INVESTOR TOOLKIT

Market Entry Basics

Company registration, banking, tax obligations, foreign-ownership rules, work permits, import/export, IP protection, and how to find reliable local partners.

1. Company Registration

All businesses operating in Suriname — including foreign companies and branch offices — are required to register in the Commercial Register (Handelsregister) maintained by the Kamer van Koophandel en Fabrieken (KKF), or Chamber of Commerce and Industry. This is the mandatory first step for all foreign investors establishing a legal business presence.

KKF has been operational since May 1, 1910, and maintains a register of nearly 30,000 businesses. Registration is governed by the Commercial Register Act (Handelsregisterwet). The KKF register is publicly accessible via the Suriname Directory.

⚠ Important: Registration must be executed during the week before or the week immediately after the actual commencement of business activities — this is a statutory requirement. Do not begin commercial operations without registering.

Exemptions from registration: certain enterprises exclusively engaged in agriculture, horticulture, fishing, or hunting are exempt. Public enterprises are also exempt. All other businesses must register.

Business Structure Options

Naamloze Vennootschap (NV)	The most common structure for foreign investors. A limited liability company (LLC equivalent). Minimum share capital: SRD 1,000 (approx. USD 27 at current rates). Requires at least 1 shareholder and 1 director. Articles of Association must be drafted in Dutch and notarised. Presidential approval is required for incorporation. KKF registration fee: SRD 100; administration fee: SRD 50.
Branch Office (Filiaal)	Foreign companies may operate branch offices in Suriname. Must also register with the KKF. Branch offices are subject to the same compliance obligations as a locally incorporated company — including tax registration and business licensing. No withholding tax on profit remittances from a branch to its foreign head office.
General Partnership (Vennootschap Onder Firma — VOF)	Two or more partners trading under a shared name. All partners carry unlimited joint and several liability. Used primarily by smaller domestic enterprises; rarely appropriate for foreign investors.
Limited Partnership (Commanditaire Vennootschap — CV)	A partnership with at least one general partner (unlimited liability) and one limited partner (liability limited to capital contribution). Used in some fund and joint venture structures.
Sole Proprietorship (Eenmanszaak)	Individual trading on own account. Full personal liability. Rarely used by foreign investors. Eligible to register in the Suriname Supplier Registration Portal (SSRP) for oil sector procurement.
Foundation (Stichting)	Non-profit legal entity. Used for CSR programs, development foundations, or in specific holding structures. Cannot distribute profits to founders.

Step-by-Step Registration Process for a Foreign Investor (NV)

Step	Action	Detail & Documents Required
1	**Company Name Search & Reservation**	Verify your proposed company name is available in the KKF database. Check also against the Suriname trademark register. Prepare 2-3 alternative names in case of conflict. Ensure the name complies with

		Surinamese naming conventions — it must not duplicate existing registrations or be misleading as to business type.
2	**Civil Registry Extract**	Each founder and shareholder must obtain a nationality declaration and a civil registry extract from the Centraal Bureau voor Burgerzaken (Civil Registry). For foreign nationals: valid passports are required. All foreign documents not in Dutch must be translated by a sworn translator AND legalized (apostilled). An apostille and a translation can take 2–4 weeks for foreign documents — plan accordingly.
3	**Engage a Licensed Surinamese Notary**	Engage a notary public licensed in Suriname. The notary will: draft and notarise the Articles of Association (Statuten) in Dutch; notarise corporate bylaws and ID documents; for non-residents — submit a request to the Foreign Exchange Commission (Valutacommissie) for approval of the company structure. KKF registration requires notarial assent by law. Fee: another fee must be paid to the District Commissioner.
4	**Capital Deposit**	Open a temporary (pre-incorporation) bank account and deposit the minimum share capital — SRD 1,000 for an NV. Obtain a bank confirmation letter as proof of deposit. Note: this account is separate from your eventual corporate account.
5	**KKF Registration & Presidential Approval**	Submit the following to the KKF: notarised Articles of Association, corporate bylaws, ID copies of all founders/shareholders/directors, bank confirmation of capital deposit, and completed KKF application form. KKF registration fee: SRD 100; administration fee: SRD 50. The application is then forwarded to the Cabinet of the President for final approval. A KKF registration number (KvK-nummer) is issued upon Presidential approval; changes to the registration: SRD 30 per change.
6	**Tax Registration**	Register with the Belastingdienst (Tax Authority, under the Ministry of Finance and Planning) to obtain a Fiscal Identification Number (FIN / RSIN). This number is required for corporate income tax filing, VAT registration, and payroll and wage tax. As of January 2024, wage tax and old-age premium (AOV) returns must be submitted via the online portal at portaal.belastingdienst.sr.
7	**Business License (if applicable)**	Businesses operating in any of 26 designated sectors must obtain a Handelsvergunning (business license) from the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Entrepreneurship and Technological Innovation. Apply via the Digital Business License Platform at vergunningen.gov.sr (launched November 2024). This platform automates digital verification, tax registration, and centralized permit processing. Processing time: approximately 3 months. Regulated sectors include food retail, hospitality, construction, healthcare, and various services.
8	**Open Corporate Bank Account**	Open your operational corporate bank account (see Section 2 for full guidance). This is separate from the pre-incorporation capital deposit account. For non-residents, Foreign Exchange Commission clearance documentation (from your notary) is required. Allow additional time for the bank's KYC/AML verification.

