

Embassy of the Republic of Benin
to the United States of America



Ambassade de la République du Bénin
près les Etats Unis d'Amérique

Benin: The Next Chapter

1. Opening

Over the last ten years, Benin has modernized and built the foundations that make the country a stable and reliable partner — roads, power, water, public finances, security.

The next chapter will ensure that progress at the national level reaches every person, in every household, in every region.

We want the United States as a partner in that chapter.

2. What to Know about Benin

Position and relevance

- A coastal West African democracy bordering **Nigeria, Niger, Burkina Faso, and Togo**, with access to the Gulf of Guinea — a natural gateway for regional trade and maritime security.
- Long recognized for **peaceful political transitions** and a commitment to constitutional government, which is increasingly rare in the neighborhood.

A decade of measurable transformation

- GDP growth rose from **~1.8% (2015) to ~8% (2025)**; per-capita income up roughly **50%** (under 600,000 to over 900,000 CFA francs).
- The national budget **tripled** between 2016 and 2025, allowing the government to invest heavily in education, health, water, electricity, sanitation, roads, digital infrastructure, tourism, and industrialization.
- Disciplined public finances: debt ratio of **53.2%** in 2025 (below the WAEMU threshold of 70% of GDP), budget deficit down to **2.8%** of GDP in 2025 (compared to 6% in 2015).

3. A Peaceful, Constitutional Transition

- President **Romuald Wadagni** was elected on **April 12, 2026**, alongside Vice President **Mariam Chabi Talata**, and was **inaugurated** on **May 24, 2026**. The new

government was announced the same day and includes several ministers from the previous administration.

- President Wadagni succeeded President **Patrice Talon** (2016–2026), who **respected the constitutional two-term limit** and handed over power peacefully.
- Wadagni is a **reform-minded technocrat**: nearly a decade as Minister of Economy and Finance, then Minister of State — he is the architect of the reforms of the past decade and the resulting public finance credibility.
- In a region under pressure, Benin’s peaceful transfer of authority demonstrates **institutional continuity and respect for the rule of law**.

Democratic credibility

- Benin’s political system is grounded in the Constitution, the Electoral Code, the Autonomous National Electoral Commission (CENA), and the Constitutional Court. The CENA organizes and centralizes elections; the Court reviews irregularities and proclaims election results.
- Candidates run as a **president/vice-president ticket** and must clear a sponsorship threshold: the requirement is **28 sponsorships** from elected officials across at least **15 of 24 constituencies**.
- Two tickets were validated: Wadagni/Talata and Hounkpè/Hounwanou. The Court confirmed a **63.57% turnout** and a first-round win for Wadagni/Talata with **94.27%** of valid votes.
- Note: inclusion measures include **reserved seats for women** — one per constituency in the National Assembly (24 of 109 seats).

“Was the election inclusive?”

- Inclusion must be measured not only by the election itself, but also by the broader direction of governance. President Wadagni’s agenda prioritizes citizen dialogue, participatory budgeting, women’s representation, local development hubs, social protection, access to justice, and economic inclusion. His mandate is to govern for all Beninese citizens — including those who did not support him.
- We recognize that democratic systems must keep improving. That is why the new government includes modernization of the electoral process, citizen participation in public policy, and stronger mechanisms for protecting fundamental rights.
- We must recognize that independent Benin is only 66 years old. We are committed to the constant improvement of institutional trust, which takes trial and error.

4. The Vision: From National Foundations to Household Prosperity

- The last 10 years built the **foundations**: roads, energy, water, sanitation, health infrastructure, public finance, digital services, port modernization, industrial zones, tourism infrastructure, and public administration modernization.
- The new agenda is **complementary**: it moves from national-level transformation to **local and household-level prosperity**.
- The central objective is clear: **eradicate extreme poverty** (which still affects approximately one third of the population) and ensure prosperity reaches every household.
- The core idea behind this objective is simple: **national growth only matters if citizens feel it** — through jobs, better income, reliable services, and opportunity at home.

Three governing priorities

- **Priority 1 — Social well-being for all:**
 - expanding access to quality healthcare
 - strengthening educational outcomes and workforce skills
 - improving social protection programs
 - increasing access to affordable housing and basic services
 - creating pathways for youth and women to participate fully in the economy

By investing in human capital, the government aims to reduce poverty, increase economic mobility, and build a more resilient and inclusive society.

