

Exporter's Internet Search Wizard

By
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This *Exporter's Internet Search Wizard* was developed by Maurice Kogon as a fast way to find specific export information and tools by “objective” of the search. Users can get directly to the resources they seek by clicking on any of the 10 listed objectives of interest. The Wizard is also an export tutorial. It not only links to the relevant resources, but also explains how the information can be applied.

Export Search Objectives

- I. Assess & Develop Export Readiness
 - A. Assess their export readiness & potential
 - B. Learn the basic steps and procedures in exporting
 - C. Find the correct classification codes for specific export products
 - D. Understand the specialized terminology used in exporting
 - E. Convert U.S. and foreign weights, measures and standards
 - F. Other handy references
- II. Identify Best Export Markets
- III. Determine Best Entry Strategies for Export Markets
- IV. Find International Trade Contacts & Leads
 - A. Trade Contact Lists
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 - C. Major Project Opportunities
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I. Assess and Develop Export Readiness

Roughly 85% of U.S. manufacturers do not export. They are either not yet export-interested or export-ready, even though many have exportable products. By limiting sales to the U.S. market (just 4% of the world's population and 1/3rd of the world's purchasing power), they are missing out on the huge potential of the far larger global market. The resources discussed below offer a wealth of information and tools to help start-up exporters:

- Assess their export readiness & potential
- Learn the basic steps and procedures in exporting
- Find the correct classification codes for specific export products
- Understand the specialized terminology used in exporting
- Convert U.S. into foreign weights, measures and standards, and vice versa

A. Assess Export Readiness & Potential

Maurice Kogon's free, online [*Export Readiness Assessment System*](#) (ERAS) offers a customized assessment and diagnosis for start-up exporters, based on answers to 23 questions about their current operations, organization, management attitudes, and products. ERAS provides immediate feedback in the form of an export readiness "score," a detailed assessment of the company's export strengths and weaknesses, and suggested next steps to overcome weaknesses, build on strengths, and improve export capability and performance.

B. How-to-Export Guides

Maurice Kogon's [*Exporting Basics*](#) and [*Export FAQs*](#) cover all aspects of exporting, including the how-to's of market analysis, planning, distribution, pricing, promotion, financing and logistics. Other useful guides include:

USDOC - A Basic Guide to Exporting	Export-U Webinars and Training
Export- Import FAQs (ITA)	SBA Small Business Guide to Exporting, 3rd Ed.
SUSTA - Basics of Exporting	Exporting: A Business of Details
Four Common Misconceptions About Exporting	Exporting Basics Podcasts
How Do I Go Global	How to Start an Export Company
Costs of Developing a Foreign Market for SMEs	How to Start Your Own Export/Import Business
	How to Find an Export Management Company

C. Commodity Classification Systems

Exporters should know the correct commodity classification code for their products under various U.S. and international coding systems. These codes are needed to find product-specific import duties, as well as statistics on exports, imports, manufacturing and employment. For quick lookups to the commodity classification systems most often used, see:

- **[Schedule B Export Codes](#)** are used for U.S. [Automated Export System](#) (AES) filings and to find U.S. export and import statistics by product and country. Search by keyword or browse through categories to find up to 10-digit Schedule B number for specific products.
- **[Harmonized System \(HS\) Codes](#)** are identical to Schedule B codes up to the first 6 digits. HS codes are used to find U.S. and foreign import duties and U.S. and foreign trade statistics by product and country. Scroll down to find the HS code for specific categories.
- **[Binding Rulings, US Customs](#)** are used when the HS number for a product was not obvious and had to be determined by an official ruling. Enter keyword in the Search field to find the HS code assigned.
- **[Standard International Trade Classification \(SITC\) Codes](#)** are used to find international trade statistics compiled by the United Nations. Scroll down to find the SITC code for a specified product, up to 5 digits.
- **Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) Codes and North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) Codes** are used to find industry-specific statistics on U.S. manufacturers and employment. NAICS codes essentially replaced the older SIC codes, but both are still in use. The [SIC-NAICS Code Concordance](#) correlates NAICS codes with the corresponding SIC codes. The [Commodity Translation Wizard](#) can be used to convert an 8-digit or 10-digit HS item number into its corresponding SIC, SITC or NAICS code number; or an SIC, SITC or NAIC classification code number into its corresponding 8-digit and 10-digit HS item numbers.
- **Export Commodity Control Numbers (ECCN)** are used solely for U.S. export control purposes, to determine whether an export license would be needed to export a particular product. ECCN numbers can be searched alphabetically ([Commerce Control List – click on Commerce Control List Index](#)).