Indicative Registration Timelines

Name search & document preparation	1–2 weeks

Foreign document apostille & translation	2–4 weeks (allow extra time)
Notarisation & Civil Registry extract	1–2 weeks
KKF submission & Presidential approval	2–4 weeks
Tax registration (FIN)	3–5 business days
Total (without sector license)	Approximately 30–66 days
Business license (Handelsvergunning, if needed)	Approximately 3 months from application
Total (with sector license)	3–5 months
Bank account opening	1–3 weeks (relationship-dependent)
Branch office registration	8–12 weeks (parent company documents, apostille, and foreign investment approvals required)

Note: Amendments to the 2025 Civil Code and the Trade Register have updated certain registration procedures. Verify current requirements with your notary at the time of application. Engaging an established Surinamese legal firm with international client experience is strongly recommended — it materially reduces processing time and avoids common errors.

2. Banking & Financial Services

Suriname's banking sector is supervised by the Centrale Bank van Suriname (CBvS), established under the Bank Act of 1956. The CBvS gained statutory independence under legislation passed during the IMF program (2021–2025) — a significant institutional reform. Since January 2024, CBvS has also served as the resolution authority for failing credit institutions.

The banking system comprises commercial banks, investment and finance companies (financieringsmaatschappijen), savings cooperatives, insurance companies, pension funds, and specialized institutions. CBvS publishes a full list of supervised financial institutions at cbvs.sr.

AML/CFT Framework — What Foreign Investors Must Know

Suriname has substantially strengthened its Anti-Money Laundering/Countering the Financing of Terrorism (AML/CFT) framework since 2022, with IMF technical assistance. The Wet ter Voorkoming en Bestrijding van Money Laundering en Terrorisme Financiering (WMTF — AML/CFT Law) was enacted in November 2022 and subsequently amended. The CBvS published its Richtlijn AML/CFT (AML/CFT Directive) to establish risk-based supervisory standards for banks.

In practice, this means KYC (Know Your Customer) requirements at Surinamese banks are now more stringent than investors may expect from a small frontier market. Banks will request full documentation of ownership structures, beneficial ownership, source of funds, and intended business purposes. Allow adequate time and ensure your documentation is complete and certified before approaching any bank.

⚠ Important: Suriname's EITI (Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative) membership was under review in 2024–2025 pending compliance with reporting requirements. Investors in the extractive sector should monitor EITI status, as this affects the broader governance and transparency environment.

Opening a Corporate Bank Account

A corporate bank account is essential for conducting business in Suriname. Accounts can be opened in SRD, USD, and EUR. For foreign investors, the Foreign Exchange Commission clearance documentation (obtained through your notary at incorporation) is required as part of the account-opening process.

Banking relationships in Suriname are highly relationship-driven. Working through your notary or local legal advisor to secure a formal introduction to your chosen bank is strongly recommended — it significantly accelerates the process.

Standard Documentation Required

- KKF registration certificate and company number (KvK-nummer)
- Certified copies of the notarized Articles of Association and corporate bylaws
- Identity documents (passport) for all directors and authorized signatories
- Fiscal Identification Number (FIN) from the Tax Authority
- Proof of registered business address in Suriname
- Foreign Exchange Commission approval documentation (for non-residents)

- Business plan or description of intended business activities (most banks require this)
- Source of funds documentation — for AML/CFT compliance; explain the origin of capital being deposited
- Corporate ownership structure chart — required for beneficial ownership verification (WMTF compliance)
- Police clearance certificates for directors, in some cases

Suriname Commercial Banking System

The following institutions are licensed commercial banks and financial institutions in Suriname, as supervised by the CBvS:

Bank	Ownership	Profile & Notes
De Surinaamsche Bank (DSB)	Private	One of Suriname's oldest and largest banks (est. 1865). Full commercial and retail banking. Acts as agent bank for Staatsolie's 2025 bond issuance. Broad correspondent banking network. Primary bank of choice for many international companies.
Hakrinbank N.V.	Private (listed)	Full-service commercial bank listed on the Suriname Stock Exchange (SSX). Has implemented an advanced AML suite (Tookitaki AMLS) — one of the most compliance-advanced banks in the system. USD, EUR, and SRD accounts.
Finabank N.V.	Private	Commercial banking with trade finance capabilities. In Q4 2024, it became the first bank in Suriname to obtain ISO 27001 Information Security Management certification. Investing in a digital banking upgrade. Active in oil-sector-related financing.
Surinaamsche Volkscredietbank (VCB)	State-owned	State-owned development and savings bank. Focused primarily on domestic retail and SME banking. Participates in the Staatsolie bond distribution network.
Republic Bank (Suriname) N.V.	Republic Bank Group (Trinidad)	Part of the Republic Financial Holdings Group, one of the Caribbean's largest financial institutions. Strong regional correspondent banking access. Well regarded for international transactions.
Surichange Bank N.V.	Private	specializes in foreign exchange, money transfers, and payment services. Part of the Staatsolie bond distribution network.
Trustbank Amanah	Private (Islamic)	Islamic banking principles. Retail and SME focus. Part of Staatsolie bond distribution network.
Coöperatieve Spaar- en Kredietbank Godo G.A. (Godo)	Cooperative	Cooperative savings and credit bank. Primarily serves its member base. Part of Staatsolie bond distribution network.
Southern Commercial Bank N.V.	Private	Full commercial bank. Licensed by CBvS. Part of Staatsolie bond distribution network.

Surinaamse Postspaa Bank (SPSB)	State-owned	State-owned postal and savings bank. Retail focus; limited commercial services.
Landbouwbank N.V.	Private	Agricultural bank. Specializes in agribusiness financing and rural lending. Relevant for agricultural sector investors.

Note: For international companies with significant foreign-currency needs or cross-border transactions, DSB, Hakrinbank, Finabank, and Republic Bank are generally recommended. Discuss correspondent banking relationships and SWIFT capabilities explicitly with your chosen bank before committing. Correspondent banking access can be a limiting factor for certain currencies and destinations.

