



## TOP STORIES

- ZIMBABWE, BOTSWANA GEAR-UP ECONOMIC COOPERATION
- UGANDA IS A GATEWAY TO EAST AFRICA
- ZIMTRADE TRAINS UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ON MARKETING AND BRANDING FOR EXPORTS
- EXPORT READINESS: KEY AREAS TO LOOK AT

# APRIL 2026



1

## ZIMBABWE, BOTSWANA GEAR-UP ECONOMIC COOPERATION



**THE STATE** visit by Botswana's President, Advocate Duma Gideon Boko, to Zimbabwe, which included Official Opening of the 66th edition of the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (ZITF) placed renewed focus on strengthening economic cooperation between the two countries, with emphasis on practical steps to grow trade and investment.

During the visit, President Boko toured the ZimTrade pavilion, where he acknowledged the high quality of products on display, giving recognition to the standards being achieved by Zimbabwean exporters and their potential in regional markets.

In his address at the ZITF Opening Ceremony, President Boko spoke on the need to improve border efficiency to support trade.

He highlighted his Government's commitment to reducing trade barriers and creating a more

competitive environment for businesses in both countries.

"We are moving away from one-stop border posts to non-stop borders," he said, stressing the importance of removing bottlenecks to facilitate the movement of goods and services.

These efforts were echoed at the Zimbabwe-Botswana Business Forum facilitated by ZimTrade, where companies from both countries engaged directly through business-to-business meetings.

The engagements focused on unlocking opportunities in sectors such as construction, processed foods, and services.

At the forum, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Professor dr. Amon Murwira, in a speech read on his behalf by Permanent Secretary Ambassador Albert Chimbindi, reaffirmed Zimbabwe Government's commitment to removing trade barriers across the region.

He noted that Zimbabwe is working towards eliminating obstacles that hinder the free flow of goods and services with neighbouring countries, in line with broader regional integration goals.

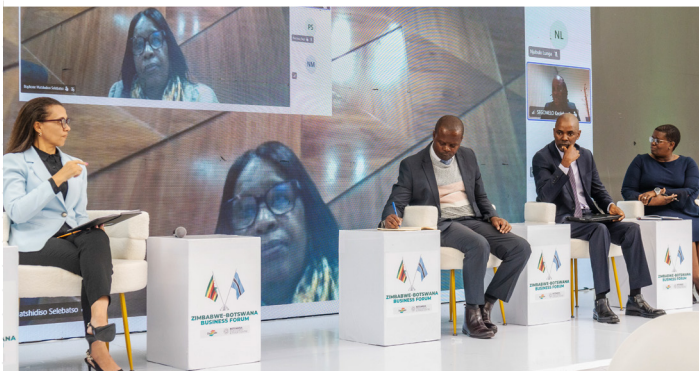
ZimTrade continues to work closely with the Botswana Investment and Trade Centre (BITC) to strengthen commercial ties.

Since signing a Memorandum of Understanding in 2018, the two organisations have been facilitating trade missions, exhibitions, and business match-making initiatives guided by both governments.

ZimTrade has over the years facilitated Zimbabwean companies to participate at the Botswana Global Expo and organised outward trade missions into the Botswana market.

In the same way, BITC has supported Botswana companies' participation in Zimbabwe's key trade platforms, including the ZITF and Zimbabwe Agricultural Show.

This year, BITC brought 18 companies to exhibit at ZITF, with more than 20 firms also attending the business forum to explore trade opportunities.





## 2

### ZIMTRADE TO CONDUCT VIETNAM AND THAILAND MARKET SCAN



William Guviyau

**ZIMTRADE WILL**, in May 2026, undertake a market scan mission to Vietnam and Thailand,

complemented by a learning visit to THAIFEX – Anuga Asia.

The initiative is designed to strengthen Zimbabwe’s market intelligence in Southeast Asia and assess future opportunities to participate in leading international trade platforms.

The market scan will provide an in-depth analysis of the economic environment, trade dynamics, consumer trends, and regulatory frameworks in Vietnam and Thailand.

As part of the mission, ZimTrade will undertake a learning visit to THAIFEX – Anuga Asia, one of the region’s premier food and beverage trade exhibitions happening from 26 to 30 May 2026.

Thailand is a strategic gateway to the ASEAN market and the purpose of this visit is to gain firsthand insights into the exhibition’s structure, standards, and potential benefits for Zimbabwean companies.

The visit will enable ZimTrade to evaluate the relevance of THAIFEX as a future platform for Zimbabwe’s export promotion efforts, particularly in the agro-processing sector.

Importantly, the findings and insights gathered will be disseminated to Zimbabwean businesses through targeted feedback sessions, reports, and capacity-building programmes.

