of Santander and their webpage about Canada's business culture, it is recommended to set up a meeting between Tuesdays to Thursdays from 10 AM to 3PM. Given that punctuality is highly valued in Canada, it is better to arrive 5 to 10 minutes earlier to the meeting. Etiquette rules in Quebec tend to be more formal than in other regions of Canada. While across Canada, it is common to start meetings with a handshake followed by a personal and company introduction, one might find in a meeting with a French-Canadian colleague of opposite sex, a double-cheek-kiss as a greeting despite the level of acquaintance (Santander Trade, 2023).

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Uzbekistan Export Kit

01.12.2023

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1. Short description of the market

1.1 Country overview

World region	Central Asia
Capital	Tashkent
Largest city by population	Tashkent
Largest city my metropolitan area	Tashkent
Population (country)	~36.0 millions
Land area	~448,900 km ²
Language	Uzbek (official language), Russian (widely used), English (increasingly used in large cities)
Religion	Islam 88% (mostly Sunni), Eastern orthodox 9%, other - 3%
Geography	Double landlocked country (50% desert, 20% mountain)
Currency	Uzbekistani som, UZS
Ethnicity	Uzbek 83.8%, Tajik 4.8%, Kazakh 2.5%, Russian 2.3%, Karakalpak 2.2%, Tatar 1.5%, other 4.4%
Government	Uzbekistan is a presidential constitutional republic, in which the president is the head of state the Cabinet of Ministers is led by the Prime Minister
GDP (2022)	80,39 billion USD
GDP per capita	2,255.2 USD
Annual GDP growth	5.7%
Value added (in % GDP 2022)	Services 41.5 % Manufacturing 26.7 % Agriculture 25.1 % Construction 6.7%
Best known for	Agriculture, mining, manufacturing
Energy and Environment	CO2-Emissions: 3.6 Mt/Capita Share of renewables in electricity generation: 2.8%
International trade	Main imports - 30 699.3 million Main import partners: China 21%, Russian Federation 20%, Kazakhstan 11%, Turkey 6%, Germany 4%, others - 38% Main exports - 19 309.1 million Main export partners: Russian Federation 16%, China 13%, Turkey 8%, Kazakhstan 7%, others - 56%

2. Economic overview

Uzbekistan's economy has undergone significant changes in recent years, reflecting efforts to diversify and modernize. Historically reliant on agriculture, particularly cotton production, the country has recognized the need for economic diversification. The government, under President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, has initiated comprehensive reforms to achieve these goals.

In terms of agriculture, cotton remains a vital export, but there is a push to diversify crops and reduce dependence on a single commodity. This shift is part of broader economic reforms that aim to create a more dynamic and resilient economy.

The mining sector has gained prominence, with Uzbekistan being rich in natural resources. Gold, uranium, natural gas, and minerals are key contributors to the economy. Increased attention and investment in the mining industry, particularly gold production, underscore the country's efforts to harness its resource potential.

Improving the investment climate is a key focus. The government has taken measures to liberalize the foreign exchange market, streamline business regulations, and encourage foreign direct investment. These steps are intended to attract capital, foster economic growth, and create a more business-friendly environment.

Infrastructure development is a priority, with investments in transportation and energy. Projects include the enhancement of road and rail networks, as well as improvements in energy infrastructure, such as power generation and distribution.

The labour force, characterized by a large and relatively young population, is undergoing improvements in education and vocational training. Aligning the workforce with the demands of a modern and diversified economy is crucial for sustained development.

Uzbekistan's strategic location positions it as a potential hub for regional trade. Strengthening diplomatic ties and improving trade relations with neighbouring countries and beyond are part of the country's foreign policy agenda.

Recognizing the tourism potential of its rich historical and cultural heritage, Uzbekistan has invested in the tourism sector. Efforts to promote historical sites aim to attract international visitors and diversify revenue streams.

Political changes, including the transition from Islam Karimov to Shavkat Mirziyoyev, have marked a new era. Mirziyoyev's presidency has been associated with a more open approach to economic and political reforms.

Challenges persist, including corruption, bureaucratic hurdles, and the need for further institutional reforms. Addressing these challenges is crucial for maintaining momentum in economic growth.

In conclusion, Uzbekistan's economic landscape is evolving, driven by comprehensive reforms and a commitment to diversification. Ongoing efforts in infrastructure, education, and foreign relations position the country for potential growth and development in the coming years.

3. Global trade

Uzbekistan actively engages in global trade, contributing to its economic activities and development. In June 2019, Uzbekistan expressed new interest and commitment to join WTO in near future. The country trades with a diverse set of partners, including neighbouring countries and those further afield. Key trade partners include Russia, China (Uzbekistan's trade with China and Russia accounts for a share of 40,8% of Uzbekistan's total trade), Kazakhstan, Turkey, South Korea, and the European Union. As a member of regional organizations like the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), Uzbekistan benefits from trade agreements with countries within these frameworks.

Total trade with the EU amounted to € 2,770 million in 2021, which makes the EU the 3rd most important trading partner for Uzbekistan. The EU accounts for a share of 9% of Uzbekistan's total trade. Uzbekistan primarily exports products such as textiles, agricultural products, and minerals. The EU, in turn, exports machinery, equipment, and manufactured goods to Uzbekistan.

Uzbekistan's exports comprise natural resources, textiles, agricultural products, machinery, and chemicals (gold, refined copper, petroleum gas, cotton, fresh and dried grapes, apricots, and peaches). Notably, the country is a significant exporter of cotton and natural gas. On the import side, Uzbekistan brings in various goods, including machinery, equipment, chemicals, food products, and consumer goods, to meet domestic demand.

The trade balance of Uzbekistan can vary based on factors such as global commodity prices, demand for its exports, and economic conditions in trading partner countries. The country actively pursues economic reforms to attract foreign investment and improve its trade environment. Measures such as the liberalization of the foreign exchange market and streamlining business regulations contribute to this effort.

Investments in transportation infrastructure, including roads and railways, facilitate the movement of goods for international trade. Uzbekistan is working to diversify its exports beyond traditional sectors like cotton, promoting value-added industries and non-commodity exports to enhance competitiveness.

Uzbekistan, like other nations, faces global economic challenges that can impact trade dynamics, including fluctuations in commodity prices, changes in demand, and geopolitical events. The government actively participates in trade promotion activities, engaging in diplomatic efforts and participating in international trade fairs.

The country embraces digitalization and e-commerce as tools to facilitate international trade, providing businesses with accessible platforms to connect with global markets. Ongoing efforts in these areas, coupled with diplomatic initiatives and infrastructure development, position Uzbekistan as an active participant in the global trade landscape.

4. Foreign investment

Uzbekistan has actively pursued foreign investment through a series of comprehensive economic reforms aimed at creating a more favorable environment for both domestic and international investors. These reforms, initiated under the leadership of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, focus on various aspects to attract and protect foreign investments. Here is an overview:

1. Economic Reforms:

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's economic reforms have been pivotal in liberalizing and modernizing the Uzbek economy. These reforms aim to reduce bureaucracy, streamline administrative processes, and improve the overall business environment.

2. Liberalization of the Foreign Exchange Market:

Uzbekistan has undertaken significant steps to liberalize the foreign exchange market. These measures include increasing currency convertibility, providing businesses with more flexibility in managing foreign exchange transactions.

3. Business Environment Enhancement:

The government has focused on improving the business environment by reducing bureaucratic hurdles and enhancing the rule of law. These efforts are designed to make Uzbekistan more attractive to both domestic and foreign investors.

4. Investment Protection:

Uzbekistan has strengthened legal frameworks to protect foreign investments. The government aims to provide a transparent and predictable legal environment, ensuring the rights of investors are safeguarded.

5. Privatization:

Uzbekistan has explored privatization of state-owned enterprises, presenting new opportunities for private and foreign investors to participate in various sectors of the economy.

6. Sectoral Opportunities:

The country has identified key sectors for foreign investment, including agriculture, energy, manufacturing, infrastructure, and information technology. This diversification strategy aims to attract investments contributing to sustainable development.

