

U.S. Country Commercial Guides



Kosovo 2019

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Doing Business in Kosovo

Market Overview

- The Republic of Kosovo is Europe's youngest country – and one of its poorest – but it has maintained positive economic growth rates, estimated at 4 percent in 2018. Kosovo is working to improve the investment climate by strengthening the legal environment necessary to attract and retain foreign investment.
- In 2018, the Central Bank of Kosovo estimated Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) at €240 million, up from €285 million in 2017. Switzerland was the largest investor in Kosovo in 2018 at €79 million. U.S. investment reached €15 million in 2018. The unemployment rate is estimated at 29.6 percent. The difficult labor-market conditions affect youth and women disproportionately and risk undermining the country's social fabric. Despite these challenges, Kosovo's relatively young population, low labor costs, and abundant natural resources have attracted foreign investment, with several international firms and franchises present in the market.
- Kosovo's main trade partners are EU countries (approximately 43.6 percent of imports and 30.2 percent of exports) and its neighbors through the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA – approximately 25.5 percent of imports and 47.2 percent of exports). Kosovo continues to post a large trade deficit, with exports covering only about 11 percent of imports.
- While an emerging market with typical emerging market risks, Kosovo also offers interesting opportunities to potential investors:
 - Kosovo's **liberal trade regime** enables duty-free exports for the majority of Kosovo goods to the EU market. The Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU has further reinforced trade liberalization and removed many of the remaining trade and tariff barriers.
 - Kosovo's **location** in the heart of the Balkans offers easy access to the Balkans and CEFTA members, which represent a market of approximately 28 million people.
 - Improving **infrastructure** including the completion of a modern highway to Albania and a second highway to Skopje, Macedonia. More than one million passengers a year pass through Pristina's international airport. The airport authority is preparing to extend the runway and upgrade the landing system, which would lower flight cancellations in the winter months and accommodate larger planes.
 - Kosovo's young **workforce** is mostly multilingual (often speaking English and German). Half of Kosovo's population is under the age of 30.
 - Kosovo **labor costs and tax policies are very competitive**. Kosovo's average monthly salary of €381 is amongst the lowest in Europe, and the current tax regime is business-friendly with a flat, 10 percent corporate income tax. VAT rates for basic food items and public utilities are 8 percent, while VAT for all other items is 18 percent.
- Kosovo ranked 44 out of 190 countries in the 2019 World Bank's Doing Business report.
- Kosovo is very pro-American and the government intends to establish U.S.-focused special economic zone near Gjakove/Djakovica.
- Major foreign investment projects in the near term include construction of a new 450MW coal-fired thermal power plant. As a member of the EU-funded Western Balkans 6 core transportation network aimed at improving regional connectivity, Kosovo plans to revitalize key railway lines.

Market Challenges

- **Market size:** Kosovo's population – officially 1.8 million people based on the 2011 census – can present a challenge to investment in industries requiring a substantial economy of scale to realize profitability.
- **Weak judicial system:** In addition to a significant backlog, Kosovo's judicial system lacks the competency and business orientation to enforce commercial contracts. The Kosovo Bar Association includes very few firms capable of providing legal services at the level expected in more developed markets.
- **Corruption:** Perceived and actual corruption is widespread in Kosovo. Senior-level public officials have been accused of bribery, racketeering, and other forms of corruption. Widespread corruption reflects a “cost-of-doing business” mentality prevalent in many parts of the region. Anti-corruption efforts suffer from a lack of cohesion, of forceful action, and of follow-through measures, including prosecution.
- **Public procurement:** The government lacks the capacity to successfully manage large-scale public-sector transactions on its own. The GoK contracts international firms as transaction advisors, which has resulted at times in conflicts of interest and delays. Local and regional distributors have consistently complained about irregularities in public tenders at the national and municipal levels. Most large contracts contain an Alternative Dispute Resolution clause.
- **Weak IPR enforcement:** Despite having EU-compliant legislation on IPR protection, there is a general lack of awareness. Legal professionals often lack the necessary expertise to deal with IPR cases. This situation is an impediment to franchise growth in the Kosovo market.
- **Workforce:** Kosovo's young, educated, and multi-lingual workforce is not trained in the skill sets required by employers, increasing training costs. Remittances flows from its diaspora create a high reserve wage that disincentivizes youth from seeking employment.
- **Lack of Recognition:** Kosovo's lack of recognition causes numerous problems including more expensive flights, misidentification or failure to list Kosovo as a country option, and difficulties exporting.

Market Opportunities

The World Bank estimated Kosovo's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate at 4 percent in 2018, among the highest in the region. The World Bank attributes this growth to diaspora revenue and domestic consumption. The Central Bank of Kosovo estimated that remittances totaled €801.1 in 2018, over 12 percent of GDP.

Leading domestic industries include agriculture, mining, and construction. Kosovo's largest exports are scrap metal, nickel, and lead. The country maintains a persistent trade deficit.

Kosovo's highly pro-American population welcomes U.S. investment in various sectors, including:

- **Energy:** Kosovo's vast lignite-coal resources and strategic regional location, along with the substantial power deficit in Southeastern Europe, provide opportunities for energy-generation projects.
- **Mining:** Historically an important contributor to Kosovo's economy, mining has declined in relevance due to a lack of investment in equipment, facilities, and development of new mines. The sector has significant foreign investment potential, and the Independent Commission of Mines and Minerals (ICMM) has issued over 500 exploration and mining licenses since 2007. In 2016, Kosovo Assembly passed a law which transformed Trepca – the biggest mining company in Kosovo – from a socially owned enterprise into a joint stock company with majority of share belonging to the government. Currently the Government of Kosovo is in the process of reorganizing Trepca.
- **Telecommunications:** Kosovo's telecommunications operators are transitioning to 3G and 4G services. Opportunities to provide support services for 4G networks may exist in the near future. Opportunities to support Kosovo's transition to its newly established country code may develop in the coming year. The Government of Kosovo is working to position the country as a regional hub for

information technology (IT)-related products and services, building on the strong IT and English-language skills within the workforce. There are a growing number of IT companies focused on outsourcing for European and U.S. companies, and the number of inbound and outbound call centers is growing.

- **Health:** Kosovo has an urgent and growing need for quality basic and specialized health and medical services, facilities, and products. The sector is dominated by public-sector services, but private-sector investment has recently increased. Many Kosovo citizens travel to other countries to meet their health-care needs, and local solutions present a potentially lucrative opportunity for outside investors.
- **Waste Management and Recycling:** As a developing country, Kosovo's waste has increased faster than its capacity to manage it. Although recycling has only recently begun in Kosovo certain companies in niche markets have been able to profitably recycle.
- **Other Services:** As Kosovo's economy develops, the need for expert financial, legal, architectural, engineering, public relations, and graphic design services will grow.

Market Entry Strategy

- Conduct appropriate market research and due diligence to adequately assess investment climate.
- Visit Kosovo and meet potential partners, government officials, and business associations. This is essential for understanding the local business climate.
- Establish strong personal ties, a key to doing business in Kosovo.
- Choose good legal representation (usually international) to protect interests.
- Exercise due diligence when identifying a local agent or partner to enhance business opportunities.
- Note that commercial and physical infrastructure, including electricity and some transport facilities, are limited and not reliable.
- Consider opportunities to develop company-based workforce training and development programs with local partners to build necessary labor inputs for the investments.