This approach ensures that a broader spectrum of exporters can benefit from the knowledge gained, while also informing the design of future outward seller missions and exhibition participation.

Vietnam and Thailand represent rapidly growing economies with increasing demand for high-quality agricultural and processed food products.

This presents a strategic opportunity for Zimbabwe to diversify export markets and position its products within dynamic Asian value chains.

Thailand represents one of Southeast Asia’s most dynamic and diversified economies and plays a central role in regional trade networks.

As the second-largest economy in mainland Southeast Asia, Thailand has developed strong capabilities in manufacturing, agro-processing, electronics, and automotive production.

The country also serves as a major trade hub within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), connecting regional supply chains with global markets.

In terms of trade, Thailand is one of the most open economies in Southeast Asia and relies heavily on international trade.

According to Trade Map, Thailand recorded a persistent trade deficit throughout the five-year period, 2021 to 2025, widening sharply in 2022 to US\$22,15 billion before stabilising at around US\$11–12 billion between 2023 and 2025.

Overall, the data suggests expanding trade volumes alongside increasing import dependence.

For Vietnam, the import profile reflects a rapidly industrializing, export-driven economy, where demand is highest for production inputs rather than finished goods.

Looking ahead, Zimbabwean exporters are encouraged to begin preparing for potential participation in future editions of THAIFEX – Anuga Asia and similar international platforms.

This includes strengthening product quality and consistency, investing in internationally compliant packaging and certification, and aligning production processes with global food safety standards particularly in Asia.

Early preparation will position local companies to effectively leverage future trade opportunities identified through this mission and to compete on the global stage.



### 3 CHINA'S ZERO-TARIFF REGIME IS CULTIVATING A NEW ERA FOR ZIMBABWEAN HORTICULTURE



Tendekai Mafuta

**THE LANDSCAPE** of Zimbabwean agriculture is undergoing a transformation as the nation strengthens its economic ties with the world's largest consumer market.

During the recent Zimbabwe-China Horticulture Buyers Engagement, held in Mutare from April 8–10, 2026, the spotlight was cast on a landmark trade policy: the Zero-Tariff Regime, effective May 1, 2026.

Through the policy, China will grant zero-tariff treatment to 53 African countries, including Zimbabwe, marking a historic shift in regional commerce. This strategic initiative is designed to dismantle traditional trade barriers by removing import taxes on 98 percent of taxable items originating from African counties such as Zimbabwe.

The policy ensures that premium goods such as citrus, macadamia nuts, and avocados, reach Chinese consumers with unprecedented ease and cost-effectiveness.

With China's population of over 1.4 billion people and a rapidly expanding middle class, the demand

for high-quality, organic horticultural products is higher than ever, providing a sustainable and lucrative destination for Zimbabwe's horticultural produce.

The main advantage of Zero-Tariff Regime is that it provides a vital competitive edge in an increasingly crowded global marketplace.

Removing tariffs ensures unbeatable price competitiveness for local farmers, without the burden of heavy import duties.

This means, horticultural goods from Zimbabwe can be priced more attractively in Chinese retail spaces, allowing Zimbabwean farmers to capture a larger market share with healthy profit margins.

The Manicaland province stands to benefit immensely from this new development, as the horticulture hub of Zimbabwe.

This development serves as a powerful catalyst for rural industrialisation and job creation.

However, the demand outweighs the supply.

To meet the immense demand of the Chinese market, there is need for investment in agricultural modern chain systems that make it easy for local farmers, including small holder farmers to benefit. Business Engagements, also provide a good platform for establishing this kind of investment and knowledge transfer needed to grow this opportunity.

The influx of trade also encourages technology and knowledge transfer, as Chinese buyers will collaborate with local growers to ensure compliance with stringent international phytosanitary standards, thereby strengthening the province agricultural infrastructure and expertise.

In addition to economic growth, the Zero-Tariff Regime fosters long-term stability and predictability for the agricultural sector, as historically, farmers have struggled with fluctuating market access and high costs of entry into foreign markets.

However, the current agreement provides a clear and stable framework that encourages long-term investment, knowing that their products can enter the Chinese market tax-free allows farmers to plan their planting cycles and expansion projects with greater confidence.

This stability is essential for perennial crops like citrus and macadamia nuts, which require significant time and capital investment before the first harvest is ready for export.

Ultimately, the Zero-Tariff Regime is a blueprint for shared prosperity and economic resilience, linking Zimbabwe's fertile lands and hardworking farmers directly to the world's most dynamic economy, offering a more stable and predictable trade environment.



# 4

## UGANDA IS A GATEWAY TO EAST AFRICA



Shingirai Masara

### ZIMBABWEAN EXPORTERS

seeking a high-growth market are encouraged to explore Uganda, which also offers a strategic gateway into East Africa markets.

