



Energising Zimbabwe's Export Growth



ZIMBABWE-JAPAN

TRADE BRIEF



Table Of Contents

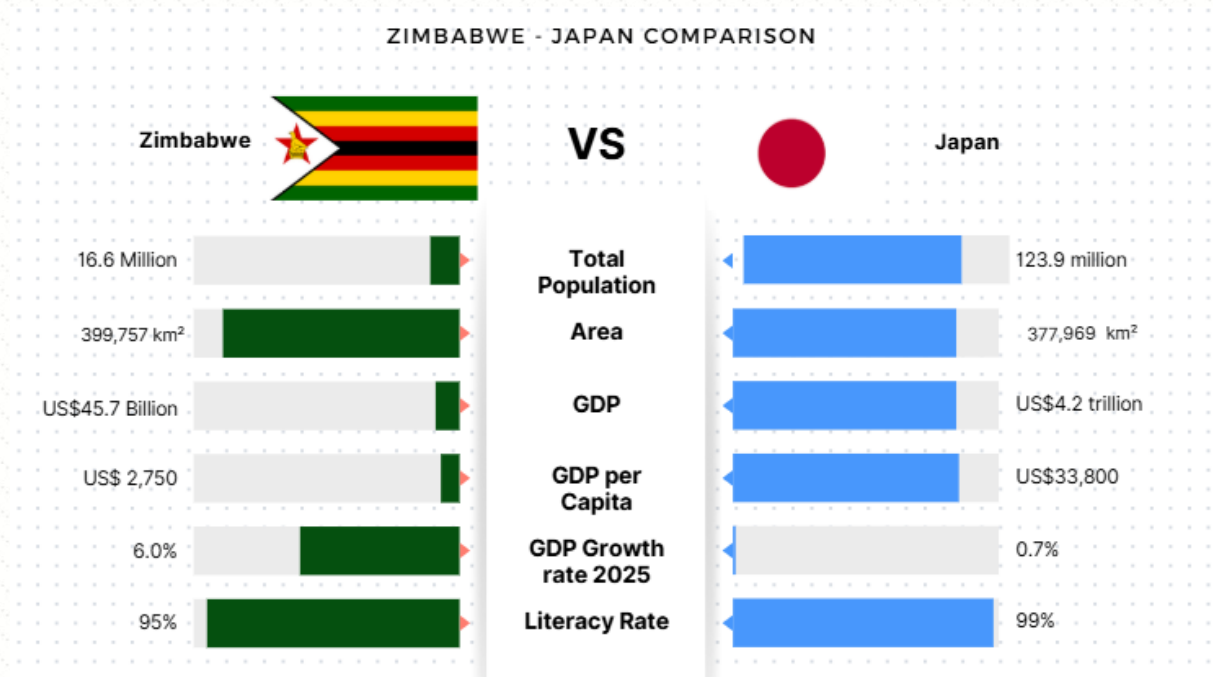


Table of Contents	
1. JAPAN OVERVIEW	2
2. KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS	2
3. ZIMBABWE – JAPAN TRADE	2
4. JAPAN TRADE WITH WORLD	4
5. JAPAN TRADE WITH AFRICA.....	6
6. JAPAN TRADE WITH SADC.....	7
7. JAPAN EXPORT POTENTIAL IN ZIMBABWE	9
8. ZIMBABWE`S TRADE OPPORTUNITIES IN JAPAN	9
9. ISSUES TO CONSIDER	10
10. CONCLUSION	11
ANNEXURES.....	12
Annex 1: Destination Countries of Japan`s Exports to the World (US\$000s)..	12
Annex 2: Source Countries of Japan`s Imports from the World (US\$000s).....	12
Annex 3: Zimbabwe`s Export Potential to Japan	13
Annex 4: Destination Countries of Japan`s Exports to Africa (US\$000s)	13
Annex 5: Source Countries of Japan`s Imports from Africa (US\$000s)	14
Annex 6: Destination Countries of Japan`s Exports to SADC (US\$000s)	14
Annex 7: Source Countries of Japan`s Imports from SADC (US\$000s)	15
Annex 8: Japan`s Growing Source Markets	15

1. JAPAN OVERVIEW

Japan is an island country in East Asia. Located in the Pacific Ocean off the northeast coast of the Asian mainland, it is bordered on the west by the Sea of Japan and extends from the Sea of Okhotsk in the north to the East China Sea in the south. The Japanese landscape is rugged, with more than four-fifths of the land surface consisting of mountains.

2. KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS



3. ZIMBABWE – JAPAN TRADE

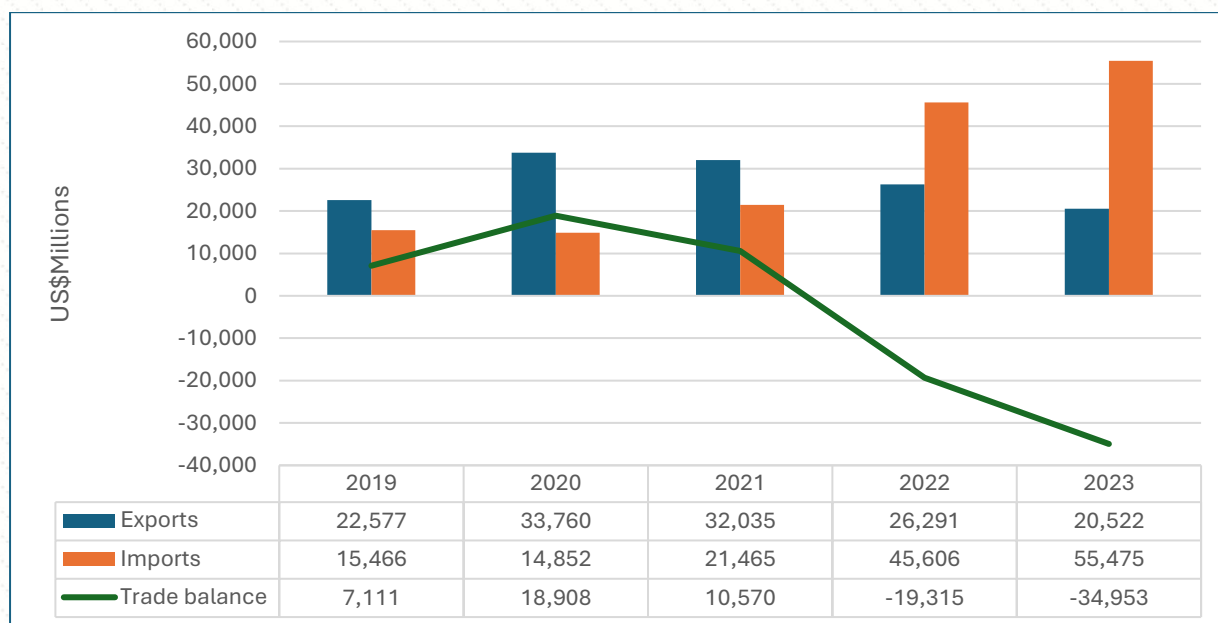


Figure 1: Zimbabwe Japan Trade

As shown in Figure 1 above, the trade imbalance for Zimbabwe with Japan has grown over the five-year period 2019 to 2023, from US\$7.11 million in 2019 to US\$34.95 million in 2023.