More information on doing business in Kosovo is available on the [U.S. Embassy in Kosovo's](#) website.

Political Environment

For background information on the political and economic environment in Kosovo, please visit the [U.S. Department of State Background Notes](#).

Selling US Products & Services

Using an Agent to Sell US Products and Services

Foreign companies doing business in Kosovo are not required to have a local agent, but it is advisable to retain one in order to gain insight into local economic and market conditions. Kosovo does not have laws regulating local agent and distributor agreements, except for dental products, where a contract with a licensed distributor is required. Any local agent or distributorship relationship should be clearly defined, stipulated by contract, and contain an alternative dispute resolution clause. Agreements should also be registered with local courts in case of a legal disagreement.

The U.S. Embassy Pristina was established as the 59th Department of State Commercial Partnership Post in January 2014. Through our partner post (Commercial Service Vienna), we provide business facilitation and Commercial Services to interested U.S. and U.S.-affiliated businesses.

Establishing an Office

The procedures for opening a business are the same for local and foreign companies. There is a single procedure to obtain a business registration, tax number, and VAT numbers through one-stop shops operating in 26 municipalities. As described by the World Bank in its Doing Business Analysis, the general steps, are to: (i) open a bank account in Kosovo; (ii) register with the Kosovo Business Registration Agency (KBRA); (iii) design a company seal; and (v) register local employees for the pension scheme with the Tax Administration. Business registration varies between two to eleven days. Business can be registered: as an individual business; a general partnership; a partnership; a limited-liability company; a foreign company; or a joint-stock company.

Registration forms vary by type of business and can be found on the KBRA's [website](#).

There is no limitation on foreign ownership of local companies and foreign investors face no restrictions on moving capital and profits outside of Kosovo. The KBRA reported 14 new American companies registered during 2018.

Franchising

There are no legal requirements for franchising. With improved legal and physical infrastructure, the Kosovo market is receptive to franchising opportunities, especially in the hotel, restaurant, and hospitality industries. Kosovo opened its first U.S. food franchise in 2016 to much fanfare and significant demand remains for other U.S. brands.

Current U.S. franchisees and licensees operating in Kosovo include: Apple (branch of Apple Premium Reseller in Croatia), Century 21, Coca-Cola, Enterprise, Hertz Rent-a-Car, KFC, Domino's, Pizza Famiglia, Burger King, Marriott, Best Western, Nike (distribution license for Kosovo), Office One Superstore, and RC Cola (bottling license in Kosovo, distribution rights for Serbia, Macedonia, Albania, and Montenegro).

Direct Marketing

Many foreign companies actively market their products and services in Kosovo. The Internet is used, but more traditional means of advertising, such as television and radio, are generally more effective. Social media marketing is gaining prevalence.

Joint Ventures/Licensing

The Foreign Investment Law (Kosovo Assembly Law 04/L-220) allows foreign investors to wholly own businesses in all sectors of the economy, with the exception of the manufacturing or distribution of military products, where their equity is limited to 49 percent. Foreign investors in all other areas are subject to the same licensing requirements as local investors. Licensing is done by the economic regulator in the respective sector. Foreign investors may be required to file a statement with local authorities identifying principal stakeholders and types of investment. No other filing requirements in excess of those required for similar domestic businesses are required for foreign investors.

Selling to the Government

Kosovo is not a WTO member and thus not a signatory of the Government Procurement Agreement. Similarly, Kosovo is not party to a Free-Trade Agreement (FTA) with the United States. Accordingly, Kosovo is not bound by any U.S. FTA commitments on government procurement. The procurement process in Kosovo is based on the tendering procedures outlined in the Public Procurement Law, which applies to all procurement-related actions involving funds from the Kosovo budget. Foreign companies bid on an equal basis with local firms. There are opportunities in areas such as energy, healthcare equipment, mining, and waste management. Vendors routinely complain about irregular processes in public tenders at the national and municipal levels, and have generally found the official appeals system inadequate to redress grievances. In an effort to enhance transparency, the Kosovo amended the Public Procurement Law to mandate electronic procurement across the government, implementing e-procurement at the municipal level in early 2017.

Like many governments, Kosovo finances some public works projects through borrowing from the Multilateral Development Banks. Please refer to “Project Financing” in the “Trade and Project Financing” section for more information.

Distribution & Sales Channels

Many local importers are also wholesalers, distributors, and retailers. Until 2001, retail goods were sold almost exclusively through small, family-owned businesses. In the last several years, locally-owned supermarket chains (e.g., ETC, Meridian Express, and Viva Fresh) have opened large stores in key cities, and foreign companies have partnered with local businesses to open large furniture stores, (e.g., JYSK and Lesna), and supermarkets (e.g., Interex and Conad). Because Kosovo is land-locked, all goods arrive by road, limited rail service from Macedonia, or air. Goods usually arrive at border crossing points and are then taken to customs terminals for clearance. The closest seaports are Durres, Albania and Thessaloniki, Greece (about 130 miles and 170 miles from Pristina, respectively). A recently-built highway connects Pristina to Durres with a drive time of less than four hours. A new highway connecting Pristina with the border of Macedonia completed in May 2019 has shorted the drive time between those cities to less than an hour.

Express Delivery

FedEx, DHL, and UPS operate in Kosovo. It normally takes two days for express delivery to arrive from major U.S. cities and the service is generally reliable. Goods arriving via express delivery undergo the same customs procedures as goods arriving through other channels. The de minimis amount for customs duty purposes is applied to goods worth less than €22 per delivery.

Selling Factors & Techniques

U.S. goods and services enjoy an excellent reputation in Kosovo. If a U.S. representative is unable to be in Kosovo full time, a local agent or distributor is recommended. The capacity of local marketing firms is improving, but local companies distributing U.S. goods usually seek marketing assistance from the producer or let the foreign company market the product directly. Domestic and regional business fairs are useful for identifying and establishing contacts with local distributors. Although English is widely spoken in Kosovo, it is advisable to print sales materials in Albanian and Serbian.

eCommerce

According to data from a telecom regulator, more than 90 percent of households regularly use internet and the number of individuals using mobile internet has reached 92.3 percent of total mobile users. While Kosovo has the highest internet penetration rate in the region, the ecommerce sector is in its nascency. The service and trade sectors are the primary users of ecommerce, but the majority of their sales are still conducted through traditional methods. Most commercial banks have introduced internet banking, and all utilities offer online bill payment options.

Kosovo follows EU standards for ecommerce and consumer protection. The average consumer in Kosovo does not make purchases via ecommerce, but online sales have increased since 2016.

Well-known ecommerce websites, including Amazon, Aliexpress, and ASOS, have recently added Kosovo to the list of countries they ship to, simplifying purchases and increasing the number of online transactions. According to data from the Kosovo Statistics Agency, the majority of online purchases in Kosovo are made through EU and U.S. retailers. Payment methods for ecommerce transactions include e-banking, credit cards (Visa and Mastercard), and cash-on-delivery for the domestic market. While third-party methods such as PayPal and Payoneer generally do not offer services in Kosovo, some users find work-arounds leveraging banks in neighboring countries.