This was the call made at the Zimbabwe-Uganda Business Forum, held in March this year, where over 200 businesses, buyers, and industry leaders shared ideas and solutions to unlock trade between the two countries.

The event was hosted by ZimTrade, the Zimbabwe Investment and Development Agency (ZIDA), and the Ugandan Investment Authority (UIA), and focused on sectors including, fast-moving consumer goods, building and construction, horticulture, tourism, agro-processing, mining, and ICT.

Their participation highlighted a coordinated effort to address trade barriers, enhance market intelligence sharing and improve the overall ease of doing business between the two nations.

Current statistics indicate that bilateral trade between Zimbabwe and Uganda remains low, presenting a significant opportunity to scale up the exchange of goods and services.

This gap creates room for Zimbabwean exporters to establish an early presence, build distribution networks and secure long-term market share in a relatively underdeveloped trade corridor.

Uganda's economy has been registering steady growth, supported by a population of over 45 million people, the majority of whom are young and increasingly urbanised.

The country's growing middle class, increasing

urbanisation and demand for quality imported products position it as a high-potential market for Zimbabwean manufactured and value-added goods.

This is driving demand for affordable, quality consumer goods, processed foods, construction materials and services, areas where Zimbabwean companies have competitive strengths.

The country's position within the East African Community (EAC) further enhances its appeal, offering access to a combined market of over 300 million people and creating opportunities for regional value chain participation.

Testimonials from Ugandan buyers during the Business Forum consistently described Uganda as a resilient, hospitable and business-friendly destination, ideal for exporters ready to scale.

Dialogue between private and public sector players emphasised actionable solutions to facilitate goods transfer and market penetration, including logistics.

Businesses called for improvements in air cargo connectivity, stronger private sector partnerships and joint ventures.

Logistics remains a key consideration, with most goods moving through regional corridors linking Uganda to ports such as Mombasa in Kenya and Dar es Salaam in Tanzania.

Improved coordination along these routes, as well as growing interest in air freight solutions for high-value and perishable goods, is expected to ease market entry challenges.

Beyond direct exports, opportunities are also emerging in contract manufacturing, franchising and supply chain integration, where Zimbabwean companies can collaborate with Ugandan firms to serve both local and regional markets.

There is also rising demand for technical services, skills transfer and machinery support, particularly in agro-processing and light manufacturing.

However, businesses can still take advantage of the market by utilising trade agreements such as COMESA and AfCFTA, which reduce tariffs and allow them to be more competitive.

These frameworks also simplify rules of origin and provide a platform for Zimbabwean exporters to scale beyond Uganda into neighbouring markets such as Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan and the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo.

Uganda offers a first-mover advantage in manufacturing, agro-processing and value-added goods.

With relatively low levels of market saturation in certain product categories, Zimbabwean exporters have the opportunity to differentiate through quality, consistency and branding, while building long-term relationships with distributors and retailers.



5

## ZIMTRADE IS INCUBATING ZIMBABWE'S NEXT TECH GIANTS



**AS THE** world advances in AI and technology, it has become increasingly important for Zimbabwe to showcase its skills on a global stage.

This is why ZimTrade is now integrating specialised incubation, mentorship, and capacity-building programs, that focus on the FinTech and Agri-Fin-Tech sectors.

The main aim of this focus is to equip local innovators with technical skills to develop innovative solutions that will propel development in strategic sectors in Zimbabwe.

A good example is the Eagles Nest, which has now taken a strategic focus on the agriculture sector.

The youth-centric incubator programme has now expanded into the Eagles Nest Agri-Challenge, focusing on innovation in the agriculture sector.

As the program only targets 18- 35 years, this is a good way to shape new ideas within the agriculture sector.

Focusing on technology and exports will ensure sustainable solutions that will advance one of Zimbabwe's top-earning sectors.

Complementing this is the NEXT She Exporter program, which empowers female-led businesses to enter global markets through knowledge sharing and mentorship.

The program has been driven by expert training and mentorship, already helping some businesses grow from backyard operations into functional business entities.

The addition of an AI-focused curriculum and advanced literacy will further increase this momentum, ensuring female business owners are prepared to navigate the complexities of international scaling.

Further to these programmes, ZimTrade has introduced AI-focused education to its flagship training programme in Marketing and Branding for International Competitiveness (MBIC).

This introduction of AI to training programmes is aimed at equipping local businesses with practical tools to strengthen their competitiveness in modern export markets.

Global trade is becoming increasingly digital, requiring businesses to adopt smarter, data-driven approaches to marketing, customer engagement and brand positioning.

The programme now incorporates artificial intelligence concepts and applications, enabling local companies to make use of tools such as data analytics, automated content creation and market intelligence platforms to better identify opportunities, target customers and respond to evolving consumer trends.

