CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Bangui Declaration on Joint Actions

Resources & References

Delivering for the people, Prefecture by Prefecture

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Casablanca Proposals

The September 2025 Casablanca Roundtable, "Ambition 28"

The September 2025 Casablanca Roundtable, themed "Ambition 28," was designed to catalyse the Central African Republic's (CAR) National Development Plan (PND) 2024–2028 by securing $12.8 billion in total investment. The event successfully mobilised $9 billion (approx. CFAF 5 trillion) in pledges, representing 70% of the plan's requirements. These proposals sought to transition CAR from a state of humanitarian dependency to one of structural economic emergence through 543 total projects, with 24 priority initiatives presented in detail.

1. Energy and Power Infrastructure

Objectives: These proposals sought to double the national generation capacity and increase the national electrification rate from a historical baseline of 4% to 38%–40% by 2028.

- **Boali 3 Hydroelectric Project:** Aimed at completing and equipping the plant to stabilise the power grid in the capital, Bangui.
- **Lobaye River Dams:** Proposed the construction of the Bac (31 MW) and Lotemo (29 MW) run-of-river dams to significantly expand the clean energy grid.
- **Regional Mini-Plants:** The Small Hydroelectric Power Plants (PCH-RCA) project sought to bring electricity to remote provinces for the first time.
- **Mobayi Electrification:** Planned to electrify nine border localities by importing surplus power from the Mobayi plant in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).
- **Implementation Details:** The government proposed utilising Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) and securing guarantees through the African Guarantee Fund (FAGACE) to de-risk these heavy infrastructure investments.

2. Transportation and Regional Corridors

Objectives: As a landlocked nation, CAR proposed infrastructure to establish logistical connectivity to regional markets (CEMAC) and reduce the high cost of imports.

- **Export/Import Highways:** Priority projects included paving the 153 km Sibut-Dekoa-Kaga-Bandoro road, the 145 km Bangui-Bossembélé highway, and the 236 km Bossembélé-Baoro road to the Cameroonian border.
- **Strategic Bridges:** Proposed a 645-meter international bridge over the Ubangi River (Bangui-Zongo) to link CAR directly with the DRC, and the 190-meter Bimbo Bridge to relieve congestion in Bangui.
- **Implementation Details:** The plan calls for paving 2,300 kilometres of national roads by 2028. The African Development Bank (AfDB) has already approved a $300 million project for a 221 km transport corridor linking Bangui to Congo and Chad.

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3. Agricultural Modernisation

Objectives: Agriculture employs 80% of the rural population but remains subsistence-based; these proposals sought to turn CAR into the "granary of Central Africa".

- **Mechanisation Initiative:** Aimed at modernising 150,000 to 200,000 hectares of arable land using advanced irrigation systems, specifically in the Ouham Valley.
- **Agro-Industrial Clusters:** Entered around the SIAD centre, these clusters focus on local processing (cassava, sugarcane) and vocational training for agricultural technicians.
- **Implementation Details:** A landmark $1 billion partnership with the Indian group Mahasakthi was signed to strengthen the sugarcane and cassava value chains. Implementation also involves professionalizing the workforce to handle transformation and commercialisation.

4. Digital and Specialized Social Infrastructure

Objectives: These initiatives sought to establish CAR as a continental digital bridge and modernise state services through e-governance.

- **National Fiber Optic (Phase II):** Proposed laying 3,000 km of regional fiber optic cable to connect all prefectures.
- **National Digital Identity System (SNID):** Creation of a biometric database to support civil registries, secure elections, and financial inclusion.
- **Digital TV (TNT Access):** Building a nationwide digital television network based on the DVB-T2 standard to improve population connectivity.
- **Implementation Details:** Implementation includes the digitisation of administrative and financial databases to modernise public finance management.

5. Resource Management and Extractive Transition

Objectives: To transition from informal, raw exports to domestic value addition in mining and forestry.

- **Mining Infrastructure:** Proposed constructing specialised geological laboratories and issuing modernised mining maps to attract institutional private operators to explore CAR's 500+ identified mineral species.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Leveraging the Congo Basin (10% of CAR's territory) to monetise carbon credits and develop 23 million hectares of forest through domestic wood processing and ecotourism.
- **Implementation Details:** This is supported by the 2024 Mining Code, which mandates compliance with EITI standards and environmental obligations for title holders.

Proposed Implementation Mechanisms

To ensure the transition from "virtual billions" to tangible results, the government and its partners proposed the following administrative steps:

- **Project Delivery and Implementation Unit (PDIU):** A proposed dedicated unit within the Ministry of Finance to convert PND concepts into structured, bankable PPP models.
- **Transparent Bidding:** Intentions to institutionalise competitive bidding processes through an open registry audited by third parties to build investor confidence.

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- **Macroeconomic Anchoring:** Implementation is paced with fiscal space and risk management, aligning with the IMF's Extended Credit Facility (ECF) program.
- **18 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs):** Formally signed at the roundtable's conclusion, these MoUs provide the legal framework for immediate cooperation in transport, agriculture, and energy.

Follow-up and Current Status

- **Immediate Commitments:** Morocco pledged scholarships for 1,000 Central African students to bolster human capital.
- **Subsequent Funding:** Post-roundtable, the Saudi Fund for Development signed $20 million for reconstruction, and France announced a €30 million aid envelope in October 2025.
- **Challenges:** Despite the pledges, institutional skepticism remains high due to unexecuted past projects like the PK-28 airport and "Monkey Island". The May 2026 cabinet reshuffle, which saw the departure of Economy Minister Richard Filakota, has raised concerns regarding administrative continuity during the implementation phase of the MoUs.

