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JANUARY
2026



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EXPORT PERFORMANCE SETS A POSITIVE TONE FOR 2026



ZIMBABWE'S EXPORT sector is entering 2026 on a stronger footing, supported by sustained policy focus, improving production conditions and a deliberate effort by Government to align trade, diplomacy and industrial development.

Recent performance indicates that exports are playing an increasingly important role in supporting economic activity and strengthening the country's external position.

This direction is the result of deliberate policy choices under President E.D Mhangagwa's administration, where exports have been positioned as a central pillar of economic recovery, with emphasis placed on value addition, market access and competitiveness.

The approach by the Second Republic reflects an understanding that durable growth will be anchored in the country's capacity to produce for external markets, generate foreign currency and progressively narrow the import-export gap.

A key component of this strategy has been the integration of economic objectives into foreign policy.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade has continued to recalibrate Zimbabwe's diplomatic engagements to prioritise trade outcomes, with embassies now expected to play a practical role in export development.

Beyond political representation, diplomatic missions are being tasked with identifying buyers, facilitating business linkages and supporting access to production inputs, equipment and technology from host markets.

This shift signals a move towards more coordinated trade facilitation, where diplomacy supports production and production feeds into export growth.

For exporters, particularly those seeking to enter new markets, this approach reduces information asymmetries and shortens pathways to market entry.

The external orientation is being reinforced by developments at home.

Expectations of a good agricultural season, relative macroeconomic stability and ongoing ease of doing business reforms are improving planning certainty for local businesses.

These conditions are particularly relevant for manufacturing and agro-processing, sectors that sit at the centre of value addition and export growth.

As reforms continue to address regulatory efficiency and transaction costs, firms are better positioned to plan for scale and market expansion. Recent trade data provides context for this outlook.

According to ZimStat, cumulative export earnings for January to November 2025 reached US\$8,57 billion, representing a 27 percent increase from US\$6,74 billion recorded over the same period in 2024.

Improved export performance contributed to a significant narrowing of the trade deficit, which declined by 69 percent from US\$2,1 billion in 2024 to US\$644 million in the period under review.

October 2025 marked a notable milestone, with exports reaching US\$1 billion in a single month.

These figures point to growing traction in export performance and provide a platform on which planning for 2026 is proceeding, with attention shifting from recovery towards consolidation, diversification and wider participation across the economy.

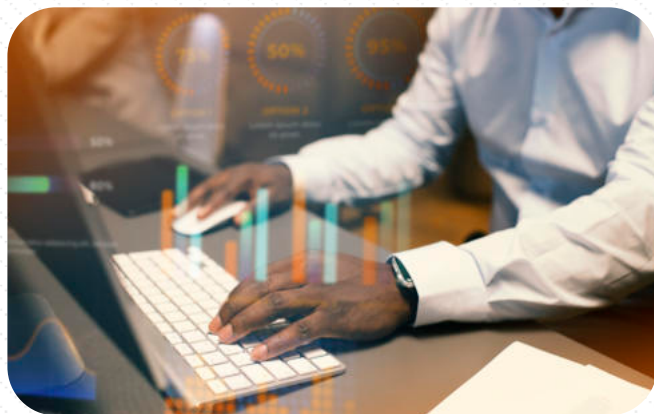
ZimTrade's role within this framework continues to evolve.

As the national trade development and promotion organisation, it is strengthening its capacity to respond to changes in global trade, including shifting demand patterns, evolving regulatory standards and competitive pressures.

The focus is on ensuring that exporters are supported to access markets, and to remain competitive and compliant within them.

Export development anchored in inclusion and value addition

Export development efforts in 2026 are placing increasing emphasis on broadening participation across the economy, ensuring that export growth supports inclusive development.



Particular attention is being directed towards integrating rural producers, youth-owned enterprises, and women-led businesses into export value chains.

Export clusters remain a key instrument in this process and organising producers around specific products and markets helps address challenges related to scale, quality consistency and coordination.

In rural areas, the cluster model is linking producers to formal markets while supporting income generation and local economic activity.

Over time, this approach also contributes to building production capacity and export readiness at community level.

Alongside clustering, there is continued focus on product development.

New export products are being identified and developed, while existing products are being improved to meet market requirements.

Heritage-based products are part of this approach, drawing on Zimbabwe's natural resources, cultural assets and traditional knowledge, while aligning them with modern packaging, branding and quality standards demanded by international markets.



