

An aerial photograph of Nairobi, Kenya, at dusk. The city skyline is visible with several tall buildings, including the Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC) with its distinctive tower. The foreground shows a mix of modern and older buildings, some with lights on, and greenery. The sky is a deep blue with some light clouds.

HOW TO EXPORT TO KENYA

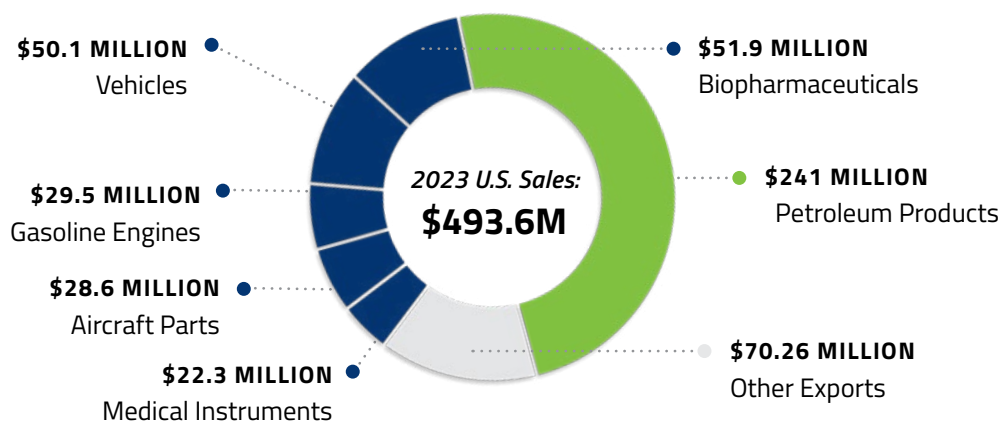
Market Opportunities & Strategies for American Exporters

Based on the U.S. Commercial Service's
[2024 Kenya Country Commercial Guide](#)

WHY EXPORT TO KENYA?

Kenya, with a domestic market of over 50 million people and the fourth-largest economy in sub-Saharan Africa, plays a vital role in regional trade. In 2023, U.S. exports to Kenya reached \$493.6 million, highlighting the country's growing significance as a trading partner for the United States.

Kenya is known for its tech-savvy, English-speaking workforce and is regarded as having the strongest industrial base in East Africa. This has made it an attractive destination for U.S. exporters and investors.



Current Trade Climate

Kenya maintains a market-based economy and is recognized as the financial, economic, commercial, and logistics hub of East Africa. The nation has actively pursued infrastructure development and policy reforms to enhance its business environment. Kenya has built strong bilateral and multilateral trade relationships and is a member of the East African Community (EAC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), and the Africa Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

In July 2022, the United States and Kenya launched negotiations for a Strategic Trade and Investment Partnership (STIP) to enhance trade, attract investment, and support sustainable economic growth. While discussions remain ongoing, the two nations have made steady progress, with the latest round of negotiations taking place in September 2024.



Kenya Quick Facts

COUNTRY SIZE:

224,960 square miles

POPULATION:

55 million people

LANGUAGE(S):

Swahili, English

CAPITAL CITY:

Nairobi

LARGEST CITY:

Nairobi

NOMINAL GDP:

\$108.04 billion
66th highest worldwide

TOTAL IMPORTS:

\$21.2 billion

IMPORTS FROM U.S.:

\$493.6 million (goods)
\$807.35 million (total)

CURRENCY:

Kenyan Shilling (KES)

All quick fact statistics are 2023 approximations. Monetary figures throughout this guide reflect USD.

INDUSTRY OPPORTUNITIES

After years of steady growth, Kenya has transitioned from reliance on traditional industries to emerging as a leader in renewable energy and technological innovation. U.S. companies are increasingly identifying opportunities in these expanding sectors:



Agribusiness

Agriculture is a key sector in Kenya, employing 40% of the workforce and contributing 33% to GDP, with tea, coffee, and flowers being major exports. Despite challenges in productivity, recurring food supply deficits, and limited infrastructure, Kenya uses COMESA and EAC agreements to regulate imports of sensitive commodities like maize, poultry, and rice.



Infrastructure

In 2023, the construction industry in Kenya grew by 4.1%, driven by infrastructure sectors like transportation and real estate, particularly roads, ports, and airports. Due to budget constraints, the government increasingly relies on public-private partnerships (PPP) for infrastructure projects, with an annual financing deficit of \$4 billion to meet the country's needs.



Energy-Electrical Power Systems

Kenya's power sector has grown steadily over the past two decades, driven by an ambitious electrification program and abundant renewable energy resources, with wind, solar, geothermal, and hydro making up about 90% of the energy mix. National electricity access has increased from 32% in 2013 to 84% in 2023, with a goal of achieving universal access by 2030, focusing on rural areas.

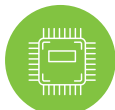


Medical Devices

Kenya's healthcare sector offers significant opportunities, especially for medical equipment suppliers, with a reliance on imports due to limited domestic production. In 2022, the U.S. held a 6.5% share of Kenya's medical device market, primarily in consumables and orthopedics. With the growing demand for healthcare services, Kenya's medical device market is one of the fastest-growing in sub-Saharan Africa.