Suriname Stock Exchange (SSX)

Suriname has a functioning stock exchange — the Suriname Stock Exchange (SSX), established in 1994. Hakrinbank is among the companies listed. The SSX is small and illiquid by international standards but is notable for its existence. CBvS supervises the SSX. For the overwhelming majority of foreign investors, the SSX is relevant only as a context indicator of Suriname's capital market development — not as a primary capital-raising venue.

3. Tax Obligations for Foreign Investors

Understanding Suriname's tax system is critical before committing to a business structure. The tax system is administered by the Belastingdienst (Tax Authority / Directorate of Taxes and Customs — DoTC) under the Ministry of Finance and Planning. The Belastingdienst's online portal is at portaal.belastingdienst.sr.

Suriname's tax legislation has a long history dating to the 19th century. Core tax laws include the Income Tax Act 1922, Dividend Tax Act 1973, Payroll Tax Act 1981, Social Insurance Contributions Act 1981, and the Value Added Tax Act 2022. Amendments are ongoing — always verify current rates and rules with a local tax advisor.

⚠ Important: Suriname's corporate income tax rate of 36% is the highest in the Caribbean and South American region. Structure your investment carefully to ensure tax efficiency within Suriname's legal framework. The Investment Law 2001 provides incentives that can reduce your effective tax burden in qualifying sectors.

Corporate Income Tax (CIT)

Rate	36% flat rate on net profit. All operating costs are deductible at set rates for certain equipment and assets.
Scope	Companies are taxed on the sum of all net profits. Resident companies are taxed on worldwide income; non-resident companies are taxed only on Suriname-sourced income.
Tax Year	Calendar year (January–December)
Filing	Annual corporate tax return; submit to Belastingdienst. File within 6 months of year-end (or as notified). Late filing attracts penalties.
Advance Payments	Companies may be required to make quarterly advance tax payments based on prior year liability.
Capital Allowances	Depreciation is deductible at set rates for fixed assets. Specific rates vary by asset class.
Losses	Tax losses can be carried forward; confirm current carry-forward rules with your tax advisor.
IFRS Requirement	As of the Accounting Act (December 2024), all companies must report under IFRS. Financial statements must be IFRS-compliant.

Value Added Tax (VAT)

Standard Rate	10% — applies to most goods and services
Reduced Rate	5% — applies to utility services (electricity, water, telecommunications)
Zero Rate	0% — applies to certain exported goods and qualifying international transactions
Exemptions	Certain basic foodstuffs and essential goods are exempt. Oil sector contractors and sub-contractors are exempt from VAT on goods and services exclusively related to petroleum activities (Petroleum Act 2023).

Registration Threshold	Businesses meeting turnover thresholds must register for VAT. Consult your tax advisor for current thresholds.
Filing	Periodic VAT returns submitted to Belastingdienst—digital filing via portal from January 2024.
Import VAT	10% VAT is applied to most imported goods in addition to applicable customs duties.
Background	VAT replaced the former Turnover Tax (Omzetbelasting). Enacted by the Value Added Tax Act 2022; in force January 1, 2023. Amended and expanded in scope 2023–2024.

Dividend Withholding Tax

Rate	25% withholding tax on dividends distributed by resident companies to shareholders (both residents and non-resident).
Exemption	Dividends received by qualifying resident companies from other qualifying resident or non-resident companies are exempt from Suriname dividend withholding tax (participation exemption applies).
Branch Profit Remittance	Profit remitted from a Suriname branch to its foreign head office is NOT subject to dividend withholding tax. This is an important structural advantage of the branch form for some investors.
Timing	Withholding tax must be remitted to the Belastingdienst at the time of dividend payment.

Other Key Taxes & Levies

Wage Tax (Loonbelasting)	The employer deducts wage tax from employees' salaries at progressive rates. As of January 2024, wage tax returns must be filed digitally via portaal.belastingdienst.sr. Wage tax brackets updated January 2024.
No Withholding on Royalties/Interest/Mgmt Fees	Importantly: under domestic law, Suriname imposes NO withholding tax on royalties, interest, or management and technical assistance fees paid to non-residents. This is a material advantage compared to many regional jurisdictions.
Old-Age Pension Contribution (AOV)	Social insurance contribution for old-age pension. Employer contributions required. As of January 2024, AOV returns filed digitally via the portal. Minimum contribution base: SRD 2,250/month; maximum: SRD 22,500/month (from August 2023, retroactive to January 2023).
Stamp Duty	Applies to notarized documents, property transfers, and certain contractual instruments.
Property / Real Estate Tax	Applicable to property ownership in Suriname. Assess with your local advisor.
Excise Duties	Applied to specific goods (fuel, alcohol, tobacco, etc.)

Fiscal Jurisdiction Act (2023)	Confirmed Suriname's authority to levy all applicable taxes across the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and Continental Shelf — directly relevant to offshore energy companies.
Tax Treaties	Suriname has limited bilateral tax treaties. The Netherlands treaty is the most significant—no tax treaties with the USA or UK. Verify treaty status for your home jurisdiction before structuring.

Investment Incentives — Investment Law 2001

Under the Investment Law 2001 (Investeringswet 2001), entrepreneurs may apply to the Ministry of Finance for specific tax incentives. Eligible sectors include agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, horticulture, aquaculture, mining, forestry, tourism, trade, transport, and professional services.

Available incentives may include:

- Partial or full exemption from import duties on business assets, raw materials, goods, or equipment — apply to the Ministry of Finance; special request required
- Possible VAT exemption on qualifying imports (conditions apply)
- Accelerated depreciation allowances in some sectors

Note: The Investment Law 2001 incentives are not automatic — a formal application must be submitted. Engage a local tax advisor to assess eligibility before structuring your investment. The Minister of Finance has discretion in granting exemptions.