Support to small and medium enterprises remains central to export development.

Programmes such as ZimTrade-run Next She Exporter and Eagles Nest have demonstrated that SMEs can access regional and international markets when provided with targeted technical assistance, market exposure and compliance support.

Building on the outcomes recorded in previous editions, these initiatives continue to play a role in preparing SMEs for export participation in 2026.

The emphasis on small businesses reflects lessons drawn from international experience. Economies such as Singapore and Malaysia have built strong export sectors by integrating small manufacturers and specialised producers into global value chains.

Their experience shows that export competitiveness is driven by efficiency, quality and market alignment, rather than scale alone.

In addition, export development efforts will place increased emphasis on the manufacturing sector, recognising its central role in driving value addition, industrialisation and sustainable export growth.

Targeted and deepened interventions will be implemented to ensure optimum results from industry, and support will be intensified to manufacturers to enhance product quality and consistency, ensuring alignment with regional and international market standards.

This will be complemented by deliberate efforts to link manufacturers with buyers across key markets, while equally strengthening linkages with suppliers of inputs, technology providers and logistics partners to improve reliability and scale.

Further to this, ZimTrade will work closely with established top-tier businesses to ensure that its programmes and interventions respond directly to their needs.

This engagement will also include facilitating dialogue around ease of doing business issues, with a view to addressing practical constraints that affect production, competitiveness and export growth.

To ensure a coordinated and collective approach, efforts will also be targeted at strengthen collaboration with business member organisations and relevant Government institutions.

Through structured engagement and alignment, these partnerships will aim to ensure that policy, support services and trade facilitation measures are responsive to the needs and expectations of industry, ultimately strengthening the overall export ecosystem.

Platforms for engagement and coordination remain important.

The Annual Exporters Conference and Exporter of the Year Awards, scheduled for 20 February 2026 in Bulawayo, continue to provide a structured forum for dialogue between policymakers, exporters and support institutions.



Beyond recognising performance, the conference creates space for discussion on policy, logistics, financing, market access and competitiveness, with outcomes that inform ongoing export development efforts.

Quality assurance is another area of focus. Access to international markets increasingly

depends on compliance with standards related to quality, safety and traceability.

In response, ZimTrade is working with local and international partners to strengthen quality infrastructure within Zimbabwe.

One of the initiatives underway is the establishment of quality assurance laboratories, beginning with a facility that will provide international certification for locally produced honey, expected to be operational in the second half of 2026.

Local testing and certification are expected to reduce costs for exporters, shorten turnaround times and improve responsiveness to buyer requirements, while also building domestic technical capacity.



Market development through targeted engagement

Market development remains a core pillar of Zimbabwe's export strategy in 2026, with efforts directed at consolidating existing markets while opening new ones.



ZimTrade is implementing targeted export promotion activities designed to improve market access, strengthen buyer relationships and enhance product visibility.

A key feature of this approach is in-market export development.

One of the initiatives at an advanced stage is the establishment of a warehouse facility in Zambia, intended to stock Zimbabwean products and ease entry into the Zambian market.

The facility will also serve as a gateway into the Democratic Republic of Congo, providing exporters with a practical distribution platform closer to buyers.

Plans are in place to replicate this model in other markets, including Mozambique, Namibia and Tanzania.

These initiatives are supported by a structured calendar of export promotion activities across Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

Planned engagements include participation in major international trade fairs, outward and inward

trade missions, market scans and sector-specific business forums.

Key platforms include Fruit Logistica in Germany, the China International Import Expo, business forums in Saudi Arabia, Uganda and Rwanda, and outward missions to Mozambique and Zambia.

These engagements are intended to deepen market intelligence, facilitate buyer engagement and support market entry for Zimbabwean firms.

Market prioritisation continues to reflect trade performance.

Dubai has emerged as Zimbabwe's leading export destination, reflecting its role as a global trading hub and re-export centre.



Other key markets include China, South Africa, Mozambique and Europe, each of which remains central to Zimbabwe's export profile and market development strategy.

A FRESH START FOR ZIMBABWEAN EXPORTS IN 2026



Pelatia Choto

The beginning of a new year offers a valuable opportunity for reflection, renewal, and forward planning.

For Zimbabwe's export community, it is a moment to take stock of recent progress while setting clear, ambitious goals for growth in an increasingly competitive global marketplace.

As the year starts, it presents a timely opportunity for exporters to review and refine their strategies.