This addition also seeks to improve efficiency and scalability for SMEs, many of which operate with limited resources.

AI-driven solutions can help streamline processes such as market research, product promotion and customer interaction, allowing businesses to compete more effectively on the international stage.



The broader objective is to ensure that Zimbabwean exporters are better prepared to participate in digital trade, adapt quickly to market changes and build strong, competitive brands that meet international standards.

# Zimbabwe International Trade Fair (ZITF)



2026

# Zimbabwe Botswana Business Forum



# 2026





# 6

## ZIMTRADE TRAINS UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ON MARKETING AND BRANDING FOR EXPORTS



**AFTER YEARS** of developing a sustainable fish feed made from maize residues, 22-year-old university student Tendai Moyo had mastered the science of her innovation but lacked the commercial framework to take it beyond Zimbabwe's borders.

Her experience at a three-day workshop in Chinhoyi, from 13 to 15 March 2026, marked a shift from technical development to market readiness.

The training is part of ZimTrade's flagship development programmes – Marketing and Branding for International Competitiveness (MBIC) – which was hosted in partnership with the Chinhoyi University of Technology (CUT) Innovation Hub.

It brought together approximately 30 student innovators, each working to transform academic concepts into export-ready products and services. The primary objective of the MBIC training was to equip participants with practical marketing skills,

enhance their understanding of export requirements, and identify promising entrepreneurs for further export development support.

This is a part of ZimTrade efforts to cultivate ideas into practical concepts that work to create sustainable sectors that propel exports.

The workshop also served as a platform to assess how products could be refined, packaged, branded, and positioned for regional and international markets.

A notable feature of the event was the diversity of innovations presented, including antibacterial bioplastic wound patches, biofuel and biogas produced using termite microbes, logistics solutions, cordials, sustainable fish feed from maize residues, goat and beef sausages with natural spices, and red dust wine.

These projects illustrate Zimbabwe's potential in value addition and sustainable production.

The training was structured around three key

pillars of export competitiveness.

On day one, participants were introduced to export marketing fundamentals, including differentiation for value addition, competitive intelligence, and market entry strategies.

This session enabled innovators to identify target markets and position their products within competitive global spaces.

Day two focused on packaging, branding, and labelling for international success, with emphasis on compliance, presentation, and market appeal.

For many participants, this session linked technical innovation to real-world consumer expectations and export standards.

The final day covered digital marketing strategies, content creation, affiliate marketing, and innovation in digital platforms, empowering participants to use online tools to promote their products beyond local markets.

All sessions were delivered by experienced ZimTrade associate trainers, ensuring both technical depth and practical relevance.

A key emphasis of the workshop was practical application.

Participants were encouraged to consider scalability, branding, and export readiness alongside product development.

For example, bioplastic wound patches were discussed as potential candidates for international

healthcare markets focused on sustainability.

Biofuel and biofertiliser innovations align with global demand for green energy solutions.

Value-added food products present opportunities in niche export markets, particularly with appropriate packaging and branding.

Unique products such as red dust wine offer differentiation potential in specialty markets.

Through guided discussions, participants explored how to refine their offerings to meet international standards and consumer preferences.

The training also reinforced collaboration between academia and industry.

This partnership is expected to bridge the long-standing gap between research and the market by aligning university innovation with real export opportunities.

Through ZimTrade's market intelligence, industry linkages and export development support, student-led innovations can move beyond prototypes into commercially viable products.

It also creates a pipeline of export-ready enterprises, where ideas developed in academic institutions are nurtured into scalable businesses capable of entering regional and international markets.

This approach strengthens the commercialisation of innovation, ensuring that research outputs contribute directly to industrial growth, job creation and increased export earnings for the country.





# 7

## UNDERSTANDING INTERNATIONAL COMMERCIAL TERMS (INCOTERMS)



Archford Mabuka

**IN THE** increasingly interconnected global marketplace, trading goods across borders requires more than just a willing buyer and seller.

It demands clarity, precision, and mutual understanding of responsibilities.

This is where Incoterms come in serving as a universal language for international trade.

Incoterms, short for International Commercial Terms, are a set of globally accepted rules that define the responsibilities of buyers and sellers in international transactions.

They help eliminate confusion by clearly outlining who is responsible for transportation, insurance, customs clearance, and most importantly when risk transfers from one party to the other.

### Why Incoterms Matter

As global trade expands, so does its complexity. Goods now move across multiple borders, through different modes of transport, and under varying regulatory environments.

Without clear agreements, misunderstandings can easily arise leading to delays, financial losses, or even legal disputes.

Incoterms reduce this risk by standardising trade practices.

Instead of negotiating every detail from scratch, parties can simply agree on a three-letter term that already defines key aspects of the transaction.