4. Foreign Ownership Rules

Suriname maintains an open foreign investment policy across the majority of its economy. There are no general statutory limits on foreign ownership or control — foreign and domestic investors are treated equally under the Commercial Code and Constitution. The U.S. Department of State's 2025 Investment Climate Statement confirms Suriname 'has no sector-specific laws or practices that discriminate against foreign investors, including U.S. investors, by prohibiting, limiting, or conditioning foreign investment.'

Sectors Open to 100% Foreign Ownership

- Agriculture, agribusiness, and food processing
- Real estate and construction
- Manufacturing and production
- Trade, retail, and distribution
- Financial services (subject to CBvS licensing)
- Logistics, freight, and transport
- Tourism and hospitality
- Technology, digital services, and FinTech
- Healthcare and pharmaceutical
- Education and training
- Professional services (legal, accounting, consulting)
- Renewable energy and utilities (subject to sector regulation)

The Key Exception: Petroleum & Mining

Under Article 41 of the Constitution of Suriname and the Mining Decree (S.B. 1986 no. 28), all natural wealth and resources — including petroleum — belong to the nation and are administered through state enterprises. Only state enterprises can hold concession rights to hydrocarbon resources.

Staatsolie Maatschappij Suriname N.V. holds the exclusive concession rights for all hydrocarbons in Suriname. Foreign oil and gas investment is possible exclusively through Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) negotiated with Staatsolie. PSC fiscal terms: 6.25% royalty + 36% corporate income tax = a government take of 60–70% (depending on oil price), per Staatsolie's published parameters.

The Suriname offshore is rapidly contracting out. As of September 2024, approximately 46% of the Surinamese offshore area was under contract. Key developments since the October 2024 GranMorgu FID include: PetroChina signed PSCs for Blocks 14 and 15 (September 2024); Petronas signed a PSC for Block 66 (June 2025); Petronas declared commerciality of the Sloanea-1 gas discovery in Block 52 (November 2025), with FID expected H2 2026.

Oil Sector: Supplier Registration — The SSRP & SAP Ariba

Companies seeking to supply goods or services to the offshore oil and gas sector — even if not directly in petroleum activities — have two registration paths:

SAP Ariba (for Staatsolie directly)	Register to supply goods and services directly to Staatsolie. Platform: SAP Ariba procurement system. Scope: Staatsolie's direct procurement needs only. Includes supplier registration and management, procurement and sourcing, contract management and compliance.
Suriname Supplier Registration Portal (SSRP)	Register to supply goods and services to ALL companies active in the offshore oil and gas sector (TotalEnergies, APA, Petronas, contractors, subcontractors). Portal: Suriname SRP (accessible via staatsolie.com). Open to any company including sole proprietorships. Self-service portal; update your profile at any time. Oil companies use the SSRP to identify local suppliers to satisfy PSC local content obligations. Registration does not guarantee procurement invitations but is necessary to be considered.

Oil sector local content: Suriname has no formal local content law — compliance is managed through PSC contractual provisions and Staatsolie's supplier oversight. Policymakers are debating whether to codify formal targets. The GranMorgu project includes a USD 1 billion local content component. Paramaribo is designated as the primary onshore logistics hub.

The Blue Wave Program is a Staatsolie initiative to train and develop local suppliers for the oil and gas sector. Companies with relevant capabilities should engage with this programme.

Additional local content resources: www.localcontentsuriname.com

Investment Screening

Foreign investments are screened by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation (BIBIS) via its International Business Directorate, and by relevant sectoral ministries. The screening process uses an intake-form assessment to evaluate alignment with national development priorities.

SITA (Suriname Investment and Trade Agency) is progressively taking over the facilitation role, which should improve transparency. The process has been noted as potentially discretionary — clearly articulate your investment's contribution to Suriname's development objectives in all government submissions.

CARICOM, EPA & Regional Framework

CARICOM Membership	Suriname joined CARICOM in 1995. Preferential trade status nominally applies to CSME (Caribbean Single Market and Economy) companies. In practice, investors from outside CSME are treated equally.
CARICOM Skilled Nationals	Nationals of CARICOM member states with recognized skills categories are exempt from Suriname's work permit requirement. This is relevant for companies with Caribbean workforces.
EU-CARIFORUM EPA	An Economic Partnership Agreement between the EU and CARIFORUM (which includes CARICOM) has been signed but NOT yet ratified by Suriname. Once ratified, this would give European companies improved market access terms.
Mercosur (Associate)	Suriname is an associate member of Mercosur, providing a degree of access to the South American trade framework.

5. Work Permits & Immigration

Every employer who wants to hire a foreign national (non-Surinamese employee) must obtain a work permit (arbeidsvergunning)—the responsibility for applying lies with the employer — not the employee. Processing is handled by the Ministry of Public Health, Welfare & Labour (the combined ministry under the Simons government; previously the Ministry of Labour, Technological Development and Environment).

Note: Suriname does NOT offer a formal investment visa or citizenship-by-investment programme. Investor residency status is obtained through the general residence permit route.