7. Investment Forums and Promotion:

Uzbekistan actively participates in international investment forums and events to showcase opportunities within the country. These forums serve as platforms for networking and presenting the investment potential of Uzbekistan to a global audience.

8. Special Economic Zones (SEZs):

Special Economic Zones have been established to attract foreign investment by offering specific incentives and favorable conditions for businesses. These zones stimulate economic activity and technological innovation.

9. Infrastructure Development:

Investments in infrastructure development, including transportation, energy, and telecommunications, form a crucial part of Uzbekistan's strategy to enhance its attractiveness for foreign investors.

10. Investment Protection Treaties:

Uzbekistan has entered into bilateral and multilateral investment protection treaties with various countries, providing legal assurances and dispute resolution mechanisms for foreign investors.

11. Digitalization and E-Government:

The government has invested in digitalization and e-government services to streamline administrative processes, enhance transparency, and simplify procedures for investors.

12. Ongoing Reforms:

Uzbekistan continues to assess and implement further reforms based on feedback from investors and changes in the global economic landscape.

4.1 What to consider if you invest in Uzbekistan

Strong points

Investing in Uzbekistan can be an attractive proposition due to several factors that contribute to the country's economic potential and business environment. Here are some strong points to consider when contemplating investments in Uzbekistan:

1. Economic Reforms:

Uzbekistan has undertaken significant economic reforms, including the liberalization of the foreign exchange market and efforts to reduce bureaucratic hurdles. These reforms are aimed at creating a more investor-friendly environment.

2. Diversified Economy:

The country's economy is diverse, with opportunities in various sectors such as agriculture, energy, manufacturing, infrastructure, and information technology. This diversification can provide investors with a range of options based on their interests and expertise.

3. Strategic Location:

Uzbekistan's strategic location in Central Asia makes it a potential hub for regional trade and economic cooperation. Proximity to major markets in Asia and Europe can be advantageous for businesses engaged in international trade.

4. Natural Resources:

Uzbekistan is rich in natural resources, including gold, uranium, natural gas, and minerals. The availability of these resources can be attractive for investors in industries such as mining and energy.

5. Special Economic Zones (SEZs):

The establishment of Special Economic Zones provides investors with specific incentives and favorable conditions. These zones aim to stimulate economic activity and innovation, offering a conducive environment for businesses.

6. Investment Protection Measures:

Uzbekistan has implemented measures to enhance the protection of foreign investments. A transparent legal framework and dispute resolution mechanisms contribute to creating a secure environment for investors.

7. Infrastructure Development:

The government is investing in infrastructure projects, including transportation, energy, and telecommunications. This focus on infrastructure development can benefit businesses by improving connectivity and logistical efficiency.

8. Digitalization and E-Government Services:

The ongoing efforts in digitalization and e-government services streamline administrative processes, making it easier for businesses to operate. This can enhance efficiency and reduce red tape.

9. Potential for Privatization:

Uzbekistan has explored privatization of state-owned enterprises, presenting opportunities for private and foreign investors to participate in various sectors of the economy.

10. Investment Forums and Promotion:

Uzbekistan actively participates in international investment forums, showcasing opportunities and networking with potential investors. This global outreach helps attract foreign capital and expertise.

11. Young and Growing Population:

Uzbekistan has a relatively young and growing population, providing a potential demographic dividend. A skilled and expanding workforce can contribute to the success of businesses operating in the country.

12. Tourism Potential:

The country's rich historical and cultural heritage, including ancient Silk Road cities, presents opportunities in the tourism sector. Investments in hospitality and related industries can capitalize on the growing interest in Uzbekistan as a tourist destination.

While these factors highlight the positive aspects, it's essential for investors to conduct thorough due diligence, stay informed about the latest developments, and seek professional advice to make informed investment decisions. Additionally, considering potential challenges and risks is crucial for a comprehensive evaluation of investment opportunities.

Weak points

1. Bureaucracy and Administrative Hurdles:

Despite ongoing reforms, bureaucratic processes and administrative hurdles can still pose challenges for businesses. Investors may encounter delays and complexities in obtaining permits and approvals.

2. Corruption Risks:

Corruption has been a historical challenge in Uzbekistan. Although the government is taking steps to address this issue, investors should remain vigilant and implement robust compliance measures.

3. Legal System Challenges:

While improvements have been made, there may still be concerns related to the predictability and transparency of the legal system. Investors should be aware of potential legal challenges and seek legal advice to navigate the regulatory environment.

4. Currency Risks:

The liberalization of the foreign exchange market introduces currency risks. Fluctuations in exchange rates may impact the profitability of investments and require effective risk management strategies.

5. Infrastructure Gaps:

Despite ongoing infrastructure development, certain sectors may still face challenges related to inadequate infrastructure. This includes transportation, energy, and telecommunications, which can affect the overall efficiency of business operations.

6. Social and Cultural Differences:

Investors should be mindful of cultural differences and social nuances that may impact business operations. Building effective relationships with local partners and understanding the cultural context is crucial.

7. Human Rights Concerns:

Uzbekistan has faced criticism in the past for human rights issues. Investors should be aware of social responsibility considerations and the potential impact on their reputation.

8. Market Size and Competition:

While Uzbekistan provides access to Central Asian markets, its domestic market size may be a consideration for certain industries. Investors should assess the level of competition and market saturation in their respective sectors.

9. Political Stability in the Region:

The geopolitical landscape in Central Asia can be dynamic. Investors should monitor political stability in the region and be prepared for potential geopolitical risks that may impact business operations.

10. Educational and Skills Gap:

Despite efforts to improve education and skills training, there may still be a gap in certain industries. Investors should assess the availability of a skilled workforce in their specific sectors.

11. Environmental Sustainability:

Environmental standards and sustainability practices may not be uniformly enforced. Investors should consider the environmental impact of their operations and align with global sustainability goals.

12. Access to Finance:

While the government is working to improve access to finance, some investors may still face challenges in obtaining funding for their projects. Exploring local and international financing options is essential.

It's important for investors to conduct thorough due diligence, seek professional advice, and stay informed about the evolving business landscape in Uzbekistan. Understanding both the strengths and weaknesses will contribute to making informed and strategic investment decisions.

5. Legal environment

Uzbekistan has been actively engaged in extensive legal reforms under the leadership of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, with a primary focus on fostering a transparent and investor-friendly environment. These reforms, initiated to modernize the legal system, include several key areas that contribute to a more conducive legal environment for businesses.

One of the significant aspects of these reforms is the simplification and streamlining of commercial legislation, aiming to reduce bureaucratic obstacles and enhance the overall efficiency of business-related legal processes. This, in turn, promotes a more dynamic and attractive landscape for both domestic and foreign investors.

Investment protection measures have been a focal point, with Uzbekistan implementing provisions to safeguard the rights of investors and establish effective dispute resolution mechanisms. These efforts are crucial in instilling confidence among investors, both local and international, and ensuring a fair and secure business environment.

Revisions to contract law have been implemented to enhance the clarity and enforceability of contractual agreements. This step is instrumental in providing a stable legal foundation for various business transactions, contributing to a more predictable and reliable legal framework.

The liberalization of the foreign exchange market represents a significant move, introducing measures to increase currency convertibility. This provides businesses with greater flexibility in managing foreign exchange transactions, reducing potential financial risks associated with currency fluctuations.

Intellectual property rights (IPR) protection has been strengthened, aligning with global standards. This is particularly crucial for fostering innovation and creativity while ensuring that the interests of businesses, both domestic and foreign, are adequately protected.

Labour legislation reforms focus on creating a more flexible labour market, simplifying hiring procedures, and improving working conditions. These changes are designed to benefit both employers and employees, contributing to a more balanced and adaptable workforce.

The legal framework for public-private partnerships (PPPs) has been developed to encourage private sector involvement in various sectors, particularly in infrastructure projects. This includes provisions for transparent and competitive PPP processes, fostering collaboration between the public and private sectors.

The implementation of e-government services represents a move toward digitizing administrative processes, enhancing transparency, and simplifying interactions with government authorities. This digital transformation is expected to contribute to more efficient and streamlined administrative procedures.