Trade Promotion & Advertising

Local advertising and marketing firms primarily provide services to domestic companies, but also cater to a handful of established international firms operating in Kosovo. Several companies offer strictly promotional services, while others offer fully-integrated marketing and advertising packages. In addition, Congress and Event Organization is a private company that organizes local and regional tradeshows.

Embassy Pristina's commercial unit also offers Single Company Promotion (SCP) services.

Pricing

Kosovo uses the euro as its currency. The Central Bank of Kosovo does not have an independent monetary policy and prices largely reflect market trends in the larger eurozone. Prices include a VAT rate of 8 and 18 percent depending on the product. Local consumers are price conscious and actively seek out sales and discounts. Local businesses frequently offer promotions and sales events in order to attract customers and gain market share. U.S. firms should study the market carefully to ensure that their goods and services are competitively priced.

Sales Service/Customer Support

After-sales service and customer support are considered to be the responsibility of the local agent or distributor.

Protecting Intellectual Property

Companies may wish to seek advice from local attorneys or IP consultants who are experts in Kosovo law. The Embassy provides a [list of local lawyers](#) on its website.

Due Diligence

No credit rating agencies in Kosovo cover private-sector actors. All U.S. businesses are advised to perform their own due-diligence checks prior to developing relationships with local firms. Due-diligence checks on socially-owned enterprises are particularly important since the Privatization Agency of Kosovo (PAK) does not extend liability warranties to purchasers. U.S. companies are strongly encouraged to perform due diligence checks on private firms to ensure that the local company:

- is not facing any bribery or corruption charges;
- maintains a certain level of financial stability that will enable it to meet financial obligations; and,
- holds, along with its owners, a solid professional reputation in Kosovo.

Businesses are also encouraged to consult the chambers of commerce (American, Kosovo, Turkish, and German) and the Kosovo Business Alliance (KBA).

In addition, the U.S. Embassy's Economic/Commercial team offers fee-based [International Company Profile \(ICP\) services](#) containing limited background checks on local companies.

Local Professional Services

Auditing Firms:

Deloitte LLP Albania and Kosovo

Grant Thornton

KPMG

Price Waterhouse Coopers

Banking:

ProCredit Bank

Raiffeisen Bank

NLB Banka

Banka Ekonomike

Banka per Biznes

Banka Kombetare Tregtare

TEB

Turkiye Is Bankasi

Komercijalna Banka AD Beograd (NOTE: This bank operates only in Serb-majority areas)

Insurance Companies:

Illyria Insurance

SIGURIA

SIGAL

SIGMA

Note: You can find more information on banks and insurance companies on the Central Bank of Kosovo's website: Central Bank of Kosovo

Courier Services:

FedEx (express mail services only)

Eqrem Cabej St. 147

10000 Pristina, Kosovo

Contact: Agon Haxha, General Manager

Tel: +383 (0)38 550 870;

E-mail: fedexkosovo@gmail.com

UPS

105/1 UCK Street

10000 Pristina, Kosovo

Contact: Artan Bislimi, Manager of A.L. Dushi Services (authorized service contractor for UPS)

Tel: +383 (0)38 242-222

Fax: +383 (0)38 249 999

E-mail: artanb@aldushi.com

DHL

25b Mother Teresa Street

10000 Pristina, Kosovo

Tel: +383 (0)38 545-545

E-mail: dhl@kujtesa.com

Web: www.dhl.com

Freight Forwarding:

Some local shipping companies own trucks registered in third countries, making transit of goods easier across territories that do not recognize Kosovo, as well as for more efficient transport throughout the region. Memoranda of Understanding with Macedonia and Albania have been signed to smooth the transit of Kosovo-registered trucks, and several Kosovo-based companies have partnerships with firms in Albanian-majority areas of Serbia.

Please contact the Kosovo Transport Association or one of the following shipping companies regarding transport of goods in and out of Kosovo.

Hotels:

There are several privately-owned hotels in Pristina.

Hotel Swiss Diamond

Telephone: +383 (0) 38 220 000

Fax: +383 (0) 38 250 000

E-mail: reservations@sdhprishtina.com

Web: www.sdhprishtina.com/home

Hotel Emerald

Telephone: +383 (0) 38 588 888

E-mail: contact@emeraldhotel.info; reservation@emeraldhotel.info

Web: www.emeraldhotel.com

Hotel International Prishtina

Telephone: +383 (0) 38 600 222

E-mail: info@hotelinternationalprishtina.com

Web: <http://hotelinternationalprishtina.com>

Hotel Pristina

Telephone: +383 (0) 38 22 32 84

E-mail: reservations@hotelprishtina.com

Web: www.hotelprishtina.com/

Hotel Sirius

Telephone: +383 (0) 38 22 22 80; +383 (0) 44 740 126

E-mail: info@hotelsirius.net

Web: <http://hotelsirius.net/web/?lang=en>

Legal Firms:

The U.S. Embassy Pristina assumes no responsibility for the professional ability or integrity of lawyers or law firms. Please note that all fees for services rendered by the firm selected are the responsibility of the individual who requests the services. Neither the U.S. Embassy Pristina nor the U.S. Government can assume responsibility for the fees or expenses incurred in use of services from these lawyers.

The [list of attorneys](#) is available at the U.S. Embassy website.

The American Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo (AmCham) is home to the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Center, which provides arbitration and mediation services. The ADR Center is an efficient alternative to the Kosovo Court System, which manages a heavy workload and backlog of cases. A list of arbiters that serve in the ADR Center is available at [AmCham's](#) website.

Principal Business Associations

The American Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo, the Kosovo Chamber of Commerce, the German Chamber of Commerce, and the Kosovo Business Alliance are the main business organizations in Kosovo. Most are open to U.S. companies. Their primary role is to protect the interests of the business community and advocate for policies to improve the business environment. These associations lobby the government on business issues.

Limitations on Selling US Products and Services

Kosovo legislation does not stipulate that any particular sector or service is only available to its nationals. Foreigners can own property and invest in the same way as locals.