Who Does NOT Need a Work Permit

- Foreign nationals married to a Surinamese citizen
- CARICOM nationals with recognised skilled national status (confirmed by CARICOM Secretariat)
- Certain categories of technical experts on specific short-term assignments (verify with the Ministry)

Work Permit Application Process

The employer initiates and sponsors the work permit application. Steps:

Step 1: Confirm hiring need	Verify whether the role can be filled locally. Authorities may require evidence that the position was advertised in Suriname and that no suitably qualified Surinamese national was available.
Step 2: Gather employer documentation	Company KKF registration extract; tax registration (FIN); proof of good standing; sector-specific business licence (if applicable).
Step 3: Gather employee documentation	Signed employment contract (must clearly state role, salary, working hours, and duration); copy of employee passport; CV; educational certificates and professional qualifications (in Dutch or English; if in another language, must be translated by a sworn translator AND legalised); police clearance certificate from home country (and from any country of residence in the past 5 years); medical examination report.
Step 4: Employer declaration	Written declaration specifying: company opening hours; employee's working hours; full task description; specific justification of why the role cannot be filled by a Surinamese national.
Step 5: Fee payment	USD 300 fee deposited at the Central Bank of Suriname (CBvS): Account No. 324524 (USD); Account No. 324525 (SRD). Payment receipt must state "Work Permit Foreign Nationals" with correct names of both employer and employee.
Step 6: Submit application	Submit a complete application to the Ministry of Labor's Department of Work Permits for Foreign Nationals. The employee co-signs the application. Application form available at the government website or at the Ministry office.
Step 7: Residence permit	The employee must also hold a valid residence permit (verblijfsvergunning) via the Alien Affairs Department (Vreemdelingenzaken) of the Ministry of Justice and Police. Apply at vz2.juspol.sr.

Step 8: Compliance	Note work permit and residence permit expiry dates; diarise renewals well in advance. The employer is responsible for ensuring the foreign national remains legally authorised.

Entry Visas & Tourist Visas

Tourist Visa	30–90 days depending on nationality. Tourist visas explicitly prohibit paid work or employment. Do not have employees commence work on a tourist visa.
e-Visa	Suriname operates an e-Visa system for tourism and short visits. Apply via suriname.vfsevisa.com, managed by the Ministry of Transport, Communications, and Tourism.
Business Visa	For initial market reconnaissance and business meetings (not for employment). Typically 30–90 days.
Residence Permit (Verblijfsvergunning)	Required alongside a work permit for employees intending to live in Suriname. Apply via the Alien Affairs Department (vz2.juspol.sr).
Permanent Residency	Typically requires approximately 5 years of continuous legal residence and employment in Suriname. No formal investment visa track exists.
Note on Family Members	Accompanying family members of work permit holders should apply for their own residence permits; dependent status may apply.

Note: Processing times for work permits are variable, "significant" per practitioners. Factor 2–4 months minimum into workforce planning timelines. Work permit approval is not guaranteed; ensure documentation is complete and the case for hiring a foreign national is clearly articulated.

6. Import & Export Basics

Suriname's import and export regime is governed by the Customs Act (Wet op de Inkomstenbelasting / WTI 1996, SB 1995 no. 111, amended SB 2004 no. 79) and operates under the CARICOM Common External Tariff (CET) 2007. Customs procedures are administered by Suriname Customs (Douane Suriname), contactable at +597 402-778.

The Suriname Electronic Single Window (SESW), launched in 2019, enables the online submission of import, transit, and export documentation and serves as the primary interface for trade compliance. The Ministry of Economic Affairs manages the SESW. Suriname Customs shifted to a fully digital declaration system in 2025. Pre—filing 24 hours before cargo arrival reduces clearance delays significantly.

Trade context (2022 data, most recent complete year available): Total exports USD 2.84 billion; total imports USD 1.80 billion. Top import sources: USA (24.4%), Netherlands (14.0%), Trinidad & Tobago (13.9%), China (~10%). Top export destinations: Switzerland (49.7% — primarily gold), UAE (21.1%), Belgium (4.5%), Trinidad & Tobago (4.4%), Guyana (3.9%).

HS Code Classification

Suriname uses the Harmonized System (HS) with 10-digit codes based on WCO HS 2025 revisions. Accurate HS code classification is essential — it determines the applicable tariff rate, any restrictions, and VAT treatment. HS code classification is the importer's (or their customs broker's) responsibility.

- Use the WCO HS 2025 classification tool for the 6-digit base code, then add Suriname-specific digits
- 2025 WCO updates specifically affect electronics (HS 85) and batteries (HS 8507.60 — lithium batteries now require certification)
- Use a licensed Surinamese customs broker for initial shipments to ensure accurate classification

Import Tariff Structure

Suriname's tariff schedule operates under the CARICOM Common External Tariff (CET) with nine tiers from 0% to 50%. The applicable rate depends on the HS code and country of origin:

Goods Category	CARICOM Countries	Other Countries (incl. USA, EU)	Notes
Raw materials	5%	5%	Generally uniform
Agricultural inputs	0–5%	5–10%	Health cert. required for food
Semi-manufactured articles	CARICOM rate	~10%	Varies by product
Finished consumer products	0–20%	Up to 50%	Highest tier applies

Capital goods/machinery	Lower rates	Generally lower	Discuss with broker; exemptions possible
Electronics (excl. batteries)	Varies	Varies HS 85	2025 HS updates apply
Lithium batteries (HS 8507.60)	Restricted	Certification required	WCO 2025 update
Petroleum sector equipment	Exempt/reduced	Exempt (PSC contractors)	Petroleum Act 2023 exemptions

Additional charges on imports: 10% VAT applies to most imported goods, in addition to applicable customs duties; a statistical fee; and a consent fee (as applicable under WTI 1996). De minimis threshold: USD 100 — shipments with declared value below USD 100 are duty-free.