D. Trade Terms and Acronyms

Many terms and acronyms are used in international trade, particularly for shipping, trade finance, and regulatory purposes. Exporters need to know what these terms and acronyms mean and how they apply. The [International Trade Compliance Institute](#) (ITCI) [Regulatory Database](#) has a comprehensive list of trade terms and acronyms searchable by keyword or category.

Here are other quick look-ups for virtually any international trade term or acronym:

Export.Gov Terms of Trade	Import-Export Made Easy Glossary
Dictionary of Export, Trade & Shipping Terms	Glossary of Shipping Terms
UN/ITC Glossary on Trade Financing Terms	IMF Glossary of Financial Terms
Foreign Exchange Glossary	Glossary of Economic Terms (FRB)
Deardorff's Glossary of International Economics	INCOTERMS 2010 Chart
Hyperdictionary of Electronic Commerce Law	Diplomatic Acronyms & Abbreviations
BIS Acronyms	A Guide to WTO Speak (Glossary)
Business Roundtable Language of Trade, 2011	An Informal Press Guide to 'WTO Speak'

E. International Conversions

There are wide differences among countries in their currencies, time zones, units of weight and measure, languages, and the like. Exporters need to be able to convert these foreign standards and measures to their own, and vice versa. Here are sources for commonly required international conversions:

15 Handy Conversion Calculators	Foreign Exchange Currency Converter
Elapsed Time Calculator	International Time Converter
Interactive Units Converter	International Unit Converter
Volumetric Weight Calculator-Converter	Distance/Mileage Calculator
International Dialing Codes	Electric Power Around the World
Interpower: Guide to Worldwide Power Outlet Patterns	International Voltage/Cycle Chart

F. Other Handy References

Finding Information on Search Engines	NTIS FedWorld (Government Information)
A-Z Index of U.S. Government Agencies	Translate Texts and Webpages
Online Language Dictionaries	Maps of the World from Embassy World
MapQuest World Maps	World Weather
USPS Zip Code Look-Up	Area Code Look-Up
International Postal Rates	World Holidays
Container Specifications	Hazardous Materials Table
Foreign Per Diem Rates (State Department)	Passport & Visa Requirements (by country)
Internet Penetration Rates – Top 50 Countries	Internet World Statistics 2012

II. Identify Best Export Markets

The nearly 200 different countries in the world offer many options, but not all are worth pursuing, especially at once. Don't waste time and money on lesser markets. When first starting, aim for top 3-5 "best" markets and expand from there as they work out. The "best" markets offer a combination of high comfort for the company (language and cultural affinity) and high potential for the products (large, emerging, fast-growing, receptive, open, limited competition).

You can find high potential markets with a little research and screening. Within the [Trade Information Database](#) of the [International Trade Compliance Institute \(ITCI\) Website](#), the sections on *Trade & Economic Data* and *Foreign Market Research* link to extensive information to help identify and size up the better markets.

- In the *Trade & Economic Data* section, look particularly at the categories for [U.S. Trade Data](#), [Foreign Trade Data](#), and [World Economic & Demographic Data](#).
- In the *Foreign Market Research* section, check out the categories for [Manufactured Products Research](#), [Food & Agriculture Products Research](#), [Services Sector Research](#), and [Countries & Regions Research](#).

Here are 5 Q&As to help identify your high potential markets:

1. Where are U.S. products like mine mostly exported to? Look for the largest and fastest growing export destinations for the product over the past several years -- see [USITC DataWeb](#) (free registration) *or* USDOC's [Trade Stats Express](#) for official U.S. export/import statistics by commodity and country.

2. Which countries are mostly importing products like mine? Look for countries with the largest and fastest growing imports of the product and strong U.S. market shares over the past several years. For foreign import statistics by commodity and country, see [UN Commodity Trade Statistics Database \(UN Comtrade\)](#), [ITC Import/Export Statistics \(By Sector & Country\)](#), and [ITC Import/Export Statistics \(by Country & Sector\)](#)

3. Where would U.S. products like mine be most wanted, competitive, welcome, and easiest to sell? U.S. Department of Commerce/USCS [Market Research Reports \(MRRs\)](#) and U.S. Department of Agriculture [Global Agricultural Information Network \(GAIN\)](#) reports are product-specific by country and address these issues in great detail. To get the full text of the MRRs, you will first need to plug in your User ID and Password (free registration to acquire). Then, from the search screen, select the relevant industry and sector and choose Market Research Report as the Report Type.