As global markets continue to evolve, exporters are required to be more agile, informed, and innovative.

The past year highlighted the resilience and determination of Zimbabwean enterprises, many of which strengthened their export readiness, explored new markets, and enhanced product quality despite a challenging operating environment.

Building on these gains, companies must continue to implement focused programmes aimed at improving competitiveness, deepening market access, and strengthening exporter capacity.

Issues such as quality assurance, standards compliance, branding, packaging, and digital visibility are increasingly critical for success in international markets.

Exporters who invest in these areas position themselves for long-term sustainability and growth.

Through partnerships, knowledge-sharing, and targeted support, the target is to strengthen the contribution of exports to national economic development.

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EXPORTERS CONFERENCE AND AWARDS SET FOR FEBRUARY

ZimTrade

Team

ZIMTRADE HAS announced the new date for its premier industry event, the Exporters

Conference and Awards, now taking place on February 20, 2026, at the Zimbabwe International Exhibition Centre in Bulawayo.

The event, under the theme “Rooted Locally, Growing Globally,” will focus on building Zimbabwean export competitiveness by leveraging domestic strengths for international success.

“Our goal is to sustain and accelerate this momentum in value-added exports,” said Allan Majuru, ZimTrade Chief Executive Officer.

“Strategic alignment between government policy and business execution is critical.

“This conference is the definitive platform to forge that collaboration and set our national export agenda for the year.”

The conference is designed as a high-level dialogue, featuring His Excellency, President Emmerson Mnangagwa, as the guest of honor, and Professor Amon Muriwa, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

It will provide exporters with a unique opportunity to engage directly with national leadership on policy and practice.

Attendees will gain forward-looking insights from an acclaimed international speaker lineup, including Dr. Mitslal Kifleyesus-Matschie, Founder and

CEO of Ecopia (Ethiopia), Mr. Alex Musembi, Co-founder & General Manager of Africa Collect Textiles (Kenya) and Nicholas Mudungwe, Executive Director, Africa Leather and Leather Products Institute, (Ethiopia).

Their sessions will provide actionable frameworks for integrating into global value chains, adopting sustainable trade models, and leveraging technologies such as AI to drive export growth.

The day-long conference will culminate in the prestigious Exporters Awards Gala, celebrating top-performing companies.

Award categories are designed to recognize excellence at all levels, from the SME Exporter of the Year to major sector champions.

An award of significant note is the Intra-Africa Trade Award, introduced last year to champion regional commerce.

“The Intra-Africa Trade award promotes and encourages the pioneers who are transforming Zimbabwe’s trade profile by participating in continental trade and championing the country’s participation and opportunities in the AfCFTA,” Majuru noted.

For the business community, this event is an essential investment.

It offers unparalleled networking, learning, and recognition opportunities, all aimed at driving profitability and resilience in Zimbabwe’s export sector.



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ZIMBABWE EXPANDS PRESENCE AT FRUIT LOGISTICA 2026.



ZIMBABWE WILL participate in Fruit Logistica 2026, scheduled for 4-6 February 2026, with a combination of local companies and smallholder farmers exhibiting, while additional top exporting firms will be attending for buyer meetings.

This expanded delegation is positioned to engage international buyers and significantly expand its global market reach.

This increased presence follows a period of robust growth for Zimbabwe's fresh produce sector, particularly within the high-value superfood segment.

The goal at Fruit Logistica is to ensure that the unique quality and taste of Zimbabwean produce translate into long-term off-take agreements that provide stability for local farmers."

The participation of local companies is being facilitated by ZimTrade, with assistance from partner organisations, including the Horticulture Development Council, the International Trade Centre, and the UK International Development.

The heightened participation reflects the maturing landscape of the nation's agriculture, with the high

interest from local producers indicating the success of the Government's Horticulture Recovery and Growth Plan.

According to TradeMap, Zimbabwe's horticultural exports amounted to US\$181.7 million in 2025. Blueberry exports have become a primary driver, increasing significantly in 2025, with production approaching 12,000 tonnes, up from 8,000 tonnes the previous year.

This expansion is bolstered by Zimbabwe's strategic harvest window, which supplies international markets ahead of major global competitors.

Aside from the flagship blueberry industry, which grew export earnings by 23 percent in 2025 compared to the previous year, other commodities have gained global demand.

These include peas and specialty vegetables, with mange tout and sugar snap peas remaining core to the UK and European markets.