Web Resources

[Kosovo Government](#)

[UNMIK \(United Nations Mission in Kosovo\)](#)

[EULEX \(European Union Rule of Law Mission\)](#)

[Kosovo Customs](#)

[Privatization Agency of Kosovo](#)

[Kosovo Investment and Enterprise Support Agency](#)

[Business Registration Agency](#)

[Kosovo Chamber of Commerce](#)

[American Chamber of Commerce in Kosovo](#)

[Kosovo Pension Savings and Trust](#)

[Statistical Office of Kosovo](#)

[Central Bank of Kosovo](#)

[Kosovo Railways](#)

[Pristina International Airport](#)

[Radio and Television of Kosovo \(RTK\)](#)

[Kohavision](#)

[Koha Ditore Daily Newspaper](#)

[Express News Portal](#)

[Zeri Daily Newspaper](#)

[Lajm Daily Newspaper](#)

[Kosovalive News Agency](#)

[Kosovapress News Agency](#)

[Telegrafi](#)

[Insajedri](#)

[Kosovo Information Center](#)

[Kosovo Telecom](#)

[Kosovo Public Tenders](#)

[Economic Initiative for Kosovo](#)

Please note that all of Kosovo's laws and regulations can be found at: [Official Gazette of The Republic of Kosovo](#) or [Republic of Kosovo Assembly](#) or accessed directly on a mobile phone app Gazeta Zyrtare – RKS developed through USAID

[Foreign Investment Law](#)

[Law on Business Organizations](#)

[Law on Public Procurement](#)

[Public Tendering Procedures](#)

[Law on Public Private Partnerships](#)

Leading Sectors for US Exports & Investments

Energy

Overview

Kosovo is currently unable to generate enough electricity domestically to fully meet demand for energy and demand is rising locally and regionally. Electricity consumption and peak demand in Kosovo grew more than 90 percent between 2000 and 2010. Peak demand in 2017 was around 1200 MWh. There is a vital need for stable, base-load power generation in Kosovo that can meet demand. Power shortages and outages have grown less frequent, but can still occur when generation and import capacity do not meet demand or when there is a service failure at one of Kosovo's power plants.

The vast majority of electricity in Kosovo is produced by Soviet-era two lignite-fired thermal power plants, known as Kosovo A and Kosovo B. The two thermal power plants are currently capable of producing up to 880 MW. Small hydropower plants (HPP) produce an additional 92 MW. Renewable energy sources (RES) are a growing source of domestic supply. To encourage RES, Kosovo has established the necessary legal framework and offers a feed-in tariff for hydropower, wind, photovoltaic, and biomass generation. Increased base-load conventional generation will be needed as a back-up to any new renewable energy generation.

As a member of the Energy Community, Kosovo has committed to meet mandatory RES targets for 2020, which were defined and approved by the Energy Community Ministerial Council in 2012. For Kosovo, the commitment is to reach a 25 percent RES share of final gross energy consumption by 2020. The Turkish company Guris has developed a wind farm using General Electric turbines that will produce a little over 30 MW of electricity. The Government of Kosovo has committed to a target of 29.89 percent RES as a share of total gross consumption by 2020. Beginning with a baseline of 77 MW of RES installed in 2017, Kosovo's energy strategy projects the country will reach 401-470 MW by 2026, depending on the development scenario.

	2015	2016	2017	2018
Total Local Production	5,600 GWh	5,835GWh	5,300.3 GWh	5,600.5 GWh
Total Exports	601 GWh	1,121GWh	880 GWh	671.5GWh
Total Imports	668 GWh	534GWh	1,242 GWh	659.2GWh
Imports from the US	0 GWh	0 GWh	0 GWh	0 GWh
Total Market Size	5,667 GWh	5,248 GWh	5,662 GWh	5, 612 GWh

Unit: Gigawatt hour (GWh)

Total market size = (total local production + imports) - exports

Data Source: ERO measured and estimated data

End-use energy-efficiency improvements will become increasingly attractive once collection discipline is complete and full-cost tariffs are established. The Millennium Challenge Corporation and several donors are beginning to develop programs in this area.

Leading Sub-Sectors

- Turbines
- Generators
- Mining equipment
- Power system spare parts
- Power operation and maintenance services
- Legal and consulting services

Opportunities

- Engineering and construction of a new power plant
- Providing equipment for wind farms
- Renewable energy
- Energy efficiency, especially in residential dwellings

Web Resources

[Kosovo Energy Corporation](#)

[Kosovo Energy Distribution Service](#)

[Kosovo Energy Supply Company](#)

[Kosovo Energy Regulatory Office](#)

[Kosovo Transmission, System, and Market Operator \(KOSTT\)](#)

[Ministry of Economic Development](#)

[World Bank Kosovo Office](#)

Waste Management and Recycling

Overview

After the end of the conflict in 1999, Kosovo's waste management issue became significantly more problematic due to the influx of people into urban areas. Growing waste generation and lack of proper infrastructure creates opportunities for U.S. companies to provide a variety of waste management and recycling services, including basic waste collection, machinery and equipment for waste management,

Local governments are responsible for waste management programs and the Law on Waste regulates waste collection, transportation, treatment, storage, disposal, import, export, plans for environmental management, and the rights and obligations of licensed entities in the sector. The Ministry of Economic Development manages the publicly owned company Kosovo Landfill Management Company (KLMC), which is responsible for supervising and managing disposal sites. In 2013, the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning (MESP) drafted a Strategy on Waste Management 2013 – 2022 covering hazardous and non-hazardous waste. The strategy highlights the impact of lack of proper waste management on water, air, land, and human health, and notes that groundwater is the most endangered. Kosovo also must address large quantities of industrial and mining tailings with a high content of heavy metals inherited from the pre-war era.

Leading Sub Sectors

- Waste collection
- Waste treatment
- Waste disposal
- Recycling equipment and facilities
- E-waste recycling, physical recycling and chemical recycling

Opportunities

- Municipal waste management and recycling
- Industrial waste management and recycling
- Hazardous waste management

Web Resources

[Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning](#)

[Ministry of Economic Development](#)

[Kosovo Environmental Protection Agency](#)

[Kosovo Landfill Management Company](#)

Health

Overview

Kosovo inherited a weak healthcare system from the Yugoslav era. The system is improving, but still faces significant challenges. Kosovo's poor health and medical facilities lead many local residents to seek health-

care services in neighboring countries, even for routine check-ups. The growing demand for quality health care and the lack of government resources to meet these needs create opportunities for U.S. companies to provide a variety of health-related services, including basic and specialized treatments, hospitals, clinics, emergency medical treatment facilities, and high-quality medicines and pharmaceutical products.

Through the country, there are seven general regional public hospitals and one university hospital, the latter located in Pristina. The American Hospital opened in 2015, offering state-of-the-art technology and equipment, as well as more advanced procedures than typically offered locally. In 2019, the Ministry of Health pledged to build the new Pristina regional public hospital, which will reduce the workload of the clinical university.

In 2017, Ministry of Health adopted the National Health Sector Strategy 2017 -2021, which aims to provide better financing and better access for marginalized groups. In 2014, Kosovo enacted a Health Insurance Law on Health Insurance, which gives all citizens the right and obligation to carry mandatory health insurance. The “basic package” covers emergency care, pregnancy, and childbirth, and other essential healthcare services. To date, Kosovo has not implemented a national health insurance program. Although Kosovo's public health facilities are available to all Kosovo citizens, the Government of Serbia pays for many of the public health services in Serb-majority areas. The public procurement process in the health sector is characterized as difficult and time-consuming.

Kosovo pharmacies and healthcare facilities rely on imported medical equipment and pharmaceuticals. There is some limited production locally of generic pharmaceuticals. The Kosovo Medicines Agency is responsible for licensing of importers and quality control.