Proposals Followed Up On or Starting Implementation

Several financial and strategic initiatives moved toward implementation shortly after the roundtable:

- **Bilateral Financial Envelopes:** In October 2025, just a month after the event, the Saudi Fund for Development signed an agreement for $20 million specifically for reconstruction. France followed with a €30 million aid envelope for budgetary and humanitarian support.
- **Regional Transport Corridors:** The African Development Bank (AfDB) approved a $300 million project to construct a 221 km transport corridor linking Bangui to Congo and Chad (Corridor CD13). This directly aligns with the PND's goal of breaking the country's landlocked isolation.
- **Agricultural Industrialisation:** The $1 billion partnership with the Indian group Mahasakthi has moved into the implementation phase to modernise the sugarcane and cassava value chains. This includes mechanisation and local processing clusters around the SIAD centre.
- **Human Capital Development:** The host nation, Morocco, formally followed up on its commitment by providing scholarships for 1,000 Central African students to bolster the nation's professional workforce.
- **Institutional Frameworks:** The 18 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) signed at the close of the roundtable provided a legal framework for cooperation in energy, transport, and digital technology. The government also began working with the IMF under its Extended Credit Facility (ECF) to maintain fiscal discipline, which is a prerequisite for the disbursement of many pledges.

Proposals Yet to Materialize or Facing Friction

While billions were pledged, several areas have yet to show tangible results, or have been met with skepticism based on historical precedents:

- **Large-Scale Energy Projects**: Major proposals like the Lotemo (29 MW) and Bac (31 MW) run-of-river dams remain in the "project preparation" window. Successful implementation of these and the Boali 3 Hydroelectric Project completion depends on converting PND concepts into structured, bankable Public-Private Partnership (PPP) models, a process that can take 6 to 18 months.
- **"Virtual Projects" and Skepticism:** Critics have labeled the Casablanca pledges "virtual billions," pointing to a long history of unexecuted large-scale announcements. Specific projects from previous plans that

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have yet to materialise include the PK-28 modern international airport, the "Monkey Island" (l'île des Singes) futuristic city, and the construction of 5,000 clean water boreholes.

- **Administrative Disruption**: A major implementation hurdle occurred in May 2026 with a cabinet reshuffle that saw the departure of Economy Minister Prof. Richard Filakota, the primary architect of the PND. Observers note this disrupted administrative continuity just as key MoUs were scheduled for operationalisation.
- **The Funding Gap Reality**: Despite $9 billion in pledges, the World Food Programme (WFP) reported severe funding shortfalls in late 2025, forcing them to reduce food rations for 442,000 displaced people. This underscores a disconnect between long-term development pledges and the immediate humanitarian financial needs that remain unmet.
- **Technical Critiques**: Some PND planning documents, such as the "RCA 2050" study, have been criticised for being purely academic and failing to propose operational programs or innovative financial models that would attract the very investors they seek.

Reversing skepticism based on historical precedents:

1. Energy and Power Infrastructure

These proposals sought to double the national generation capacity and increase the national electrification rate from a historical baseline of 4% to 38%–40% by 2028.

2. Transportation and Regional Corridors

As a landlocked nation, CAR proposed infrastructure to establish logistical connectivity to regional markets (CEMAC) and reduce the high cost of imports.

3. Agricultural Modernisation

Agriculture employs 80% of the rural population but remains subsistence-based; these proposals sought to turn CAR into the "granary of Central Africa".

4. Digital and Specialized Social Infrastructure

These initiatives sought to establish CAR as a continental digital bridge and modernise state services through e-governance.

5. Resource Management and Extractive Transition

To transition from informal, raw exports to domestic value addition in mining and forestry. Mining Infrastructure: Proposed constructing specialised geological laboratories and issuing modernised mining maps to attract institutional private operators to explore CAR's 500+ identified mineral species.

Proposed Implementation Mechanisms

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- **Agricultural Industrialisation**:
- **Human Capital Development**
- * **Fiscal discipline**, a prerequisite for disbursement of many pledges. Government began working with IMF under its Extended Credit Facility (ECF)

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While billions were pledged, several areas have yet to show tangible results, or have been met with Reversing skepticism based on historical precedents:

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SECTION 2 OF 5

Media

The media landscape in the Central African Republic

The media landscape in the Central African Republic (CAR) is dominated by radio, but persistent conflict has hampered its development, with journalists and media organisations caught between the authorities and armed groups and targeted by both. Key broadcasters include state-run TVCA and Radio Centrafrique, whose FM coverage is limited, alongside Radio Ndeke Luka ("bird of luck"), run by Swiss NGO Fondation Hirondelle, which provides balanced output and rebroadcasts international news bulletins, and Guira FM, operated by the UN stabilisation mission (Minusca), available in the capital and regions and named after a tree under which differences are resolved. About two dozen privately owned radio stations, many run by religious organisations, complement local relays in Bangui of BBC World Service (90.2 FM), Radio France Internationale and Voice of America. Privately owned newspapers have limited reach because of low literacy levels and poor rural distribution, while internet access is mainly confined to Bangui: Internetworldstats.com recorded 557,000 internet users, or 11% of the population, by December 2021. Online platforms such as Corbeau News Centrafrique and aBangui, together with international outlets such as Jeune Afrique, provide regular updates.

Press

- Le Citoyen - private, daily
- Le Confident - private, daily
- L'Hirondelle - private, daily
- Centrafric Matin, external - private, daily
- La Fraternite - private, daily
- Le Democrate - private, daily

Television

- Television Centrafricaine (TVCA) - state-run

Radio

- Entreafrique
- - state-run
- Radio Notre Dame - Catholic
- Radio Ndeke Luka, external - run by Swiss NGO Fondation Hirondelle
- Guira FM, external - operated by UN stabilisation mission

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Online

- Centrafrique-presse, external - private, news site
- aBangui, external - private, news site
- Corbeau News Centrafrique, external - private, news site
- JournalDeBangui, external - private, news site
- Jeune Afrique, external - French based pan-African news magazine
- News Now - English language world news on the CAR
- Africa Confidential -

Local and Regional Media (Radio/TV/Online)

- Radio Ndeke Luka: The most listened-to station, created by Fondation Hirondelle, offering 24/7 news in French and Sango.
- Guira FM: A UN-supported station (93.3 FM) providing, nationwide, non-partisan news.
- Télévision Centrafricaine (TVCA): State-run television station.
- Corbeau News Centrafrique: A private online news site focusing on politics and corruption.
- aBangui / JournalDeBangui: Private online portals aggregating local news.
- RJDH (Réseau des Journalistes pour les Droits de l'Homme): Produces daily news bulletins.

