

Africa Export Competitiveness Report 2024: A Call to Action for Inclusive Growth and Shared Prosperity

The report expands its analysis to 40 African nations in 2024, providing a comprehensive assessment of export competitiveness .

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Mamadou Biteye, ACBF

The Africa Export Competitiveness Report 2024 was officially launched at the Africa Think Tank Summit in Addis Ababa, marking a major milestone in Africa's journey toward building a globally competitive and inclusive trade ecosystem.

Produced through the collaborative efforts of the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), the Institute for Competitiveness India, the Institute for Competitiveness

Africa, and Shift Impact Africa, the report serves as both a mirror and a roadmap for Africa's economic transformation under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

Now in its second edition, the report expands its analysis from 30 countries in 2023 to 40 African nations in 2024, providing a comprehensive assessment of export competitiveness through four key pillars — Enabling Environment, Demand Sophistication, Business Dynamism, and Export Performance. It also features an in-depth case study on South Africa, offering practical insights into how national policy and institutional reforms can drive export success across the continent.

A defining focus of the 2024 edition is gender inclusion in trade, an area too often overlooked yet vital to Africa's economic future. Women constitute 60–70% of informal cross-border traders, yet contribute only 20% of export value. The report underscores that removing structural barriers and expanding access to finance, education, and digital infrastructure could unlock an additional US\$58.5 billion in trade value, potentially raising women's total contribution to US\$180 billion.

“This report is more than just an analytical exercise — it is a call to action. As the continent faces global economic uncertainties and evolving trade dynamics, Africa’s export competitiveness will determine our shared prosperity,” said Dr. Amit Kapoor, Honorary Chairman of the Institute for Competitiveness India. “By embracing inclusive growth and unlocking the potential of all our people — particularly women — the continent can transform its abundant resources into shared prosperity.”

The report provides evidence-based insights and strategic direction to guide policymakers, investors, and development institutions. It highlights Africa’s resilience — with intra-African trade growing 7.2% to reach US\$192 billion in 2023 — while calling for targeted investment in infrastructure, education, innovation, and gender-responsive trade frameworks to drive sustainable growth.



“This publication comes at a pivotal moment for Africa’s integration and economic future. It reinforces the imperative of collaboration, data-driven decision-making, and inclusive participation to ensure that Africa not only competes globally but thrives collectively,” said Mamadou Biteye, Executive Secretary of the African Capacity Building Foundation.

“For Africa to realize its full potential, we must shift from extractive to value-creating economies — building trade systems that are inclusive, ethical, and anchored in shared prosperity. This report is a crucial tool to help leaders make that vision a reality,” added Tiekie Barnard, CEO of Shift Impact Africa and Institute for Competitiveness Africa.

The Africa Export Competitiveness Report was created to equip African policymakers, businesses, and institutions with actionable insights to accelerate export-led growth, reduce poverty, and build resilient, inclusive economies. It aligns with the ambitions of the AfCFTA and Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, serving as a catalyst for systems change by addressing structural barriers and advocating for gender equity, financial inclusion, and digital transformation across the continent.

The report can be downloaded at www.shiftimpact.africa/researchandreports

Credits and Acknowledgment

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