

## **DOING BUSINESS WITH MARTINIQUE**



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## 1. GENERAL INFORMATION

**Official Name:** Department of Martinique.

**Nickname:** L'île aux fleurs

**Capital:** Fort-de-France

**Area:** 1,128 sq. km.

**Major towns:** Fort-de-France, Le Francois, Lamentin, Le Robert, Saint-Marie, Schoelcher.

**Official language:** French;  
Indigenous language: Creole Patois.

**Nationality:** Martiniquais

**Government:** Martinique is a French Overseas Department. France is represented there by a prefect who is appointed by the French Government on the advice of the French Minister of Interior. Two bodies, the 45-member General Council and the 41-member Regional Council have local power and are elected by universal adult suffrage for six-year periods. After these elections, the members of each council choose its president. Four deputies represent Guadeloupe in the French National Assembly; it also has two senators in the French Senate and a councilor in the Economic and Social Council. It is also represented at the European Parliament.

**Elections:** General Council elections were last held in 2006 and Regional Council on March 2004

**Head of State:** President Nicolas Sarkozy

**Head of Regional Council:** President Alfred Marie-Jeanne

**Head of General Council:** President Claude Lise.

**Prefect:** Ange Mancini (appointed July 2007)

**Political Parties:** Rally for the Republic (RPR), Federation Socialist of Martinique (FSM), Martinique Progressive Party (PPM), Martinique Communist Party (PCM), Union for French Democracy (UDF), Martinique Independence Movement (MIM), Union for a Popular Movement (UMP), Martinique Forces of Progress (FMP), Build the Martinique Country (BPM), Martiniquan Democratic Rally (RDM), Oson Oser, Modemas.

**Population:** 400,229 (2007 est.)

**Pop. Density:** 358km<sup>2</sup> per sq. km. (2005 est.)

**Median age:** Total population 34.1 years

Male: 33.4 years

Female: 34.8 years (2006 est.)

**Sex ratio: Birth** 1.02  
males/females (m/f)

Under 15 1.03 m/f

15-64 1 (m/f)

65 years and older 0.82 m/f

Total population 0.99 (2006 est.)

**Life expectancy at birth:** Total population = 79.18 years

Male = 79.5 year

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Female= 78.85 (2006 est.)

**Total Fertility Rate:** 1.79 children born/woman (2006 est.)

**Ethnic Composition:** Black and Mulatto: 90%; White: 5%; East Indian, Lebanese and Chinese: less than 5%.

**Religion:** Roman Catholic: 95%; Hindu and Pagan African: 5%.

**Education:** Education is compulsory through to the primary and secondary levels. There are 269 primary schools and 77 secondary schools. The enrolment in the 2005/2006 term was 99451 pupils. The University Antilles-Guyana in Martinique focuses on economics, politics, law and the humanities. There is also a Master Formation University Institute (IUFM) for teachers' training; as well as an informatics school and an international business and management school run by the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Martinique. Other organisations provide job specific and other vocation training.

**Adult Literacy:** 92%; Male: 90%; Female: 90%.

**Health:** There is one University hospital; 6 private hospitals; two clinics with a total of 1, 739 beds; 871 doctors and 145 pharmacies.

**Land Use:** Arable land: 8%; Permanent crops: 8%; Permanent pastures: 17%; Forest and woodland: 44%; Other: 23%.

**Irrigated Land:** 40 sq. km

**Climate:** The climate is tropical moderated by the trade winds and maritime influences. The annual mean temperature is 25°C (77°F). Annual rainfall averages from very heavy in the northern mountains and moderate in the south central plain of Lamentin, to the very light on the semi arid southwest coast. From June to October, the country is susceptible to hurricanes.

## Geography and

**Topography:** One of the Windward Islands in the Eastern Caribbean, Martinique lies about 360 miles of southeast Puerto-Rico, with Dominica to the north and St. Lucia to the south. It is 6,850 kms from Paris; 3,200 kms from New York. The Caribbean Sea is on its western coast and the Atlantic Ocean on its east. The island consists of many volcanic peaks, dense rain forest in the mountains and narrow fertile valleys; coastline formed by numerous coves and harbors with many small islets off the east coast.

## 6.6.2 Public Holidays

New Year's Day	January 1
Lenten Carnival	February 23-24
Good Friday	April 6
Easter Monday	April 9
Labour Day	May 1
1945 Victory Day	May 8
Ascension Day	May 17
Abolition of Slavery	May 22
National Day	July 14
Assumption Day	August 15
All Saints' Day	November 1
All Souls' Day	November 2
Armistice Day	November 11
Christmas Day	December 25

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## 2. THE ECONOMY

### 2.1 Economic Indicators

**National currency:** Euro (€).  
Exchange Rate: US\$ 1.35 = € 1.00  
(floating rate)

**Balance of Payments 2006:** Exports:  
US\$ 818 million; Imports: US\$3,483  
million

**Gross National Product 2005:** S\$ 7.4  
billion

**Composition:** Agriculture: 6%;  
Industry: 15%; Services: 72%

**GDP per Capita 2002:** US\$21,174.75

**Inflation Rate 2005:** 2.4 %.

**Unemployment rate:** 25.2% (June  
2005)

### 2.2 Structure of the Economy

Martinique's economy is marked by a chronic balance of trade deficit, heavy dependency on Metropolitan France and the European Union for financial support and specialisation in few sectors which suggests the need for diversification. Its per capita income is the highest among the French Overseas Departments (DOMs) and ranks about third in the Caribbean, after the Bahamas and Barbados.

The country has a demand economy which is somewhat propelled by household consumption. The economy is fast becoming a service-based economy

with tourism as the leading foreign exchange earner supported by agriculture (bananas, sugar cane and pineapples) which traditionally was the key sector. The tertiary sector contributes about 80% of value-added, mainly non-market services and wholesale and retail trade.

The economy is made up of many small companies. In 2005, some 17,244 enterprises were registered and it is estimated that some 1 500 business are created annually. Most of these businesses are in the service sector. See Table 1.