- **Priority 2 — A diversified, competitive economy:**
 - accelerating private-sector growth
 - reducing dependence on a small number of economic sectors
 - prioritizing industrialization, value-added manufacturing, agricultural transformation, digital innovation, and infrastructure development

The goal is to establish Benin as a leading commercial and logistics hub in West Africa.

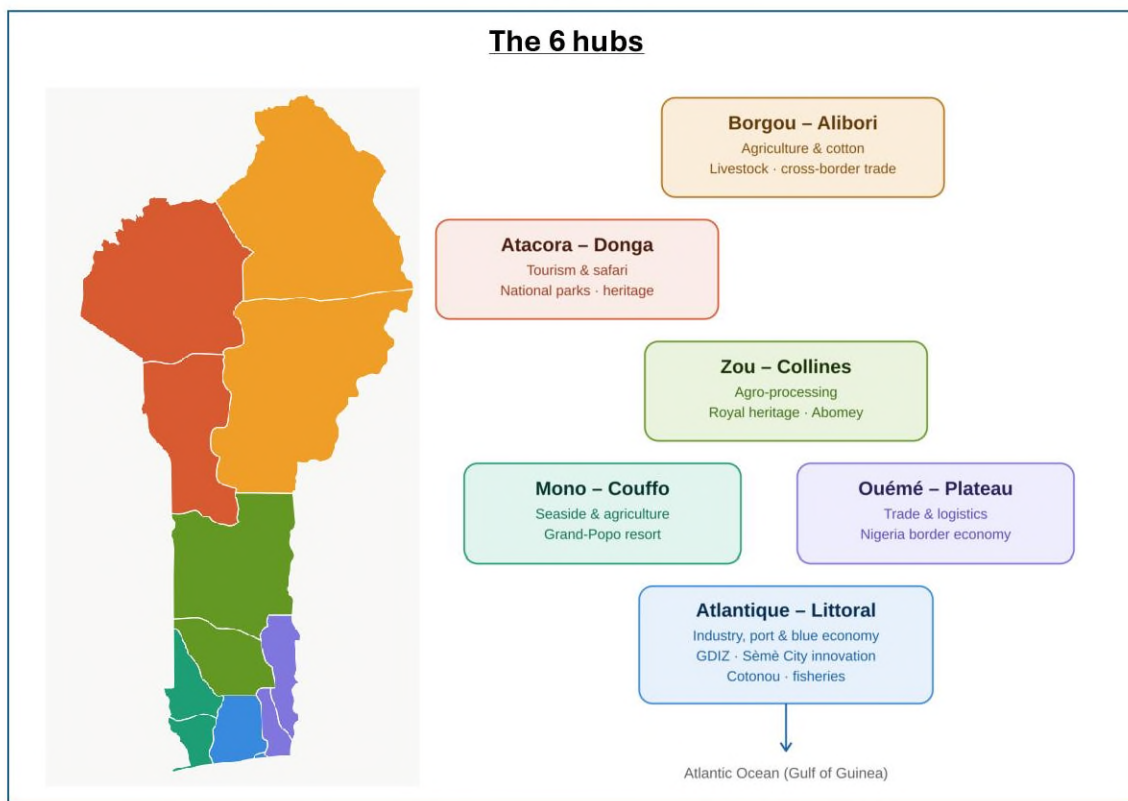
- **Priority 3 — National cohesion and security:**
 - democratic governance
 - regional diplomacy

- preventing the spread of violent extremism

The administration aims to safeguard Benin's stability while preserving the conditions necessary for continued economic growth and social progress.

5. The Mechanism of the New Vision: 6 Territorial Development Hubs

- To implement the vision, Benin's **12 regions are paired into 6 regional development hubs**, each built around the comparative advantages of its territory.
- The graphic below provides non-exhaustive examples of strategic components.



Each hub combines four strategic components:

- At least **one key industry** per hub (“One Hub, One Industry”) (e.g. Glo-Djigbé Industrial Zone)
- **Touristic attractions and hospitality infrastructure** (“One City, One Village of Splendor”)
- **Targeted innovation** (e.g. Sèmè City Innovation Campus)
- **A territory-specific economic component** based on local strength (e.g., a blue economy in Atlantique–Littoral).

