

## Welcome to the Gambia “The smiling coast”

Despite being one of the smallest countries of the African continent, the Gambia offers interesting and surprising places (like the other countries of the sub-saharian region).

Its capital Banjul constitutes a particular African reality, with a frantic market and with a street culture that makes envy to the holiday fun of the most fascinating cities.

For a more “traditional” perspective, a quick trip towards the source of the river brings to the heart of the country, where the picturesque buzz of the weekly markets rivals with the boat trips through the mangrove creeks and with the bike rides at a time of villages with mud huts.

Although largely defined by its natural characteristics (from the Gambia River, which crosses the country for its entire length, to the long golden beaches of the Atlantic coast), one of the most interesting aspects of the country is constituted by its people, its culture and the pleasant atmosphere that characterizes the life of every day.

Every tourist, who has had the opportunity to converse at one of the stalls selling coffee along the sidewalks or scream until losing the voice witnessing a clash of wrestling during the weekend, will definitely go home with a feeling of affection towards inhabitants of the Gambia , the same as they demonstrate to all travelers.



**Complete name:** Republic of Gambia  
**Official languages:** English  
**Capital:** Banjul (31,301 people)  
**Form of Government:** Presidential Republic  
**Total area:** 10,380 km<sup>2</sup>, 11.5% water  
**Total population:** 1,882,450 people (cens.2013)  
**Growth rate:** 2.78%  
**Currency:** Dalasi  
**Currency exchange:** 1 € = 48.576 GMD  
**Nominal GDP:** US \$ 914.3 mln  
**GDP per capita:** US \$ 514  
**Religions:** Muslim and Christian



## THE GOUVERNMENT

According to the Constitution came into force in 1997, the Gambia is a presidential republic. The President is elected by universal suffrage every five years.

The judicial system in use in the country is based on English Common Law, with local adaptations, and on Islamic law, for citizens Muslims. Justice is administered by the Courts of Magistrates, which act as courts of first instance, by the High Court, qualified in civil and criminal matters and in its highest degree by the Supreme Court.

The defense is entrusted to the army, the navy and the presidential guard. Military service is mandatory since 1997. The education system suffers British school organization .

Primary education is free, but not mandatory. The percentage of illiteracy in 2005 was around 57.5 %. In Gambia, there are no universities.

## ECONOMY

The Gambia has a traditional economy characterized by agriculture, a historic reliance on groundnuts for earnings from exports, a growing trade built around the sea, low customs duties, minimal administrative procedures, a flexible exchange rate regime, and a strong tourism industry.

As mentioned, the only advanced crop planting is peanuts , followed by the production of cotton . The country has achieved a strong self-sufficiency for wheat and rice; crops intended solely for domestic consumption are cereals (millet, maize, cassava etc.). The breeding, particularly of cattle, goats and sheep, is poorly developed and has little importance in the economic status. More significant is instead fishing, widespread in coastal areas and in the rich basin of the River Gambia: much of the catch is exported.

No major basic industries , work only a few processing plants for the processing of peanuts and fish preservation .

The country suffers from a lack of raw materials: there are small quantities of copper and kaolin .

The trade balance is extremely negative , the country exports mainly peanuts and imports raw materials, energy and food. The exchange takes place primarily with UK, followed by China, Belgium and Japan .

Unemployment and underemployment remain high; economic progress depends mostly on bilateral and multilateral aid. Lack the railways, so most of the transport takes place by river. The capital hosts the country's main port and in Yundum, near the capital, operates an international airport . The government relies heavily on tourism, the major source of strong currency.

### MAIN ECONOMIC INDICATORS

<b>GDP</b>	752 mln US\$ in 2011, it is expected to grow up to 941 million within 2015
<b>GDP GROWTH</b>	3.3% in 2011, 5.9% expected annual growth between 2012-2015
<b>Country Risk</b>	It has the lowest level of risk compared to neighboring countries
<b>Inflation Rate</b>	4.4% in 2011
<b>Import/Export Values</b>	Export 94.7 mln US\$ Import 343.69 mln US\$

## AGRICULTURE

The Gambia has 558,000 hectares of arable land of excellent quality which currently only 200,000 hectares are used for agricultural production. The country has great potential for the abundance of water for irrigation, thanks to fresh water of the River Gambia and rainwater. In addition, it has a kind of climate suitable for almost all types of agricultural production.