Import Documentation — Required for Customs Clearance

- IT Form (Intake/Import declaration) — the Single Administrative Document; submit via SESW portal
- Original commercial invoice from the supplier (clearly showing HS codes, unit prices, total value, country of origin)
- Bill of lading (sea freight) or airway bill (air freight)
- Packing list
- Import license / H-99 Form — from Ministry of Economic Affairs (required for certain goods; check with customs broker)
- Certificate of origin — required for CARICOM preferential tariff rates; must be accompanied by a CARICOM invoice
- Health certificate — mandatory for food, agricultural products, and pharmaceutical imports (issued by the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Agriculture)
- Phytosanitary certificate — for fresh produce, plants, and plant products
- Veterinary import permit — for live animals and animal products (issued by Veterinary Inspection, Ministry of Agriculture)
- Environmental approval — for chemicals, hazardous materials, and certain industrial products
- Pharmaceutical permit — Ministry of Health (for all pharmaceutical and medical device imports)

Restricted, Licensed & Prohibited Import Categories

Fresh & processed food	Health certificate from the country of origin required; phytosanitary certificate for fresh produce; SSB product certification may apply
Agricultural products & live animals	Veterinary import permit required from the Ministry of Agriculture; phytosanitary certificate for plants
Pharmaceuticals & medical devices	A prior permit from the Ministry of Public Health, Welfare & Labor is required.

Chemicals & hazardous materials	Environmental approval required; MSDS documentation needed
Electronics & batteries	Compliance with Suriname Standards Bureau (SSB) standards; 2025 HS updates for batteries
Weapons & ammunition	Strictly controlled; special license required from the Ministry of Justice and Police
Controlled substances/narcotics	Strictly regulated or prohibited; heavy penalties for violations.
Counterfeit goods	Prohibited; Customs has the authority to seize and destroy
Protected wildlife (CITES)	Strictly regulated under the CITES convention; permits required

Export Basics

Suriname's principal export commodities are: gold (USD 1.83 billion export value in 2023), crude oil (first exports from 2028), rice, bananas, timber, shrimp, fish, citrus, and alumina. Export procedures are managed through the SESW.

Key export documentation: commercial invoice; packing list; bill of lading or airway bill; certificate of origin (required for CARICOM preferential treatment and some buyers); product-specific export permits (notably for gold, timber, and agricultural products); SSB product certification (for food exports).

- All exporters must register with the KKF
- The Suriname Standards Bureau (SSB) is a member of CARICOM's CROSQ and COPANT. — SSB product certification is required for many export markets
- Gold exports require export permits and are subject to oversight by the Foreign Currency Committee (under the CBvS); oversight failures in 2025 led to renewed regulatory scrutiny
- Timber exports require permits from the Ministry of Land and Forest Management; REDD+ and forest carbon regulations apply
- Agricultural exporters should contact the Ministry of Agriculture for phytosanitary certification requirements of target markets

Note: Suriname Customs contact: Douane Suriname, Tel: +597 402-778. SESW portal for trade documentation. Always engage a licensed customs broker (douane-expediteur) for initial import/export operations — they know the system, have established relationships, and can prevent costly errors.

7. Intellectual Property

Suriname's intellectual property framework is underdeveloped compared with most investment destinations, and foreign investors must proactively plan around this rather than assume standard protections are in place.

Trademarks

Legal Basis	Royal Ordinance (Regulation for Industrial Property) of August 19, 1912, amended by Decree of August 31, 1984. Based on the old Dutch Trademark Law (Merkenrecht) of 1893.
Administering Body	Bureau for Industrial Property (Bureau voor Industriële Eigendom), housed under the Ministry of Justice and Police.
Coverage	Goods classes 01–34 of the Nice Classification, 9th edition. Service marks are currently NOT covered under Surinamese trademark law (a new law is in preparation).
Multi-class Applications	Permitted. An extra government fee is charged after the third class.
Paris Convention	Priority under the Paris Convention can be claimed.
Registration Timeline	⚠ 6–7 years — trademark registration in Suriname is extremely slow. Applications are processed by the Head of the Bureau for Industrial Property.
International Filing	Suriname is NOT a member of the Madrid Agreement or Protocol. No international trademark filing route is available for Suriname-specific registration. File locally.
Proof of Use	Not required for registration — intent to use is sufficient.
Practical Recommendation	File your trademark registration early — ideally before market entry — given the 6–7 year processing time. Use a local IP attorney to ensure correct classification and to conduct pre-filing clearance searches.

Patents

Suriname currently has no functioning patent system. The Bureau for Intellectual Property of Suriname (BIS) is being established to introduce protection for patents, service marks, utility models, and industrial designs. As of 2025, no patent applications are being processed until further notice.

Companies with patentable technologies should obtain patent protection in key markets before entering the Suriname market. Consider trade secret protection (contractual confidentiality obligations) as the primary IP protection tool for proprietary processes and technologies until a patent system is operational.

Copyright

Copyright protection in Suriname is governed by the Berne Convention, which Suriname has ratified. Copyright arises automatically upon creation of an original work — no registration is required. Covers literary works, software, artistic works, music, films, and other creative content. Enforcement capacity is limited; contractual protections should be layered onto copyright for commercial content.

Practical IP Strategy for Suriname

- File trademark registrations immediately upon market entry decision — the 6–7 year wait makes early filing essential
- Protect proprietary technology and processes through robust contractual confidentiality obligations, not patent filings (which are not currently available)
- Include comprehensive IP ownership and licensing clauses in all JV agreements, employment contracts, and supplier agreements
- For software and digital products: ensure contracts explicitly assign IP to your company, as Suriname's framework for software IP is limited
- Monitor use of your brand and report infringement to the Bureau for Industrial Property

8. Finding Reliable Local Partners

Success in Suriname is strongly correlated with the quality of your local partnerships. The Surinamese business environment is relationship-driven: procurement decisions, government approvals, logistics, and market intelligence all flow more effectively through established local networks. This is not unusual for frontier markets — it is the operational reality, and investors who acknowledge it from the outset are better positioned.

