The Export-Import Bank ("Ex-Im Bank") serves as the official export credit agency for the U.S. government. The Ex-Im Bank provides financial support to U.S. firms selling goods and services in higher-risk developing and emerging countries. This support is intended for markets and transactions that would not receive exporting financing from private capital markets. (Analogous financial support is available for U.S. foreign direct investment through OPIC; Ex-Im focuses on goods exports.)

The Ex-Im Bank’s primary products include: pre-export financing through working capital guarantees; export-credit insurance; and buyer financing through loan guarantees and direct loans. Ex-Im is designed to be self-financing through fees and interest payments by its customers.

Ex-Im does not provide direct subsidies to U.S. exporters. However, the private market would likely charge higher rates for the financial products that it provides or even refuse the financing. Supporters of Ex-Im argue that many other governments provide similar export financing so that Ex-Im helps “level the playing field.”

Ex-Im’s focus is on U.S. exports to markets that may entail high political and economic risk than in other markets. These risks include exchange rate risk, corruption, political turmoil, war, and inadequate creditor rights enforcement. Ex-Im tends to focus on a relatively small number of key industries include: civilian aircraft, oil and gas, mining, medical equipment, and construction equipment. Both large and small businesses are eligible for Ex-Im loans though the bulk of the financing goes to larger multinationals.

The Ex-Im Bank is on the following three financial products, which are available only to U.S. firms meeting eligibility requirements (e.g. U.S.-based activities and minimum U.S. domestic content):

**Export Credit Insurance**
Private banks often provide “letters of credit” assuring payment for delivery of exports to foreign nations. Banks may hesitate to provide such guarantees for exports to countries with higher probability of non-payment.
Ex-Im offers export credit insurance that will guarantee payment in the event that the foreign importer is in default. This product is only available when private financing is not forthcoming.

**Working Capital**
Exporting often requires up-front costs (e.g. developing distribution networks, purchasing raw materials, and market analysis). This often can be an impediment to small U.S. enterprises entering foreign markets.

Ex-Im provides loan guarantees to commercial banks that provide direct loans to firms incurring such start-up costs. Ex-Im therefore will repay the loan in the event that the U.S exporter is unable to repay the loan. The loan themselves may be used to cover purchases of finished products, raw materials, supplies, and overhead expenses.

**Medium-Term Credit Financing**
Purchases of large capital goods (e.g. power plants) typically require multi-year financing. Private lending may be difficult or expensive to obtain for this type of transaction.

Ex-Im provides medium-term financing for purchases of capital goods and related services for qualifying U.S. exporters in higher risk markets. The maximum level of financing per transaction is $10 million and normally involves payments completed over a five year period.

**ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**
The Ex-Im Bank provides export information for every US state in a database.

These include annual financial reports and specialized reports on topics such as competitiveness, small business, Freedom of Information Act, and more.

*For Foreign Governments*
Provides information on major Export-Import Bank deals that can affect the economies of various countries.

*For Domestic and Foreign Businesses*
Global Access for Small Business is an initiative to increase the number of small businesses exporting. It provides information on different packages and step-by-step process to expand into exports.