Doing Business in Norway:

2012 Country Commercial Guide for U.S. Companies

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Chapter 1: Doing Business in Norway

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Nordic Region

- The Nordic region (Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland) with its 1.4 trillion dollar plus economy is considered one of the ten largest economies in the world, and the fifth largest market in Europe. It is considered worldwide to be a test market for new products/technology and an easy-to-enter export market for new and new-to-export companies. English is widely spoken, business agreements are reliable, and the infrastructure is first rate. The Nordic countries have close ties to the United States culturally, politically, and historically. There are great opportunities for American businesses.
- The Nordic countries are closely related in terms of language (except for Finland), ethnic roots, religion, history and a host of other ways, but they also differ in many ways.

Norway

- Norway is located in the Northern Europe and is a part of the Scandinavian Peninsula. Jan Mayen and the Arctic archipelago of Svalbard are also part of Norwegian territory.
- The majority of the country shares a border to the east with Sweden; its northernmost region is bordered by Finland to the south and Russia to the east; and Denmark lies south of its southern tip across the Skagerrak Strait. Norway's extensive coastline is facing the North Atlantic Ocean and the Barents Sea.
- With a population of 4.9 million covering 323,802 square kilometers, Norway is one of the most sparsely populated countries in Europe. The population is spread across 1100 mile long, narrow and mountainous landscape, and has a coastline three times its length.
- Norway is a vibrant, stable democracy.
- Norway is one of the wealthiest countries in the world based on per capita terms, thanks in part to its status as the world´s 6th largest exporter of crude oil and the 2nd largest exporter of natural gas. Incomes are also more evenly distributed, making every person a consumer. Unemployment rates and interest rates are low.

- Bilateral trade in goods and services exceeded $15 billion in 2010 and Norway's foreign direct investment in the U.S. totaled $14.4 billion.
- In 2010 the United States imported goods valued at USD 6.5 billion from Norway and exported for USD 4.2 billion. This trade deficit was largely a result of Norwegian petroleum exports to the United States valued at more than USD 3 billion.
- Trade in services with Norway totaled USD 4.3 billion in 2009 (latest data available). Services exports were USD 2.8 billion; services imports were USD 1.5 billion.
- The majority of Norwegians are fluent in English and many have very close cultural and family ties to the United States.
- Norwegian business ethics are similar to those of the United States.
- Norway is not a member of the European Union (EU), but is linked to the EU through the European Economic Area (EEA) agreement. By virtue of the EEA, Norway is practically part of the EU's single market, except in fisheries and agriculture.
- Norway is part of the Schengen Agreement, which guarantees free movement of persons and the absence of internal border control between 22 EU Member States and Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and Liechtenstein. All passport control between these Schengen countries has been abolished.

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- The overall economic and trade relationship is strong and Norway's import climate is generally open and receptive to U.S. products and investments, although the agriculture sector is well protected through trade barriers. For information on existing trade barriers (please see chapter 4 to learn more about the agriculture sector), use the link to the National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers, published by USTR: http://www.ustr.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/reports/2010/NTE/2010_NTE_Norway_final.pdf

- The domestic market is small, but the country can serve as an attractive base for business operations in the Nordic, Baltic, and/or Western Russian markets.

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- U.S. companies have excellent opportunities to capture a significant share of new contract awards in Norway's oil and gas, renewable energy, information technologies, and defense sectors.
- Other sectors with significant opportunities are telecommunications equipment and services, healthcare technologies, shipping and maritime equipment, tourism and consumer goods.

Please also see: Chapter 4: Leading Sectors for U.S. Export and Investment

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- U.S. exporters seeking general export information and assistance or country-specific commercial information should consult with their nearest Export Assistance Center or the U.S. Department of Commerce's website www.export.gov.
- Information about services offered by the U.S. Commercial Service in Oslo can be found at http://export.gov/norway/
- The offices of the U.S. Commercial Service in Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland are offering a unique opportunity to companies that want to enter the Nordic Market in the form of the Nordic Services. The offices packaged simple, affordable one-stop services to gain access to Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland with one point of contact and one good, positive result. Information about these Nordic Services can also be found at http://export.gov/norway/
- Please also see: Chapter 3: Selling U.S. Products and Services

For More Information

Contact the U.S. Commercial Service in Oslo, Norway, via E-mail: Vidar.Keyn@trade.gov, Tel: + (47) 21308834, Fax: + (47) 22558803, website http://export.gov/norway/

The U.S. Commercial Service — Your Global Business Partner

With its network of offices across the United States and in more than 80 countries, the U.S. Commercial Service of the U.S. Department of Commerce utilizes its global presence and international marketing expertise to help U.S. companies sell their products and services worldwide. Locate the U.S. Commercial Service trade specialist in the U.S. nearest you by visiting http://www.export.gov.

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Chapter 2: Political and Economic Environment

For background information on the political and economic environment of Norway, please click on the link below to the U.S. Department of State Background Notes.

http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3421.htm

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Chapter 3: Selling U.S. Products and Services

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Defense Exports

The U.S. Commercial Service at the U.S. Embassy in Oslo receives many inquiries about agents and consultants in Norway wishing to secure government defense contracts. The query is usually about the payment of commissions/fees and Norwegian laws, regulations or informal policies regarding such payments. There are no prohibitions (under Norwegian law, regulations or informal policy) against using sales agents to make sales of defense-related products to Norwegian government agencies.

U.S. defense contractors seeking to do business in the Norwegian defense market may also get valuable information and assistance from the Office of Defense Cooperation at the U.S. Embassy in Oslo (http://norway.usembassy.gov/defense.html)

Selling to the Norwegian Armed Forces

To conduct business successfully in Norway, a local presence is often required, and doing business with the armed forces is no exception. One of the benefits from operating locally is to have an ally that continuously follows smaller tenders that are published nationally through www.doffin.no. Even though tenders published nationally are of a small scale, this can also be of great value in terms of building a good reputation in the sector.

The Ministry of Defense negotiates offset agreements and has the overall responsibility for monitoring current contracts. Implementation of a industrial strategy and offset agreements is provided by The Norwegian Defense Research Establishment (FFI). The Norwegian Defense Logistics Organization (NDLO) is responsible for procurement, supply, information and communications (ICT) services as well as the maintenance, repair and storage of materiel, engineering services and base operating services. NDLO has extensive knowledge and experience with international manufacturers.

Purchasing defense equipment often involves collaboration among several departments. A number of private law firms specialize in public procurements in Norway and in Europe.

Commercial Agency Agreements

U.S. exporters often ask the Commercial Service about their rights and obligations regarding agreements with Norwegian commercial representatives. In most cases, there is no legal requirement for U.S. exporters to have a local representative. However, the Commercial Service recommends that U.S. companies wishing to export goods or services to Norway find local representatives. Representatives can help U.S. firms adapt their exports to conform to cultural, technical and legal conditions in the Norwegian market. They can also introduce the product or service to extensive networks of customers, and if necessary, provide after-sales service and support. Even if local representation is not a statutory requirement, it may be a practical necessity.

This report briefly outlines the rights and obligations of both parties (principal and agent) in an agency agreement. The report should not be considered definitive or comprehensive, and any company considering entering into an agreement governed by Norwegian law should obtain professional legal assistance. On request, the Commercial Service (see Contacts below) can send a copy of the English language text of the Act on Commercial Agents and Commercial Travelers (Agency Act), no. 56 of 19 June 1992. The Norwegian Import and Export Agents' Association (see Contacts below) can also provide information about agents' rights.

Agency Agreements

Each agency agreement is a legally binding agreement between two parties, where the parties are mutually obliged and entitled to certain compensations. There are no requirements stipulating the form or content of an agency agreement. For this reason, the Norwegian Agent's Association has worked to establish standard agency contracts on a Nordic basis. These are based on the Norwegian Agency Law and EU directives governing agency agreements.

Agreement on Choice of Law

Most countries in Western Europe have legislation governing agency agreements. In December 1986, an EU directive was approved legislating agency agreements in all EU countries. On January 1, 1993, Norway implemented this directive through the Agency Act.

Perhaps one of the most important issues to settle when negotiating an agency agreement is which country's law will be used to settle any eventual disputes over the content of the contract. Section 3 of the Agency Act states that a provision pursuant to which the act is invariable may not be set aside to the detriment of a commercial agent or a commercial traveler through an agreement that the agency relationship shall be regulated by foreign law, if in the absence of such agreement the relationship would be subject to Norwegian law.

The Agent's General Obligations

In performing his/her activities, a commercial agent shall look after the principal's interests and specifically:

1. Make proper efforts to procure orders and, where it is part of the agency contract, conclude transactions,
2. Inform the principal of orders procured and transactions concluded and of other matters of which the agent is aware that are of significance for the performance of the agency contract, and
3. Comply with reasonable instructions given by the principal.

Commercial Agent's Care of the Principal's Goods

A commercial agent shall take proper care of goods and other items belonging to the principal that the agent has in his charge. The agent shall have such insurance as is customary in the circumstances. The principal's goods shall be kept separate from other goods. Where a commercial agent is entitled to receive payment for sold goods, he or she shall keep the amounts received separate from other monies. The agent shall give the principal an account of all amounts received.

Obligations of the Principal

A principal shall act dutifully and in good faith towards the commercial agent, and in particular:

1. Provide the agent with samples, descriptions, price lists and other necessary documentation relating to the goods concerned,
2. Obtain for the agent the information necessary for the performance of the agency contract, and
3. Inform the agent without undue delay of acceptance, refusal and of any non-execution of a commercial transaction that the agent has procured. Where the principal anticipates that the volume of transactions will be significantly lower than that which the commercial agent could normally have expected, he or she shall inform the agent accordingly without undue delay.

Commissions

The parties are completely free to determine additional content in the agency contract, including size of commission and commission settlement. Where the parties have not agreed on the level of remuneration, a commercial agent shall be entitled to such remuneration as is customarily allowed in the area where the agent carries on his duties. If there is no such customary practice, remuneration shall be fixed at a level deemed reasonable taking into account all the aspects of the agency contract. U.S. exporters should refer to sections 10 to 17 of the Agency Act for a detailed explanation of when an agent has the right to collect commission.

Protection for the Agent

There are three elements in the Agency Law that give the agent some form of protection. These concern notice of termination, right to payment for termination and compensation for loss. These three elements are compulsory, meaning that the parties cannot exempt themselves from these rights. The agent is not protected against termination of the contract itself, only against untimely termination. Every agency contract should be able to be mutually terminated in a purely businesslike manner.

Compensation

Should the commercial agent or the principal fail to fulfill their obligations pursuant to the agency contract or pursuant to the Agency Act, the counterpart is entitled to claim compensation for any resulting losses. This shall not apply if the other party can prove that such failure is not due to error or negligence on his/her part.

Termination notice

According to the Agency Act, section 25, the agent has the right to a maximum of six months termination notice. Notice is one month for the first year, and can be extended by one month for each year the agency agreement has been in effect, up to a maximum of six months notice. Termination notice is calculated in whole months from the following month.

The right to notice of termination should be understood such that termination can occur with immediate effect, but that the agent has the right to compensation for reduced notice. The agent has the right to usual commission for all orders brought in during the period of notice, in addition to orders scheduled for delivery after expiration of the notice.

Payment of Indemnity

When an agency contract is terminated, the commercial agent is entitled to an indemnity if and to the extent that:

1. The agent has brought the principal new customers or has significantly increased the volume of business with existing customers and the principal will continue to derive substantial benefits from the business with such customers, and
2. The indemnity is equitable having regard to all the circumstances, including the commission lost by the commercial agent on contracts with customers.

The amount of the indemnity due with regard to points one or two will not exceed a figure equivalent to one year's commission. This amount shall be calculated on the basis of the commercial agent’s average annual remuneration over the preceding five years. If the contract goes back less than five years the indemnity shall be calculated on the basis of the average for the period in question.

For Further Information

There are many other provisions governing the Principal/Agent relationship in the Agency Act. Any U.S. exporter considering signing an agreement with a Norwegian representative should acquaint themselves with their rights and obligations under this law, and if necessary, seek professional legal advice for assistance in drafting the agreement. U.S. exporters can obtain an English language version of the law text from the American Embassy in Oslo upon request.

Contacts

U.S. Commercial Service - Oslo, Norway
Contact: Mr. Vidar Keyn, Head of Commercial Section
Tel: 011 (47) 21 30 88 34
Fax: 011 (47) 22 55 88 03
E-Mail: Vidar.Keyn@trade.gov
Website: http://export.gov/norway/

Virke, The Federation of Norwegian Enterprises
Contact: Mr. Henrik Renner Fredriksen, Legal Associate
Section for Labor Law Affairs and Business Law
Tel: 011 (47) 22 54 17 00 / 22 54 17 19
E-mail: henrik.fredriksen@virke.no
Website: http://www.virke.no/

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The process of establishing a Norwegian company is relatively simple and generally free of restrictions.

The Norwegian Ministry of Trade and Industry has established the Bedin web portal to simplify the process of establishing and running business enterprises in Norway. The information is aimed to be relevant, reliable and non-biased. Bedin addresses two target groups; 1) Entrepreneurs looking for information needed to start his/her own business, incl. forms and brochures, all free of charge, 2) Enterprises that need answers to most of the questions arising during regular business activities: taxes, VAT, bookkeeping, employer employee relations, legislation, etc. Bedin provides useful information in an abbreviated format, together with links to sources and useful sites.

Bedin
How to Start and Run an Enterprise in Norway
Tel; 011 (47) 800 33 840
Website: http://www.bedin.no/cwindex2eng.html

All companies establishing a presence in Norway are subject to mandatory registration through a central government agency, the Bronnoysund Register Center, which also maintains open annual accounts on all Norwegian companies. A fee of about USD 750 is paid to cover handling and the cost of publication in the official Norwegian Gazette. The Bronnoysund Register Centre is a government body under the Norwegian Ministry of Trade and Industry, and consists of several different national computerized registers. These registers contain information and key data about such matters as: liabilities and titles in mortgaged movable property; business enterprises; annual accounts and auditor's reports of limited companies; bankruptcies and compulsory liquidations.

Bronnoysundregistrene (Bronnoysund Register Center)
Tel: 011 (47) 75 00 75 00
E-mail: firmapost@brreg.no
Website: http://www.brreg.no

The Norwegian Competition Act requires that concentrations (mergers, acquisitions, etc.) be notified to the Norwegian Competition Authority by way of a standardized notification.

Norwegian Competition Authority
Tel: 011 (47) 55 59 75 00
Website: www.konkurransetilsynet.no

Franchising

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Franchising has become popular in Norway. There are several examples of American chains active in Norway, such as McDonalds and Avis. However, most franchising systems operating in Norway are based on concepts developed in Norway. In fact, franchise systems of Norwegian origin account for about 75% of the franchise systems, followed by the U.S. with 10%, Sweden 4%, Denmark 4%, and the U.K. 2%. There are about 300 franchise systems operating in Norway.

All franchise systems in Norway are required to act in accordance with the Norwegian legal framework for business enterprises. They also have to operate in line with the framework of the EEA, which is harmonized with EU legislation. Here franchising is exempted from the competition act through directive 4087/88. In Norway, franchising is regulated by the Ministry of Trade and Industry. There are no major obstacles for starting a franchise chain in the country.

In Norway, public knowledge about the franchise concept is relatively poor. There have been attempts to establish franchise conferences and trade shows in Norway to better educate the public and potential franchisees, but like in Sweden and Denmark, these attempts have failed. There are very few central marketplaces for potential franchisees to meet, so most of the business opportunities are presented through newspaper and magazine advertisements, the Internet, or facilitated meetings. It has been relatively difficult for potential franchisers to find financing in Norway and, faced by the current economic downturn and financing drought, obtaining financing for franchise ventures may prove a major obstacle.

In addition, a significant challenge when setting up a franchise system in Norway compared to the U.S. is the limited size of the market. Norway has a small population of 4.9 million, which often forces the franchise concepts to be broader than what is typically the case in the U.S. It would be difficult for niche products or services to succeed it in Norway. It is also more critical that all of the franchisees succeed. If one fails, the odds for the rest of the chain are considerably lower.

Franchise systems in Norway also face high costs of for example labor and property rental and a tight labor market. However, the price levels and per capita consumption in Norway are significantly higher than in most other countries. Given a prudent balance, this creates potential opportunities for higher margins and volumes despite a small market. It is highly recommended that foreign franchise systems obtain a local partner, either as a master franchisee or as a business partner.

The master franchise fee in Norway depends on the terms set by the master franchise contract. Because Norway is a small market with a population of 4.9 million, frequently a concept will not already be established in the Norwegian market, the master franchisee is often required to make significant investments. However, the franchise fees often end up being lower than in most other countries in Europe.

A useful resource on franchising in Norway is the Norwegian Franchise Association, http://www.franchiseforeningen.no/

Also, the local consulting firm Effectum Franchise Consulting: www.effectum.no

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There are plenty of options for companies wishing to use direct marketing in Norway, despite the fact that privacy issues and protection of personal data has been moved higher on the agenda by Norwegian consumers and authorities, particularly the Norwegian Data Inspectorate. Norwegian consumers now have an option to reserve the right to refuse receiving direct marketing. A national register for this purpose has recently been established by the Bronnoysund Register Center, the administrative agency responsible for a number of national control and registration schemes for business and industry.

For information on Norwegian direct marketing service providers, contact:

Norwegian Association of Direct Marketing
Tel: (47) 22 62 70 17
http://www.nordma.no

Norwegian Data Inspectorate
Tel: (47) 22 39 69 00
http://www.datatilsynet.no

Bronnoysundregistrene (Bronnoysund Register Center)
Tel: 011 (47) 75 00 75 00
Website: http://www.brreg.no

Joint Ventures/Licensing

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Joint ventures and licensing agreements are common in Norway. Joint ventures may not have a name of its own, and its existence cannot be raised as a defense against claims made by third parties. Joint ventures may not be registered and have no independent legal identity. Bookkeeping and audit requirements do not exist for joint ventures, except when specified in the joint venture agreement.

With regard to licensing agreements, it is not mandatory to record these in the official patent office (Styret for det Industriale Rettsvern) in Norway. However, submitting a record may be recommended. A recorded licensee has the statutory right to be notified of any third parties filing cancellation actions etc. and can thereby be more prepared to enforce his rights under the license agreement.

There are a number of local consulting firms that provide assistance in connection with license agreements adapted to the Norwegian market and in accordance with Norwegian intellectual property law. For a list of consulting firms, see the section below on Protecting Your Intellectual Property.

Selling to the Government

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The total annual value of the Norwegian Government’s procurements is estimated to exceed USD 100 billion.

Norway is party to the Agreement on the European Economic Area (EEA), which extends, in most respects, to the internal market of the EU, as well as to the European Free Trade Agreement (EFTA) countries Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. These EFTA members and all the member states of the EU are party to the EEA Agreement. As part of the EEA Agreement, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein have adopted relevant EU legislation with respect to public procurement.

Through the signature of the WTO Government Procurement Act (GPA), Norway's public procurement market opened to more countries, so signatory states outside the European Union may also participate. Norway's international commitments through both the EEA and GPA agreements are incorporated into Norwegian legislation.

All public tender notices are required to be published in the Norwegian Gazette, Norsk Lysingsblad and the public procurement database DOFFIN. Through the EEA Agreement, public entities in Norway are required to announce tenders above certain threshold values in the EU database, Tender Electronic Daily (TED) http://ted.europa.eu/TED/main/HomePage.do Because of the GPA, purchases covered by the GPA are also announced the Doffin database that automatically forward received tenders above the threshold value to the TED. DOFFIN Database http://www.english.doffin.no/

Most tenders from European public contracting authorities for public supplies whose value is above the agreed thresholds are open to U.S.-based companies by virtue of the WTO Government Procurement Agreement (GPA). The GPA allows U.S. firms to bid on all supplies and services and some construction works contracts above thresholds contracted by EU central public contracting authorities. However, there are restrictions for U.S. suppliers in the utilities sector both in the EU Utilities Directive and in the EU coverage of the GPA. The Utilities Directive allows EU contracting authorities in these sectors to either reject non-EU bids where the proportion of goods originating in non-EU countries exceeds 50% of the total value of the goods constituting the tender, or are entitled to apply a 3% price difference to non-EU bids in order to give preference to the EU bid. These restrictions are applied when no reciprocal access for EU companies in the U.S. market is offered.

Legal complaints regarding public procurement in Norway should be directed to the Norwegian courts, or to the EFTA Surveillance Authority (ESA).

EFTA Surveillance Authority (ESA)
Tel: 011 (32) 2 286 18 11
Website: http://www.eftasurv.int/

The website of the U.S. Mission to the EU also has a database of all European public procurement tenders that are open to U.S.-based firms by virtue of the GPA. This database is free of charge, and is updated twice per week.

For more information, please see the website of the U.S. Commercial Service at the U.S. Mission to the European Union dedicated to procurement and the market research page which contains a handful of reports on EU tendering and government procurement.

Key Links: http://export.gov/EU/

Distribution and Sales Channels

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Although some 400 U.S. companies are estimated to have a presence or subsidiaries in Norway, the most common way of doing business is through agents/distributors. Three-quarters of Norway's 4.9 million people reside in southern Norway. Most major importers and distributors are headquartered in the Oslo region; some have sub-agents or sales offices in other major Norwegian cities. The rest of the country is made up of widely dispersed, small population centers that are expensive to serve due to long distances and high freight expenses. There are few countrywide, multi-store chains outside the apparel, sporting goods, and grocery sectors, and most retailers and distributors are small by U.S. standards. As a result, sub-agents and secondary distribution are the standard, workable method of handling Norway's scattered northern markets. With proper market promotion and support, a good local business partner and/or an astute local office, U.S. companies have unusually good prospects in this small but affluent market. Moreover, U.S. companies may find some licensing and joint venture agreements and full Norwegian subsidiaries to be excellent vehicles for tapping upscale markets beyond Norway (e.g., through the Nordic region and the Baltic states).

Selling Factors/Techniques

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Americans with business interests in Norway benefit from ease of communication as the vast majority of Norwegians speak English very well. American culture, including movies and TV series, is pervasive and there is no extensive use of dubbing. Yet marketing and training materials in Norwegian will give companies a competitive advantage. Unfortunately, news about Norway in English is sparse, limited to a few Internet services that provide only brief summaries of major events.