This not only saves time but also builds trust between trading partners.

The structure of Incoterms 2020 consists of 11 rules, which are grouped according to the mode of transport used as explained below.

### For Any Mode of Transport

These are the most flexible and widely used terms:

- EXW (Ex Works)
- FCA (Free Carrier)
- CPT (Carriage Paid To)
- CIP (Carriage and Insurance Paid To)
- DAP (Delivered at Place)
- DPU (Delivered at Place Unloaded)

- DDP (Delivered Duty Paid)

### For Sea and Inland Waterway Transport

These are specifically designed for maritime shipping:

- FAS (Free Alongside Ship)
- FOB (Free On Board)
- CFR (Cost and Freight)
- CIF (Cost, Insurance and Freight)

Understanding which category applies is critical.

Using a sea-only term for inland or air transport, for example, can create confusion and contractual gaps.

### The Core Principles: Delivery, Risk and Cost

At the heart of every Incoterm are three key elements:

- 1. Delivery:** This defines the exact point where the seller fulfils their obligation. It could be at the seller's warehouse, a port, or the buyer's premises.
- 2. Risk Transfer:** Risk is closely tied to delivery. Once delivery occurs, the risk of loss or damage to the goods shifts from the seller to the buyer. This does not always align with who pays for transport, which is why understanding the distinction is crucial.
- 3. Cost Allocation:** Each Incoterm clearly divides costs such as freight, insurance, loading, unloading, and customs duties between the buyer and seller.

These three elements must always be considered together.

Focusing on price alone, something many traders mistakenly do can lead to poor decisions and unexpected expenses.

### Avoiding Common Pitfalls

Two terms often cause problems when used incorrectly:

- EXW (Ex Works) places almost all responsibility on the buyer, including export procedures. This can be impractical in international trade, especially where the buyer has limited presence in the seller's country.
- DDP (Delivered Duty Paid) does the opposite, placing maximum responsibility on the seller, including import clearance in the buyer's country. This can be legally and logistically difficult.

Because of these challenges, businesses are often advised to consider alternatives that provide a better balance.

### Recommended Alternatives

- FCA (Free Carrier) is widely regarded as one of the most practical and flexible terms. It allows

the seller to handle export clearance while the buyer controls the main transport.

- DAP (Delivered at Place) is a good option when the seller wants to offer a higher level of service without taking on import responsibilities.
- CIP (Carriage and Insurance Paid To) is useful when the seller wants to include insurance and provide added assurance to the buyer.

### Understanding Popular Incoterms in Detail

#### EXW (Ex Works)

Under EXW, the seller's responsibility is minimal.

The goods are simply made available at the seller's premises.

The buyer takes on all responsibilities from that point forward, including loading, transport, export clearance, and risk.

While this may seem simple, it can create complications.

For instance, the buyer may not be able to handle export formalities in the seller's country.

This makes EXW less suitable for many international transactions.

#### FCA (Free Carrier)

FCA is often considered the "go-to" Incoterm for international trade.

The seller delivers the goods to a carrier chosen by the buyer, typically after completing export clearance.

This term strikes a balance: the seller handles local obligations, while the buyer takes control of international logistics.

It is flexible and works well across different transport modes.

#### CPT (Carriage Paid To)

With CPT, the seller pays for transporting the goods to a specified destination.

However, risk transfers to the buyer much earlier when the goods are handed over to the carrier.

This distinction is important.

Even though the seller pays for transport, the buyer bears the risk during transit. Misunderstanding this can lead to disputes if goods are damaged along the way.

#### CIP (Carriage and Insurance Paid To)

CIP builds on CPT by requiring the seller to also provide insurance.

This makes it particularly useful for high-value or fragile goods.

The insurance requirement offers additional protection for the buyer, making this term attractive in transactions where risk mitigation is a priority.

### DAP (Delivered at Place)

DAP places more responsibility on the seller, who must deliver the goods to the buyer's specified location.

The buyer is responsible for unloading and import clearance.

This term is often used when the seller wants to provide a seamless delivery experience without dealing with foreign customs procedures.

### DPU (Delivered at Place Unloaded)

DPU is unique because it requires the seller to unload the goods at the destination.

This makes it suitable for projects where the buyer expects a complete delivery service.

However, sellers should only use this term if they

are confident in their ability to manage unloading at the destination.

### Making Smarter Trade Decisions

Incoterms are powerful tools but only when used correctly.

The key is not just understanding what each term means but also knowing when to use it.

Businesses should always:

- Clearly specify the chosen Incoterm and location
- Match the term to the mode of transport
- Consider their operational capabilities and risk tolerance

Ultimately, the right Incoterm can streamline operations, reduce risk, and strengthen business relationships.