Anti-corruption measures have been a priority, with the introduction of legal provisions aimed at preventing corruption and ensuring fair business practices. These efforts underscore Uzbekistan's commitment to promoting ethical conduct and maintaining a corruption-free business environment.

Efforts to improve legal education and training programs are underway, recognizing the importance of a skilled legal workforce in effectively implementing and navigating the evolving legal landscape.

In summary, Uzbekistan's legal environment is undergoing comprehensive reforms to create a modern, transparent, and efficient framework. These reforms cover various aspects,

including investment protection, commercial legislation, foreign exchange regulations, and initiatives to combat corruption. The country's commitment to fostering a business-friendly environment is evident in these measures, contributing to its appeal as an emerging destination for both domestic and foreign investors.

6. Business relations with Sweden, Finland, Latvia and Estonia

6.1 Business relations with Sweden

Business relations between Uzbekistan and Sweden have been gradually developing. Both countries have shown interest in expanding economic cooperation, and various sectors provide opportunities for collaboration.

Trade between Uzbekistan and Sweden has been growing, with a focus on diverse sectors such as machinery, equipment, chemicals, and textiles. Both countries have expressed interest in expanding bilateral trade and investments.

Uzbekistan has been actively seeking foreign investments and technology transfers to support its economic development. Swedish businesses may find opportunities to contribute to projects in sectors like infrastructure, energy, and technology.

The governments of Uzbekistan and Sweden engage in trade promotion activities to facilitate business ties. This includes participation in trade fairs, business forums, and other events to connect companies from both countries.

Uzbekistan has undertaken reforms to improve its investment climate, including measures to liberalize the foreign exchange market and enhance the protection of foreign investors. These reforms aim to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) and foster a more favorable business environment.

Collaboration in technology and innovation is an area of potential growth. Swedish companies, known for their advancements in technology and innovation, may find opportunities for partnerships or projects in Uzbekistan's developing tech sector.

Uzbekistan's focus on infrastructure development opens avenues for cooperation. Swedish companies with expertise in construction, engineering, and related sectors may find opportunities in contributing to infrastructure projects.

The renewable energy sector is gaining importance in Uzbekistan. Swedish companies specializing in renewable energy solutions may explore partnerships or investment opportunities in this sector.

Uzbekistan is a significant producer of cotton, and the textile industry plays a crucial role in its economy. Collaboration in the textile and fashion sectors, potentially involving Swedish fashion brands or technology for sustainable textiles, is an area of interest.

Collaboration in education and research is another potential area for business relations. Partnerships between universities or research institutions from both countries can contribute to knowledge exchange and innovation.

6.2 Business relations with Finland

Business relations between Uzbekistan and Finland have been characterized by cooperation in various sectors. Both countries have expressed interest in strengthening economic ties and exploring opportunities for collaboration.

Bilateral trade between Uzbekistan and Finland has shown potential for growth. Trade relations cover diverse sectors, including machinery, technology, and energy. Both countries have aimed at expanding trade volumes and exploring avenues for mutual investments.

Uzbekistan actively seeks foreign investments, and Finnish businesses may find opportunities for collaboration in sectors such as technology, renewable energy, and infrastructure development.

Finland is known for its advancements in technology and innovation. Uzbekistan may seek collaboration with Finnish companies in areas such as information technology, telecommunications, and digital solutions.

Uzbekistan's growing interest in renewable energy aligns with Finland's expertise in this sector. Collaboration in renewable energy projects, including technology transfer and investments, is a potential area of cooperation.

With Uzbekistan emphasizing infrastructure development, Finnish companies with expertise in construction, engineering, and related fields may find opportunities to contribute to significant projects in the country.

Collaboration in education and research is a potential avenue for business relations. Partnerships between universities or research institutions in both countries can contribute to knowledge exchange and innovation.

Both governments engage in trade promotion activities, participating in events such as trade fairs and business forums to facilitate connections between companies from Uzbekistan and Finland.

6.3 Business relations with Latvia

Business relations between Uzbekistan and Latvia have been marked by a growing interest in economic cooperation. Both countries express a willingness to explore opportunities for trade and collaboration across various sectors. Bilateral trade relations show potential for expansion, encompassing diverse sectors such as machinery, textiles, agricultural products, and more. Latvia's expertise in agriculture and food production presents opportunities for collaborative efforts, involving technology transfer, joint ventures, and the exchange of agricultural products.

Moreover, Latvia's technological advancements open avenues for collaboration in information technology, telecommunications, and digital solutions. Education and research collaboration between universities or research institutions in both countries is seen as a potential avenue for fostering innovation and knowledge exchange.

Latvia's strategic location as a transportation hub in the Baltic region may lead to collaborations in logistics and transportation, especially given Uzbekistan's focus on infrastructure development. Both governments may engage in trade promotion activities, participating in events such as trade fairs and business forums to facilitate connections between companies from Uzbekistan and Latvia.

6.4 Business relations with Estonia

Business relations between Uzbekistan and Estonia are marked by a growing interest in fostering economic collaboration across various sectors. Bilateral trade between the two countries has shown potential for expansion, with a focus on diverse areas such as machinery, textiles, and technology. There is a shared commitment to enhancing trade ties and exploring avenues for mutual investments.

Estonia's expertise in technology and innovation presents opportunities for collaboration in areas such as information technology, telecommunications, and digital solutions. Uzbekistan actively seeks foreign investments, and Estonian businesses may find opportunities for collaboration in projects related to infrastructure, energy, and technology.

Given Estonia's strategic position as a hub for technology and innovation in the Baltic region, collaborative efforts in these fields hold promise. Both countries may engage in trade promotion activities, participating in events such as trade fairs and business forums to facilitate connections between companies from Uzbekistan and Estonia.

While there are opportunities, businesses should be aware of potential challenges, including cultural differences, regulatory complexities, and the need for a thorough understanding of the local market conditions.

7. Soft landing services

Several challenges exist for foreign and local companies operating in Uzbekistan. Corruption avoidance, navigating the tax system, and compliance with the regulatory framework, particularly for innovative start-ups, are significant concerns. Overcoming these challenges is indeed facilitated by having local and reliable partners. Soft landing services play a crucial role in assisting companies, including EU firms, in navigating the initial steps of establishing themselves in a new business environment. Here are some key public soft-landing services that EU companies may consider:

Embassy of the Republic of Latvia in Uzbekistan	<p>Address: 16 A Lashkarbegi Str., Tashkent, 100000, Uzbekistan</p> <p>Telephone: (998 71) 237 22 15</p> <p>Email: embassy.uzbekistan@mfa.gov.lv</p> <p>Website: https://www2.mfa.gov.lv/en/uzbekistan/embassy</p>
Embassy of the Republic of Latvia in Uzbekistan (Consular section)	<p>Address: the submission of visa application will take place at VISA CENTRE VFS GLOBAL (AMIR TEMUR STREET 88A, TASHKENT</p> <p>Telephone: (998) 71 237 08 51 (15:00 - 16:00)</p> <p>Email: consulate.uzbekistan@mfa.gov.lv</p> <p>Website: https://pieraksts.mfa.gov.lv/en/uzbekistan</p>
Estonia has no diplomatic missions in Tashkent, Uzbekistan at the moment. Nearest Estonian embassy location to Uzbekistan - Estonia Embassy in Astana, Kazakhstan	<p>Address: Kabanbay Batyr ave. 28 010000 Astana Kazakhstan</p> <p>Telephone: +7 7172 240 280</p> <p>Email: consular.astana@mfa.ee, embassy.astana@mfa.ee</p> <p>Website: https://astana.mfa.ee/en/</p>
Consulate of Sweden in Tashkent	<p>Address: 65, V. Vakhidov Street 700031 Tashkent Uzbekistan</p> <p>Telephone: +998 71 152 11 02, +998 93 184 15 00</p> <p>Email: guenther.begemann@ericsson.com, sweconsulate.tashkent@gmail.com</p> <p>Website: https://embassies.net/sweden-in-uzbekistan/tashkent</p>
Honorary Consulate of Finland, Uzbekistan	<p>Address: 8/2, Bunyodkor Street, Chilanzar district, Tashkent city, 10043 Uzbekistan</p> <p>Telephone: finconsulate.tashkent@gmail.com</p> <p>Email: finconsulate.tashkent@gmail.com</p> <p>Website: https://um.fi/finland-s-representation-abroad-by-country/-/asset_publisher/dCMOY7IDMXLf/contactInfoOrganization/id/32411215#personnel-section-1109164</p>
Roving Ambassador for Central Asia - Ilkka Räisänen	<p>Address: Merikasarmi, Laivastokatu 22, 00160, HELSINKI, FINLAND</p> <p>Telephone: +358 295 350 579</p> <p>Email: ITA-21@gov.fi</p> <p>Website: https://finlandabroad.fi/web/uzb/frontpage</p>

7.1 Annual business events in Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan typically hosts a variety of significant business events, conferences, and exhibitions throughout the year, covering diverse sectors. These events serve as platforms for networking, knowledge exchange, and business development. The importance of these events often depends on the industry and the specific goals of participants.