A few useful words on selling techniques in Norway: Norwegian companies are generally willing to pay for quality. They are also willing to switch suppliers to get better terms or better quality. Do not over promise, and make sure that you keep your deadline/schedule promises. Otherwise Norwegians quickly lose interest. To Norwegians "new" is not necessarily better. You need to present a convincing case – not based on emotions but on usefulness and technical quality. New concepts have to be proven as high quality, practical and already well tested. Hard selling techniques will get you nowhere in Norway. Avoid bragging and exaggerations, and make a well-documented presentation that gets your counterpart involved and lets him/her buy from you rather than you selling through one-way communication.

Norwegians are typically not tactical negotiators. If they say your product is too expensive, they probably mean it. If you have made a proposal you should stick to it. To your Norwegian counterpart trust is important, and use of written documents to establish agreements is common. Turning around and changing or adding surprising new elements is generally not popular. It is also hard to renegotiate terms after an agreement has been made, even if circumstances have changed.

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The Norwegian Act on Certain Aspects of Electronic Commerce and Other Information Society Services entered into force on July 1, 2003. The act implements the E-commerce Directive (2000/31/EC) into Norwegian law, and mirrors the directive in all essential features, except for the articles regulating the liability of intermediary service providers and some details of the information requirements.

Trade Promotion and Advertising

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All major types of advertising media are available in Norway. With the exception of the state-controlled Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation's (NRK) TV and radio stations, advertising on radio and television is now fully developed and a number of nationwide and local commercial radio stations compete in a growing market. City radio stations that broadcast during morning and evening commuter times are useful advertising vehicles.

The Norwegian television audience can now be reached via several commercial TV stations. TV2 is a national station with excellent coverage. TV3 and Norway-based TVNorge have additional popular advertising possibilities. Key Norwegian decision-makers can also be reached via CNN, BBC World, and Sky News, which are available via cable in all major towns and satellite throughout the country.

Norway has extremely high newspaper readership, with circulation figures audited by the newspaper publishers' association. Extensive demographic information concerning readership is available. Distinctions are drawn between the four major metropolitan areas and other, so-called trade districts, which number about 100.

Leading Oslo papers include Aftenposten, Verdens Gang (VG) and Dagbladet. While these papers are available throughout the country, local papers like Bergens Tidende (Bergen), Adresseavisen (Trondheim), and Stavanger Aftenblad (Stavanger) dominate their local areas. The business dailies Dagens Naeringsliv and Finansavisen reach business and professional people, nationwide. A recent trend in Norwegian news has been the rise of neighborhood or regional tabloids. These are delivered free-of-charge to households and represent a new method of reaching consumers. The last few years it has been declining numbers for newspapers sales, and the trend is more people using online channels because of good and easy internet coverage and access.

Major Norwegian business newspapers include:

Dagens Naeringsliv
Tel: 011 (47) 22 00 10 00
http://www.dn.no

Finansavisen
Tel: 011 (47) 23 29 63 00
http://www.hegnar.no

Aftenposten
Tel: 011 (47) 22 86 30 00
http://www.aftenposten.no

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Norwegian tariffs on industrial goods are generally quite low. Most of Norway's trade with EU countries is conducted on a duty-free basis under the provisions of the EEA. About 70% of Norway's exports go to the EU, which supplies three-quarters of Norway's imports.

Norway's corporate tax rates are lower than the EU average. Both companies and branches are subject to income and capital tax. An income tax of 28% applies generally to all forms of income of corporate bodies and other entities liable to taxation. No tax allowances are provided.

The top personal income tax marginal rate is 47.8% (there is a two-step "surcharge" on higher incomes), and is applied at about USD 133,000. The lower step personal income tax marginal rate is 44.8% and is applied at such a relatively low level (about USD 82,000) that almost half of Norwegian workers are subject to it.

The value-added tax (VAT) is 25% on most goods and services, but is 14% on food items. There are also very high taxes on automobiles, gasoline, real estate, financial assets, and other items. Overall, government revenues equal half of GDP. Disposable income is much lower than apparent income per capita, but this is offset to some extent by generous state benefits such as mostly free health care, free tuition at public schools and universities, grants for children, high state pensions (social security), etc.

A revised convention for the avoidance of double taxation between the United States and Norway came into force in 1972. It applies to national income taxes in the United States and Norway as well as local income taxes in Norway. The law covers both individuals and corporations in the two countries. For Norwegian taxation purposes, the key is whether an American enterprise operates in Norway through a permanent establishment (article 4 of the convention), defined as a fixed place of business through which a resident of one of the contracting states engages in individual or commercial activity. If so, then all industrial and commercial profits made in Norway are taxable by the Norwegian government (and exempt from taxation by the United States). The identical rule applies to Norwegian-operated permanent establishments in the United States.

Sales Service/Customer Support

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Conscious of the discrepancies among EEA and EU Member States in product labeling, language use, legal guarantee, and liability, the redress of which inevitably frustrates consumers in cross-border shopping, the EU institutions have launched a number of initiatives aimed at harmonizing national legislation. Suppliers within and outside the EU should be aware of existing and upcoming legislation affecting sales, service, and customer support.

Product Liability

Under the 1985 Directive on liability of defective products, amended in 1999, the producer is liable for damage caused by a defect in his product. The victim must prove the existence of the defect and a causal link between defect and injury (bodily as well as material). A reduction of liability of the manufacturer is granted in cases of negligence on the part of the victim.

Key link:
http://ec.europa.eu/comm/consumers/cons_safe/prod_safe/defect_prod/index_en.htm

Product Safety

The 1992 General Product Safety Directive introduces a general safety requirement at the EU level to ensure that manufacturers only place safe products on the market. It was revised in 2001 to include an obligation on the producer and distributor to notify the Commission in case of a problem with a given product, provisions for its recall, the creation of a European Product Safety Network, and a ban on exports of products to third countries which are not deemed safe in the EU.

Key link: http://ec.europa.eu/

Legal Warranties and After-sales Service

Under the 1999 Directive on the Sale of Consumer Goods and Associated Guarantees, professional sellers are required to provide a minimum two-year warranty on all consumer goods sold to consumers (natural persons acting for purposes outside their trade, businesses or professions), as defined by the Directive. The remedies available to consumers in case of non-compliance are:

- Repair of the good(s);
- Replacement of the good(s);
- A price reduction; or
- Rescission of the sales contract.

Key link: http://ec.europa.eu

Although it may not be required by law, marketing, sales service, customer support, user manuals, and training materials in Norwegian language will give a company a competitive advantage.

Issues pertaining to consumers' rights and protection, such as the New Approach Directives, CE marking, quality control and data protection are dealt with in Chapter 5 of this report.

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Protecting Your Intellectual Property in Norway

Several general principles are important for effective management of intellectual property ("IP") rights in Norway. First, it is important to have an overall strategy to protect your IP. Second, IP is protected differently in Norway than in the U.S. Third, rights must be registered and enforced in Norway, under local laws. Your U.S. trademark and patent registrations will not protect you in Norway. There is no such thing as an "international copyright" that will automatically protect an author's writings throughout the entire world. Protection against unauthorized use in a particular country depends, basically, on the national laws of that country. However, most countries do offer copyright protection to foreign works under certain conditions, and these conditions have been greatly simplified by international copyright treaties and conventions.

Registration of patents and trademarks is on a first-in-time, first-in-right basis, so you should consider applying for trademark and patent protection even before selling your products or services in the Norwegian market. It is vital that companies understand that intellectual property is primarily a private right and that the US government generally cannot enforce rights for private individuals in Norway. It is the responsibility of the rights' holders to register, protect, and enforce their rights where relevant, retaining their own counsel and advisors. Companies may wish to seek advice from local attorneys or IP consultants who are experts in Norwegian law. The U.S. Commercial Service can provide a list of local lawyers upon request.

While the U.S. Government stands ready to assist, there is little we can do if the rights holders have not taken these fundamental steps necessary to securing and enforcing their IP in a timely fashion. Moreover, in many countries, rights holders who delay enforcing their rights on a mistaken belief that the USG can provide a political resolution to a legal problem may find that their rights have been eroded or abrogated due to legal doctrines such as statutes of limitations, laches, estoppel, or unreasonable delay in prosecuting a law suit. In no instance should U.S. Government advice be seen as a substitute for the obligation of a rights holder to promptly pursue its case.

It is always advisable to conduct due diligence on potential partners. Negotiate from the position of your partner and give your partner clear incentives to honor the contract. A good partner is an important ally in protecting IP rights. Consider carefully, however, whether to permit your partner to register your IP rights on your behalf. Doing so may create a risk that your partner will list itself as the IP owner and fail to transfer the rights should the partnership end. Keep an eye on your cost structure and reduce the margins (and the incentive) of would-be bad actors. Projects and sales in Norway require constant attention. Work with legal counsel familiar with Norwegian laws to create a solid contract that includes non-compete clauses, and confidentiality/non-disclosure provisions.

It is also recommended that small and medium-size companies understand the importance of working together with trade associations and organizations to support efforts to protect IP and stop counterfeiting. There are a number of these organizations, both Norwegian or U.S.-based. These include:

- The U.S. Chamber and local American Chambers of Commerce
- National Association of Manufacturers (NAM)
- International Intellectual Property Alliance (IIPA)
- International Trademark Association (INTA)
- The Coalition Against Counterfeiting and Piracy
- International Anti-Counterfeiting Coalition (IACC)
- Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA)
- Biotechnology Industry Organization (BIO)

IP Resources

A wealth of information on protecting IP is freely available to U.S. rights holders. Some excellent resources for companies regarding intellectual property include the following:

- For information about patent, trademark, or copyright issues -- including enforcement issues in the US and other countries -- call the STOP! Hotline: 1-866-999-HALT or register at www.StopFakes.gov.

- For more information about registering trademarks and patents (both in the U.S. as well as in foreign countries), contact the US Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) at: 1-800-786-9199.

- For more information about registering for copyright protection in the US, contact the US Copyright Office at: 1-202-707-5959.

- For more information about how to evaluate, protect, and enforce intellectual property rights and how these rights may be important for businesses, a free online training program is available at www.stopfakes.gov.

- For US small and medium-size companies, the Department of Commerce offers a "SME IP Advisory Program" available through the American Bar Association that provides one hour of free IP legal advice for companies with concerns in Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Russia, and . For details and to register, visit: http://www.abanet.org/intlaw/intlproj/iprprogram_consultation.html

- For information on obtaining and enforcing intellectual property rights and market-specific IP Toolkits visit: www.StopFakes.gov This site is linked to the USPTO website for registering trademarks and patents (both in the U.S. as well as in foreign countries), the U.S. Customs & Border Protection website to record registered trademarks and copyrighted works (to assist customs in blocking imports of IP-infringing products) and allows you to register for Webinars on protecting IP.

- The U.S. Commerce Department has positioned IP attachés in key markets around the world. You can get contact information for the IP attaché who covers Norway at: http://export.gov/norway

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The U.S. Embassy in Oslo is well equipped to assist U.S. businesses with due diligence services. Comprised of offices of the U.S. Department of Commerce, Department of State, Department of Defense, and the Social Security Administration, the Embassy provides services and information for U.S. exporters, investors, and their Norwegian partners. Our trade specialists are available to counsel American companies, as well as Norwegian agents, importers and end-users.

If you are interested in doing business in Norway and need an introduction to Norway's business community or profiles on individual companies (e.g. our **International Company Profile** service), please contact our U.S. Export Assistance Centers in the U.S. or the U.S. Commercial Service in Oslo for assistance http://www.export.gov/norway

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Following is a list of contacts and resources available in Norway to help U.S. businesses wishing to explore the country's investment climate or compare it with other European countries.

Major international accounting firms:

PriceWaterhouseCoopers
Tel: 011 (47) 0 23 16
Tel: 011 (47) 95 26 00 00

http://www.pwc.no

KPMG Consulting A/S
Tel: 011 47 45 40 40 63
http://www.kpmg.no

Deloitte & Touche Statsautoriserte Revisorer AS
Tel: 011 (47) 23 27 90 00
http://www.deloitte.no

Ernst & Young AS
Tel: 011 (47) 24 00 24 00
http://www.ey.no

For other local professional services, including legal services, please see the U.S. Commercial Service in Oslo's local listing of Business Service Providers:
http://export.gov/Norway/businessserviceproviders/index.asp

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U.S. Commercial Service, Oslo
http://export.gov/Norway

U.S. Commercial Service, European Union
http://www.export.gov/eu

Market Research Reports
http://export.gov/europeanunion/marketresearch/index.asp

EU Member State Country Commercial Guide
http://export.gov/europeanunion/eustandardsandcertification/2010countrycommercialguide/index.asp

European public procurement tenders open to U.S. companies
http://export.gov/europeanunion/grantstendersandfinancing/cseutendersdatabase/index.asp

EU Tenders Website
http://ted.europa.eu/TED/main/HomePage.do

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Chapter 4: Leading Sectors for U.S. Export and Investment

Commercial Sectors

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- Renewable Energy – Green Technologies
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Oil and Gas

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Norway ranks as the world's 6th largest exporter of crude oil - behind Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iran, UAE and Kuwait. Norway is ranked as the 11th largest oil producer. Production of crude oil has been slowly declining and currently averages about two million barrels per day. Norway exports 90% of its oil production, accounting for more than 47% of overall Norwegian exports. Norway is also the world's 2nd largest exporter of natural gas - behind Russia. Norway is ranked as the world's 5th largest gas producer. Norway has significant long-term supply contracts by pipelines to the European continent.

Norway's emergence as a major oil and gas producer in the mid-1970s transformed the economy. After four decades, the petroleum sector is still gaining significance as a key driver for the Norwegian economy. It is the country's single largest industry. The sector accounts for more than 22% of GDP (annual GDP at about USD 450 billion in 2008 based on current prices). About 75,000 people are directly employed in the sector (oil companies, supply and service industry). Indirectly, it is estimated that the petroleum sector contributes about 200,000 jobs throughout Norway.

Resource accounts with estimates of both produced and remaining resources show that there are more than 8.1 billion standard cubic meters (scm) of oil equivalents (oe) left to be produced on the Norwegian Continental Shelf (NCS). This is nearly twice the amount produced so far. During its 40 years of production, Norway has depleted about 5.3 billion scm oe – or 40% of its total resources.

The vast majority of Norway's gas exports are destined for Europe (Norwegian gas accounts for about 15% of Western Europe's gas consumption). Gas production is expected to increase from the current level of nearly 100 billion scm to about 105-130 billion in the coming years. Norway now produces double the liquids volumes of the UK (in 2010, Norway was estimated to supply about 35% of the UK's gas consumption). Norway also provides substantial amounts of gas to Germany and France.

Estimates from the Norwegian Government and the Norwegian Petroleum Directorate indicate that the NCS has the potential to produce oil for another 50 years and gas for 100 years.

Oil and gas production in Norway is <u>only</u> offshore. While there are significant onshore processing facilities, there is <u>no</u> onshore production. The average estimated recovery factor for oil on the NCS is now close to 50% after steady increments during the last decade. Many of the fields that are producing today are of such a magnitude that even a small increase in the recovery factor will yield substantial extra oil volumes.

Norway has the second largest gas resources in Europe, after Russia. Today, there are about 50 fields producing gas on the NCS. In order to transport gas from field to market, Norway has developed one of the world's most extensive offshore pipeline transportation systems. The system consists of about 4,900 miles (7,800 km) of offshore pipelines and three large gas-processing plants, integrated into one network. Europe is the main market for Norwegian gas.

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The remaining resources on the NCS are gradually becoming more difficult to produce, both technologically and commercially. The industry's development and implementation of new technology, e.g. within seismic surveys, interpretation of seismic data, and drilling, will be of crucial importance in this regard. Also of great significance is the information sharing and innovation linking the petroleum sector with sectors such as information and communication technology, maritime industries, finance, and other Norwegian energy industries.

The NCS is divided into three petroleum provinces, the North Sea, the Norwegian Sea, and the frontier Barents Sea, collectively known as the High North. Norway continuously seeks new and proven technology to be used in the deeper and more extreme northern waters. Even though there is a clear trend for Norwegian petroleum activities to move further north and into more coastal areas, in terms of production, the North Sea is still Norway's most important petroleum region.

A promising sub-sector for U.S. suppliers continues to be drilling and well completion technology. Key areas continue to be zero-surface, subsea and deepwater technology, gradually reducing the need for traditional platforms. LNG technology/gas value chain, incl. technology facilitating more efficient and clean production and transportation of gas from remote locations. Advanced technology facilitating remote/onshore, real-time operations, and solutions advancing the e-field, reducing the need for transportation and the number of personnel having to stay on offshore platforms. Innovative solutions for improved recovery and marginal field technology. As oil and gas fields are depleted and production ceases, investments will also be needed on abandonment or alternative use of installations.

The Norwegian government has emphasized that the oil industry needs to strive to make their exploration activities as efficient as possible while at the same time showing due consideration for the environment and the fisheries, especially since exploration and drilling activities are moving further north and into more coastal areas. The Norwegian government vows that it will ensure that the goal of "zero discharge" to sea of environmentally harmful substances remains a priority. This demands added focus on new and advanced environmental technology.

To summarize some of the best market prospects:

- Subsea and deepwater technology. Gradually reduced need for traditional platforms.
- Carbon capture and storage technologies.
- LNG technology/gas value chain. Technology facilitating production and transportation of gas from remote locations.
- Technology facilitating remote/onshore, real-time operations. Reduced need for transportation of personnel and reduced number of personnel on platforms.
- Improved recovery, marginal field technology, tail-end production.
- Any cost reduction technology. E.g. introduction and enhancements to the "e-field".

- New and advanced environmental technology. Clean technologies reducing harmful emissions to the air and the sea.
- Decommissioning/abandonment technology – alternative use of installations.

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Total investments in NCS oil and gas activity for 2010, incl. pipeline transportation were estimated at USD 22 billion. Total investments for 2011 are estimated at a record USD 25 billion. The Norwegian Government expects capital spending to remain high, but expects to see a gradual decline in the coming years.

The overwhelming share of capital spending goes to fields in operation and fields under development, followed in order of size by exploration, pipelines, and land-based petroleum operations.

The individual fields/projects involving the highest investments/upgrades in 2010 were Ekofisk, Valhall, and Troll. The highest investments for new fields under development in 2010 were Skarv, Gjøa og Morvin. In 2011 it is expected to be Valemon, Luno, Frøy, Gygrid and Jordbær. In addition come several smaller fields under development, as well as a large number of projects to improve recovery from existing fields.

Most purchases for the offshore industry stem from international oil companies operating on the NCS and from local shipyards and offshore structure contractors building and maintaining offshore installations. There is also extensive use of engineering, procurement and construction (EPC) contracts. Most of these major contracts are channeled through Norwegian and international offshore engineering and service companies developing the NCS.

The Norwegian Government controlled Statoil (a result of the merger of Statoil and Norsk Hydro's Oil and Gas Division on October 1, 2007 – with 67% Government ownership) controls approximately 80% of the operatorships on the NCS.

Most of the U.S. oil majors and large service companies are present on the NCS: ConocoPhillips, ExxonMobil, Chevron, Marathon Petroleum, Hess, Halliburton, Baker-Hughes, Weatherford, National Oilwell Varco, Schlumberger, etc.

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Norwegian Ministry of Petroleum and Energy
http://www.regjeringen.no/en/ministries/oed.html?id=750

Norwegian Petroleum Directorate
http://www.npd.no/en/

Norwegian Ministry of Trade and Industry
http://www.regjeringen.no/en/ministries/nhd.html?id=709

Norwegian Oil Industry Association

http://www.olf.no/english

Norwegian Shipowners' Association
http://www.rederi.no/nrweb/english.nsf

Petroleum Safety Authority Norway
http://www.ptil.no/main-page/category9.html?lang=en_US

Norwegian Coastal Administration
http://www.kystverket.no/en/

Norwegian Pollution Control Authority
http://www.klif.no/no/english/english/

Renewable Energy – Green Technologies

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Norway and its Nordic neighbors are considered world leaders in the use of renewable energy, clean technology and alternative fuels. The governments are inclined to invest in energy research, providing tax benefits, funded expansion plans, electricity certificate programs and production incentives for the increased use of alternative fuels and renewable energy.

Norway has accepted a number of international commitments to reduce emissions (including carbon dioxide). These numerous commitments have proven to be a challenge for Norway, given its role as the world's 6th largest exporter of oil and the 2nd largest exporter of natural gas. However, in a political agreement in January 2008 between the Norwegian Government and the opposition parties in the Norwegian Parliament the following ambitious climate change goals were stated:
--Norway intends to cut the global emissions equivalent to 100% of its own emissions by 2030, aspiring to become a carbon neutral nation.
--By 2020, Norway plans to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions by the equivalent of 30% of its own 1990 emissions.
--Norway will strengthen its Kyoto commitments by 10 percentage points, corresponding to nine percent below the country's 1990-level.

Norway has the world's largest per capita hydropower production, and is the world's 6th largest hydropower producer. In a year with normal precipitation, hydropower generation is around 120 TWh, corresponding to approximately 99% of Norway's total power production.

Norway considers itself a global environmental champion and is on the leading edge of several clean energy technologies, especially concerning carbon capture and storage (CCS). Production of power and other use of fossil energy are the largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions. Capture of CO2 and storage of CO2 in oil/gas reservoirs and geological formations emerge as potential measures to reduce global emissions. Norway aims to make full-scale CCS a reality.

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CCS - The Norwegian Government's CCS goals remain ambitious. The commitment to develop gas-fired power stations with CCS in Norway has been a centerpiece of Norway´s energy policy. If successful, Norway will achieve a more secure energy supply and through technology development contribute to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Hydropower – Norway has considerable hydro resources and has over the past 100 years constructed more than 330 dams. There are still new niche developments and technology potential associated with hydropower. Norway is a leader in pumped storage hydropower developments.

Wind power (particularly offshore) is the renewable energy source where most investments are focused and which is also the source closest to commercial viability (including companies like Statoil, Statkraft, Scatec, Sway).

Solar power R&D and production is one of the fastest-growing sectors of the global energy market. Norway has ambitions and several leading solar technology companies (including REC Group, Elkem Solar, Norsun) participating in developments across the entire value chain.

Tidal power and wave energy are also rising developments - based largely on Norway´s offshore capabilities, with current projects also involving osmotic power (salinity gradient energy based on seawater).

Geothermal energy is another renewable energy source, also tied to Norway's oil and gas production expertise.

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There are a number of Government-funded programs for renewable and environmentally friendly energy. Some of these programs manage government funding for the testing and demonstration of technology for removing greenhouse gas emissions from power production.