#### 2.2.1 Tourism

In 2006, the Martiniquan tourism industry reported a 2.5% increase in tourist arrivals but this followed an 8.2 % decline in 2005 and is a far cry from 2000 when 928 000 people visited the country and 2002 when arrivals reached 785,709. However long stay visitors have been on the increase, most of them slept at hotels with three stars or higher status. Consequently, the smaller establishments saw a 26 % in their customers but the occupancy rate in that section of accommodation did not fall by as much as would have been expected since the number of rooms had been reduced from the 2005 figure.

At the end of 2006, Martinique had 99 registered hotels with 4,747 rooms, an increase of one hotel and 74 rooms on the 2005 figures. Spending by tourists rose by 7.1 per cent in 2006 over 2005 to reach €42.5 million as long stay spending grew by 3.3 %. In 2004, tourist expenditure was €34.4 million, a 7.2 % increase on 2003's €28.6 million. Mainland France, the Caribbean and the

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rest of Europe are the main sources of tourists followed by the United States. In 2006, 90% of the visitors were from mainland France. See Table 2.

### 2.2.2 Agriculture

Agriculture was the key source of income for the country but it now accounts for only about 6% of the country's gross domestic product. This change in fortune can be linked to the decline in sugar and bananas which has been taking place over time.

Recent changes in the preferential treatment which Europe extended to its former colonies have negatively affected Martinique's agriculture sector. Sugar and banana producers have been facing stiff competition for market share from more price efficient overseas producers but they remain import sources of foreign exchange and local employment. See Table 3.

Not only has the level of bananas exports fallen (5%) but the average price paid to producers experienced a 39% drop. The exported quantities fell from €432.70 a tonne in 2005 to €264.80 a tonne in 2006. However planters received compensatory financing which helped to relieve some of the stress in that section. Exports in 2006 stood at 216, 827 tonnes falling from 228,538 tonnes in 2005.

Sugar is still very important to Martinique's economy providing direct benefits from the production of rum and sugar. There are also indirect benefits through its by-products, such as the molasses or the straw, which can be used as a source of energy, animal feed or natural fertilizers. An estimated 4,073 tonnes of sugar was produced in 2006, a

7.3 % decline on the 4,349 tonnes produced in 2005.

Martinique also produced notably quantities of melons, avocados, other fruits and vegetables, and flowers. The country's agriculture sector has good potential judging from its fertile soils and its wet tropical climate.

### 2.2.3 Manufacturing

The light industry employed about 13.9 per cent of the population. It includes food processing, building materials, chemical plants, printing, and petroleum refining. The agro-food sector is the largest and includes sugar and rum production as well as fruit and vegetable processing. In 2006, there was a 7.3% decline in rum production with 74,824 gallons produced. Generally most of the rum is exported to Mainland France.

The country has been encouraging industrial development under a special tax system called "dispositif de defiscalisation" since 1986. In addition five industrial zones are in operation.

## **2.3 Prices and Income**

Generally prices in Martinique are higher than those in metropolitan France. This fact is evident from an examination of retail prices between January 1990 and December 2005. During that period, prices in Martinique grew by a cumulative 36% compared to 33% for the metropolis and in 2006, Martinique's prices rose by 2.4 % compared with Metropolitan France's 1.7%. This price increase was linked to the rising price of oil. Martinique's minimum wage set at €8.44 or about US\$11.39 per hour at



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July 1, 2007 represents an increase of 2.1% from the 2006 level. However the unemployment rate is high about 25.2 % and a large number of people are receiving benefits via the RMI (minimum income paid by the welfare state) system.

## 2.4 Economic Outlook

The Martinique economy is continuing to grapple with the challenges brought on by international calls to end preferential treatment granted by France to its overseas departments. Bananas, rum and sugar are especially facing this up hill task and given the small size of their operation vis-à-vis their international competitors, these industries will have a difficult future without this special support from France.

Even competing in the European Community (EC) market without special support is hard. An example is the rum industry which is under strain from an EC request for France to decrease a special tax arrangement granted since 1995 on “traditional rum”. However, production and labour costs have been growing even as the industry has to increase spending to comply with the EC regulatory standards, which calls for important non-productive investment to conserve the environment. Tourism too has its challenges but is trying to upgrade its plant and improve competitiveness.

Programmèmes are being put in place by the European Community, France, Martinique’s Regional Council and General Council to put a development strategy in place. This strategy will add dynamism to the economy, develop the

intelligence and knowledge industries to improve the lot of disadvantaged communities and improve the country’s competitiveness.

## 2.5 Overview of Trade

Exports grew in 2006 by 29.5% to reach €489.1 million, marking a return to the growth trend which had started in 1996 but was briefly interrupted in 2005. Imports also rose but by a smaller amount (8.9%) to reach €2.5 billion. The trade deficit reached the €2 billion mark and the rate of 19.5 % which was the best cover for the three French overseas departments (Guadeloupe was 7.18% and French Guyane, 14.9%). See Table 4.

## 2.6 Exports

In 2006, with the exception of agriculture, all categories of exports increased. Re-exports of petroleum products increased by more than 50% because of rising prices and a 25% increase in volume. However the other exports grow slightly, by 1.2%. Exports were made up primarily of refined oil (60%), banana (14%) and rum (9%).

Banana exports decreases but after 2005’s strong fall, equipment suppliers registered a 19.7% in sales which accounted for a 5.3% of total exports. This equipment included shipbuilding and aeronautical engineering products. Other exports included pineapples and flowers.

Over the years, Metropolitan France has been the main source and destination of Martinique’s goods and services and

2006 continued this trend. An estimated 20% of the goods exports went to Metropolitan France which was also the source of 56% of the imports. Nearly all of the bananas exported from Martinique as well as more from 43% of rum (the balance is exported in Guadeloupe and Guyana) went to the mainland.

### **2.7 Imports**

The 8.9% growth in imports registered in 2006 was somewhat in keeping with the trend observed at the start of the decade for a 6% annual increase. More than 60% of the 2006 growth can be attributed to imports of oil, industry electric components, and agricultural produce.

Imports were made up of 60% manufactured goods, 21% energy-generating products and 15% of agro-processed products. Imports of agricultural produce accounted for a meager 1.7%.

Martinique imported approximately 70% of its intermediate imported goods; 79% of its consumption imports; 75% of its agro-processed imported products and over 60% of its imported agro-processed products and over 60% of the agricultural produce, from the mainland.



