

# YOUR LOCAL PARTNER

## Benin

Do you want to expand your business? Are you looking for the right partner to support you? Societe Generale Benin is the partner you are looking for when doing business in Benin. Societe Generale Benin will work with you to achieve your business objectives, including your international trade transactions.

### ABOUT THE COUNTRY

Benin is a country that welcomes investments:

- a stable political environment: the “model of democracy in Africa”,
- a government committed to economic development,
- a Member State of the OHADA (Organisation for the Harmonisation of Business Law in Africa),
- a good education system and regulatory framework
- trade channels with other countries comprising the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)
- an economy based on port activity (entry to the hinterland and Nigeria) and cotton and cashew nuts/shea.

### IDENTITY CARD

**Capital :** Porto-Novo

**Area:** 114,763 sq. km

**Population:** 11.8 million

**Local currency:** CFA franc (XOF)

**GDP/Capita:** \$902/hab

**PPP/Capita:** \$3,446/hab

**Growth rate:** 0.7%

**Inflation rate (average):** -0.3%

**Budget balance/GDP:** -2.3%

**Current account/GDP:** -6.1%

**External deficit/GDP:** 39.67%

**Rating:** B+ by Standard & Poor's, B2 by Moody's

**Economic sectors (as % of GDP):**

Services 53.1%, Agriculture 24.5%, Industry 22.4%

**Export partners:**

India 13%, Niger 9.6%, Malaisie 8.8%, Singapour 7.9%

**Import partners:**

France 11.7%, China 10.8%, India 9.8%, Togo 8.5%

**Time zone:** UTC/GMT +1 h

**Language(s):** French, English

**For more information:**  
[www.import-export.societegenerale.fr](http://www.import-export.societegenerale.fr)

### SOCIETE GENERALE BENIN



Ten years after opening its first branch in February 2003, Societe Generale Benin celebrated a decade of activity during which it has developed a major presence in the Benin banking sector.

Societe Generale Benin is the country's No. 1 and only international bank.

The close collaboration between the bank's customers and its teams is built on core priorities such as quality customer relations, team spirit and business development.

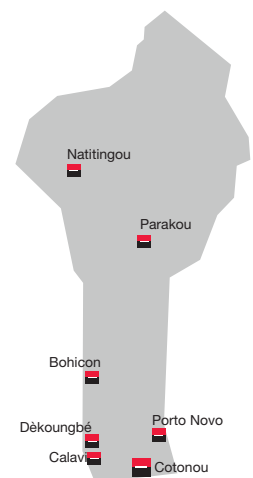
With a wealth of tailored solutions, Societe Generale Benin is a committed partner for your local and international day-to-day operations and projects. Business experts of its Global Transaction Banking set-up support clients in the areas of cash management, international trade finance, correspondent banking and related foreign exchange transactions.

**11 BRANCHES**

**32 ATM**

**69,000 CLIENTS** with  
**5,000 CORPORATES**

**260 EMPLOYEES**



**YOUR CONTACT:**  
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# SOCIETE GENERALE BENIN PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

## DAILY BANKING

- CURRENT ACCOUNT in local currency
- DOMESTIC MEANS OF PAYMENT: transfers, commercial papers, cheques
- INTERNATIONAL PAYMENT SERVICES: forex transactions, transfers, cheques, commercial papers, documentary collection/credit, stand-by letter of credit, international guarantees
- ELECTRONIC PAYMENT SERVICES: corporate cards, payroll cards, withdrawal and/or payment cards, electronic payment terminals
- REMOTE BANKING AND CASH MANAGEMENT:
  - VOCALIA, account consultation by phone
  - MESSALIA, SMS alert on mobile
  - SOGEBENIN, remote management of your domestic accounts
  - SOGECASH WEB, e-banking cash management solution (account-statements consultation, online payment, automatic account reconciliation, etc.) whatever the country where your accounts are domiciled
  - VIREXPRESS, mass transfers, automatic handling of payroll and supplier payments
  - End of day MT940 statements
  - Intraday MT942 statements (provisional account situation before end of day processing)
- OTHER: safe deposit box rental

## SAVINGS AND INVESTMENTS

- TERM DEPOSITS, INTEREST-BEARING ACCOUNTS, SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

## FINANCING SOLUTIONS

- FUNDING THE OPERATING CYCLE: overdraft facilities, Loan facility convention, commercial paper and documentary credit discounts, stock financing, spot credit, campaign credit, ahead market, endorsements, deposits, financial guarantees
- INVESTMENT FINANCING: medium- and long-term loans in local currency (financing of capital goods, the means of production, real estate and expansion work)
- structured finance, project finance and syndication

## STAFF BENEFITS

- STAFF CONVENTIONS: preferential rates on loans, attractive conditions on products and services for staff

## WHAT TO KNOW

### STARTING A BUSINESS IN BENIN?

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Benin now has a single investment office where a business can be set up (GUFÉ), which also has a business registry. The time needed to complete the formalities for starting your own business is three business days.

There are different types of companies: Limited Liability Companies (minimum share capital of CFA Franc 1 million) or Public Limited Companies (minimum share capital of CFA Franc 10 million).

A foreign company may open a non-resident account. As operating constraints can be considerable, it is better to set up a branch office. Companies can operate in this way for a maximum of 2 years. At the end of the 2 years, they must either close the non-resident account (unless it is extended by the Ministry of Finance and the Economy as an exception) or set up a new entity under Benin law.

Foreign investment regime: incentives (5 investment schemes) have been set up to foster industrial investments. These measures, which mostly comprise tax breaks, may be spread over a maximum of 10 years.

### IMPORTS OF GOODS AND SERVICES?

Foreign exchange controls on international transactions are fairly strict and are the same for all WAEMU countries.

A number of documents justifying the economic interest of a transaction (invoice, transport document, record of contract, etc.) are required to settle the import of goods and services in a foreign currency.

Proof that the goods and services were consumed on Benin soil must be provided (e.g. a customs document), and the prior authorisation of the Ministry of Finance and the Economy must also be obtained.

Any capital, legal profits and income from the sale of a business may be transferred after all local taxes and duties have been paid.

### INTER-COMPANY PAYMENTS?

Benin's finance laws stipulate that a payment instrument must be used for transactions of more than CFA Franc 0.1 million. However, cash-based transactions are widespread given the size of the informal sector.

A range of instruments is available to businesses for their transactions. Cheques and transfers are paid electronically and are automated on a regional and national scale which means transactions are processed within 48 hours.

Foreign payments must comply with foreign exchange controls.

**Societe Generale Benin is there to help, so ask advice from your direct contact on how to accomplish your international projects.**

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### YOUR DIRECT CONTACT AT SOCIETE GENERALE BENIN:

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