5. Which markets do the experts consider most promising? [Country Commercial Guides \(CCGs\)](#), updated annually by U.S. commercial and agricultural specialists in each country, identify "Leading Sectors for U.S. Exports" in Chapter 4. To access CCGs from the search screen, plug in the country wanted and select Country Commercial guide as the Report Type. The Recommended markets are also identified in the [Market Research Reports](#) cited above.

III. Determine Best Entry Strategies for Export Markets

Foreign markets differ in many ways -- income levels, standards, climates, sizes of people and space, language, religion, cultural preferences and taboos, business practices, etc. These differences must be accommodated in market entry planning to avoid costly mistakes. A market entry plan should at least address strategies for distribution, promotion, competition, market access and localization.

Distribution strategy -- Distribution options include appointing local agents or distributors; hiring expatriates or overseas staff, licensing technology, and setting up overseas sales or branch offices, joint ventures, or wholly-owned subsidiaries. For recommended distribution strategies in specific markets, see the chapter on "Selling U.S. Products & Services" in [Country Commercial Guides](#) (CCGs). Other sources are industry/product-specific [Market Research Reports](#) and [Global Agricultural Information Network](#) (GAIN) reports.

Promotion strategy – Promotion options include your company's Website, direct marketing (Email, Fax and snail mail), press releases, paid ads, trade shows, and sales trips. For recommended promotion strategies in specific markets, see the chapter on "Selling U.S. Products & Services" in [Country Commercial Guides](#) (CCGs). See also [Trade Event Resources & Schedules](#), [Worldwide Marketing Media](#), and [Trade Promotion & Matchmaking Services](#) in the **Trade Promotion** area of the ITCI Website.

Competitive strategy -- Competitive factors/practices include price, quality, service, credit, and timely delivery. For recommended promotion strategies in specific markets, see the chapter on "Selling U.S. Products & Services" in [Country Commercial Guides](#) (CCGs). Other sources are industry/product-specific [Market Research Reports](#) and [Global Agricultural Information Network](#) (GAIN) reports.

Market access strategy – Ease of market access depends mostly on the whether the country's import duties and non-tariff barriers are low or onerous. Low barriers are conducive to direct exporting. Higher barriers may suggest producing within the market, seeking different classifications with lower duties, or modifying the product to comply with a health, safety or technical standard. Import duties by country and product can be found in the ITCI Website's [U.S. and Foreign Import Duties](#) section, particularly in [Country-Specific Tariff and Tax Information](#). Non-tariff barriers by country, including technical/legal requirements, are covered in the chapter on Trade Regulations & Standards in [Country Commercial Guides](#) (CCGs). Other sources are industry/product-specific [Market Research Reports](#) and in the ITCI Website's [Foreign Trade Laws & Regulations](#) section, particularly in [National Trade Estimate Reports on Foreign Trade Barriers](#).

Localization strategy - Local business practices, tastes and cultural imperatives, including needs to comply by adapting the product, packaging or sales literature, are covered in [International Business Etiquette & Culture](#) reports, [Country Cultural Profiles Project](#), [Market Research Reports](#), and [Country Studies](#) (formerly *Army Area Handbooks*).

IV. Find International Trade Contacts & Leads

Exporters cannot survive on unsolicited business. They must aggressively seek and pursue potential suppliers, buyers and distributors. Finding the “right” contacts for each purpose and market is crucial.

- U.S. producers that want intermediaries to handle their export business would look for Export Management Companies (EMCs) or Export Trading Companies (ETCs).
- U.S. EMCs and ETCs would look for such suppliers to represent as export clients.
- Both direct exporters and intermediaries would look for overseas business partners -- buyers, agents or distributors -- to generate ongoing export sales. Agent/distributor selection is especially important. A poor overseas rep could seriously hamper you in possibly lucrative markets, perhaps indefinitely in countries that impede termination of agent/distributor agreements. Internet sources can only take you so far. They can identify potential contacts and leads, but you must do the due diligence to vet them.

A. Trade Contact Lists

Specialized global and country-specific directories offer selective searching to identify potential U.S. suppliers and intermediaries and foreign buyers, distributors, and manufacturers.