As a major producer of fossil fuels Norway considers that it has an important role in contributing to new technology development. To develop the technologies necessary to meet the twin challenges of energy security and climate change, the Norwegian Government believes that it must use a mix of political incentives/ persuasion and market mechanisms. In 2007, Norway embarked on a major new research, development and demonstration project with a view to building the world's largest full-scale CCS facility in connection with a combined gas-fired heat and power plant at Mongstad. This is a cooperative venture between the Norwegian Government, the oil and gas company Statoil and others. The Norwegian Government has wanted the Mongstad project to stimulate international technological cooperation, which it considers critical for coherent, urgent and broad-based action on climate change. Statoil also operates other leading CCS facilities, such as Sleipner fields in the North Sea, Snohvit in the Barents Sea and In-Salah in Algeria.

The Norwegian Government has decided that all new gas fired power plants shall be based on CCS technologies. The government strategy to achieve this goal involves a combination of technologies and processes, financial support and regulations. Gassnova, a government entity, was established in July 2007 with the mandate to manage governmental interest and support technology development within the area of CCS management.

The Norwegian Government has also set up a fund to strengthen efforts on renewable energy and energy efficiency. The state-owned agency Enova will manage the yield from the fund. Enova is working to establish a support system for district heating infrastructure, and manage a support system for renewable electricity.

Green Buildings

About 80% of Norway's 2.2 million homes use electricity as their prime energy source for heating. Electricity has traditionally been very affordable and has created a significant share of homes that needs infrastructure upgrades when electricity prices rise and reach European levels. New types of investments are expected to give good returns, as overall electricity price adjustments develop. Not only will energy efficient retrofits and renovations become a lucrative market, but also intelligent solutions for new houses; 90,000 homes needed in Oslo alone to meet demand over the next ten years or so. New building directives require higher standards than before.

Passive houses – homes using no more than 4746 btu/ft^2 per year in heating - will also offer a good market opportunity. Some 1,000 passive houses are currently under planning or construction and 15 home builders offer passive houses in Norway. Estimates suggest that 15,000 to 20,000 passive houses are already developed worldwide. The majority of them have been built in Germany and Scandinavia.

Best prospects include quality insulation and building materials, new and efficient windows, efficient low maintenance heat exchangers, various types of heat pumps, and efficient burning furnaces, including pellets. Norway has a total of 765 million m3 of forest, with an annual contribution of 25 million m3. This is about 47% of Norway's landmass. Statistics Norway suggests that 69% of households have a wood burning appliance of some kind, and many households benefit from free firewood.

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Norwegian Government – Energy initiatives
http://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/Energy.html?id=212
http://www.regjeringen.no/en/The-Government/stoltenberg-ii/The-Big-Issues/Binding-climate-policy.html?id=446708

Norwegian Ministry of Trade and Industry
http://www.regjeringen.no/en/ministries/nhd.html?id=709

Norwegian Ministry of Petroleum and Energy
http://www.regjeringen.no/en/ministries/oed.html?id=750

Norwegian Ministry of Environment
http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/md.html?id=668

Norwegian Pollution Control Authority
http://www.klif.no/no/english/english/

Gassnova
http://www.gassnova.no/?language=UK

Enova
http://www.enova.no/sitepageview.aspx?sitePageID=1346

Statoil
www.statoil.com

Statkraft
www.statkraft.com

Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate
http://www.nve.no/en/

SINTEF Byggforsk passive house project
www.passiv.no

Norsk Bioenergiforening (Norwegian Bio Energy Association)
http://www.nobio.no/

Telecommunications

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Unit: USD million

	2009	2010	2011
Total Market Size	12,0079		
Total Local Production	8,100		Not published
Total Exports	923	912	Not published
Total Imports	1,477	1,682	Not published
Imports from the U.S.			
Exchange Rate: 1 USD	6.0	6.0	6.0

Total Market Size = (Total Local Production + Total Imports) – (Total Exports)

Data Sources: Statistics Norway and The Norwegian Post and telecommunications Authority

The Norwegian trade deficit of ICT goods increased by 11 per cent from 2009 to 2010, and was NOK 21 billion in 2010. The growth was mainly caused by trade with telecommunications equipment.

Revenue in the Norwegian telecom market remains relatively stable, but consumers use the services differently than before. In the mobile market subscribers are both sending fewer SMS' and talking less. Fixed telephony continues to decline, while data traffic is growing, according to the report "The Norwegian Ecom Market 1st half 2011", published by the Norwegian Post and Telecommunications Authority.

The turnover in radio and television broadcasting showed an increase of 7.9 per cent from 2009 to 2010.

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The number of mobile subscriptions in Norway continues to increase. At the end of the first half, the number of prepaid cards and post-paid subscriptions totalled 5.67 million. While this is an increase of 2.7 % in one year, the growth rate is only half that of a year earlier, when subscriptions grew 5.3 % from the first half of 2009 to 2010. Prepaid card subscriptions account for a 27 % share. In one year, the share of customers who have a mobile subscription with a data packet has doubled.

Mobility is still the main driver in the telecommunications market. The business market is demanding safe, mobile and flexible sharing of company resources, such as e-mail synchronization, calendars etc. With new and sophisticated offerings, margins have been stable in the B2B cellular phone market as opposed to continued low margins in the consumer market for regular traffic. The market is very competitive, and telecoms are also under heavy pressure from services offering free calls and using high bandwidth. Once these applications are mature, operators will have to reevaluate their business model and charge for data traffic over speech.

At the end of the first half of the year the total number of paid TV subscriptions in Norway was just over 2.15 million, 35,000 more than the previous year.

In the same period total revenue went up USD 48 million, to USD 636 million. Cable TV customers account for 35 % of revenues, but 44 % of subscriptions. While just barely 11 per cent of customers have broadcasting delivered over fibre, this technology is responsible for half of the total revenue growth in the broadcasting market in the last twelve months.

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Data traffic over fiber and cable TV continues to increase. The fiber infrastructure is primarily owned and operated by local utility companies, and may not be the best business case for foreign investors (this could change), however, increased broadband open for more sophisticated content solutions, such as pay per view videos and games.

High quality hardware for infrastructure will also be in demand as base stations and grids are updated constantly. Norway has currently three GSM licenses with world class capacity/speed and one NTM 950 network covering the peripheral parts of the country. Even though population is spread over a large area, no operators seem to believe internet over satellite would offer a viable business model in Norway. Operating costs would be too high, and 3G/4G GSM is a strong competitor even in marginal areas.

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Post and telecommunications Authority
http://www.npt.no/portal/page/portal/PG_NPT_NO_EN/PAG_NPT_EN_HOME

Statistics Norway
http://www.ssb.no/english/

The Ministry of Transport and Communications
http://www.regjeringen.no/en/ministries/sd.html?id=791

Computers and Peripherals

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Unit: USD thousands

	2009 Imports	2009 Exports	2010 Imports	2010 Exports
Computers and related products	1,939,000	319,000	2,183,000	358,000
Electrical components	601,000	250,000	572,000	497,000
Other IT products (not including telecom or AV equipment)	859,000	1,023,000	865,000	1009,000
Total IT hardware	**3,399,000**	**1,592,000**	**3,620,000**	**1,864,000**

Data Sources: Statistics Norway

Both imports and exports of IT equipment to Norway increased from 2009 to 2010. 8.4% of all imports into Norway were ICT goods in 2010.

Imports of computers and related equipment were worth almost USD 2.2 billion. Other IT goods comprise, among other things, navigational and measuring instruments, an area where Norway holds a competitive advantage due to the maritime environment.

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After two years of decline in total sales in 2008 and 2009, in the consumer electronics industry, 2010 came in with growth. 2011 was again a declining year, with a 5.4% reduction in turnover, according to the industry association Elektronikkbranssjen. PCs and Cell phone sales declined 5.5% and 5.7%, whereas sales of AV equipment declined 18.1%. Household appliances was the only consumer electronics category growing in 2011 with 7.4%.The explanation is primarily price development, number of sold units are stable or growing in most categories. As an example, sales revenues of PCs decreased 5.5%, whereas number of units increased 0.5% from 2010 to 2011.

Despite the decline in total sales, market penetration of new technology goes fast. In 2010, 50% of cell phones were “smart”, whereas 65% of sold phones in 2011 were smart phones. 33% of televisions sold in 2011 were so-called 3D. Ipod/Iphone docking stations and digital radios are “hot”, video cameras are “not”.

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With a slow global economy, Norway may be an opportunity for expansion since Norway only suffered moderately from the financial crisis in 2008 and maintains low unemployment and healthy GDB growth since. A wealthy public sector, a large surplus on national budgets, a dominant energy sector, a sober banking system and one of the highest GDP per capita, make Norway better positioned than most other countries. Purchasing power is continuing to grow in 2012. Norwegian end-users are technology-savvy, innovative, largely homogeneous, and are often among the first to try and adopt new technology. Norway is sometimes used as a test market for foreign manufacturers to effectively measure the potential of their new products due to the homogenous market.

The strongest present and future growth area in hardware will be centralized and sophisticated data-storage, e-businesses and transaction applications, as service providers are required to store more and more of their clients' data. EU directives may also require higher storage capabilities. A push towards cloud computing will also drive sales of hardware, especially hand held terminals

On the consumer side, Norwegians are often innovators of new concepts and ideas and are able and willing to pay a premium for new high end products such as smart phones. Purchasing power is high, since most households benefit from low interest rate, high average income and low unemployment (3.3% in 2012).

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ICT Norway (Norway's largest IT-organization with over 320 members)
www.ikt-norge.no

Abelia (Association of Norwegian ICT- and knowledge based enterprises, associated with the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise)
www.abelia.no

EE Branch of Trade
http://www.elektronikkbransjen.no/

Computer Software and Services

The market for IT services has been very strong in 2011 and is expecting to be good also in 2012. Capgemini, for example, increased revenues by 16% and profits by 50% in 2011.

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IT consultancy services

Public sector is a significant client for local IT consulting companies. Public authorities' websites or home pages are becoming more and more important for Norwegian enterprises. The share of enterprises that used the Internet in their contact with public sector has increased from 80 per cent in 2009 to 91 per cent in 2010. Significant investments are needed to meet expectations by the public and by companies.

The Norwegian health sector is in need of a full IT renovation, but industry experts don't think 2012 budgets will allow for long needed data consolidations and other improvements, other than improved Customer Relations Management (CRM) functionality at hospitals doctor's offices.

IT consultancy companies report that most customers, except government clients, have plans for outsourcing. Onshore consulting prices are expected to grow slowly.

Software

A ICT-Norway study from 2007 (not replicated) showed that out of USD 1.2 billion spent on IT, some USD 300 million (25%) were spent on software procurements, the remaining 75% was spent on hardware or own developed software (less than 10%).

Use of operating systems with a third party open source code, e.g. Linux, has increased from 8 per cent in 2010 to 16 per cent in 2011. Large enterprises seem to use such operating systems much more than small enterprises.

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Mobility and cloud computing is said to be two of the strongest drivers in the service market, but at the same time also in the software market. Public sector is increasingly "moving to the cloud" to save costs and to be more flexible, according to industry experts. This will also create security issues.

Enterprise software and services

SMBs represent a good business opportunity in Norway, and not just because of the sheer number of these companies. Both market growth and drivers vary by company size, and vendors should plan based on this knowledge, according to IDC.

Oracle, SAP and Microsoft dominated the ERP-market. The three giants accounted for as much as 71% of awarded contracts in Norway in 2009, more than ever before. Billing prices for computer consultancy services increased by 1.7 per cent from the 2nd quarter of 2010 to the 3rd quarter of 2010, according to Statistics Norway.

IT security

IT security still has a significant market potential in the enterprise market. This market develops much faster than other parts of the industry, as threats emerge at a rapid pace. New EU legislation in 2012 is expected to create a demand for Intrusion Detection and Prevention Systems.

Studies from all vertical industries show that companies have big holes into their critical and sensitive data. A 2009-study suggests that Norwegian companies incurred losses of USD 85 million last year from hacking and theft. A 2010-study by Statistics Norway found that large enterprises experienced more problems with their IT systems in 2010 than 2009 and they also took more precautions to prevent such problems.

U.S. security vendors with niche products should consider Norway and the Nordic region. Value added resellers (VARs) and systems integrators are on a constant lookout for new features to secure their customers.

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U.S. software vendors should consider partnering with a local company, either through joint venture or value added resellers. Some niche-software will be able to sell directly. Companies that translate their programs into Norwegian will also have a greater advantage in some markets.

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The Ministry of Government Administration and Reform
http://www.regjeringen.no/en/ministries/fad.html?id=339

The Ministry of Transport and Communications
http://www.regjeringen.no/en/ministries/sd.html?id=791

ICT Norway (Norway's largest IT-organization with over 320 members)
www.ikt-norge.no

Abelia (Association of Norwegian ICT- and knowledge based enterprises, associated with the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise)
www.abelia.no

EE Branch of Trade
http://www.elektronikkbransjen.no/

Shipping and Maritime Equipment and Services – PRT, CVR

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Norway has been a major player in shipping and shipbuilding over the past 150 years. This country, with a population of only 4.8 million, is still considered a superpower on the seas, controlling the world's 5th largest merchant fleet. Norway has a long tradition of utilizing the rich maritime environment, including major activities in commercial shipping and fishing. The market for leisure boats is also big in Norway, with about 800,000 leisure boats registered. The Norwegian coastal line measures over 20.000 km, and 6% of the land areas are covered by water. With fjords and islands included, the Norwegian coastline is 126% compared to that of the United States.

Norwegian ship owners are especially active within shipping areas like offshore service/specialty vessels, oil tankers, bulk carriers, chemical tankers, gas (LNG/LPG) tankers, car carriers, and cruise operations. Shipbuilding has very long traditions in Norway, and is still a very important part of Norwegian maritime activities.

As of the 4th quarter of 2010, the Norwegian fleet counted 1,771 ships. Approximately 46% of the fleet sail under the Norwegian flag, the rest under foreign flags (often referred to as "flags of convenience"). Building orders for the Norwegian account in 2010 were 224 ships and 14 rigs. The value of ships on order is about USD 22 billion and 39 of the vessels are being built at Norwegian yards.

The Norwegian fleet of mobile offshore units reached 61 units as of October 2010, qualifying as the 2nd largest in the world, after the United States. It is estimated that the maritime cluster today provides around 90,000 jobs in Norway. Some 61,000 Norwegians and foreigners work on Norwegian ships and rigs.

By international comparisons, most of the Norwegian shipyards are relatively small and they have recently experienced heavy competition. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Norwegian shipbuilding industry survived growing international competition and loss of market share by shifting production towards the national offshore oil and gas industry and ship equipment manufacturing. The production of offshore oil and gas related ships and equipment has been vital for the industry's survival, and it still relies heavily on this relatively large domestic market.

Today, however, most large ships, floating production storage and off-loading units (FPSOs), and offshore rigs are built in East Asia and Southeast Asia. Lack of sufficient Norwegian competitiveness in these labor and raw materials intensive segments is primarily based on high costs for hull constructions, plus the fact that shipyards in Norway can only handle new vessels up to 45,000 dwt.

Many have characterized the Norwegian maritime community as being the most internationally competitive and knowledge-based industry in Norway. The maritime community is one of the most comprehensive of its kind in the world, encompassing ship-owners, brokers, insurance and financial services, classification institutions, shipyards, ship's gear manufacturers, institutions of maritime education, maritime research and development, maritime authorities and employees' organizations.

Cargo transport within Norway has seen a significant increase during the last few years. There has been an increase in sea transport and road transport, but a decline in freight transport by rail. Almost half of cargo transport in Norway now occurs on roads, while sea transport accounts for 44% and rail transport accounts for the remaining 7%. Ships completely dominate international cargo transport, with 88% of the freight volume to and from mainland Norway.

Best Prospects/Services

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U.S. maritime technology and service suppliers have found the Norwegian market well worth exploring for exports and joint venture opportunities.

Over the past 30 years, Norway has also become a significant oil-producing nation. One of the main reasons for this success was that Norwegian shipping and related maritime businesses provided the administrative network, the technical know-how, and the infrastructure needed to build up a sophisticated offshore oil-related industry. Norway is now the world's third largest exporter of oil and gas. In addition, the Norwegian-controlled offshore fleet is the second largest in the world, after the United States.

The country has to stay ahead of increased international competition by maintaining and modernizing its important merchant fleet. Norway needs to keep its fleet and shipbuilding industry as modern, efficient, "clean" and well-equipped as possible, and ship-owners and shipyards are constantly seeking advanced, labor-saving equipment and systems, not only for the growing Norwegian merchant fleet, but also for the ever-expanding offshore oil and gas sector.

All shipyards and ship equipment manufacturers and suppliers are seeking new ways to reduce costs and increase productivity and will evaluate any system or equipment that will contribute to a better competitive position. Analysing the total life cycle costs of equipment is crucial in making purchasing decisions.

Shipbuilding today entails construction of sophisticated vessels with highly integrated electronic control systems - from cargo handling to technical reporting - that demand advanced information technology. At the same time, customers are demanding multi-system packages from single source suppliers.

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More than half of all Norwegian yards orders are commissioned by the offshore oil and gas sector. Furthermore, much of the production in the Norwegian manufacturing industry has been geared towards offshore-related industrial activity. In last quarter of 2010, the numbers of Norwegian mobile offshore installations were 61 units; 19 semi-submersibles, 20 floating production units, 1 drill ship and 19 jack-ups. The Norwegian orders amounted about 10 per cent of the world's order book. Increased investments and high industrial activity in the offshore sector will have significant effects on Norwegian industrial activity in general. Investments in the Norwegian petroleum sector are estimated at USD 25 billion in 2011, which bodes well for the Norwegian shipbuilding and maritime sector.

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Norwegian Ministry of Trade and Industry
http://www.regjeringen.no/en/ministries/nhd.html?id=709

Norwegian Shipowners' Association
http://www.rederi.no/nrweb/english.nsf

Norwegian Ministry of Petroleum and Energy
http://www.regjeringen.no/en/ministries/oed.html?id=750

Norwegian Maritime Directorate

http://old.sjofartsdir.no/en/

Healthcare Technologies

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Norway is one of the wealthiest countries in the world and this is reflected in its expenditure on medical care for its citizens. With the exception of the U.S. and Switzerland, Norway spends more of its GDP (9% / USD 30 billion) on healthcare than any other country in the world. The state-dominated medical system, covering 84% of total healthcare costs, is striving for technological advances and organizational improvements in a climate of increasing system and budget constraints and an aging population. By 2025, there will be 40% more senior citizens in Norway than today.

The health and social welfare system in Norway is predominantly publicly financed, primarily through a national insurance tax. The national insurance, or social security, is a collective insurance plan to which all in Norway belong. Citizens requiring medical treatment in Norway are guaranteed medical care and user fees are limited – no one pays more than about USD150/year for public health services.

Estimates from the public health authorities and trade associations indicate that the total Norwegian market for medical and dental equipment and supplies reached just over 2 billion USD in 2011, growing approximately 2% per annum. The various public health care authorities are estimated to account for about 90% of the purchases of medical equipment, whereas private (non- publicly funded) purchases account for the remaining 10%. About half of the medical equipment is sold to hospitals.

The Public Dental Health Service employs about 1,000 dentists, and it provides free dental care for those under 20 years age. In addition, there are about 2,300 private practicing dentists in general dental clinics in Norway, there are about 280 private practitioners with dental specialties and about 300 dental technicians.

The Norwegian pharmaceuticals market is estimated at USD 3.17 billion, including value added tax (PRP - pharmacy retail price) in 2011. The pharmaceuticals market in Norway has experienced modest growth in recent years, and this has been attributed to the government's restrictive policy in fixing prices and reimbursement, and the patent expiry of several high turnover brands The generic pharmaceuticals market has grown significant in recent years and accounts for 40% of the market, and with the introduction of the "step price scheme" aimed at further reducing the price of generic medicines this is a trend set to continue. The Norwegian Medicines Agency is the national regulatory authority on assessment and surveillance of new and existing medicines in Norway. In Norway, the Norwegian Medicines Agency fixes the maximum purchase price (PPP) on prescription medicines. The market has determined non-prescription prices since 1995.

Foreign pharmaceutical firms experience difficulties in the Norwegian market, due to a lack of transparency on pricing and reimbursement decisions and patent protection is lacking. However, although the pharmaceutical companies continue to face considerable challenges vis-à-vis the national regulatory authorities, the market still remains significant. Healthcare in Norway is publicly funded, and the cost of medicines represents 7.7% of the public spending on health care in Norway.

Sub-Sector Best Prospects Return to top

U.S. companies are estimated to supply around 25-30 percent of Norwegian purchases of medical equipment. High end, quality products and a tailored marketing approach are key factors for U.S. companies in penetrating the Norwegian market. The perceived reliability and quality of a product, together with information received from health care providers and from relevant certifying bodies and professional associations in Norway constitute the most significant factors in a purchasing decision for Norwegian buyers and end-users of medical equipment. Due to very limited domestic production Norway relies heavily on imports of medical equipment and increases in market demand are likely to be met by imports.

Promising sub-sectors for U.S. suppliers of medical equipment include surgical instruments and equipment, diagnostic apparatus, ultrasound, orthopedic equipment, monitoring instruments and equipment, laboratory/pathology instruments and equipment, digital x-ray systems and customized ICT equipment. Telemedicine is an important part of future acute medical care, and significant potential for radiology (work-sharing among hospitals); specialist consultations within the ear-nose-throat field (video conferencing); specialist consultations in dermatology (e.g. video conferencing and still picture technology); and cardiography (e.g. heart rhythm/sound comparisons).

Demographically, Norway is growing older, and in particular the oldest segment of the population is expanding; this represents an extra burden for the healthcare system. The government has signaled that nursing and care for the aged must be given higher priority. Indications are that there will be growing opportunities for private initiatives in these areas.

Best sales prospects for U.S. dental suppliers in Norway include general dental, surgical and laboratory supplies and materials, and advanced technical and electronic equipment, such as digital x-ray systems. High-quality and technically advanced products, competitive prices, and a tailored marketing approach are critical for U.S. companies wishing to penetrate the mature Norwegian market. An attractive and functional design is also very important.

Equipment to be sold in Norway must be registered with the Department of Health and Care Services http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/hod/Subjects/Pharmaceutical-products/medical-devices.html?id=86835, and must have EU approval (CE Mark) http://export.gov/eu/index.asp. Norway participates in the EU internal market through the EEA Agreement (European Economic Area), and has the same rights and obligations as EU member states in regulation of medical devices. Norway applies EU product requirements, methods of conformity assessment, and duty rates for U.S. imports.