In terms of exports, Zimbabwe's exports to Japan were at the highest in 2020 recording US\$33.76 million and lowest in 2019 at US\$22.58 million. The main products exported were tobacco, earth and stones, natural or cultured pearls, cotton and raw hides as shown in Figure 2.

Zimbabwe's imports from Japan grew by 259% from US\$15.47 million in 2019 to US\$55.48 million in 2023. Figure 3 shows the main products imported which were vehicles and accessories, optical for medicals or surgical and machinery among others.

3.1 Zimbabwe's products exported to Japan



Figure 2: Products exported by Zimbabwe to Japan

3.2 Zimbabwe's imported products from Japan

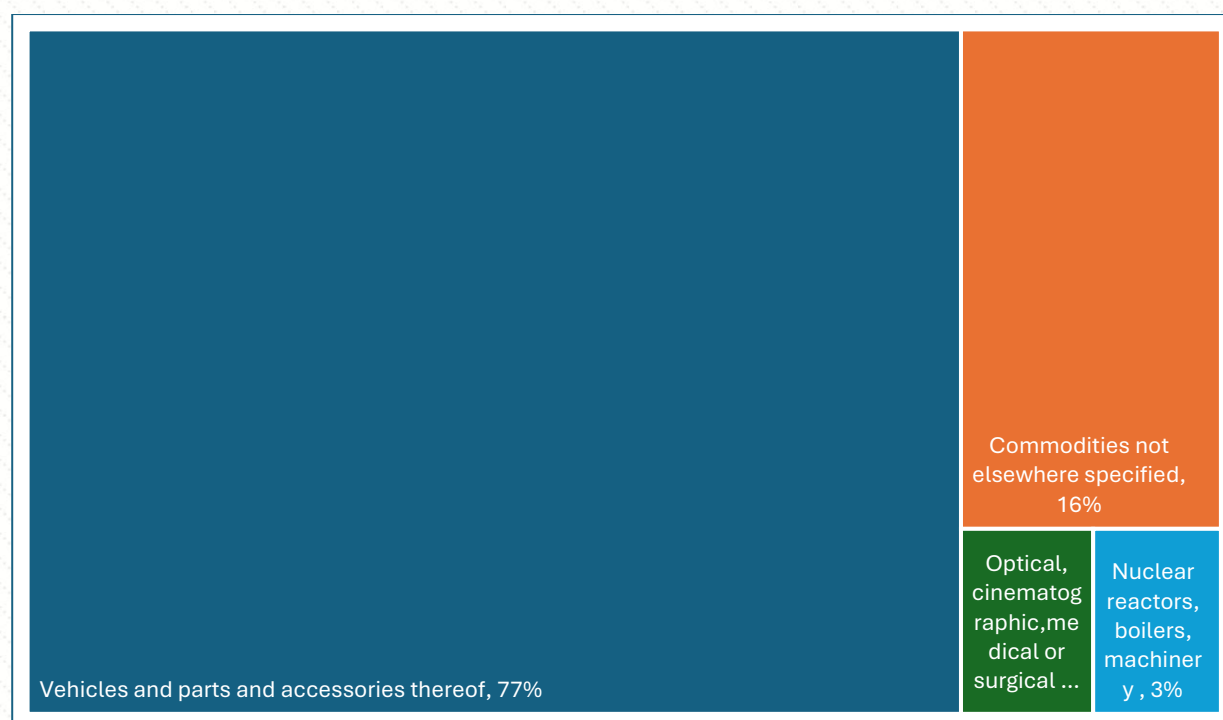


Figure 3: Products imported by Zimbabwe from Japan

3.3 Zimbabwe's Export Potential to Japan

Zimbabwe has an unrealized export potential in Japan amounting to US\$3.6million (refer to Annexure 3). The products with greatest export potential from Zimbabwe to Japan are Ferrochromium, $\geq 4\%$ carbon, Mineral substances, n.e.s. and Oranges. Zimbabwe has the highest supply capacity in Raw hides & skins of reptiles. Copper ores & concentrates are the products that have the strongest demand potential in Japan.

4. JAPAN'S TRADE WITH THE WORLD

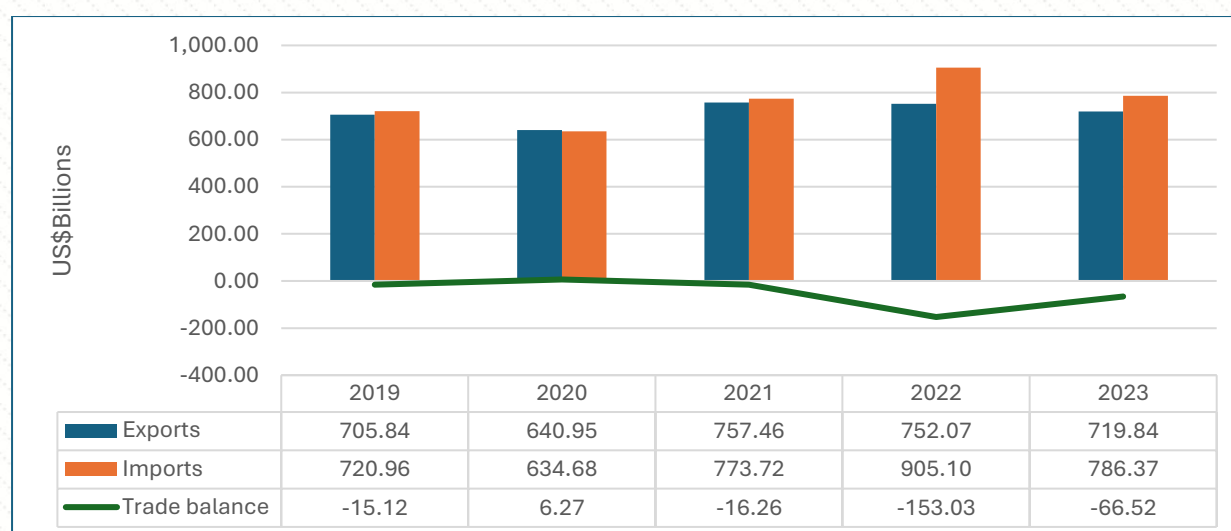


Figure 4: Japan's Trade with the World

As shown in Figure 4 above, over the five-year period 2019 to 2023, Japan recorded a positive trade balance of US\$6.27 billion with the World in 2020, with the other years being negative.

