

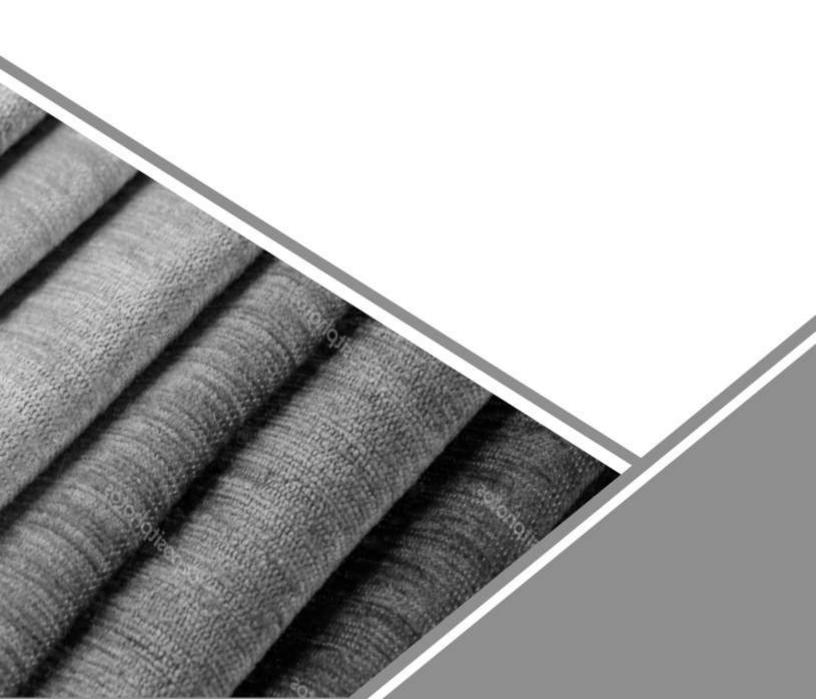






MARKET SURVEY

The Textile Industry in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

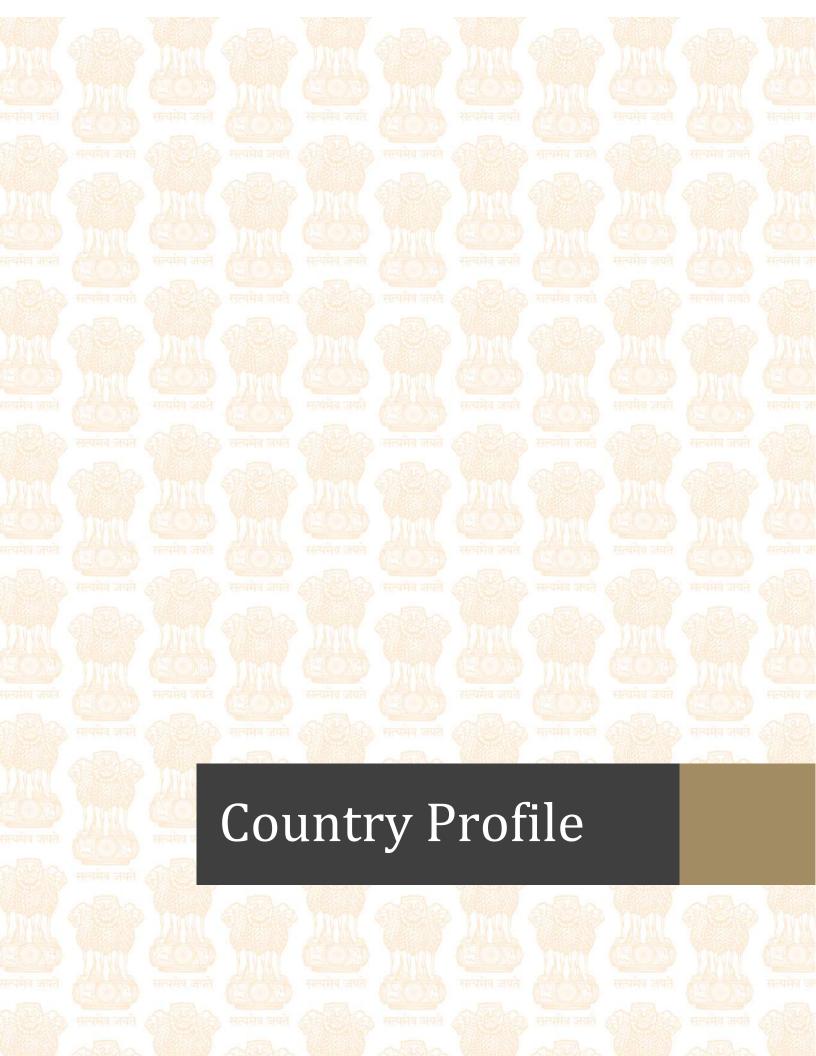


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Introduction

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is a sovereign and independent form of political organization, constituted under a republican and democratic model, characterized by principles of justice and equality and a stable union of states in which the different constitutional powers are distributed between a central government and the individual states that comprise it.

The established form of government is the federation, in which the relationship between the member states is organized under the principles of unity, autonomy, hierarchy and participation. This form of government is exercised through the administration of public finances and the execution of each of the legal instruments established for compliance with the law. This exercise of government is a product of the attributions established in the national constitution for each of the branches of public power.

The Public Power, according to the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, is distributed among the Municipal Power, the State Power and the National Power. The National Public Power is divided into Legislative, Executive, Judicial, Citizen and Electoral, while the State and Municipal Public Power is divided into Legislative, Executive and Citizen, the latter represented by the State or Municipal Comptroller's Office, as the case may be.

Geographical aspects.