Best prospects for U.S. suppliers of pharmaceuticals are still drugs associated with the treatment of cardiovascular diseases, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, asthma, mental (psychiatric) disorders, gastric ulcers, allergy, and pain relief.

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Norway spends an estimated USD 7 billion annually on its hospitals, and there is an attractive market for innovative, high quality medical and dental equipment. A further USD 300 million has been earmarked for the Norwegian Ministry of Health and Care Services as part of increased government spending in the wake of the current economic downturn. These investments are earmarked for upgrading hospital and building new facilities for senior citizens. There have also been reports that equipment in Norwegian hospitals is outdated, and the cost of replacing this equipment is estimated at $600m.

Large public tenders are to be found at the Norwegian site www.doffin.no and http://ted.europa.eu/TED/main/HomePage.do

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Norwegian Ministry of Health and Care Services
http://www.regjeringen.no/en/ministries/hod.html?id=421

Norwegian Directorate of Health
http://www.helsedirektoratet.no/english/Sider/default.aspx

Norwegian Institute of Public Health
http://www.helsetilsynet.no/Norwegian-Board-of-Health-Supervision/

National Insurance Administration
http://www.nav.no/English

Norwegian Medicines Agency
http://www.legemiddelverket.no/templates/InterPage____16645.aspx?filterBy=CopyToGeneral

Norwegian Food Safety Authority
http://www.mattilsynet.no/portal/page?_pageid=54,40103&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&language=english

South Eastern Norway Regional Health Enterprise (Helse Sør-Øst RHF)
http://www.helse-sorost.no/omoss/english/Sider/page.aspx

Central Norway Regional Health Enterprise (Helse Midt-Norge RHF)
http://www.helse-midt.no/no/Om-oss/English/

Western Norway Regional Health Enterprise (Helse Vest RHF)
http://www.helse-vest.no/english/Sider/side.aspx

Northern Norway Regional Health Enterprise (Helse Nord RHF)
http://www.helse-nord.no/about-helse-nord/category5770.html

Norwegian Association of Medical Suppliers
http://www.lfh.no/index.asp?id=38787

Defense Technology

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The Norwegian Armed Forces procures goods and services for over 3 billion USD annually from both Norwegian and international contractors. In 2009, the total export of Norwegian defense material was approximately 800 million USD. This is a 400% growth comparing to exports in year 2000. The 2010 defense budget had a total of USD 1278 million directly set aside for materiel investments.

The Strategic Concept Report developed for procurements in the Norwegian Armed Forces from 2010 until 2017 clearly shows increased investments. Norway is focused on developing their Armed Forces in a specialized direction, increasing the number of professional soldiers. Combat capability is crucial when participating in national and international operations. An efficient and high-tech defense demands innovative solutions. U.S manufacturers have a very good reputation in the Norwegian defense industry, which can initiate further opportunities for business cooperation.

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Some significant investments over the past five years, both in army, air and sea systems have been done by the Norwegian Armed Forces. Equipment deliveries of investments are spread over time. The Government of Norway often requires offset agreements for the larger projects, but recognizes the U.S position of best value for the JSF program. Norway's participation in operations abroad, operating in different environment is also an area of focus. Making a more streamlined defense and developing professional full-time soldiers turn the attention to high-tech solutions when investing.

The Norwegian Armed Forces will continue to upgrade equipment in the following areas:

- Current air systems, while waiting for new deliveries: aircrafts and helicopters.
- Current land systems, while waiting for new deliveries: armored patrol vehicles, artillery (fire support) and weapon stations.
- Current sea systems, while waiting for new deliveries: submarines and minesweeper.
- Soldier equipment/systems: night vision equipment, new hand weapons, clothing and equipment more suitable for female soldiers.
- Information infrastructure: upgrade safety system at the Norwegian defense intranet to level Secret/NATO Secret, secure access to a space segment, purchase ICT equipment to support deployed units.

Investment(s) and development(s) 2010-2013: The main areas of investments that will dominate 2010-2013 are the initiated vessel structure projects in the Royal Norwegian Navy and:

- Five Frigates (Nansen, Amundsen, Sverdrup, Ingstad, Heyerdahl)
- Missile torpedo boats
- Helicopters that will be used by the Navy and the Coast Guard
- Initiate an upgrade of the submarines at the end of the time period

- Investments in new weapon systems in general for the Royal Norwegian Navy
- Naval strike missile for frigates and the missile torpedo fleet
- Lightweight torpedoes for the frigates, frigate helicopters, and the maritime patrol aircraft
- Further development of the network-based defense (Network Centric Warfare). Many new projects and technologies in this category are under planning. Investments in current operating systems being able to provide services up to date are also necessary.

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Reorganization of the Norwegian Armed Forces the past five to ten years has increased the focus on developing a defense system with professional soldiers. Manufacturers will be directly affected in a positive way, with growing demand for up-to-date warfare equipment. Smaller procurements may not be subject to the same transparency or formality as larger tenders, but can be of great importance to defense manufacturers. Looking at the strategic concept report, ongoing updates for all defense branches are planned over the next seven years. Please see Best Prospects for more detailed information. U.S products have a very good reputation in the Norwegian defense environment.

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The Norwegian Ministry of Defense
www.forsvarsdepartementet.no

The Norwegian Armed Forces
www.forsvaret.no

The Norwegian Defense and Security Industries Association (FSI)
www.fsi.no

The Norwegian Defense Logistics Organization
http://forsvaret.no/om-forsvaret/avdelinger-i-forsvaret/flo/Sider/flo.aspx

The Norwegian Defense Research Establishment (FFI)
www.ffi.no

Norwegian Armed Forces Operational Headquarters
http://forsvaret.no/om-forsvaret/avdelinger-i-forsvaret/operativt-hovedkvarter/Sider/operativt-hovedkvarter.aspx

Joint Warfare Center (Office for public information)
www.jwc.nato.int

Travel and Tourism

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For the Norwegian travel market 2011 was yet another year with significant optimism and growth. Record numbers of Norwegians traveling to the U.S. underlines that the U.S. is still Norway's favorite long haul destination. A total of 234 305 Norwegians traveled to the U.S. in 2011 (Jan-Nov), up 13%, and forecasts for 2012 are good as the trend of more Norwegians vacation abroad than in their home country is set to continue. An extremely favorable currency exchange rate has made particularly America more affordable in terms of good deals on hotel rooms, car rental, shopping.

Norwegian tour operators specializing in the U.S. market report record numbers of reservations in 2012 and this is reflected Scandinavian Airlines reestablishing their direct scheduled service Oslo to Newark in March 2011. Continental Airlines also has direct scheduled flights from Oslo to Newark, opening their gateways to the rest of America for the Norwegian traveler.

2007	172,882
2008	213,983
2009	193 318
2010	221 145
2011	234 305 (Jan-Nov)

Norwegians are experienced and increasingly sophisticated travelers, fluent in English, and they have the time and money to travel long haul. The average Norwegian tourist stays in the United States for 16 days and spends more than USD 4000 on his/her trip. With most Norwegians now having 25 days of annual vacation in addition to public holidays, this is expected to diversify Norwegian travel, spreading their vacation days throughout the year. The summer remains the primary vacation season for Norwegians, whose custom it is to take three weeks in July. More Norwegians are now traveling abroad in the autumn/ winter getting away from the cold and harsh climate. Norwegian schools are closed for one week in October and February, and for two weeks around Easter.

The vacation group with the highest growth rate is the age group over 65. The top five destinations for Norwegian visitors are: New York City, Miami, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Tampa.

The traditional fly-drive vacation in Florida and California remain very popular, as well as city breaks to New York City. Many Norwegians have close family and cultural ties with the United States, so there is still a growing interest in travel to “Norwegian America".
Trends in the Norwegian travel market also include activity vacations built around pursuits such as rafting, mountain climbing, golf, and culture.

Independent travel has long been apparent in travel to the U.S. where the majority of travel is either booked directly online by the traveler or organized through a specialist travel agent, tailoring the vacation to the specific requirements of the traveler. Increasingly, customers do a significant amount of research on the Internet before approaching a travel agent.

Norwegian air travel has long been characterized by a high share of business travel. However, business travel has come under pressure as companies are being forced to look for new, more cost efficient ways to manage their travel budgets. Business travel suppliers in Norway such as Bennett BTI and Berg Hansen are working closely with customers, streamlining travel policy for managing business travel effectively. Men are still in great majority on business trips (75%), while women are in the majority on private journeys (57%). Leisure travel now constitutes 56% of international scheduled air travel from Norway.

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Based on the current trends in the Norwegian travel market, a best prospect is certainly the activity/niche vacation market, a vacation that offers them something unusual. Norwegian enjoyment of nature and an outdoor lifestyle is a vital part of the country's national identity. Hiking, ranching or visiting an Indian reservation, or activity vacations combining fishing and hunting with photographic opportunities would be of interest.

In addition, the climate is an important factor in encouraging Norwegians abroad, as it is both cold and dark for 5 months of the year. This interest particularly appeals to the 45-79 year old segment, which is a fast growing group with both time and money on their hands. Golfing vacations could of course be combined with other elements to make up a complete vacation experience.

Finally, there is a significant growth in the cruise market segment, either out of Florida or New York.

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One of the best ways to increase market exposure and sales in Norway's tourism market is to partner up with a credible and visible Norwegian player. There are a number of travel agents and wholesalers located in Norway targeting the U.S market. The U.S. Commercial Service in Oslo can assist in finding a suitable partner in the market. Alternatively, consider exhibiting at the international travel and tourism show Reiseliv, next scheduled for March 2013. Reiseliv is well attended and the U.S. Commercial Service in Oslo organizes a U.S. Pavilion, along with the Discover America Committee of Norway. U.S. companies are also welcome to join the Discover America Committee, which sponsors many activities that will help increase your market exposure in Norway. For more information, contact the U.S. Commercial Service at the American Embassy in Oslo http://export.gov/norway/

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Discover America Committee in Norway
http://www.DiscoverAmerica.no

U.S. Travel Association
http://www.ustravel.org

Agricultural Sectors

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$ in millions	2008	2009	2010 (forecast)
Total Market Size	23,237	21,511	21,600
Total Local Production	24,263	22,772	24,000
Total Exports	9,901	7,874	9,400
Total Imports	8,875	6,613	7,000
Imports from the U.S.	230	165	165

Sources: UN Trade and Statistics Norway (www.ssb.no/english)
Average exchange rate 2009: USD1= NOK 6.29
Average exchange rate 2008: USD1= NOK 6.41

Norway is a high-cost producer with agricultural policies focused on maintaining a high degree of self-sufficiency. To maintain agricultural production, Norway's subsidies for most agricultural products exceed those of the EU. High tariffs, quantitative restrictions and technical barriers to trade severely limit competitive products from entering the Norwegian market. Tariff-rate quotas exist for grains and a number of horticultural products. Additionally, Norway extends rebates to food processors in compensation for the high cost of agricultural inputs and to ensure that Norwegian processed products can compete with imports. Norway has implemented EU legislation with regard to biotech feed, seed and food. Norwegian legislation is, however, more restrictive than EU legislation in the sense that it also lays down requirements that GM products should be ethically justified and provide societal benefits as well as be in line with sustainable development. This difference in the assessment of biotech products has led to Norway's rejection of several products approved in the EU. The spirits and wine retail market is controlled by a government monopoly, Vinmonopolet.

Best Products/Services

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Best U.S. Food, Agricultural, Fishery and Forestry Prospects for Norway

Processed fruit and vegetables
Fresh fruit and vegetables
Tree nuts and peanuts
Beef, non-hormone treated
Wine and beer
Sugar and sweeteners
Pet food
Hardwood lumber
Panel/plywood products

Opportunities

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Norway is only 50 percent self-sufficient in food and agricultural production. U.S. food and agricultural products are associated with high quality and innovation. Large Nordic retail chains provide opportunities for high volume sales to established U.S. suppliers.

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The Office of Agricultural Affairs at the U.S. Embassy in Stockholm, Sweden has regional responsibility for Sweden, Finland, Norway and Denmark. Current information on U.S. food and agricultural trade in the Nordic region can be found at the website http://stockholm.usembassy.gov/fas.html. Its content includes an array of exporter/importer services, and links to sites containing a detailed current breakdown of individual country imports/exports of agricultural products subdivided into several product categories (bulk, intermediate, consumer-oriented, forestry and fishery).

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Chapter 5: Trade Regulations, Customs and Standards

Import Tariffs

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Norway (with Switzerland, Iceland and Liechtenstein) is a member of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). EFTA members, except Switzerland, participate in the European Union (EU) single market through the European Economic Area (EEA) accord. Norway grants preferential tariff rates to EEA members. As an EEA signatory, Norway assumes most of the rights and obligations of EU member states. The principal exception is in the agricultural sector, which the EEA accord does not cover.

The Integrated Tariff of the Community, referred to as TARIC (Tarif Intégré de la Communauté), is designed to show various rules applying to specific products being imported into the customs territory of the EU or, in some cases, when exported from it. To determine if a license is required for a particular product, check the TARIC.

The TARIC can be searched by country of origin, Harmonized System (HS) Code, and product description on the interactive website of the Directorate-General for Taxation and the Customs Union. The online TARIC is updated daily. Website: http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/customs_duties/tariff_aspects/customs_tariff/index_en.htm

The Customs Tariff can be found on the Norwegian Customs and Excise website: http://www.toll.no/default.aspx?id=3&epslanguage=EN

Hard copies of the Customs Tariff may be ordered from the publisher Fagbokforlaget, PO Box 6050 Postterminalen, N-5892 Bergen, Norway, E-mail: ordre@fagbokforlaget.no, Website: http://fagbokforlaget.no/?artikkelid=312

Tel: 011 (47) 55 38 88 38, Fax: 011 (47) 55 38 88 39. More information available on the following Norwegian Customs and Excise website http://www.toll.no/default.aspx?id=3&epslanguage=EN

Trade Barriers
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Trade barriers are relatively few. Although not a member of the EU, Norway is affiliated with the EEA, whose rules mirror practically all EU standards, rules and regulations. Market access to the EU from Norway is not a major hurdle.

In principle, the government supports free trade and non-interference. However, it should be noted that despite reforms and cuts in many support schemes for various sectors, Norway has a long way to go, particularly in the agricultural and fisheries sectors, where state support and protectionism remain strong. Norway still spends considerable amounts annually to support farmers. Subsidies from the Government can provide up to two-thirds of a farmer's income. There have also been repeated complaints from the industry regarding non-tariff trade barriers in sectors such as pharmaceuticals and automotive products. There have also been issues in Norway with adequate protection of intellectual property rights (please also see: Chapter 6: Investment Climate).

For information on existing trade barriers, please see the **National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers**, published by USTR and available through the following website:
http://www.ustr.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/reports/2009/NTE/asset_upload_file348_15473.pdf

Information on agricultural trade barriers can be found at the following website:
http://www.fas.usda.gov/posthome/useu/

To report existing or new trade barriers and get assistance in removing them, contact either the Trade Compliance Center at http://www.trade.gov/tcc, the U.S. Embassy in Norway http://export.gov/norway/ or http://norway.usembassy.gov/, or the U.S. Mission to the European Union at http://export.gov/eu/index.asp

Import Requirements and Documentation
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General import documentation required is the commercial invoice plus a bill of landing or an airway bill. A certificate of origin is not required unless specified. The importation of live animals, animal products and plants requires a sanitary or health certificate. Phytosanitary certificates are required for most fresh fruits, vegetables, and other plant materials. For commodities composed of animal products or by-products, EU countries require that shipments be accompanied by a certificate issued by the competent authority of the exporting country. This applies regardless of whether the product is for human consumption, for pharmaceutical use, or strictly for non-human use (e.g., veterinary biologicals, animal feeds, fertilizers, research).

EU/EEA rules on waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE), while not requiring specific customs or import paperwork, may require exporters of U.S. products to register the products with a national WEEE authority, or arrange for this to be done by a local partner. Similarly, related rules for EEE restricting the use of the hazardous substances (RoHS) lead, cadmium, mercury, hexavalent chromium, PBBs, and PBDEs, do not entail customs or importation paperwork. However, U.S. exporters may be asked by a European RoHS enforcement authority or by a customer to provide evidence of due diligence in compliance with the substance bans on a case-by-case basis.

As an example, Norway decided to ban mercury from January 1, 2008. The ban will include dental filling materials (amalgam) and measuring instruments, as well as other products. The ban includes all areas of use that are not specifically exempted or that are already regulated.

In another example, on January 17, 2008, Norway announced that it had decided to ban DecaBDE in all applications apart from transportation, with effect from April 1, 2008. This extended an existing ban in EEE (Norway did not implement the exemption of DecaBDE from a ban within the RoHS Directive) to applications such as textiles, upholstered furniture and cables. Norway therefore ignored opposition from national and EU industry, the EU and EFTA as well as from WTO partners regarding the draft ban notified in 2005. Shortly after the entering into force of REACH, it was also seen by the industry as a fundamental provocation of the REACH rules and principles.

IMPORT DOCUMENTATION

REACH

REACH is a major reform of EU chemicals policy that was adopted in December 2006 and became national law in the 27 EU member states in June 2007 (Regulation 1907/2006). Virtually every industrial sector, from automobiles to textiles, is affected by the new policy. REACH stands for the "Registration, Evaluation and Authorization and Restriction of Chemicals." Since June 1, 2008, REACH requires chemicals produced or imported into the EU in volumes above 1 ton per year to be registered with a central European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), including information on their properties, uses and safe ways of handling them. Chemicals pre-registered before December 1, 2008, benefit from extended registration deadlines, from three to eleven years depending on the volume of the substance and its hazardous properties. U.S. companies without a presence in Europe cannot register directly and must have their chemicals registered through their importer or EU-based 'Only Representative of non-EU manufacturer'. A list of Only Representatives can be found on the website of the U.S. Mission to the EU: http://export.gov/eu/index.asp
U.S. exporters to the EU should carefully consider the REACH 'Candidate List' of substances of very high concern. Substances on that list are subject to communication requirements, and, at a later stage, may require authorization for the EU market. For more information, see the ECHA website:
http://echa.europa.eu/chem_data/authorisation_process/candidate_list_table_en.asp

WEEE & RoHS

EU rules on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE), while not requiring specific customs or import paperwork, may entail a financial obligation for U.S. exporters. They require U.S. exporters to register the products with a national WEEE authority, or arrange for this to be done by a local partner. Similarly, related rules for EEE Restricting the Use of Hazardous Substances (RoHS) lead, cadmium, mercury, hexavalent chromium, PBBs, and PBDEs, do not entail customs or importation paperwork. However, U.S. exporters may be asked by a European RoHS enforcement authority or by a customer to provide evidence of due diligence in compliance with the substance bans on a case-by-case basis. The WEEE and RoHS Directives are currently being revised to enlarge the scope and add substances to be banned in electrical and electronic equipment; U.S. exporters seeking more information on WEEE and RoHS regulations should visit: http://export.gov/europeanunion/weeerohs/index.asp

Non-agricultural Documentation

The official model for written declarations to customs is the Single Administrative Document (SAD). European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries including Norway, Iceland, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein also use the SAD. However, other forms may be used for this purpose. Information on import/export forms is contained in Title VII, of Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2454/93, which lays down provisions for the implementation of Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2913/92 establishing the Community Customs Code (Articles 205 through 221). Articles 222 through 224 provide for computerized customs declarations and Articles 225 through 229 provide for oral declarations.

Additional information on import/export documentation can be found in Title III, of Council Regulation (EEC) No. 2913/92 of October 12, 1992, establishing the Community Customs Code (Articles 37 through 57). Goods brought into the customs territory of the Community are, from the time of their entry, subject to customs supervision until customs formalities are completed.

Goods presented to customs are covered by a summary declaration, which is lodged once the goods have been presented to customs. The customs authorities may, however, allow a period for lodging the declaration, which cannot be extended beyond the first working day following the day on which the goods are presented to customs. The summary declaration can be made on a form corresponding to the model prescribed by the customs authorities. However, the customs authorities may permit the use, as a summary declaration, of any commercial or official document that contains the particulars necessary for identification of the goods. It is encouraged that the summary declaration be made in computerized form.

The summary declaration is to be lodged by:

- the person who brought the goods into the customs territory of the Community or by any person who assumes responsibility for carriage of the goods following such entry; or
- the person in whose name the person referred to above acted.

Non-EU goods presented to customs must be assigned a customs-approved treatment or use authorized for such non-Community goods. Where goods are covered by a summary declaration, the formalities for them to be assigned a customs-approved treatment or use must be carried out:

- 45 days from the date on which the summary declaration is lodged in the case of goods carried by sea;
- 20 days from the date on which the summary declaration is lodged in the case of goods carried other than by sea.

Where circumstances so warrant, the customs authorities may set a shorter period or authorize an extension of the period.

The Modernized Customs Code (MCC) of the European Union is expected to be fully put into place by 2013 although there are concerns that this deadline may be missed due to the complexity of the project. Some facets of the MCC implementation have already been put into place such as EU wide Economic Operators Registration and Identification (EORI) numbers. The MCC will replace the existing Regulation 2913/92 and simplify various procedures such as introducing a paperless environment, centralized clearance, and more. Check the EU's Customs website periodically for updates: http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/procedural_aspects/general/community_code/index_en.htm.

Agricultural Documentation

Phytosanitary Certificates: Phytosanitary certificates are required for most fresh fruits, vegetables, and other plant materials.

Sanitary Certificates: For commodities composed of animal products or by-products, EU countries require that shipments be accompanied by a certificate issued by the competent authority of the exporting country. This applies regardless of whether the product is for human consumption, for pharmaceutical use, or strictly for non-human use (e.g., veterinary biologicals, animal feeds, fertilizers, research). The vast majority of these certificates are uniform throughout the EU, but the harmonization process is not complete. During this transition period, certain member state import requirements continue to apply. In addition to the legally required EU health certificates, a number of other certificates are used in international trade. These certificates, which may also be harmonized in EU legislation, certify origin for customs purposes and certain quality attributes. Up-to-date information on harmonized import requirements can be found at the following website: http://www.fas.usda.gov/posthome/Useu/certificates-overview.html

Sanitary Certificates (Fisheries): In April 2006, the European Union declared the U.S. seafood inspection system as equivalent to the European one. Consequently, a specific public health certificate must accompany U.S. seafood shipments. Commission Decision 2006/199/EC lays down specific conditions on imports of fishery products from the U.S. Unlike for fishery products, the U.S. shellfish sanitation system is not equivalent to EU's one. The EU and the US are currently negotiating a veterinary equivalency agreement on shellfish. In the meantime the EU has put a ban in place since July 1, 2010, that prohibits the import of US bivalve mollusks, in whatever form, into the EU territory. This ban doesn't apply to wild roe-off scallops.
With the implementation of the second Hygiene Package, aquaculture products coming from the United States must be accompanied by a public health certificate according to Commission Decision 2006/199/EC and the animal health attestation included in the new fishery products certificate, covered by Regulation (EC) 1250/2008. This animal

health attestation is not required in the case of live bivalve mollusks intended for immediate human consumption (retail).