To identify the most important business events in Uzbekistan, consider looking into the following:

- **International Investment Forums:**

Uzbekistan often organizes international investment forums to attract foreign investors. These forums provide a platform for discussions on economic policies, investment opportunities, and business networking.

- **Industry-Specific Conferences:**

Key industries in Uzbekistan, such as energy, agriculture, technology, and tourism, host conferences and exhibitions. These events showcase innovations, trends, and opportunities within each sector.

- **Business and Economic Summits:**

National and international business and economic summits are organized to discuss economic development strategies, policies, and opportunities for collaboration.

- **Trade Fairs and Expos:**

Uzbekistan hosts trade fairs and expos focusing on various industries. These events attract businesses, investors, and professionals looking to explore and engage with the local market.

- **Innovation and Technology Conferences:**

With a growing emphasis on innovation, Uzbekistan hosts conferences and events centered around technology, startups, and digital transformation.

- **International Forums on Silk Road Connectivity:**

Given Uzbekistan's strategic location along the historic Silk Road, forums and conferences on regional connectivity and trade routes may be of significance.

- **Investment and Business Development Seminars:**

Seminars and workshops focused on investment strategies, business development, and market entry may be organized by government agencies, business chambers, or international organizations.

8. Cultural environment

The cultural environment in Uzbekistan is deeply influenced by its rich historical heritage and diverse traditions. The country's cities, such as Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva, showcase magnificent examples of Islamic architecture, reflecting its position on the ancient Silk Road. Uzbek, the official language, is written in the Latin alphabet, with Russian also widely spoken, especially in business and government contexts.

Islam, particularly Sunni Islam, is the dominant religion, shaping cultural practices, traditions, and celebrations. Hospitality is a cherished value, with guests treated with great respect, and hosting guests considered an honor. Uzbek cuisine, known for flavorful dishes like pilaf and shashlik, emphasizes communal eating as a social practice.

Traditional clothing is colorful and reflects regional diversity, with women often wearing dresses, scarves, and ornate accessories. Major celebrations include Navruz, the Persian New Year, while festivals highlight cultural traditions, music, dance, and crafts. Uzbekistan is renowned for its arts and crafts, including intricate embroidery, ceramics, and silk weaving, often showcased in local markets.

The family holds a central role in Uzbek society, with strong emphasis on family ties and respect for elders. Social etiquette involves politeness, courtesy, and maintaining personal space, with the right hand traditionally used for eating and greeting.

Traditional Uzbek music, often accompanied by dance, is a significant cultural expression, featuring instruments like the dutar. The government plays a role in cultural promotion and preservation, and there may be guidelines or regulations related to cultural activities.

Cultural sensitivities, particularly regarding religious practices and conservative norms, should be respected. The evolving cultural landscape in Uzbekistan embraces both traditional and modern influences, especially in urban centers.

Overall, an understanding and appreciation of these cultural nuances contribute to positive and respectful interactions in both social and business contexts in Uzbekistan. It's important to recognize that cultural practices can vary across regions and communities within the country.

In Uzbekistan, cultural differences are deeply rooted in historical, religious, and social influences, shaping the way people interact and engage with one another. Hospitality is a cornerstone of Uzbek culture, with hosts going to great lengths to make guests feel honored and welcome. Social structures prioritize respect for elders, and decisions often consider familial considerations.

Politeness and courtesy hold great importance, and maintaining personal space is considered essential. Islam, the predominant religion, significantly influences daily life, emphasizing modesty in dress and behavior, particularly in more conservative regions. While Uzbek is the official language, Russian is widely spoken, especially in urban and business settings.

Meals in Uzbekistan are communal events, highlighting the significance of sharing food as a symbol of camaraderie. Traditional Uzbek cuisine, featuring dishes like pilaf and shashlik, is an integral part of social gatherings. Non-verbal communication, including facial expressions and gestures, plays a significant role in conveying messages.

Clothing styles vary across regions, with colorful and ornate garments being common. Modesty is generally valued, especially in women's clothing choices. In a business context, personal relationships are prioritized, and face-to-face meetings are preferred over written communication. Decision-making may involve consultation with senior members of the organization.

Punctuality is appreciated but may not be as rigid as in some Western cultures. Flexibility in scheduling and patience are virtues that are valued. Gift-giving is a common practice, expressing gratitude and appreciation, particularly when visiting someone's home.

Uzbekistan's cultural landscape is diverse, with different regions having unique traditions, languages, and customs. Understanding and respecting these cultural differences require openness, cultural sensitivity, and a genuine interest in learning about and embracing the local way of life. Navigating these nuances contributes to positive and harmonious interactions in both personal and professional spheres.

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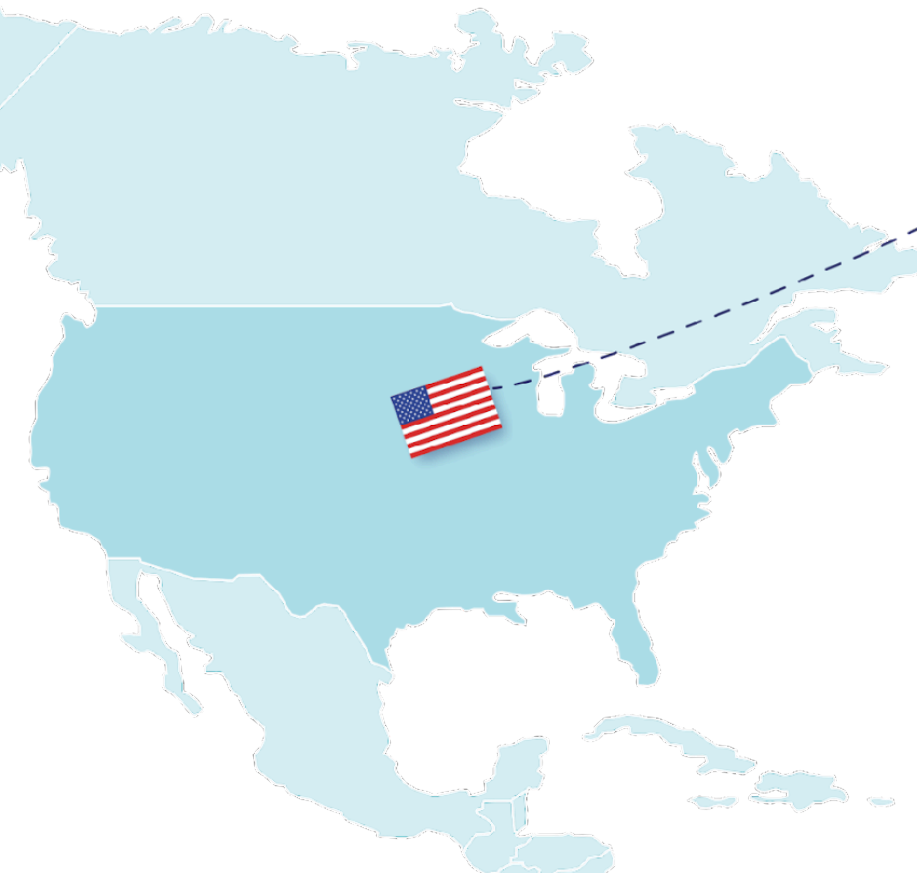
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- Statistics agency under the president of the republic of Uzbekistan
<https://stat.uz/en/>
- The “Concept for the Development of the Water Resources of Uzbekistan for 2020-2030” (adopted and in 2022, the Decree of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan was approved, dated May 24, 2022 No. PP-257) (ЎЗБЕКИСТОН РЕСПУБЛИКАСИ ПРЕЗИДЕНТИНИНГ ҚАРОРИ. АҲОЛИНИНГ ИЧИМЛИК СУВ ТАЪМИНОТИ ВА ОҚОВА СУВ ХИЗМАТЛАРИ БИЛАН ТАЪМИНЛАНГАНЛИК ДАРАЖАСИНИ ОШИРИШ БЎЙИЧА ҚЎШИМЧА ЧОРА ТАДБИРЛАР ТЎҒРИСИДА)
<https://lex.uz/ru/docs/6033201>
- The World Bank in Uzbekistan (Latest news and information from the World Bank and its development work in Uzbekistan. Access the country data, statistics, project information, research from our experts, and many more)
<https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/uzbekistan/overview>
- International Monetary Fund
<https://www.imf.org/en/Countries/UZB>