Leading Sub-Sectors

- Hospitals, clinics, and other medical facilities
- Emergency medical treatment services and equipment
- Medicines, pharmaceutical products, and pharmacies
- Hospital management, staff training, legal services

Opportunities

- Primary, secondary and tertiary level healthcare facilities
- Private hospitals, clinics, and emergency medical facilities
- Medical supplies and pharmacies
- Provision of medical equipment and supplies
- Professional staff training and consulting
- National Health Insurance Information system

Web Resources

[Ministry of Health](#)

[National Institute of Public Health](#)

[Kosovo Medicine Agency](#)

[Kosovo Pharmaceutical Association](#)

Mining and Minerals

Overview

Kosovo has a varied geology that includes a number exploitable metal and mineral deposits including gold, chrome, nickel, aluminum, copper, iron metals, and lead-zinc. Kosovo also possesses the world's fifth-largest proven reserves of lignite. The mining sector has traditionally been an important contributor to Kosovo's economy. The industry declined during the 1990s due to a lack of investment in equipment, facilities, and failure to develop new sites. Significant foreign investment potential exists in this sector though the political situation makes such investments very difficult.

The Independent Commission for Mines and Minerals (ICMM) regulates Kosovo's minerals sector, issues exploration and mining licenses, and ensures legislative compliance with international mining, environment, and safety standards. ICMM provides key technical information to prospective bidders.

Many of the existing mines have been privatized, with varying degrees of success. The Trepca mining complex contains Kosovo's largest mines. At the height of production in the 1970s and 1980s, Trepca employed over 22,000 workers and accounted for more than 70 percent of Yugoslavia's mineral extraction. Significant investment in the complex is at a standstill pending the Government of Kosovo's implementation of the 2016 Law on Trepca, which includes an initiative to explore a public-private partnership model. The situation is complicated by Serbia's claim to ownership of a percentage of Trepca's assets.

Kosovo's energy corporation will need to develop a new mine to provide coal for one existing power plant Kosovo B and the new power plant "Kosova e Re." There is some potential to exploit gold, silver and marble.

Leading Sub-Sectors

- Exploration, mining, and extraction
- Legal and consulting services
- Equipment and spare parts sales; maintenance services

Opportunities

- Possible full ownership or operation of new or existing mines following a PPP structure
- Engineering and construction of a new power plant
- Sales of equipment, spare parts, and maintenance services
- Minerals export to global markets

Web Resources

[Kosovo Energy Regulatory Office](#)

[Kosovo Ministry of Economic Development](#)

[Kosovo Privatization Agency](#)

[Independent Commission on Mines and Minerals](#)

Telecommunications

Overview

The Regulatory Authority of Electronic and Postal Communications (RAEPC) estimated the total number of fixed and mobile internet users in Kosovo in 2018 was 328,177 and 1,816,283, respectively. These numbers equate to 18 and 108 percent penetration rates. RAEPC data indicates mobile telephone penetration in Kosovo covers 100 percent of inhabited zones and 94 percent of Kosovo's territory. Kosovo's telecommunications sector is one of the least expensive in the region and has similar quality voice services in comparison with other providers in the region. Through the auspices of the EU, Kosovo and Serbia have worked with ITU to grant Kosovo a dialing code. Kosovo began transitioning to the new (383) code in March 2017 and is in the process of migrating all phone numbers to the dialing code.

Three main companies – IPKO, Kosovo Telecom (TK), and Kujtesa – provide internet service for about 78.4 percent of Kosovo's market, while TK and IPKO provide mobile internet (3G and 4G). Kosovo Telecom offers mobile telephone services through its subsidiary Vala and has over 1,140,000 customers (56.1 percent of the overall market). Kosovo Telecom (KT), once the most profitable state owned enterprise and is the major provider of landline services, now suffers from a bloated workforce, inflated wages, and years of mismanagement and the company is facing a financial crisis. In early 2017, a branch of Serbia's telecom company, MTS, was licensed to provide mobile services in Kosovo.

Unit: millions of U.S. dollars

Data Source: Regulatory Authority of Electronic and Postal Communications

Leading Sub-Sectors

Services	Revenues in 2014	Revenues in 2015	Revenues in 2016	Revenues in 2017	Revenues in 2018
Mobile	142.0	122.2	112.3	108.8	109.3
Landline	11.4	10.3	9.3	9.5	11.6
ISP	19.6	20.5	22.5	27.9	29.1
Infrastructure	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.65
Cable TV	18.6	20.2	23.8	22.4	25.17
TOTAL	192.2	173.8	168.4	169.1	175.8

- General service mobile (GSM) operator
- GSM network supplies, equipment, and technology
- Network management
- Telecommunications infrastructure development, including WiMax and other municipal wireless internet services.
- Digitalization of TV broadcasting

Opportunities

- Infrastructure development
- Network upgrade
- Spectrum System Monitoring

Web Resources

[Regulatory Authority of Electronic & Postal Communications](#)

[Independent Media Commission](#)

[IPKO Telecommunications, LLC](#)

[Kosovo Telecom](#)

[Z-Mobile](#)

Customs, Regulations and Standards

Trade Barriers

Kosovo has no general restrictions on imports. When applicable, products are required to undergo phytosanitary or veterinary inspections at border control.

U.S. companies' local distributors must complete an application form and health certificate to import animal food products, including poultry products. Kosovo accepts USDA food-safety inspection service certificates. The FVA's Phytosanitary Division requires control certificates and certificates of origin for all imports.

Import licenses are required for pharmaceutical products, live animals, and tobacco products. An import license is required for production inputs and raw materials associated with manufacturing of pharmaceutical products. Licenses can be obtained from the Kosovo Medicines Agency (KMA) for six months, with an additional six months in case the import was not completed as scheduled. The KMA requires that the shelf-life of imported pharmaceutical products be valid for at least one year from the date of entry into Kosovo. Quality and safety requirements for pharmaceutical products also stipulate that the following documents accompany every import:

- Business license issued by the Competent Authority;
- Marketing authorization for medicinal product issued by KMA;
- Importing authorization held by the importer granted by the KMA, or an
- Import license issued by KMA that should meet the Good Manufacturing Practice standards;
- Batch Certificate of Analysis for each batch of medicinal product imported.

These procedures are subject to change; please contact the KMA for up-to-date guidance. Information on sanitary requirements can be obtained from Kosovo Ministry of Health. Information on phytosanitary and veterinary requirements can be obtained from the Kosovo Food and Veterinary Agency in the Office of the Prime Minister.

Import Tariff

Kosovo applies an integrated tariff schedule broken down into goods categories and applicable rates: [Kosovo Customs](#). Kosovo adopted a Customs and Excise Code in compliance with European Union and World Customs Organization standards in early 2009: [Official Gazette - Law NO. 04](#).

