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Export-Import Bank: Overview and Reauthorization Debate

The Export-Import Bank of the United States (Ex-Im Bank, or the Bank) is a wholly owned government corporation and an export credit agency (ECA). It aims to support U.S. jobs by financing and facilitating U.S. goods and services exports when the private sector is unwilling or unable to provide financing at acceptable rates and/or U.S. exports are competing against foreign ECA-financed exports.

Ex-Im Bank operates under a renewable, general statutory charter that Congress enacted in 1945 (12 U.S.C. §§635 et seq.). In 2019, Congress renewed the Bank until December 31, 2026 (P.L. 116-94, Div. I, Title IV). If a sunset occurs, the Bank generally could not approve new transactions, but it could manage existing obligations and perform certain other functions for "an orderly liquidation." A key issue facing the 119th Congress is whether to reauthorize Ex-Im Bank. Supporters argue that the Bank fills gaps in private-sector financing and helps counter foreign ECA-backed competition. Critics argue that the Bank distorts private markets, is "corporate welfare," and poses taxpayer risks.

Overview

Leadership. By statute, Ex-Im Bank is led by a Board of Directors with five voting members who are presidentially appointed and Senate-confirmed, with no more than three from one political party. The Bank President is Board Chair, and the First Vice President (VP) is Board Vice Chair. The Secretary of Commerce and U.S. Trade Representative are non-voting ex officio members. The Board currently has three voting members: John Jovanovic, President/Chair (confirmed in September 2025); James Burrows, Acting First VP/Vice Chair (designated in March 2025); and Spencer Bachus III, director (confirmed in December 2023 for a four-year term).

The Board requires a quorum of three members to vote on proposed transactions, make policy, and delegate authority. Staff can approve transactions below $25 million (formerly $10 million). If a quorum lapses for 120 consecutive days in a President's term, a "temporary Board" composed of government officials and Board members must "act in the [Board's] stead." The temporary Board cannot change policies or procedures. The 2019 reauthorization added the temporary Board procedures, after a lapse in the quorum due to Board vacancies from July 2015 to May 2019.

Programs. Headquartered in Washington, DC, the Bank has 12 regional export finance centers located across U.S. cities to support business development. It also has a Regional Export Promotion Program (REPP) that partners with subfederal economic development entities. Bank activities are demand-driven, fee-based, and backed by the U.S. government's full faith and credit. Programs include

- **direct loans** to foreign buyers of U.S. exports (interest rates based on spreads set in international rules);
- **guarantees of loans** to foreign buyers of U.S. exporters (lender usually sets rate);
- **insurance** to protect U.S. exporters or financial institutions against export-related risks; and
- **working capital guarantees** of loans to U.S. exporters.

Focused programming at the Bank includes the following:

- **China and Transformational Exports Program (CTEP).** Created per the 2019 reauthorization, CTEP aims to counter export subsidies and financing by China and to advance U.S. leadership in statutorily specified export areas (e.g., artificial intelligence, 5G, semiconductors, quantum computing, renewable energy). CTEP currently sunsets on December 31, 2026.
- **Make More in America (MMIA) Initiative.** Approved by the Board in 2022, MMIA aims to support "export-oriented" domestic manufacturing projects.
- **Supply Chain Resiliency Initiative (SCRI).** Approved by the Board on January 8, 2025, in the final days of the Biden Administration, SCRI aims to strengthen U.S. critical minerals supply chains.

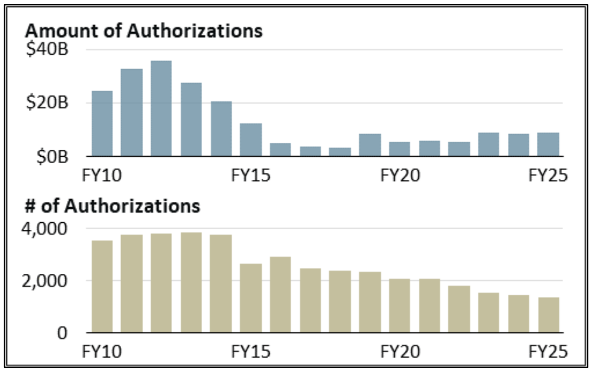
Selected Parameters. Under its charter, Ex-Im Bank may extend financing only if it has a "reasonable assurance of repayment." The Bank must supplement, not compete with, private capital and be "fully competitive" with foreign ECA rates, terms, and conditions. It must consider the economic and environmental impact of proposed projects. It has sectoral mandates, such as to make available not less than 30% of its total financing authority each year to support small business exports and to reserve for CTEP no less than 20% of its total financing authority ($27 billion out of $135 billion). A transaction may support multiple mandates.

The Bank aims to ensure that it does not crowd out the private sector and supports transactions where a U.S. export would not have taken place otherwise ("additionality"); it may require evidence from applicants of foreign competition or unavailability of commercial financing at competitive rates. The Bank, which considers the U.S. content in an export contract a proxy for U.S. jobs support, lowers its level of support based on amount of foreign content. It has a more flexible CTEP content policy. It requires some Bank-supported exports to ship on U.S. flag vessels, per a 1934 law, to ensure a ready U.S. merchant marine.

Funding. Ex-Im Bank's revenues include interest, risk premiums, and other fees charged for its support. Revenues acquired in excess of forecasted losses are recorded as offsetting collections. During FY1992-FY2025, the Bank reported sending a net of $9.8 billion to the Treasury, after covering expenses, loan-loss reserves, and administrative costs. Offsetting collections did not fully cover costs in FY2018-FY2025; the Bank attributed this to the prior lack of a Board quorum limiting its full financing authority. For FY2026, Congress provided the Bank a $125.0 million limit for administrative expenses, $20.0 million for programs, and $8.86 million for its Inspector General (IG).