U.S.A Export Kit

Great Lakes Area

12.02.2024

Yi Tang – Business Tampere



Interreg



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1. Description of the market

1.1 Country overview

Table 1 USA quick facts

Capital	Washington, D.C
Currency	US Dollar
Largest city by metropolitan area	New York city
Government	Federal presidential constitutional republic
Population (country)	~309 million
Land area	~9833520km ²
Region	North America

1.2 Economic overview

Table 2 Market overview

GDP (PPP)	\$26855 trillion ¹
GDP (PPP) per capita	\$80035 ²
Annual GDP growth	2.1% ³

¹ ["World Economic Outlook Database, April 2023". IMF.org. International Monetary Fund.](#) April 10, 2023. [Archived](#) from the original on October 11, 2022. Retrieved April 10, 2023.

² ["World Economic Outlook Database, April 2023". IMF.org. International Monetary Fund.](#) April 10, 2023. [Archived](#) from the original on October 11, 2022. Retrieved April 10, 2023.

³ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/188165/annual-gdp-growth-of-the-united-states-since-1990/>

Trade (2022 annual) ⁴	Exports \$3,009.7 billion Imports \$3,957.8 billion
Value added (in % of GDP, 2021) ⁵	Services 77.6% Industry 17.88% Agriculture 0.96%
OECD member	Since 1961

1.3 The Great Lakes Region (US) overview

Table 3 The Great Lakes (US) market overview

Area	244,106 km ² (US + CANADA)
Population	85,011,531
GDP (2022)	\$6,756,987
Annual GDP growth	About 5%
Major cities in the region	Buffalo, New York; Chicago, Illinois; Cleveland and Columbus, Ohio; Detroit, Michigan; Indianapolis, Indiana; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Minneapolis, Minnesota; and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
Best known for	Manufacturing, automotive, health and life sciences, IT, aerospace and defence, agriculture and food processing, financial services, logistics and transportation, education, tourism

⁴ <https://www.bea.gov/news/2023/us-international-trade-goods-and-services-december-and-annual-2022>

⁵ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/270001/distribution-of-gross-domestic-product-gdp-across-economic-sectors-in-the-us/>

The Great Lakes region in the United States, encompassing portions of eight states – Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin – is a significant area both economically and geographically. This region is characterized by its proximity to the Great Lakes, which are a group of five freshwater lakes that collectively form the largest group of freshwater lakes on Earth by total area, and the second largest by total volume.

One of the key industries in the Great Lakes region is manufacturing, particularly in the automotive sector. Detroit, Michigan, often referred to as the "Motor City," has historically been the heart of America's automotive industry, housing major car manufacturers like General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler. The manufacturing sector extends beyond automotive, including steel production, machinery, and chemical manufacturing, primarily around major urban centers like Chicago, Cleveland, and Milwaukee.

Another significant industry in the Great Lakes region is agriculture. The area's fertile soil and favorable climate contribute to its status as a major agricultural producer, with products ranging from corn and soybeans to dairy and livestock. States like Wisconsin are renowned for their dairy production, particularly cheese, contributing significantly to the region's economy.

The Great Lakes themselves are a crucial economic asset due to their role in transportation and trade. The Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Seaway System provides a critical transportation link between the North American interior and international markets. This waterway allows for the movement of bulk commodities such as iron ore, coal, and grain, which are integral to the region's industrial base. Over the past few years, growth has moderated in the face of structural constraints, including declining labor force growth, diminishing returns to investment, and slowing productivity. The challenge going forward is to find new drivers of growth while addressing the social and environmental legacies of China's previous development path.

In recent years, the Great Lakes region in the United States has seen significant developments in various sectors, including advancements in Industry 4.0, healthcare innovation, and the circular economy, which are reshaping its economic landscape.

Industry 4.0: The manufacturing sector, particularly in the automotive industry, is undergoing a transformation with the integration of Industry 4.0 technologies. These include automation, robotics, artificial intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), and advanced data analytics. For instance, manufacturers in the region are adopting smart factory technologies to increase efficiency, reduce costs, and improve product quality. This technological shift is not only enhancing traditional manufacturing processes but also attracting new investments and fostering the growth of high-tech industries in the region.

Healthcare and Biotechnology: The healthcare sector in the Great Lakes region has seen significant growth and innovation, driven by world-class research institutions, hospitals, and a burgeoning biotechnology industry. Cities like Chicago, Cleveland, and Minneapolis have become hubs for medical research and innovation, with a focus on areas such as medical devices, pharmaceuticals, and health IT. The region's strong university and research infrastructure contribute to advancements in personalized medicine, genomics, and digital health solutions, making it an attractive location for healthcare startups and established companies alike.

Circular Economy: The circular economy is gaining traction in the Great Lakes region as businesses and governments seek to reduce waste and promote sustainability. This approach focuses on reusing, repairing, refurbishing, and recycling existing materials and products to extend their lifecycle. The region is seeing growth in industries related to renewable energy, waste management, and sustainable manufacturing practices. For example, some manufacturing companies are adopting closed-loop systems where waste materials are repurposed for new production, reducing environmental impact and costs. Additionally, initiatives to clean up and preserve the Great Lakes themselves reflect the circular economy principles, emphasizing sustainability and resource efficiency.

These recent innovations and industry trends are contributing to the economic dynamism of the Great Lakes region. The integration of advanced technologies in manufacturing, the growth of the healthcare and biotechnology sectors, and the adoption of circular economy principles are not only creating new job opportunities but also positioning the region as a leader in modern, sustainable economic practices. As these industries continue to evolve, they are likely to play a key role in shaping the future economic development of the Great Lakes area.

1.4 Trade between the EU and US

Trade between the European Union (EU) and the United States (US) is a cornerstone of the global economy. The EU and the US maintain the largest bilateral trade and investment relationship and represent one of the most integrated economic relationships in the world. Despite being overtaken by China in 2020 as the largest trading partner for goods, the US remains the EU's largest trading partner overall when considering both services and investment.

In 2022, the US was the largest partner for EU exports of goods, accounting for 19.8% of the EU's total exports. It was also the second-largest partner for EU imports of goods, making up 11.9% of the total. The most traded goods between the EU and the US in 2022 included energy products like natural gas and petroleum oils, medical and pharmaceutical products, as well as motor cars and vehicles.

The trade relationship is not just about goods; it also encompasses services and investment. In 2021, transatlantic trade reached a record high of 1.2 trillion euros, surpassing pre-pandemic levels by more than 10%. The bilateral trade in services alone accounted for more than 500 billion euros. The size of trade in goods and services is matched by mutual investments, which are among the biggest in the world. Total US investment in the EU is significantly higher than in the Asia-Pacific region, while EU foreign direct investment in the US is around ten times the amount of EU investment in India and China combined.