The wrong one, however, can lead to costly mistakes.



## Got a packaging dilemma?

Visit [zimpackaging.co.zw](http://zimpackaging.co.zw)

Your online information center for all the latest packaging trends, news, suppliers, regulations and standards.



Metal Packaging



Paper Packaging



Textile Packaging



Plastic Packaging



Glass Packaging



Wood Packaging



The Packaging Portal is funded by European Union, implemented by COMESA, managed by ZimTrade and the Federation of Master printers.



# 8

## REPORTING NON-TARIFF BARRIERS AND NON-TARIFF MEASURES



Kudzai Magwenzi

**ZIMBABWE IS** a member of regional economic blocs, including the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and Southern African Development Community (SADC).

However, regional trade continues to face significant constraints due to the imposition of non-tariff barriers (NTBs) and measures by member states.

NTBs are restrictions arising from prohibitions, regulatory conditions, or specific market requirements that make the import or export of goods more difficult and costly.

They also include the unjustified or improper application of non-tariff measures (NTMs), such as sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) requirements and other technical barriers to trade (TBT).

These barriers stem from a broad range of government actions, including laws, regulations, policies, and administrative requirements, as well as private sector practices and outright prohibitions, often aimed at protecting domestic industries from foreign competition.

In practice, NTBs manifest in various forms, such as import bans, quotas, and complex or discriminatory rules of origin.

They may also include stringent quality standards, unjustified SPS measures, and burdensome packaging, labelling, and product requirements imposed by importing countries.

Additionally, NTBs arise from complex regulatory environments, including the determination of eligibility for exporting countries and firms, as well as extensive documentation requirements such as certificates of origin.

Other contributing factors include import licensing systems, occupational safety and health regulations, employment laws, and state interventions such as subsidies, procurement policies, and state ownership.

Further barriers include export subsidies, minimum import price controls, product classification practices, quota allocations, and restrictions in foreign exchange markets.

Structural and policy-related challenges such as

inadequate infrastructure, “buy national” policies, overvalued currencies, restrictive licensing regimes, and seasonal import controls also play a role. Moreover, inefficient, lengthy, or corrupt customs procedures continue to significantly hinder the smooth flow of trade within the region.

### Reporting Mechanisms

Zimbabwean exporters, importers, and transporters can report non-tariff barriers (NTBs) encountered in regional trade through the online platform; <https://www.tradebarriers.org/>.

This simple and user-friendly system enables traders to lodge complaints on barriers faced when trading within COMESA and SADC.

Through regional trade agreements, member states have committed to addressing and eliminating reported NTBs. The online reporting mechanism is open to the private sector, allowing any business including micro, small, and medium

enterprises (MSMEs) to register and submit NTB complaints arising from their day-to-day operations. Once submitted, complaints are received in real time by designated National Focal Points, who are mandated under the NTB framework to resolve issues within specified timelines.

The platform also facilitates communication and document exchange among stakeholders.

Additionally, it includes an automatic translation feature, enabling accessibility across multiple languages.

In addition, ZimTrade plays a key advocacy role for exporting entities by supporting the identification and resolution of trade-related challenges.

Exporters can report impediments directly to ZimTrade, where experts are available to provide guidance and practical assistance in navigating export markets.

Businesses facing any trade obstacles are encouraged to report them by submitting the relevant reporting form on <https://tradezimbabwe.com/>



## EDITORIAL TEAM



Danai Majaha



Karen Bvurere



Shingirai Masara



Tenson Wunganai



William Guviyau



Archford Mabuka



Prosper Nzembe



Tendekai Mafuta



Kudzai Magwenzi



Maxmillan Chikwati



Lorraine Muzadzi



WHETHER YOU ARE A  
**BUYER**



**SELLER**  
THIS IS WHERE QUALITY ZIMBABWEAN  
PRODUCTS ARE FOUND.



SCAN TO LOGIN



[www.shopatzim.co.zw](http://www.shopatzim.co.zw)

A PRODUCT OF **ZimTrade**



# 9

## EXPORT READINESS: KEY AREAS TO LOOK AT



Maxmillan Chikwati

**BEFORE** A business ships its first export consignment, long before it signs an off-take agreement or books freight, there is groundwork that determines whether the whole exercise will be sustainable or short-lived.

Export readiness is that groundwork. It is not a single condition a business either has or does not have.

Export readiness is a profile across several interconnected areas which make or break a business' export ambitions.

Understanding what those areas are, identifying gaps and being honest about them, is the most practical starting point for any business serious about exporting.

### Organisational resources and export experience

The first question is an internal one: is the business structured to export?

This means more than having a willing executive or an ambitious sales team.

It means having a person or function with a specific

mandate to develop exports.