Since June 2009, the unique U.S. competent authority for issuing sanitary certificates for fishery and aquaculture products is the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA-NMFS).

In addition to sanitary certificates, all third countries wishing to export fishery products to the EU are requested to provide a catch certificate. This catch certificate certifies that the products in question have been caught legally.
For further information on the issuance of this specific certificate please see the link below.

For detailed information on import documentation for seafood, please contact the NOAA Fisheries office at the U.S. Mission to the EU (stephane.vrignaud@trade.gov) or visit the following NOAA dedicated web site: http://www.seafood.nmfs.noaa.gov/EU_Export.html

For up to date information on import requirements and documentation, please contact the Norwegian Customs Authority:
http://www.toll.no/default.aspx?id=3&epslanguage=EN

See section below on Customs Regulations and Contact Information.

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The Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS), a U.S. Department of Commerce agency, is charged with the development, implementation and interpretation of U.S. export control policy for dual-use commodities, software, and technology. Dual-use items subject to BIS regulatory jurisdiction have predominantly commercial uses, but also have military applications. In order to accomplish this objective, BIS seeks to promulgate clear, concise, and timely regulations. Below is a link to the Bureau's regulations governing exports of dual-use items (the "Export Administration Regulations"), codified at 15 Code of Federal Regulations, Chapter 7. It also provides discussions of certain key regulatory policy areas, including policies governing exports of high performance computers, exports of encryption products, deemed exports, U.S. anti-boycott regulations, special regional considerations, the multilateral export control regimes, and the technical advisory committees. For more information, please see BIS' website.

Bureau of Industry and Security
U.S. Department of Commerce
http://www.bis.doc.gov/

The U.S. Government views the sale, export, and re-transfers of defense articles and defense services as an integral part of safeguarding U.S. national security and furthering U.S. foreign policy objectives. The U.S. State Department's Directorate of Defense Trade Controls (DDTC), in accordance with 22 U.S.C. 2778-2780 of the Arms Export Control Act (AECA) and the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR) (22 CFR Parts 120-130), is charged with controlling the export and temporary import of defense articles and defense services covered by the United States Munitions List. For more information, please see DDTC's website.

Directorate of Defense Trade Controls
U.S. Department of State
http://www.pmddtc.state.gov/index.html

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Samples, carnets

Norway is a member of the international convention to facilitate the importation of commercial samples and advertising matter. Samples may be imported into Norway free of customs charges if they are of little or no commercial value, or if they have been made unfit for use. If they do not meet these requirements, samples are subject to customs duties. However, samples intended exclusively for obtaining orders in Norway may be temporarily exempted from duty payment provided a bond is posted upon entry. Upon re-exportation, the bond is canceled. Samples carried by a commercial traveler, as well as pattern books and pattern cards, must be declared immediately upon arrival in the country. Samples may also be imported temporarily by using the ATA carnet, a simplified customs document by which commercial samples or professional equipment may be sent or taken into Norway and any of the other 75 foreign countries participating in the arrangement.

The ATA carnet is a guarantee to the customs authorities that duties and taxes will be paid if the goods are not taken out of the country. The carnet permits making customs arrangements in advance in the United States and is especially useful when visiting several countries, since the same document may be used and remains valid for a 12-month period. In the United States, ATA carnets are issued for a fee from:

U.S. Council for Intl. Business
1212 Avenue of the Americas
New York, NY 10036
Tel: (212) 354-4480
Fax: (212) 575-0327
E-mail: info@uscib.org
Website: http://www.uscib.org/index.asp?documentID=1843

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An overview of EU/EEA mandatory and voluntary labeling and marking requirements has been compiled in a market research report that is available on http://export.gov/europeanunion/marketresearch/sellingusproductsandservicesintheeu/index.asp

The subject is also covered in the section on standards (Standards).

Toxic chemicals

A mandatory composition declaration is imposed on domestic and foreign suppliers of chemical substances and products. The requirement calls for a 100% product composition declaration to be filed and registered in the product register. These provisions govern the declaration and labeling of very toxic, toxic, and carcinogenic substances and products. These products must be declared to the product register prior to import and production.

The fundamental principle is that all manufacturers and importers of chemicals shall provide all the information required by the product register. In cases where foreign producers need to withhold detailed composition from the importer, the foreign producer may send the complete chemical composition directly to the product register. One condition for accepting the above is that the importer supplies administrative information ("administrative data") with reference to the information provided by the foreign supplier. The Norwegian importer is nevertheless responsible for labeling the product and preparing the safety data sheet.

In special instances, however, the board of the product register may grant a partial or total dispensation from the declaration requirements. Exemptions may be granted only for specific product groups, and for a limited period of time. The exemptions will normally not be granted for more than three years at a time. Special guidelines have been prepared in connection with the various forms of dispensation, which may be obtained from the product register:

Produktregisteret
(The Product Register - the Norwegian Government's Central Register for chemical products that are on the market in Norway)
Tel: 011 (47) 22 05 48 80
E-mail: produktregisteret@produktregisteret.no
Website: http://www.klif.no/no/english/english/The-Product-Register/

Publication: "Guidelines for Declaration of Chemical Products"
Website: http://www.klif.no/seksjonsartikkel____41818.aspx

Norwegian Climate and Pollution Agency
(An agency under the Norwegian Ministry of Environment)
Website: http://www.klif.no/no/english/english/

Safety data sheets

An additional obligation for domestic manufacturers or importers includes the preparation of a safety data sheet, sufficiently comprehensive for the customer/user to handle the substance or product safely. Information regarding the "administrative data" and the safety data sheets may be obtained from:

Arbeidstilsynet (Norwegian Labor Inspection Authority)
Tel: 011 (47) 22 95 70 00
E-mail: direktoratet@arbeidstilsynet.dep.no
Website: http://www.arbeidstilsynet.no/artikkel.html?tid=79289

Food Products

Questions regarding food products and food packaging regulations may be directed to the Norwegian Food Safety Authority. The Norwegian Food Safety Authority is a governmental body. Its goal is that consumers should have healthy and safe food and safe drinking water. The agency promotes human, plant, fish and animal health, environmentally friendly production, and ethically acceptable farming of animals and fish. The Norwegian Food Safety Authority also performs duties relating to cosmetics and medicines, and inspects animal health personnel. The Norwegian Food Safety Authority was established on 1 January 2004. It represents a merger of the Norwegian Animal Health Authority, the Norwegian Agricultural Inspection Service, the Norwegian Food Control Authority, the Directorate of Fisheries' seafood inspectorate, and local government food control authorities.

Norwegian Food Control Authority
Tel: 011 (47) 23 21 68 00
Website:
http://www.mattilsynet.no/portal/page?_pageid=54,40103&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&language=english

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The TARIC is designed to show various rules applying to specific products being imported into the customs territory of the EU or, in some cases, when exported from it. To determine if a product is prohibited or subject to restriction, check the TARIC for that product for the following codes:

CITES	Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species
PROHI	Import Suspension
RSTR	Import Restriction

For information on how to access the TARIC, see the Import Requirements and Documentation Section above.

Key Link:
http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/customs_duties/tariff_aspects/customs_tariff/index_en.htm

For up to date information on prohibited and restricted imports to Norway, please contact the Norwegian Customs Authority:
http://www.toll.no/default.aspx?id=3&epslanguage=en

Also, see section below.

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Advance rulings on classification

Before signing a long-term contract or sending a shipment of considerable value, it may be prudent for the Norwegian importer or U.S. exporter to obtain an official ruling on customs treatment. Requests for advance information regarding the customs classification of products may be addressed directly to:

Toll og Avgiftsdirektoratet (Norwegian Customs and Excise Authority)
Tel: 011 (47) 22 86 03 00
E-mail: tad@toll.no
Website: http://www.toll.no/default.aspx?id=3&epslanguage=EN

The application should describe the product in full detail. Samples, catalogs, photographs, or other descriptive literature should be submitted whenever possible. The manufacturer, the exporter, or the representative in Norway should sign the application. While the customs authorities will not in all cases give a binding decision, the decision will usually be considered binding if the goods are found to correspond exactly to the sample or the description.
Customs and Taxation Union Directorate (TAXUD)
Website: http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/index_en.htm

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Products tested and certified in the United States to American standards are likely to have to be retested and re-certified to EU requirements as a result of the EU’s different approach to the protection of the health and safety of consumers and the environment. Where products are not regulated by specific EU technical legislation, they are always subject to the EU’s General Product Safety Directive as well as to possible additional national requirements.

European Union standards created under the New Approach are harmonized across the 27 EU Member States and European Economic Area countries to allow for the free flow of goods. A feature of the New Approach is CE marking. For a list of new approach legislation, go to http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/european-standards/documents/harmonised-standards-legislation/list-references/index_en.htm

While harmonization of EU legislation can facilitate access to the EU Single Market, manufacturers should be aware that regulations and technical standards might also function as barriers to trade if U.S. standards are different from those of the European Union.

Agricultural Standards

The establishment of harmonized EU rules and standards in the food sector has been ongoing for several decades, but it took until January 2002 for the publication of a general food law establishing the general principles of EU food law. This Regulation introduced mandatory traceability throughout the feed and food chain as of Jan 1, 2005. For specific information on agricultural standards, please refer to the Foreign Agricultural Service's website at: http://www.fas.usda.gov/posthome/Useu/

There are also export guides to import regulations and standards available on the Foreign Agricultural Service's website: http://www.fas.U.S.da.gov/posthome/Useu/

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EU standards setting is a process based on consensus initiated by industry or mandated by the European Commission and carried out by independent standards bodies, acting at the national, European or international level. There is strong encouragement for non-governmental organizations, such as environmental and consumer groups, to actively participate in European standardization.

Many standards in the EU are adopted from international standards bodies such as the International Standards Organization (ISO). The drafting of specific EU standards is handled by three European standards organizations:

- CENELEC, European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization
  http://www.cenelec.eu/
- ETSI, European Telecommunications Standards Institute
  http://www.etsi.org/
- CEN, European Committee for Standardization, handling all other standards
  http://www.cen.eu/cenorm/index.htm

Standards are created or modified by experts in Technical Committees or Working Groups. The members of CEN and CENELEC are the national standards bodies of the member states, which have "mirror committees" that monitor and participate in ongoing European standardization. CEN and CENELEC standards are sold by the individual member states standards bodies. ETSI is different in that it allows direct participation in its technical committees from non-EU companies that have interests in Europe and gives away some of its individual standards at no charge on its website. In addition to the three standards developing organizations, the European Commission plays an important role in standardization through its funding of the participation in the standardization process of small- and medium-sized companies and non-governmental organizations, such as environmental and consumer groups. The Commission also provides money to the standards bodies when it mandates standards development to the European Standards Organization for harmonized standards that will be linked to EU technical legislation. Mandates can be checked on line at http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/european-standards/standardisation-requests/index_en.htm

Due to the EU's vigorous promotion of its regulatory and standards system as well as its generous funding for its development, the EU's standards regime is wide and deep - extending well beyond the EU's political borders to include affiliate members (countries which are hopeful of becoming full members in the future) such as Albania, Belarus, FYR Macedonia, and Turkey among others. Another category, called "partner standardization body" includes the standards organization of Australia, which is not likely to become a CEN member or affiliate for political and geographical reasons. Many other countries are targets of the EU's extensive technical assistance program, which is aimed at exporting EU standards and technical Regulations to developing countries, especially in the Mediterranean and Balkan countries, Africa, as well as programs for China and Latin America.

To know what CEN and CENELEC have in the pipeline for future standardization, it is best to visit their websites. CEN's "sectors" page provides an overview by sector and/or technical committee whereas CENELEC offers the possibility to search its database. ETSI's portal (http://portal.etsi.org/Portal_Common/home.asp) leads to ongoing activities.

With the need to adapt more quickly to market needs, European standards organizations have been looking for "new deliverables" which are standard-like products delivered in a shorter timeframe. While few of these "new deliverables" have been linked to EU legislation, expectations are that they will eventually serve as the basis for EU-wide standards.

Key Link: http://www.cen.eu/cenorm/products/cwa/index.asp

Standards Norway, the Norwegian Electro technical Committee and the Norwegian Post and Telecommunication Authority are the three standards writing bodies in Norway. Standards Norway is the Norwegian member of CEN and ISO. Standards Norway is responsible for all standardization areas except electro technical and telecommunication. Standards Norway adopts and publishes some 1,500 new Norsk Standard (Norwegian Standards - NS) annually. NS are adopted by Standards Norway based on nationally required standards, European and international standards. Website: http://www.standard.no/en/

The Norwegian Electro technical Committee is the Norwegian member of CENELEC and IEC and is responsible for standardization in the electro technical area. The

Norwegian Electro technical Committee adopts and publishes some 300 new standards annually. Website: http://www.standard.no/en/

The Norwegian Post and Telecommunication Authority is the Norwegian national member of ETSI and ITU. The Norwegian Post and Telecommunication Authority are responsible for post and telecommunication standardization in Norway. The major tasks are the co-ordination of international and European work in this area. Website: http://www.npt.no/portal/page/portal/PG_NPT_NO_EN/PAG_NPT_EN_HOME

Pronorm AS is responsible for marketing and sale of standards and related products in Norway. Pronorm provides information on available standards, and Standards Norway, the Norwegian Electro technical Committee and the Norwegian Post and Telecommunication Authority provide information on standardization work in progress. Website: http://www.standard.no/en/

As the Norwegian member of ISO, Standards Norway is responsible for marketing and selling ISO standards and publications within Norway. Pronorm AS is doing this on behalf of Standards Norway. Each Norwegian Standard (NS) is adopted by Standards Norway based on either nationally created or European and International Standards. There are currently around 14,000 NS in many different fields. More than 95 % of the standards being adopted today are common European Standards and are designated NS-EN.

Note on Standards in the Offshore Oil Industry

EU regulations stipulate that suppliers of products and services to the oil industry must be selected with the aid of objective criteria based on a public call for competition in the EU/EEA area. To ensure correct and objective procurement in accordance with these rules, leading Scandinavian oil companies have established a common qualification scheme, called the Achilles Joint Qualification System, for qualification of suppliers of products and services to the oil industry in Norway and abroad. All operators, the main engineering companies, and the suppliers in the industry use this system. Achilles contains information on each company, its QA system, and its services and products. Also, Achilles may be very useful for any new-to-market company since it provides an overview on existing competitors, or even better, it may reveal gaps in a product range that offer an opportunity to the suppliers with the relevant products, tools, or services.

Achilles Information Center - http://www.achilles.com/en/Norway/

A Norwegian initiative for reducing development and operation costs for the offshore oil and gas industry has resulted in the NORSOK Standards (Norsk Sokkels Konkurranseposisjon – the competitive standing of the Norwegian offshore sector). The main objective for these standards has been to add value and ensure cost savings for all relevant transaction parties in the industry. NORSOK standards have been widely used by companies on the Norwegian Continental Shelf. NORSOK standards for the Norwegian offshore market are available for free from the Standards Norway website http://www.standard.no/petroleum

NIST Notify U.S. Service
Member countries of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are required under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement) to report to the WTO all proposed technical regulations that could affect trade with other Member countries. **Notify U.S.** is a free, web-based e-mail subscription service that offers an opportunity to review and comment on proposed foreign technical regulations that can affect your access to international markets. Register online at Internet URL: http://www.nist.gov/notifyus/

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Conformity Assessment is a mandatory step for the manufacturer in the process of complying with specific EU legislation. The purpose of conformity assessment is to ensure consistency of compliance during all stages of the production process to facilitate acceptance of the final product. EU product legislation gives manufacturers some choice with regard to conformity assessment, depending on the level of risk involved in the use of their product. These range from self-certification, type examination and production quality control system, to full quality assurance system. You can find conformity assessment bodies in individual Member State country in this list by the European Commission.

Key Link: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newapproach/nando/

To promote market acceptance of the final product, there are a number of voluntary conformity assessment programs. CEN's certification systems are the Keymark, the CENCER mark, and CEN workshop agreements (CWA) Certification Rules. CENELEC has its own initiative. ETSI does not offer conformity assessment services.

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To sell products on the EU market of 27 Member States as well as Norway, Liechtenstein and Iceland, U.S. exporters are required to apply CE marking whenever their product is covered by specific product legislation. CE marking product legislation offers manufacturers a number of choices and requires decisions to determine which safety/health concerns need to be addressed, which conformity assessment module is best suited to the manufacturing process, and whether or not to use EU-wide harmonized standards. There is no easy way for U.S. exporters to understand and go through the process of CE marking, but hopefully this section provides some background and clarification.

Products manufactured to standards adopted by CEN, CENELEC and ETSI, and published in the Official Journal as harmonized standards, are presumed to conform to the requirements of EU Directives. The manufacturer then applies the CE marking and issues a declaration of conformity. With these, the product will be allowed to circulate freely within the EU. A manufacturer can choose not to use the harmonized EU standards, but then must demonstrate that the product meets the essential safety and performance requirements. Trade barriers occur when design, rather than performance, standards are developed by the relevant European standardization organization, and when U.S. companies do not have access to the standardization process through a European presence.

The CE marking addresses itself primarily to the national control authorities of the Member States, and its use simplifies the task of essential market surveillance of regulated products. Although CE marking is intended primarily for inspection purposes by Member State inspectors, the consumer may well perceive it as a quality mark.

The CE marking is not intended to include detailed technical information on the product, but there must be enough information to enable the inspector to trace the product back to the manufacturer or the authorized representative established in the EU. This detailed information should not appear next to the CE marking, but rather on the declaration of conformity (which the manufacturer or authorized agent must be able to provide at any time, together with the product's technical file), or the documents accompanying the product.

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Independent certification bodies, known as notified bodies, have been officially accredited by competent national authorities to test and certify to EU requirements.

European Accreditation is an organization representing nationally recognized accreditation bodies. Membership is open to nationally recognized accreditation bodies in countries in the European geographical area that can demonstrate that they operate an accreditation system compatible with EN45003 or ISO/IEC Guide 58.
http://www.european-accreditation.org/content/home/home.htm

Norwegian Accreditation is the authorized Accreditation Body in Norway. This agency manages the Norwegian accreditation system and serves as the top level in the quality system in Norway. Organizations accredited by Norwegian Accreditation (e.g. laboratories and certification bodies), will in turn control the quality and certify other organizations/businesses. http://www.akkreditert.no/en/

Norwegian Accreditation is a member of:
- ILAC International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation
- IAF The International Accreditation Forum, Inc.
- EA European Accreditation

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The Official Journal is the official gazette of the European Union. It is published daily on the internet and consists of two series covering draft and adopted legislation as well as case law, studies by committees, and more (http://eur-lex.europa.eu/JOIndex.do)It lists the standards reference numbers linked to legislation -
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/european-standards/documents/harmonised-standards-legislation/list-references/index_en.htm

National technical Regulations are published on the Commission's website - http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/tris/index_en.htm to allow other countries and interested parties to comment

Member countries of the World Trade Organization (WTO) are required under the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreement to report to the WTO all proposed technical regulations that could affect trade with other member countries. Notify U.S. is a free, web-based e-mail subscription service that offers an opportunity to review and comment on proposed foreign technical regulations that can affect access to international markets. Register online at Internet URL: http://tsapps.nist.gov/notifyus/data/index/index.cfm

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Manufacturers should be mindful that, in addition to the EU's mandatory and voluntary schemes, national voluntary labeling schemes might still apply. These schemes may be highly appreciated by consumers, and thus, become unavoidable for marketing purposes.

Manufacturers are advised to take note that all labels require metric units although dual labeling is also acceptable. The use of language on labels has been the subject of a Commission Communication, which encourages multilingual information, while preserving the right of Member States to require the use of language of the country of consumption.

The EU has mandated that certain products be sold in standardized quantities. Council Directive 80/232/EC provides permissible ranges of nominal quantities, container capacities and volumes for a variety of products. Please note that this legislation is currently being reviewed in an effort to simplify it.

Website: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/prepack/packsize/packsiz_en.htm

The Eco-label

The EU eco-label is a voluntary label which U.S. exporters can display on products that meet high standards of environmental awareness. The eco-label is intended to be a marketing tool to encourage consumers to purchase environmentally-friendly products. The criteria for displaying the eco-label are strict, covering the entire lifespan of the product from its manufacture, use, and disposal. These criteria are reviewed every three to five years to take into account advances in manufacturing procedures. There are currently twenty-three different product groups, and approximately 250 licenses have been awarded for several hundred products.
Applications to display the eco-label should be directed to the competency body of the member state in which the product is sold. The application fee will be somewhere between €300 and €1300 depending on the tests required to verify if the product is eligible. The eco-label also carries an annual fee equal to 0.15% of the annual volume of

sales of the product range within the European community. However, the minimum annual fee is currently set at €500 and maximum €25,000.
There are plans to significantly reform the eco-label in the near future, reducing the application and annual fees and expanding the product ranges significantly. It is also possible that future eligibility criteria may take into account carbon emissions.

Key Links:

- Eco-label Home Page
- Product Categories eligible for the Eco-label
- List of Competent Bodies
- Revision of the Eco-label
- The Eco-label and Carbon Footprint

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U.S. Mission to the European Union
Contact: Louis Santamaria – Standards Attaché
Tel: 011 (32) 2 508 2674
E-Mail: louis.santamaria@trade.gov

Contact: Sylvia Mohr – Standards Specialist
E-Mail: sylvia.mohr@trade.gov
Tel: 011 (32) 2 508 2675
http://export.gov/europeanunion/index.asp

U.S. Commercial Service - Oslo, Norway
E-Mail: Vidar.Keyn@trade.gov
Contact: Vidar Keyn – Head of Commercial Section
Tel: 011 (47) 21 30 88 34
http://export.gov/norway/

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Norway voted against joining the European Union (EU) in a 1994 referendum. With the exception of the agricultural and fisheries sectors, however, Norway enjoys free trade with the EU under the framework of the European Economic Area. This agreement aims to apply the four freedoms of the EU's internal market (goods, persons, services, and capital) to Norway. As a result, Norway normally adopts and implements most EU directives. Norway is not a member of the EU's Economic and Monetary Union and does not have a fixed exchange rate.