In terms of exports, Japan's exports to the World averaged US\$700 billion during the same period with the main products exported being vehicles and parts, machinery and mechanical appliances, and electrical machinery and equipment among others as shown in Figure 5.

Over the same period, Japan's imports from the World were the highest at US\$905.10 billion in 2022 and lowest at US\$634.68 billion in 2020. Figure 6 shows the main products imported which were mineral fuels, ores and plastics, among others.

4.1 Japan's Exports to the World

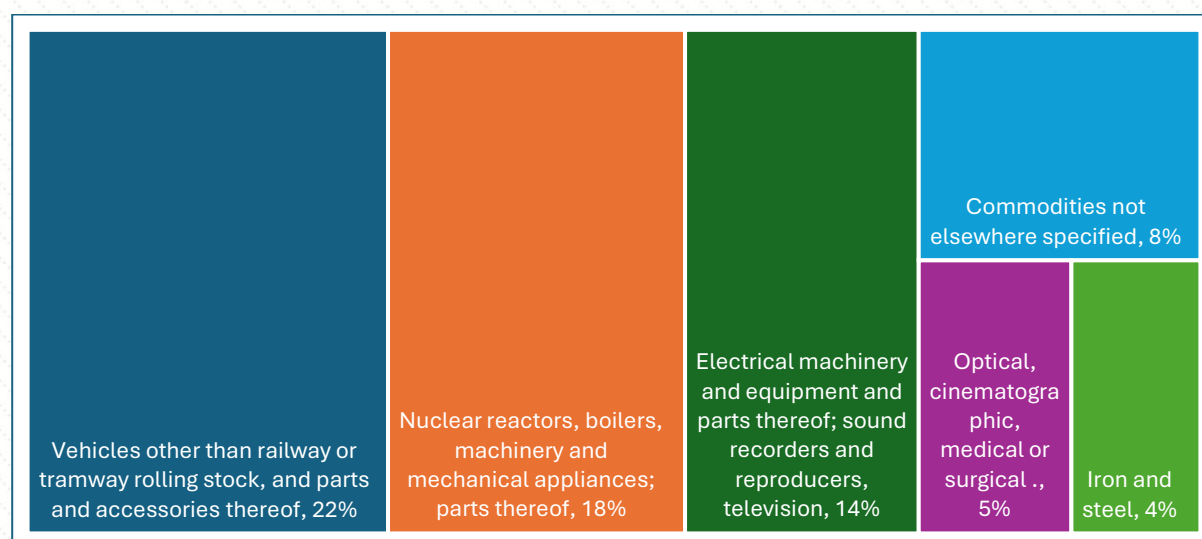


Figure 5: Japan's Exports to the World

4.2 Japan's Imports from the World

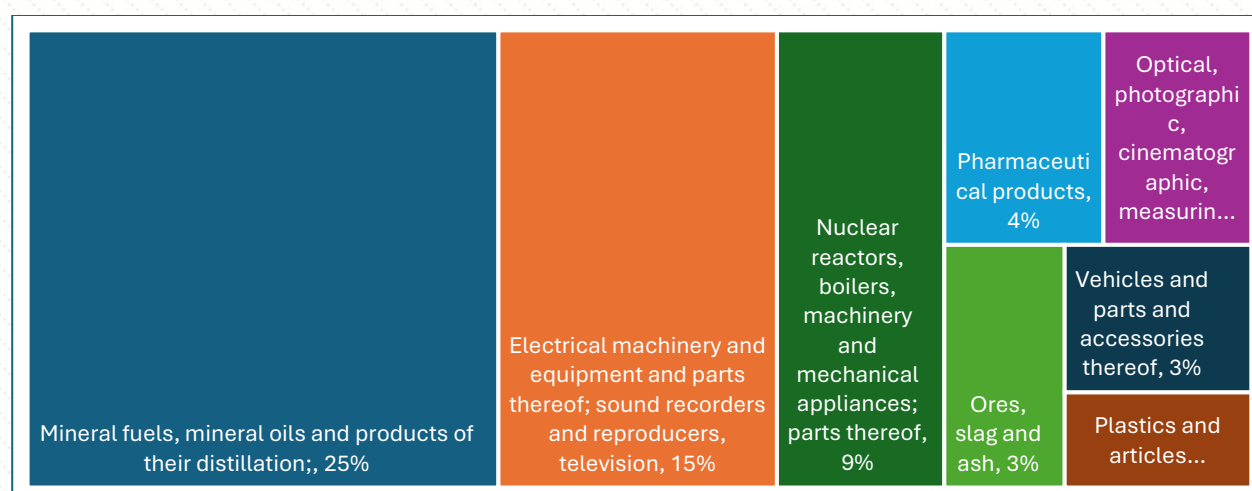


Figure 6: Japan's Imports from the World

5. JAPAN'S TRADE WITH AFRICA

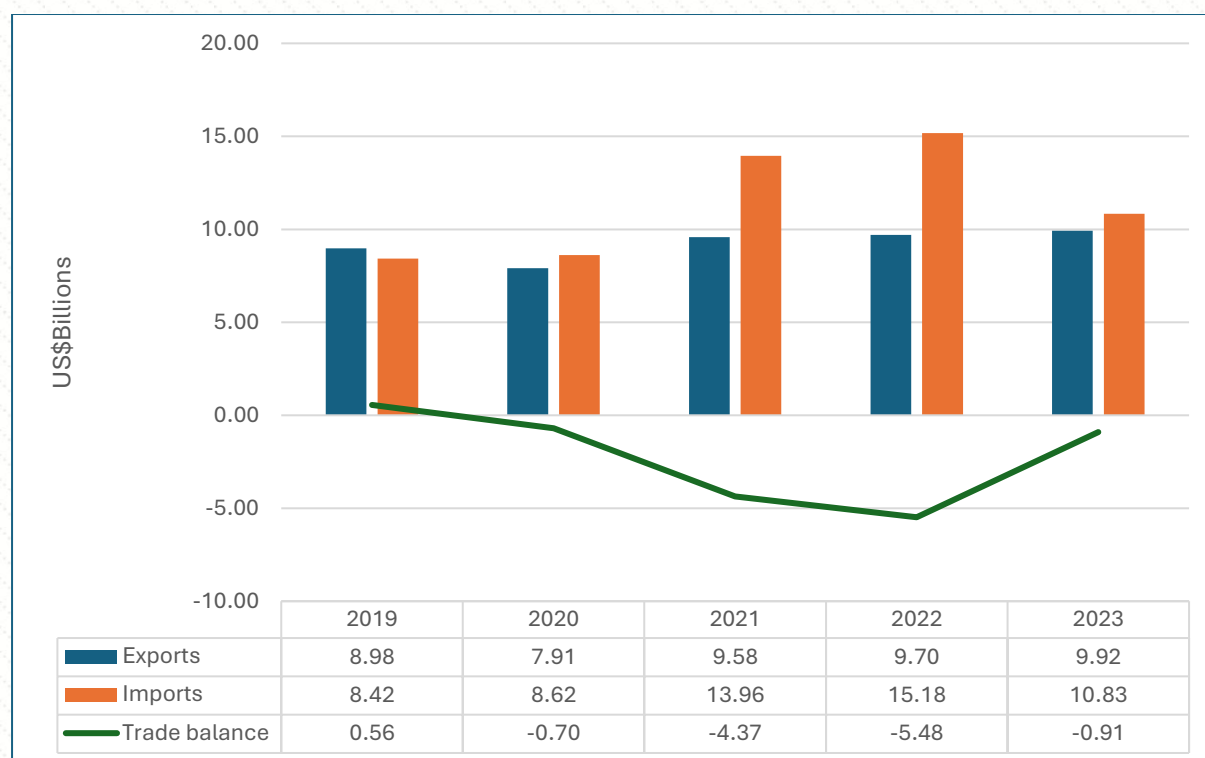