For countries that Kosovo does not have a free trade agreement with, there is a 10 percent customs duty. There is also an eight percent VAT on essential goods and an 18 percent VAT on all other imported goods. VAT is assessed on the cost, insurance, and freight of the goods. Certain products are also subject to an additional excise tax. These include petroleum, tobacco, vehicles, and alcohol. The excise tax is applied as a flat percentage rate of the value of the item or as a pre-determined amount depending on the item. This tax can significantly increase the final price of the good for consumers. Several goods are exempt from VAT: raw materials, machinery used in production, and IT equipment agricultural inputs, chemical agents, wood products, health and medical devices, some medicines,

Kosovo is a member of the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) and the World Customs Organization. Most imports from CEFTA countries are duty free. The April 2016 implementation of a European Union Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) eliminated customs duties on over 1044 agricultural and 487 fishery imports from the EU. The same agreement will gradually eliminate customs tariffs on industrial imports over a period of 10 years. In November 2018, Kosovo government imposed a 100 percent tariff on goods originating from Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Detailed information on the SAA between Kosovo and the EU is available at: [European Council - \(SAA\) Signed between the EU and Kosovo](#).

Import Requirements & Documentation

Kosovo's Customs Law requires a single administrative document (SAD) be completed by the importer. The SAD must be obtained from the Kosovo Customs' office in Pristina and is not available online. Completion of the SAD requires the certificate of origin, commercial invoice, and customs goods declaration. More information on import requirements and documentation can be found at [Kosovo Customs website](#).

Labeling/Marking Requirements

Labels must contain the name of the product, full address of the importer and country of origin, net quantity/weight/volume of the product, ingredients, method of storage (transport, use, or maintenance), and any applicable consumer warnings. Labels must be in one of Kosovo's official languages and labeling in more than one language is permitted. Products are required to show the flag of the country in which they were produced. Consumer protection legislation requires that technical products be accompanied by instructions for usage, the manufacturer's specifications, a list of authorized maintenance offices, warranty information, warranty period, and other applicable data. For food importers, it is advisable to use the European date system for expiry or spell out the month of expiration on the label. More information on labeling requirements can be found on the website of the Ministry of Trade and Industry at: [Ministry of Trade and Industry](#), and the Regulation on Labeling, Presentation, and Advertising Food Products: [Official Gazette of the Republic of Kosovo](#).

U.S. Export Controls

Most electronic equipment and products can enter Kosovo without a U.S. export license. However, U.S. businesses are strongly advised to obtain export licenses from the Department of Commerce's Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS) or the Department of State's Bureau of Verification, Compliance, and Implementation (VCI), depending on the product. BIS and VCI coordinate the licensing process with each other, as well as with the Department of Defense.

If a U.S. firm has a product that may require an export license, the company must obtain the export commodity control number (ECCN) from the manufacturer. The U.S. exporter can also obtain the ECCN by filling out the BIS-748 Multipurpose Form.

Temporary Entry

Kosovo permits temporary importation of products for re-export provided they do not undergo any change while in country. Kosovo has limited capacity "bonded" customs warehouses, which are privately owned storage facilities that allow importers to store goods duty free until they are released into the local economy or re-exported free-of-charge. Companies importing warranty and non-warranty items for repair must be authorized by Customs for internal repair or repair under Customs' control.

Prohibited & Restricted Imports

The importation of narcotics is prohibited. The importation of most non-hunting use firearms is prohibited. The importation of certain chemicals and pharmaceuticals is restricted.

More information on chemical import regulations can be found at: [Official Gazette - Law on Chemicals](#).

More information on pharmaceutical import regulations can be found at: [Official Gazette - Law on Medicinal Products and Medical Devices](#)

More information on firearm import regulations can be found at: [Official Gazette - Law on Weapons](#).

Customs Regulations

Kosovo Customs

Kosovo Customs

Telephone: +381 (0)38 541 031

Web: [Kosovo Customs](#).

[Customs and Excise Code](#)

[Integrated Tariff Schedule](#)

[Kosovo International Trade Guide](#)

Standards for Trade

Overview

Kosovo's Law on Standardization is based on European and international systems of standards. Product certification also falls under this law. The law is available online in English:

<http://www.kuvendikosoves.org/common/docs/ligjet/2009-144-e.pdf>

The Kosovo Standardization Agency (KSA) identified and adopted construction codes/euro codes. Kosovo is not a member of the ISO or any other international or regional standardization bodies. The government is pursuing membership and/or alternatives methods of cooperation with these organizations.

Standards

The KSA and Accreditation Directorate (AD) within the Ministry of Trade and Industry are the only government bodies responsible for standardization and accreditation activities in Kosovo. The government requires the KSA to:

- Organize procedures on the formulation of standards; approve and apply such standards; certify products, services, quality systems, and personnel.
- Organize procedures on standardization, accreditation, and certification based on international and European standardization systems.
- Approve, adapt, and implement international and European standards, except in the area of telecommunications.
- Revise existing standards in Kosovo.
- Maintain and administer a standardizations archive on foreign and local standards; upon request, communicate technical information to domestic and foreign subjects that conduct business activities in the territory of Kosovo.
- Prepare the laws and by-laws for activities it covers.

Testing, inspection and certification

KSA and AD are the primary conformity and accreditation assessment bodies in Kosovo. Kosovo does not have a national product certification body, but it has certified experts in ISO 9001 and similar areas cooperating with relevant foreign companies in the certification of Kosovo businesses. U.S. exporters have not reported problems related to product-certification requirements. Kosovo has no product certification agreements with the United States. It is a member of the European co-operation for Accreditation (EA), the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC), and has adopted the code of conduct of International Accreditation Forum (IAF). Test certificates are accepted from laboratories in countries that have signed multilateral agreements with ILAC, IAF, and EA and from countries with which AD has agreements. All U.S. testing laboratories which are accredited by the American National Standards Institute are assumed to comply with Kosovo regulatory requirements, as they follow the same ISO/IEC standards.

More information on accreditation is available at the AD's website: <http://dak.rks-gov.net/>

Publication of technical regulations

The Government publishes all laws and regulations in the Official Gazette: <http://gzk.rks-gov.net>. Only final regulations are published. U.S. entities can comment on regulations by attending the relevant legislative working groups or upon invitation by the government agency sponsoring the regulation. Business associations such as the American Chamber of Commerce also regularly collect comments from members on proposed legislation. Kosovo maintains an annual legislative program available on the website of the Office of Prime Minister at: www.kryeministri-ks.net/?page=2,1.

Contact Information

U.S. Embassy Pristina

Yllka Bina, Commercial Advisor

Telephone: +383 (0)38 5959 3211

E-mail: PristinaCommercial@state.gov

Trade Agreements

Kosovo's Ministry of Trade and Industry manages its international trade relations. In some cases, opposition by non-recognizing states means that Kosovo is included under the name Kosovo*, with a footnote clarifying that the name is made without prejudice to Kosovo's legal status. In other cases, UNMIK ensures Kosovo's ability to fulfill international obligations under agreements where UNMIK is the signatory on behalf of Kosovo.

Kosovo is a member of the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) and has signed Free-Trade Agreements (FTA) with Albania, Macedonia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Turkey. A Stabilization and Association Agreement liberalizing trade with the EU entered into force in April 2016.

Additionally, Kosovo has signed double taxation treaties with Albania, Macedonia, Slovenia, Austria, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, and the United Kingdom. Older treaties with Hungary, Netherlands, Germany, Finland, and Belgium from the time of the former Yugoslavia still apply for Kosovo.

Kosovo is member of the European Common Aviation Area and member of the Athens Process on Energy for the Southeastern Europe Energy Community Treaty.

