



Investing in Gabon:

Unlocking Opportunities in Central Africa



STATISTICS

- **Gross Domestic Product (GDP):** Approximately \$16.7 billion USD (2020 estimate).
- **GDP Growth Rate:** Projected growth of 2.8% for 2021, with expectations of continued growth in subsequent years.
- **Population:** Over 2.2 million people.
- **Official Language:** French.
- **Currency:** Central African CFA Franc (XAF).
- **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):** FDI inflows reached approximately \$1.5 billion USD in recent years.
- **Memberships:**
 - United Nations (UN)
 - African Union (AU)
 - Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)
 - Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie
 - Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)
 - World Trade Organization (WTO)
- **Ease of Doing Business Ranking:** Ranked 169th out of 190 countries (World Bank Doing Business Report 2020).
- **Literacy Rate:** Approximately 84%.
- **Time Zone:** West Africa Time (WAT), UTC+1.
- **Natural Resources:** Rich in oil, manganese, uranium, timber, and iron ore.

INTRODUCTION

Gabon, a jewel in the heart of Central Africa, is a nation blessed with abundant natural resources, political stability, and a commitment to sustainable economic development. As one of Africa's leading oil producers, Gabon has leveraged its resource wealth to invest in infrastructure, healthcare, and education, fostering a conducive environment for business and investment. The country's strategic location along the Atlantic coast provides access to regional and international markets, positioning Gabon as a gateway to Central Africa. With a progressive government eager to diversify the economy and attract foreign investment, Gabon offers immense opportunities for investors seeking to tap into a dynamic and growing market.

BACKGROUND

Since gaining independence in 1960, Gabon has enjoyed relative political stability, which has been instrumental in promoting economic growth and development. The nation's economy has historically been driven by oil production, accounting for a significant portion of its GDP and export earnings. Recognizing the importance of economic diversification, the Gabonese government has implemented the Emerging Gabon Strategic Plan (Plan Stratégique Gabon Émergent - PSGE), aiming to transform the country into an emerging economy by focusing on three pillars: Green Gabon (sustainable forestry and agriculture), Industrial Gabon (manufacturing and processing), and Service Gabon (services sector development).

Gabon boasts a high urbanization rate, with a well-developed infrastructure network compared to many of its regional counterparts. Investments in ports, roads, telecommunications, and energy have enhanced the country's capacity to support business operations. The government has also undertaken reforms to improve the business climate, streamline administrative procedures, and offer incentives to foreign investors.

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BENEFITS OF INVESTING IN GABON

Abundant Natural Resources

- » **Oil and Gas Wealth:**
 - » Gabon is one of Africa's major oil producers, offering opportunities in exploration, production, and ancillary services.
 - » Presence of untapped offshore and onshore reserves invites investment in exploration activities.
- » **Mineral Resources:**
 - » Rich deposits of manganese, uranium, iron ore, and gold.
 - » Gabon is the world's second-largest producer of manganese.
- » **Forestry and Timber:**
 - » Over 85% of the country is covered by forests, providing high-quality tropical timber.
 - » Sustainable forestry initiatives open avenues for responsible investment.

Strategic Geographic Location

- » **Gateway to Central Africa:**
 - » Borders Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon, and the Republic of Congo, facilitating regional trade.
 - » Access to the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) market.
- » **Atlantic Coastline:**
 - » Port of Owendo and Port-Gentil facilitate international maritime trade.
 - » Opportunities in port development and logistics services.

Political Stability and Governance

- » **Stable Political Environment:**
 - » A consistent government focused on economic development and investment promotion.
- » **Legal Framework:**
 - » Business laws aligned with the Organization for the Harmonization of Business Law in Africa (OHADA).
 - » Protection of investments through membership in international agreements.

Investment-Friendly Policies

- » **Emerging Gabon Strategic Plan (PSGE):**
 - » Government commitment to diversification and modernization of the economy.
 - » Emphasis on public-private partnerships and investment promotion.
- » **Tax Incentives:**
 - » Attractive fiscal policies for foreign investors, including tax exemptions and reductions.
- » **Special Economic Zones (SEZs):**
 - » Development of SEZs like the Nkok Special Economic Zone offering benefits such as simplified customs procedures and infrastructure support.