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## 3. GENERAL MARKET FACTORS

Martinique has a sophisticated distribution and retail system which displays trends, historical and current, similar to Guadeloupe's. Competition in the distribution sector is intense especially among the five large influential importers. The retail network is comprehensive and includes small and medium sized family-owned firms that traditionally were the dominant players in the local wholesale and retail trade. They are losing their dominance to increasingly popular larger outlets like supermarkets and hypermarkets which are providing stiff competition with respect to price and variety of items on sale. These new players have influenced a change in consumer buying patterns.

This is evident by the tendency to buy in large quantities, to seek opportunities for discounts and to use credit cards, debit cards or cheques as a means of payment. Specialized chain stores are also becoming very prevalent. Needless to say in such competitive environment advertising is very popular and a necessity.

### 3.1 Distributions and Sales Channels

There are five major food importers: Sogedial Martinique, Rene Lancry, S.A., Multigros, and Ets. George de Negri and Sodocar.

Several small wholesalers were bought and merged by Sogedial, a franchise of

the French distributing giant, Promodes that also operates in French Guiana and Guadeloupe.

Sogedial has many subsidiaries: Berthier, Martinique Frais, Sofrima, Promo Cash and Fabre, S.A. Its closest competitors are Rene Lancry, S.A. and Multigros which supplies other retailers. George de Negri and Sodocar are smaller wholesalers.

The four larger wholesalers have extensive facilities for storage, handling and distributing food products,

### 3.2 Retail Sector

Hypermarkets command more than 32,000 sq. ft. of floor space and are able to offer cheaper prices and a wider variety of items than other outlets. Euromarché (Carrefour), Hyper U, Primistères Reynoird and Le Phare are the major ones in Martinique. The cost leaders are Groupe Primistères Reynoird retail outlets Ecomax, Match, and Cora as well as Leader Price.

Martinique also has a number of supermarkets - retailers with over 8,000 sq. ft. of floor space- and several small country shops, green grocers, and butchers. Especially in the rural areas, fresh produce, fish, meat and poultry are sold in open markets and covered public markets but prices at these outlets are usually higher than those offered by the supermarkets and hypermarkets.

The other retail outlets include large specialized stores which offer wide choices of a special type of goods and emphasize competitive prices and customer service. The most popular

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examples in Martinique are furniture and do-it-yourself equipment stores.

### 3.3 Agents and Distributors

Considering the distribution options available, it is important that prospective exporters select the method best suited to his product. Local buyers generally prefer to purchase through an intermediary, making sales directly to the end-user. French rules allow for three primary forms of intermediaries; distributors, agent and salaried representatives.

**Distributor:** (Concessionaire) buys goods for resale directly from a producer. This individual or legal entity operates independently according to the written provisions of a distribution agreement. At the end of the contract period, either party may end the distribution agreement, without notice or indemnification. If the termination occurs before the contract period ends, the terminating party may be sued for breach of contract. After a fair period of notice, usually six months, either party may terminate a distribution agreement without indemnification. If the producer terminates the contract without fair notice, the distributor may have grounds for damage claims.

**Agent:** Commercial agents and persons acting though not fulfilling the requisites for commercial agent status can be considered agents. They match buyers and sellers for a commission. Agents are independent operators and their principals do not pay payroll taxes on their behalf. In fact agents pay their own business licence tax and VAT and take care of their own health insurance,

social security and retirement/pension benefits.

**Salaried Representative:** These operate on employment contracts and their employers pay payroll taxes as well as contribute to social security, unemployment compensation and retirement/pension plans on their behalf.

**Statutory Representative:** They benefit from labour law protection and have special rights to indemnification if they are unfairly dismissed from employment. This indemnity depends on the size and importance of the clientele created by the statutory representative. These are sustained independent profession who:

- Act as a sales representative for one or more employers;
- Do not conduct commercial operations on their own behalf;
- Institute mutual commitments with employers with respect to the nature of the goods or services offered for sale, location of activity or the category of clients, and the rate of compensation.

**Non-Statutory Salaried Representative:** These do not fulfill the conditions to be statutory representative status and are considered regular employees.

#### 3.3.1 Sales service/Customer Support

Local businesses provide all kinds of services such after sale service, home delivery and maintenance contacts, warehousing facilities, hot line or toll free numbers for technical assistance.

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As a French Overseas Territory, the European Commission directives are followed with regards to consumer protection. There are safety requirements for consumer products such as sports and playground equipment, childcare articles, lighters and most household products such as textiles and furniture. In addition, France has laws to protect public health and the consumer interests and to deal with fraudulent practices and infringement of economic regulations. Martinique generally follows France's lead.

### 3.3.2 Payment Terms

The usual terms of payment are:

- Commercial letters of Credit
- Sight and time draft
- Bank transfers
- Certified checks

### 3.3.3 Sales Promotions and Facilities

Consumers' choices are influenced by price, quality and after-sale service but they are also swayed by advertisements and lured by promotions and lifestyles depicted by the mass media. All advertising, labelling, instructions and promotional programmes must be in French. Selling products or services in Guadeloupe is similar to what obtains in other Caribbean countries.

## **3.4 Transport and Communication**

### 3.4.1 Shipping

As suggested by its name, Port de Fort-de-France is located in the capital. It is also the major port on the island with

many seaport facilities. Among them are Pointe des Grives, a container terminal with a 450 metre (m) long quay and water height of 14 metres and the Old Terminal which caters exclusively to non-container traffic and is 418m long with a water depth of 12m. Cruise traffic has access to three quays; Quay of Tourelles (North and South) which is 325m long and 11m deep; Annexes Quay, 180m long and 9m deep; and the Cruise Terminal of Pointe Simon (East and West) that is 270 m long and 10m deep. The other facilities include The Wharf which is the deepest harbour at 17m, West Quay, Radoub Basin, Cargo Boat Quay, Hydro-base Quay and Tourelles Board. La Trinite is another important port.

Some of the maritime cargo lines which stop at Martinique are Compagnie Generale Maritime (CGM) Bermuth Lines, Chargeurs Delmas, Columbus Lines, Crowley American Transport, Louis Dreyfus, Marseille Fret, Nedloyd Lines, Nippon Yusen Kaisha, Seaboard Marine, Suriname Line, Tecmarine Lines, Tropical Shipping, and UIM. CGM has links to Europe, Cuba and the Caribbean and Latin America.