Avocados and macadamias are benefiting from new trade agreements and trade protocols, spurring investment in value-added processes like oil extraction.

Additionally, citrus and stone fruits from revitalized

orchards under the Horticulture Recovery and Growth Plan are now reaching maturity.

Fruit Logistica serves as a critical platform to tap into the global horticultural market through networking and consolidating trade relationships. In a global marketplace defined by stringent phytosanitary and sustainability standards, direct engagement with international off-takers is essential.

Participation enables Zimbabwean firms to negotiate multi-year supply contracts, ensuring long-term price stability and market access.

With continued assistance and guidance from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, ZimTrade has facilitated local companies' attendance at the Fruit Logistica fair over the past 5 years.

Fruit Logistica also provides a vital learning opportunity, offering exposure to the latest advancements in cold chain logistics and post-harvest management, which is key to maintaining the premium quality of Zimbabwean exports.

For Zimbabwean enterprises, achieving export readiness is a significant milestone that reflects extensive learning, adaptation, and alignment with international market expectations.

Through programmes such as NextShe Exporter and Eagles' Nest, beneficiaries acquire critical technical, operational, and market knowledge while gaining a clearer understanding of international requirements and buyer expectations.



These programmes also support beneficiaries to refine, position, and improve their products to meet global standards, making the foundational support central to ZimTrade's overall impact on enterprise competitiveness.

However, export success is not achieved at the point of readiness alone, as businesses require continued guidance, refinement, and real time problem solving when transitioning from preparation into active export participation.

The Alumni Masterclass is designed to respond to this critical transition phase by supporting past programme beneficiaries who have mastered the fundamentals and are now ready to penetrate, grow, and sustain their presence in export markets.

The introduction of this advanced engagement platform reinforces ZimTrade's commitment to walking the export journey alongside its alumni, while intentionally shifting the focus from foundational learning to practical application, execution, and growth acceleration.

Participants will focus on managing business growth in increasingly competitive export environments while identifying, securing, and sustaining niche markets that offer long term commercial value.

They will also strengthen supply chains to ensure consistency, reliability, and scalability, while navigating more complex regulatory and compliance requirements associated with higher levels of export activity.

ZIMTRADE LAUNCHES ALUMNI MASTERCLASS



Melissa M Ncube

ZIMTRADE CONTINUES to extend its support well beyond initial capacity building interventions, demonstrating a deliberate

commitment to sustained engagement that goes past foundational training and once-off programme participation.

The organisation is strengthening long term relationships with alumni of flagship programmes such as Eagles' Nest and NextShe Exporter through the planned launch of a targeted Alumni Masterclass in 2026.

This initiative represents a strategic progression in ZimTrade's export development mandate, ensuring that investments made in training and mentorship translate into measurable, sustainable, and long term export outcomes for participating enterprises.



The Masterclass further promotes peer learning and collaboration by connecting programme alumni with experienced exporters, industry specialists, and dedicated mentors within a supportive and structured ecosystem.

This approach creates a dynamic environment for shared learning, problem solving, and collective progress among enterprises operating at similar stages of export development.

Beyond advanced insights, participants gain actionable strategies, renewed momentum, and stronger professional networks that support long term growth, resilience, and competitiveness in international markets.

These combined elements equip participating enterprises to confidently transition from being export ready to becoming export active and performance driven exporters.

Ultimately, the Alumni Masterclass represents a deliberate effort to sustain meaningful relationships with past beneficiaries, identify critical transition points within the export journey, and unlock the next phase of growth for high potential enterprises.

This initiative is a strategic investment in Zimbabwe's export champions, ensuring that the foundations laid through Eagles' Nest and NextShe Exporter continue to drive long term national export competitiveness and economic resilience.

and SMEs should ensure their products are showcased in environments where the right buyers are already present.



Food and beverage producers should target food expos, natural cosmetic brands should focus on beauty and wellness fairs, while craft and heritage producers are better suited to gift and lifestyle exhibitions.

ZimTrade-supported shows are selected with sector relevance in mind, but SMEs must still assess whether their product fits comfortably within the show's focus.

SMEs should also be clear about what they want to achieve by attending a trade show.

Some businesses aim to secure buyers or distributors, while others want to test market response, study competitors, or build brand visibility.

Having one primary objective helps shape the choice of exhibition and manage expectations.

A show that is strong in business-to-business matchmaking may be ideal for buyer sourcing, while another may be better for learning and exposure.