Suriname's business community is small and highly interconnected. Reputation matters enormously. A bad local partner can damage your standing with the government, banks, and other potential partners. Invest serious time and due diligence in partner selection before committing.

Types of Partners You May Need

Local Agent / Representative	For market entry and distribution. Manages local relationships, handles import logistics, and represents your interests in-country. Particularly important for companies selling products or services into the Surinamese market without a full local presence.
Joint Venture Partner	For operations requiring local presence, land access, sector-specific licenses, or government relationships. Common in real estate, logistics, services, and agribusiness. Requires careful structuring of the JV agreement — IP ownership, governance, profit distribution, and exit provisions must all be addressed.
Licensed Surinamese Notary (Notaris)	Essential from day one. All company formation, real estate transactions, and Foreign Exchange Commission applications require notarial assent. Choose a firm with demonstrable experience in international commercial transactions. The Ministry of Justice and Police must license all notaries.
Legal Firm (Advocatenkantoor)	For commercial law, regulatory compliance, dispute resolution, labor matters, and government relations. Must be Dutch-language capable. Firms with international client portfolios and sectoral expertise (energy, mining, real estate) are most valuable.
Tax & Accounting Firm	Required for ongoing IFRS compliance, CIT returns, VAT filing, payroll tax, and investment incentive applications. International accounting firms have offices in Paramaribo. Local firms with international affiliation are preferred for quality and independence.
Government Relations / Consulting Firm	For navigating procurement processes, concession applications, ministry introductions, and regulatory approvals. Particularly valuable in the energy and mining sectors. Local knowledge and personal relationships are the key differentiators.
Logistics / Freight Forwarder	For importing materials, equipment, or goods. A Paramaribo-based freight forwarder who knows the SESW system, customs broker relationships, and port procedures saves time and reduces costs. Essential for oil sector supply chain companies.
Human Resources / Payroll Partner	For managing local employment compliance, payroll tax, social insurance contributions, minimum wage requirements, and the work permit process. Critical, given the complexity of Suriname's labor laws.

Where to Find Partners

Institution	Role & Value for Investors	Contact
SITA — Suriname Investment and Trade Agency	The national investment promotion agency is your first call. SITA facilitates ministerial introductions, provides sector intelligence, organizes investor missions and B2B matchmaking, and can guide you to reliable local partners in your target sector. Affiliated with CAIPA. CEO: Amar Alakhramsing.	info@sita.sr | +597 431317 | sita.sr
KKF — Chamber of Commerce and Industry	The KKF's commercial register (searchable via the Suriname Directory) lists all registered businesses, including their structure and registered activities. The KKF also hosts business events and B2B meetings and provides advisory services. Use the KKF extract system to verify that any potential partner is duly registered.	chamber@sr.net | +597 530-311 | kkf.sr
VSB — Suriname Business Forum (Verbond van Surinaams Bedrijfsleven)	The principal private sector employers' federation. Represents major companies across all sectors. Advocacy body for business-friendly policy. Membership signals established, legitimate business operations. Useful for introductions to established Surinamese business interests.	www.vsb.sr
ASFA — Associatie van Surinaamse Fabrikanten	The manufacturers' and producers' association, representing 100+ member companies. Key network for companies in manufacturing, food production, and industrial supply. ASFA's "Made in Suriname" program promotes local products, which are relevant to oil sector local-content obligations and to consumer goods distribution.	info@asfasuriname.org | +597 434014 | asfasuriname.org
SGCC — Suriname-Guyana Chamber of Commerce	Established February 2024. Relevant for companies with a dual Suriname-Guyana strategy — particularly oil field services, logistics, and professional services operating across both markets.	surguychamber.org
Staatsolie SSRP	Suriname Supplier Registration Portal — register here to be considered for procurement by all offshore oil and gas companies and their contractors. Essential first step for any company targeting the energy sector supply chain.	staatsolie.com/en/suriname-srp/
InvestInSuriname.com	Custom research and sector intelligence to identify, profile, and assess local market players and potential partners. Sector-specific partner mapping for investors entering Suriname.	investinsuriname.com
U.S. Commercial Service	Market research, Gold Key matchmaking services, and business facilitation for American	trade.gov | U.S. Embassy Paramaribo

	companies via the U.S. Embassy in Suriname. Access via the Trade.gov Country Commercial Guide for Suriname.	
Dutch Embassy in Suriname	Trade and investment facilitation for Dutch companies. Provides introductions, regulatory guidance, and market intelligence. Given the historical ties between the Netherlands and Suriname, the Dutch Embassy has deep institutional connections.	suriname.nlambassade.org
IDB / Inter-American Development Bank	IDB-funded public tenders represent procurement opportunities for foreign companies in infrastructure, consulting, and services. SITA has used the ConnectAmericas platform for business connections.	iadb.org | Paramaribo field office

Due Diligence on Local Partners

Partner due diligence is as important in Suriname as anywhere — possibly more so given the small business community and the potential for reputational risk. Before formalizing any partnership:

- Verify KKF registration: obtain a KKF extract showing registration number, registered activities, and shareholding. Available via the KKF or Suriname Directory.
- Request references from existing clients — particularly international ones; contact them directly
- Check for litigation and legal disputes: public court records are accessible in Suriname; engage your legal firm to conduct a search
- Verify beneficial ownership structure — who ultimately owns and controls the company? Required for your own AML/KYC compliance
- Conduct a media search for any corruption, contract disputes, or adverse press coverage
- Assess sector-specific expertise: does the company have verifiable experience in your target sector? Ask for client references and project examples
- Use SITA's sector expertise to validate credentials — SITA has visibility of the market landscape and knows which companies have operational track records
- Consider a structured pilot or phased engagement: start with a limited-scope assignment or trial period before committing to a long-term partnership agreement
- Include comprehensive exit clauses in any partnership or agency agreement — define the process for termination, IP ownership on exit, and non-compete provisions

9. Market Entry Checklist

Use this checklist as a project management tool for your Suriname market entry process. Sequence matters — many steps have dependencies. Tick off items as completed and track responsible parties and target dates.