Astronomical Geography

The territory of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela is astronomically located at 12° 11' 46" North latitude, 0° 38' 53" South latitude, 59° 47' 30" East longitude and 73° 23' 00" West longitude; the distance East - West is 1,493 Km and North - South is 1,271 Km. It covers a continental and insular surface of 916,445 Km2 and a continental platform of 98,500 Km2 with a coastline of 4006 Km to the north.

Physical Geography

The territory enjoys a mostly temperate climate typical of a tropical region, although due to its characteristics it is divided into natural regions. These regions are differentiated by climates that vary from dry to rainy depending on the location. It has been determined the existence of approximately 9 natural regions, and in general terms the average temperature of the territory is 28° C.

Political Geography

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela maintains a border in its northern part with the insular territories of the United States of America (Puerto Rico and U.S. Virgin Islands), the Kingdom of the Netherlands (Aruba, Curaçao and the Dutch Caribbean), the Dominican Republic, France (Guadeloupe and Martinique), and Trinidad and Tobago. Remaining to delimit part of the border with Colombia (430 km), the islands of St. Kitts and Nevis (80 km), the United Kingdom (Montserrat) (45 km), Dominica (80 km), St. Lucia (10 km), St. Vincent and the Grenadines (90 km) and Grenada (300 km).

Likewise, it maintains a border in its southern part with the Federative Republic of Brazil of 2,199 km, to the east with the Cooperative Republic of Guyana of 743 km (subject to change by claim) and to the west with the Republic of Colombia of 2,219 km.

The territory is divided into 23 Federal Entities, a Capital District, 89 Federal Dependencies and 2 Federal Territories, formed by the territories of Amazonas and Delta Amacuro, which re a special political division. In turn, the 23 Federal Entities are organized into 335 Municipalities and 1136 parishes.

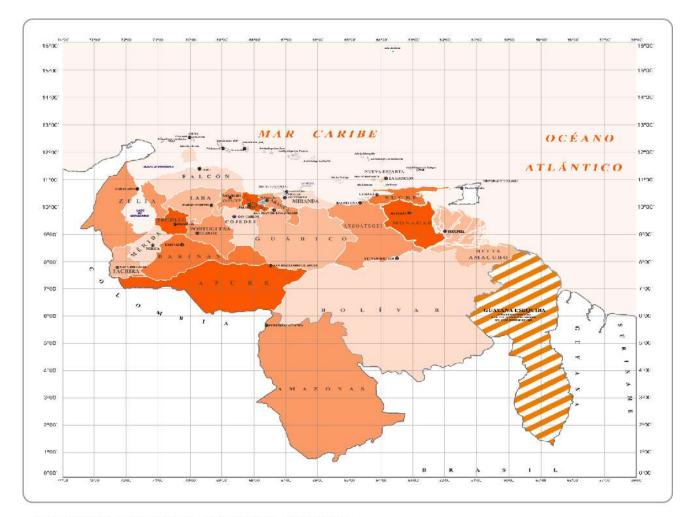


Figure 1 - Astronomical and geographic position of Venezuela

Source: Simón Bolívar Geographic Institute of Venezuela

Demographic aspects

Structural

The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela has a population of 31,028,637 people, of which 15,554,863 are men and 15,473,774 are women. Venezuelan life expectancy is 74.1 years with a birth rate of 20.1 births per 1,000 inhabitants and a neonatal mortality rate of 8.9 per 1,000 live births.

Dynamics

The schooling expectation is 14.2 years per inhabitant, with an average schooling of 8.9 years and a public expenditure on education of 6.9% of GDP. The employment rate at age 15 and older is 60.2%, with a labour force participation rate of 51.1% for women and 79.2% for men.

Economic Aspects

Summary

According to the data submitted by the Venezuelan National Bank (or Banco Central de Venezuela - BCV), the Venezuelan economy shows deep trouble with regard to economic growth, with high rates (5%) in 2012, while a sharp drop occurred since 2014 and economy is contracting for the seventh year running.

Despite being an oil economy, the oil sector is contributing less to the national productive apparatus, representing only 11% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP); a worrying situation because this is the only economic productive sector participating in international trade, and it contributes 98% of income in foreign currency. Consequently, the rest of the non-oil productive sectors, representing a non-tradable (89%) sector of the economy, is not working under criteria of efficiency and competitiveness. Additionally, the collapse of the oil market

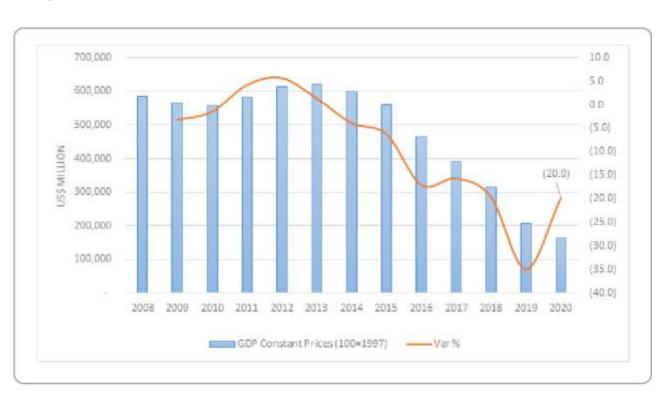
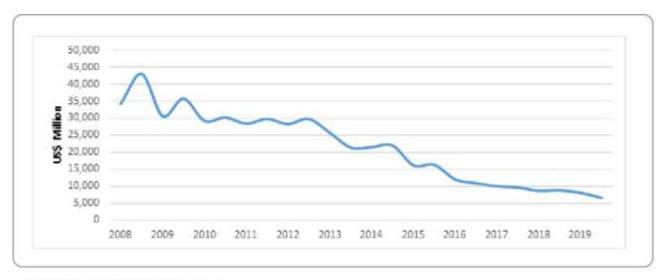


Figure 2. 2008-2020 GDP Constant Prices

Source: Central Bank of Venezuela

prices and the lack of investment has shortened the external revenues for all the Venezuelan economy. Additional U.S. sanctions have discouraged foreign investment in the oil sector.