Clear objectives turn participation into a strategic investment rather than a gamble.

The target market represented by the trade show is another key factor.

Different markets have different consumer preferences, price sensitivities, and regulatory requirements. SMEs should consider whether their product naturally fits the market where the exhibition is held.

For example, premium organic products may perform better in markets with strong demand for sustainability, while affordable processed foods may find better traction in regional African markets.

ZimTrade's market intelligence can help SMEs understand which destinations offer realistic opportunities.

Cost versus potential return must also be carefully weighed.

Trade show participation involves expenses such as travel, accommodation, samples, and marketing materials.

HOW SMEs CAN MAXIMISE VALUE FROM ZIMTRADE-SUPPORTED EXHIBITIONS



Natali Franciko

When SMEs work with ZimTrade, they gain access to a carefully curated platform of exhibitions and market opportunities,

but success still depends on selecting events that align with the business's level of readiness, product offering, and market goals.

Trade fairs are often seen as exciting gateways to international markets, filled with potential buyers, new trends, and networking opportunities.

However, not every trade show will deliver meaningful results for every business.

Businesses that are still refining their product or production processes may benefit more from regional or learning-focused exhibitions before moving into large international fairs.

ZimTrade's export readiness and capacity-building programmes help SMEs reach this stage, making it easier to identify when they are truly prepared to participate.

Equally important is matching the trade show to the product category.

Each exhibition attracts a specific type of buyer,

Instead of focusing only on affordability, SMEs should think about what outcomes would justify the investment. These could include a certain number of quality buyer leads, sample requests, or serious business meetings.

A show that delivers strong commercial prospects, even if more costly, can offer better value than a cheaper event with limited buyer presence.

One of the major advantages of attending through ZimTrade is the value-added support provided before and during exhibitions.

This includes pre-show training, market briefings, branding and packaging guidance, and facilitated B2B meetings.

SMEs should prioritise trade shows where such structured support is available, as preparation significantly increases the likelihood of success.

Trade shows reward businesses that arrive

informed, organised, and confident.

Finally, SMEs must consider their ability to follow up after the exhibition.

Most deals are not concluded on the show floor.

They develop through emails, calls, sample shipments, and negotiations.

An SME should be able to respond quickly to inquiries, provide quotations, and provide additional information. Without a strong follow-up, even the best trade show opportunity can be wasted.

In essence, trade shows should be viewed as strategic tools rather than one-off events.

When SMEs carefully choose exhibitions that align with their readiness, products, objectives, and target markets, and when they fully leverage ZimTrade's guidance, trade fairs become powerful stepping stones from local production to international markets.



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4

BUILDING AND AGRICULTURE SERVICE SECTOR SET FOR REGIONAL OUTWARD MISSION



Renwick Wachenyuka

ZIMTRADE WILL lead an Exploratory Mission to Zambia aimed at opening new market opportunities for Zimbabwean companies in the agriculture and building and construction services sectors.

The mission will take place in Lusaka from 9-11 June 2026 and responds to growing demand in Zambia for specialised Zimbabwean expertise, while strengthening economic cooperation between the two neighbouring countries.

With a deliberate focus on services exports, the initiative reflects a growing emphasis on positioning Zimbabwe's intellectual, technical, and professional capabilities within regional markets.

The primary objective of the mission is to facilitate direct and practical business linkages between Zimbabwean service providers and Zambian importers, contractors, and project developers seeking reliable and competitive solutions.

Zimbabwean firms have established a strong regional reputation in engineering, project management, architectural design, and specialised agricultural consultancy.

The exploratory mission is designed to move companies from expressions of interest to actual business deals, noting Zambia's ongoing infrastructure expansion and agricultural modernisation programmes align closely with Zimbabwean expertise.

The building and construction delegation is expected to include companies offering civil engineering, quantity surveying, electrical and plumbing installations, sustainable building technologies, and project management services.

Participants from the agriculture services sector will include providers of irrigation design and installation, soil management consultancy, agro processing engineering, veterinary services, and smart farming solutions.

The three-day programme in Lusaka will feature structured business to business meetings, targeted site visits to major development projects, and networking engagements with key industry organisations such as the Zambia Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Engineering Institution of Zambia.

LOCAL COMPANIES TO PARTICIPATE AT ZAMBIA LEADING TRADE FAIR



Vivinah Matswetu

Zimbabwean companies will participate at this year's Zambia Agricultural and Commercial Show (ZACS) 2026, scheduled

for July/August in Lusaka.