INDUSTRY OPPORTUNITIES

(cont'd)



Information Technology

Kenya is a leading tech hub in East Africa, with an ICT sector growing 10.8% annually. By 2025, the digital economy is expected to contribute 9.24% to GDP, driven by initiatives like the Digital Superhighway Project and the Kenya Digital Economy Acceleration Project. These efforts expand fiber networks, public Wi-Fi, and digital skills, while supporting sectors like healthcare through eHealth strategies.



Education

In 2023, Kenya's education sector saw growing demand for digital learning tools, vocational training, and higher education programs. Investments in e-learning platforms and technical training are expanding opportunities for both local and international institutions. U.S. education providers are well-positioned due to their reputation for quality and innovation.



Chemicals

In 2023, Kenya's chemical import sector grew, driven by demand for industrial chemicals, fertilizers, and pharmaceuticals. The agriculture sector requires chemical inputs like pesticides and fertilizers, while healthcare expansion fuels demand for medical chemicals. With reliance on imports, Kenya faces supply deficits, but the sector is supported by a regulatory framework ensuring compliance with local quality standards.

SALES STRATEGIES

Kenya's growing consumer market values quality and competitive pricing. The retail sector spans supermarkets, informal markets, and e-commerce. U.S. companies wanting to sell here should endeavor to follow these guidelines:

01

Pricing Models

U.S. goods have an overall good reputation of high quality and good performance, but are relatively expensive, especially because of shipping and other logistical costs. In Kenya's price-sensitive market, businesses prioritize affordable yet high-quality goods, making competitive pricing essential for success.

02

Customer Service

Kenyan consumers have a high standard of customer support. Considered secondary to product and price considerations, after-sales service in Kenya by foreign suppliers is often found lacking. After-sales service—and customer service in general—should be managed closely in order to increase competitiveness. Consider establishing a regional servicing facility which can effectively service and support sales to Kenya.

03

Advertising

The total spending on advertisements in Kenya in 2023 was around KSh 17 billion. With the rise in mobile internet usage and increased digital connectivity, digital advertising saw a significant boost. Businesses looking to expand into Kenya should consider an online advertising strategy for their goods to build awareness.

04

Contract Agreements

In Kenya, contracts are formal agreements, but negotiations may continue even after signing. Trust and mutual respect are crucial, and businesses should remain flexible in their dealings to adapt to local practices. See the complete list of considerations in the [ITA's Country Commercial Guide for Kenya](#).



Networking

Organizations

A list of U.S. and Kenyan partners and organizations that can help your business in Kenya include:

1. [Kenya Association of Manufacturers](#)
2. [Kenya Export Promotion and Branding Agency](#)
3. [Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry](#)
4. [Kenya Investment Authority](#)
5. [Kenya Commercial Arbitration Centre](#)

Professional Services

If you need additional support for your export business, refer to the [Commercial Service's business providers directory](#). These companies may provide assistance.

IMPORTANT MARKET DIFFERENCES

U.S. companies face challenges in Kenya, including complex regulations, bureaucratic inefficiencies, price sensitivity, and strong local competition. Exporters must also navigate infrastructure constraints and differing industry standards.

In general, businesses exporting to Kenya must be aware of several differences, including:

Customs Regulations

Kenya operates an import declaration system which requires importers to file a Pre-Export Verification of Conformity (PVoC) for most goods. While standard shipments are cleared upon submission of accurate documentation, high-risk items may be subject to additional inspections and testing. Businesses with a history of compliance typically face fewer delays. Exporters must submit export documentation through Kenya's Integrated Customs Management System (iCMS). Most goods can be freely exported, except for restricted items listed under Kenya's export control regulations.

Labels & Marking

Kenya has specific labeling and marking requirements for various products, including pharmaceuticals, food, and biotechnology-related goods. The Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) mandates labeling in English or Swahili, with detailed product information, including ingredients, expiration dates, and country of origin. Labels for imported goods must comply with Kenya's Standards Act, and certain products require KEBS approval before market entry.

Government Contracts

U.S. companies seeking government procurement opportunities in Kenya must engage with the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA). It is advisable to have a local representative to track tender opportunities and navigate regulatory requirements. Bidders must register on the Public Procurement Information Portal (PPIP) and meet local content requirements for certain contracts. Foreign firms may participate but often need a local partner. Failure to register or comply with procurement guidelines may lead to bid rejection.



LEARN MORE

The information presented in this brochure is sourced from the U.S. Commercial Service's [Country Commercial Guides](#) (CCGs), which includes in-depth reports on market conditions, opportunities, regulations and business customs for more than 140 countries. Prepared by U.S. Embassy staff worldwide and updated annually, the CCGs are the premier trusted source of market intelligence.

Talk to an Expert:

Get Trade Assistance

Ready to get started? Contact an international trade specialist at the U.S. Commercial Service. They can provide general export assistance or help determine if Kenya is the right market for you. [Find the nearest office](#) in the U.S. and other countries.

Next Steps:

Learn the Basics of Exporting

Whether you're new to exporting or just want to see new ideas and techniques, the Basic Guide eBook will give you all the information you need. You'll learn about creating a plan, financing, handling orders, shipping, legal concerns, and more. [Claim your free copy.](#)

Next Steps:

Access Financing Support

As an exporter, you face challenges most businesses never consider. [Download the Trade Finance Guide](#) to learn about accessing capital, types of sales terms, and more. Or, [request a free consultation](#) to discuss how EXIM can help you protect your business.



This is a descriptive summary to be used only as a general introductory reference tool. The complete terms and conditions of the policy are set forth in the policy text, applications, and endorsements.