Figure 7: Japan's Trade with Africa

5.1 Japan's Exports to Africa

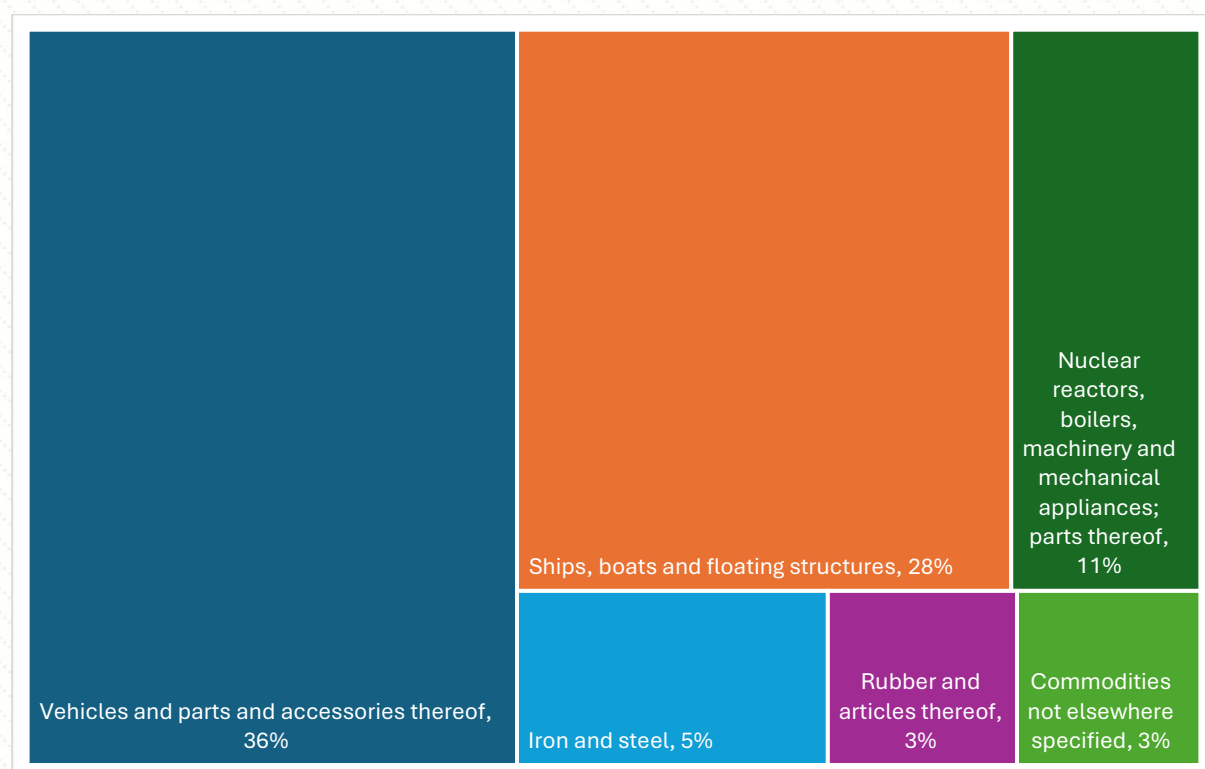


Figure 8: Products Exported by Japan to Africa

5.2 Japan's Imports from Africa

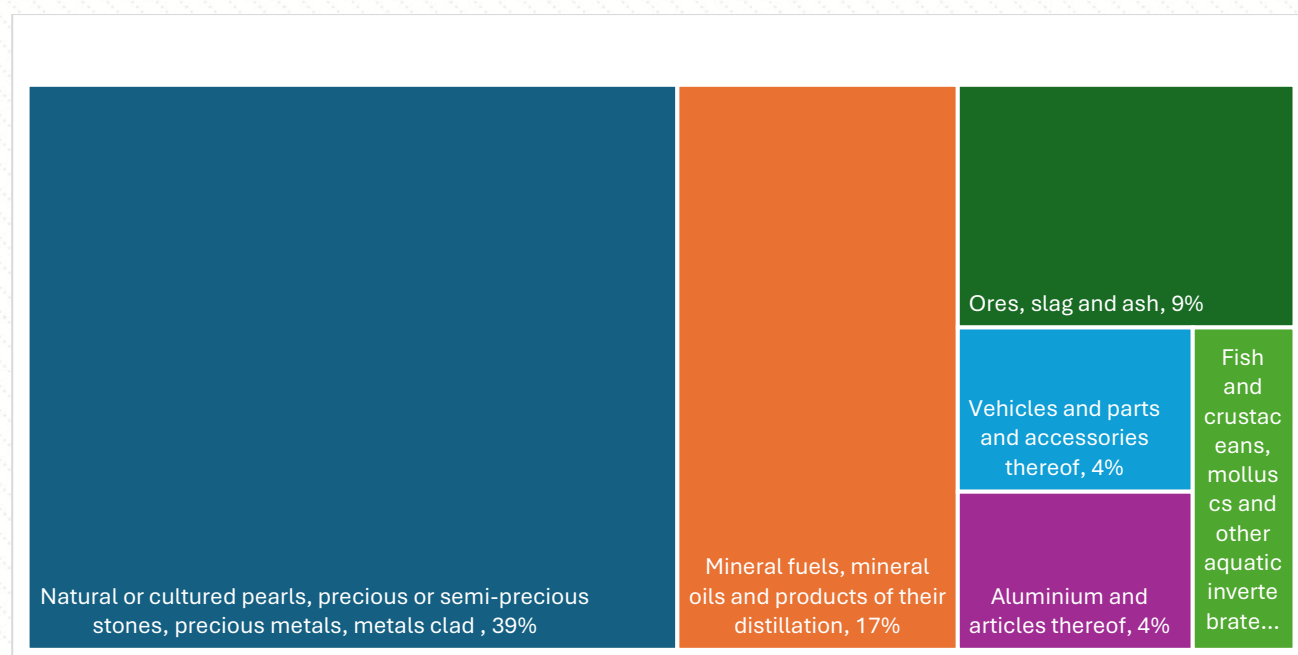


Figure 9: Products Imported by Japan from Africa

6. JAPAN'S TRADE WITH SADC

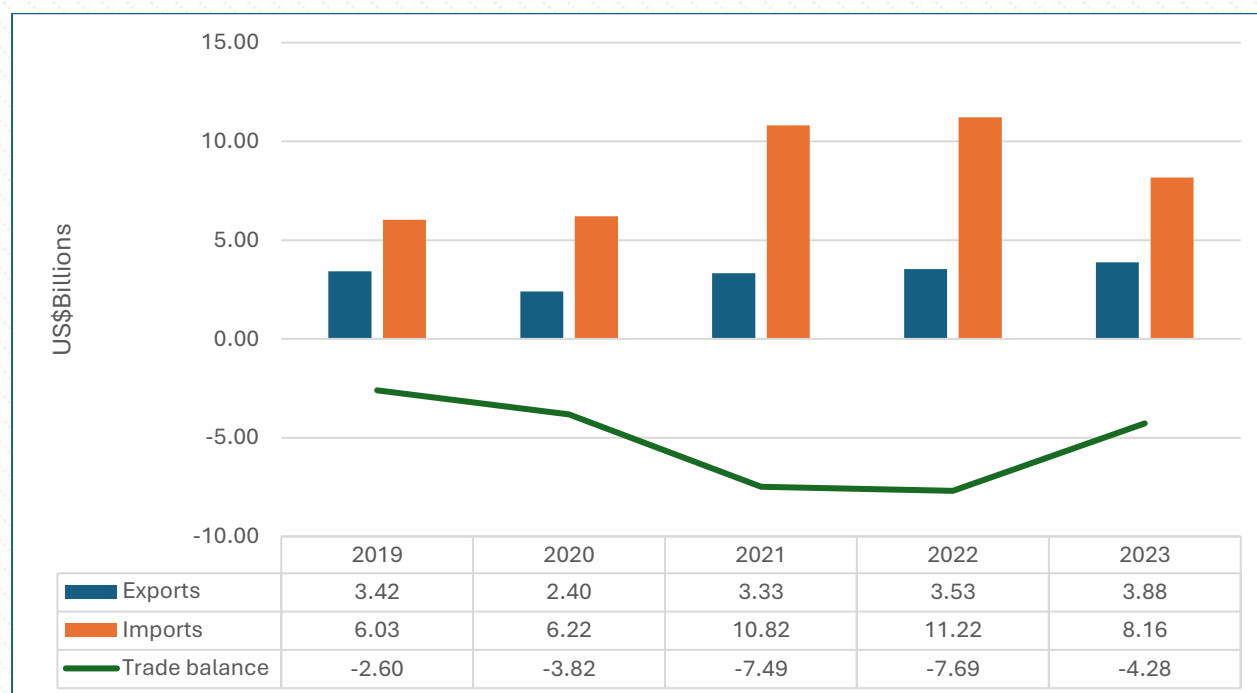


Figure 10: Japan's Trade with SADC

6.1 Japan's Exports to SADC

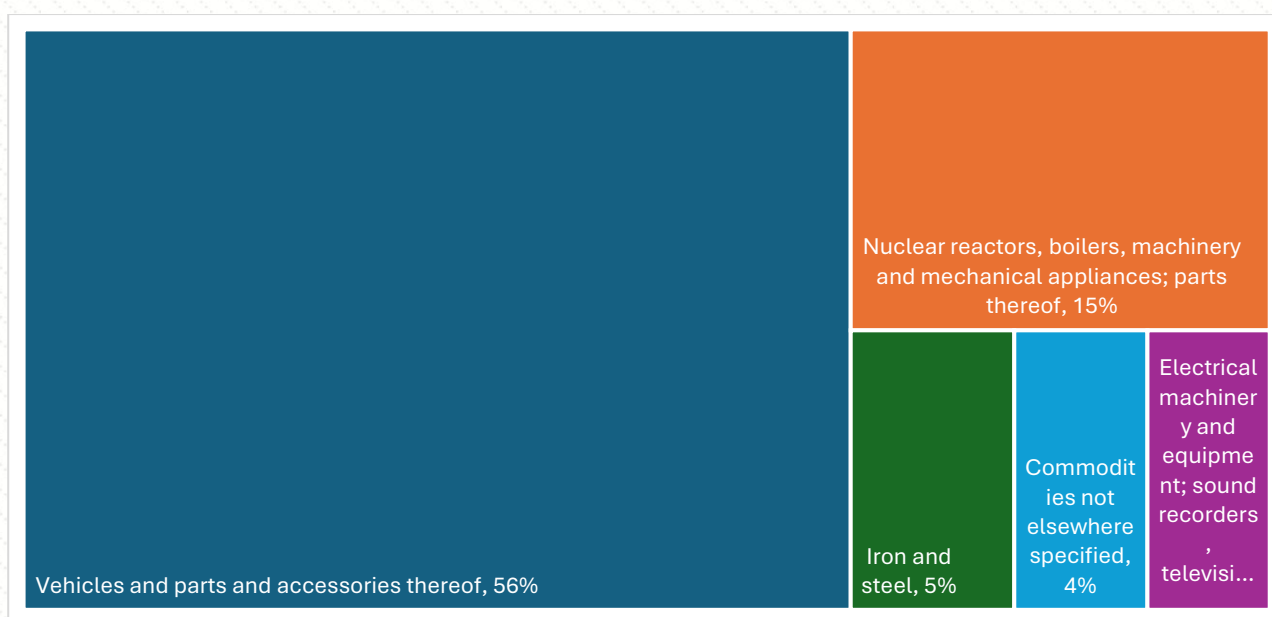


Figure 11: Japan's Exports to SADC

6.2 Japan's Imports from SADC

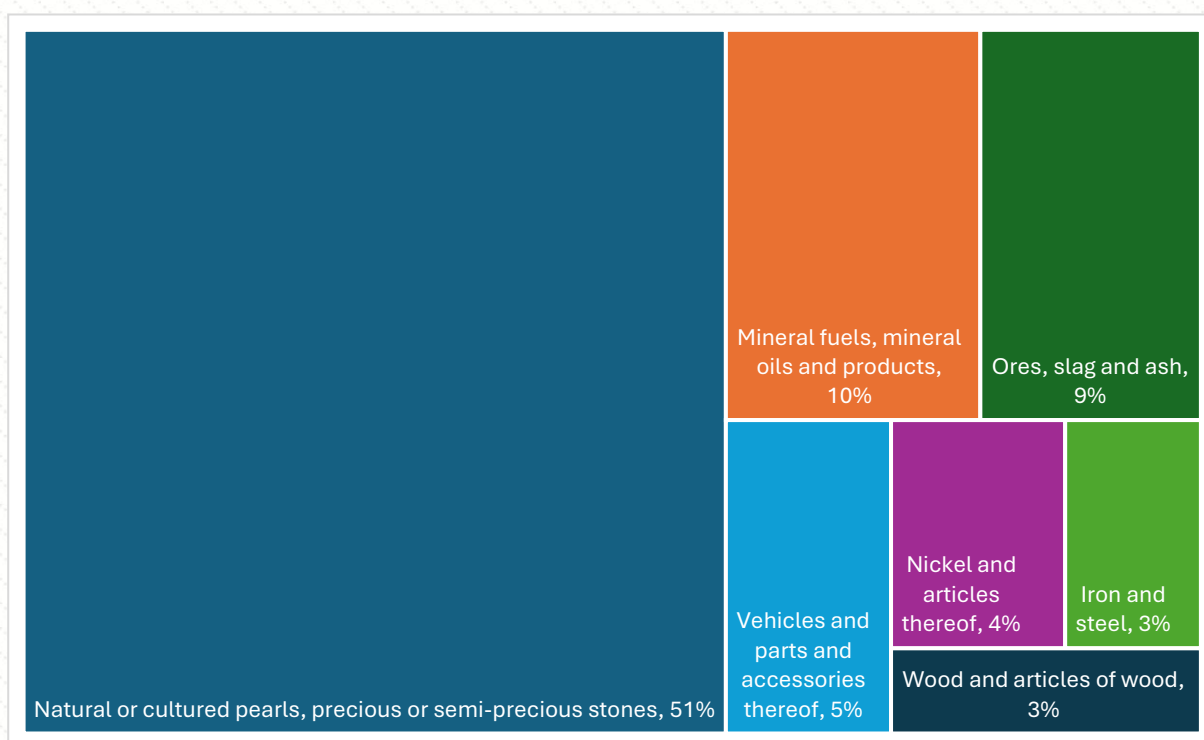
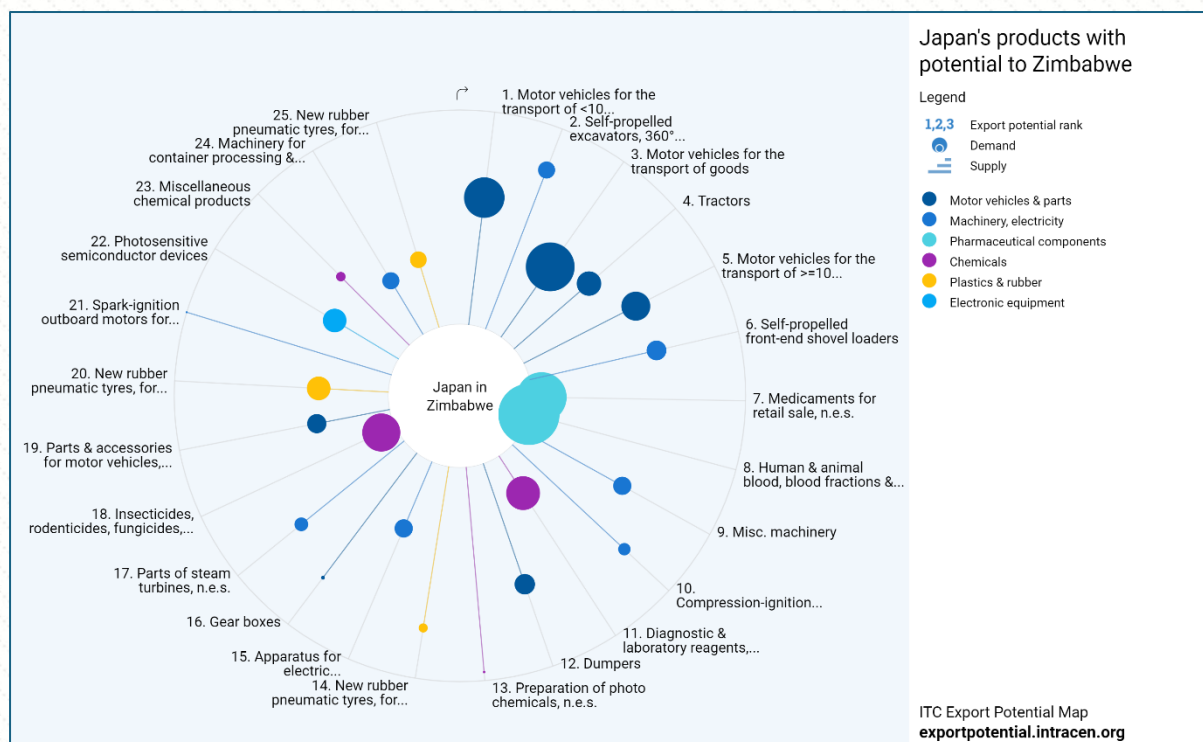


Figure 12: Japan's Imports from Africa

7. JAPAN'S EXPORT POTENTIAL IN ZIMBABWE



The products with greatest export potential from Japan to Zimbabwe are Motor vehicles for the transport of <10 persons, self-propelled excavators, 360° rotating