More information on Kosovo's trade agreements can be found on the [website of the Ministry of Trade and Industry](#).

Licensing Requirements for Professional Services

According to the KBRA, many professional services do not require a license. The Law on the License and Permit System stipulates procedures and general criteria for licensing of foreign professional services by competent boards of respective ministries. Legal and accountancy professions require a license, while consulting does not.

Foreigners who wish to practice law in Kosovo must register with the Kosovo Bar Association, present their home country Bar Association certificate and law license, and pass a test on their knowledge of Kosovo legislation before applying for a license at the Ministry of Justice. Details on licensing of foreign lawyers may be found on the website of [Kosovo Bar Association](#).

Similarly, to become a licensed accountant, a foreign professional must apply for registration with the Society of Certified Accountants and Auditors of Kosovo (SCAAK), documenting their professional standing from their respective home country, and pass SCAA's eligibility test. The licensing determination is made by the Kosovo Council for Financial Reporting, which is part of the Ministry of Finance.

Web Resources

[Kosovo Customs](#)

[Official Gazette](#)

Ministry of Finance

Ministry of Trade and Industry

Kosovo International Trade Guide

Kosovo Bar Association

Society of Certified Accountants and Auditors (SCAAK)

Law on Permit and License System

Trade & Project Financing

Methods of Payment

About 75 percent of Kosovo importers regularly receive goods under short-term supplier credits. Longer term financing may be sought for larger purchases, but may be difficult to obtain. No credit rating agencies currently operate in Kosovo. Kosovo obtained a SWIFT code in 2013 and the IBAN format for bank accounts in 2014.

Banking Systems

Kosovo uses the euro as its national currency even though the country is not a member of the European Central Bank and has no independent monetary policy of its own.

Kosovo's banking system is well regulated, profitable, and liquid. The Central Bank of Kosovo (CBK) is an independent public agency with the authority to license, supervise, and regulate financial institutions and insurance companies in Kosovo. The CBK has adopted banking rules and regulations in line with the Basel Accords and EU directives.

Ten commercial banks operate in Kosovo, representing 66.3 percent of total assets in the financial sector, eight of which are foreign-owned and comprise about 86.8 percent of total banking system assets. Two domestic banks account for the remaining 13.2 percent. Pension funds represent 26.7 percent of financial system assets, followed by microfinance institutions (4.0 percent) and insurance companies (2.8 percent), while other financial intermediaries comprise the rest. In December 2018, financial sector assets amounted to €6.31 billion, recording an annual growth rate of about 6.9 percent.

Neither the banking sector nor local commercial enterprises are sufficiently capitalized to finance large investment projects. In 2018, new investment loans represented 39.1 percent of total new loans issued during that period. As of December 2018, approximately 79.3 percent of bank loans have maturities of two years or more, with maturities of two to five years accounting for 34.4 percent of loans. Nearly 64 percent of loans are directed towards enterprises and 3.9 percent towards the agricultural sector. Transferable deposits represent 48.1 percent of banks' liabilities.

Kosovo signed the Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA) with the United States in March 2015. FACTA is an information-sharing agreement between the GoK and the U.S. Department of Treasury that ensures that American citizens and legal permanent residences with foreign-held bank accounts comply with their U.S. tax obligations.

There are no special rules or regulations that might impact U.S. businesses.

Foreign Exchange Controls

Kosovo unilaterally adopted the euro as its national currency in 2002. The CBK has no monetary policy tools to influence its currency. Other than reporting to Kosovo Customs the removal or importation of €10,000 into the country, there are no currency or payment restrictions related to the use of the euro in Kosovo.

US Banks & Local Correspondent Banks

There are no U.S. banks or local correspondent banks in Kosovo. Ex-Im Bank does not have any programs in Kosovo.

Project Financing

The following are international bilateral and multilateral institutions that provide project financing:

Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC):

OPIC is a U.S. Government agency that promotes economic growth in developing and high-risk countries or regions by encouraging U.S. private investment. OPIC's investment incentive tools are loan guarantees, direct loans, and political risk insurance. OPIC has supported two projects in Kosovo – a hydro power plant project and a real estate development project. OPIC funds also supported the development of the American Hospital.

OPIC

1100 New York Ave, NW

Washington, DC, 20572

Telephone: (202) 336-9700

Fax: (202) 408-5155

Web: www.opic.gov

U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA):

USTDA is a U.S. Government agency that advances economic development and U.S. commercial interests in developing and middle-income countries. The Agency funds various forms of technical assistance, early investment analysis, training programs, orientation visits, and business workshops that support the development of a modern infrastructure and a fair and open trading environment. Contracts funded by USTDA grants must be awarded to U.S. companies. USTDA has been active in Kosovo's telecommunications and information technology sectors.

The United States Trade and Development Agency

1000 Wilson Blvd., Suite 1600

Arlington, VA 22209

Telephone: (703) 875-4357

Fax: (703) 875-4009

E-mail regional office for Europe: mena_ee@ustda.gov

Web: www.ustda.gov

World Bank:

The World Bank serves as a vital source of financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world.

Kosovo Resident Representative: Marco Mantovanelli, Country Manager

Pristina, Kosovo

Telephone: +383 38 224 454

Web: www.worldbank.org

European Investment Bank (EIB):

The EIB is the European Union's bank. It is owned by and represents the interests of European Union Member States. It works closely with other EU institutions to implement EU policy. In June 2013, the EIB signed a Framework Agreement with Kosovo, allowing it to finance priority projects, particularly in the areas of the environment, transport, telecommunications, and energy infrastructure. EIB's involvement will facilitate the co-financing of projects with other donors and support the implementation of the Western Balkans Investment Framework and the Western Balkans Enterprise Development and Innovation Facility. Kosovo has identified eight priority projects for potential EIB support, six of which are in the infrastructure sector, including the rehabilitation and modernization of railways.

Council of Europe Development Bank (CEB):

The CEB is a multilateral development bank with a social vocation. Established in 1956 to bring solutions to the problems of refugees, its scope of action has progressively widened to other sectors of action directly contributing to strengthening social cohesion in Europe.

Representative to the Governing Board

Mimoza Ahmetaj, Consul General of Kosovo, Strasbourg

Representative to the Administrative Council

Lum Mita, Head of Division for International Financial Cooperation, Ministry of Finance, Pristina
Web: <https://coebank.org/en/about/member-countries/kosovo/>

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD):

The EBRD is an international financial institution that supports projects in 30 countries from central Europe to central Asia. Investing primarily in private sector clients whose needs cannot be fully met by the market, the EBRD promotes entrepreneurship and fosters transition towards open and democratic market economies.

EBRD

Pristina-Fushe Kosove Main Road

PO Box 122

Pristina, Kosovo

Telephone: +383 (0)38 242 07000

Fax: +383 (0)38 242 07071

Web: www.ebrd.com

Multilateral Development Banks:

U.S. Commercial Service Liaison Offices at the Multilateral Development Banks (World Bank)

The Commercial Service maintains Commercial Liaison Offices in each of the main Multilateral Development Banks, including the World Bank. These institutions lend billions of dollars in developing countries on projects aimed at accelerating economic growth and social development by reducing poverty and inequality, improving health and education, and advancing infrastructure development. The Commercial Liaison Offices help businesses that create U.S. jobs learn how to get involved in bank-funded projects and how to connect to other parts of the International Trade Administration, including the U.S. Field; the overseas network of Commercial Service offices; and, in Washington, desk officers, sectoral experts and the Advocacy Center.

