

South Africa to stay in AGOA for now

By [Fred Meintjes](#) | 2 January 2025

Relief as Biden administration extends the AGOA Act for another year, but the future for fruit growers in the US market remains uncertain

The US has extended the present AGOA Act which benefits trade between Africa and the US for another year. AGOA was destined to lapse this year unless the US government passes a new Act which was expected to last until 2042. However, uncertainty caused by the transfer of power in Washington has disrupted the process.



South African sources said the country still finds itself in a difficult situation as far as the US market and future trade is concerned. They point out that the move by the Biden government will buy South Africa some time as the Trump administration settles in Washington.

RSA citrus exporters have benefited from the Act

South Africa is a major beneficiary of the AGOA Act, with South African citrus growers in particular having built up an important export deal to the US. Exporters of stonefruit and table grapes are also now extending their trade into the US under the Act.

South African sources said it would be a devastating blow for the country if it were to lose the benefits of the AGOA Act. The removal of duty-free imports and return to normal trade tariffs will make a continuation of trade impossible in citrus and other fruits.

While there is therefore some level of relief in the temporary extension of the Act, observers said it is only temporary and that the real showdown is still ahead.

EUROFRUIT knows little about the matter other than hope that the South African government will use this period of extension to reach a new deal with Washington. The fact that South Africa's foreign policy aligns itself closely with BRICS countries – seen in Washington as being counter to the interests of the US – is a major stumbling block, even before the Trump administration moves into the White House.

The South African government's foreign policy has also come under scrutiny in local political circles. Since the last elections, the country is governed by a Government of National Unity, which includes a number of political parties.

However, the African National Congress, which came into power in 1994, but only got 42 per cent of the national vote in the last election, still insists that it has the right to decide on foreign policy. Observers said this may just become a major stumbling block for unity in the new government.

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