Developed Infrastructure

- » **Transportation Network:**
 - » Expanding road networks connecting major cities and neighboring countries.
 - » Modernization of Libreville International Airport enhancing connectivity.
- » **Energy Sector:**
 - » Investments in power generation and distribution to ensure reliable electricity supply.
- » **Telecommunications:**
 - » Advancements in ICT infrastructure provide opportunities in the digital economy.

Skilled Workforce

- » **Education Initiatives:**
- » Government investment in education to enhance human capital.
- » Availability of skilled labor in sectors like oil and gas, mining, and services.
- » **Multilingual Population:**
- » French is the official language, with English increasingly taught, facilitating international business.

Membership in Regional and International Organizations

- » **ECCAS and OPEC Memberships:**
- » Access to regional markets and cooperation frameworks.
- » **Investment Protection Agreements:**
- » Bilateral agreements provide security and confidence to foreign investors.

RELEVANT AGENCIES

Gabonese Agency for Investment Promotion (Agence Gabonaise de Promotion des Investissements - AGPI)

- » **Role:** Primary agency responsible for promoting and facilitating investment in Gabon.
- » **Services:**
- » Provides information on investment opportunities and procedures.
- » Assists with company registration, permits, and licensing.
- » Offers aftercare support to ensure investor satisfaction.
- » **Website:** www.investgabon.ga
- » **Contact:**
- » **Email:** contact@investgabon.ga
- » **Phone:** +241 01 79 64 70

Ministry of Investment Promotion, Public Works, Transport, Housing, and Tourism

- » **Role:** Develops policies and strategies to enhance investment and infrastructure development.
- » **Services:**
- » Provides guidance on regulations, policies, and investment incentives.
- » Facilitates public-private partnerships and infrastructure projects.
- » **Website:** www.gabonstructures.gouv.ga
- » **Contact:**
- » **Email:** info@gabonstructures.gouv.ga
- » **Phone:** +241 01 76 13 94

Gabon Special Economic Zone (GSEZ)

- » **Role:** Manages the Special Economic Zones, including the Nkok SEZ.
- » **Services:**
- » Offers industrial land, infrastructure, and facilities.
- » Provides one-stop-shop services for administrative procedures.
- » Facilitates customs and tax incentives for companies operating within the SEZ.
- » **Website:** www.gsez.com
- » **Contact:**
- » **Email:** info@gsez.com
- » **Phone:** +241 01 76 12 56

National Agency for the Promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises (Agence Nationale de Promotion des PME)

- » **Role:** Supports the development of SMEs, fostering entrepreneurship and innovation.
- » **Services:**
- » Provides training, financing, and advisory services to SMEs.
- » Encourages partnerships between foreign investors and local enterprises.
- » **Website:** www.anpme.ga
- » **Contact:**
- » **Email:** contact@anpme.ga
- » **Phone:** +241 01 74 19 87

Chamber of Commerce, Agriculture, Industry, and Mines of Gabon

- » **Role:** Represents the interests of businesses and facilitates commerce.
- » **Services:**
- » Offers networking opportunities and business matchmaking.
- » Provides market information and support services.

- » **Website:** www.ccaim-gabon.com
- » **Contact:**
- » **Email:** contact@ccaim-gabon.com
- » **Phone:** +241 01 76 08 42

INCENTIVES FOR INVESTORS

Tax Incentives

- » **Corporate Tax Reductions:**
- » Reduced corporate income tax rates for qualifying investments.
- » Tax holidays ranging from 5 to 10 years in priority sectors.
- » **Customs Duties Exemptions:**
- » Exemptions or reductions on import duties for capital goods, equipment, and inputs.
- » **Value-Added Tax (VAT) Exemptions:**
- » Exemption from VAT on goods and services related to approved investment projects.