In 2003, an estimated 2,750,000 metric tonnes of goods traffic passed through the port as well as 587 000 passengers including 292 000 inter-island passengers. Ferry services link Fort-de-France with main resort areas, Troise-Ilets and Sainte-Anne.

### 3.4.2 Air Transport

In 2007, Martinique's only international airport was renamed Martinique-Aime Cesaire Airport in honour of poet, Aime Cesaire who was also a deputy in the

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lower house of France's parliament for almost 50 years. The international airport, which was formerly called the Fort-de-France/Lamentin Airport, is located about 7.5 miles from the capital and ranks ninth among French airports for passenger traffic and third for jumbo jet traffic. The airport has an air terminal which is 24,000m<sup>2</sup> and an air freight terminal of 9,400m<sup>2</sup>. In 2004, 13,003 metric tonnes of freight traffic and 1,615,561 passengers passed through the airport.

Air Canada, Air France, Air Guadeloupe, Air Martinique, Air Caraibe, Air Outremer, American Airlines, American Eagle, Take Air Airline, Corsair and LIAT are among the airlines which provide service to the airport.

### 3.4.3 Land Transport

In 2003, €25 million was spent on upgrading roads in Martinique. It now has an extensive road network (2,142 km), most of which was recently built. It is used by an inexpensive bus service but most of the public transport is done by collective taxis, eight-passenger limousines which carry the sign "TC".

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## 4. MARKET ACCESS CONDITIONS

### 4.1 Customs Tariffs

As an Overseas Department of France, Martinique's import policy agrees with that operating within the European Union (EU). Imports from non-EU countries are therefore subjected to a Community Integrated Tariff (TARIC) system, and the tariff schedule is based on the Harmonized Commodity Description and Coding System (HS).

The taxes which are applied include General Customs Tax, the Octroi de Mer Tax (OM), Additional Tax to the Octroi de Mer Tax (DAOM) and Value Added Taxes which are applied on a product-by-product basis. Goods coming from African Caribbean and Pacific countries are exempted from general Customs Tax because Martinique is a fellow ACP country. These exempted countries must however complete an EUR1 form (for postage) to be allowed to enter duty-free.

Import duties are calculated on an ad valorem basis, i.e. expressed as a percentage of the value of imported goods. This dutiable value is the "transaction value" plus freight, insurance, commissions, and all other charges and expenses incidental to the sale and delivery of goods to the point of entry into the EU customs territory (including the French Overseas Departments). The invoice price is used as the transaction value providing there is no relationship between the seller and the buyer.

The following documents are generally required by Martinique's customs for imports:

- Bill of lading or Airway bill
- Commercial invoice – written in French or carrying a translation
- Certificate of origin
- Transit document (T1 or T2) if the goods passed through a European Union country.
- EUR 1 circulation certificate (for exemption of certain taxes as an ACP member)
- Proof of compliance with French standards
- Phyto-sanitary, fumigation or disinfection, zoo-sanitary certificate where relevant.

Most goods are liberalisation but a few require an import licence which can be obtained from the office of the Prefect of Martinique. Goods must be shipped before the expiry date.

### 4.2 Taxation

#### 4.1.1 Internal Taxes

The "Octroi de Mer" (O.M): All products whether imported or produced in French Overseas Departments are generally subjected to these dock taxes. However, there are some exceptions: undertakings whose turnover is less than French Francs 3.5 million are not liable; Regional Councils can determined that certain transactions relating to categories of local products will be totally or partially exempted by applying a zero or reduced rate. This tax is 2.5% plus an 8.5% VAT. The VAT is reduced to 2.1% on food and medical products.

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The value-added tax: This is applied on the “tax excluded price”. All imports, except cigarettes, have an “overseas tax” of between 5 % and 25% of duty value. Cigarettes attract a tax of 73 %. VAT must be added to the price of all goods and services sold.

Additional levies: These are used to protect national industries, for example, fishing and textile. Imports of these products are subjected to a special levy. Excise taxes are charged on alcohol and oil products.

The quay tax: Corresponds to a tax for the unloading of goods. There are two rates, according to the size container used for transportation: US\$6 for 20 ft containers and US\$11 for 40 ft containers.

### 4.1.2 Import Licensing

As part of the European Union, imports from third countries (non-European Union countries) are subjected to regulation. Liberalized imports may be imported without an import license. A limited number of products considered to be sensitive may require a specific import licence. These non-liberalized goods need a specific import licences which is issued by the Office of the Prefect of Martinique. Such licences are usually valid for six months from the date of issuance and can be extended for an additional 30 days if a justifiable reason is provided.

### 4.1.3 Samples and Carnets

Samples that carry no commercial value do not attract duties and taxes. Shipping documents must specify that such samples are of “No commercial value”

when they are being imported into Martinique. If they are being sent via the parcel post, the types of samples must be clearly identified.

Samples of commercial value can also enter duty free and tax free, however a bond or deposit of the total amount of duties and taxes must be supplied. This money is refunded if the samples are re-exported within a year. An ATA Carnet can be used instead of this deposit.

An ATA Carnet is an international customs document which simplifies and streamlines customs entry procedures for merchandise imported to participating countries for a year. They may be used for commercial samples, professional equipment, and goods destined for exhibitions and fairs. They are accepted in Martinique as a guarantee that all customs duties and excise taxes will be paid if any of the items covered by the carnet are not re-exported within the time period allowed. Advertising matter attracts duties.

## **4.3 Non Tariff Barriers**

### 4.3.1 Foreign Exchange Controls

Martinique does not place restrictions on the repatriation of profits, service fees, interest or royalties. However, an approved bank must be used and the investment must be one which was authorized by the government officials. Bank transfers are generally used for the transfer of money overseas or into Martinique and through approved banking intermediaries by bank transfers.