Norway and other members of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) -- Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland -- have jointly concluded free trade agreements and/or declarations of cooperation with 21 countries, or blocks of countries, since 1960. These include: Bulgaria, Chile, Croatia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Macedonia, Mexico, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Romania, Singapore, Turkey, Albania, Algeria, Egypt, Gulf Cooperation Council, MERCOSUR, Serbia and Montenegro, Tunisia, and Ukraine. The agreements cover trade in goods and services, services and investment, dispute settlement and other issues generally found in bilateral investment accords.

For a list of trade agreements with the EU and its Member States, as well as concise explanations, please see http://tcc.export.gov/Trade_Agreements/index.asp

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Norwegian Websites:

Norwegian Customs and Excise Authority
http://www.toll.no/default.aspx?id=3&epslanguage=EN

Standards Norway
http://www.standard.no/en/

The Norwegian Electro-technical Committee
http://www.nek.no

The Norwegian Post and Telecommunication Authority
http://www.npt.no/portal/page/portal/PG_NPT_NO_EN/PAG_NPT_EN_HOME

Norwegian Accreditation
http://www.akkreditert.no/en/

EU websites:

Online customs tariff database (TARIC):
http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/common/databases/taric/index_en.htm

The Modernized Community Customs Code MCCC):

http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/procedural_aspects/general/community_code/index_en.htm.

ECHA: http://echa.europa.eu/doc/press/pr_08_38_candidate_list_20081028.pdf

New Approach Legislation: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/european-standards/documents/harmonised-standards-legislation/list-references/index_en.htm

Cenelec, European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization:
http://www.cenelec.eu/

ETSI, European Telecommunications Standards Institute:
http://www.etsi.org/

CEN, European Committee for Standardization, handling all other standards:
http://www.cen.eu/cenorm/homepage.htm

Standardisation – Mandates:
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/european-standards/standardisation-requests/

ETSI – Portal – E-Standardisation :
http://portal.etsi.org/Portal_Common/home.asp

CEN – Sector Fora:
http://www.cen.eu/cenorm/sectors/index.asp

Nando (New Approach Notified and Designated Organizations) Information System:
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newapproach/nando/

Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs):
http://ts.nist.gov/Standards/Global/mra.cfm

European Co-operation for Accreditation:
http://www.european-accreditation.org/content/home/home.htm

Eur-Lex – Access to European Union Law:
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/index.htm

Standards Reference Numbers linked to Legislation:
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/european-standards/documents/harmonised-standards-legislation/list-references/index_en.htm
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/newapproach/standardization/harmstds/whatsnew.html

National technical Regulations:
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/tris/index_en.htm

NIST - Notify U.S.: http://tsapps.nist.gov/notifyU.S./data/index/index.cfm

Metrology, Pre-Packaging – Pack Size:
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/prepack/packsize/packsiz_en.htm

European Union Eco-label Homepage:
http://ec.europa.eu/comm/environment/ecolabel/index_en.htm

Eco-Label Catalogue:
http://www.eco-label.com/default.htm

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
http://www.fao.org/

World Trade Organization

www.wto.org

U.S. websites:

National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers:
http://www.ustr.gov/sites/default/files/uploads/reports/2009/NTE/asset_upload_file348_15473.pdf

Agricultural Trade Barriers:
http://www.fas.U.S.da.gov/posthome/Useu/

Trade Compliance Center:
http://www.trade.gov/tcc

U.S. Mission to the European Union:
http://export.gov/europeanunion/index.asp

The New EU Battery Directive:
http://www.buyusainfo.net/docs/x_8086174.pdf

The Latest on REACH:
http://export.gov/europeanunion/reachclp/index.asp

WEEE and RoHS in the EU:
http://export.gov/europeanunion/weeerohs/index.asp

Overview of EU Certificates:
http://export.gov/europeanunion/eustandardsandcertification/index.asp

Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition:
http://www.fda.gov/Food/default.htm

EU Marking, Labeling and Packaging – An Overview
http://export.gov/europeanunion/marketresearch/sellingusproductsandservicesintheeu/index.asp

The European Union Eco-Label:
http://buyusainfo.net/docs/x_4284752.pdf

Trade Agreements:
http://tcc.export.gov/Trade_Agreements/index.asp

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Chapter 6: Investment Climate

Openness to Foreign Investment

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General Government Attitude

Norway welcomes foreign investment as a matter of policy and generally grants national treatment to foreign investors. Norwegian authorities encourage foreign investment particularly in the key offshore petroleum sector, mainland industry, and in less developed regions such as northern Norway. The policy vis-a-vis third countries, including the United States, will likely continue to be governed by reciprocity principles and by bilateral and international agreements. The European Economic Area (EEA) free trade accord, which came into force for Norway in 1995, requires the country to apply principles of national treatment in certain areas where foreign investment was prohibited or restricted in the past.

Norway's investment regime is generally based on the equal treatment principle, but national restrictions exist on activities and ownership in the fishing and maritime transport sectors. According to the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development)'s 2010 FDI Regulatory Restrictiveness Index, Norway is ranked close to the OECD average (slightly less restrictive than the United States). State ownership in companies can be used as a means of ensuring Norwegian ownership and domicile for these firms.

Laws/Rules/Practices affecting Foreign Investment

As an EEA signatory, Norway continues to liberalize its foreign investment legislation to conform more closely to European Union (EU) standards. Current laws, rules, and practices follow below.

Government Monopolies

Norway has traditionally barred foreign and domestic investors alike from investing in industries monopolized by the government, including postal services, railways, and the domestic production and retail sale of alcohol. In 2004, Norway slightly relaxed the restrictions, allowing foreign companies to bid on providing certain postal services (e.g., air express services between countries) and railway cargo services (notably between Norway and Sweden). The government may grant foreign investment in hydropower (though limited to 20 percent of equity), but rarely does so. Norway has fully opened the electricity distribution system to foreign participation, however, making it one of the more liberal power sector investment regimes in the world.

Ownership of Real Property

Foreign investors may generally own real property, though ownership of certain real assets is restricted. Companies must obtain a concession to acquire rights to own or use various kinds of real property, including forests, mines, tilled land, and waterfalls. Foreign companies need not, however, seek concessions to rent real estate, e.g. commercial facilities or office space, provided the rental contract is made for a period not exceeding ten years. The two major laws governing concessions are the Act of December 14, 1917 and the Act of May 31, 1974.

Petroleum Sector

The Petroleum Act of November 1996 (superseding the 1985 Petroleum Act) sets forth the legal basis for Norwegian authorities' awards of petroleum exploration and production blocks and follow-up activity. The act covers governmental control over exploration, production, and transportation of petroleum.

Foreign oil companies report no discrimination in the award of petroleum exploration and development blocks in recent licensing rounds. Norway has implemented EU directives requiring equal treatment of EEA oil and gas companies. The Norwegian offshore concession system complies with EU directive 94/33/EU of May 30, 1994, which governs conditions for awards and hydrocarbon development. Norway's concession process operates on a discretionary basis, with the Ministry of Petroleum and Energy awarding licenses based on its views about which company or group of companies will be the best operator for a particular field, rather than according to purely competitive bids.

The Norwegian government has dismantled former tight controls over the gas pipeline transit network that carries gas to the European market. All gas producers and operators on the Norwegian Continental Shelf (NCS) are free to negotiate gas sales contracts on an individual basis, with access to the gas export pipeline network guaranteed.

The government partially privatized state-owned oil and gas company, Statoil, in 2001, and partially sold off state oil and gas assets to Statoil and other operators on the NCS. Statoil and Norsk Hydro's oil and gas division, Norway's two major petroleum producers and largest NCS operators, merged on October 1, 2007. The new entity, Statoil, controls 80% of NCS operatorships. Following the merger, the Norwegian government held a 62.5% share in the merged firm, which has since been increased to the target of 67%. The merger has not prevented a number of new market entrants from securing contracts and thriving on the NCS. Norwegian companies Det Norske Oljeselskap ASA and partly state-owned Aker Exploration ASA merged in the second part of 2009 to form the second largest company on the Norwegian shelf in terms of licenses and operatorships. A number of U.S. energy companies are present on the NCS.

Norwegian authorities encourage the use of Norwegian goods and services in the offshore petroleum sector, but do not require it. The Norwegian share of the total supply of goods and services on the NCS has remained approximately fifty percent over the last decade.

Manufacturing Sector

Norwegian legislation granting national treatment to foreign investors in the manufacturing sector dates from 1995. Legislation that formerly required both foreign and Norwegian investors to notify and, in some cases, file burdensome reports to the Ministry of Industry and Trade if their holdings of a company's equity exceeded certain threshold levels was repealed in July 2002. Foreign investors are not currently required to obtain government authorization before buying shares of Norwegian corporations.

Financial and Other Services

Effective January 1, 2004, Norway liberalized restrictions on acquisitions of equity in Norwegian financial institutions. Prior to that time, any investor, foreign or domestic, had to obtain a concession from the Norwegian Finance Ministry to acquire more than 10 percent of such equity (or shareholder stake), unless they went on to acquire 100 percent of the financial institution. Current regulations delegate responsibility for acquisitions to the Norwegian Financial Supervisory Authority and streamline the process.

Financial Supervisory Authority permission is required for acquisitions of Norwegian financial institutions that exceed defined threshold levels (20, 25, 33 or 50 percent). The Authority assesses the acquisitions to ensure that prospective buyers are financially stable and that the acquisition does not unduly limit competition.

The Authority applies national treatment to foreign financial groups and institutions, but nationality restrictions still apply to banks. At least half the members of the board and half the members of the corporate assembly of a bank must be nationals and permanent residents of Norway or another EEA nation. Effective January 1, 2005, there is no ceiling on foreign equity in a Norwegian financial institution as long as the Authority has granted permission for the acquisition.

The Finance Ministry has abolished remaining restrictions on the establishment of branches by foreign financial institutions, including banks, mutual funds and other types. Under the liberalized regime, Norway grants branches of U.S. and other foreign financial institutions the same treatment as domestic institutions.

Media

Media ownership is regulated by the Media Ownership Act of 1997 and the Norwegian Media Authority. No individual party, domestic or foreign, may control more than 1/3 of the national newspaper, radio and/or television markets without a concession. National treatment is granted in line with Norway's obligations under the EEA accord. The introduction and growing importance of new media forms (including those emerging from the internet and wireless industries) has raised concerns that the existing domestic legal regime (which largely focuses on printed media) is becoming outmoded. In 2011, in response, the Ministry of Culture assembled an expert working group tasked with reviewing the existing legal regime; a report is expected in the spring of 2012.

Investment Screening Mechanisms

Investment applications, when required, are processed by the ministries concerned. For example, the Ministry of Trade and Industry handles applications to acquire real property in Norway when permission is required. The Finance Ministry handles cases involving financial institutions. The Ministry of Culture is responsible for media cases. Decisions are normally taken at the Ministerial level. However, in some cases with significant political implications, the minister(s) may ask the entire cabinet to make the decision.

The processing time for acquisition applications depends on several factors, but is normally from one to three months. The government may set conditions when a concession is granted, which is commonly done in cases involving more than one-third foreign ownership. Concession agreements do not permit a company to engage in business activities other than those specified. In general, the government screens investments on a case-by-case basis based on the "public interest" principle. This principle is vague and permits broad discretion.

Competition, Acquisition and Takeovers

Current legislation governing competition went into effect on May 1, 2004. The legislation established a Norwegian Competition Authority (NCA) under the authority of the Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs. The NCA is authorized to conduct non-criminal proceedings and impose fines, or "infringement fees," for anti-competitive behavior. The size of the fees may vary according to a number of factors, including company turnover and severity of the offense. The NCA may impose lower infringement fees if a company under investigation cooperates.

The 2004 legislation also empowers the NCA to halt mergers that threaten to significantly weaken competition. Companies planning mergers are obliged by law to report their plans to the NCA, which may conduct a review.

The Ministry of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs amended its regulations on the threshold values for triggering a merger review, effective January 1, 2007. The revisions increase the value thresholds to exempt more transactions from the obligation to submit a standardized notification to the NCA. Mergers in which the companies involved have a combined annual turnover in Norway exceeding NOK 50 million (about USD 9 million) must notify the Competition Authority. However, if only one of the undertakings concerned has an annual turnover in Norway exceeding NOK 20 million, notification is not required. The former thresholds for triggering a merger review were quite low.

Public Procurements

Pursuant to its obligations under the EEA, Norway implemented EU legislation on public procurements on January 1, 1994. Norway is also a signatory to the WTO Government Procurement Agreement (GPA). The EEA/EU legislation and WTO agreement oblige Norway to follow internationally recognized, transparent procedures for public procurements above certain threshold values.

All public procurement contracts exceeding certain threshold values must be published in the Official Journal of the European Union and in the EU's Tenders Electronic Daily (TED) databank. Norway instituted an electronic notice database more than a decade ago and currently transmits all tender notices electronically through this database to the TED system.

The rules apply to procurement by the central government, regional or local authorities, bodies governed by public law, or associations formed by one or more such authorities or bodies governed by public law. In addition, special rules apply to the procurement by certain entities in the "utilities" sectors of water, energy, transport and telecommunications.

Public agencies must publish general annual plans for purchases of goods and services, as well as general information on any major building and construction projects planned. No later than two months after a contract has been awarded, a notice stating which company won the contract must be published. All notices must be published in an EU language.

Discriminatory technical specifications may not be used to tailor contracts for a local or national supplier. Any technical standards applied in the procurement process must be national standards that are harmonized with European standards. If no such standards exist, other international or national standards may be applied. All specifications that are to be used in evaluating tenders must be included in the notice or in the invitation to tender.

In general, public procurements are non-discriminatory and based on open, competitive bidding. There are exceptions, however, notably in defense procurements where national security concerns may be taken into account.

In January 2003 the Norwegian Parliament established an independent review body for bid challenges that offers suppliers an inexpensive complaint process. This Complaint Board can issue “non-binding opinions” and review the legality of the procurement in question. More serious disputes may be taken before the European Surveillance Authority (ESA), or the courts, but the decision making process can be lengthy.

Investment Incentives

Norway offers no significant general tax incentives for either domestic or foreign investors. There is an exception for investments in sparsely settled northern Norway, where reduced payroll taxes and other incentives apply. There are no free-trade zones, although taxes are minimal on Svalbard, a remote area, which is subject to special treaty provisions. A state industry and regional development fund provides support (e.g., investment grants and financial assistance) for industrial development in areas with special employment difficulties or with low levels of economic activity. Tax deductions are allowed for research costs in key industries, including the petroleum sector. Petroleum sector regulations for write-offs of exploration expenses are generous to encourage the search for new hydrocarbon resources.

Discriminatory/Preferential Export/Import Policies

An export promotion organization, Innovation Norway, assists export-oriented firms to market their goods and services internationally. Norway also maintains an export credit institution (Eksportfinans) and an export guarantee institution (GIEK).

Norway's agricultural sector is highly protected from external competition through a variety of tariffs, subsidies, and other barriers. Norway imposes high, variable tariffs on farm product imports that compete with domestic products, largely excluding them from the market.
According to the WTO, Norway's simple average applied tariff in 2010 was 49.4 percent for agricultural goods -- in comparison to less than one percent for non-agricultural products -- and can range up to several hundred percent. Agricultural export subsidies are also high.

With limited exceptions, Norway has since 1996 effectively banned the importation of agricultural biotechnology products. Harmonization with relevant EU regulations may open the Norwegian market up to these products in the future.

International Comparative Scores/Rankings

Transparency International Corruption Perception Index, 2011: 9.0 (6/183 countries and territories assessed)

2011 Index of Economic Freedom, Heritage Foundation:
Economic Freedom Score: 70.3
World Rank: 30

Ten Economic Freedoms	2010 Index Score
Business Freedom	88.3
Trade Freedom	89.4
Fiscal Freedom	51.6
Government Spending	51.5
Monetary Freedom	75.1
Investment Freedom	65.0
Financial Freedom	60.0
Property Rights	90.0

Freedom From Corruption	86.0
Labor Freedom	45.8
AVERAGE	70.3

World Bank Doing Business: 8

Ease of…	DB 2012 Rank	DB 2011 Rank
Doing Business	6	7
Starting a business	41	33
Dealing with Construction Permits	60	61
Registering Property	8	11
Getting Credit	48	45
Protecting Investors	24	21
Paying Taxes	27	23
Trading Across Borders	9	8
Enforcing Contracts	4	3
Resolving insolvency	4	4

Conversion and Transfer Policies Return to top

Dividends, profits, interest on loans, debentures, mortgages and repatriation of invested capital are freely and fully remissible, subject to Central Bank reporting requirements. Ordinary payments from Norway to foreign entities can normally be made without formalities through commercial banks.

Expropriation and Compensation Return to top

There have been no cases of questionable expropriation in recent memory. Government "takings" of property are generally limited to non-discriminatory land and property condemnation for public purposes (road construction, etc.). The Embassy is not aware of any cases in which compensation has not been prompt, adequate and effective.

Dispute Settlement Return to top

Norway has ratified principal international agreements governing arbitration and settlement of investment disputes, including the New York Convention of June 10, 1985. No major investment disputes have occurred in recent years.

Norway's legal system provides effective means for enforcing property and contractual rights.

Performance Requirements and Incentives

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Norway does not impose performance requirements or incentives on foreign investors.

Right to Private Ownership and Establishment

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Subject to the restrictions noted above, foreign and domestic entities are generally free to establish and own business enterprises and engage in all forms of legal commercial activity. Norway generally treats private and public enterprises equally in terms of market access and other business operations. Foreign investors are generally permitted to participate freely in privatizations of Norwegian state firms.

Protection of Property Rights

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Norway recognizes secured interests in property, both movable and real. The system for recording interests in property is recognized and reliable. Norway maintains an open and effective legal and judicial system that protects and facilitates acquisition and disposition of rights in property, including land, buildings and mortgages.

Intellectual Property Rights

Norway adheres to key international agreements for the protection of intellectual property rights (e.g., the Paris Union Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property, the Berne Copyright Convention, the Universal Copyright Convention of 1952, and the Rome Convention). It has notified its main intellectual property laws to the World Trade Organization. Norway's intellectual property statutes cover the major areas referred to in the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement.

The chief domestic statutes governing intellectual property rights include: the Patents Act of December 15, 1967, as amended; the Designs Act of March 14, 2003; the Copyrights Act of May 12, 1961, as amended; the Layout-design Act of June 15, 1990, as amended; the Marketing Act of June 16, 1972; and the Trademarks Act of March 3, 1961, as amended. The above legislation also protects trade secrets and industrial designs, including semiconductor chip layout design. As an EEA member, Norway adopted legislation intended to implement the 2001 EU Copyright Directive, though subsequent court cases exposed shortcomings in the legislation (see below).

Patents

The patent office (Patenstyret) grants patents for a period of 20 years (Acts of June 8, 1979, and May 4, 1985). U.S. industry has expressed concerns that Norway’s regulatory framework for process patents filed prior to 1992 denies adequate patent protection for a number of pharmaceutical products. Although Norway introduced product patents for pharmaceuticals in 1992, the old system has left a difficult legacy for pharmaceutical companies, as competitors claiming to use non-patented processes have continuously entered the market. Several U.S. pharmaceutical companies filed successful patent infringement lawsuits in Norwegian courts to fend off these new entrants, but others lost their court cases, and were later forced to restructure their Norwegian operations with loss of employment.

The U.S. Government placed Norway on the Special 301 Watch List in 2008, 2009, 2010 and 2011 due to concerns about pharmaceutical patent protection.

Copyright

Internet piracy in Norway is facilitated by high broadband internet penetration, which makes peer-to-peer downloads of music and video easy and common. Groups that release early copies of new motion pictures (including so-called “encoding groups,” release groups” and “top sites”) on the internet are active in the Norwegian market. Norway has experienced some “camcording incidents,” where motion pictures are illegally recorded in cinemas. Private organizations like the Motion Picture Association are attempting to raise public awareness of internet and video piracy, for example by running anti-pirating advertisements in movie theaters.

In June 2005, Norway enacted legislation based on the EU's 2001 Copyright Directive that combats internet piracy and addresses some gaps in Norway's intellectual property rights protections. The legislation bans unauthorized peer-to-peer file sharing and requires that creative works can only be downloaded from the internet with the artist's prior approval. The legislation also grants legal protection to technological protection measures designed to prevent unauthorized use of a creative work. Some recent court cases have tested the implementation of this legislation. In a 2009, the Court ruled that an ISP (Internet Service Provider) could not be forced to block consumer access to illegal file-sharing networks, while a separate ruling in 2010 opened up for the use of civil suits against key file sharers. Both cases return these issues to the Ministry of Culture for clarification; Norway’s Copyright Act is under review and proposed amendments are expected early in 2012.

Counterfeit and Pirated Goods

Norway does not expressly ban imports or exports of counterfeit or pirated goods for private use or consumption. However, import or export for resale or other commercial purpose will be controlled by Norwegian Customs and rightsholders will be notified. Customs may seize and hold suspected counterfeit goods for up to five working days, during which time rightsholders may decide whether to proceed with an injunction or other settlement. If the rightsholder does not pursue the case or respond to the notice, the goods are released to the importer (unless considered harmful). In comparison, customs officials in the EU have wider powers to seize, hold and destroy counterfeit shipments. In 2010, Norwegian Customs established an intellectual property rights (IPR) office to coordinate training and increase awareness. The Norwegian authorities reported a significant rise in seizures of counterfeit goods, year-on-year, in 2010 and 2011.

Enforcement

The Norwegian government does not consider itself obligated under the European Economic Area Agreement to implement the European Union Enforcement Directive. Rightsholders report that law enforcement authorities have begun to investigate major copyright infringement cases, with the result that several internet sites facilitating infringement were closed down. However, rightsholders contend that the authorities still do not give adequate priority to copyright and internet piracy cases.

Transparency of Regulatory System

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The transparency of Norway's regulatory system is generally on par with that of the EU. Norway is obliged to adopt EU directives under the terms of the EEA accord (in the areas of social policy, consumer protection, environment, company law and statistics).

Efficient Capital Markets and Portfolio Investment

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Norway has a highly computerized banking system that provides a full range of banking services, including internet banking. There are no significant impediments to the free market-determined flow of financial resources. Foreign banks have been permitted to establish branches in Norway since 1996.