Directories of U.S. Producers and Intermediaries

SBA Pro-Net SME Manufacturers	Kompas USA Directory
ExportUSA (formerly CNUSA)	ThomasNet
Export Yellow Pages	GlobalTradeNet Directory of U.S. EMCs
Export Bureau- Manufacturer Export Directory	U.S. Trading Companies & Agents

Directories of Global Manufacturers

Wand Global Trade Directory	Export Bureau Global Directory
TradeMama Int'l Trade Directory	Global Sources
Kompas Worldwide Company Directory	Thomas Global Supplier Directory

Directories of Global Importers & Distributors

Int'l Trading Companies & Distributors	World Directory of Importers' Associations
International Importers- Import Bureau	Import Genius

Region/Country Trade Directories

Canadian Importers Database	Asian Sources
Chile Importers	China Sources Directory
BrazilBiz	Trade-India
EU Business/Europages Company Directory	Companies of Africa

B. “Hot” Trade Leads

Clearly, the best leads are the first-hand leads you uncover on foreign business trips and trade events or that your overseas reps find for you. While better, these leads are also more costly to develop. If you don't yet have overseas reps, or can't afford overseas trade events or sales trips, give the "second-hand" leads a try. However, since your competitors can learn about them too, you want to follow up quickly on these leads. “Hot” trade lead sources include:

USDOC Trade Opportunities	Export Bureau Global Directory
FITA Trade Leads	Alibaba Buy/Sell Leads
Worldwide Buy/Sell Leads from TooToo.com	Euro Trade Leads
Federal Business Opportunities	Trade Leads from Japan
Int'l Leads: Post Offers, Search for Buyers	

C. Major Project Opportunities

Some of the best “big-ticket” leads are for development projects still in the planning stage. These future projects offer opportunities for equipment, supplies and services of all kinds. They often have foreign government backing and assured financing from international development banks. You can find advance notice of proposed projects in:

World Bank Int'l Business Opportunities	North American Development Bank Info
African Development Bank Opportunities	Japanese Government Procurement Notices
Asian Development Bank Opportunities	Trade Development Agency (TDA) Pipeline
European Bank's Opportunities	TDA Feasibility Studies & Projects
Inter-American Development Bank Projects	

V. Advertise & Promote to International Markets

Exporters that aren't known abroad attract no business, so exposure is a must. The Internet is a low cost, global promotional medium. Promotion methods typically used in exporting are described in Maurice Kogon's [Exporting Basics](#) (pp. 25-27) and other export guides on the [ITCI Website](#) listed in the [Export Guides](#) section. Promotional techniques that work well in particular countries are discussed in [Country Commercial Guides](#) (CCGs) and in [Market Research Reports](#) as they relate to industry-specific promotion in the country.

Company Web Pages can be virtual company/product catalogs, with text, images, price sheets, and order forms. The audience is international, whether intended or not. However, Web Page exposure has limits for exporters. Finding any one Web Page among millions is a chore, and most of the companies don't or won't export. This may deter Web searches by importers. If you want Web searchers to know you are already exporting or open to it, make that clear on your website and consider tweaks that might make your site more appealing to a foreign buyer audience.

Listings in Internet export directories increase your chances to be found and also indicate your interest in exporting. There are two types of export directories – company-specific and product-specific. An export company directory essentially lists the companies by name and industry category. Most such directories provide limited details about a listed company’s export products (e.g., [Export Yellow Pages](#)). An export product directory lists the products each company offers for export, often with detailed descriptions and images (e.g., [ExportUSA](#)). When given the opportunity, it’s best to provide as much information as possible in your offer, to reassure potential respondents that you are a serious and reliable supplier. It’s especially helpful to be specific in describing your export product (specifications, uses, benefits), quantity available, price and delivery options, your bona fides, and what you would like to know from respondents. Also, use discretion in selecting trade lead systems. Most allow anyone to post an export offer and have little or no quality control.

Press releases and paid ads can be placed in print media in almost every country. See [Newspapers of the World](#) and [International Advertising Research Center](#) for worldwide marketing media.