PHASE 1 — PRE-ENTRY (Before you arrive or commit)

- ☐ Commission sector research and competitive landscape analysis (InvestInSuriname.com, SITA)
- ☐ Review IMF Article IV reports, U.S. State Dept. Investment Climate Statement, and World Bank Suriname Country Overview
- ☐ Engage SITA for initial investor briefing, sector intelligence, and ministry/partner introductions
- ☐ Assess foreign exchange risk: develop USD-denominated revenue strategy where applicable
- ☐ Evaluate tax structure: assess CIT exposure, dividend WHT, investment incentives under Investment Law 2001
- ☐ Identify and shortlist qualified local notaries (must be licensed in Suriname; Dutch-speaking)
- ☐ Identify and shortlist qualified local legal firms (commercial law; Dutch-language; international experience)
- ☐ Identify and shortlist tax/accounting firms (IFRS compliance, CIT, VAT, payroll)
- ☐ Conduct initial due diligence on potential local partners or agents
- ☐ Determine optimal legal structure: NV, branch office, or JV
- ☐ File trademark registration application (file early — 6–7 year processing time)

PHASE 2 — COMPANY FORMATION

- ☐ Prepare 2–3 company name options; verify availability with KKF
- ☐ Obtain Civil Registry extracts for all founders/shareholders (allow 2–4 weeks for foreign document apostille & translation)
- ☐ Engage notary: draft and notarise Articles of Association in Dutch
- ☐ Open temporary bank account; deposit minimum share capital (SRD 1,000 for NV)
- ☐ Obtain bank confirmation of capital deposit
- ☐ Submit KKF registration application with all notarised documents
- ☐ Obtain Presidential approval and KKF registration certificate/number (allow 2–4 weeks)
- ☐ Register for Fiscal Identification Number (FIN) with Belastingdienst
- ☐ Register for wage tax via online portal (portaal.belastingdienst.sr)

PHASE 3 — OPERATIONAL SETUP

- ☐ Apply for Handelsvergunning (business license) via vergunningen.gov.sr if operating in a regulated sector — apply early (3-month processing time)
- ☐ Open corporate bank account (SRD, USD, EUR — allow relationship-building time; prepare complete KYC/AML documentation)
- ☐ Register for VAT (if turnover threshold applies)
- ☐ Establish payroll tax and AOV/social insurance compliance
- ☐ Register employees; set up IFRS-compliant accounting system

- ☐ Apply for work permits for all expatriate staff (employer responsibility; allow 2–4 months; advertise vacancies locally first)
- ☐ Apply for residence permits for expatriate employees (via vz2.juspol.sr)
- ☐ Set up SESW access and engage a licensed customs broker for the first imports
- ☐ Identify and contract logistics/freight forwarding partner
- ☐ Register in Staatsolie SSRP (if operating in or serving the oil & gas sector)
- ☐ Register in SAP Ariba (if supplying directly to Staatsolie)
- ☐ Establish data protection and confidentiality protocols; execute NDAs with key partners

PHASE 4 — ONGOING COMPLIANCE

- ☐ Annual IFRS-compliant financial statements (mandatory under Accounting Act 2024)
- ☐ Corporate Income Tax return (36% CIT; annual filing)
- ☐ VAT returns (periodic digital filing via Belastingdienst portal)
- ☐ Wage tax / AOV returns (digital filing from January 2024)
- ☐ KKF registration renewal and updates (notify KKF of any changes; SRD 30 per change)
- ☐ Business license renewal (Handelsvergunning)
- ☐ Labor Ministry approvals for any staff changes post-probation (dismissal requires Ministry approval)
- ☐ Monitor minimum wage updates (reviewed periodically; last update April 2025)
- ☐ Work permit and residence permit renewals (diarise expiry dates)
- ☐ Annual SSRP profile update (if registered for oil sector procurement)
- ☐ Monitor regulatory and fiscal developments (IMF Article IV, Budget Law, DNA legislative register at dna.sr)

PHASE 5 — PARTNER & RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

- ☐ Conduct annual performance review of local agent/partner against contractual KPIs
- ☐ Maintain active SITA relationship — flag investment challenges for facilitation
- ☐ Engage VSB and/or ASFA as membership/advocacy bodies once operational
- ☐ Monitor KKF registration status of key partners (verify annually)
- ☐ Review and update IP protection strategy annually

Key Resources

Suriname Govt Portal	gov.sr
National Assembly (legislation)	dna.sr
KKF / Business Register	kkf.sr | chamber@sr.net
SITA	sita.sr | info@sita.sr
Belastingdienst (Tax)	belastingdienst.sr | portaal.belastingdienst.sr
Business License Platform	vergunningen.gov.sr
Trade / SESW	sesw.sr (SESW portal)
CBvS (Central Bank)	cbvs.sr

Staatsolie (Oil sector)	staatsolie.com | SSRP: staatsolie.com/en/suriname-srp/
Alien Affairs (Residence)	vz2.juspol.sr
e-Visa	suriname.vfsevisa.com
Local Content Resources	localcontentsuriname.com
IMF Suriname Country Reports	imf.org/en/countries/SUR
US State Dept. Investment Climate	state.gov (2025 Investment Climate Statement)
InvestInSuriname.com	investinsuriname.com

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