



Morocco Atlantic Bridge Initiative

Signed October 31, 2011

The *Bridge Initiative* was signed between the Department of Commerce/International Trade Administration/U.S. & Foreign Commercial Service and the Moroccan Ministry of Foreign Trade (now part of Ministry of Commerce, Industry and New Technologies) on October 31, 2011

Purpose of the Initiative

The *Bridge Initiative* directly supports the National Export Initiative which intends to double U.S. exports by 2015. Morocco will utilize the *Bridge Initiative* to support its Maroc Export Plus Program which intends to double Moroccan exports by 2015 and to triple them by 2018, creating 1,800 new exporting companies and 300,000 new jobs, and enhance Morocco as an export platform. Both countries will identify programs, events, media, etc., to promote U.S. exports via Morocco's export platform. Using Morocco's already developed export infrastructure – ports, rail, highways, logistics zones, free trade zones and investment incentives – U.S. companies can access markets in the European Union, North Africa and Sub Saharan Africa.

Morocco's Export Platform

Morocco has aggressively developed the infrastructure to be a gateway for North Africa and the European Union. The Port of Tanger-Med, soon to be Africa's largest port, is located only eight miles from Europe, at the northern tip of Africa where the Mediterranean Sea meets the Atlantic Ocean. A direct shipping line from Houston, Mobile, Savannah, Charleston, and Norfolk to Tanger-Med is available. This strategically located port offers logistics zones, free trade zones, including the Auto Zone dedicated to autos and auto parts, and direct distribution systems onward to the European Union, the Middle East, and North Africa. Morocco's bilateral trade agreements with Turkey, Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, and United Arab Emirates facilitate onward shipping in the region.

There are currently over 625 companies, mostly French, already established in Tanger-Med free trade zones. The biggest investment to date is Renault's 600 million euro Auto Zone which commenced operations this year. At full capacity in several years, this factory will produce 400,000 autos for export to the European Union. There are currently five U.S. companies – Delphi, PolyDesign, Lear Automotive, DuPont and Powerex – established in Tanger-Med for sales to Renault within the free trade zone and/or exports to regional markets. Most U.S. exporters, even large multinationals, are unaware of Morocco's extensive export platform. The *Bridge Initiative* seeks to educate U.S. business on the benefits of using Morocco's export platform as a 'bridge' to other markets in the region.