

# Welcome from Lesley Batchelor OBE, FIEEx (Grad) - Director General, Institute of Export & International Trade



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Kenya is generally considered the economic, commercial, and logistics hub of East Africa. This Doing Business in Kenya Guide will help prepare UK businesses who are looking to trade with this important market.

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Whilst this market can be challenging, historic ties to Britain mean that English is the language of business and there is a demand for British products. British companies are well placed to take advantage of opportunities in a number of sectors especially those to do with ICT, education & skills, transport, financial services and energy.

For businesses looking to expand their presence in east Africa as a whole, Kenya provides a logical first step. The Port of Mombasa is already the most important deep-water port in the region, catering to the shipping needs of more than a dozen countries and Kenya's financial and manufacturing industries, while relatively modest, are also the most sophisticated in East Africa.

As far as business culture is concerned, most business meetings are conducted in English and while corporate dress code is generally formal, nobody is likely to fault you for omitting a tie in your attire. It is common to find Kenyans going out of their way to make sure you feel comfortable often asking to know if you need any extra arrangements made for the meeting such as enlisting the services of an interpreter. It is important to remember that when responding to questions, you should try to avoid flat out 'no' responses, as most communities consider these rude. Similarly, you should also avoid phrasing any queries in the negative as these can lead to misunderstandings.

Although the Kenyan market can be challenging, not least because of the bureaucracy you will probably encounter, ease of doing business in Kenya has improved greatly in recent years, largely spurred on by key government reforms. You may also find having a local presence or establishing a good relationship with a local agent can help avoid many unnecessary restrictions. Whatever approach your business chooses to take, the Institute of Export & International Trade can help guide you through the intricacies of doing business in this fascinating country.

Good luck!

**Lesley Batchelor OBE, FIEEx (Grad) Director General - Institute of Export**  
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