Global Media	Online Newspaper Directory for the World
Directory of World Newspapers, By Country	RefDesk - USA & Worldwide Newspapers
World Newspapers Online	Internet Public Library - Newspapers & Magazines

Trade shows. They're costly, but a trade show puts you face-to-face with many potential customers, all able to see you and your products first hand. You can confer one-on-one, book orders, and perhaps even sell off the floor. Trade show opportunities exist all over the world. Every country has at least one major annual trade show. Many countries have shows throughout the year, often on specific industry themes. Shows organized or certified by the U.S. Commercial Service (USDOC) or Foreign Agricultural Service (USDA) often provide discount pricing and amenities not otherwise available. Use these links to search for [USCS events](#) and [FAS events](#).

Commercially organized events can be found at these links: [BizTrade Trade Show Directory](#); [Trade Show News Networking \(TSNN\)](#); and [Exhibition Center - Foreign Trade Online](#). If trade shows abroad are not in your budget, you can also meet many foreign buyers at up to 40 major U.S.-based trade shows a year under the USCS [International Buyer Program](#).

VI. Respond to Foreign Inquiries & Orders

An export sale often starts with an inquiry. Someone overseas has heard of you and wants more information. The inquiry might be general, for example, "Tell me more about your company and product" or specific, for example, "What is the price?" Inquiries are precious. It's a buyer's market, and the inquirer has other options. You should respond quickly, fully and professionally. If prospects are encouraged by your response, they'll follow up with more specific requests for price, delivery and payment terms. Some inquiries, however, may be fishing expeditions, so use discretion in responding. Basically, you need to know if they are serious and reputable. As you provide requested information, you should also ask the prospects for information, such as who they are and what they do. If you're satisfied and want the business, be prepared to negotiate until you've mutually agreed on all the terms (price, delivery, payment method)

Should you respond to every inquiry? No. You might disregard form letters or inquiries that are clearly unprofessional or poorly written. However, it's not always possible to distinguish serious from frivolous requests. Err on the side of responding to all or most inquiries. If in doubt, don't send samples or bulky product literature that costs more in postage.

Maurice Kogon's [*Exporting Basics*](#) (pp. 34-36) offers detailed advice on when and how to respond to inquiries, as well as sample response letters (p.110), an export quotation worksheet (p.115), and a model Proforma invoice (p. 116). Here are some pointers:

- Say it fast or not at all - Delay implies lack of interest or low priority.
- Answer all questions asked - Don't make them ask the same questions twice.
- Use a business-like tone - Be friendly and courteous; avoid obvious form letters.
- Reply in the language specified. Reply in English if invited; translate as needed.
- Print and sign all letters. Handwritten or unsigned letters leave a bad impression.
- Enclose product brochures, price lists and other information only after confirming the inquirer's credentials or intent. These materials usually answer most questions, so that the next communication will more likely be a request for quote.
- Send a form response, or no response, if the request is unprofessional, poorly written or obvious boilerplate.

VII. Comply With U.S. & International Trade Regulations

Exporters must comply with a host of documentary and regulatory requirement to get their goods out of their own country and into the importing country. Failure to comply has severe potential consequences. Take all documentary and regulatory requirements seriously, but don't let them deter you from exporting. It's not necessary and even foolish to attempt to deal on your own with the plethora and complexity of documentation and regulations. An international freight forwarder can advise you on the requirements you must comply with, help you get any needed permits or licenses, and even prepare all the necessary shipping and other documents.

Documentary Requirements: The most commonly needed export documents include [*Electronic Export Information*](#) (EEI), formerly *US Shipper's Export Declaration*, [*Commercial Invoice*](#), [*Export Packing List*](#), [*Bill of Lading*](#) or [*Air Waybill*](#), and [*Certificate of Origin*](#). A U.S. [*Export License*](#) will be required for products controlled for national security purposes. Various export certificates may be needed for certain products, such as [*Certificates of Free Sale*](#) for export of medical devices, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals; [*Phytosanitary Certificates*](#) for exports of grains; or a [*Dangerous Goods Certificate*](#). Other certificates may be required to satisfy foreign buyers that they will get exactly what they ordered, such as [*Certificates of Inspection*](#). To learn more about documentary requirements, see the links below in the [*Documentation Basics*](#) section of the ITCI Website. Samples of most of these documents can be found in the ITCI [*Sample Export Documents*](#) section.

Regulatory Requirements: All countries control their exports and imports in some form. Exporters need to comply not only with their own country's export regulations, but also the procedural requirements imposed by the importing countries.