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## 4.4 Labelling and Marking Requirements

As can be expected Martinique's regulations with regards to labels comply with those of the European Union. Labels must therefore:

- Be written in the language of the country where the products is being sold - in this case French. This does not preclude having a label in more than one language. The writing must be clear and non-promotional.
- Be used to properly identify the product.
- Specify the ingredients or material constituting the product starting with the one with the highest content.
- State the net quantity of product (in metric units).
- Carry the product's date of manufacture; recommended 'best used before' date; and expiry date.
- Include instructions on usage and care.
- State the name of the producer, manufacturer or distributor. Registered brand names and trademarks must be used.
- State the country of origin and the lot number.
- Inform of any special sales conditions or limitations of the product.
- Carry tax-included prices for all pre-packaged goods except those sold by mail order.
- Barcode price labelling generally use the GENCOD that is the French system.

## 4.5 Patents, Trademarks and Copyrights

### 4.5.1 Patents

An invention is protected if it is an absolute novelty; has a non-obvious procedure and can be applied to an industrial or agriculture process. To obtain a patent an application must be made to the French National Institute for Industrial Property (INPI, that is, the Institut National de la Propriete Industrielle.). To register a patent, the inventor must have a local address.

After approval, the patent should be registered. It becomes the property of its owner who can transfer, or sell it, or grant a licence to those wanting to use it, but no one is permitted to use it without the owner's authorization. Patents for inventions last 20 years, before becoming public.

### 4.5.2 Trademarks

The INPI also handles applications for trademarks. After registration, a trademark must be used for five consecutive years, if not all rights are lost. They are renewable every ten years.

Trademarks must be novel for the specific product. They can be written or designed; sonorous such as jingles and slogans but they must be recognizable by sound or sight.

### 4.3.3 Copyrights

Copyrights include artistic works, literary works and software. Copyright usually last up to 50 years after the author's death with two main exceptions. A composer's copyright lasts 70 years



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after the owner's death while software copyright is valid for 25 years after creation. It must be noted that software designed by a salaried employee is owned by the employer.

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## 5 INVESTMENT PROFILE

The French Agency for International Investment is responsible for promoting investment. The French investment policy is considered among the least restrictive in the world. There is little screening of investment. However, acquisitions which have bearing on health sector, public order and national security are subjected to a review within a month. In Martinique, the French regulations generally apply. Some investors see the dis-incentives to investment as high payroll; income taxes and corporate tax of about 33 %; and pervasive regulation of labour.

However, Martinique has a range of financial incentives aimed at encouraging companies to invest and create jobs. These include grants for tangible investments, job creation and the recruitment of local managers; tax credits for professional training; reduced charges on wages; temporary corporate income tax exemptions and local authority guarantees.

All new businesses are likely to be eligible for some type of incentives which will depend on the type of activity and the number of employees. Priority sectors include agriculture; tourism and industry. See Table 5 for the types of Incentives.

Table 5: Type of incentives\*

TYPE OF INCENTIVE	REFERENCE	DESCRIPTION
<b>Summary of the Main Tax Incentives Granted to Companies</b>		
<b>Income tax reduction</b>	Article 197.3 of the French General Code of Taxes (CGI)	Tax-payers residing in a DOM benefit from a 30% allowance deductible from taxable income, up to a certain limit
<b>Deduction of business deficit from global income</b>	Article 238 bis HA of the CGI	Contrary to the provisions of the 1996 Finance Law in effect in mainland France, the charging of business deficits to global income remains possible in the Overseas Departments for investments made within the framework of the "Pons Law".
<b>Exemption from real-estate capital gains</b>	Article 150 D 7Δ of the CGI	Real-estate capital gains made on the sale of building land in the French Overseas Departments are tax exempt if the land is intended for the building of tourist facilities.
<b>Medium-term tax relief</b>	Article 208 quarter of the CGI	Start-up companies in a DOM can, upon approval, be exempt from corporate tax for 10 years.
<b>Reduction on taxable profits</b>	Article 217 bis of the CGI	Companies subject to corporate tax for operations situated in the DOMs benefit from a 33% allowance deductible from their taxable profits.
<b>Payroll tax</b>	Article 231 of the CGI	The normal rate of 4.25% is reduced to 2.95% in Martinique. This tax is not applicable to Sociale Integration through Activity Contracts

## DOING BUSINESS WITH MARTINIQUE

		(CIAs) nor to agricultural companies in the DOMs.
<b>Exemption from social security contributions according to sector</b>	Law No 94-638 of 25 July 1994 – Articles 4 and 5	Five-year exemption from employer's contributions, family income support, social security and industrial injury insurance for all pay up to the minimum wage (SMIC). This measure is limited to industry, catering, agriculture and audiovisual production.
<b>Exemption from social security contributions on low wages</b>	Emergency plan for employment (July 1995) Article 113 of the 1996 Finance Law Decree of 20 September 1995	In order to compensate for the considerable increase in the SMIC in the DOMs in the second half of 1995, the measure in effect in mainland France (coverage by the government of health insurance payments and family income support up to 1.33 times the SMIC) has been extended, in the DOMs, to sectors which were not included in the law of 25 July 1994 (building and public works, trade, transport, communications).
<b>Summary of Other Incentives Granted to Companies</b>		
<b>Employment grant</b>	Law of 24 July 1984-Article 40 Decree of 2 May 1995	Payment of a sliding scale grant over 10 years for every new job created in an activity geared to the opening up of the economy. This grant is subject to approval. Basic condition: the company or the new activity must derive 70% of its turnover from exports. Tertiary activities are eligible only when they are located in a free zone.
<b>Job access contract (Contract d'accès à l'emploi)</b>	Article L.832-2 of the Labour Code Article R. 831-2 to 831-9 of the Labour Code	For recruitment of an RMI (Minimum Social Income) welfare recipient, of the long-term unemployed, of a youth under a social worker or of an ex-prisoner, employer contributions are exempted for the duration of the contract when it is a term contract, or for up to 2 years if it is a permanent appointment. This exemption is longer if the beneficiary is at least 50 years old when entering into the contract. Moreover, he benefits from a monthly grant of FF2, 000 and the coverage of training costs for up to 1,000 hours.
<b>Service job checks (Chèque emploi-service)</b>	Article 208 quarter of the CGI	Maintenance of the specific advantages for DOMs since 1st January 1997.
<b>Increased support for apprenticeships</b>	Decree 96-493 of 6 June 1996	In the DOMs, the financial help granted to employers with apprentices to cover training costs is increased by FF2, 000 per year.