Foreign and domestic investors have access to a wide variety of credit instruments. The financial regulatory system is transparent and consistent with international norms. The Oslo Stock Exchange facilitates portfolio investment and securities transactions in general.

Conservative asset/liquidity requirements limited the exposure of banks to the global financial crisis. The government was forced to take special measures to deal with a temporary liquidity crisis in the fall of 2008. Norwegian banks are generally considered to be on a sound financial footing.

The Norwegian state acquired controlling stakes in the country's top three commercial banks in the government's bailout of the banking sector in the 1990s. The state has subsequently reduced its stakes in the top two banks and sold its entire stake in the third biggest bank to private investors.

Competition from State Owned Enterprises

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The government continues to play a strong role in the Norwegian economy through its ownership or control of many of the country's leading commercial firms. The public sector accounts for nearly sixty percent of GDP. The Norwegian government is the largest owner in Norway, with ownership stakes in a range of key sectors (i.e. energy, transportation, finance, and communications). Over 80 State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) are managed directly by the relevant ministries. Central or local authorities own shares in approximately 35 percent of the companies listed on the Oslo Stock Exchange, and approximately 40 percent of the stock exchange's capitalization is in government hands. State ownership in companies can be used as a means of ensuring Norwegian ownership and domicile for these firms.

The current center-left government, which assumed power in October 2005, and was reelected for a second term in 2009, has indicated that it intends to sustain stable levels of strong, transparent and predictable government ownership. The GON, since 2009, has increased its stake in companies like Statoil ASA, Kongsberg Gruppen AS and Yara International ASA but also sold off other holdings. A sale of airline SAS is being considered.

Norway's sovereign wealth fund, the Government Pension Fund Global (GPF), was established in 1990, and is as of the end of 2011 valued at over NOK 3.3 trillion (USD 547 billion). Petroleum revenues are invested in global stocks and bonds, and the current portfolio includes over 8000 companies and approximately 1 percent of global stocks. In 2004, Norway adopted ethical guidelines for GPF investments, which ban investment in companies engaged in various forms of weapons production, environmental degradation, tobacco production, human rights violations and other particularly serious violations of fundamental ethical norms. The fund has since divested from some 55 companies, 20 of which are American. As of 2009, the GPF has strengthened its Corporate Governance efforts, and intends to use shareholder engagement rather than divestment as a first resort.

Corporate Social Responsibility

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CSR is very much part of Norwegian corporate and political consciousness. Significant attention has been given to ethical and sustainable business practices over the last several years, and the GON has issued a series of White Papers on various aspects of CSR, most recently in 2009, on CSR and the responsibility of Norwegian businesses in the global economy. In 2006 and 2007, the GON also set down guidelines for ethical and responsible conduct in government-owned enterprises, and incorporated climate policy, procurement policy and development policy as parts of the GON's broader CSR vision.

Political Violence

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Norway is a vibrant, stable democracy. Violent political protests or incidents are extremely rare, as are politically motivated attacks on foreign commercial projects or property. However, on July 22, 2011, a Norwegian individual motivated by extreme anti-Islam ideology carried out twin attacks on Oslo's government district and on the Labor Party's youth summer camp in Utoeya, killing 77 people. All indications the Norwegian police have received to date are that the individual operated alone. He is now in custody and this incident should not presage increased political violence in the future.

Corruption

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Business is generally conducted "above the table" in Norway, and Norway ranks 6 out of 183 countries on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index for 2011. Corrupt activity by Norwegian or foreign officials is a criminal offense under Norway's Penal Code. Norway's anti-corruption laws cover illicit activities overseas, subjecting Norwegian nationals/companies who bribe officials in foreign countries to criminal penalties in Norwegian courts. Norway has ratified the UN Anticorruption Convention, and is signatory of the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery. In 2008, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs launched an anti-corruption initiative, focused on limiting corruption in international development efforts.

Norway is a member the Council of Europe's anti-corruption watchdog Group of States Against Corruption (GRECO) and ratified the Criminal Law Convention on Corruption in 2004, without any reservations.

Corruption, including bribery, raises the costs and risks of doing business. Corruption has a corrosive impact on both market opportunities overseas for U.S. companies and the broader business climate. It also deters international investment, stifles economic growth and development, distorts prices, and undermines the rule of law.

It is important for U.S. companies, irrespective of their size, to assess the business climate in the relevant market in which they will be operating or investing, and to have an effective compliance program or measures to prevent and detect corruption, including foreign bribery. U.S. individuals and firms operating or investing in foreign markets should take the time to become familiar with the relevant anticorruption laws of both the foreign country and the United States in order to properly comply with them, and where appropriate, they should seek the advice of legal counsel.

The U.S. Government seeks to level the global playing field for U.S. businesses by encouraging other countries to take steps to criminalize their own companies' acts of corruption, including bribery of foreign public officials, by requiring them to uphold their obligations under relevant international conventions. A U. S. firm that believes a competitor is seeking to use bribery of a foreign public official to secure a contract should bring this to the attention of appropriate U.S. agencies, as noted below.

U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act: In 1977, the United States enacted the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), which makes it unlawful for a U.S. person, and certain foreign issuers of securities, to make a corrupt payment to foreign public officials for the purpose of obtaining or retaining business for or with, or directing business to, any person. The FCPA also applies to foreign firms and persons who take any act in furtherance of such a corrupt payment while in the United States. For more detailed information on the FCPA, see the FCPA Lay-Person's Guide at: http://www.justice.gov/criminal/fraud/

Other Instruments: It is U.S. Government policy to promote good governance, including host country implementation and enforcement of anti-corruption laws and policies pursuant to their obligations under international agreements. Since enactment of the FCPA, the United States has been instrumental to the expansion of the international framework to fight corruption. Several significant components of this framework are the OECD Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions (OECD Antibribery Convention), the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UN Convention), the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (OAS Convention), the Council of Europe Criminal and Civil Law Conventions, and a growing list of U.S. free trade agreements. This country is party to [add instrument to which this country is party], but generally all countries prohibit the bribery and solicitation of their public officials.

OECD Antibribery Convention: The OECD Antibribery Convention entered into force in February 1999. As of March 2009, there are 38 parties to the Convention including the United States (see http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/59/13/40272933.pdf). Major exporters China, India, and Russia are not parties, although the U.S. Government strongly endorses their eventual accession to the Convention. The Convention obligates the Parties to criminalize bribery of foreign public officials in the conduct of international business. The United States meets its international obligations under the OECD Antibribery Convention through the U.S. FCPA. [Insert information as to whether your country is a party to the OECD Convention.]

UN Convention: The UN Anticorruption Convention entered into force on December 14, 2005, and there are 158 parties to it as of November 2011 (see http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CAC/signatories.html). The UN Convention is the first global comprehensive international anticorruption agreement. The UN Convention requires countries to establish criminal and other offences to cover a wide range of acts of corruption. The UN Convention goes beyond previous anticorruption instruments, covering a broad range of issues ranging from basic forms of corruption such as bribery and solicitation, embezzlement, trading in influence to the concealment and laundering of the proceeds of corruption. The Convention contains transnational business bribery provisions that are functionally similar to those in the OECD Antibribery Convention and contains provisions on private sector auditing and books and records requirements. Other provisions address matters such as prevention, international cooperation, and asset recovery. [Insert information as to whether your country is a party to the UN Convention.]

OAS Convention: In 1996, the Member States of the Organization of American States (OAS) adopted the first international anticorruption legal instrument, the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (OAS Convention), which entered into force in March 1997. The OAS Convention, among other things, establishes a set of preventive measures against corruption, provides for the criminalization of certain acts of corruption, including transnational bribery and illicit enrichment, and contains a series of provisions to strengthen the cooperation between its States Parties in areas such as mutual legal assistance and technical cooperation. As of December 2009, the OAS Convention has 34 parties (see http://www.oas.org/juridico/english/Sigs/b-58.html) [Insert information as to whether your country is a party to the OAS Convention.]

Council of Europe Criminal Law and Civil Law Conventions: Many European countries are parties to either the Council of Europe (CoE) Criminal Law Convention on Corruption, the Civil Law Convention, or both. The Criminal Law Convention requires criminalization of a wide range of national and transnational conduct, including bribery, money-laundering, and account offenses. It also incorporates provisions on liability of legal persons and witness protection. The Civil Law Convention includes provisions on compensation for damage relating to corrupt acts, whistleblower protection, and validity of contracts, inter alia. The Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) was established in 1999 by the CoE to monitor compliance with these and related anticorruption standards. Currently, GRECO comprises 49 member States (48 European countries and the United States). As of December 2011, the Criminal Law Convention has 43 parties and the Civil Law Convention has 34 (see www.coe.int/greco.) [Insert information as to whether your country is a party to the Council of Europe Conventions.]

Free Trade Agreements: While it is U.S. Government policy to include anticorruption provisions in free trade agreements (FTAs) that it negotiates with its trading partners, the anticorruption provisions have evolved over time. The most recent FTAs negotiated now require trading partners to criminalize "active bribery" of public officials (offering bribes to any public official must be made a criminal offense, both domestically and trans-nationally) as well as domestic "passive bribery" (solicitation of a bribe by a domestic official). All U.S. FTAs may be found at the U.S. Trade Representative Website: http://www.ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements. [Insert information as to whether your country has an FTA with the United States: Country [X] has a free trade agreement (FTA) in place with the United States, the [name of FTA], which came into force. Consult USTR Website for date: http://www.ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements.]

Local Laws: U.S. firms should familiarize themselves with local anticorruption laws, and, where appropriate, seek legal counsel. While the U.S. Department of Commerce cannot provide legal advice on local laws, the Department's U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service can provide assistance with navigating the host country's legal system and obtaining a list of local legal counsel.

Assistance for U.S. Businesses: The U.S. Department of Commerce offers several services to aid U.S. businesses seeking to address business-related corruption issues. For example, the U.S. and Foreign Commercial Service can provide services that may assist U.S. companies in conducting their due diligence as part of the company's overarching compliance program when choosing business partners or agents overseas. The U.S. Foreign and Commercial Service can be reached directly through its offices in every major U.S. and foreign city, or through its Website at www.trade.gov/cs.

The Departments of Commerce and State provide worldwide support for qualified U.S. companies bidding on foreign government contracts through the Commerce Department's Advocacy Center and State's Office of Commercial and Business Affairs. Problems, including alleged corruption by foreign governments or competitors, encountered by U.S. companies in seeking such foreign business opportunities can be brought to the attention of appropriate U.S. government officials, including local embassy personnel and through the Department of Commerce Trade Compliance Center "Report A Trade Barrier" Website at tcc.export.gov/Report_a_Barrier/index.asp.

Guidance on the U.S. FCPA: The Department of Justice's (DOJ) FCPA Opinion Procedure enables U.S. firms and individuals to request a statement of the Justice Department's present enforcement intentions under the anti-bribery provisions of the FCPA regarding any proposed business conduct. The details of the opinion procedure are available on DOJ's Fraud Section Website at www.justice.gov/criminal/fraud/fcpa. Although the Department of Commerce has no enforcement role with respect to the FCPA, it supplies general guidance to U.S. exporters who have questions about the FCPA and about international developments concerning the FCPA. For further information, see the Office of the Chief Counsel for International Counsel, U.S.

Department of Commerce, Website, at http://www.ogc.doc.gov/trans_anti_bribery.html. More general information on the FCPA is available at the Websites listed below.

Exporters and investors should be aware that generally all countries prohibit the bribery of their public officials, and prohibit their officials from soliciting bribes under domestic laws. Most countries are required to criminalize such bribery and other acts of corruption by virtue of being parties to various international conventions discussed above.

Anti-Corruption Resources

Some useful resources for individuals and companies regarding combating corruption in global markets include the following:

- Information about the U.S. Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), including a "Lay-Person's Guide to the FCPA" is available at the U.S. Department of Justice's Website at: http://www.justice.gov/criminal/fraud/fcpa.

- Information about the OECD Antibribery Convention including links to national implementing legislation and country monitoring reports is available at: http://www.oecd.org/department/0,3355,en_2649_34859_1_1_1_1_1,00.html. See also new Antibribery Recommendation and Good Practice Guidance Annex for companies: http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/11/40/44176910.pdf.

- General information about anticorruption initiatives, such as the OECD Convention and the FCPA, including translations of the statute into several languages, is available at the Department of Commerce Office of the Chief Counsel for International Commerce Website: http://www.ogc.doc.gov/trans_anti_bribery.html.

- Transparency International (TI) publishes an annual Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). The CPI measures the perceived level of public-sector corruption in 180 countries and territories around the world. The CPI is available at: http://www.transparency.org/policy_research/surveys_indices/cpi/2009. TI also publishes an annual *Global Corruption Report* which provides a systematic evaluation of the state of corruption around the world. It includes an in-depth analysis of a focal theme, a series of country reports that document major corruption related events and developments from all continents and an overview of the latest research findings on anti-corruption diagnostics and tools. See http://www.transparency.org/publications/gcr.

- The World Bank Institute publishes Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI). These indicators assess six dimensions of governance in 213 countries, including Voice and Accountability, Political Stability and Absence of Violence, Government Effectiveness, Regulatory Quality, Rule of Law and Control of Corruption. See http://info.worldbank.org/governance/wgi/index.asp. The World Bank Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Surveys may also be of interest and are available at: http://data.worldbank.org/data-catalog/BEEPS.

- The World Economic Forum publishes the *Global Enabling Trade Report*, which presents the rankings of the Enabling Trade Index, and includes an assessment of the transparency of border administration (focused on bribe payments and corruption) and a separate segment on corruption and the regulatory environment. See http://www.weforum.org/s?s=global+enabling+trade+report.

- Additional country information related to corruption can be found in the U.S. State Department's annual *Human Rights Report* available at http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/.

- Global Integrity, a nonprofit organization, publishes its annual *Global Integrity Report*, which provides indicators for 106 countries with respect to governance and anti-corruption. The report highlights the strengths and weaknesses of national level anti-corruption systems. The report is available at: http://report.globalintegrity.org/.

Bilateral Investment Agreements

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Norway has concluded investment protection agreements with numerous countries. These agreements contain provisions for repatriation of capital, dispute settlement, and standards for expropriation and nationalization by the host country.

Norway and other members of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) -- Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland -- have 24 joint free trade agreements covering 33 countries: Albania, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Egypt, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Macedonia, Mexico, Montenegro, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Peru, Serbia, Singapore, Southern African Customs Union, The Republic of Korea, Tunisia, Turkey, and Ukraine. The agreements cover trade in goods and services, services and investment, dispute settlement and other issues generally found in bilateral investment accords. EFTA is currently negotiating a free trade agreement with India, with concluding negotiations scheduled for the first half of 2012.

OPIC and Other Investment Insurance Programs

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The Norwegian Guarantee Institute for Export Credits (GIEK) is the central governmental agency responsible for issuing export credits and investment guarantees. GIEK operates under the authority of the Norwegian Ministry of Trade and Industry, which contains a section that oversees export and investment guarantees and domestic industry financing.

GIEK's primary function is to promote export of Norwegian goods and services and Norwegian investment abroad. It underwrites exports to over 150 countries of all types of goods and services. The guarantees may encompass a single transaction or a series of transactions and cover not only commercial risk, i.e., bankruptcy on the part of the debtor or non-payment for other reasons, but also political risk, i.e., war, expropriation and actions by the public authorities that prevent payment.

GIEK offers long term guarantees for export of capital goods to most countries, including emerging markets. The guarantees are issued on behalf of the Norwegian government and can be used as security vis-à-vis banks and other financial institutions to facilitate funding. The Director General and a Board of seven directors are responsible for day-to-day operations.

GIEK guarantees the down payment on a loan raised by the buyer for financing deliveries from a Norwegian exporter.

GIEK is a member of the Berne Union. Norway is a member of the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA).

In November 2011, the Government announced that it will establish a state run export finance scheme, which will replace the scheme previously managed by Eksportfinans, a public-private company, by July 1st, 2012.

Labor

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Skilled and semi-skilled labor is usually available in Norway, though strong economic growth in recent years has caused shortages in certain professions (e.g., nurses) and in unskilled labor (construction workers). The labor force as of year-end 2010 totals about 2.61 million persons, representing 72.7 percent of the working-age population. Unemployment stood at 3.3 percent as of October 2011. Unemployment has been low and stable (between 2.3-4.7 percent since 2003) and is expected to remain low in 2012, though developments in international markets may have an impact.

For the last few years, financial services and other business activities have shown the strongest employment growth. Other recent growth sectors include legal, accounting, and auditing services, business and management consultancy, as well as temporary staffing agencies. Union membership is in excess of 1.5 million persons, over 60 percent of the labor force. Labor benefits are generous, e.g., one year's paid maternity leave (financed chiefly by the government).

The average number of hours worked per week in one’s primary job, 33.8 in 2010, is the second lowest in the OECD, after the Netherlands. Sickness and absenteeism rates fell from 7.0 percent in Q3 2010 to 6.6 in Q3 2011. Relatively high disability rates, especially among young people, are a concern.

Despite attempts to curb wage growth, Norwegian blue-collar hourly earnings are comparatively high. (High wages encourage the use of relatively capital-intensive technologies in Norwegian industry.) Top-level executives and highly-skilled engineers on the other hand, are generally paid considerably less than their U.S. counterparts, which, when combined with relatively high wages at the bottom of the wage scale, contributes to the fact that the Norwegian economy is characterized by less income inequality than in many other countries.

Obtaining work permits for foreign labor, particularly for semi-skilled workers, can be cumbersome. Norway has witnessed a strong influx of foreign workers as demand for labor has outstripped supply in some sectors, e.g., construction.

The government has a history of imposing mandatory wage mediation should strikes threaten key sectors in the economy, particularly the oil and gas and transportation sectors. The government stepped in during 2006 to prevent a threatened strike in the banking sector. Mandatory wage mediation was used in 2010 to end strikes in the health sector.

Foreign-Trade Zones/Free Ports

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Norway has no foreign trade zones and does not contemplate establishing any.

Foreign Direct Investment Statistics

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The following data are the latest available from the Norwegian Central Bank and the Norwegian Central Bureau of Statistics. Figures on investment position refer to book value. These figures are limited to companies in which a single foreign investor holds 10 percent or more of equity capital and do not include foreign ownership interests via third party investment. Flow investment statistics are based on market value. FDI stands for Foreign Direct Investment.

Note that the NOK/USD exchange rates were as follows for the period in review:
Source: Norges Bank

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
End-Period	6.97	6.68	6.04	6.77	6.23	5.41	7.05	5.78	5.86	5.96
(Last day recorded)										
Period-Average	7.97	7.08	6.74	6.45	6.42	5.86	5.64	6.28	6.05	5.61

Table I: FDI Position in Norway by Country (NOK Bill)
Source: Statistics Norway

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Total FDI	298.0	327.1	479.5	516.7	599.0	679.5	789.7	850.3
of which from:								
U.S.	34.6	33.3	98.4	109.2	107.2	127.0	122.2	124.2
Sweden	52.1	74.0	104.4	113.2	114.0	115.4	125.3	131.4
France	20.4	18.6	29.8	32.2	37.1	39.6	52.7	51.3
Netherlands	47.5	55.0	37.8	39.5	54.9	52.3	43.7	72.0
Great Britain	30.1	29.5	46.0	46.0	54.4	52.3	61.0	71.1
Germany	5.7	6.0	8.3	13.6	20.2	17.8	23.8	34.8
Denmark	28.9	43.4	47.6	51.1	70.9	69.2	67.1	57.4
Finland	28.1	8.1	13.9	13.1	13.2	9.5	11.9	11.3

Switzerland	12.4	11.3	15.9	21.8	20.3	25.9	24.4	26.1
Japan	3.4	2.6	3.5	3.6	3.1	2.9	3.8	4.9
All EU	220.4	246.6	308.0	331.5	396.8	411.3	463.1	510.5
FDI/GDP (%)	16.4	17.9	25.2	26.5	30.3	29.9	30.8	36.1

Table II: FDI Position in Norway by Industry (NOK Bill)
Source: Statistics Norway

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Total FDI	298.0	327.1	479.5	516.7	599.0	679.5	789.7	850.3
of which in:								
Mining/Quarrying	83.3	77.7	111.0	135.4	149.1	193.5	222.3	252.8
Manufacturing	64.1	66.7	130.3	137.9	145.9	147.5	169.8	165.4
Construction	4.3	2.3	4.3	3.9	4.6	4.2	5.5	6.4
Wholesale/Retail/Hotel/Rest.	37.2	44.2	60.9	61.9	62.6	58.9	66.0	64.2
Transport/Communications	19.7	40.1	47.4	44.2	54.4	49.5	68.8	65.9
Financial/Insurance/Property	72.9	78.7	90.9	95.0	131.8	151.7	183.7	231.5
Other	16.5	17.4	33.3	35.5	48.5	74.1	73.6	82.0

Table III: Norway's Investment Position Abroad by Country (NOK Bill)
Source: Statistics Norway

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Total Inv. Abroad	327.9	381.3	488.8	629.9	754.1	789.2	933.5	946.4
of which in:								
U.S.	44.7	45.9	43.5	110.8	103.5	74.8	122.1	101.8
Sweden	59.9	66.1	91.2	89.4	111.7	117.8	127.2	123.6
Denmark	27.8	32.4	23.2	42.8	39.3	47.2	61.6	57.9
Great Britain	18.1	23.6	26.2	38.2	39.1	49.0	47.7	50.7
Netherlands	24.8	24.1	38.8	53.5	63.8	103.8	115.0	77.8
France	14.0	17.3	21.0	26.6	32.5	31.2	36.3	38.2
Germany	17.1	15.6	19.9	29.1	17.8	17.6	11.9	14.6
All EU	206.1	232.8	306.4	355.5	428.1	456.6	533.9	566.2
Total/GDP (%)	27.8	30.2	29.6	35.0	39.8	34.7	36.5	40.2

Table IV: Norway's Investment Position Abroad by Industry (NOK Bill)
Source: Statistics Norway

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Total FDI	327.9	381.3	488.8	629.9	754.1	789.2	933.5	946.4
of which in:								
Mining/Quarrying	74.5	90.3	106.2	170.6	221.5	193.9	221.7	279.7
Manufacturing	112.2	122.7	144.0	191.7	162.3	167.1	195.2	177.5

Construction	0.43	0.54	0.79	1.35	2.20	1.6	2.3	2.2
Wholesale/Retail/Hotel/Rest.	12.0	13.2	20.5	16.8	19.7	27.0	28.4	25.9
Transport/Communications	31.8	43.5	68.2	79.3	132.6	125.1	155.2	126.4
Financial/Insurance/Property	41.3	39.8	52.2	56.8	71.5	97.3	208.4	211.1
Other	55.7	71.2	96.0	112.5	144.4	177.2	208.4	211.1

Major Foreign Investors

Norwegian, American and other foreign companies are major investors in the offshore petroleum sector. The major U.S. investors offshore are: ExxonMobil, ConocoPhillips, Chevron, Marathon, and Hess. Major U.S. petroleum service providers include Halliburton, Baker Hughes, FMC, General Motors, National Oilwell Varco, Weatherford, and BJ Services. The number of companies holding production/operator licenses on the Norwegian Continental Shelf currently totals 57, including other international majors like BP-Amoco, Shell, ENI, and Total. In 2011, foreign and Norwegian petroleum firms invested approximately NOK 150 billion (USD 25 billion) in the offshore petroleum sector.