The show brings together buyers, policymakers, producers, distributors, financiers, farmers, and development partners from across the region, providing a platform for product showcasing, market engagement, and business interaction.



Zimbabwe's participation at ZACS 2026 is intended to support structured entry into the Zambian market and facilitate wider engagement within the SADC region.

When approached with clear objectives, the exhibition serves as a practical platform for export development, partnership building, and regional market expansion.

ZACS provides an environment where decision makers and market participants can interact directly within a short timeframe.

This enables relationship building, product assessment, and initial commercial discussions to take place during the exhibition period.

For Zimbabwean firms seeking to expand regionally, the show offers both immediate engagement opportunities and longer term strategic value.

As a long standing multi sector trade fair, ZACS

regularly attracts more than 1,300 exhibitors and over 200,000 visitors from over 20 countries.

Participants represent agribusiness, manufacturing, FMCG, services, public institutions, and development partners, making the event a central meeting point for regional trade.

The 2026 edition will again provide Zimbabwean companies with face-to-face access to regional buyers and decision makers within a single setting.

This reduces the cost and complexity associated with initial market entry while supporting faster relationship development and deal progression.

ZACS is particularly relevant to Zimbabwe given Zambia's position as a key regional trading partner.

Zambia also functions as a gateway to Central and East Africa, supported by a growing consumer base and expanding industrial activity that continues to demand competitively priced regional products.

Recent exhibitors continue to report positive commercial outcomes.

Companies have recorded increased orders for agricultural inputs and equipment, sustained demand for processed foods and FMCG products, and new leads for industrial machinery, building materials, and related services.

Several firms have progressed from transactional sales to establishing a longer term market presence in Zambia.

This has supported the integration of Zimbabwean products into local supply chains and retail networks, reinforcing confidence in Zimbabwe as a regional supplier





5

MARKET FOCUS: MOZAMBIQUE



Kingstone Gwatidzo

ZIMTRADE WILL lead an Outward Trade Mission to Beira from 7 to 9 July, aimed at unlocking new trade and logistics driven opportunities for Zimbabwean companies seeking to expand into Mozambique and beyond.

The mission will bring together exporters from multiple sectors with Mozambican buyers, distributors, logistics operators, and institutional stakeholders, creating direct pathways for market entry, partnership formation, and deal making.

The mission is designed to provide practical exposure to Mozambique’s evolving trade and logistics environment, while supporting exporters to strengthen corridor-based planning, navigate regulatory requirements, and engage potential partners along the Beira route.

In addition to facilitating business linkages, the mission will deepen understanding of sector specific demand, investment trends, and operational realities that shape cross border trade with Mozambique.

The focus on Beira reflects the growing importance of logistics competitiveness in shaping the Zimbabwe–Mozambique trade relationship.

As both economies adjust to new investment priorities and regional trade dynamics, logistics efficiency is emerging as a decisive factor influencing cost structures, delivery reliability, and export viability.

Mozambique is increasingly shifting from being viewed solely as a neighbouring destination market to serving as a cost efficient gateway to global shipping routes for Zimbabwean exporters.

This transition is being driven by corridor upgrades, border efficiency reforms, and increased private sector participation in transport and logistics services.

The Beira and Maputo corridors, long critical for Zimbabwe’s access to international markets, are undergoing infrastructure and administrative improvements that are changing the economics of cross border commerce.

Reduced transit delays, more predictable border procedures, and improved road and rail connectivity are lowering landed costs and improving the competitiveness of Zimbabwean products across multiple sectors.

These developments reinforce Mozambique’s broader strategic importance.

With a GDP of approximately US\$21 billion in 2023 and a GDP per capita of about US\$623, Mozambique combines a moderate domestic consumer base with a central role in regional logistics.

Its ports and corridors serve several landlocked Southern African economies, positioning the country as a key transit hub.

Mozambique remained Zimbabwe's second largest export market within the SADC region in 2024, after South Africa, with exports valued at US\$253 million.

This performance highlights the market's continued relevance for established exporters and emerging SMEs seeking regional expansion.

For Zimbabwean businesses, the combination of geographic proximity, port access, and multimodal transport connectivity continues to support demand in priority sectors, including food products, agro based goods, construction materials, and industrial equipment.

Economic momentum in Mozambique, supported by investment in energy, logistics, and agriculture between 2024 and 2025, is expected to translate into stronger commercial opportunities in 2026.