International Coverage

- BBC News: Dedicated CAR coverage, often covering regional stability.
- Radio France Internationale (RFI): Provides extensive coverage in French.
- allAfrica - CAR: Aggregates news from various sources.
- Deutsche Welle (DW) - Centrafrique: German international broadcaster offering French coverage.
- Euronews: Covers key developments in the country.
- The Africa Report: Covers political and business developments.
- Le Citoyen, L'Echo de Centrafrique, and L'Hirondelle are listed as independent, though print reach is limited.

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SECTION 3 OF 5

Multilaterals and Regional Bodies

African Development Bank

The African Development Bank (AfDB) is a multilateral development finance institution established in 1964 to support economic and social development across Africa. African Development Bank It provides loans, grants, technical assistance, and policy support to African countries and private-sector organisations to finance projects that promote sustainable development. The AfDB focuses on areas such as infrastructure, energy, agriculture, education, healthcare, regional integration, and climate resilience, helping countries reduce poverty, create jobs, and strengthen economic growth. Through investments and partnerships, the bank supports African governments in implementing development strategies and works to improve living standards and increase economic opportunities across the continent.

The Bank is one of CAR's largest infrastructure financiers. supporting projects that improve roads and connectivity; thus helping to facilitate trade and access to markets. It also promotes regional integration by supporting initiatives that strengthen CAR's links with neighbouring countries and regional economic communities. The Bank also invests in energy development to expand access to reliable electricity, as well as water infrastructure projects that improve access to safe water and sanitation services. In agriculture, the AfDB supports initiatives to increase productivity, strengthen food security, and improve rural livelihoods. Additionally, it provides assistance for institutional strengthening and public financial management reforms to enhance government capacity, transparency, and effective use of public resources.

Responsibility for Engagement with the Central African Republic

Engagement with CAR is led through the Country Office located in Bangui and headed by Country Manager Mamadou Coulibaly, which in turn is managed by the Bank's Central Africa Regional Department. Activities are coordinated by sector-specific departments, including Transport, Energy, Water and Sanitation, Agriculture, Governance, and Human Development. Project implementation is tracked and assessed by the Country Portfolio Performance Review (CPPR) mechanism.

Examples of Ongoing Initiatives

Examples of the Bank's activities include:

- Pointe-Noire–Brazzaville–Bangui–N'Djamena Multimodal Transport Corridor (CD13)
- Gouga–Mbaïki–Bangui Highway Paving Project
- Mongoumba River Port Construction
- Bangui M'Poko Airport Modernisation Support Programme (PAMAB)

AfCTA

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is a trade agreement that aims to create a single, integrated market for goods and services across Africa by bringing together all African Union member states. African Continental Free Trade Area Established in 2018 and operational from 2021, the AfCFTA seeks to reduce trade barriers, such as tariffs and restrictions on cross-border commerce, while promoting the free movement of

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goods, services, and investment across the continent. It supports economic growth by encouraging intra-African trade, strengthening regional value chains, attracting investment, and helping African businesses access larger markets. By increasing cooperation between countries and improving trade connectivity, the AfCFTA aims to boost industrial development, create jobs, diversify economies, and enhance Africa's position in the global economy.

In CAR, the AfCTA promotes greater integration into continental trade networks and improving the country's capacity to participate in regional and international markets. Through the reduction of tariff barriers, the AfCFTA helps lower the costs of exporting and importing goods, making trade between CAR and other African countries more competitive. It works to eliminate non-tariff barriers, such as restrictive regulations and administrative obstacles, while improving trade facilitation measures to make cross-border commerce faster and more efficient. The agreement also supports customs modernisation by encouraging more efficient border procedures and digital systems that reduce delays. As a result, the AfCFTA encourages investment by creating a more predictable and integrated trade environment, while supporting the harmonisation of trade policies across African countries. Through these efforts, the AfCFTA contributes to private sector development in CAR by helping businesses access larger markets, improve competitiveness, and expand economic opportunities.

Responsibility for Engagement with the Central African Republic

Engagement with CAR is coordinated through the AfCFTA Secretariat in Accra, Ghana, and its Secretary-General Wamkele Mene. Dialogue is held withCAR's Ministry of Trade and Industry, which serves as the national implementing authority alongside the AfCTA's own national implementation comittees. Unlike the other organisations discussed in this folder, the AfCFTA does not maintain country offices.

Examples of Ongoing Initiatives

Current initiatives include:

- Implementation of CAR's National AfCFTA Strategy
- Customs and trade facilitation reforms
- Capacity-building for trade institutions
- Support for rules of origin implementation

African Union

The African Union (AU) is a continental organisation made up of 55 African countries that was established in 2002 to promote unity, cooperation, peace, security, and sustainable development across Africa. African Union It works to advance economic integration, support democratic governance, protect human rights, coordinate responses to conflicts and humanitarian crises, and represent African interests in global affairs. The AU develops continent-wide initiatives, such as promoting trade through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), supporting infrastructure and development projects, and coordinating peacekeeping and conflict prevention efforts through its peace and security structures. By encouraging cooperation among member states, the AU aims to strengthen Africa's political influence, economic growth, and long-term stability.

In CAR, the AU's activities are primarily centred on peacekeeping and mediation between political actors. With this, the AU implements African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), offering governance and constitutional support to member states. The AU also coordinates its efforts with United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) in pursuing regional political stability.

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As a result, unlike development banks, the AU is principally a political and security organisation rather than an infrastructure financier.