Figure 4. Venezuela | International Reserves (US\$ Million) 2008-2019



Source: Central Bank of Venezuela

Figure 3 Balance of Payments (US\$ Million)



Source: Central Bank of Venezuela

The variation of prices is expected to remain at higher levels since the beginning of the hyperinflation period, changing exponentially. Nevertheless, the speed of price changes has relented and the inflation rate will be 5,000%, due to the partial dollarization of the economy which has encouraged economic activity and reduced scarcity levels.

In the period 2008-2018, international reserves fell to less than a quarter, reaching lower levels similar to those experienced 40 years ago. This creates a strong pressure on external balances.

The growth of the foreign debt and the drop in international reserves, make the current coverage be less than 5%, meaning that the amount of the international reserves only pays 5% of the total foreign debt. By 2017, the country has declared default over most debt bonds.

The balance of payments remained negative during the period 2008-2018, with the characteristic feature of maintaining surplus trade balances, but capital outflows exceeded this surplus. By 2015, for the first time in 20 years, the third and the fourth quarters are shown with negative trade balances, mainly due to the fall in oil prices.

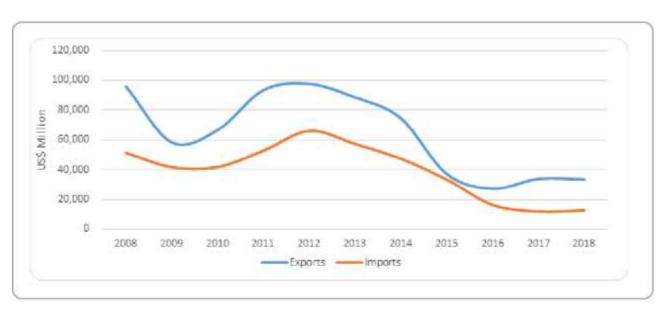


Figure 5 Trade Balance (US\$ Million)

Source: Central Bank of Venezuela

Table 1 Indicators | Labour

Labour			
Unemployment Rate	6.4	percent	Dec/2018
Employed Persons	15.011.108		Dec/2018
Unemployed Persons	1.018.421		Dec/2018
Population	32.98	Million	Dec/2021

Table 2 Indicators | GDP

GDP			
GDP Annual Growth Rate	-1.5	percent	Dec/2021
GDP	112	USD Billion	Dec/2021

Table 3 Indicators | Prices

Prices			
Inflation Rate	156	percent	Oct/22
Inflation Rate MoM	6.2	percent	Oct/22
Consumer Price Index CPI	5.654.207	million points	Oct/22
Food Inflation	158	percent	Oct/22
CPI Transportation	6.389.439.307	thousand points	Oct/22

Table 4 Indicators | Health

Health			
Coronavirus Vaccination Rate	134	doses per 100 people	Dec/22
Coronavirus Vaccination Total	37.860.994	doses	Dec/22
Coronavirus Cases	551.666	Persons	Feb/23
Coronavirus Deaths	5741	Persons	Jul/22

Table 5 Indicators | Money

Money			
Interest Rate	57.97	percent	Dec/22
Money Supply M0	13.93	VES Million	Dec/22
Money Supply M1	18.752	VES Million	Dec/22
Money Supply M2	18.806	VES Million	Dec/22
Money Supply M3	18.806	VES Million	Dec/22
Banks Balance Sheet	93.339.224	VES Thousand	Nov/22
Foreign Exchange Reserves	9.880	USD Million	Jan/23
Deposit Interest Rate	36	percent	Feb/23
Central Bank Balance Sheet	686.240.818	VES Thousand	Dec/22

Table 6 Indicators | Trade

Trade			
Balance of Trade	5.680	USD Million	Mar/19
Current Account	2.533	USD Million	Mar/19
Current Account to GDP	-2.1	percent of GDP	Dec/21
Exports	8627	USD Million	Mar/19
Imports	2947	USD Million	Mar/19
External Debt	0	USD Million	Dec/22
Gold Reserves	161	Tonnes	Dec/22
Crude Oil Production	669	BBL/D/1K	Dec/22
Foreign Direct Investment	105	USD Million	Mar/19
Terrorism Index	4.01	Points	Dec/21

Table 5 Indicators | Trade

Government			
Government Debt to GDP	241	percent of GDP	Dec/21
Government Budget	-4.5	percent of GDP	Dec/21
Credit Rating	11		Feb/23
Military Expenditure	0.4	USD Million	Dec/19
Corporate Tax Rate	34	percent	Dec/22
Personal Income Tax Rate	34	percent	Dec/22
Sales Tax Rate	16	percent	Dec/22
Social Security Rate	23	percent	Dec/22
Social Security Rate for Companies	17	percent	Dec/22
Social Security Rate for Employees	6	percent	Dec/22

Table 6 Indicators | Business

Business			
Industrial Production	-20.6	percent	Jan/19
Corruption Index	14	Points	Dec/22
Corruption Rank	177		Dec/22
Crude Oil Rigs	0		Jan/23

Table 7 Indicators | Consumer

Consumer			
Retail Sales MoM	-29.6	percent	Jan/19
Retail Sales YoY	-53.5	percent	Jan/19
Consumer Spending	3.819	VEF Million	Mar/19
Private Sector Credit	80.079	VES Thousand	Dec/22
Gasoline Prices	0.02	USD/Liter	Jan/23