In terms of trade balance, in 2022, the EU had trade surpluses with the US in various sectors, including machinery & vehicles, chemicals, and food & drink. However, there were trade deficits in energy and raw materials.

The EU-US trade relationship also includes important cooperative initiatives like the EU-US Trade and Technology Council (TTC), established to coordinate approaches to key global trade, economic, and technology issues. The TTC focuses on strengthening semiconductor supply chains, curbing non-market trade practices, and adopting unified approaches to regulating global technology firms.

Despite being each other's largest trade and investment partner, there is currently no dedicated free trade agreement between the EU and the US. However, transatlantic trade still enjoys one of the lowest average tariffs in the world, governed by World Trade Organization (WTO) rules.

This robust trade and investment relationship between the EU and the US plays a pivotal role in the global economy, with either the EU or the US being the largest trade and investment partner for most other countries worldwide.

1.5 Attitude towards foreign investments

The attitude towards European investment in the US market, particularly in the Great Lakes region, tends to be multifaceted, reflecting both the opportunities and challenges posed by foreign investment. This region, known for its rich industrial history and strategic access to the Great Lakes waterway, has attracted a wide array of European investors looking to capitalize on its manufacturing prowess, technological innovation, and logistical advantages.

On one hand, there is a positive reception to European investment, primarily because it brings a wealth of benefits to the local economies. European companies often bring capital, advanced technologies, and new management practices, which can lead to job creation, enhanced industrial competitiveness, and overall

economic growth in the Great Lakes region. States like Michigan, Ohio, and Illinois, which have strong manufacturing bases, have seen significant European investment in sectors such as automotive, renewable energy, and biotechnology. These investments are often viewed as a vote of confidence in the region's economic potential and its workforce.

Moreover, the strategic importance of the Great Lakes for trade and transportation, with access to both domestic and international markets, makes the region particularly attractive for European companies looking to establish a footprint in North America. This geographical advantage, combined with various state-level incentives designed to attract foreign investment, underscores the positive aspects of European engagement with the local economy.

On the other hand, there are concerns and challenges that accompany foreign investment. Some local stakeholders express apprehension about the potential for job losses due to the automation of industries or the relocation of production facilities to lower-cost regions. There's also the fear of losing control over critical industries to foreign entities, which could have implications for regional autonomy and economic security. Furthermore, environmental concerns have been raised, particularly regarding the sustainability of projects and their impact on the Great Lakes ecosystem, which is a vital resource for the region.

In summary, while European investment in the Great Lakes region is generally welcomed for its economic benefits, it also prompts discussions about ensuring that such investments are aligned with the region's long-term interests, including job creation, environmental sustainability, and the maintenance of local control over key sectors. The overall attitude thus balances cautious optimism with a vigilant approach to managing the impact of foreign investment.

1.6 Business law in USA

Business law in the United States is a complex framework of federal, state, and local regulations that can significantly impact companies operating within its borders. European companies looking to invest or expand into the US market, especially in the Great Lakes region, need to navigate a myriad of legal

considerations that might differ substantially from European Union regulations and practices. Here are several key areas of US business law that European companies should pay particular attention to:

Regulatory Compliance: The United States has strict regulations concerning corporate governance, environmental protection, consumer protection, and labor laws. European companies must understand and comply with these regulations at all levels of government—federal, state, and local. For example, the Great Lakes region is subject to specific environmental regulations aimed at protecting the Great Lakes and surrounding ecosystems. Non-compliance with these regulations can result in significant fines, legal penalties, and reputational damage.

Taxation: The US tax system is complex, with federal, state, and sometimes local taxes applicable to business operations. European companies must navigate this landscape carefully, understanding how corporate taxes, sales taxes, and other levies such as property taxes may affect their investments in the Great Lakes region. Differences in tax structures and rates between states can also influence where a company decides to locate its operations.

Intellectual Property (IP) Protection: The US places a strong emphasis on the protection of intellectual property rights. European companies should ensure they have comprehensive IP protection strategies in place, including patents, trademarks, and copyrights, relevant to the US legal framework. This is particularly important in industries such as manufacturing, technology, and pharmaceuticals, which are prominent in the Great Lakes region.

Employment Law: Employment laws in the US can be quite different from those in European countries, especially concerning at-will employment, minimum wage, overtime regulations, and benefits. European companies must familiarize themselves with these laws to manage their workforce effectively. Additionally, labor union presence in certain industries and states within the Great Lakes region might necessitate negotiations and agreements that comply with US labor law.

Litigation Risk: The US is known for its litigious environment. European companies should be aware of the higher risk of litigation, including class action lawsuits, which can be costly and time-consuming. Ensuring compliance with laws and regulations, maintaining robust legal and financial documentation, and obtaining appropriate insurance coverage are critical steps in mitigating litigation risks.

Cross-Border Considerations: European companies must also consider the legal implications of cross-border operations, including compliance with international trade laws, tariffs, and the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), which replaced NAFTA. These factors can affect the flow of goods and services between the Great Lakes region and other countries.

In summary, European companies venturing into the US market, particularly in the Great Lakes region, should conduct thorough due diligence and possibly seek advice from legal experts familiar with both US business law and the specific regulatory landscape of the Great Lakes region. Understanding and adhering to the complex web of regulations is crucial for successful and compliant business operations in the US.

2. Business relations with Sweden, Finland, Latvia, and Estonia

2.1 Business relations with Finland

Since 2019, Finland has forged robust partnerships with six U.S. states, each focusing on distinct thematic areas of importance. Here's a breakdown of the priority sectors for each state:

- **Washington:** Forging alliances in cutting-edge technologies and the transition towards sustainable practices, with a focal point on 5G technology, the establishment of sustainable and intelligent ports, and the flourishing of a forest-based economy.
- **Michigan:** Joining hands in the arena of clean technologies, with a specific emphasis on advancements in battery technology, intelligent maritime transport, and initiatives within the bioeconomy.
- **Minnesota:** Pioneering sustainable technologies, with a concentrated effort on clean energies, the advancement of the bioeconomy, and the integration of digital technologies.

- Texas: Building bridges in the realms of digitalization, 5G/6G technology, high-performance computing, artificial intelligence, renewable energy solutions, and the development of energy-efficient materials.
- Maine: Delving into the realms of forest-based bioeconomy, with a keen eye on bio refineries, cutting-edge pulp-based materials, value-added products, smart forestry practices, and forest policy.
- Colorado: Engaging in cooperation surrounding supercomputing, quantum technologies, the green economy, and aerospace.

Finnish enterprises excel in delivering green and digital solutions, harnessing the forefront of technology encompassing wireless networks, artificial intelligence, sensor technology, renewable energy sources, automation, and robotics. Additionally, Finnish entities and research institutions lead the charge in various emerging disruptive technologies, spanning microelectronics, quantum and supercomputing, photonics, the creation of innovative materials, and advancements in biotechnology.

Within the six states, there's a palpable appetite for readily implementable solutions, coupled with an authentic eagerness to join forces with Finland in research, development, and innovation endeavors. Finnish companies and research institutions stand to reap substantial benefits from the cutting-edge research and innovation ecosystems fostered in these partner states. The partnership agreements have already borne fruit, resulting in heightened collaboration in the spheres of high-performance computing, AI, and biosciences, as well as through research partnerships and academic exchanges.

The current moment presents an unparalleled opportunity for Finnish companies to thrive in the United States. Over the last decade, there has been a noticeable shift in the mindset of Finnish business leaders towards the U.S. market. The once-prevailing feelings of fear, apprehension, and uncertainty have given way to a newfound sense of confidence and a belief in the potential success of Finnish businesses in the U.S.

With recent discussions revolving around Finland's inclusion in NATO, the spotlight has squarely been in Finland. Many Americans have come to appreciate Finland, recognizing it as a country of remarkable strength despite its relatively modest size. Finnish companies should capitalize on this awareness when engaging with their American counterparts. Finland has firmly established itself as a trustworthy, forward-thinking, and principled partner for American businesses. This perception holds greater significance now than ever before.