This is an arm or someone who owns the process, tracks buyer relationships, manages compliance requirements, and drives the export marketing plan.

Experience matters here too.

A business with no prior export history faces a steeper learning curve than one that has navigated at least one or two export cycles, understood the documentation, and absorbed the rhythm of international trade.

Where experience is limited, the honest response is to build it deliberately rather than assume it will come with the first deal.

### Product

A product that performs well in the domestic market is a starting point, not a guarantee of export suitability.

Two questions matter most here.

First, what proportion of the business's product lines have genuine export potential and is there room to diversify that offer over time?

Second, and more immediately, does the product carry the certifications that target markets require? Quality certification, whether ISO or sector-specific standards, is not a formality in most serious export markets. It is a prerequisite.

Businesses that arrive at a buyer conversation without certification are asking the buyer to absorb the compliance risk on their behalf. Most won't.

### **Packaging**

Packaging is where many otherwise capable exporters lose deals silently.

Compliance is not just about whether the packaging looks professional or attractive to the eye.

It covers dimensional and weight configurations for the target market, labelling requirements under that market's regulatory framework, cultural preferences that affect how the product is received, and general aesthetics that position it appropriately on shelf.

A product packaged for a Zimbabwean supermarket will not automatically work in a Mozambican, Gulf, or European retail environment.

These differences are specific and verifiable, and addressing them before engaging buyers is far less costly than discovering them after.

### **Export market information**

Market selection is a decision that should be made with evidence, not inherited from wherever the first enquiry happened to come from.

Readiness in this area means being able to answer a specific set of questions: What tools is the business using to analyse trade data and market trends?

Has a formal market survey been conducted, that is: by product, country, and region?

Who is the target buyer, and why was that market chosen?

Businesses that can answer these questions have done the work.

Those that cannot are operating on assumptions, which is a fragile foundation for a long-term export relationship.

Good market intelligence is not expensive to develop; it is mostly a matter of discipline and the right analytical tools.

### **Finance and Logistics**

Export finance and logistics readiness is technically demanding and frequently underestimated.

On the finance side, the business needs to understand what payment facilities are available to it such as letters of credit, documentary collections, advance payment terms and which it can execute without error.

Export costing requires a full build-up: factory costs, freight, insurance, documentation, port charges, destination duties, and the markups that accumulate through the value chain before the product reaches the end buyer.

Businesses that price without this full picture either erode their margins or lose the deal on price.

On logistics, these questions should arise; what mode of transport is being used, through which corridors, and with which partners?

Each of these is a variable that affects cost, delivery reliability, and ultimately the buyer's experience.

### **Production Capacity**

The final area is the one where optimism most often outpaces reality.

A business needs to know three things about its own production before making export commitments: total installed capacity, current utilisation levels, and how both shift across seasons.

Export buyers are not interested in what a business can produce at its best, they are interested in what it can deliver consistently, on schedule, across a supply window that suits their procurement cycle.

A business that has mapped its peak periods, troughs, and off-season availability against a specific buyer's requirements can make credible commitments.

One that has not is setting itself up to disappoint.

Taken together, these six areas: organisational capacity, product, packaging, market intelligence, finance and logistics, and production form a complete picture of export readiness.

No business will score perfectly across all of them, and that is not the point.

The value of working through each area honestly is that it converts vague export ambition into a specific development plan.

Businesses get a clear view of what needs to be fixed, in what order, and by when.

That plan is what separates businesses that eventually export successfully from those that keep almost getting there.





## **FAKE ACCOUNTS ARE IMPERSONATING ZIMTRADE STAFF AND SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES TO STEAL YOUR MONEY!**

### **ZIMTRADE DOES NOT:**



-  Ask for your WhatsApp number on social media .....
-  Request personal or payment info via inbox .....
-  Send links for “account verification” or “prizes” .....
-  Run any investment programme and is not an investment company

### **STAY SAFE ONLINE**

Report any suspicious accounts

### **FOR MORE INFO**

Please contact  
ZimTrade on

-  **+263 242 369 330-41** or
- Email us here
-  **info@zimtrade.co.zw.**





# 10

## BUSINESSES MUST PREPARE FOR NEW COST OF CARBON TRADE



Lorraine Muzadzi

**GLOBAL TRADE** is undergoing its most consequential rules change in decades, and

the price of carbon is now officially on the invoice. The European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) has moved from policy paper to legal reality, and for Zimbabwean exporters, it signals a fundamental shift in what it costs to access one of the world's most lucrative markets.

CBAM is a carbon pricing tool introduced by the European Union that levies a charge on the embedded carbon emissions of specific imported goods.

Simply put, if a product is manufactured in a way that releases more carbon dioxide than EU standards allow, the importer pays a carbon levy at the EU border.

