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Company formation in Cuba

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Company formation in Cuba



Flag



Coat of arms

Common form	Mixed company (empresa mixta) or wholly foreign-owned company under the Foreign Investment Law (Law 118)
Registry	Mercantile Register, after approval of the investment by the Cuban government (Ministry of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment)
Minimum capital	Agreed in the approval of the investment
Directors	Set in the approved statutes
Local director	Investment must be approved case by case; most foreign investment is made jointly with Cuban state entities
Corporate tax	35% general rate; 15% for foreign investments under Law 118 (12% in the Mariel Special Development Zone)
VAT / sales tax	Sales and services taxes at several rates
Typical timeline	Often several months (government approval required)
Tax treaties	Domestic rates and treaty list [2]
Currency	Cuban peso (CUP)

In short: To set up a company in Cuba, most founders form a mixed company, registered with the Mercantile Register, after approval of the investment by the Cuban government (Ministry of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment). Minimum capital: agreed in the approval of the investment. Corporate tax: 35% general rate; 15% for foreign investments under Law 118 (12% in the Mariel Special Development Zone). Registration: often several months (government approval required) (as of November 2026).

Sanctions warning. Cuba is subject to a comprehensive United States embargo, which also reaches non-US companies in some situations; the European Union and the United Kingdom have blocking rules that restrict compliance with parts of it. Forming, owning or financing a company there, moving money, or supplying goods and services can be prohibited or need a licence, and the rules apply to you based on your nationality, residence and the banks you use. Get legal advice in your own jurisdiction before taking any step.

Short guide. Tax figures come from the sources listed under References; company-law details summarise official guidance and can change. Confirm requirements with the Mercantile Register, after approval of the investment by the Cuban government (Ministry of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment) before filing.

Foreign investment in **Cuba** requires government approval under the **Foreign Investment Law (Law 118 of 2014)**, usually as a joint venture with a Cuban state entity. Private small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) created since 2021 are reserved for Cuban residents.

Business structures

Most founders in Cuba form a mixed company, registered with the Mercantile Register, after approval of the investment by the Cuban government (Ministry of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment). Other forms are listed below.

- **Mixed company** – the usual company form for private businesses

Requirements

Minimum share capital in Cuba (2026): agreed in the approval of the investment. Directors required: set in the approved statutes. Local resident director: investment must be approved case by case; most foreign investment is made jointly with Cuban state entities.

- A company name that is available, checked with the registry.
- Share capital: agreed in the approval of the investment.

- Directors: set in the approved statutes.
- Local residency: investment must be approved case by case; most foreign investment is made jointly with Cuban state entities.
- A registered office address in Cuba.
- Articles of association; standard templates are often available.

Registration process

Typical time to register a company in Cuba (2026): often several months (government approval required). The usual steps are:

1. Choose the company form and check that the name is available.
2. Prepare and sign the articles of association.
3. File the registration with the Mercantile Register, after approval of the investment by the Cuban government (Ministry of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment).
4. Receive the company's registration number, and pay in the share capital where required.
5. Register for corporate tax and VAT or sales tax with the National Tax Administration Office (ONAT).

Taxation

The corporate tax rate in Cuba in 2026 is 35% general rate; 15% for foreign investments under Law 118 (12% in the Mariel Special Development Zone). Standard VAT or sales tax: sales and services taxes at several rates.

Tax	Rate and notes
Corporate income tax	35% general rate; 15% for foreign investments under Law 118 (12% in the Mariel Special Development Zone)
VAT / indirect tax	Sales and services taxes at several rates
Withholding tax on dividends to non-resident companies	Depends on the payer and recipient; see the Double tax treaties section

Ongoing compliance

Annual compliance in Cuba: Companies file annual financial statements and tax returns with the National Tax Administration Office (ONAT), and keep their details up to date with the Mercantile Register, after approval of the investment by the Cuban government.

Double tax treaties

Cuba has few comprehensive double tax treaties, so domestic withholding rates usually apply; check whether a treaty covers the other country before relying on a reduced rate.

Domestic withholding tax on payments to non-resident companies

Domestic withholding rates on dividends, interest and royalties could not be confirmed from a current source for this short guide; confirm them with the National Tax Administration Office (ONAT).

The reduced rate for each partner country is set by the treaty concerned; confirm it with the tax authority.

Domestic rates from the sources listed under References. Treaty benefits require proof of tax residence and are subject to anti-abuse rules.

Frequently asked questions

How long does it take to register a company in Cuba?

Typical registration time in Cuba: often several months (government approval required) (as of November 2026), once all documents are ready. Opening a bank account and tax registrations can take longer.

What is the minimum share capital for a company in Cuba?

Minimum share capital in Cuba: agreed in the approval of the investment (as of November 2026).

What is the corporate tax rate in Cuba in 2026?

The corporate tax rate in Cuba in 2026 is 35% general rate; 15% for foreign investments under Law 118 (12% in the Mariel Special Development Zone). See the Taxation section for reduced rates and other taxes.

Can a foreigner own 100% of a company in Cuba?

Only with government approval. Wholly foreign-owned companies are allowed in principle under Law 118, but most approved projects are joint ventures with Cuban state entities. Local director rule in Cuba: investment must be approved case by case; most foreign investment is made jointly with Cuban state entities.

Official registries and resources

The official websites of the Mercantile Register, after approval of the investment by the Cuban government (Ministry of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment) and the National Tax Administration Office (ONAT) have not yet been verified by our editors, so they are not linked here. Use the names above to find them, and beware of unofficial look-alike sites.

Figures as of November 2026. Rates, thresholds and procedures change; confirm with the official registry, the tax authority or a local adviser before filing.

See also

- Comparison of company formation by country
- Company formation in the United States
- Company formation in Canada
- Company formation in Mexico
- Company formation in Brazil
- All countries

References

Entries marked **Official** are the registry, government and tax authority sources for this country; footnote numbers in the infobox point to them.

1. Country tax rates (January 2026 update, compiled from PwC and KPMG) . Damodaran Online, NYU Stern. Accessed November 2026.
2. Global indirect tax rates (Cuba sales tax) . Deloitte. Accessed November 2026.

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