Agriculture is the most important sector for the economy of the Gambia:

1. The country offers a wide extension of arable land quality; thanks to favorable climate, low labor costs, richness of the soil and proximity to Western markets, the country offers great opportunities to invest in agriculture.
2. The country has achieved strong growth in agricultural production, although due to the lack of processing plants much of the export potential remains untapped.
3. Regarding the breeding of livestock, the lack of slaughterhouses and places of storage, refrigeration and freezing, as well as other processing plants, at the time prevents a better exploitation of this sector.
4. On the other hand, in addition to the possibilities to export, the tourism industry booming creates a strong domestic demand for food and drink, both fresh and processed.



## FISHING

The fisheries sector of the Gambia is internationally competitive, thanks to its marine and river waters full of a great deal of valuable species. The Gambia has a continental shelf of 4,000 km<sup>2</sup> and an Exclusive Economic (fishing) Zone (EEZ) of 19,500 km<sup>2</sup>, with a yield of fish estimated about 75,000 t / year and the current annual exploitation of around 29,000 t / year.

Furthermore fishing vessels registered in Gambia can easily obtain a license to operate in neighboring Senegal through mutual agreement on fisheries between the two countries: this ensures bigger operational areas and better fishing prospects. Fishing is carried out throughout the year.



## TOURISM

Tourism is one of the industries with the largest growth; it contributes around 16% of the country's GDP and it is the main form of work that is not derived from traditional agricultural economy of the country.

The country has excellent potential for the development of tourism: it can be reached easily from the European market and good comparison quality-price of the various touristic packages .

Not to be forgotten are also the favorable climate, long beaches, tropical landscaping, a comfortable atmosphere and the wonderful hospitality of the population.

The country offers a variety of hotel accommodations to suit every need: luxury hotels, self-catering, apartments and guest houses.

Most of the hotels are autonomous, with all the facilities to satisfy even the most demanding tourists . There are also dozens of campsites, hotels in rural areas with basic forms but with every comfort. There are also organized excursions or other visits for tourists who wish to discover "the real Gambia".

## ENERGY

Given the rapid growth in recent years of the Gambian population, the demand for energy has far exceeded the ability to supply by the state.

The ability to generate energy is substantially below the question, and so, in particular with the development of industry and tourism, born and grow new requirements.

The supply of electricity has become a priority for the Government, which is in search of investments needed to upgrade the existing supply and distribution system.



## INFRASTRUCTURES

Banjul airport is the main infrastructure pole on which the Government of the Gambia is pointing. There are also developing other new infrastructure:

- The bridge "Trans-Gambia"
- The improvement of road links with Senegal
- A second port on the Atlantic coast

It is also being evaluated the creation of an internal port for facilitating transports in the hinterland of the whole region.

### Transport systems

There are many international flights and are growing low-cost airlines. There are only 5 hours of flight from most European countries.

The road network is quite extensive, while completely missing the railroad, so the most of the transport takes place by river. In fact, the Gambia River is a good alternative to road transport, also because Banjul, the capital, is located on the mouth of the river.

## MANUFACTURING FIELD

The manufacturing sector in Gambia continues to be an underdeveloped sector, with a limited production mainly focused on the domestic market and with the use of a limited range of technologies. The Government's strategy is based on building before a local market to encourage large companies to invest in production to supply the Gambia and the African regional markets, and then subsequently develop products that can be exported into the European Union and America There are good opportunities in the following areas:

- Machines for packaging of food and beverages
- Production and service machinery (in particular for agriculture and for industry of fish)
- Production of plastics for the consumer market and construction industries
- Basic assembly of appliances
- Medicines and cosmetics production
- Healthcare

## FINANCIAL FIELD

The financial sector in The Gambia is constantly growing. Commercial banks, insurance companies, offices for foreign trade, micro finance institutions and financial companies consolidate existing activities and open new offices. Currently there are eleven commercial banks and as many insurance companies, although with very limited offerings.

Therefore, the financial system, although competitive, offers ample space for the opening of new institutions and the proposal of new products. The goal is to increase the international competitiveness of the Gambia thanks to investments in the banking world. Although the current legislature present limits to facilitate this growth and encourage more the banking system, there are processes to overcome their own limits.