The government's role will be to create enabling conditions, while the private sector's role will be to drive job creation, value addition, innovation, and local economic growth.

By improving wellbeing and opportunities where people live, young people and entrepreneurs can succeed in their own communities rather than feeling they must migrate to Cotonou or abroad.

6. What This Means for Citizens

- **Young people:** technical and vocational training hubs in every region — skills without leaving home.
- **Farmers:** agricultural hubs, agri-tech, storage, processing, and market access to raise productivity and incomes; a farmer social-protection scheme (insurance, savings, pensions).
- **SMEs and artisans:** craft-support hubs, shared equipment, financing, digital payments, and market linkages to help local businesses scale.
- **Women and vulnerable populations:** expanded social protection, financial inclusion, and digital credit to move households from vulnerability to resilience.
- **Rural communities:** electricity, drinking water, sanitation, roads, social services, economic inclusion.
- **Entrepreneurs:** access to credit in under 48 hours via a national digital credit platform (loans 50,000–50 million CFA francs).
- **Every region:** local jobs, talent retention, higher household incomes, better services, resilience to economic and climate shocks.

7. Why This Matters to the United States

- **A stable partner in a tough neighborhood** — a positive example amid democratic backsliding and insecurity in the Sahel.
- **A reform agenda that opens doors for U.S. investment:** energy, infrastructure, agriculture, digital technology, logistics, health, education, tourism.
- **A gateway for U.S. business** into West Africa and the broader continent, given location, and regional market access and recent ambitious reforms.
- **A security buffer:** U.S. support helps prevent insecurity from spreading further south from the Sahel.

- A relationship Benin wants to **upgrade** — engaging both the U.S. government and the American private sector to advance shared economic and strategic priorities.

8. Opportunities to Explore

Sector	Goal	Recent achievements
Security	Strengthen security forces and develop at-risk areas, especially in the north.	National Guard and Republican Police created; equipment modernized; maritime surveillance in place.
Technology	Position Benin as a “smart nation” and future exporter of technological solutions.	National AI strategy; data centers, digital public services; sectoral technology hubs.
Energy	Provide more reliable electricity and more renewable energy; modernize the power grid.	Electricity access doubled (30% → 61%); “connect today, pay later” system.
Agriculture	Raise productivity and farmer incomes via agri-tech, processing, and income protection.	Africa’s leading cotton producer; rice production doubled, soya tripled; irrigation up 4x.
Infrastructure & transport	Improve connectivity — roads, ports, airports, and inter-regional corridors.	3,000 km of new paved roads; modernized Cotonou airport and port; river/lagoon transport in Greater Nokoué.
Health	Deliver quality healthcare accessible to every citizen, with telemedicine and AI extending reach.	New hospitals (e.g., Calavi International Hospital), more ambulances; qualified staff doubled (5 → 12.5 per 10,000); digital health records.
Education & skills	Build technical, vocational, and digital training aligned with the economy’s needs.	9,000 classrooms built; development of the Sèmè City innovation campus.

Sector	Goal	Recent achievements
Financial inclusion	Widen access to credit, digital payments, and SME financing for women, youth, farmers, and the informal sector.	Banking access up 63% → 87%, usage up 69% → 90% (leading WAEMU); digital credit and microfinance scaling.
Diplomacy	Use cooperation as a development tool — Benin as a strategic partner, not merely a recipient.	New partnerships (Brazil, Vietnam, Gulf States); deepening economic integration with Nigeria.

9. Closing

- Now that the foundations are built, Benin is entering a new chapter: **continuity in reform, with a stronger emphasis on inclusion, territorial development and prosperity at the household level.**
- Benin seeks to work with **Congress and the broader U.S. government as development partners**, advancing shared priorities for mutual benefit — a more secure, prosperous, democratic, opportunity-driven country.
- We are building the Benin of our dreams and welcome the opportunity to strengthen the US-Benin relationship in this pursuit. We will gladly explore opportunities for strategic partnership with your office.

These materials are distributed by Squire Patton Boggs (US) LLP on behalf of its foreign principal The Government of the Republic of Benin. Additional information is on file with the FARA Registration Unit of the Department of Justice, Washington, District of Columbia.