N.B This was taken from Doing Business with Martinique 2001-2006 produced by Caribbean Export Development Agency

# DOING BUSINESS WITH MARTINIQUE

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Among the opportunities which exist for investment are:

- Industry - food processing and manufacturing PVC sections;
- Tourism - diversifying supply and development of related business, for example, by modernizing existing hotels, creating adventure parks, recreational villages and theme-type restaurants and museums;
- Cottage industries, for example, small scale paper manufacturing from banana industry recycling and soap manufacturing;
- Services - tertiary services for individuals, assistance for the elderly, day nursery and,
- Service provision for businesses like pooled services including marketing and human resource development.

## 5.1 Business Facilities

The Martinique Chamber of Commerce and Industry is in charge of the port, airport, industrial zones and World Trade Center. The center employs foreign trade specialists to inform business people on regulations; set up meetings between local and foreign business people. It also employs interpreters to effect adequate communications at these meetings.

At the industrial zones, factory space for rent and in-bond facilities are among the special benefits available. These zones are Zone de Gros de La Jambette at Fort-de-France; Place d'Armes industrial zone and La Lezarde industrial zone at Lamentin; Petite-Cocotte industrial zone at Ducos and La Laugier industrial zone at Riviere-Salee.

## 5.2 Telecommunications

The country boasts an ISDN network with international dialing, local access to Internet with high speed connection through ADSL and SL as well as a cellular phone network which provides 99% of population with mobile signal. Some important statistics are:

- Fixed line phones per 100 people  
44.47 (2001)
- Mobile cell phone per 100 people  
74.78 (2004)
- Computers per 100 people  
20.76 (2004)
- Internet users per 100 people  
32.83 (2005)

Source: International  
Telecommunication Union

The metric system of weights and measures is used in Martinique.  
Electricity is A.C. 220 volts, 50 cycles.

# DOING BUSINESS WITH MARTINIQUE

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## 6. CULTURAL PRACTICES

### 6.1 Business Hours

Commercial: Monday – Friday  
8:00/9:00 a.m. to 12:00/1:00 p.m.  
2:30/3:00 p.m. to 5:00/6:00 p.m.

Government: Monday – Friday  
7:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.  
2:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.  
(Some Government Offices close at 1:30 p.m. at specific days of the week)

### 6.2 Visa Requirements

To enter Martinique, nationals of some countries require a visa. For a stay of less than 90 days forms can be downloaded from the French Consulate assigned to their country.

Among the documents which are generally required are:

- Two identical passport-sized photographs on a white background
- Valid passport (validity exceeding six months and with at least one full blank page to place the visa)
- Proof of residency status in Barbados for holders of non-Barbadian passports
- Proof of return ticket
- Documentary evidence of professional/ financial situation: job letter, bank statement under three months old or bank letter
- Documentary evidence of accommodation during your visit: confirmed hotel booking or [“attestation d'accueil”](#) (official

proof of lodging when staying with friends or relatives) or rental agreement

- Emergency medical insurance for the duration of stay.

Persons who have to send their documents to an overseas consulate to be processed should guarantee the security and quick return of these documents by using a parcel delivery service (FedEx, Star Pack, Quick Pack or DHL). They should also provide for the return of documents using the same means by including a prepaid return coupon when sending the package. The fee for the visa application is Trinidad and Tobago\$100 and it usually takes about five days to process the application.

Barbados' nationals and residents should use the French embassy in Trinidad and Tobago. All Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States nationals except the holders of St. Lucian passports need a visa to enter into the French Overseas Départements. Bearers of a Saint Lucian passport can spend 15 days or less in the French Overseas Départements without any visa.

OECS nationals applying for a visa must pay the following:

- Transit visa -10 €
- Stay between 1 and 30 days - 25 €
- Stay between 31 and 90 days, single entry - 30 €
- Stay between 31 and 90 days, multiple entries - 35 €
- One year visa with multiple entries - 50 €

Payment has to be done in Eastern Caribbean currency at the rate in force.

## DOING BUSINESS WITH MARTINIQUE

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National of Trinidad and Tobago must apply in person for visas Interviews are by appointment on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays between 8 and 11 a.m. at the French consular section, Port-of-Spain. Appointments should be made at least two weeks before the departure date. The minimum visa processing time is 48 hours but can be much longer according to individual cases and destinations

# DOING BUSINESS WITH MARTINIQUE

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## 7. CONTACTS

### 7.1 BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT ORGANISATIONS

- [Agence pour le Développement Economique de la Martinique](#)  
Tel: (596) 73 45 81  
Website: [www.adem-martinique.org](http://www.adem-martinique.org)  
E-mail: [b.marimoutou@adem.mq](mailto:b.marimoutou@adem.mq)
- Chamber of Commerce of Martinique  
(Chambre de Commerce et d'industrie de la Martinique)  
50 Rue Ernest Deproge BP. 478  
97241 Fort-de-France  
Tel. (596) 55 28 00  
Fax. (596) 60 66 68  
E-mail: [cai@martinique.cci.fr](mailto:cai@martinique.cci.fr)
- Martinique Chamber of Trade  
(Chambre des Métiers de la Martinique)  
2, Rue du Temple  
Morne Tartenson BP 1194  
97200 Fort-de-France  
Tel: (596) 71 32 22  
Fax: (596) 70 47 30
- Martinique Chamber of Agriculture  
(Chambre d'Agriculture de la Martinique)  
Place d'Armes, BP 312  
97286 Le Lamentin  
Tel: (596) 51 75 75  
Fax: (596) 51 76 77
- Agence Regional pour le Development de la Martinique  
Apse Gouraud  
97233 Schoelcher  
Tel: (596) 61 61 77  
Fax: (596) 61 22 72
- Office Departemental du Tourism  
20, rue Ernest Deproge BP. 520  
97206 Fort-de-France  
Tel. (596) 63 79 60  
Fax. (596) 73 66 93
- World Trade Center  
50 Rue Ernest Deproge BP. 478  
97241 Fort-de-France  
Tel: (596) 55 28 52/19  
Fax: (596) 71 66 80
- Centre d'Affaires International  
55 Rue Ernest Deproge BP. 478  
97241 Fort-de-France  
Tel. (596) 55 28 62  
Fax. (596) 71 66 80
- A.D.E.X.M.A (Association des Exportateurs de la Martinique)  
(Exporters Association)  
55 Rue Ernest Deproge  
97241 Fort-de-France  
Tel. (596) 55 29 50  
Fax. (596) 71 66 80
- M.P.I (Association des Petites et Moyennes Industries)  
(Small Industry Association)  
Bat. Pierre Lot Trompeuse  
97232 Lamentin  
Tel. (596) 50 74 00  
Fax. (596) 50 74 37
- Tax Authority



