

# Africa's growth story is shifting. Smart logistics will shape what comes next

South Africa and the African continent are standing at a defining moment, as global trade patterns shift and digital commerce accelerates. New industries are taking root across the continent, and the speed at which goods move across borders—via strong networks and efficient logistics—will be a decisive driver of Africa's future competitiveness.

By [Nelson Teixeira](#) 23 Jan 2026



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As supply chains stretch across borders and industries become more interconnected, the ability to move goods seamlessly from local hubs to global markets is one of the most important drivers of Africa's future competitiveness.

## Lessons from sport and community

As the cricket season continues at full speed this month, it is clear how sports can energise communities and stimulate economic activity, demonstrating how the right systems, infrastructure, and coordination can uplift commerce and a nation. The same is true for logistics.

Sport carries real economic weight. Globally, the sports industry contributes over US \$700bn annually, roughly 1% of global GDP, underscoring how sport can drive investment and national visibility. The 2024 Cricket World Cup generated \$1.6bn in revenue, showing the power to unite people and economies across the globe.

In South Africa, major sporting events have played a profound role in uniting citizens on the path toward true democracy and reconciliation. That potential to uplift people and economies is exactly why collaboration between sport and logistics matters beyond the pitch. What sport can do socially and economically, a robust logistics infrastructure can do for trade.

Improvements in infrastructure and logistics performance strongly correlate with improved economic growth outcomes, especially when accompanied by increased trade activity.

## The economic impact of logistics

Smart logistics has a direct economic impact. Globally, logistics networks contribute significant direct and indirect value to economies, with regional operations offering gateways for companies of every size to participate in global trade. As the continent looks toward deeper economic integration and export growth, the kind of access is critical.

South Africa's freight and logistics sector reflects this momentum. Currently valued at USD 14.7 billion, it is projected to grow at over 6% annually by 2030. Demand for efficient, technology-enabled logistics will only rise as e-commerce expands and manufacturing picks up.

However, many businesses still face fragmented supply chains, with different providers handling different parts of a shipment. This introduces delays and increased costs, threatening businesses' reliability.

## Streamlining supply chains

A one-stop logistics model simplifies this complexity. When every stage from pick up to customs clearance and final delivery is connected through a single, integrated network, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) benefit significantly.

Growing businesses often lack the resources to manage multiple logistics partners or navigate the intricacies of cross-border documentation.



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Digital tools and trade enablement solutions can help SMEs access global customers with greater knowledge at competitive rates. This is especially meaningful in South Africa, where SMEs play a crucial role in employment and economic inclusion.

## Supporting heavy freight and industry

Logistics is not only about small packages. Many of the industries that underpin South Africa's economic engine, such as mining, engineering, and manufacturing, rely on heavy freight.

These sectors move equipment that is high-value and technically complex. Freight remains the largest share of South Africa's logistics market, underscoring the magnitude of this need. Capable freight solutions enable large-scale projects to run on schedule and unlock trade flows that fuel economic growth.

## Logistics in healthcare

The importance of logistics is even more profound in healthcare. As Africa strengthens its capacity to modernise medical technology, the movement of temperature-sensitive and time-critical supplies become an essential part of health system resilience.

Specialised handling, cold-chain stability, and end-to-end monitoring are required to protect sensitive healthcare shipments. In this case, future-ready logistics safeguard lives and push the economy forward.

## **A catalyst for economic and social progress**

These capabilities form the foundation on which Africa's economic aspirations can be realised. A resilient logistics ecosystem enables businesses to expand with confidence and strengthen industrial capacity. When these systems function well, communities gain access to opportunity. The potential of young people, entrepreneurs, and industries can be shared with the world. In this way, logistics has the power to act as a catalyst for broader social and fiscal progress.

## **Shared values of coordination and readiness**

Sport and logistics may appear to belong to different worlds, but they share essential values of discipline, coordination, and readiness. Both demonstrate what becomes possible when people and systems work toward a common goal. A team's ability to perform well depends on many of the same principles that allow business to compete globally.

## **Moving forward**

Excellence, whether in a supply chain or on the field, can spark inspiration and open new pathways for growth across the continent. Expanding capabilities, supporting businesses, and connecting markets ensures that every logistical improvement translates into broader economic and social opportunity.

When logistics work, everything moves, providing endless possibilities.

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