Agriculture and horticulture remain among the most promising sectors.

Despite Mozambique's own production capacity, supply gaps persist in vegetables, citrus, bananas, avocados, and processed foods, alongside sustained demand for agro inputs such as seed, fertilisers, and irrigation technologies.

Short haul transport routes into Beira, combined with improved corridor reliability, reduce spoilage risks and support time sensitive and cold chain exports

Demand for construction and industrial supplies is also increasing as Mozambique continues to invest in infrastructure and public works.

Zimbabwean firms supplying building materials, iron and steel products, fabricated components, engineering tools, personal protective equipment, and industrial consumables are well positioned to scale, particularly where value addition and specialisation are introduced.

Logistics services are emerging as a growth area. Improved border predictability and corridor performance are increasing demand for clearing and forwarding, bonded warehousing, refrigerated transport, fleet management, and last mile distribution services.

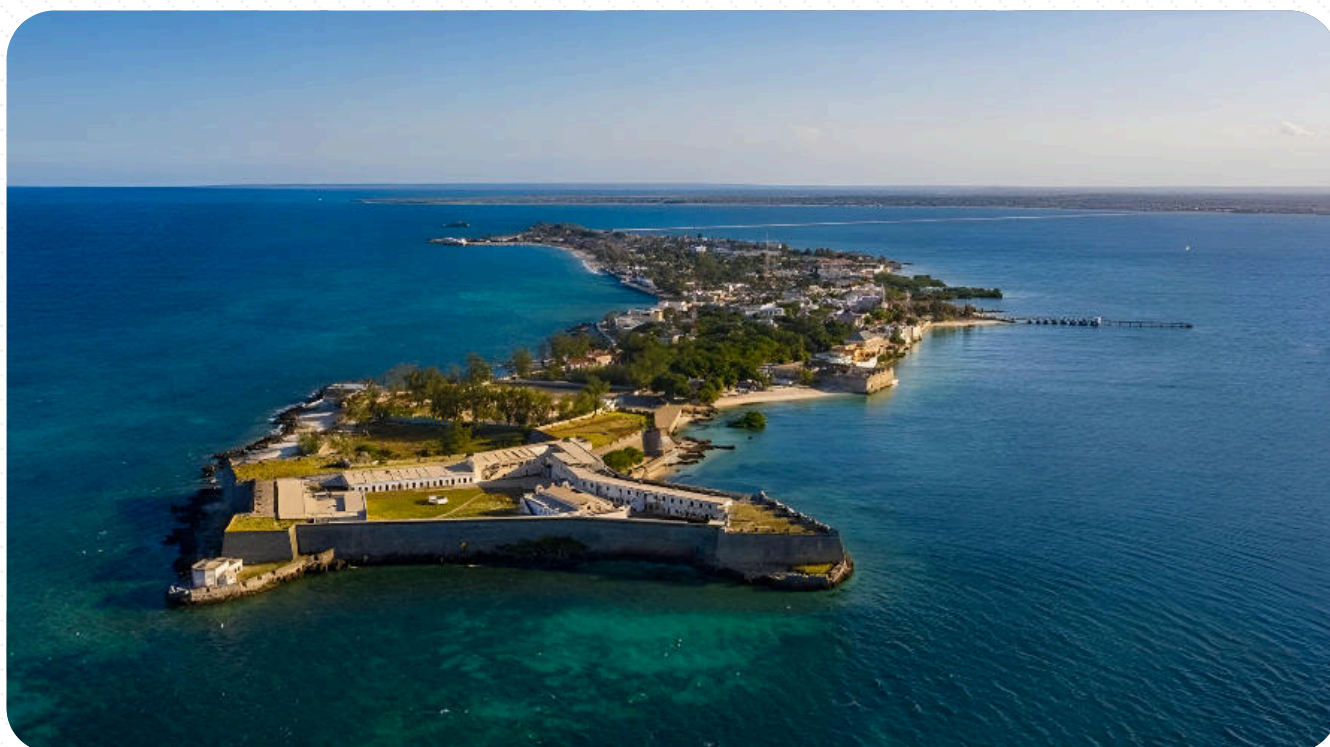
These developments create opportunities for Zimbabwean logistics providers while also supporting manufacturers and exporters seeking consistent delivery performance.

Beyond goods trade, opportunities are also developing in services such as tourism and education, with Mozambique's expanding coastal tourism sector and demand for vocational training aligning with Zimbabwe's service capabilities.