- **U.S. export controls.** U.S. export controls are designed to prevent unfriendly parties and countries from getting products that could be used to our detriment (strategic controls), prevent depletion of precious or scarce resources (short-supply controls), or attest to the quality of exported goods, such as food and agricultural products, drugs, cosmetics and medical devices. The [International Trade Compliance Institute](#) (ITCI) Website provides easy look-up to thousands of U.S. export regulations in its [Regulatory Database](#) and [Regulatory FAQ Database](#).

U.S. export controls and forms are spelled out in the Department of Commerce, Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) [Export Administration Regulations](#) (EAR) for non-military products and in the State Department, [Directorate of Defense Trade Controls](#) (DDTC) [International Traffic in Arms Regulations](#) (ITAR) for military products. Although all U.S. exports are technically subject to control, a formal export license is only required for a small minority of total US goods exported. A product's [Export Control Classification Number](#) (ECCN) determines whether and what type of U.S. license is required. U.S. exporters may ask BIS for advice on whether a license is required, or is likely to be granted for a particular end-use, end-user, and/or destination. See the BIS [Exporter Portal](#) for an overview of export control regulations.

- **Import duties and taxes.** Basic information about import duties and taxes, as well as actual import duties by country and product, can be found in the ITCI Website's [U.S. and Foreign Import Duties](#) section.
- **Foreign import controls.** Foreign trade regulations vary widely by country. Each country has its own policies, laws, regulations, and business practices – generally known as *non-tariff barriers* if restrictive -- that may or may not be import-friendly. You should research potential trade restrictions in each country and seek counsel from an international law firm if needed. Non-tariff barriers by country, including technical/legal requirements, are covered in the chapter on Trade Regulations & Standards in [Country Commercial Guides](#) (CCGs). Other sources are industry/product-specific [Market Research Reports](#) and in the ITCI Website's [Foreign Trade Laws & Regulations](#) section, particularly in [National Trade Estimate Reports on Foreign Trade Barriers](#). The ITCI Website also provides easy look-up to foreign import regulations and international regulations under treaties and conventions in its [Regulatory Database](#) and [Regulatory FAQ Database](#).

International Business Law & Practices: In addition to tariffs and non-tariff barriers, it is also important to understand a country’s overall legal environment, customary business practices, and treatment of intellectual property. Failure to conform or adapt could be costly, if not fatal to the business. These ITCI links provide useful guidance in this respect:

International Business Contracts	Transparency International
Legal Aspects of Int’l Trade & Investment	Protect your IPR at Home & Abroad
Lexmundi Guides to Doing Business Abroad	USPTO-Protecting Intellectual Property Overseas
International and National Labor Law	Protecting IPR at Home and Abroad
International Tax Guides	IPR Toolkit – IPR in China

VIII. Finance & Get Paid for Export Sales

Unless paid in advance, exporters need to protect against payment default. The first imperative is to check out the buyer. The payment terms should be more demanding for less-known buyers. From least to greatest risk, payment methods include cash in advance (wire transfer, credit card), [Letter of Credit](#) (L/C), [Documentary Collections](#) -- Documents Against Payment (D/P) or Documents Against Acceptance (D/A) -- and [open account](#). Exporters might also consider discounting receivables through [Factoring](#) or [Forfaiting](#) as ways to get paid up front while still offering competitive credit terms to buyers.

Letters of Credit (L/Cs) are the most secure after cash in advance. They virtually assure payment (by the importer’s bank or yours). However, L/Cs incur costs to importers and may be resisted in favor of less costly D/A or D/P terms. These often used “Documentary Collections” (sight or time drafts) are routinely handled by banks, are less costly, and are relatively secure. However, importers may insist on open account credit terms (e.g., payment 30-60 days after receiving the goods). Although you can be more competitive by offering open account terms, you are also at greater risk. This risk can be mitigated almost entirely with an [export credit insurance policy](#) from the U.S. Export-Import Bank. Under these very inexpensive policies, you are guaranteed nearly full payment if the buyer defaults for virtually any reason.