## DOING BUSINESS WITH MARTINIQUE

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(Direction des Services Fiscaux de la Martinique)

Hotel des Finances de Forte-de-France

Route de cluny-BP605

97261 Fort-de-France

Tel: (596) 59 55 00

Fax: (596) 63 00 66

- Regional Council of Martinique (Conseil Regional de la Martinique)

Rne Gaston Deferre-cluny

97262 Fort-de-France -BP 601

Tel: (596) 59 63 00

Fax: (596) 72 68 10

Website: [www.cr-martinique.fr](http://www.cr-martinique.fr)

E-mail: [servicecooperation@cr-martinique.fr](mailto:servicecooperation@cr-martinique.fr)

- Customs Department (Direction Inter-régionale des Douanes)

Cluny Quartier Plateau Roy BP 630

97200 Fort-de-France

Tel: (596) 63 04 82

Fax: (596) 63 61 80

- General Council of Martinique (Conseil General de la Martinique)

Bd Chevalier Sainte-Marthe

97200 Fort-de-France -BP 679

Tel: (596) 55 26 00

Fax: (596) 73 59 32

- French National Institute of Statistics & Economic Surveys (Institut-National de la Statistique & des Etudes Economiques Center Delgrés Entrée C, 3ème étage – Bd de la Pointe des sables

Les Hauts de Dillon-BP 641

Tel: (596) 60 73 73

Fax: (596) 60 73 60

- Association Martiniquaise pour la Promotion de l'Industrie Centre d'Affaires de la Martinique Bat Pierre 2ème étage Californie 97232 Le Lamentin Tel: (596) 50 74 00 Fax: (590) 50 74 37

### 7.2 SHIPPING AGENTS

- Antilles Trans Express Bassin Radoub Quai Ouest 97200 Fort-de-France Tel: (596) 63 21 11 Fax: (596) 63 34 47
- C.A.M.A (Compagnie d'Agence Multiples Antillaises) 44 Rue Garnier Pages 97200 Fort-de-France Tel. (596) 713100 Fax. (596) 635440
- C.T.S (Caribbean Trading Shipping Services) Bld. General Francois Reboul 97200 Fort-de-France Tel. (596) 60 32 67
- C.G.M Sud (Compagnie General Maritime) Av. Maurice Bishop 97200 Fort-de-France Tel: (596) 5532 00 Fax: (596) 63 69 20

## DOING BUSINESS WITH MARTINIQUE

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### 7.3 INDUSTRIAL BUSINESS CONSULTANTS

- Europe Caraibe Consultant  
9 Resid. La Sylve rue Gardenia  
97232 Fort-de-France  
Tel. (596) 60 49 00  
Fax. (596) 60 51 70  
(Foreign trade consultant)
- G.M Conseil  
57 Avenue Condorcet  
97200 Fort-de-France  
Tel: (596) 60 56 86  
Fax: (596) 71 66 40  
(Foreign trade consultant)
- Millon-Devignes Michelle  
76 bis rue Devard Ambroisine  
97200 Fort-de-France  
Tel: (596) 75 59 19  
(Business and Management consultant)
- K.P.M.G (Fiduciaire de France)  
Centre d’Affaire de Dillon  
Valmeniere Bat. D  
97200 Fort-de-France  
Tel. (596) 50 16 30  
Fax. (596) 50 55 49  
(Auditor)
- Janvier Romain (Auditor)  
Bat. A Centre d’Affaire  
Californie  
972232 Lamentin  
Tel: (596) 50 96 00  
Fax: (596) 50 96 01
- C.G.F (Comptabilite Gestion  
Fiduciaire)  
Voie 5 rue Prof. Garcin  
97200 Fort-de-France  
Fax: (596) 64 22 24 (Auditor)
- J.P.P Formation et Conseil  
36 lot. La Moville Balata  
97200 Fort-de-France  
Tel: (596) 647676  
Fax: (596) 647666  
(Staff training consultant)
- Gidef Martinique  
Jeanne d’Arc Quartier Petit-Pre  
97232 Lamentin  
Tel: (596) 506811  
Fax: (596) 506901  
(Staff training consultant)
- Colagest  
Z.I Petite Cocotte  
97224 Ducos  
Tel: (596) 56 37 66  
Fax: (596) 56 37 56  
(Consultant in organization  
administration & management)
- Kappa Consultant  
Resid. Beau Pre 3 Rte. Du Phare  
97200 Fort-de-France  
Tel: (596) 61 07 92  
Fax: (596) 61 91 74  
(Consultant in organization  
administration & management)
- Top Management  
Resid. Allende Morne Dillon  
97200 Fort-de-France  
Tel: (596) 73 10 38  
Fax: (596) 73 10 46  
(Consultant in organization  
administration and management)
- Sogestrat  
4 Rue Anatole France  
97200 Fort-de-France  
Tel: (596) 60 17 09  
Fax: (596) 60 17 10  
(Market research)

## DOING BUSINESS WITH MARTINIQUE

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- M Consultant-Groupe IPSOS  
Hab. Desfourneaux  
97212 St. Joseph  
Fax: (596) 57 93 20  
(Market Research)
- Infoplus Telemedias (Market research)  
Morne Boyer 26 Cite Pinel  
97233 Schoelcher  
Tel: (596) 61 61 34  
Fax: (596) 61 61 92
- Kromwell Jean-Marc  
20 lot. Alizes Redoute  
97200 Fort-de-France  
Tel: (596) 79 95 45  
Fax: (596) 79 95 11  
(Advertising publisher)
- Les Editeurs Locaux  
126 Rue Victor Hugo  
97200 Fort-de-France  
Tel: (596) 71 82 00  
Fax: (596) 71 83 38  
(Advertising publisher)