2.2 Business relations with Sweden

The business relationship between Sweden and the USA, with a particular focus on the Great Lakes region, is robust and multifaceted, reflecting deep-rooted ties in trade, investment, and innovation across diverse sectors. The strategic decision by Sweden to pursue membership in NATO adds a new dimension to this relationship, potentially enhancing security cooperation and fostering even closer economic and technological collaboration.

Trade and Investment Enhancement: The presence of Swedish companies in the Great Lakes region underscores a significant investment in sectors such as manufacturing, technology, healthcare, and clean energy. This region, known for its central location, manufacturing legacy, and extensive transportation networks, aligns well with Sweden's expertise in engineering, innovation, and sustainability. With Sweden's move towards NATO membership, there could be an increased emphasis on defense and security sectors, alongside traditional areas of cooperation. Companies like Volvo and Scania, which have significant operations in states like Illinois, Michigan, and Ohio, might find new opportunities in defense-related projects and collaborations, benefiting from the region's industrial capabilities.

Strengthening Innovation and Technology Ties: Sweden's reputation for technological advancement and innovation, particularly in environmental technology, telecommunications, and digital services, complements the Great Lakes region's burgeoning tech hubs and research institutions. NATO membership could open doors for enhanced collaboration in cybersecurity, defense technologies, and communication systems, areas where both Sweden and the Great Lakes region have considerable expertise and interest.

This could lead to joint ventures, research and development projects, and technology transfers that leverage the strengths of both parties.

Sustainability and Renewable Energy Collaboration: The commitment to sustainability and renewable energy is a shared priority for Sweden and the Great Lakes region. As Sweden moves closer to NATO, there could be increased collaboration on green technologies and initiatives aimed at enhancing energy security and environmental protection. This alignment offers opportunities for Swedish companies specializing in renewable energy and sustainable urban solutions to contribute to the region's goals of reducing carbon emissions and protecting the Great Lakes, leveraging their expertise in creating sustainable and resilient communities.

Enhanced Cultural and Economic Exchanges: The pursuit of NATO membership by Sweden may also bolster cultural and economic exchanges, facilitated by Swedish-American chambers of commerce and bilateral organizations. These platforms could play a crucial role in navigating the expanded scope of collaboration, providing networking opportunities, business matchmaking, and forums for sharing best practices in areas of mutual interest, including security and defense.

Addressing Challenges and Seizing Opportunities: While the evolving security landscape and Sweden's NATO aspirations introduce new complexities, they also present opportunities for deeper engagement between Sweden and the Great Lakes region. Adapting to the regulatory environment, understanding the implications of trade policies, and leveraging the enhanced security cooperation are key to maximizing the benefits of this relationship. The shared values of innovation, sustainability, and international cooperation continue to underpin the potential for growth and collaboration, making the partnership between Sweden and the Great Lakes region even more significant in a changing global context.

In summary, Sweden's move towards NATO membership adds a strategic layer to its business relationship with the USA, particularly in the Great Lakes region. This development could enhance security cooperation, deepen economic ties, and foster innovation across traditional and emerging sectors, further

solidifying the partnership between Sweden and the Great Lakes region in a mutually beneficial and forward-looking manner.

2.3 Business relations with Estonia

The business relationship between Estonia and the United States, particularly within the Great Lakes region, is characterized by innovation, technological collaboration, and a growing trade partnership. Although smaller in scale compared to larger European economies, Estonia's strong emphasis on technology, digital governance, and entrepreneurship has positioned it as an attractive partner for American businesses, especially in regions known for technological innovation and manufacturing like the Great Lakes.

Technological and Digital Collaboration: Estonia is globally recognized for its digital governance, e-services, and cybersecurity capabilities. The country's expertise in these areas offers substantial opportunities for collaboration with businesses and institutions in the Great Lakes region, which is home to a burgeoning tech industry alongside traditional manufacturing. Joint ventures in IT, cybersecurity, and digital services are areas where Estonian companies and US counterparts in the Great Lakes can find mutual benefits, leveraging Estonia's innovative e-government models and the region's industrial and technological infrastructure.

Trade and Investment Opportunities: While the volume of trade between Estonia and the Great Lakes region is not as substantial as that of larger economies, there is significant potential for growth. Estonian businesses, particularly those in tech, clean energy, and advanced manufacturing, are increasingly looking to expand into the US market. The Great Lakes region, with its strategic location, manufacturing heritage, and network of universities and research institutions, presents a fertile ground for such expansion. In return, US companies can tap into Estonia's tech-savvy workforce and its position as a gateway to the European and Nordic markets.

Educational and Research Exchanges: Collaborations between Estonian and American educational and research institutions can further strengthen ties. The Great Lakes region hosts several leading universities and research facilities that focus on areas like engineering, computer science, and environmental science. Partnerships in research and development, student and faculty exchanges, and collaborative projects can enhance the technological and scientific capabilities of both Estonia and the Great Lakes region, fostering innovation and creating new opportunities for business collaborations.

Challenges and Opportunities for Growth: Despite the promising aspects of this relationship, there are challenges to navigate, such as cultural differences in business practices, regulatory hurdles, and the need for increased awareness and networking between Estonian and Great Lakes businesses. However, these challenges also present opportunities for growth. Initiatives to facilitate business matchmaking, trade missions, and participation in technology and industry-specific fairs can help overcome these barriers, enhancing the economic ties between Estonia and the Great Lakes region.

In conclusion, the business relationship between Estonia and the USA, with a focus on the Great Lakes region, is marked by potential for growth, particularly in the realms of technology, digital governance, and education. As both sides continue to explore and expand upon these opportunities, the partnership is poised to contribute to technological advancement, economic growth, and a deeper mutual understanding, benefiting both Estonia and the Great Lakes region in the long term.

2.4 Business relations with Latvia

The trade and business relationship between Latvia and the United States, particularly with the Great Lakes region, is characterized by growing economic ties and collaboration across various sectors. While the geographical distance between the two countries may seem considerable, the bilateral trade relationship has been steadily expanding, facilitated by advancements in transportation and communication technologies. Both Latvia and the Great Lakes region benefit from their strategic locations and robust infrastructures, which facilitate trade flows and investment opportunities.

One significant aspect of the trade relationship between Latvia and the Great Lakes region is the exchange of goods and services. Latvia exports a variety of products to the United States, including machinery, wood and wood products, textiles, and agricultural goods. Conversely, the United States exports machinery and equipment, chemicals, vehicles, and agricultural products to Latvia. The Great Lakes region, with its strong manufacturing base and access to extensive transportation networks, serves as an important entry point for Latvian exports into the United States and vice versa.

Investment and business partnerships also play a vital role in the Latvia-USA relationship. Latvian companies have increasingly sought opportunities to invest in the Great Lakes region, particularly in sectors such as manufacturing, technology, and logistics. Likewise, American companies have shown interest in Latvia's growing economy, leveraging its skilled workforce, favorable business environment, and strategic location within the European Union. These investments contribute to job creation, technology transfer, and economic growth in both Latvia and the Great Lakes region.

Furthermore, cultural, and educational exchanges foster stronger ties between Latvia and the Great Lakes region. Academic partnerships, student exchanges, and cultural events promote mutual understanding and collaboration, laying the groundwork for future business ventures and diplomatic relations. As both regions continue to explore new opportunities for cooperation and economic development, the trade and business relationship between Latvia and the Great Lakes region is poised to thrive, benefiting businesses, communities, and stakeholders on both sides of the Atlantic.