Selected Activity. In FY2025, the Bank approved $8.7 billion in transactions (**Figure 1**), to support an estimated $10.1 billion in U.S. exports. Small business support was 19.4% by value and 87.7% by number of transactions. CTEP support was 23.5% by value. Total portfolio exposure was $34.8 billion in FY2025. Guarantees (46.3%) were the largest share, followed by loans (39.8%) and insurance (9.5%). By region, Africa was the largest share of exposure (28.4%); by sector, aircraft was (28.1%).

Figure 1. Ex-Im Bank Authorizations, FY2010-FY2025



Source: CRS, based on data from Ex-Im Bank annual reports.

During the second Trump Administration, Ex-Im Bank, for instance, has approved guarantees of U.S. exports for a data center in Côte d'Ivoire ($66 million) and Kazakhstan's national railway ($448 million); approved MMIA financing for three critical-mineral-related projects (totaling $58 million); announced Project Vault (see below); and moved on a $4.7 billion Mozambique energy project loan that had been stalled for four years amid political strife in-country.

Ex-Im Bank Backing for Project Vault

In February 2026, President Trump announced Project Vault, an Ex-Im Bank-led initiative to bolster critical minerals supply chains and reduce dependency on China through the establishment of critical minerals reserves in the United States. Ex-Im Bank's Board approved a direct loan of up to a record $10 billion to back Project Vault. An additional $2 billion in support is to come from the private sector. On July 9, 2026, VaultCo LLC, the public-private partnership that is to implement Project Vault, announced Brett Lambert as its Executive Chairman. Policy questions surrounding Project Vault center on issues such as which authorities underlie Bank support, the level of due diligence of potential transactions, transparency of operations to Congress and the public, and effectiveness in addressing U.S. policy concerns regarding critical minerals supply and access.

Risk. Ex-Im Bank monitors credit and other risks, reserves against losses, and reports its default rate. If its default rate reaches 2%, it cannot approve new financing until it lowers the rate. At end-FY2025, the agency had reserves of $2.2 billion (6.4% of exposure) and a 1.023% default rate.

Global Context. Ex-Im Bank is one of at least 117 ECAs across 90 economies. The key international framework on ECAs is the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Arrangement on Officially Supported Export Credits, which sets limits on ECA financing terms and conditions (e.g., interest rate floors, repayment terms ceilings, transparency). It aims to foster export competition based on product quality and price, not ECA financing terms. It applies to medium- and long-term (MLT) ECA financing (repayment term of two or more years). The United States and some other economies—such as the European Union, Japan, South Korea, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom—are Arrangement participants. Arrangement-compliant activity is not deemed to be export subsidies prohibited by World Trade Organization rules.

Unregulated ECA financing has grown as non-OECD countries operate ECAs and OECD members offer support outside of the Arrangement. China's ECA activity has raised concerns in particular for some U.S. policymakers due to purported size, tactics, opacity, and operation outside of the OECD. An effort by the United States, China, and others to form new ECA rules outside of the OECD stalled in 2020 over issues such as transparency.

Per Ex-Im Bank estimates, global MLT export credit activity grew from $71 billion in 2021 to $123 billion in 2025. Italy ($26 billion), China ($24 billion), and France ($20 billion) were the three largest providers in 2025, composing 60% of such support globally. The United States, via Ex-Im Bank, was seventh-largest ($5 billion).

Selected Options for Congress

As the Bank's sunset date nears, Congress could consider whether to (with examples of 119th Congress bills)

- **reauthorize Ex-Im Bank and, if so, for how long.** Options include: reauthorize the Bank, possibly with other changes to the agency; take no action, allowing the Bank's authority to sunset; or set rules to guide the Bank's termination. S. 3772 would extend the agency's overall and CTEP-specific sunset dates by 10 years.
- **modify the Bank's exposure cap**, assessing implications for Bank activity and taxpayer risk. S. 4781 would raise this cap to $205 billion for FY2027-FY2033.
- **adjust the default rate cap and CTEP**, assessing effects on risk management and strategic impact. S. 5254 would raise the default rate cap to 4%, add civil nuclear energy to CTEP, and exclude up to $50 billion of CTEP support from default rate calculations. Other bills would also ease default rate calculations and/or modify CTEP (e.g., H.R. 1615/S. 753, H.R. 9585/S. 4823, S. 4702).
- **maintain the Bank's traditional export financing role or update its mission.** S. 4781 would add a domestic production focus to the Bank's existing mission.
- **modify Bank priorities and policies.** Some stakeholders seek more flexible Bank content policies to reflect global supply chains and counter foreign ECA-backed competition; others argue that doing so would lower Bank support for U.S. jobs.
- **codify and/or set rules for Bank programs**, which could allow Congress to set priorities and clarify authorities, yet reduce Bank flexibility. Examples are S. 4781 on MMIA and S. 4820 on REPP. Congress could also consider whether to legislate on SCRI and Project Vault.
- **address staffing.** The Bank OIG has found that staffing gaps and compensation issues affect Bank operations and staff recruitment and retention. S. 4228 would allow special compensation for more Bank employees.
- **assess ECA governance**, such as whether new ECA rules or WTO enforcement would advance U.S. policy.

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