Over 300 U.S. companies have a presence in Norway, including names such as: Cisco, Citigroup, CSC, Coca-Cola Norge, Dell, Google, IBM, Microsoft, Pepsi Cola Norge, Kraft General Foods, American Express, General Electric, Ford Motor Company, Pfizer, Merck, Eli Lilly, Abbott, Baxter, Colgate-Palmolive, DHL International, Ernst & Young, Hewlett-Packard, Ingersoll-Rand, Kellogg, 3M, Manpower, Motorola, Yahoo, and Xerox Corporation.

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Norwegian Ministry of Finance
http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/fin

Norwegian Ministry of Trade and Industry
http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/nhd

Norwegian Ministry of Labor
http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/aid

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud

Statistics Norway
http://www.ssb.no/english/

Central Bank of Norway
http://www.norges-bank.no/english/

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Chapter 7: Trade and Project Financing

How Do I Get Paid (Methods of Payment) Return to top

The payment system in Norway is highly automated and computerized. The most common forms of payment in Norway are bank cards (debit and credit cards), internet banking/payment, and giros. Bank checks are not frequently used in Norway.

Payment is normally prompt and usually interest is charged and paid if payment is late.

While the Central Bank of Norway is responsible for authorizing interbank systems in Norway, the Financial Supervisory Authority of Norway supervises all banks and other financial institutions. See more information below.

How Does the Banking System Operate Return to top

Participants in the Norwegian banking market vary from large full-service banks active in both the wholesale and retail sectors to small private institutions. There is also a range of savings banks, and the Post Office (http://www.posten.no/en/) runs a giro “bill” system. The banking system, i.e., the actual payment system, is highly automated and computerized.

The Norwegian banking system is comprised of 15 commercial banks**,** 129 savings banks and a small number of state-owned banks that provide financing for particular purposes. Other principal financial institutions are mortgage companies, finance companies and insurance companies. The Financial Supervisory Authority of Norway (Finanstilsynet - http://www.finanstilsynet.no/en/) supervises all banks and other financial institutions in Norway.

The Commercial Banking Act, the Savings Bank Act and the Act on Financing and Finance Institutions regulate banking activities. Norway has revised the regulations relating to financial institutions as a result of the EEA Agreement. With respect to financial services, the EEA Agreement provides for full adaptation to EU regulations. Foreign banks have been allowed to establish subsidiaries in Norway since 1985. Since the implementation of the EEA Agreement in January 1994, foreign banks may also establish branches in Norway, but only a few U.S. banks currently operate in Norway.

The Central Bank of Norway (http://www.norges-bank.no/english/) is organized as a share-issuing company, but the government owns all the shares. It is the executive and advisory entity for monetary, credit and exchange policy. It is the sole bank of currency issue.

Commercial banks enjoy a very close relationship with trade and industry. Savings banks have a long tradition in Norway and also cover a substantial part of the local credit requirements. Merchant banks have not achieved the same position in Norway that they enjoy in some countries. This is partly because of the market dominance by the very large commercial banks, all of which maintain specialized departments covering the areas generally regarded as typical of merchant banking.

There are special banks for fisheries, agriculture, shipping, industry, house building, and export finance. The State, to varying degrees, participates in all of these.

Foreign-Exchange Controls

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Norway has no currency restrictions. Foreign exchange controls were abolished in 1990. No licensing requirements are in force. The only requirement is a reporting requirement for international payments and financial transactions. The transaction bank generally takes care of this reporting.

The Government has defined an inflation target for monetary policy in Norway. The operational target is consumer price inflation of close to 2.5% over time. Monetary policy shall also contribute to stabilizing output and employment. The interest rate on banks' deposits with the Central Bank of Norway (the sight deposit rate) is the most important monetary policy instrument.

U.S. Banks and Local Correspondent Banks

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Listed below are major Norwegian banks and their corresponding branches in the U.S. - as well as two U.S. banks operating in Norway:

DnB NOR ASA
Tel: 011 (47) 915 03000
http://www.dnbnor.com

DnB NOR Bank ASA, New York Branch
E-mail: dnbnor.newyork@dnbnor.no

Nordea Bank Norge ASA
Tel: 011 (47) 915 06002
http://www.nordea.no

Nordea Bank Finland Plc, New York Branch
Telephone: +1 212 318-9300
http://www.nordea.com

J.P. Morgan - Corporate Banking
Tel: 011 (47) 22 00 30 10
http://www.jpmorgan.com/pages/jpmorgan/emea/local/nordic

Project Financing Return to top

In principle, all kinds of financing are available to foreign investors. Overdrafts and mortgages are available from banks, which will also assist in the issuance of such financial instruments as discount bonds, convertible bonds, etc.

Financial lease arrangements are supplied by leasing companies. If a leased asset is financed from foreign funding, a license is required from the Bank of Norway. If the lessee is foreign and the agreement is of a financial character (financial leasing), a license is required. No license is required if the leasing agreement can be said to be operational.

Venture capital and merchant banking are not highly developed in all sectors, but do exist. Venture capital is particularly focused on the energy sector, renewable technology and healthcare technology. The Norwegian Venture Capital & Private Equity Association (NVCA) is an independent, non–profit association supporting the interests of companies and persons who are active in the Norwegian private equity industry.

Norwegian Venture Capital & Private Equity Association
http://www.norskventure.no/index_en.aspx

Under relatively strict conditions it is possible to obtain fresh capital at the stock exchange. The Oslo Stock Exchange (Oslo Bors) offers the only regulated markets for securities trading in Norway today.

Oslo Stock Exchange
http://www.oslobors.no/ob_eng/

Export financing

Eksportfinans is the Norwegian Export Credit Agency - a joint institution of the banks and the Norwegian Government (Ministry of Trade and Industry) - whose purpose is to develop and offer competitive, long-term financial services to the export industries and the local government sector. Eksportfinans ASA finances exports of Norwegian capital goods and services on both market- and government-supported terms. The financing programs are designed to promote the sale of Norwegian capital goods and services, financing is also available to foreign buyers.

Eksportfinans ASA
Tel: 011 (47) 22 01 22 01
http://www.eksportfinans.no/

Loans at market terms are given for purchases of Norwegian capital goods. Eksportfinans extends credit on market terms at competitive rates, ensuring that the financing is appropriately matched to project requirements in terms of currencies, loan period, interest rates and repayment structure. Eksportfinans also administers a number of trade-subsidy schemes on behalf of the Norwegian government.

Where exports are involved, the Government of Norway is able to offer subsidized fixed-rate loans to most countries. Government-supported loans are regulated under the OECD consensus agreement. This scheme was introduced to enable Norwegian exporters to match the financing terms offered by foreign competitors. The loans are repayable in equal semi-annual installments, and the interest rate is fixed for the entire period of the loan.

The Guarantee Institute for Export Credits (GIEK) is the central governmental agency responsible for furnishing guarantees and insurance of export credits. The primary function of the Institute is to promote export of Norwegian goods and services and Norwegian investment abroad. GIEK underwrites exports to over 150 countries of all types of goods and services ranging from fruit and berries to ships to consultancy services. The guarantees may encompass a single transaction or a series of transactions and cover not only commercial risk, i.e. bankruptcy on the part of the debtor or non-payment for other reasons, but also political risk, i.e. war, expropriation and actions by the public authorities that prevent payment.

GIEK
Tel: 001 (47) 22 87 62 00
Website: http://www.giek.no/en

Norway offers no significant financing programs for either domestic or foreign investors. One exception is investments in northern Norway, where a reduced payroll tax and other incentives apply. There are no free-trade zones, although taxes are minimal on Svalbard. A state industry and regional development fund provides support (e.g., investment grants and financial assistance) for industrial development in areas with special employment difficulties or with low levels of economic activity.

Web Resources

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Export-Import Bank of the United States: http://www.exim.gov

EXIM Bank - Country Limitation Schedule:
http://www.exim.gov/tools/country/country_limits.html

OPIC: http://www.opic.gov

Trade and Development Agency: http://www.tda.gov/

SBA's Office of International Trade: http://www.sba.gov/oit/

USDA Commodity Credit Corporation: http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ccc/default.htm

U.S. Agency for International Development: http://www.usaid.gov

Norwegian Ministry of Finance: http://www.regjeringen.no/en/ministries/fin.html?id=216

Central Bank of Norway: http://www.norges-bank.no/default____106.aspx

Financial Supervisory Authority of Norway: http://www.finanstilsynet.no/en/

Norwegian Financial Services Association: http://www.fno.no/en/

Oslo Stock Exchange: http://www.oslobors.no/ob_eng/

Norwegian Venture Capital & Private Equity Association:
http://www.norskventure.no/index_en.aspx

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Chapter 8: Business Travel

Business Customs Return to top

Business customs are largely similar to those in the U.S. and practically all business people speak excellent English.

Norwegian business people tend to travel extensively, so meetings should be scheduled well in advance. It is recommended to use the 24-hour clock. This will avoid confusion over any references to a.m. and p.m. Punctuality is valued for both business and social occasions. If you are late for a business meeting, call your counterpart and explain the delay.

The typical greeting is a firm handshake with everyone in the room when you arrive and before you leave. Maintain moderate eye contact. Business cards are widely used. Although many Norwegians tend to dress more casually, you should dress conservatively – at least until the host opens up for an open-shirt dress code.

Norwegians are often direct and do not focus on rituals and social environments for negotiations. In the initial meeting, Norwegians are ready to talk business after only a few minutes of small talk. Norwegians are straightforward in business meetings. Presentations should be precise and concrete and you should not make any promises that you cannot keep - your honesty will be respected. There is no need to be embarrassed talking about price and payment.

Business lunches and dinners are common. The one inviting is the one who pays. If you are the host, arrange for reservations in advance. Smoking is banned in all places of business. Do not smoke in someone's home without asking for permission.

Norway, with its 4.8 million population spread over an area larger than the United Kingdom or Germany, has a very low population density. This gives the opportunity for a large variety of outdoor sports, hikes in the mountains, skiing, sailing, hunting, golfing, etc. Many Norwegians own their own cabins or vacation homes in the mountains, on the coast, or both, where they spend many of their weekends and vacations. If invited to a local Norwegian home or to an "off site" meeting, you are experiencing an honor that should be gratefully accepted.

Travel Advisory

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U. S. citizens are encouraged to register at the Consular Section of the U.S. Embassy and to obtain updated information on travel and security in Norway. The American Embassy in Oslo is located at Henrik Ibsens gate 48, Tel. (47) 22 44 85 50, Consular Fax: (47) 22 56 27 51, E-Mail: oslоamcit@state.gov. For additional information visit the Embassy's website at http://norway.usembassy.gov/

Norway has a relatively low crime rate. Most crimes involve the theft of personal property, e.g., residential burglary, auto theft, or vandalism to parked cars. Persons may become targets of pickpockets and purse-snatchers, especially in hotel restaurants and in certain parts of the Oslo area. Violent crime, although rare, occurs and appears to be increasing. The loss or theft of a U.S. passport in Norway should be reported immediately to the local police and to the U.S. Embassy in Oslo. The Department of State's pamphlet A Safe Trip Abroad provides useful information on guarding valuables and protecting personal security while traveling abroad. The pamphlet is available on the Internet at http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/safety/safety_1747.html

While in a foreign country, a U.S. citizen is subject to that country's laws and regulations. Penalties for breaking the law can be more severe than in the United States for similar offenses. Persons violating the laws of Norway, even unknowingly, may be expelled, arrested or imprisoned. Penalties for possession, use, or trafficking in illegal drugs are strict. Some substances that are legal in other European countries are prohibited in Norway. These include ephedrine, an ingredient in many U.S. over-the-counter drug preparations. The possession of small amounts of drugs for personal use that may not result in arrest in neighboring countries can result in arrest in Norway. Penalties usually include detention, a hefty fine and deportation.

Visa Requirements

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A passport is required. U.S. citizens may enter Norway without a visa. Norway is a member of the Schengen Agreement. Travelers may not stay in the Schengen area for more than 90 days in any six-month period. For information regarding entry requirements travelers can contact the Royal Norwegian Embassy at 2720 34th Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20008-2714, Tel. (202) 333-6000, or the nearest Norwegian consulate. Consulates are located in Houston, Minneapolis, New York, and San Francisco. Information is also available on the Internet at http://www.norway.org

U.S. companies that require travel of foreign businesspersons to the United States should be advised that security options are handled via an interagency process. This process may be time-consuming. Visa applicants should go to the following links.

State Department Visa Website
http://travel.state.gov/visa/visa_1750.html

Telecommunications
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Norway has one of the most modern and advanced telecommunications networks in Europe. The following cellular phone systems can be used in Norway: GSM, GPRS, EDGE, 3G/UMTS, and CDMA are widely available.

There are still also many public telephones where payment can be made with Visa, American Express, Diners Club or Eurocard/ Mastercard. For an operator, you can dial 1881 for numbers in Norway, Sweden and Denmark, and 1882 for numbers in all other countries. When calling another country from Norway, dial 00 first.

In Norway, in the event of an emergency, call:

110 Fire Department
112 Police
113 Ambulance

Broadband, ADSL lines and 3G wireless networks are widely available. 4G services have also been launched.

Electricity in Norway is 220 V AC with 50 Hertz cycles. Plugs used are round-ended, two-pronged, continental plugs.

Transportation
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Norway has an excellent transportation system. Car rentals are expensive but easily available. Those choosing to drive themselves should exercise caution. Because of the mountainous terrain, most roads are narrow and winding. The northerly latitude can cause road conditions to vary greatly depending on weather and time of year. Speed limits vary from 50-100 km per hour (30-60 miles per hour). Fines for traffic violations are extremely high and can easily exceed USD 1,000 for speeding.

Roadblocks for checks of drivers under the influence of alcohol are frequent, and submission to a breathalyzer test is mandatory. Norway has adopted a zero tolerance policy regarding drinking and driving. One drink may put a person over the legal limit and could result in a fine. More than two drinks could result in a jail sentence.

Language
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The three Scandinavian countries – Norway, Denmark, and Sweden - are closely related in terms of language, ethnic roots, religion, history and a host of other ways. The languages are to a lesser degree related to English, Dutch and German.

Americans with business interests in Norway benefit from the ease of communication as the vast majority of Norwegians (and nearly everyone under 60) speak English well.

American culture, including movies and TV series, is pervasive. Unfortunately, news about Norway in English is sparse, limited to a few Internet services that provide only brief summaries of major events.

There are two official languages, bokmål and nynorsk, with equal status both in official use and in schools. The Norwegian alphabet contains 29 letters, including three letters not found in the English alphabet – æ (ae), ø (oe), and å (aa).

Health Return to top

Medical care is widely available. U.S. medical insurance is not always valid outside the United States. Travelers have found that supplemental medical insurance with specific overseas coverage has proved useful in some cases. Information on medical emergencies abroad, including overseas insurance programs, is provided in the Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs brochure Medical Information for Americans Traveling_Abroad, available on the Internet at http://travel.state.gov. Further information on health matters can be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's hotline for international travelers at Tel. (877) 394-8747, or via their Internet site at http://www.cdc.gov

Local Time, Business Hours, and Holidays Return to top

Businesspeople should note the following local holidays during 2011:

April 5 - Holy Thursday
April 6 - Good Friday
April 9 - Easter Monday
May 1 - May Day
May 17 - National Day
May 18 - Ascension Day
May 28 - Whit Monday
Dec 24 - Christmas Eve
Dec 25 - Christmas Day
December 31 – New Years´ Eve?

Some Norwegian manufacturing plants and major businesses are closed for 3-4 weeks during the summer holidays from mid-July to mid-August. Easter (10-day holiday season for many Norwegians) and the week between December 23 and New Year also are periods of low business activity.

Temporary Entry of Materials and Personal Belongings Return to top

Click on the following link for updated customs regulations when traveling to and from Norway:

Norwegian Customs and Excise
http://www.toll.no/default.aspx?id=94&epslanguage=EN

Web Resources

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U.S. Commercial Service – Oslo, Norway
http://export.gov/norway/

U.S. Embassy, Oslo
http://norway.usembassy.gov/

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Chapter 9: Contacts, Market Research and Trade Events

- Contacts
- Market Research
- Trade Events

Contacts Return to top

Embassy of the United States of America
U.S. Commercial Service (U.S. Department of Commerce)
Contact: Mr. Vidar Keyn, Head of Commercial Section
Henrik Ibsens gate 48, N-0244 Oslo, Norway
Tel: 011 (47) 21 30 88 34
E-mail: Vidar.Keyn@trade.gov
http://export.gov/norway/

Embassy of the United States of America
Henrik Ibsens gate 48, N-0244 Oslo, Norway
Tel: 011 (47) 21 30 85 50
http://norway.usembassy.gov

U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, D.C
Contact: Ms. Jen Levine, Nordic/Baltic Desk Officer
European Country Affairs
Market Access and Compliance
International Trade Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
Tel: 202 482 4414
E-mail: Jen.Levine@trade.gov
www.trade.gov/mac

Norwegian Government

Information from the Government and the Ministries
http://www.regjeringen.no/en.html?id=4

Norwegian Ministries
http://www.regjeringen.no/en/ministries.html?id=933

Norwegian Parliament (The Storting)
http://www.stortinget.no/en/In-English/
Tel: 011(47) 23 31 30 50

Central Bank of Norway (Norges Bank)
http://www.norges-bank.no/default____106.aspx

Tel: 011 (47) 22 31 60 00

Statistics Norway
http://www.ssb.no/english/
Tel: 011 (47) 21 09 00 00

Norwegian Petroleum Directorate
http://www.npd.no/en/
Tel: 011 (47) 51 87 60 00

Innovation Norway
http://www.innovasjonnorge.no/system/Global-toppmeny/English/
Tel: 011 (47) 22 00 25 00

Major Trade Organizations in Norway

The American Chamber of Commerce in Norway
Contact: Mr. Jason Turflinger, Managing Director
Tel: 011 (47) 22 41 50 10
www.amcham.no

Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise
http://www.nho.no/english/
Tel: 011 (47) 23 08 80 00

Federation of Norwegian Industries
http://www.norskindustri.no/english/
Tel: 011 (47) 22 59 00 00

Federation of Norwegian Commercial and Service Enterprises
http://www.virke.no
Tel: 011 (47) 22 54 17 00

Abelia - Association of Norwegian ICT- and Knowledgebased Enterprises
http://www.abelia.no/english
Tel: 011 (47) 23 08 80 70

ICT Norway
http://ikt-norge.no/
Tel: 011 (47) 22 54 27 40

Norwegian Oil Industry Association
http://www.olf.no/en/
Tel: 011 (47) 51 84 65 00

Major Norwegian and U.S. Banks Operating in Norway

DnB NOR ASA
Tel: 011 (47) 915 07700
https://www.dnb.no/en/corporate/

DnB NOR Bank ASA, New York Branch
Address: 200 Park Avenue 31st Floor
New York, N.Y. 10166-0396, USA
Tel: + 1 212 681 3800
Fax: + 1 212 681 3900
E-mail: dnbnor.newyork@dnbnor.no

Nordea Bank Norge ASA
Tel: 011 (47) 22 48 50 00
http://www.nordea.no

Nordea Bank Finland Plc, New York Branch
437 Madison Avenue
New York, NY 10022, USA
Telephone: +1 212 318-9300
Fax: +1 212 421-4420
http://www.nordea.com

J.P. Morgan - Corporate Banking
Tel: 011 (47) 22 00 30 10
http://www.jpmorgan.com/pages/jpmorgan/emea/local/nordic

Market Research Firms

Several Norwegian market research firms serve international clients. Some of the major ones are:

TNS Gallup
Tel: (47) 91 11 16 00
http://www.tnsglobal.com/global/europe/norway/

AC Nielsen Norge AS
www.acnielsen.no
Tel: 011 (47) 22 58 34 00

Synovate MMI AS
www.synovate.no
Tel: 011 (47) 22 95 47 00

Market Research

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To view market research reports produced by the U.S. Commercial Service please go to the following website: http://www.export.gov/mrktresearch/index.asp and click on Country and Industry Market Reports.

Please note that these reports are only available to U.S. citizens and U.S. companies. Registration to the site is required, and is free.

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Please click on the link below for information on upcoming trade events.

http://www.export.gov/tradeevents/index.asp

(Add link to trade events section of local buyusa.gov website here or just delete this text.)

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Chapter 10: Guide to Our Services

The President's National Export Initiative aims to double exports over five years by marshaling Federal agencies to **prepare U.S. companies to export successfully**, **connect them with trade opportunities** and **support them once they do have exporting opportunities**.

The U.S. Commercial Service offers customized solutions to help U.S. exporters, particularly small and medium sized businesses, successfully expand exports to new markets. Our global network of trade specialists will work one-on-one with you through every step of the exporting process, helping you to:

- Target the best markets with our world-class research
- Promote your products and services to qualified buyers
- Meet the best distributors and agents for your products and services
- Overcome potential challenges or trade barriers
- Gain access to the full range of U.S. government trade promotion agencies and their services, including export training and potential trade financing sources

To learn more about the Federal Government's trade promotion resources for new and experienced exporters, please click on the following link: www.export.gov

For more information on the services the U.S. Commercial Service offers to U.S. exporters, please click on the following link: (Insert link to Products and Services section of local buyusa.gov website here.)

U.S. exporters seeking general export information/assistance or country-specific commercial information can also contact the **U.S. Department of Commerce's Trade Information Center** at **(800) USA-TRAD(E).**

We value your feedback on the format and contents of this report. Please send your comments and recommendations to: Market_Research_Feedback@trade.gov

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