Table 8 Indicators | Forecast - Markets

Forecast					
Markets	Actual	Q1/23	Q2/23	Q3/23	Q4/23
Currency	24.14	25	25.89	26.82	27.77
Stock Market (points)	26.440,01	25.005	23.542	22.166	20.867
Government Bond 10Y (%)	10.43	10.43	10.43	10.43	10.43

Table 9 Indicators | Forecast - Overview

Forecast					
Overview	Actual	Q1/23	Q2/23	Q3/23	Q4/23
GDP Annual Growth Rate (%)	-1.50				1.5
Inflation Rate (%)	155.80	70	50	40	40
Inflation Rate MoM (%)	6.20	1.5	2.1		3
Interest Rate (%)	57.97	60	60	60	60
Government Budget (% of GDP)	-4.50				-5
Corporate Tax Rate (%)	34.00				34
Personal Income Tax Rate (%)	34.00				34
Government Debt to GDP (% of GDP)	241.00				260

Source: Trading Economics / https://tradingeconomics.com/venezuela/indicators

General Characteristics

Economic Crisis

The oil sector represents 95% of the nation's income, and as a consequence of its excessive dependence on oil exports, Venezuela in 2014, began to experience a slump in its economic activity due to the fall in oil prices. This is how it enters into a Balance of Payments deficit, hindering the importation of goods and services to meet the needs of the population.

By the date (2020) oil production was reduced to less than 400 thousand barrels per day, considerably decreasing the income of foreign currency and royalties from oil income.

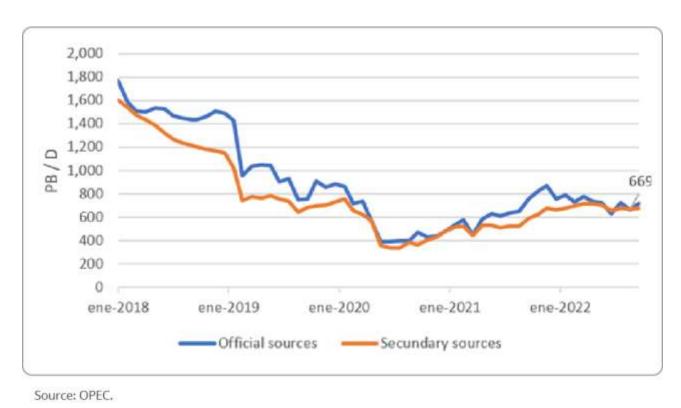


Figure 6 Oil Production in Venezuela 2018-2022

To date, oil production has seen a slight improvement. After falling from 1.8 million PB/D in 2018 to 0.4 million PB/D, production has maintained an average of 0.7 PB/D. This fact is reflected in the country's economic growth. However, there is still a long time to go before recovering the levels of GDP.

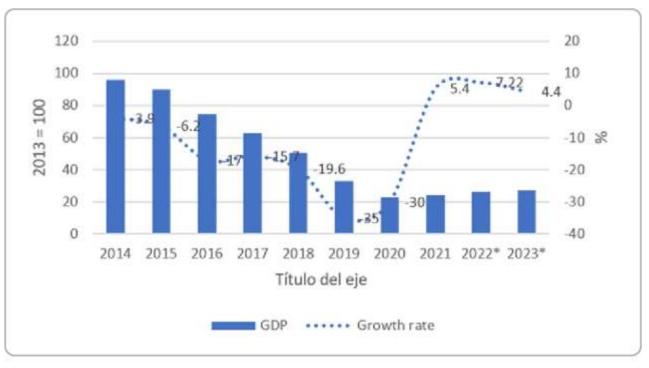


Figure 7 GDP - Venezuela.

Source: : International Monetary Found.

Changes in the Regulatory Framework

By the end of 2020, the Venezuelan government takes a set of measures aimed at reactivating the country's economy through different mechanisms. Faced with problems of inflation, falling production and shortage of products, it dictates measures in three particular sectors, the monetary system, the investment system and the import system, all measures aimed at promoting better conditions in the economic environment, both for domestic production and for foreign investors.

In order to stimulate foreign investment and generate investment opportunities, the National Executive has had to relax regulations in the national productive sector, giving way to stimulate foreign investment in the oil, mining, gas and electricity sectors, among others. Formerly public companies are privatized in order to achieve a socioeconomic boost and recover tax revenues.

Monetary flexibility

Venezuela has been characterized for having restrictions on the exchange of foreign currencies in the national territory, being its official currency the Bolivar Sovereign (BES). However, since the hyperinflation period, the use of the US dollar as an exchange currency became more and

more frequent. The government, after the economic emergency decree, allows the exchange of foreign currency as an "escape valve" against the so-called "economic war". Thus, it changes its economic line and facilitates the exchange of foreign currency in the local market and frees the exchange rate of the dollar. The economy has experienced an increasing dollarization in commercial transactions, due to the loss of value of the official currency (the sovereign bolivar).

By 2021 Nicolás Maduro announces the opening of foreign currency accounts in local banks to facilitate the payment of goods and services; although this does not indicate a total opening of a dollarization process. Dollar accounts represent on average 49.3% of total deposits in all local banks by the end of 2020.

By 2022, hyperinflation in Venezuela has ended, but the country remains with high levels of inflation (above 100%). The deceleration of inflation and the pace of bolivar depreciation in the first ten months of 2022 required an active and intense foreign exchange intervention by the BCV. Between January and October 2022, the BCV sold a net US\$2.8 billion, three times the amount sold in the whole year 2021.

Decree of Exoneration in Customs Matters

In Official Gazette No. 6,608, Decree No. 4,412 it is established the exoneration of import taxes, value added tax and the rate for determining the customs regime for the goods and sectors indicated in Chapter III of the Decree.