## LAWS-TAXES

"The Gambia Investment Promotion Act 2001" and "Free Zones Act 2001" are the main laws that regulate investment in Gambia .

These laws provide guidelines for investing in the country and make clear which are the priority areas , guarantees for investors , the eligibility criteria for incentives, administrative procedures, the institutional framework. In practice respond on all the typical questions of who should make investment choices. The registration process of company forms is somewhat simplified and requires only the presentation of the following documents with the Register: Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, Evidence of payment of stamp duty and Registration fee.



# INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

## Breeding Livestock

### Beef cattle and milk production:

There are over 400,000 cattle. The breeding crossed with European breeds of cattle to increase the production of meat and milk is possible through the ITC (International Trypanotolerance Centre in Banjul) .

### Small livestock:

There are more than 300,000 head of cattle small: sheep, goats, pigs and rabbits

### Eggs and Poultry:

chickens, hens, ducks and turkeys are raised both for meat and for eggs (daily consumption in the country of 20,000 eggs). Nevertheless there is a high import of poultry products.



## Agriculture and Agri-Food Industries

### Animal feed:

there is a strong need of feed for poultry and fish (aquaculture)

### Agro-pharmaceutical products :

there is an urgent need of veterinary drugs for the animal industry

### Pesticides and fertilizers :

systems are required for the production of pesticides and organic fertilizers;

### Installations for the processing of fruit and vegetables:

are extremely necessary in order to reduce losses in the industry and imports;

### Processing cereal products:

serve farm machinery, particularly threshing and milling machines;

### Meat processing:

are needed modern slaughterhouses to exploit the resources of the country and improve livestock exports;



### Oil Mills:

there is a productive potential of 250,000 tons of peanuts and over 40,000 tons of sesame. They are therefore necessary installations for the treatment of peanuts and sesame and for the production of oil;

### Tanneries:

despite the presence of more than 700,000 head of cattle, the skin of the animals after slaughter is not normally used, for the lack of adequate processing facilities;

### Dairy products:

the miscegenation between the EU and the local breed cattle gave 10-15 liters more milk per day; despite that currently more than 80% of dairy products are imported.

### Processing fishery products:

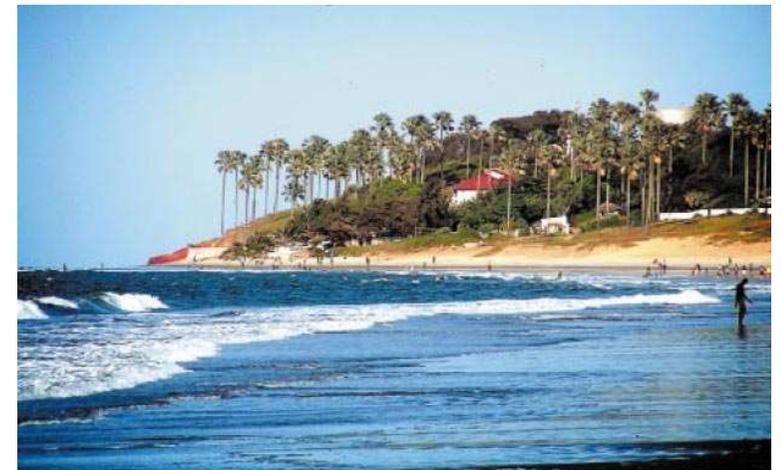
fishing companies with existing factories annexed have extensive experience in the processing of fishery products and value-added in the commercialization of products in the international fish markets. Many of these companies are already certified according to the EU regulations for importing and are able to meet the needs of potential importers in Africa, Europe, Asia and the United States. There are no excises and customs duties on exports of fish products or on imported capital goods.

Finally, the EU-ACP Cotonou agreement helps to provide excellent opportunities for trade in fisheries products.



## **Hotel facilities**

Tourism, as already mentioned, is an important and rapidly developing in Gambia. The existing facilities are not able to offer a full range of solutions. There is definitely space for investors for the realization of hotel complexes (both small and large), to provide the appropriate hosting services to international standards of holiday tourism.