Responsibility for Engagement with the Central African Republic

The African Union's engagement with CAR is primarily coordinated through:

- The Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC) Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, who provides overall political oversight of AU activities.
- The AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, responsible for conflict prevention, governance, peacebuilding, and security engagement.
- The Peace and Security Council (PSC), which oversees AU responses to peace and security issues affecting CAR.
- The AU Liaison Office in the Central African Republic, which coordinates political engagement with the Government of CAR, the United Nations, ECCAS, and other international partners.
- The Panel of the Wise and AU-appointed special envoys, when mandated to support mediation and political dialogue.

Examples of Ongoing Initiatives

Current and recent AU-supported initiatives include:

- Implementation support for the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation (APPR-RCA)
- Election observation missions
- Cooperation with ECCAS and the United Nations on peacebuilding
- Assistance with security sector reform and Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration (DDR) processes

ECCAS

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) is a regional intergovernmental organisation made up of countries in Central Africa that was established in 1983 to promote economic cooperation, regional integration, and sustainable development among its member states. Economic Community of Central African States works to strengthen trade, improve infrastructure and connectivity, support peace and security, and encourage political cooperation across the region. In addition to its economic goals, ECCAS plays an important role in conflict prevention, peacekeeping, and the coordination of responses to security challenges, helping member countries collaborate on issues such as governance, humanitarian crises, and cross-border threats. Through these efforts, ECCAS aims to foster stability, economic growth, and greater integration throughout Central Africa.

In CAR, ECCAS supports regional economic integration, contributing towards transport corridor planning, cross-border infrastructure, and aiming for the harmonisation of regional transport standards. ECCAS promotes free movement initiatives in the pursuit of regional trade facilitation. As a result, many regional transport projects in CAR originate from ECCAS transport master plans.

Responsibility for Engagement with the Central African Republic

ECCAS' engagement with CAR is coordinated through the ECCAS Commission and its president, Gilberto Da Piedade Verissimo; the Department of Regional Integration and Infrastructure; the Department of Peace, Security and Humanitarian Affairs; and ministerial committees responsible for transport, infrastructure, security, and economic integration.

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As CAR is one of the founding members of ECCAS, it participates directly in ministerial and Heads of State meetings.

Examples of Ongoing Initiatives

Current initiatives include:

- Implementation of the Central Africa Regional Transport Master Plan.
- Development of the Pointe-Noire–Brazzaville–Bangui–N'Djamena Multimodal Transport Corridor (CD13)

CEMAC

The Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) is a regional organization that brings together six Central African countries—Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, and Gabon—to promote economic integration and monetary cooperation. Central African Economic and Monetary Community was established in 1994 and oversees a common market and a shared currency, the Central African CFA franc, which is managed by the Bank of Central African States (BEAC). CEMAC works to facilitate the free movement of goods, services, capital, and people within the region, harmonize economic policies, strengthen financial stability, and support sustainable economic development. By fostering closer economic ties among its member states, CEMAC seeks to enhance regional competitiveness, attract investment, and promote long-term growth and stability in Central Africa

In CAR, CEMAC focuses on customs union, regional transport policy, trade facilitation, and infrastructure integration. The organisation also promotes financial integration by creating a common financial and monetary framework using the Central African France (CFA) that enables closer economic cooperation with CEMAC's other five member states. In addition, CEMAC supports the integration of regional payment systems and capital markets, making it easier for businesses and financial institutions in CAR to access financial services, attract investment, and participate in regional economic activities.

Its activities complement those of ECCAS by focusing more directly on economic and monetary integration.

Responsibility for Engagement with the Central African Republic

CEMAC's engagement with CAR lies with CEMAC Commission and its president Baltasar Engonga Edjo'O, where offices are held in Bangui. The Bank of Central African States (BEAC) is responsible for regional monetary policy the Development Bank of Central African States (BDEAC) finances CEMAC's regional infrastructure projects.

Examples of Ongoing Initiatives

Examples include:

- Coordination of the Douala–Bangui Economic Corridor
- Customs modernisation
- Implementation of the CEMAC Transport Master Plan

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SECTION 4 OF 5

Trade Data and Information

The Central African Republic's (CAR) trade environment combines regional integration and preferential market access with substantial costs of moving goods across borders. The Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) provides the core customs framework through its Common External Tariff (CET), with product-based import duties supplemented by VAT and other statutory charges. The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) has a broader role in regional integration and prospective harmonisation of customs procedures. CAR's wider trade relationships also encompass WTO membership, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the EU's Everything But Arms (EBA) arrangement, and bilateral investment treaties with Rwanda and Switzerland. These frameworks sit alongside practical constraints: border delays, administrative inefficiency, insecurity, roadblock payments, facilitation fees, and other informal charges add to the formal cost of trade and weaken competitiveness.

Merchandise trade is characterised by imports exceeding exports and a concentrated export base. The 2025 figures show exports of $255 million and imports of $573 million, producing a trade deficit of $318 million. The separate 2023 sector breakdown places stone and glass at 76.4% of exports, followed by wood and paper at 11.0% and transport equipment at 5.1%. At product level, gold, industrial diamonds, and timber feature prominently. Imports span a broader range of sectors, led by transport equipment, machinery and electronics, fuels, chemicals, and food products; petroleum oils, powdered milk, vehicles, medicines, and rice are among the principal products listed. Trading relationships show a similar contrast: the United Arab Emirates accounts for 69.4% of exports in the 2023 partner data, while import origins are more dispersed, with China, Cameroon, France, Côte d'Ivoire, and Japan among the leading suppliers.

Tariffs and transport conditions are therefore central to the relationship between market access and the actual cost of importing and exporting. The 2026 tariff figures give a simple average most-favoured-nation (MFN) applied rate of 18.0% and a trade-weighted rate of 16.3%, with agricultural tariffs averaging 20.0% compared with 16.0% for non-agricultural goods. The transport inventory includes airports, postal exchanges, and a road terminal, with facilities listed in Bangui and other locations across the country. Against this infrastructure backdrop, cumulative customs charges, logistics costs, delays, and informal payments shape the conditions under which trade takes place. The combination of a narrow export base, wider import requirements, and costly cross-border movement defines the central features of CAR's commercial links with regional and international markets.