The validity for some sectors

- Telecommunications until 31-03-2021
- Quota until 30-04-2021
- COVID until 30-04-2021
- Automotive sector until 30-04-2021
- BK and BIT until 12/31/2021
- Full duty until 04-30-20-2021

Capital furniture, IT, telecommunications and tangible goods made by organs and entities of the national public administration to prevent the spread of Covid19 are exempted; likewise, electrical and electronic material is exempted for 90 days, and a tariff contingency regime is established for qualified goods indicated in Appendix IV of the decree.

Based on the modifications to the national regulatory framework, Venezuela is trying to position itself as an economically viable alternative through the aforementioned legal tools, where investment opportunities such as the following can be evaluated.

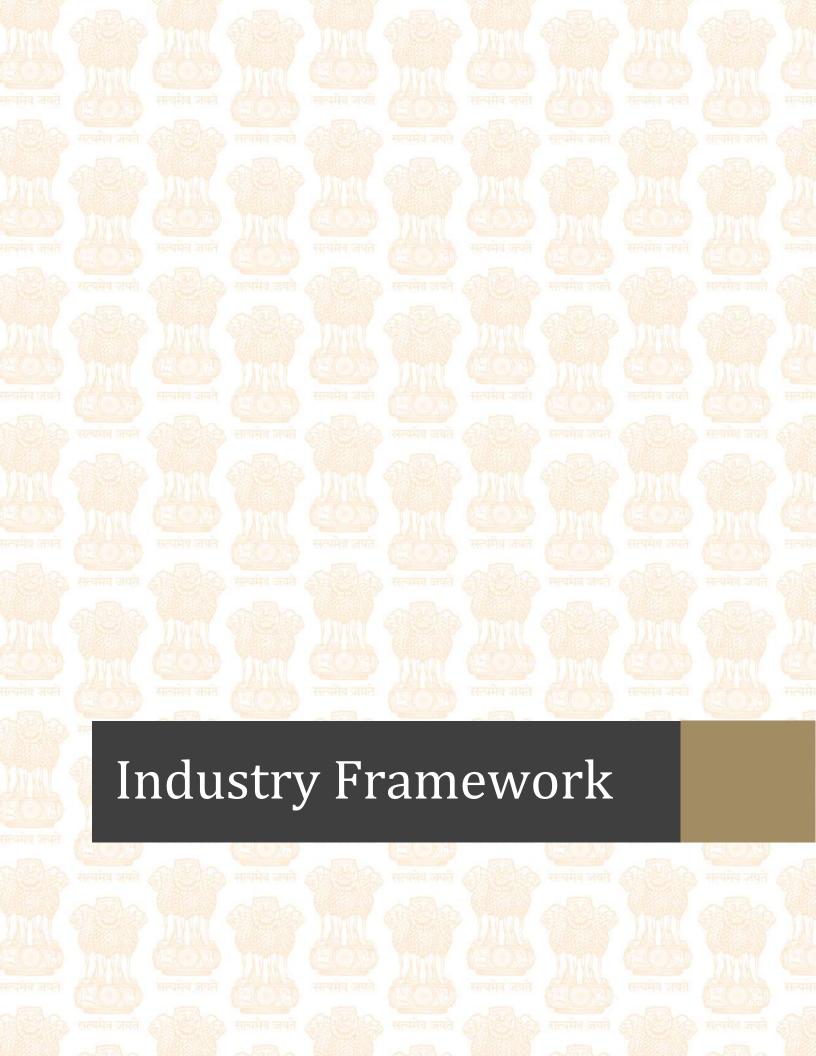
Special Economic Zones Law

In the year 2022, the national government has created the Special Economic Zones Law in order to attract Foreign Direct Investment. These economic zones comprise a more flexible regulatory framework in order to facilitate production in certain areas.

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The first five such zones are Paraguaná, in the state of Falcón; Puerto Cabello-Morón, in Carabobo; the state of La Guaira; Margarita, in Nueva Esparta, and the island of La Tortuga, which will begin to enjoy tax and customs incentives.

Due to the geographical characteristics of these five areas, the industries that will benefit are associated with the tourism sector (Margarita and La Tortuga) and the international trade sector (Paraguaná, Puerto Cabello and La Guaira). Investments related to the tourism services sector will have opportunities in these areas.



Characterization of the Venezuelan textile industry

Historical Background

During the presidency of General Juan Vicente Gómez, the first large textile industry in Venezuela was founded in 1927, called Telares de Maracay, with the purpose of supplying uniforms to the Venezuelan armed forces. This fact can be called the beginning of the textile industry in Venezuela.

When the president died in 1935, production was paralysed and began to be reactivated at the end of the 1940s by a group of investors led by Esteban Zarikian (engineer and later owner of Telares Maracay).

With the strengthening of the Venezuelan state as a result of oil revenues, an industrialisation programme began to be implemented as a measure to strengthen national industry in order to counteract the effect of imports.

In the process, activity in the textile sector stagnated due to the quality of the materials and production processes and the lack of funds to modernise equipment. The Venezuelan government was forced to implement protectionist measures such as tariffs because it did not have the level of development to compete with foreign products in terms of quality, price and variety.

At the end of the 1980s, Venezuela made a change and began to implement policies aimed at the gradual liberalisation of the economy, eliminating tariff barriers, subsidies and licences, and began to stimulate competition between national and international producers, motivating the productive apparatus.

In this decade, exchange rate policies were applied that allowed Venezuelan textile producers to renew their machinery and turn to new technological manufacturing practices, giving them the opportunity to compete and position themselves in foreign markets.

Between 1989 and 1994, approximately 1,500 garment companies had to close due to the economic and social crisis. Between 1990 and 1995, imports increased from 90 million to 200 million.

Since the year 2000, the Venezuelan textile industry has been weakened due to exchange rate policies that benefit imports of garments in the Venezuelan market, the national producer is at a disadvantage because national production is not profitable. In addition, the industry has a structural problem related to its low competitive orientation and its integration in the textile and clothing chain, which causes it to lose presence among direct consumers who are made up of small and medium-sized companies.