### 7.4. ADVERTISING AND PUBLICITY

- C'Direct Stracom  
Lot. Acajou Californie  
97232 Lamentin  
Tel: (596) 50 85 60  
Fax: (596) 50 85 70  
(Advertising consultant)
- Despointes Claude  
Centre Dillon Valmeniere  
97200 Fort-de-France  
Tel: (596) 60 35 24  
Fax: (596) 60 41 02  
(Advertising consultant)
- Havas Martinique  
Rue Pietonne ZAC Riviere  
Roche  
97200 Fort-de-France  
Tel: (596) 42 56 78  
Fax: (596) 42 56 60  
(Advertising consultant)
- Crea Com  
20 Rue Robespierre  
97200 Fort-de-France  
Tel: (596) 70 52 21  
Fax: (596) 70 52 22  
(Advertising publisher)

- Pams Choubouloute  
32 Rue Perrinon  
97200 Fort-de-France  
Tel: (596) 63 23 02  
Fax: (596) 60 57 66  
(Advertising publisher)

### 7.4 BANKING INSTITUTIONS

- Central Bank  
Caisse Centrale de Cooperation Economique  
BP 804, 12 Bld. Du General de Gaulle  
97200 Fort-de-France  
Tel: (596) 73 31 02
- Commercial Banks  
Banques des Antilles Francaises (B.D.A.F)  
28 rue Lamartine  
97200 Fort-de-France  
Tel: (596) 60 72 72
- Banque National de Paris (BNP)  
Cite Artisanale Dillon  
97200 Fort-de-France  
Tel: (596) 75 08 18

## DOING BUSINESS WITH MARTINIQUE

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- Caisse Regionale du Credit Agricole Mutuel  
Place d'Armes rue Case-Negres  
97232 Lamentin  
Tel: (596) 66 59 39  
Fax: (596) 51 51 37
- Societe Generale de Banque aux Antilles (SGBA)  
19 Rue de la Liberte  
97200 Fort-de-France  
Tel: (596) 63 11 00  
Fax: (596) 73 85 57
- Caisse Federal de Credit Mutuel Antilles Guyane  
Rue Prof. Raymond Garcin  
97200 Fort-de-France  
Tel: (596) 63 53 00  
Fax: (596) 71 49 58

# DOING BUSINESS WITH MARTINIQUE

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## 8. APPENDICES

Table 1: Commercial Firms –Distribution by Sector (2005)

	0-9 workers	10 workers	10 & more	Total
<b>Trade</b>	5,813	60	274	6,147
<b>Industry</b>	2,096	51	308	2,455
<b>Services</b>	8,180	58	268	8,506
<b>Other</b>	133		3	136
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,222</b>	<b>169</b>	<b>853</b>	<b>17,244</b>

Source: CCIM Fichier des Entreprises

Table 2: Tourist Arrivals

	2003	2004	2005	2006	05/04 %1	06/05%2
<b>Long stay</b>	453 160	470 890	484 127	503 475	2.8	4
<b>Cruising</b>	268 542	159 416	93 063	96 089	-41.6	3.3
<b>Pleasure</b>	39 777	44 572	29 759	31 975	-33.2	7.4
<b>Other Excursionists</b>	24 230	21 423	32 111	23 674	49.9	-26.3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>785 709</b>	<b>696 301</b>	<b>636 060</b>	<b>655 213</b>	<b>-8.2</b>	<b>2.5</b>

Source: Comité Martiniquais du Tourisme

N.B - 05/04 %1 denotes percentage growth in 2005 over 2004

06/05 %2 denotes percentage growth in 2006 over 2005

Table 3: Number of active workers 2005

Type	Total	Banana	% of Total	Sugar	% of Total
<b>Family</b>	5,182	1,197	23	374	7
<b>Permanent employees</b>	4,328	3,491	81	814	19
<b>Paid seasonal</b>	2,790	1,378	49	426	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,300</b>	<b>6,066</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>1,614</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Annual work Unit</b>	<b>8,347</b>	<b>4,647</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>1,196</b>	<b>14</b>

Source: Agreste - Enquête Structure 2005

## DOING BUSINESS WITH MARTINIQUE

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Table 4: Balance of TRADE (€millions)

	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>
<b>Imports</b>	1,914.5	2 010.5	2,253.8	2,500.0
<b>Exports</b>	340.7	314.3	392.3	498.1
<b>Trade deficit</b>	1,573.8	1 696.2	1,861.5	2,000.0
<b>Cover rate</b>	17.8%	15,6%	17.4%	19.5%

Source: Directorate-General of the Customs

N.B 2006 numbers are estimates from information provided by INSEE.

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Table 6: Hotel stock

	Martinique		Area/Metropolitan France (%)
	2006	2007	2007
<b>Classified hotels</b>	99	92	0,5
<b>0 star</b>	33	30	1,5
<b>1 star</b>	4	4	0,3
<b>2 stars</b>	28	21	0,2
<b>3 stars</b>	30	31	0,8
<b>4 stars and luxury</b>	4	6	0,7
<b>Not classified hotels of chain</b>		0	0,0
<b>A number of rooms classified hotels</b>	4 747	4 846	0,8
<b>0 star</b>	750	728	1,1
<b>1 star</b>	66	65	0,2
<b>2 stars</b>	949	640	0,2
<b>3 stars</b>	2 585	2 670	1,5
<b>4 stars and luxury</b>	397	743	1,2
<b>A number of rooms not classified hotels of chain</b>	0	0	0,0

Source: INSEE, Direction of Tourisme

Table 7: Agriculture Land use

Land use	2004 (ha)	2005 (ha)	Production 2005 tonnes
<b>Aromatic and medicinal crops, condiments</b>	80	70	377
<b>Sugar cane</b>	3,690	3,780	214,144
<b>Fruit bear crops excluding bananas</b>	315	270	5,048
<b>Banana</b>	8,600	7,650	260,361
<b>Vegetable culture*</b>	2,682	2,2238	41,120
<b>Total arable land</b>	18,154	17,024	

N.B. This includes tubers, roots and bulbs; Fresh and dry vegetables

Source : Agreste - Statistique Agricole Annuelle