superstructure and motor vehicles for the transport of goods. Japan has the highest supply capacity in Spark-ignition outboard motors for marine propulsion. Human & animal blood, blood fractions & immunological products is the product that has the strongest demand potential in Zimbabwe.

8. ZIMBABWE'S TRADE OPPORTUNITIES IN JAPAN

8.1 Growing Demand for Organic and Fair-Trade Products

Japanese consumers are increasingly seeking organic and ethically sourced goods. Zimbabwe can capitalize on this trend by exporting organic agricultural products such as coffee, tea, and fruits. Japan imported coffee and tea amounting to US\$1.724 billion in 2023 from the World with source countries from Africa being Ethiopia, Tanzania, Kenya and Rwanda. Edible fruits sourced from Africa amounted to US\$55.615 million in 2023 with source countries being South Africa, Egypt and Morocco. In these identified products, Zimbabwe is yet to start exporting to Japan.

8.2 Cotton and Textiles

Zimbabwe's high-quality cotton can meet Japan's demand for raw materials in the textile and fashion industries. Japan imports raw cotton, processes it into value-added

products, and exports high-quality yarns, fabrics, and finished goods to international markets, leveraging its expertise in precision manufacturing. Japan imported cotton worth US\$423.466 million from the World in 2023 with Africa contributing US\$4.146 million. Zimbabwe was the main source country from Africa with US\$1.775 million representing 42%. In order to benefit from the close economic ties between the two countries, Zimbabwe should negotiate for cotton value addition investments by Japanese companies in the sector.