For more information on payment methods, see:

Trade Finance Guide for U.S. Exporters	How to Get Paid for Your Export Sales
Export Finance FAQs for New Exporters	Getting Paid by Your Latin-American Buyer
Bankable Deals: SME Guide to Trade Finance	Getting Paid for Exports to China

For information on specific U.S. export finance programs and services, see:

SBA Export Loan Programs	USDA Agricultural Export Finance Programs
Ex-Im Bank Financing for U.S. Exporters	“Branded” Agricultural Export Programs

IX. Prepare & Deliver Goods for Export

Export goods must arrive intact, in good condition, and on time. Competition dictates fast, least-cost delivery as well. To assure this result, the goods must be properly packed, labeled, insured and shipped. Some of this preparation is precautionary -- to protect the goods from damage, theft, or delay in transit. Some actions are legally required, either by the exporting or importing country. In these cases, the requirements are usually very specific and must be followed to the letter. Given the complexities and risks, most exporters use an international freight forwarder to perform these critical services. Maurice Kogon's [Exporting Basics](#) (p.37) and other export guides cover export delivery issues in some detail, including:

Packing for export. Exported goods are vulnerable to physical risks en route, such as breakage, theft, and damage. See [Packing Your Products for Shipping](#) for packaging tips, but also consult with [freight forwarders](#), [carriers](#), and [marine insurance companies](#) for specific advice for any given shipment. If you're not equipped to pack the goods yourself, use a professional export packing firm. This service is usually provided at a moderate cost.

Export marking and labeling. Export packages need to be properly marked and labeled to meet shipping regulations, ensure proper handling, conceal the identity of the contents, and help receivers identify shipments. The buyer usually specifies export marks that should appear on the cargo, either preferred or required by the importing country. See [Marking and Labeling Shipping Containers](#) for further advice on this topic.

Transport Options. The sooner the goods arrive, the sooner you get paid, so speed is essential. However, faster transport may cost more. The procedures, routes and rates vary with the transport mode -- truck, rail, air or sea. It's best to use freight forwarders to ship the goods. As the experts, they can compare the costs, lead times, and transit times for each transport option; select the best one; and make the booking. See [Exporting Basics](#) (p.41) and other export guides for more information about export transport and logistics. Other sources include:

Transportation and Logistics Basics	International Shipping Basics
Logistics 101: Back to Basics	Int'l Maritime Freight Transport and Logistics
Creating a Logistics Strategy	Introduction to Supply Chain Management

Cargo insurance. Cargo insurance, also called marine insurance, offers important protection against delays in transit and losses or damage from bad weather, rough handling by carriers, and other common hazards. Either the supplier or the buyer is at risk for the cargo in transit, depending on the terms of sale. For all CIF transactions, the supplier is liable for any loss or damage to the goods up to the point the buyer takes title. For FOB or FAS sales, the buyer assumes risk at the exit point. The responsible party must insure the cargo for its portion of the risk. To cover your share of the risk, you can take out a company policy, or insure the cargo under a freight forwarder's policy for a fee. For more on cargo/marine insurance, see [Marine Insurance Basics](#) and [Cargo Insurance Guide](#). Check with a [marine insurance company](#) or freight forwarder for options and advice.

X. Get Export Advice & Assistance

Exporters can ask questions and get advice and information from many sources, governmental, non-profit and commercial, often at no or little cost. The following sources cover nearly every form of export assistance:

U.S. Government Trade Assistance Organizations	Chambers of Commerce
U.S. Government Trade Regulatory Organizations	Foreign Trade Offices
State & Local Economic and Trade Organizations	Academic Trade Organizations
Trade & Industry Associations	International Trade Organizations

Maurice Kogon's [Export FAQs](#) is a quick and convenient source of answers to commonly asked export questions. Over 70 questions are answered in 11 need-to-know categories.

The U.S. Government offers a wide range of export assistance programs and services, and most state governments provide similar support to resident exporters. Government assistance focuses primarily on how-to counseling, trade information, matchmaking, trade promotion, and trade finance. At the Federal level, many different U.S. agencies offer information or services of value to exporters. The Commerce Department's [International Trade Administration](#) (ITA) and the Agriculture Department's [Foreign Agricultural Service](#) (FAS) have primary responsibility for U.S. export assistance.

Within Commerce's ITA, the U.S. & Foreign Commercial Service has a network of International Trade Specialists located throughout the U.S. (100 cities) and in over 80 countries around the world. They offer free export counseling by appointment, as well as other free-and fee-based export services, and many also specialize by industry sector. For a complete list of Commerce International Trade Specialists by location, name and specialty, see [U.S. & Foreign Commercial Offices and Staff](#). For a comprehensive list and description of U.S. Government programs and services, see [Export Programs Guide](#).

A wide range of Web-based [Daily News Feeds & Blogs](#), [Periodicals](#), and [Industry-Specific Publications](#) can help keep you current and knowledgeable about global trade. Following are