Web Resources

[Commercial Liaison Office to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development Commercial Liaison Office to the World Bank](#)

Financing Web Resources

Trade Finance Guide: A Quick Reference for U.S. Exporters, published by the International Trade Administration's Industry & Analysis team, [Trade Finance Guide](#)

[Export-Import Bank of the United States](#)

[OPIC](#)

[Trade and Development Agency](#)

SBA's Office of International Trade

[USDA Commodity Credit Corporation](#)

U.S. Agency for International Development

World Bank

European Investment Bank

Council of Europe Development Bank

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

Business Travel

Business meetings throughout regular business hours, generally at 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Government ministries and offices are open Monday through Friday during these hours.

English is generally understood by business professionals in Kosovo, but not always by the general public. Depending on one's audience, saying a few words in Albanian or Serbian or knowing a few greetings or phrases in other local languages, such as Turkish, will impress locals, who nearly universally admire the United States. Most Kosovo Albanians over the age of 35 speak Serbian; however, unless you know your audience well, it is preferable to use English or Albanian. Kosovo Serbs who operate businesses are generally fluent in English, but rarely in Albanian. Many Kosovo nationals – Albanians more so than Serbs – have studied in the United States.

Kosovo nationals of all ethnic backgrounds are hospitable to foreigners, especially westerners. Invitations to lunch, dinner, receptions, even religious family customs and other official and/or private family events are frequent and should be accepted if possible. Be prepared for small talk dominating much of the discussion and do not be concerned if your business contact does not immediately get down to business. If offered, be prepared to accept coffee, tea, or other beverages, as sign of respect for the host.

Dress at meetings should be business attire, but a formal suit is not expected. It is preferable to print business cards with one side in English and the other side in Albanian and/or Serbian. It is advisable, but not necessary, to have a temporary local or international mobile phone. Giving gifts is not expected as it will depend on the closeness of the relationship. If it is known that your local contact will provide you with a gift, be prepared to offer one in exchange. Emphasis is not placed on the value of the item, but on the thought.

Travel Advisory

Consult the State Department Consular [Information Sheet for Kosovo](#).

Visa Requirements

To enter Kosovo, U.S. citizens need a passport that will be valid at least six months upon entry. No visa is required, but visitors may be asked to produce documentation to demonstrate the purpose of their visit. Visitors authorized entry into Kosovo are permitted to stay up to 90 days within a six-month period. Persons who wish to prolong their stay beyond 90 days will need to register at the Office for Registration of Foreigners, located in the Main Police Headquarters in Pristina. Any cash carried in the amount of \$10,000 or more should be declared. Prior to traveling to Kosovo, U.S. business travelers are strongly encouraged to obtain general and [country-specific travel information from the U.S. Department of State's website](#).

U.S. companies that require travel of foreign business persons to the United States should go to the following links:

[State Department Visa Website](#)
[United States Embassy in Pristina, Kosovo](#)
[United States Embassy in Skopje, Macedonia](#)

Currency

Kosovo has adopted the euro as its currency. Serbia's dinar is also used in the northern part of the country. Visa and MasterCard are frequently accepted, and ATMs are available throughout Kosovo. Travelers' checks are not routinely accepted.

Telecommunications/Electric

Kosovo has both fixed line and mobile telephony services, which are in the process of being modernized and updated. Telephone charges are the lowest in the region. U.S. calling cards are not accepted in

Kosovo. Most major U.S. cell phone carriers work in Kosovo, including AT&T, Verizon, TMobile, and Nexttel (through Kosovo Telecom only). Please note that roaming charges will apply. There are charges on all calls made from and received on cellular phones.

Kosovo's Internet service is provided by two privately-owned companies, Kujtesa and IPKO, and through the public provider Kosovo Telecom. According to a March 2018 report by the telecom regulator, 87.8 percent of households have internet at home. Free Wi-Fi is common in Pristina's cafes, restaurants, and hotels. Like elsewhere in Europe, appliances in Kosovo run on 220 volts. Plug adapters and power converters are needed for U.S. appliances.

Transportation

The most convenient way to travel to and from Kosovo is through its modern international airport, located in Slatina, 20 minutes from the capital Pristina. Road transportation options for business travelers are limited to car rentals or private taxi. International rental firms, including Enterprise, Europcar, and Hertz, operate in Kosovo. Local travel company MCM offers similar services, with locations at the airport and downtown Pristina. Another local firm, Limo Prishtina, offers car rentals with or without a driver, and also acts as a travel agent. A considerable number of private taxis are available.

Language

Albanian and Serbian are the official languages in Kosovo. English is widely spoken and understood, but it is advisable to use an interpreter.

Health

Kosovo's public health and medical facilities are in poor condition. The quality of the numerous private clinics varies. Many locals and internationals travel to Macedonia, Albania, Serbia, and Turkey for more complex health-care services and medical treatment. In 2015, the American Hospital opened in Kosovo, offering state-of-the-art technology and equipment, as well as more advanced procedures than typically offered locally. For additional medical information, visit the [U.S. Embassy Pristina's website](#).

Local Time, Business Hours and Holidays

Kosovo local time is GMT plus one hour -- six hours ahead of U.S. Eastern Standard Time. The Government of Kosovo's official working hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. Banking hours depend on the bank and the location, although most are open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and closed on public holidays. Some banks are open on Saturdays from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. U.S. Embassy Pristina hours are 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The Embassy closes for U.S. and Kosovo holidays. [The list of public holidays](#) for U.S. Embassy Pristina website.

Kosovo adheres to the western calendar. Two major Muslim holidays are observed based on the lunar calendar: Eid al-Fitr marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadan and Eid al-Adha marks the conclusion of the pilgrimage (Hajj) to Mecca. The exact dates of these holidays are determined by the government and religious leaders in advance of their observance. Catholic and Orthodox Christian holidays are also observed.

Public-sector officials and private-industry representatives often take vacation from July to September. The week between New Year's and Orthodox Christmas is also a popular time to take leave.

The list of Kosovo's national holidays is available on the [Ministry of Public Administration website](#).

Temporary Entry of Materials or Personal Belongings

Most standard business equipment for individual use may be brought into Kosovo temporarily without incurring customs duties. Exhibition materials may be imported for temporary use, but a tax-based bank

guarantee must be paid. Upon departure, the guarantee is reimbursed to the importer. If the items are sold in Kosovo, customs duties will be applied. Exhibition organizers generally designate a local freight forwarder and a clearing agent for specific events in order to assist foreign exhibitors with entry procedures.

Travel Related Web Resources

[State Department Visa Website](#)

[United States Embassy in Pristina, Kosovo](#)

[United States Embassy in Skopje, Macedonia](#)

[Kosovo Embassy in Washington, D.C.](#)

[Kosovo National Holidays](#)