At present, the textile sector has tried to satisfy the country's demand, but has found itself with a decrease in the installed capacity of the companies in operation, and must compete with the subcontracting of production processes in different parts of the world.

Elements of industry differentiation

The textile industry is characterized by different points:

- 1. Production of raw materials.
- 2. Production of fabrics.
- 3. Knitting.
- 4. Finished products.
- 5. Distribution.
- 6. Consumption.

Due to the characteristics of Venezuela, the Venezuelan textile market depends on imports. Every year, this sector requires a lot of capital to import raw materials and keep the industry functioning at its maximum capacity.

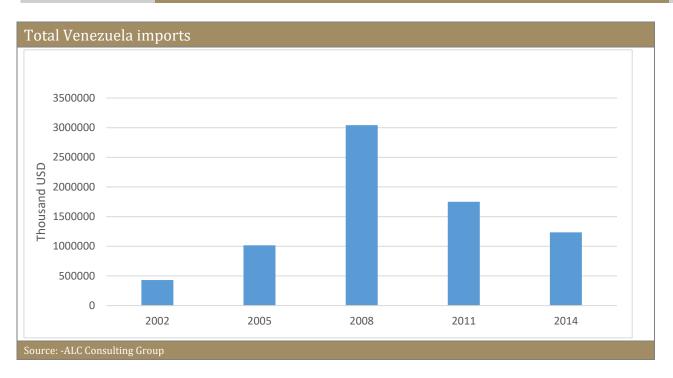
Fibres are essential for the production of different types of yarns and the most commonly used in the Venezuelan market are cotton, polyester and viscose.

The textile industry uses multiple distribution channels, but the following are the most important:

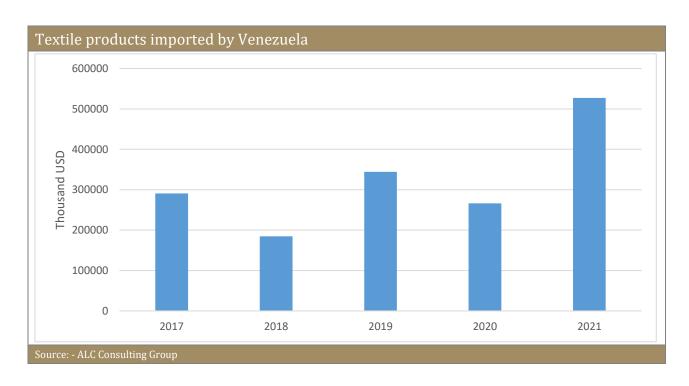
- 1. Direct: short and simple, without intermediaries between producer and consumer and is little used because it depends on volume.
- 2. Indirect: conditioned to forms of distribution dictated by the wholesaler/distributor or manufacturer/consumer trade.

The most used channel in Venezuela is the indirect channel due to the country's tendency to import.

The following graph shows how, from the year 2000 onwards, Venezuela increased its dependence on imports of textile material and its derivatives, supported by the great oil bonanza that Venezuela was experiencing in 2008, which made it more economical to import than to invest in the textile sector.



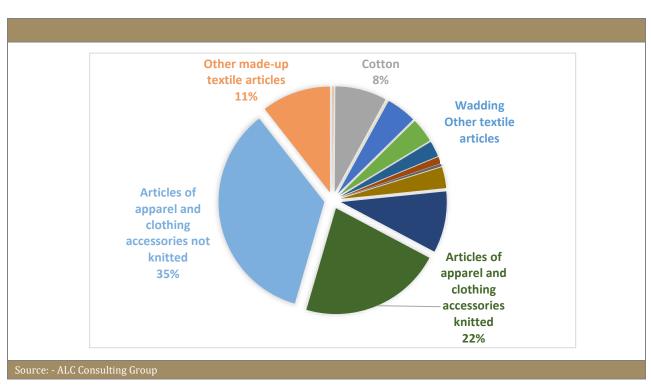
However, from 2009 onwards, after the global crisis, the price of Venezuelan crude oil began to fall, causing a significant decrease in textile imports, a situation that lasted until 2017-2018.



The main import is related to heading 62 (clothing), with approximately 612,836.43 tonnes being transported into the territory, which were distributed throughout the territory among large wholesale chains and to supply the large demand for uniforms for public employees.

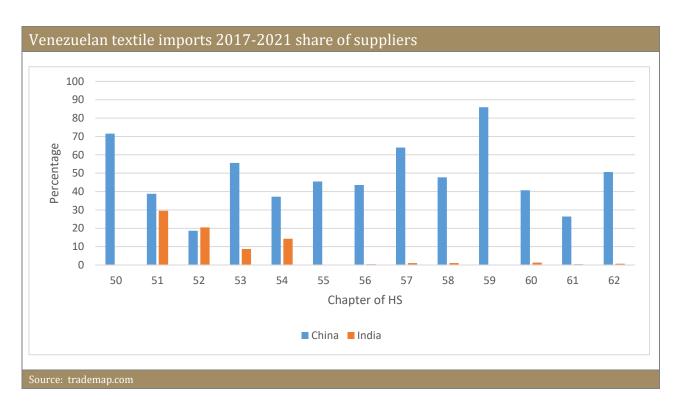


As of 2017, 35 % of the total imports of the textile sector corresponds to non-knitted garments and accessories, 563,410 tonnes are distributed throughout the territory, followed by 22% belonging to knitted garments and accessories, demonstrating Venezuela's tendency to require garments with these characteristics.



In recent years, Venezuela's main trading partner has been China, providing over 40% of the textile industry's goods. China covers all items in the sector, importing approximately 1,612,756 tonnes in the period 2017-2021.