CEMAC and ECCAS

CAR's regional trade system is shaped as much by informal taxation, insecurity, and administrative inefficiency as by formal customs and tariff frameworks. While mechanisms such as the CEMAC Common External Tariff (CET), VAT systems, customs duties, and export levies define the formal trading environment, the operational reality across the country's major corridors is dominated by roadblock payments, facilitation fees, militia taxation, security charges, and prolonged border delays.

Across all corridors, the combined impact of formal and informal costs significantly increases the price of moving goods into and out of the CAR. In many cases, unofficial payments exceed official charges, reducing competitiveness, incentivising smuggling, and weakening formal state revenue collection.

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Formal trade across CAR's regional corridors is governed by the Central African Economic and CEMAC), which establishes the core customs and tariff framework applied across member states. The most significant is the Common External Tariff (CET), which sets a unified structure for import duties across the region.

Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC)

The CET functions as the baseline formal cost layer for all cross-border trade entering CAR. It defines the minimum official tax burden applied to imported goods before any additional domestic taxes, administrative charges, or informal payments are incurred along transport corridors.

Under CEMAC's framework, import duties are standardised across member states, but applied in tiered categories depending on product type. In practice, this creates a formal tariff environment that already places a significant cost burden on imported goods before they enter national distribution systems. In addition to the CET, imports into CAR are subject to VAT and other statutory customs-related charges.

The key feature of this structure is the cumulative stacking of formal charges, which establishes a high baseline cost of entry for all goods entering these corridor systems. This means that even before logistics costs, delays, or informal payments are considered, imported goods entering CAR already operate within a structurally high-cost formal tariff environment.

Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)

ECCAS plays a broader role in regional integration planning, its influence on tariff structures is more indirect; its relevance lying in future harmonisation efforts and planned alignment of customs procedures.

Being the wider regional body responsible for promoting trade integration across Central Africa, it works towards aligning tariff systems across member states. One of the key proposals under discussion is a more unified tariff structure, with some product categories facing higher maximum rates.

If implemented, this would change the official cost of importing goods into the region. For CAR, this could increase import costs over time, affecting everyday consumer goods and industrial supplies. Any increase would be added on top of existing CEMAC tariffs, translating into the cost of imports would rise before goods enter transport corridors where additional delays and informal charges are already common.

Trade Figures

Merchandise Trade Overview (2025)

- Exports: $255M
- Imports: $573M
- Trade Balance: -$318M1

Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Network

Regional Integration & Agreements

- Major Blocs: CEMAC, ECCAS, AfCFTA, WTO, EU (via EBA)
- FTA Partners: 17 countries across all agreements
- Key Agreements:
- WTO Membership (Multilateral, In Force since 1995)
- CEMAC (Customs Union, In Force since 1999)

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- UDEAC (Customs Union, Superseded)
- ECCAS (RTA, In Force since 1985)
- AfCFTA (FTA, In Force since 2019)
- EU Everything But Arms (PTA, In Force since 2001)
- Bilateral Investment Treaties (BIT) with Rwanda and Switzerland
- Ongoing Negotiations: Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) with the EU (Central Africa group)
- Trade Policy: Deeply rooted in regional integration, preferential market access as a Least Developed Country, protection for foreign investments2

Products & Sectors Overview

Export Sectors (2023)

- Total Export Value: $113.2M
- Top Sectors:
- Stone & Glass (HS 68-71): 76.4%
- Wood & Paper (HS 44-49): 11.0%
- Transport Equipment (HS 86-89): 5.1%
- Machinery & Electronics (HS 84-85): 2.9%
- Footwear & Headgear (HS 64-67): 1.2%
- Export Concentration: Highly concentrated; top 3 sectors = 92.5%, top 5 = 96.5%
- Other Sectors: Food Products, Miscellaneous, Textiles & Clothing, Vegetable Products, Base Metals, Chemicals, Plastics & Rubber, Fuels, Animal Products, Minerals3

Import Sectors

Overview (2023)

- Total Import Value: $742.4M1
- Import Composition: 16 HS sectors
- Top Import Sectors:
- Transport Equipment (HS 86-89): $159.8M (21.5%)
- Machinery & Electronics (HS 84-85): $125.8M (16.9%)
- Fuels (HS 27): $100.2M (13.5%)
- Chemicals (HS 28-38): $65.1M (8.8%)
- Food Products (HS 16-24): $53.8M (7.3%)
- Other Sectors: Vegetable Products, Base Metals, Animal Products, Miscellaneous, Plastics & Rubber, Textiles & Clothing, Minerals, Wood & Paper, Stone & Glass, Footwear & Headgear, Hides & Skins1
- Import Concentration: Top 3 sectors = 52.0%, Top 5 = 68.0%. Imports are well diversified across multiple sectors1.

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Detailed HS6 Breakdown — Export Products (2023)

Top Export Products

- Gold in unwrought forms (HS 710812): $72.3M (71.7%)
- Diamonds industrial (HS 710221): $14.2M (14.1%)
- Keruing, Ramin, Kapur, Teak, Jongkong, Merbau (HS 440333): $7.6M (7.5%)
- Wood, nes sawn or chipped (HS 440799): $4.7M (4.7%)
- Food preparations (HS 210690): $943K (0.9%)
- Other vegetables (HS 070999): $568K (0.6%)
- Other prepared/preserved fruit (HS 200899): $213K (0.2%)
- Semi-milled/wholly milled rice (HS 100630): $70K (0.1%)
- Petroleum oils (HS 271019): $65K (0.1%)
- Other oil seeds (HS 120799): $56K (0.1%)
- Palm kernel oil (HS 151319): $52K (0.1%)
- Cocoa beans (HS 180100): $30K (0.0%)
- Coffee (HS 090111): $21K (0.0%)
- Fowls, frozen (HS 020714): $10K (0.0%)
- Live bovine animals (HS 010229): $5K (0.0%)
- Waters, mineral/aerated (HS 220210): $3K (0.0%)
- Live sheep/lambs (HS 010410): $3K (0.0%)
- Live goats (HS 010420): $2K (0.0%)
- Fish, frozen (HS 030389): $1K (0.0%)
- Cut flowers (HS 060310): $1K (0.0%)
- Coconuts, Brazil nuts, Cashew nuts, Bananas, Guavas, Oranges, Green tea, Pepper, Cumin seeds, Soya beans, Ground-nuts, Sunflower seeds, Plants for perfumery/pharmacy, Lac, Vegetable saps/extracts, Oilcake (all $1K or less) 4