3. Soft landing services

Soft landing services help companies and other stakeholders to navigate the first steps in the new business environment and to connect with the local business networks. Key public soft-landing services for all EU companies are:

Table 5 Soft landing for EU companies

European Union Chamber of	http://www.eu-chamberofcommerce.org/
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Commerce in USA	1629 K St N. W. 20006 Washington D.C. USA
Enterprise Europe Network	https://een.ec.europa.eu/local-contact-points/us 6 offices in USA

3.1 Soft landing services for Finnish companies

Table 6 Soft landing for Finnish companies

Embassy of Finland in Washington, D.C	<p>Finlandabroad.fi/usa</p> <p>Address: 3301 Massachusetts Ave NW, Washington, D.C. 20008, United States</p> <p>+86 108 519 8300</p> <p>sanomat.was@formin.fi</p> <p>Telephone +1 202 298 5800</p> <p>hannakaisa.andersson@formin.fi</p>
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<p>Business Finland USA</p>	<p>https://www.businessfinland.fi/en/locations/americas/united-states</p> <p>WASHINGTON</p> <p>Business Finland USA, Washington, Finland Trade Center</p> <p>Embassy of Finland</p> <p>3301 Massachusetts Avenue N.W. Washington D.C 20008-3624, USA</p> <p>SILICON VALLEY</p> <p>Business Finland Silicon Valley</p> <p>Nordic Innovation House</p> <p>470 Ramona Street</p> <p>Palo Alto, CA 94301, USA</p> <p>NEW YORK</p> <p>Business Finland Office, New York</p> <p>Consulate General of Finland, Finland Trade Center</p> <p>605 Third Avenue, 35 floor</p> <p>New York, NY 10158, USA</p>
<p>Finnish Business Council USA</p>	<p>https://facc-usa.com/</p>
<p>Consulate General of Finland, NYC</p>	<p>605 Third Avenue, 35th Floor, New York, NY 10158, USA</p> <p>sanomat.nyo@formin.fi</p>
<p>Consulate General of Finland in Los Angeles</p>	<p>11766 Wilshire Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90025, USA</p> <p>sanomat.los@formin.fi</p>

3.2 Soft landing services for Swedish companies

Table 7 Soft landing for Swedish companies

Embassy of Sweden in Washington, D.C.	swedenabroad.se 2900 K Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20007, United States +1 202 467 2600 ambassaden.washington@gov
Business Sweden	https://www.business-sweden.com/markets/americas/usa/
The Swedish Chamber of Commerce in USA	https://www.sacc-usa.org/
Consulate General of Sweden in New York	445 Park Avenue, Suite 1401, New York, NY 10022, United States +1 212 583 2500 generalkonsulat.new-york@gov.se
Consulate General of Sweden in San Francisco	595 Market Street, Suite #1350, San Francisco, CA 94105 +1 415 268 08 00 sanfrancisco@gov.se

3.3 Soft landing services for Estonian companies

Table 8 Soft landing for Estonian companies

Embassy in Washington, D.C	washington.mfa.ee 2131 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Washington, D.C. 20008 (+1) 202 588 0101 Embassy.Washington@mfa.ee
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Permanent Mission of Estonia in New York	Three Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza, 6Th Floor, 305 East 47Th Street, New York, N.Y. 10017 + 1 212 883 06 40 Mission.NewYork@mfa.ee
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3.4 Soft landing services for Latvian companies

Table 8 Soft landing for Estonian companies

Embassy in Washington, D.C	https://www2.mfa.gov.lv/en/usa 2306 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington DC (+1) 202 328-2840 embassy.usa@mfa.gov.lv
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3.5 Yearly business events in USA

The Great Lakes region in the United States is home to many significant business events and expos throughout the year. Here's a list of some of the most important ones:

- North American International Auto Show (NAIAS) - Detroit, Michigan

One of the largest auto shows in North America, typically held in January.

- International Manufacturing Technology Show (IMTS) - Chicago, Illinois

A premier manufacturing technology event, occurring biennially in September.

- Automate Show - Detroit, Michigan

A leading trade show for robotics, automation, and vision technology, typically held in May.

- National Hardware Show - Las Vegas, Nevada

While not within the Great Lakes region, it's an important event for hardware and home improvement industries, usually in May.

- Greenbuild International Conference & Expo - Various locations (including the Great Lakes region)

A significant event for sustainable building and construction, with rotating locations in the United States, often including cities within the Great Lakes region.

- TechCrunch Disrupt - San Francisco, California (may also have virtual components)

A major tech event featuring startups, innovators, and industry leaders, often attended by companies from across the country, including the Great Lakes region.

- Midwest Tech Connect - Cleveland, Ohio

A tech-focused event connecting entrepreneurs, investors, and tech professionals from the Midwest region, typically held in September.

- Chicago Boat, RV & Sail Show - Chicago, Illinois

One of the largest boat and RV shows in the Midwest, usually occurring in January.

- Manufacturing in America Symposium and Expo - Detroit, Michigan

A conference and expo focusing on manufacturing technology and innovation, held annually in March.

- Advanced Design & Manufacturing Expo (ADM Expo) - Cleveland, Ohio

An event showcasing advanced manufacturing technologies, typically held in March.

Please note that event schedules and locations may vary from year to year, and it's advisable to check the official websites of these events for the most current information.

4. Business Culture Tips

The business culture in the Great Lakes region of the United States, which encompasses states like Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin, is a blend of traditional American business values and the unique industrial heritage, diverse workforce, and Midwestern ethos specific to this area. For those looking to navigate business relationships and operations effectively in the Great Lakes, understanding both the general interaction norms and specific aspects like contracts, meetings, timing, negotiations, and legal frameworks is crucial.

Communication and Professionalism: The region values direct and straightforward communication, with a preference for clear and efficient decision-making processes. Professionalism is highly regarded, manifesting in expectations for punctuality, preparedness for meetings, and a serious approach to work commitments. This directness extends to negotiations, which are approached with pragmatism and a focus on achieving mutually beneficial outcomes.

Decision-Making: The decision-making process in the Great Lakes region tends to be more individualistic, with decisions often made by individuals or small groups based on available data and a direct assessment of the situation. In contrast, some European business cultures, such as those in Nordic countries or Germany, may emphasize consensus and collaborative decision-making, involving a broader group of stakeholders.

Formality: European business environments often adhere to more formal protocols in dress, titles, and interactions, especially in countries like Germany, Italy, and France. In contrast, the Great Lakes region, similar to the broader U.S., may exhibit a more relaxed approach to formality, with greater emphasis on casual interactions and attire, particularly in the tech and startup sectors.

Contracts and Legal Considerations: The Great Lakes business environment emphasizes the importance of meticulous legal documentation and protection. Engagements often begin with thorough legal reviews, emphasizing the need for detailed contracts that comply with both federal and state laws. Legal counsel is vital in these processes to navigate the complexities of American contract law and to ensure that agreements are comprehensive, clear, and capable of preventing future disputes.

Meetings and Time Management: Meetings are structured and objective-oriented, with an expectation that participants will contribute meaningfully to discussions. Agendas are typically shared in advance, and there's a strong emphasis on following through with defined goals. Time is regarded as a precious resource, with punctuality expected and deadlines taken seriously. The region's businesses operate on a fast-paced schedule, indicative of the broader American value placed on efficiency.

Negotiations: The approach to negotiations in the Great Lakes region is characterized by directness and a straightforward pursuit of fair and beneficial agreements. Parties are expected to be transparent about their needs and constraints, with integrity and fair dealing serving as the foundation for discussions. The goal is often to foster long-term relationships rather than seeking immediate advantages.

Collaboration and Teamwork: Reflecting the region's history of industrial collaboration and unionized labor, there is a strong emphasis on teamwork and collective problem-solving. Despite the competitive market, businesses often seek ways to collaborate and support mutual success, especially in innovation and technological advancements.

Regulatory Compliance and Innovation: Navigating the regulatory landscape, including compliance with environmental, labor, and industry-specific laws, is crucial. At the same time, the region's shift from traditional manufacturing to technology and service-oriented industries highlights a culture of innovation, adaptability, and openness to new ideas.

Humility and Approachability: Despite a professional and often ambitious environment, humility remains a valued trait. Leaders and business professionals are approachable, with a preference for modesty and a grounded demeanor in professional settings.

Combining these insights, successful engagement in the Great Lakes business environment requires a balance of professionalism, clear communication, legal diligence, and a commitment to efficiency and integrity. Understanding and adapting to these cultural norms and legal requirements can facilitate smoother transactions, enhance business relationships, and contribute to long-term success in this economically vibrant and strategically important region of the United States.

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