For its part, India has a share in Venezuelan imports, mainly in wool, cotton, other vegetable fabrics and filaments, with a share in the Venezuelan market between 15% and 30%.



Currently, the Venezuelan clothing chamber (CAVEDIV) estimates that clothing will be 80% more expensive by the end of 2022, the variations in the exchange rate in recent months have been reflected in an increase in costs of up to 45%.

Roberto Rimeris, president of the Venezuelan Chamber of the Clothing Industry (Cavediv), indicates that "those manufactured nationally depend on other factors, local inflation, as well as raw materials that are often imported, the impact will depend on how liquidity is managed". He expects liquidity to grow at the same rate as the supply of products. The main companies that have closed down are textile or clothing companies and some of them have reduced their production by 60 to 80%.

He also stated that "Most of the fabrics are imported, they have the benefit of the cheap dollar, but they have the disadvantage of logistics and tariffs", but he pointed out that the garment industry uses a quarter of its installed capacity, which is approximately 20% to 27%. Of the 400 companies affiliated to the Chamber in 2000, only 20 remain today, so they are not representative in terms of employment figures.

On the other hand, the Venezuelan-Vietnamese Chamber (CAVENVIET) represented by Mr. Oswaldo Hernández expressed in the newspaper El Universal that a group of businessmen were preparing to participate in business rounds in order to capture new alliances for manufacturing companies in the textile area, indicating that "the trade balance is now.....

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unfavourable for us, precisely what we are developing is to complement and overcome the trade balance to levels that are favourable for our economy.

Importers of Textiles from Venezuela								
Company	Address	Phone	Contact person	Email				
Hindu Paradise Shop	Palacio de Justicia, Esq. Santa Teresa a Veracruz, Local A-8, PB, Caracas	0212 5413757 / 0212 5418525 Fax: 0212 4846618	Ravin Malhotra	hindushop@yahoo.com				
Telasa	Plaza Sur, C. C. Altamira, Loca 1, 2 y 3, Altamira, Caracas	0212-2666067 / 0212-2662272	Juan Nadal Guixa - Director	juannadalguixa@yahoo.com.mx				
BECO	Av. Principal, Edif. Centrobeco, Boleita Norte, Caracas	0212 2122318	Mirna Mondragón	mmondragon@beco.com.ve				
Guayabita		0424 2008822	Vanesa Coto	vanesa@guayabita.com				
Ardhangini India Exclusiva		0412 9909963; 0426 7053646	Katherine Chacón	adhangini.india@gmail.com				
Visión Cósmica	C.C. Plaza Las Américas, Nivel Cristal, Local 3-22	0212 9867556	Gerardo Torres	visioncosmica@yahoo.com; t.gerardo@yahoo.com				
Grupo Telares Maracay	Av. Urdaneta, Edif. Don Raúl, Mezzanina. Caracas Venezuela.	+58 212- 561.35.11 / 561.11.52 / 563.0303	Rosa Ramírez	rramirez@emporiodelastelas.com.ve				
Sol Hindú Boutique	Av. Circunvalación El Sol, Centro Comercial El Sol, Planta Baja, Urb. Santa Paula, Caracas	0212 9859327; 0412 2009254	Andrea Mendoza					
La Gran Dama	Av Urdaneta Mini Centro Plaza Bolívar Local 118, 1010, Caracas, Distrito Capital, Venezuela	0414 9186649	Xiomara	lagrandama50@yahoo.es				
Chalalai	Carretera Santa Inés – Baruta casa ATI sótano 1 y 2 (al lado de centro km5) las Minitas – Baruta código postal 1081 Caracas	0212 9752727 / 0414 2986600 / 0414 1362553	María Eugenia Rocha	artechalalai@gmail.com				
El Mundo Hindú	Centro Comercial Multiplaza Paraíso, Local M-5, Avenida José Antonio Páez de El Paraíso. Entre Avenida Santander y Avenida D, Caracas, Venezuela.	0212 4521318 / 0424 2758346	Delia Macho / Orlando Macho	elmundohindu@gmail.com				
Tramas	Urb. Carabobo, calle 149 (Uslar), Torre Centro A1, Piso 8. Valencia Edo. Carabobo.	0241-7000200 / 0241-7000168	Gina Bule – Acquisitions Manager	gbule@tramas.com.ve				
Inversiones Túnicas		0414 245 1426	Reyna Bitchatchi	reynasonny@gmail.com				
Yapacana		0212 2669819 / 0424 5398878	José Luis Vegas	jvegasal@yapacana.com				
Chennai	C. C. Galerías Los Naranjos, P-1, Los	0212 987.4334		julieoyon@yahoo.com				