Detailed HS6 Breakdown — Import Products (2023)

Top Import Products

- Petroleum oils (HS 271000): $99.0M (18.6%)
- Milk and cream, powder (HS 040221): $47.2M (8.9%)
- Tanks/armoured vehicles (HS 871000): $32.7M (6.2%)
- Automobiles, diesel (HS 870323): $27.3M (5.1%)
- Special purpose motor vehicles (HS 870590): $20.2M (3.8%)
- Food preparations (HS 210690): $20.0M (3.8%)
- Medicaments (HS 300490): $20.0M (3.8%)
- Rice (HS 100600): $16.5M (3.1%)
- Medicaments with antibiotics (HS 300420): $15.0M (2.8%)

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- Meat and edible offal (HS 020700): $14.8M (2.8%)
- Cheese and curd (HS 040690): $10.0M (1.9%)
- Antisera/blood fractions (HS 300210): $10.0M (1.9%)
- Structures, iron/steel (HS 730890): $10.0M (1.9%)
- Onions/shallots (HS 070310): $9.9M (1.9%)
- Wheat/meslin flour (HS 110100): $9.7M (1.8%)
- Salt (HS 250100): $9.6M (1.8%)
- Bars/rods, iron/steel (HS 721420): $8.0M (1.5%)
- Cigarettes (HS 240220): $7.3M (1.4%)
- Palm oil (HS 151190): $7.3M (1.4%)
- Screws, bolts, nuts (HS 731815): $7.0M (1.3%)
- Beer (HS 220300): $6.5M (1.2%)
- Sacks/bags, polymers (HS 392321): $6.0M (1.1%)
- Flat-rolled iron/steel (HS 721041): $6.0M (1.1%)
- Fish, frozen (HS 030329): $6.0M (1.1%)
- Birds' eggs (HS 040711): $5.0M (0.9%)
- Fertilizers (HS 310510): $5.0M (0.9%)
- Woven cloth, iron/steel wire (HS 731420): $5.0M (0.9%)
- Tableware, plastics (HS 392410): $4.0M (0.8%)
- Men's/boys' trousers (HS 620342): $4.0M (0.8%)
- Aluminium foil (HS 760711): $4.0M (0.8%)
- Tomatoes (HS 070200): $3.0M (0.6%)
- Portland cement (HS 252329): $3.0M (0.6%)
- Maize flour (HS 110220): $3.0M (0.6%)
- Herbicides (HS 380894): $3.0M (0.6%)
- New pneumatic tyres (HS 401110): $3.0M (0.6%)
- Bed linen, cotton (HS 630231): $3.0M (0.6%)
- Refined copper bars (HS 740710): $3.0M (0.6%)
- Meat, bovine (HS 020230): $2.5M (0.5%)
- Meat, swine (HS 020322): $2.5M (0.5%)
- Soap (HS 340111): $2.5M (0.5%)
- T-shirts, cotton (HS 610910): $2.5M (0.5%)
- Tubes/pipes, iron/steel (HS 730431): $2.5M (0.5%)
- Cane/beet sugar (HS 170199): $2.0M (0.4%)
- Bananas (HS 080390): $2.0M (0.4%)
- Vegetable fats/oils (HS 151620): $2.0M (0.4%)
- Waters, mineral/aerated (HS 220210): $2.0M (0.4%)
- Cabbages, cauliflowers (HS 070410): $2.0M (0.4%)

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- Methanol (HS 290511): $2.0M (0.4%)
- Polyethylene (HS 390110): $2.0M (0.4%)
- Woven fabrics, cotton (HS 600522): $2.0M (0.4%) 5

Ports & Transport Facilities

Port Types & Distribution

- Total Facilities: 42
- Airport: 25
- Postal Exchange: 15
- Road Terminal: 1
- Seaport: 1
- Sample Ports:
- Alindao (CFALI) — Exchange
- Baboua (CFBAB) — Exchange, Operational
- Bakouma (CFBMF) — Airport, Operational
- Bambari (CFBBY) — Airport, Operational
- Bangassou (CFBGU) — Airport, Operational
- Bangui (CFBGF) — Airport, Operational
- Baoro (CFBAO) — Operational
- Batangafo (CFBTG) — Airport, Operational
- Berbérati (CFBBT) — Airport, Operational
- Birao (CFIRO) — Airport, Operational
- Bocaranga (CFBOC) — Exchange
- Boda (CFBOD) — Exchange
- Bogoto (CFBOG) — Terminal, Operational
- Bossangoa (CFBSN) — Airport, Operational
- Bossembélé (CFBEM) — Airport, Operational
- Bouar (CFBOP) — Airport, Operational
- Bouca (CFBCF) — Airport, Operational
- Bozoum (CFBOZ) — Airport, Operational
- Bria (CFBIV) — Airport, Operational
- Carnot (CFCRF) — Airport, Operational
- Facility Types: Airport, Postal Exchange, Road Terminal, Seaport2.