9. ISSUES TO CONSIDER

9.1 Stringent Quality and Safety Standards

Japan imposes strict regulations on imports, especially for food and agricultural products, requiring Zimbabwean exporters to comply with rigorous quality, safety, and phytosanitary standards.

To overcome this challenge, it is essential to: Provide training and support to exporters on meeting Japanese quality and safety standards. Strengthen bilateral trade agreements to address trade barriers and simplify export procedures.

9.2 High Transportation Costs

The geographical distance between Zimbabwe and Japan contributes to increased shipping costs, which may reduce competitiveness. This is compounded by Zimbabwe being a land-linked country which can delay shipments and affect product quality.

To overcome this challenge, it is essential to: Take advantage of Zimbabwe's participation at OSAKA EXPO 2025 by highlighting opportunities for collaboration with the Japanese in developing Zimbabwe's infrastructure, including transport, energy, and technology.

9.3 Limited Diversification of Export Products

Over-reliance on tobacco and a few other commodities limits Zimbabwe's ability to fully leverage on the Japanese market.

To overcome this challenge, it is essential to: Use platforms such as OSAKA EXPO 2025 to present opportunities to attract Japanese investors into Zimbabwe's agricultural and manufacturing sectors. Also, introducing unique Zimbabwean products such as crafts and organic coffee to the Japanese market.

9.5 Market Entry Barriers

Lack of familiarity with the Japanese market, language barriers, and complex import processes can pose challenges for Zimbabwean businesses.

To overcome this challenge, it is essential to: Strengthen bilateral trade agreements to address trade barriers and simplify export procedures as well as explore joint ventures and partnerships with Japanese firms for better market access and knowledge transfer.

10. CONCLUSION

Strengthening trade ties between Zimbabwe and Japan presents significant opportunities for mutual economic growth. Zimbabwe, which is endowed with abundant natural resources and a strategic geographical position, can leverage its exports to meet Japan's demand for high-quality raw materials such as cotton and agricultural products. Conversely, Japan's advanced technological capabilities and expertise in industrial production offer Zimbabwe valuable prospects for technology transfer, capacity building, and industrial modernization.

To enhance trade relations, Zimbabwe must focus on meeting Japan's stringent quality and regulatory standards, investing in value-added production, and promoting sustainability and traceability in its supply chains. Diversifying export portfolios, improving logistics infrastructure, and fostering strong bilateral trade agreements are critical steps to overcoming challenges such as distance, high transportation costs, and competition from other exporters.

ANNEXURES

Annex 1: Destination Countries of Japan's Exports to the World (US\$000s)

Importers	Exported value in 2019	Exported value in 2020	Exported value in 2021	Exported value in 2022	Exported value in 2023
World	705,842,013.00	640,953,137.00	757,461,387.00	752,071,999.00	719,844,077.00
United States of America	140,468,605.00	118,723,609.00	136,046,461.00	140,775,993.00	145,500,824.00
China	134,719,884.00	141,322,302.00	163,945,539.00	145,584,397.00	126,765,775.00
Korea, Republic of	46,282,733.00	44,658,431.00	52,595,406.00	54,432,482.00	46,973,194.00
Taipei, Chinese	43,013,040.00	44,403,796.00	54,587,373.00	52,527,961.00	42,930,492.00
Hong Kong, China	33,632,061.00	31,993,214.00	35,464,968.00	33,376,395.00	32,673,313.00
Thailand	30,195,432.00	25,514,386.00	33,041,857.00	32,687,182.00	29,363,105.00
Germany	20,233,415.00	17,592,633.00	20,775,846.00	19,693,624.00	19,387,662.00
Singapore	20,173,990.00	17,694,529.00	20,061,019.00	22,503,833.00	18,776,678.00

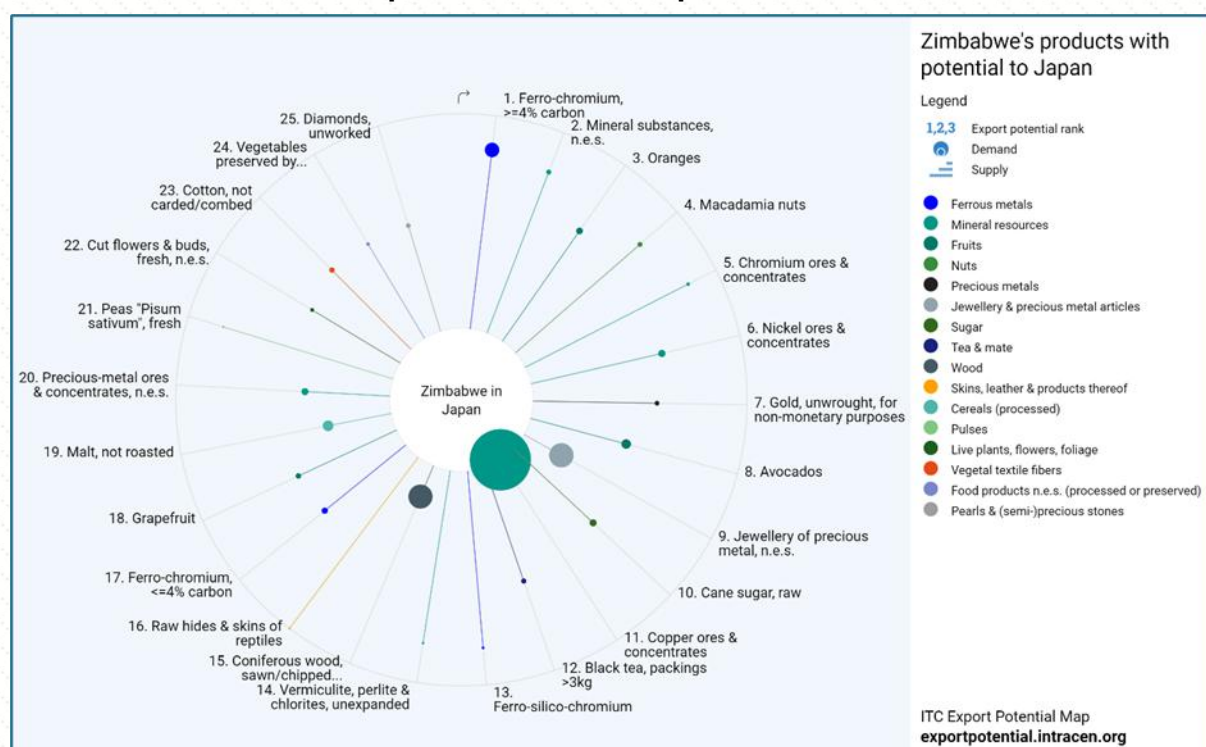
Source: Trademap, 2025

Annex 2: Source Countries of Japan's Imports from the World (US\$000s)