The Textile Industry in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

	Naranjos- El Cafetal, Caracas -			
El Castillo	Esq. entre Marrón y Dr. Paul, Caracas	+58212 50022784556 /7614764 / 7614765		atencionalcliente@elcastillotucentrotextil.
Distribuidora Kopyko C.A.	La Yaguara, Calle 11 N° 9, Caracas	+58212 4711642 / 4711362 / 0212-4713906		jgonzalez@kopyko.com
Almacenes Toledo	Esq. Gradillas, c/Esq. San Jacinto, Edf. Gradillas B, P-1 Caracas	+582125432566 /+58212 5431215 / +58212 8645090		almacenestoledo@hotmail.com grupotoledo@cantv.net
Almacenes La Oferta	Esq. Miguelacho, edif. La Oferta, P. B. La Candelaria	+58212 5722432 / +58212 5724487		almaceneslaoferta@hotmail.com
Atlantic Fabrics C.A.	San Jacinto a Dr. Paul, N° 43, Caracas	+58212 5649424 5644204		atlanticfabrics@hotmail.com
Diseños Beatriz	1ra Transversal Los Cortijos de Lourdes – Calle Bernardette Edif. Pond`s – Piso 3 Caracas	0212-2341802 / 2358556 / 2373721 Fax: 0212 2347191 /2398323	Mrs. Beatriz Alvarez, Owner	dibe@movistar.net.ve
B & L TEXTIL	Universidad Coliseo a Peinero edif. N° 42 PB, Caracas	+58212 5410664 / +58212 5412686		norma2103@gmail.com
GINA	4ta Transversal, Los Cortijos de Lourdes, Edf. Gina, Piso 1,Caracas	(58-212) 2377044 Fax: (58-212) 2385140	Mirbe Pacheco; Franklin Guahnich, Vice Presicent	fguahnich@gina.com.ve
Accesorios VOE C.A.	Calle Capitolio, Edificio Feltre, Boleita Sur, Caracas	(58 212) 2370035		pedidos@voeaccesorios.com
Empresas Rocamar C.A.		+58-412- 3534805	Mr. Carlos Pereira, Marketing Manager	carlospcaviar@yahoo.es
Distribuidora Namasti C.A.		0212 3417244 / 0426 2145256	Mr. Gaetano Murgano Corona	gaetanomurgano@hotmail.com
Saibaba Import II	Calle Igualdad frente a la Iglesia San Nicolás de Bari, Porlamar, Nueva Esparta, Venezuela	+58 295 261.22.08 / +58 295 263.90.30 Fax: +58 295 – 263.91.50	Carola Reinfield	info@saibabaimport.com
Importadora La Quinta Hindu	Calle Igualdad, Plaza Bolívar, Porlamar, Margarita	+58 294 2643647	Ashok Bhawnani	laquintahindu@hotmail.com
ATV- ASOCIACIÓN TEXTIL VENEZOLANA	Calle El Club, Edf. Textilera Gran Colombia, Piso 4, Diagonal Al Club Los Cortijos	+58 212 238-17- 44 - Ext. 232 Fax: +58 212 239-40-89		asociaciontextilvenezolana@gmail.com
General Import	Av. Francisco de Miranda. Edf. Parque Cristal. Torre Oeste. Piso 5. Ofc. 5-3.	(+58) (212) 285.3275 Fax.: (+58) (212) 286.3484		info@generalimport.com

Consumer Profile

According to the most recent data from ENCOVI 2021-2022, post-pandemic in Venezuela labour activity begins to increase, the opening policy by the government begins to show an increase in economic activities generating more jobs.

For ENCOVI, in 2022 the pre-crisis activity of mobility due to lack of gasoline recovers, men go from 65.7 % to 64.0 %. Women only grow by 4.8% (34.3% to 39.1%). Inequality in the level of activity is 27.3% and 72.7%.

Formal employment grows to 50% of the employed, the public sector increases 3.0 and the private sector 4.7 pp. Informal employment is down 7.7 p. p., still well above its lowest value in 2014 (36%).



Despite these figures, monetary poverty is decreasing compared to other years, inequality is growing, Venezuela is in the most unequal continent in the world and by 2022 it is estimated that the level of inequality will be comparable to countries such as Mozambique. On average, almost 40% of the households with the highest income are located in the country's capital, with Caracas accounting for only 16% of households.

Therefore, it could be said that the consumption profile of textile garments will be focused on regions with more economic activity such as Caracas, Valencia and Barquisimeto.

Legal structure of the textile sector

The textile industry is not regulated by laws but by COVENIN norms. The general laws that apply to the sector are the Labour Law for Workers, which establishes the rights and duties that both workers and employers must comply with. This law applies indistinctly to all sectors in the country, so the rules established for starting a business in Venezuela must be followed in order to start a business in Venezuela.

According to information provided by the Venezuelan Textile Association, SUNDDE is the umbrella organisation for the national bodies that establish certain controls for the sector, as some rules come from the "Ley de Precios Justos". The decree with rank, value and force of Organic Law of Fair Prices establishes certain parameters that the Venezuelan government considers favourable to reduce the gaps between the producers of raw materials and the companies that process them, and to contribute to the fight against speculation and usury. This law establishes the permitted profit margins and authorises SUNDDE as the governing body to evaluate and modify by means of orders and other regulations, what the scope and application of the law will be.

Possible areas of interest

In Venezuela, industrial sector is small, but with a low investment has achieved to create enough jobs and a sales volume with an important market nationwide. Import of raw materials such as silk, cotton, man-made fibres and synthetic artificial staple fibres, can be considered as a main area of interest for India.

Raw material import

Main raw materials imported by Venezuelan textile sector are:

- Cotton
- Polyester (Synthetic filaments)
- Silk
- Wool
- Fur and leather
- Carpets and floor coverings

A secondary market poorly developed in Venezuela is for products such as:

- Special fabrics
- Knitwear
- Impregnated fabrics

Fashion Industry

There is also a third sector that has a great potential because Venezuelan culture is guided by standards of beauty promoted by beauty competition. Fashion is a sector always looking for

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permanent innovation and special requirements such as garments and dresses. Fashion industry has representation through the Venezuelan Association of Garments, which is part of the Venezuelan Textile Association, and seeks to represent the interests and ensure the functioning of an industry, created and supported by Venezuelan culture and idiosyncrasy.

Fashion industry in Venezuela does not have the size or dynamic like other countries or cities: but it is still a sector in continuous development and growth due to the long tradition and participation of women (and more recently men) in beauty competitions. This sector is not yet fully developed, but it can be a potential market for investors in future.

Investments in renovation of plants

The textile sector can get benefits not only from the import of raw materials, but also from updating or restructuring plants and machinery production, which can allow to increase the production of finished products and their sale in the domestic or international markets.

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Government of India

Embassy of India Caracas, Venezuela