It is the EU's way of ensuring that its own industries, already subject to the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS), are not undercut by cheaper, carbon-intensive imports from countries with weaker climate policies.

The mechanism entered its transitional phase in October 2023, and enforcement began in January 2026.

Importers are required to report the embedded emissions of covered goods without yet paying a financial charge.

Zimbabwe is not navigating this alone. Across Africa and the Global South, governments and exporters are grappling with CBAM's implications.

The African Union has formally raised concerns about CBAM's disproportionate impact on developing economies, arguing it constitutes a trade barrier that undermines preferential access under agreements like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and the EU–Africa partnership framework.

The sectors currently covered under CBAM include steel and iron, cement, aluminium, fertilisers, and the EU has signalled that this list will expand to cover other products such as organic chemicals, polymers, and potentially agriculture-linked products, which are under active review

for inclusion in subsequent phases.

Zimbabwe's export portfolio, dominated by minerals (gold, chrome, platinum group metals, lithium), tobacco, horticultural produce, ferro-alloys, and agro-processed goods, sits directly in EU's evolving green trade agenda.

According to Zimbabwe's National Statistics Agency (ZimStat) and the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe, the EU remains among Zimbabwe's top three export destinations for minerals and agricultural commodities.

As the EU considers extending CBAM to downstream metal products and organics, Zimbabwe's exposure grows substantially.

For many Zimbabwean exporters, the most immediate threat is not the carbon tariff itself, but it is the steep cost of getting compliant.

Before a single certificate is purchased, companies must invest in calculating and independently verifying the greenhouse gas emissions embedded in their production processes.

For firms without existing environmental management systems, this means spending on auditing infrastructure, technical expertise, and third-party certification, costs that most SMEs are ill-equipped to absorb.

The administrative burden compounds the financial one.

CBAM demands granular, product-level emissions data, yet most Zimbabwean exporters lack both the digital infrastructure and the skilled personnel to generate such records reliably.

This is not a minor operational gap; it is a structural vulnerability.

When reporting falls short, EU buyers will not wait for exporters to catch up, they will simply move to better-prepared suppliers in competing markets.

The combined weight of compliance costs, reporting deficiencies, and tariff exposure does not merely raise the price of doing business with Europe, it threatens to make that business impossible altogether.

Assessments reveal the under-preparedness of the SMEs that form the backbone of

Zimbabwe's export community, particularly in agro-processing and light manufacturing.

Exposure to ESG compliance requirements has been minimal, leaving a dangerous awareness gap at precisely the wrong moment.

Compliance with CBAM is not optional, but it need not be catastrophic if action begins now.

The starting point for every exporter targeting the EU market is a rigorous, independent carbon footprint audit across key production processes, and without this baseline, no meaningful compliance strategy can be built.

Exporters must invest in digital supply chain systems capable of tracking production inputs, energy consumption, and emissions at the product level.

This traceability infrastructure does not merely serve CBAM, it simultaneously addresses the EU Deforestation Regulation, broader ESG due diligence requirements, and the growing expectation among EU buyers that sustainability claims be backed by verifiable data.

Early movers stand to gain disproportionately, and Zimbabwe has more to work with than most.

Exporters who achieve verified low-carbon status and can credibly market their goods as sustainably produced will unlock premium pricing, preferred supplier relationships with climate-conscious EU buyers, and preferential access to the growing pool of ESG-aligned investment capital reshaping global trade finance.

The opportunity is particularly compelling across Zimbabwe's most strategically important export sectors.

In horticulture, where EU buyers already apply rigorous standards, low-carbon certification can elevate Zimbabwean flowers, vegetables, and fresh produce from commodity status to premium shelf positioning.

In agriculture, verified sustainable practices across tobacco, macadamia, and soya value chains can open doors to green-premium markets and responsible sourcing programmes that command stronger margins.

In manufacturing, firms that transition to cleaner production processes and can demonstrate measurable emissions reductions will find themselves better positioned not only for EU market access but for the broader global shift toward sustainable procurement.

Underpinning all of this is Zimbabwe's exceptional natural endowment, its renewable energy potential, biodiversity-rich landscapes, and resource base, which together offer a credible and differentiated foundation for a national 'green exports' brand.

ZimTrade is ready to help Zimbabwean exporters navigate the CBAM transition through its export development programmes, advisory support on EU market compliance requirements, connections to technical assistance partners, and access to capacity-building workshops on sustainability standards and green trade readiness.

Exporters seeking to understand their CBAM exposure, benchmark their emissions profiles, or identify certification pathways are encouraged to reach out directly.





# IMPORT FROM ZIMBABWE BUY AUTHENTIC PRODUCTS

*when you join the community*



**VISIT**

[www.shopatzim.co.zw](http://www.shopatzim.co.zw)