Exporters	Imported value in 2019	Imported value in 2020	Imported value in 2021	Imported value in 2022	Imported value in 2023
World	720,964,445.00	634,678,167.00	773,720,906.00	905,098,532.00	786,365,263.00
China	169,236,468.00	163,760,523.00	185,800,620.00	190,223,513.00	174,260,232.00
United States of America	81,259,414.00	71,703,352.00	83,130,275.00	91,341,148.00	83,832,265.00
Australia	45,461,975.00	35,654,301.00	52,447,436.00	89,039,881.00	64,878,617.00
United Arab Emirates	26,196,772.00	16,391,766.00	27,147,184.00	46,136,111.00	37,067,123.00
Taipei, Chinese	26,860,116.00	26,762,797.00	33,530,408.00	38,917,274.00	35,650,203.00
Saudi Arabia	27,665,618.00	18,452,565.00	27,524,404.00	42,657,588.00	34,772,571.00

Source: Trademap, 2025

Annex 3: Zimbabwe's Export Potential to Japan



Annex 4: Destination Countries of Japan's Exports to Africa (US\$000s)

Importers	Exported value in 2019	Exported value in 2020	Exported value in 2021	Exported value in 2022	Exported value in 2023
World	705,842,013.00	640,953,137.00	757,461,387.00	752,071,999.00	719,844,077.00
Africa Aggregation	8,975,887.00	7,913,437.00	9,583,244.00	9,698,592.00	9,922,843.00
Liberia	2,026,898.00	2,157,361.00	2,404,681.00	2,669,807.00	2,805,720.00
South Africa	2,416,169.00	1,670,177.00	2,363,474.00	2,366,810.00	2,515,752.00
Kenya	854,751.00	719,834.00	1,028,196.00	971,122.00	949,268.00
Egypt	910,895.00	973,361.00	1,089,920.00	776,607.00	681,224.00
Tanzania, United Republic of	318,206.00	254,331.00	388,155.00	464,101.00	558,069.00
Nigeria	392,273.00	285,972.00	287,556.00	248,326.00	298,223.00
Morocco	198,653.00	223,929.00	226,414.00	238,801.00	270,181.00
Uganda	182,022.00	180,945.00	233,747.00	210,935.00	197,394.00

Source: Trademap, 2025

Annex 5: Source Countries of Japan's Imports from Africa (US\$000s)

Exporters	Imported value in 2019	Imported value in 2020	Imported value in 2021	Imported value in 2022	Imported value in 2023
World	720,964,445.00	634,678,167.00	773,720,906.00	905,098,532.00	786,365,263.00
Africa Aggregation	8,419,956.00	8,615,174.00	13,955,274.00	15,182,909.00	10,830,047.00
South Africa	5,130,231.00	5,750,190.00	10,126,773.00	10,096,966.00	7,296,565.00
Nigeria	509,451.00	687,033.00	761,124.00	1,279,277.00	505,533.00
Algeria	376,373.00	254,493.00	560,682.00	652,897.00	477,661.00
Madagascar	216,213.00	119,613.00	181,707.00	456,148.00	368,421.00
Morocco	269,577.00	299,008.00	357,789.00	462,316.00	299,663.00
Egypt	140,578.00	312,368.00	318,568.00	374,301.00	229,690.00
Mauritania	230,355.00	182,907.00	274,705.00	195,159.00	207,635.00

Source: Trademap, 2025

Annex 6: Destination Countries of Japan's Exports to SADC (US\$000s)

Importers	Exported value in 2019	Exported value in 2020	Exported value in 2021	Exported value in 2022	Exported value in 2023
World	705,842,013.00	640,953,137.00	757,461,387.00	752,071,999.00	719,844,077.00
Southern African Development Community (SADC) Aggregation	3,422,985.00	2,401,964.00	3,329,845.00	3,529,969.00	3,882,522.00
South Africa	2,416,169.00	1,670,177.00	2,363,474.00	2,366,810.00	2,515,752.00
Tanzania, United Republic of	318,206.00	254,331.00	388,155.00	464,101.00	558,069.00
Mauritius	133,776.00	94,362.00	105,395.00	121,639.00	184,372.00
Congo, Democratic Republic of the	73,859.00	58,135.00	82,933.00	117,062.00	165,211.00
Zambia	44,784.00	36,304.00	67,413.00	107,439.00	119,585.00
Mozambique	184,653.00	141,614.00	129,885.00	120,747.00	112,952.00
Zimbabwe	15,466.00	14,852.00	21,465.00	45,606.00	55,475.00

Source: Trademap, 2025

Annex 7: Source Countries of Japan`s Imports from SADC (US\$000s)

Exporters	Imported value in 2019	Imported value in 2020	Imported value in 2021	Imported value in 2022	Imported value in 2023
World	720,964,445.00	634,678,167.00	773,720,906.00	905,098,532.00	786,365,263.00
Southern African Development Community (SADC) Aggregation	6,026,962.00	6,217,558.00	10,816,217.00	11,221,198.00	8,163,254.00
South Africa	5,130,231.00	5,750,190.00	10,126,773.00	10,096,966.00	7,296,565.00
Madagascar	216,213.00	119,613.00	181,707.00	456,148.00	368,421.00
Mozambique	216,423.00	57,113.00	146,074.00	120,385.00	187,710.00
Tanzania, United Republic of	88,360.00	82,380.00	91,869.00	151,181.00	119,253.00
Seychelles	75,586.00	86,083.00	79,906.00	76,090.00	61,008.00
Congo, Democratic Republic of the	5,480.00	22,377.00	16,775.00	24,883.00	36,309.00
Botswana	30,941.00	14,441.00	94,918.00	46,438.00	22,061.00
Zimbabwe	22,577.00	33,760.00	32,035.00	26,291.00	20,522.00

Source: Trademap,2025

Annex 8: Japan`s Growing Source Markets

Exporters	Value imported in 2023 (USD thousand)	Growth in imported value between 2019-2023 (% , p.a.)
Southern African Development Community (SADC) Aggregation	8,163,254.00	
South Africa	7,296,565.00	14
Madagascar	368,421.00	27
Mozambique	187,710.00	5
Tanzania, United Republic of	119,253.00	13
Congo, Democratic Republic of the	36,309.00	48
Botswana	22,061.00	5
Malawi	18,523.00	7
Eswatini	1,576.00	10
Lesotho	1,264.00	14

Source: Trademap,2025



✉ info@zimtrade.co.zw
☎ +263 788 665 599
✕ ZimTrade Alerts
f ZimTrade Zimbabwe
🌐 www.tradezimbabwe.com



HEAD OFFICE

188 Sam Nujoma
Street Avondale
Harare, Zimbabwe
+263 24 2369332-34

SOUTHERN REGION

48 Josiah Tongogara
Street P. O. Box 3090
Bulawayo, Zimbabwe
+263-292 266151

EASTERN REGION

Suit 6 Manica Centre
118 Hebert Chitepo
Mutare, Zimbabwe
+263 20 20 62843/46