**SOME PRODUCTS GIVING INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRANSFORMATION ACTIVITIES**

**PRODUCTS ALREADY TREATED IN GAMBIA  
(Low level of processing)**

**PRODUCTS PRESENT IN GAMBIA WITH HIGH  
TRANSFORMATION POTENTIAL  
(Not yet fully used)**

**Cocktails and Drinks**



**Poultry**



**Peanuts**



**Tomatoes**



**Oranges**



**Fishes**



**Shrimps**



**Onions**



**Corn**



**Mangos**



**Dairy products**



**Beef**



## **WHY INVEST IN GAMBIA?**

There are many benefits to consider that lead to the choice of investing in Gambia, including:

- Peace and political stability
- No restrictions to foreign operators
- Liberal economics
- English as official language
- Geographical location with proximity to Europe and the US
- Quick and easy accessibility is by air that maritime
- Stop shop (GIPFZA)
- Social Security
- Abundant workforce both qualified and unqualified
- Average daily wages of 2-3 dollars lower than many countries in West Africa
- Liberal market economy
- Fiscal and monetary discipline facilitated
- Flexible exchange rates
- Reliable laws
- Tax Incentives

## INCENTIVES FOR INVESTORS

There are different incentives available to investors in the processing , provided they meet certain criteria relating to the value of investments and the creation of jobs . These incentives are :

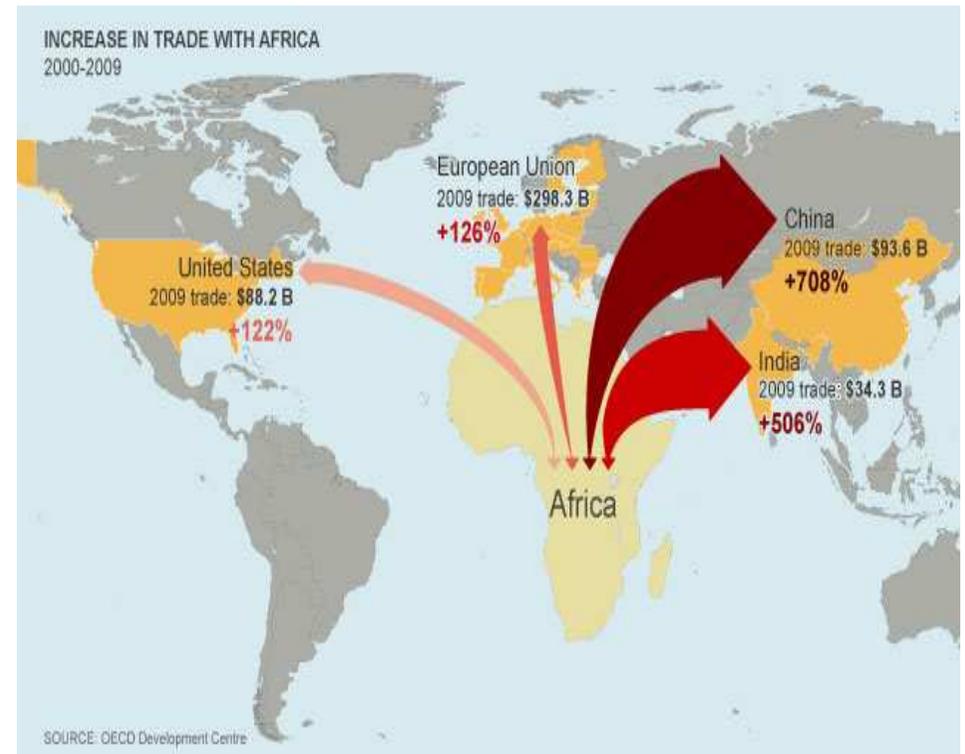
- tax holiday: tax breaks for corporation tax and turnover, withholding tax on dividends and for a period of 5-8 years, depending on the location of the project;
- assistance Tax on Imports: exemption from payment of import tax on direct inputs (for example, agricultural machinery)
- assistance Export: exemptions, reductions in corporate taxes and revenues, the exemption from excise duty and sales tax on goods produced or imported in the Export Processing Zone for processing and export, depending on the percentage of exported goods.
- no charge on exports of agricultural products

President Yahya Jammeh, within 2020, provides for the implementation of various incentives to become the country the focus of Export-Oriented negotiation (both agricultural and manufacturing), focusing on free-market policies.

The Government of the Gambia is in an advanced stage for the implementation of the Project GateWay, whose overall objective is to develop and promote the country to become the regional center for the processing, manufacturing, assembly and distribution of goods in West Africa.