Special Economic Zones (SEZs) Benefits

- » **Nkok Special Economic Zone:**
- » Tax incentives such as zero customs duties and VAT during the license period.
- » Simplified administrative procedures through a one-stop-shop system.
- » Access to developed infrastructure and utilities.
- » Investment Guarantees and Protection
- » **Legal Framework:**
- » Protection of property rights and investments under Gabonese law.
- » Adherence to international conventions on arbitration and dispute resolution.
- » **Repatriation of Funds:**
- » Freedom to repatriate profits, dividends, and capital.
- » Access to foreign exchange facilitated by the regional central bank (BEAC).

Financial Support and Grants

- » **Investment Grants:**
- » Financial assistance for projects contributing to economic diversification.
- » **Training Support:**
- » Subsidies for workforce training and skills development.
- » **Access to Financing:**
- » Availability of credit facilities through national banks and development institutions.

Sector-Specific Incentives

- » **Agriculture and Agro-Processing:**
- » Enhanced incentives for investments in sustainable agriculture and value-added processing.
- » **Tourism Development:**
- » Tax benefits for constructing hotels, resorts, and eco-tourism facilities.
- » **Renewable Energy:**
- » Incentives for investing in hydropower, solar, and other renewable energy projects.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVESTORS

Oil and Gas Sector

- » **Exploration and Production:**
- » Opportunities in offshore and onshore exploration blocks.
- » Enhanced oil recovery projects and natural gas development.
- » **Support Services:**
- » Investment in drilling services, equipment supply, and logistics.

Mining and Minerals

- » **Manganese Mining:**
- » Expansion of existing operations and development of new mines.
- » **Gold and Iron Ore:**
- » Exploration and extraction projects in untapped reserves.
- » **Value Addition:**
- » Processing of minerals to increase export value.

Agriculture and Agro-Processing

- » **Sustainable Agriculture:**
- » Development of plantations for rubber, palm oil, and cocoa.

- » **Agro-Processing Industries:**
- » Value-added processing of agricultural products for domestic and export markets.
- » **Livestock and Fisheries:**
- » Investment in aquaculture, fishing, and meat production.

Forestry and Timber

- » **Sustainable Forestry Management:**
- » Opportunities in logging, processing, and certified timber exports.
- » **Wood Processing Industries:**
- » Investment in plywood, furniture, and paper production facilities.

Infrastructure and Construction

- » **Transportation Projects:**
- » Development of roads, bridges, ports, and airports to enhance connectivity.
- » **Urban Development:**
- » Construction of housing, commercial buildings, and industrial parks.
- » **Public-Private Partnerships:**
- » Collaboration on infrastructure projects under the PSGE.

Energy Sector

- » **Renewable Energy Projects:**
- » Hydropower development utilizing abundant river systems.
- » Solar and wind energy projects to diversify energy sources.
- » **Power Infrastructure:**
- » Investment in transmission lines and grid expansion.

Tourism and Hospitality

- » **Eco-Tourism:**
- » Development of lodges and resorts in national parks like Loango and Ivindo.
- » **Cultural Tourism:**
- » Promotion of Gabon's rich cultural heritage and festivals.
- » **Cruise and Maritime Tourism:**
- » Investment in port facilities and services catering to cruise ships.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

- » **Digital Economy:**
- » Opportunities in telecommunications, internet services, and e-commerce.
- » **Technology Hubs:**
- » Development of innovation centers and tech parks.
- » **E-Government Services:**
- » Collaboration on digitizing public services and administration.

CONCLUSION

Gabon presents a compelling proposition for investors seeking opportunities in a stable and resource-rich environment. The country's commitment to economic diversification, combined with its strategic location and investment-friendly policies, creates a fertile ground for business growth. Whether in the extractive industries, agriculture, infrastructure, or emerging sectors like ICT and renewable energy, Gabon offers a range of prospects for forward-thinking investors.

By choosing to invest in Gabon, businesses can contribute to the nation's sustainable development goals while accessing the potential for significant returns. The supportive government framework, coupled with abundant natural resources and a strategic position in Central Africa, positions Gabon as an attractive destination for investment.

Embark on a journey of growth and success by exploring the opportunities that Gabon has to offer.

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- » **Website:** www.imf.org/en/Countries/GAB
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- » **Website:** unctad.org
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- » **Website:** www.opec.org
- » Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC)
- » **Website:** www.cemac.int