Realising these opportunities will require disciplined execution.

Exporters must prioritise compliance through accurate documentation, adherence to standards, and alignment with sanitary and phytosanitary requirements.

Effective use of preferential trade arrangements under SADC, COMESA, and the AfCFTA, particularly through correct application of rules of origin, will be essential to maintaining price competitiveness.





4 PRODUCT FOCUS: ZIMBABWE'S SPICE AND CHILLI EXPORT MARKET



Pamela Surumete

ZIMBABWE'S SPICE and chilli export sector continues to grow as a niche yet increasingly influential component of the country's agricultural export portfolio.

In an era where consumers and food manufacturers are steadily shifting toward natural flavours, clean label ingredients, and sustainably sourced herbs and spices, Zimbabwe's potential in this sector has become especially visible.

As global demand for chillies and spice derivatives expands, opportunities for Zimbabwe in regional, European, and Asian markets continue to strengthen, supported by improvements in production practices and value chain coordination.

Across regional markets, Trade Map reveals stable performance in exports classified under coffee, tea, mate, and spices.

South Africa remains a dominant destination for Zimbabwean spices, benefiting from established logistics routes and its strong food processing industry, with exports worth US\$12.6 million in 2024.

Products such as dried chillies and capsicum peppers form an important portion of Zimbabwe's exports in this category, reflecting both regional demand and Zimbabwe's ability to supply competitively priced, high quality spice products.

Beyond the region, Zimbabwe is capturing growing interest from international buyers, particularly in Europe and Asia.

This shift is supported by improved production practices among farmers, increased participation in contract farming arrangements, better drying technologies, and enhanced post harvest handling.

A steady growth in spice and herb exports has been recognized, supported by greater visibility on global trade platforms and increasing confidence from buyers searching for alternative and reliable suppliers from Africa.

European Market Opportunities

European markets present major opportunities for Zimbabwean spices.

The European Union is one of the world's largest i

importers of herbs and spices, relying heavily on external suppliers for their consumption needs.

In 2024, Germany imported approximately US\$52 million worth of spices, while France imported around US\$43 million, underscoring the depth and consistency of demand within this region.

This substantial import activity highlights significant potential for Zimbabwe to increase its penetration into European markets.

The region is characterised by robust demand for clean label, sustainably produced, and traceable spice products trends that align closely with Zimbabwe's agro ecological strengths.

Zimbabwean chillies, known for their rich color, pungency, and aroma, are particularly attractive to European processors and retailers seeking premium natural ingredients.



Asian Market Opportunities

Asia also represents a dynamic and expanding frontier for Zimbabwe's chilli and spice exports.

Despite being a major global producer of spices and chillies, the region remains one of the world's largest importers due to its high consumption levels, large populations, and fast growing food manufacturing sectors.

In 2024, China imported approximately US\$53 million worth of spices, while Japan imported around US\$43 million, demonstrating strong and sustained demand across the continent.

This significant import volume highlights promising potential for Zimbabwe to deepen its presence within Asian markets.

Countries such as India, China, Vietnam, Thailand, and Indonesia frequently supplement domestic production with imported chillies to meet industrial processing needs.

Zimbabwean chillies recognized for their heat intensity and deep coloration fit well into these markets, which require consistent quality to

produce chilli powders, flakes, seasoning blends, and oleoresins.

In Southeast Asia especially, industries such as instant noodle production, snack manufacturing, and ready meal processing rely heavily on imported spices, creating further opportunities.

Zimbabwe's ability to supply dried whole chillies, crushed chilli, and value added spice derivatives positions it favorably for expansion in these sectors.

Asia's rising health and wellness trends also present new prospects.

Markets such as Japan and South Korea increasingly prioritise natural, traceable, and organic ingredients.

Zimbabwe's capacity to produce organic or low chemical input spices strengthens its competitiveness, especially as certification systems become more accessible to smallholder and medium scale producers.



Required certifications for export market access

Exporters targeting formal regional and international spice and chilli markets are expected to comply with a range of recognized standards.

These include GLOBALG.A.P. for primary production, HACCP and ISO 22000 for food safety management in processing and packing, and organic certification for buyers operating in premium or health-focused market segments.

Additionally, major European retailers and international buyers are increasingly requiring social compliance standards to ensure ethical and responsible production practices.

Robust traceability systems and consistent quality assurance protocols are also essential components for successfully meeting international market requirements.

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