Tariffs

Tariff Environment (2026)

- WTO Member: Since 1995

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- GSP Beneficiary: Yes
- MFN Applied Rates:
- Simple Average MFN: 18.0%
- Trade-Weighted MFN: 16.3%
- Bound Tariffs:
- Average Bound Rate: 21.8%
- Duty-Free Lines: 5.0% of tariff lines at 0%
- Tariff Band Distribution: Ranges from 0% (duty free) up to 40%
- Sectoral Tariff Comparison (22 Sectors):
- Agriculture Average: 20.0%
- Non-Agricultural (NAMA) Average: 16.0%
- Highest Tariff Sectors: Sugars & Confectionery, Beverages & Tobacco, Cotton, Chemicals, Textiles, Clothing (all up to 40%)
- Leather & Footwear: 30%
- Coffee & Tea: 20%
- Regional Tariff Policy: Applies CEMAC Common External Tariff (CET) effective January 1, 2026
- EU EBA Arrangement: Duty-free and quota-free access for most products as a Least Developed Country.

Trading Partners

Export Destinations (2023)

- Total Export Value: $113.2M
- Top Export Partners:
- United Arab Emirates — $78.6M (69.4%)
- Italy — $8.1M (7.1%)
- France — $6.4M (5.7%)
- China — $4.3M (3.8%)
- Gabon — $4.2M (3.7%)
- Export Concentration: Top partner (UAE) = 69.4%, Top 3 = 82.2%, Top 5 = 89.7%, Top 10 = 96.2%4.

Import Origins (2023)

- Total Import Value: $726.8M
- Top Import Partners:
- China — $126.0M (17.1%)
- Cameroon — $115.0M (15.6%)
- France — $83.1M (11.3%)
- Cote d'Ivoire — $47.8M (6.5%)
- Japan — $37.6M (5.1%)
- Import Concentration: Top partner (China) = 17.1%, Top 3 = 44.0%, Top 5 = 55.6%, Top 10 = 72.7%4.

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SECTION 5 OF 5

Treaties

Trade preference schemes and international partnerships

Trade preference schemes and international partnerships offer a framework for understanding the opportunities and conditions surrounding the Central African Republic's (CAR) access to international markets and cooperation with other countries. The European Union's Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) and the United Kingdom's Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS) should be considered in terms of their potential benefits, eligibility requirements and associated obligations. CAR's bilateral cooperation with selected BRICS countries is also worthy of note, with a distinction drawn between these relationships and formal participation in the BRICS grouping.

GSP+

GSP+ (Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus) is a special trade arrangement offered by the European Union that gives eligible developing countries duty-free access on most exports to the EU market in exchange for implementing international conventions on human rights, labor rights, environmental protection, and good governance.

Key benefits for a country with GSP+ status include:

1. Increased Exports to the EU

- Most products can enter the EU with **zero or reduced tariffs**.
- Makes the country's exports more competitive compared with countries that do not have GSP+.
- Particularly beneficial for sectors such as textiles, garments, fisheries, agriculture, and manufactured goods.

2. Economic Growth and Foreign Exchange Earnings

- Higher exports generate more foreign currency earnings.
- Can improve the country's trade balance and support economic growth.

3. Job Creation

- Export-oriented industries often expand production to meet increased demand from EU buyers.
- This can create employment opportunities, especially in manufacturing and agriculture.

4. Attraction of Foreign Investment

- Investors may establish factories or sourcing operations in GSP+ countries to take advantage of preferential access to the EU market.
- This can bring technology transfer and skills development.

5. Diversification of the Economy

- Encourages development of new export sectors and products.

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- Reduces dependence on a small number of export markets or commodities.

6. Improved International Reputation

- GSP+ eligibility requires compliance with 27 international conventions.
- Maintaining GSP+ status signals commitment to good governance, labor standards, environmental protection, and human rights.

7. Institutional and Regulatory Improvements

To qualify and remain eligible, governments often strengthen:

- Labour laws
- Environmental regulations
- Anti-corruption measures
- Human rights protections
- These reforms can have broader developmental benefits beyond trade.

Example: countries such as **Pakistan** and **Sri Lanka** have benefited significantly from GSP+ through increased exports to the EU, particularly in the textile and apparel sectors.

Potential Risks

- A country can lose GSP+ if it fails to meet the required international commitments.
- Heavy reliance on GSP+ preferences can create vulnerability if the scheme changes or preferences are withdrawn.

In summary, the biggest practical benefit of GSP+ is **preferential access to the EU market, which can boost exports, investment, and employment while encouraging governance and sustainability reforms.**

EU GSP+

The EU GSP+ (Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus) is a special trade arrangement that grants eligible developing countries duty-free access to the EU market on most tariff lines in exchange for meeting strict sustainability, governance, labour, and human-rights obligations.

Main criteria for obtaining GSP+ status, where a country must satisfy all of the following:

1. Be an eligible developing country

The country must:

- Be classified by the World Bank as a low-income or lower-middle-income country.
- Not already have a preferential trade arrangement with the EU that provides equivalent market access (e.g., a comprehensive Free Trade Agreement).

2. Be considered a “vulnerable” economy

The EU reserves GSP+ for countries that are economically vulnerable, meaning:

- Their exports are not well diversified.
- They are relatively dependent on a limited range of products and markets.
- Under the current framework, vulnerability is assessed using indicators such as export concentration and limited integration into the international trading system.

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3. Ratify the 27 international conventions

The applicant must have ratified 27 international conventions covering:

- Human rights
- Labour rights
- Environmental protection
- Climate-related commitments
- Good governance and anti-corruption measures

4. Effectively implement those conventions

Ratification alone is not enough. The country must demonstrate:

- Actual implementation in law and practice.
- Compliance with reporting obligations under those conventions.
- Progress in addressing deficiencies identified by international monitoring bodies.

5. Accept EU monitoring and dialogue

The country must:

- Cooperate with the European Commission.
- Allow regular monitoring, information exchanges, and review missions.
- Engage with civil society and international organisations involved in the monitoring process.