The project will facilitate the creation of a Free Zone Authority (FZA) and the creation of export processing zones, developed specifically for activities that are export-oriented and include "storage / sorting / packing / secondary processing / mounting / assembly ". Investors will benefit from a series of One-Stop-Shop and its structures.

According to a witness of the project GateWay, the Gambia has signed agreements with major lenders Africans including: African Bank for Development / The World Bank Group / Islamic Development Bank. The main agreement is the ACP – EU convention, signed in Cotonou in 2000, that offers, to the cooperative relations of the EU, a framework for economic, social and cultural development of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP).



## CURIOSITIES

### COOKING



Among the main dishes in Gambia we can cite the Benechin, a rice dish cooked in fish sauce and vegetables, the Domoda, the Super- Kanja, the Mbahal, Chicken Yassa. Normally the dishes in the Gambia are composed of rice and sauces, with one or two variations available per day. Meals include sometimes roasted or grilled meats. You can buy food everywhere from small and simple locals, called chop shop, to the huts called afra, the stalls on the street. Do not miss the fresh fish dishes, thanks to the abundant supply for the Gambia River and the ocean, and it is also possible to satisfy the tastes of vegetarians.

The country has over the years expanded restaurants offering quality foods, and is gaining international fame with the chefs from around the world who live and work in Gambia.

It is interesting to find that the local dishes of the country are loved by tourists, are very nutritious and provided by local producers who with their annual work on farms guarantee the freshness and safety of the ingredients of the dishes offered.

### LIVING AND WORKING

The population is known for its tolerance towards other cultures and for his peaceful attitude. Although being the combination of various ethnic groups, the population lives serene together as one community. This makes the Gambia one of the quietest and most secure countries in West Africa: an attractive country to live and work.

### AN ECOSOLIDARY COUNTRY

Yahya Jammeh's government has forbidden to throw any kind of garbage in the streets and the collection and disposal of waste has, at least in the capital, a very efficient service, at the point of creating outrage from some citizens if it is stacked.

Even drinking a simple drink in glass bottle on the streets of Banjul becomes a crime because possible source of pollution, exactly the opposite situation to that found at the Senegalese cousins, where the presence of bottles and objects stacked is a constant.

Find a Gambian who in his own country is willing to talk about politics is certainly not easy, because many people are afraid that any complaints may come to the ears of civil servants or police forces, assumptions not so impossible in the tiny Gambia. But outside of the country, for example in Senegal, it is not difficult to find people who, especially with tourists, open and declare openly the reality of their country.



## FOUR GOOD REASONS TO CHOOSE THE GAMBIA

<p><b>1. Strong potential to increase production levels</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Strong growth in the domestic market</li> <li>- Tourism demand in considerable increase</li> <li>- Strong potential for food and beverage processing</li> </ul>	<p><b>2. Competitive environment for investments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The best agricultural policy and the most competitive economy in West Africa (WEF 2012)</li> <li>- The labor market more efficient in West Africa (WEF 2012)</li> <li>- Low political risk (Maplecroft)</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Significant infrastructure improvement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accessibility for trade by sea / river Gambia</li> <li>- Efficient port with competitive costs ( fixed tariff system unit )</li> <li>- Road links in rapid improvement</li> </ul>	<p><b>4. Attractive incentives and competitive cost</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Generous incentives for food and drinks</li> <li>- Competitive costs</li> <li>- Strong political support for the processing of foods and beverages</li> <li>- Guidance and support from GIEPA</li> </ul>

### TESTIMONIALS FROM SOME INVESTORS

***“I think we entered the [Gambian] market at a very exciting time, when government is trying to prioritise cum mechanise and make the agricultural sector more attractive.”***

Momodou S. Samateh - Director of Administration New Nut Company

***“We are very optimistic about the growth of the country, and we expect to develop more projects. Really, I am impressed [...] The government is very helpful in terms of promoting investment and providing the environment conducive for business. It is one of the better countries in this regard.”***

Mohamed Nagaty - Area Manager, West Africa M.A. Kharafi & Sons

***“Cashew production costs are relatively low and the high quality of the raw nut from this area has been well documented and acknowledged among cashew industry stakeholders....Cashew processing has the potential to be a viable business.”***