



THOUGHT PIECE

Since 2005, October has been celebrated as **Transport Month** in South Africa, a period dedicated to highlighting the role of transport in economic development, social connectivity, and industrial competitiveness. The **2025 theme, “Striving for Safety, Service, and Embracing Technology,”** emphasizes the importance of safe, efficient, and modern transport systems. During this month, government departments, businesses, and communities showcase initiatives that improve mobility, optimise logistics, and strengthen integrated transport networks.

OCTOBER
TRANSPORT
MONTH 2025

DRIVING CONNECTIVITY
INDUSTRIAL GROWTH AND
REGIONAL TRADE



GAUTENG: SOUTH AFRICA'S INDUSTRIAL & TRANSPORT HUB

Gauteng contributes over 33% of South Africa's national GDP and is the country's economic powerhouse. Despite being landlocked, the province's manufacturing sector thrives due to highly efficient transport and logistics systems. These networks are essential for:

- The inward movement of raw materials
- The outward distribution of finished goods across South Africa and into continental markets

Gauteng's industrial capabilities are therefore deeply integrated with robust logistical infrastructure that sustains both production and trade.

To reinforce its position as a key contributor to South Africa's and Africa's economy, the Gauteng Provincial Government adopted the Growing Gauteng Together 2030 (GGT 2030) Strategy. Among its priorities, the Strategy emphasizes the development of efficient, competitive, and responsive transport infrastructure to drive the province's re-industrialisation and economic growth. This focus is particularly integral to the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) programme, which aims to stimulate provincial growth through SEZs across Gauteng's five development corridors

The Gauteng Provincial Government adopted the Growing Gauteng Together 2030 (GGT 2030) Strategy.



SEZs AND THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSPORT

The South African Special Economic Zone (SEZ) Programme seeks to promote export-led growth by positioning SEZs as globally competitive production and export hubs. Efficient transport and logistics systems are therefore critical to the success of all SEZs — and Gauteng's are no exception. As a landlocked province, Gauteng's SEZs are being strategically designed with consideration of strong transport linkages and logistics capabilities necessary to facilitate the movement of goods to major domestic and international markets.

THE OR TAMBO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT SEZ OFFERING

Among the province's five SEZs, the OR Tambo International Airport SEZ stands out for its distinct value proposition, anchored in its proximity to one of Africa's leading air transport hubs. OR Tambo International Airport is Gauteng's main air cargo hub, handling 87% of South Africa's international airfreight. It also has the capacity to handle over 400 000 tonnes of cargo annually, supporting the offering of the Zone for the production and seamless export of products to global markets. This service offering will be further supported by the new cargo terminal currently in planning by Airports Company South Africa – which aims to increase OR Tambo International's air cargo capacity.



BEYOND AIR FREIGHT LOGISTICS: ROAD AND RAIL CONNECTIVITY

Although landlocked, the province of Gauteng is supported by major road and rail transport networks that connect it to other countries across the Continent.



The province's road network includes the key corridors of the N3 (connecting Johannesburg to the Port of Durban), the N1 (connecting Johannesburg to Zimbabwe and further onwards to Zambia and East Africa), the N4 (connecting Pretoria to Mozambique).

Combined, these over 2 600km road networks are pivotal in facilitating overland trade between South Africa and other African markets.

In addition, Gauteng is central to South Africa's rail network, which although challenged in recent years, is undergoing revitalisation to enhance efficiency.



AGENDA 2063 & INTRA-AFRICA TRADE

The African Union's Agenda 2063 recognizes transport and logistics as key enablers for trade, economic growth, and continental integration. To achieve these goals, the Plan highlights several strategic priorities; these include, amongst others:

1 Trans-African Highway Networks –

Upgrading and expanding road corridors to improve connectivity between countries and facilitate overland trade.

2 Rail Corridors –

Developing efficient rail links, particularly to connect landlocked countries to ports and regional markets.

3 **Ports** – Upgrading port infrastructure to handle higher cargo throughput and support regional and international trade.

4 **Air Transport** – Enhancing air freight capabilities for the movement of perishable and high-value goods, strengthening Africa's participation in global trade.

5 **Special Economic Zones (SEZs)** – Strategically positioning SEZs to facilitate intra-African trade, supporting industrialization and regional value chains.

Collectively, these initiatives aim to **strengthen Africa's transport and logistics ecosystem**, reduce trade costs, and enhance **intra-Africa trade**, which currently accounts for approximately **15% of total African trade** — significantly lower than intra-continental trade in **Europe (70%) and Asia (60%)**.

AVAILABLE TRADE OPPORTUNITIES

Strategically positioned SEZs, like OR Tambo, are critical for supporting intra-Africa trade. Competitively located next to Africa's largest and busiest Airport and within the province of Gauteng ensures that the OR Tambo International Airport SEZ is able to support the production and export of products by air or even by road or rail.

For more information on the OR Tambo SEZ and the opportunities it has available to support your vision for intra-Africa trade , visit:

www.ortambosez.co.za

References

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