6. Submit a formal application

Unlike standard GSP benefits, GSP+ is **not automatic**. An eligible country must:

- Apply to the European Commission.
- Provide evidence of ratification and implementation of the conventions.
- Commit to ongoing compliance.

Can GSP+ status be withdrawn?

Yes. The EU can suspend or withdraw GSP+ benefits if a beneficiary country commits:

- Serious and systematic violations of human rights.
- Serious breaches of labour standards.
- Failures regarding environmental, climate, or governance commitments.
- Failure to cooperate with monitoring requirements.

Examples of current GSP+ beneficiaries

Current beneficiaries include:

- Pakistan
- Sri Lanka
- Philippines
- Uzbekistan
- Mongolia

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- Kyrgyzstan
- Bolivia
- Cabo Verde (Cape Verde)

The EU adopted a revised GSP Regulation in 2026 that will apply from 2027, expanding the number of required conventions from 27 to 32 and strengthening monitoring requirements. Countries seeking or retaining GSP+ status under the new regime will need to comply with these additional obligations.

If you mean EU GSP+ status, the current beneficiary countries are:

1. Bolivia
2. Cabo Verde (Cape Verde)
3. Kyrgyzstan
4. Mongolia
5. Pakistan
6. Philippines
7. Sri Lanka
8. Uzbekistan

GSP+ gives these vulnerable developing countries duty-free access to the EU market for most products, provided they implement international conventions on human rights, labor rights, environmental protection, climate action, and good governance.

UK GSP

The UK GSP (in force from 1 January 2021 until it was replaced by the Developing Countries Trading Scheme in June 2023) covered 70 developing countries, which now applies to 65 developing countries.

The UK's Developing Countries Trading Scheme (DCTS) is a unilateral trade preference system that gives lower tariffs—or in many cases zero tariffs—to eligible developing countries exporting goods into the UK. It came into force on 19 June 2023 and replaced the UK's earlier post-Brexit Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP). The purpose is to support economic development by making it easier for poorer countries to sell products into the British market while also reducing costs for UK businesses and consumers.

Rather than being a negotiated free trade agreement where both sides make concessions, the DCTS is a scheme offered by the UK alone. Countries do not negotiate tariff reductions in return; instead, if they meet eligibility criteria, they can access preferential treatment when exporting to Britain.

The scheme currently applies to 65 countries that are classified mainly as least developed countries, low-income countries, or lower-middle-income countries. Many of these are in Africa, Asia, and parts of the Caribbean. More than half of the participating countries are African.

The DCTS is structured around three preference tiers:

Comprehensive Preferences are the most generous category and mainly apply to Least Developed Countries (LDCs). Countries in this tier receive duty-free and quota-free access on almost all products except arms. There are 47 countries in this category.

Enhanced Preferences provide zero tariffs on approximately 92% of product lines. These are available to certain economically vulnerable developing countries.

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Standard Preferences provide zero tariffs on around 65% of product lines and reduced tariffs on many additional products.

One of the main changes compared with the previous GSP system is that the UK simplified "rules of origin." Rules of origin determine whether a product genuinely comes from an eligible country. Under older systems, these rules could be complex and prevented some exporters from qualifying for lower tariffs. The DCTS allows more flexibility in sourcing components from other countries while still qualifying for preferential access. This can help developing countries integrate into regional and global supply chains.

Examples of products that can benefit include:

- Clothing and textiles
- Agricultural products and food items
- Processed foods
- Footwear
- Manufactured goods
- Certain household products and consumer goods

Reduced import taxes on these products can make exports from developing countries more competitive in the UK market.

The UK government presented several intended benefits:

- Supporting industrial growth and job creation in developing economies
- Diversifying supply chains
- Reducing prices for British consumers
- Lowering costs for UK importers
- Shifting from aid-based relationships toward trade-based development strategies

The scheme has also attracted criticism. Some analysts argue that although it is more generous than the previous UK system, many of its provisions closely resemble earlier EU arrangements and may not fundamentally transform trade patterns. Others raised concerns about conditions related to labour rights, human rights, and environmental standards, arguing that developing countries may face stricter expectations than some wealthier trading partners.

For a country such as Central African Republic, the DCTS could matter because it may provide preferential access for exports such as agricultural products or natural-resource-related goods entering the UK market, assuming the products satisfy the scheme's origin requirements and other eligibility rules.

BRICS Signups

The key distinction here is between (a) formal treaties, accession agreements, memberships, and signed frameworks, and (b) political engagement or summit attendance. The Central African Republic has relatively few formal arrangements directly with BRICS *as a bloc* because BRICS itself is a loose intergovernmental grouping rather than a treaty organization. Most of CAR's relationships are bilateral (especially with Russia and China) or through multilateral institutions.

Despite engaging diplomatically with BRICS nations, CAR has not become a BRICS member or partner state.

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Russia

Agreement / Arrangement	Approx. period	Area
Military cooperation agreement	2018	Security, training, arms support
Security assistance framework	2018–present	Military advisers and protection support
Mining concessions and resource cooperation agreements	Multiple	Gold, diamonds, mineral extraction
Education and scholarship agreements	Multiple	Student exchanges and training
Economic and technical cooperation memoranda	Multiple	Development cooperation

These arrangements expanded substantially after 2018 and reshaped CAR's security architecture.

China

Agreement / Arrangement	Area
Belt and Road cooperation understanding	Infrastructure and connectivity
Economic and technical cooperation agreements	Development financing
Mining and natural resource agreements	Gold and mineral projects
Health cooperation arrangements	Public health and hospital support
Agricultural cooperation	Farming support and training

China has become a major investor and infrastructure partner.

India

Agreement / Arrangement	Area
Development partnership programs	Capacity building
Training and technical assistance	Education and civil service
Pharmaceutical and health cooperation	Medicines and health systems

The relationship is much lighter than with Russia or China.

South Africa

Agreement / Arrangement	Area
Diplomatic cooperation understandings	Political engagement
Regional peace and security cooperation	African mechanisms

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