

A Guide to the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC) for Solar Manufacturing Investors

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Content Partner: J. v. G. technology GmbH

Turnkey solar module production lines – since 1997

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Technical Overview: Ghana's GIPC Guide for Solar Manufacturing Investors



Created as part of the PVKnowHow Knowledge Network



Prepared by J.v.G. Technology GmbH



European specialists in turnkey solar module production lines

Key Project Data

\$200K...

Min. Foreign Capital

\$200K with Ghanaian partner ($\geq 10\%$ equity);
\$500K wholly foreign-owned

5 Days

Registration Target

GIPC certificate issued within 5 working days of complete application

Act 865


Legal Framework

GIPC Act, 2013 — governs registration, incentives, and investor guarantees

10 Yrs

Max Tax Holiday

Free Zone status: up to 10 years corporate tax exemption for qualifying factories

 Project type: Industrial solar manufacturing · Region: Ghana, West Africa · Source: PVKnowHow / J.v.G. Technology GmbH

The Market Entry Challenge

Navigating an Unfamiliar Regulatory Landscape

- Foreign investors face multiple parallel registration processes
- No single official source consolidates all requirements for manufacturing
- Timelines, costs, and agency roles are often misunderstood at entry stage

Manufacturing Sector: A Favorable Exception

- Manufacturing is a GIPC-designated **priority sector**
- No minimum equity requirement for wholly foreign-owned manufacturing ventures
- Solar factories qualify under this exception — a significant structural advantage

- ❏ Manufacturing is listed as a priority area under GIPC Act 865. Solar panel production qualifies as an industrial manufacturing activity.

Role of the GIPC

What GIPC Is

- Government agency established under GIPC Act, 2013 (Act 865)
- Principal body for encouraging and promoting investment in Ghana
- Mandatory first point of contact for all foreign investors
- Covers all sectors except mining and petroleum

What GIPC Does for Investors

- Registers enterprises and issues the official GIPC certificate
- Acts as liaison between investor and government agencies
- Administers incentives: tax, duty, and quota entitlements
- Provides aftercare, advocacy, and ongoing investor support

Registration Process: 3 Key Steps

1 — Step 1 — Incorporate the Company

Register the legal entity with the **Office of the Registrar of Companies** under Ghana's Companies Act

Required before GIPC registration can begin — both foreign and joint-venture entities must complete this first

2 — Step 2 — Register with GIPC

Submit a complete application to the GIPC, including: proof of incorporation, capital documentation, and investment details

GIPC is legally mandated to issue the registration certificate **within 5 working days** of receiving a complete file

3 — Step 3 — Parallel Regulatory Clearances

Register with the **Ghana Revenue Authority (GRA)** for tax obligations

Obtain permits from the **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** — a parallel process that must be planned alongside GIPC registration

i A well-structured project plan accounts for all parallel administrative processes from day one. The GIPC is the central node, but not the only agency involved.

Investment Requirements

Enterprise Structure	Min. Foreign Capital Requirement	Notes
Wholly foreign-owned manufacturing	US\$500,000	No Ghanaian partner required
Joint venture (\geq 10% Ghanaian equity)	US\$200,000	Reduced threshold with local partner
Wholly foreign-owned trading activity	US\$1,000,000	Min. 20 skilled Ghanaians employed

- ☐ Capital can be contributed in cash, in capital goods relevant to the investment, or a combination of both. For a solar factory, machinery and equipment count toward the capital requirement.

Key Benefits: Tax, Duty & Quotas

Customs Duty Exemptions

- Exemption on plant, machinery, and equipment imported for the investment
- Applies to all core factory equipment: stringers, laminators, simulators
- Zero-rated under Customs Harmonised Tariff Code (Chapters 82, 84, 85)
- Substantially lowers initial capital setup costs

Tax Incentives

- Tax holidays available — length depends on location and sector designation
- Free Zone status: up to **10 years** corporate tax exemption ($\geq 70\%$ export)
- Reduced corporate tax rates for manufacturing outside Accra/Tema
- Non-traditional export income taxed at concessionary **8%** rate

Immigrant Quotas

- GIPC provides automatic work quotas for expatriate technical staff
- Quota scale tied to paid-up capital level
- Enables import of lead engineers and QC specialists during setup phase
- Critical for factories requiring specialized commissioning expertise

Risk Mitigation & Legal Guarantees

Capital Repatriation

- Unconditional right to transfer dividends, profits, and trade capital abroad
- No restrictions on foreign exchange earnings retention where necessary
- Guaranteed free transfer of loan servicing, fees, and technology royalties

Protection Against Expropriation

- GIPC Act explicitly safeguards against government expropriation
- Any dispute with the Government subject to mutual amicable settlement first
- International arbitration available under UNCITRAL rules as fallback

Incentive Certainty

- Minimum incentives are codified in law — not granted on an ad hoc basis
- Once registered, entitlements are automatic and enforceable
- Government retains discretion to grant additional incentives beyond minimums

Common Challenges for Investors

Administrative Complexity

- Multiple agencies involved — GIPC, GRA, EPA — each with separate timelines
- Incomplete applications are the primary cause of registration delays
- Capital documentation requirements must be met precisely and in advance
- EPA environmental permits must be planned in parallel, not sequentially

Structural & Strategic Risks

- Choosing the wrong entity structure (JV vs. wholly foreign-owned) affects capital thresholds and quota entitlements
- Free Zone eligibility requires $\geq 70\%$ export — not always viable for domestic-market factories
- Location decisions affect applicable tax rates and holiday eligibility
- Technical staffing (quota allocation) must be planned before registration

FAQ Highlights

What is the minimum investment for a foreign-owned solar factory?

US\$500,000 for wholly foreign-owned; reducible to US\$200,000 with a Ghanaian partner holding at least 10% equity. Capital goods count toward this figure.

How long does GIPC registration take?

The GIPC is legally required to issue the registration certificate within **5 working days** of receiving a complete application with all supporting documents.

Can machinery be imported duty-free?

Yes. GIPC-registered manufacturing enterprises are eligible for customs duty exemptions on all necessary plant, machinery, and equipment — including all core solar production line components.

Can I bring in foreign technical experts?

Yes. GIPC provides automatic immigrant quotas scaled to paid-up capital, enabling the import of essential technical personnel during factory setup and commissioning.

Strategic Conclusion

1

Regulatory Gateway

GIPC registration is mandatory and strategic — it unlocks all statutory incentives, quotas, and legal protections simultaneously

2

Structured Advantage

Manufacturing sector classification provides unique benefits: no equity floor, duty-free equipment, tax holidays, and enforceable capital guarantees

3

Execution Readiness

Success depends on pre-registration planning: entity structure, capital documentation, EPA timelines, and technical staffing must all be aligned before filing

- ❏ An experienced European turnkey provider familiar with the Ghanaian regulatory environment can substantially reduce the administrative learning curve for new solar manufacturing entrants.

About the Content Partner

J. v. G. technology GmbH – The DESERT Company

Founded in 1997 in Bavaria, Germany. Family-owned engineering company specializing in turnkey solar module production lines.

More than 90 factory projects delivered worldwide.

On-site team training included – no prior manufacturing experience required.

Key areas:

Turnkey PV manufacturing lines | DESERT Technology® |
TÜV-certified module designs | Factory planning to production

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