

2025 STRATEGIC PERSPECTIVE - Shaped by Research and Data

Africa's Inflection Point:

Navigating Opportunities Amid Challenging Structural Realities



ABOUT THIS REPORT

This report explores the momentum behind Africa’s emerging determination for transformation, the real opportunities attracting business leaders, and the barriers that could hold them back. It concludes with practical recommendations for both policymakers and business leaders seeking to engage with Africa’s next chapter.

It draws on the latest trends, economic indicators, and proprietary research commissioned by Strategy Management Partners to assess the level of interest and attractiveness of African markets to UK-based companies. The research was conducted independently by Censuswide, a global leader in digital data collection. In Q1 2025, a survey was completed by 250 senior decision-makers in strategic roles (including CEOs and Heads of Strategy) from UK companies with annual revenues exceeding £20 million and active operations in at least one international market. Respondents represented a broad cross-section of industries, including IT & Telecoms, finance, healthcare, utilities, and manufacturing.

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Executive Summary

Africa stands at a critical turning point. Historically regarded primarily as a source of raw materials, the continent is now emerging as a vibrant and increasingly influential economic centre, shaped by its youthful population, accelerating innovation and regional integration efforts.



With over 30% of the world's mineral reserves and a population set to comprise a quarter of the global workforce by 2035, Africa presents one of the most compelling growth opportunity narratives of our time.

UK businesses are paying attention. New research among 250 senior leaders of UK companies with over £20 million in turnover reveals that more than half are already operating in African markets and seeking to grow further, while nearly a third have interest in exploring opportunities.

- ✓ **50% are already operating in African markets and planning expansion**
- ✓ **28% are interested but uncertain of the best entry strategy**
- ✓ **15% are currently scaling back**
- ✓ **8% are not considering Africa at all**



While the potential is undeniable; driven by demographic growth, technological adoption, and regional integration under AfCFTA, companies operating in, or entering into, African markets must navigate real and persistent structural challenges including infrastructure gaps, political risk, regulatory complexity, and cross-border trade inefficiencies.

Governments and businesses across Africa are actively repositioning to attract investment and expand private sector involvement. Many are advancing industrialisation strategies to promote local processing and manufacturing

Africa is a continent of 54 sovereign nations. Each country has its own government, legal system, policies, regulations, and rich cultural and historical identity. Business success will depend on intentional engagement, a deep understanding of local contexts, mutually beneficial partnerships and the execution of strategies that demonstrate commitment to long-term value generation.



The momentum behind Africa's emerging determination for transformation is explored in this report. The paper highlights some of the opportunities attracting business leaders, and the barriers to overcome. It concludes with practical recommendations for both policymakers and business leaders seeking to engage with Africa's next chapter.



RESEARCH FINDINGS

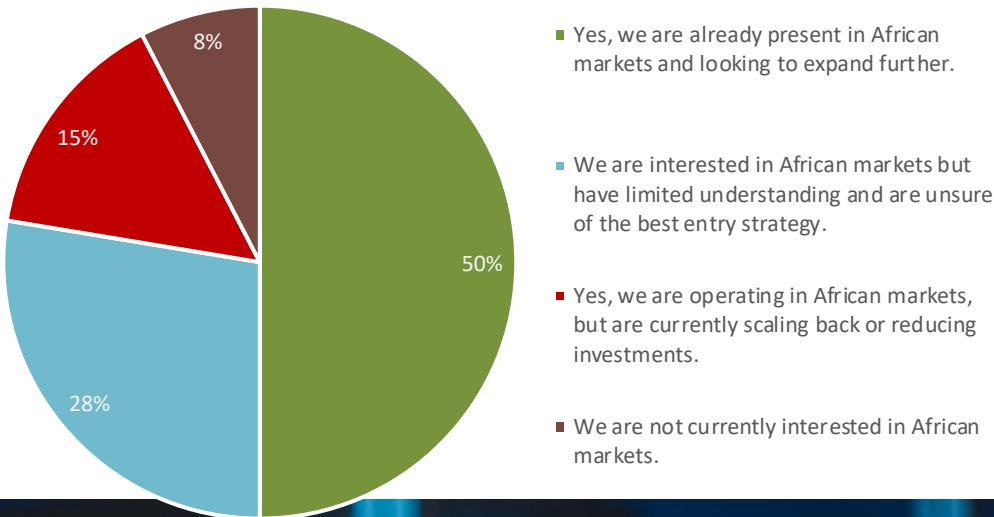
Voice of International Business Leaders

Insight based on research with 250 senior decision-makers in strategic roles (including CEOs and Heads of Strategy) from UK companies with annual revenues exceeding £20 million and active operations in at least one international market.

Africa's Inflection Point is Real

More than 50% of business leaders surveyed are already operating in Africa. 28% are interested, but uncertain of the best entry strategy.

Q. Are you currently exploring opportunities in Africa?

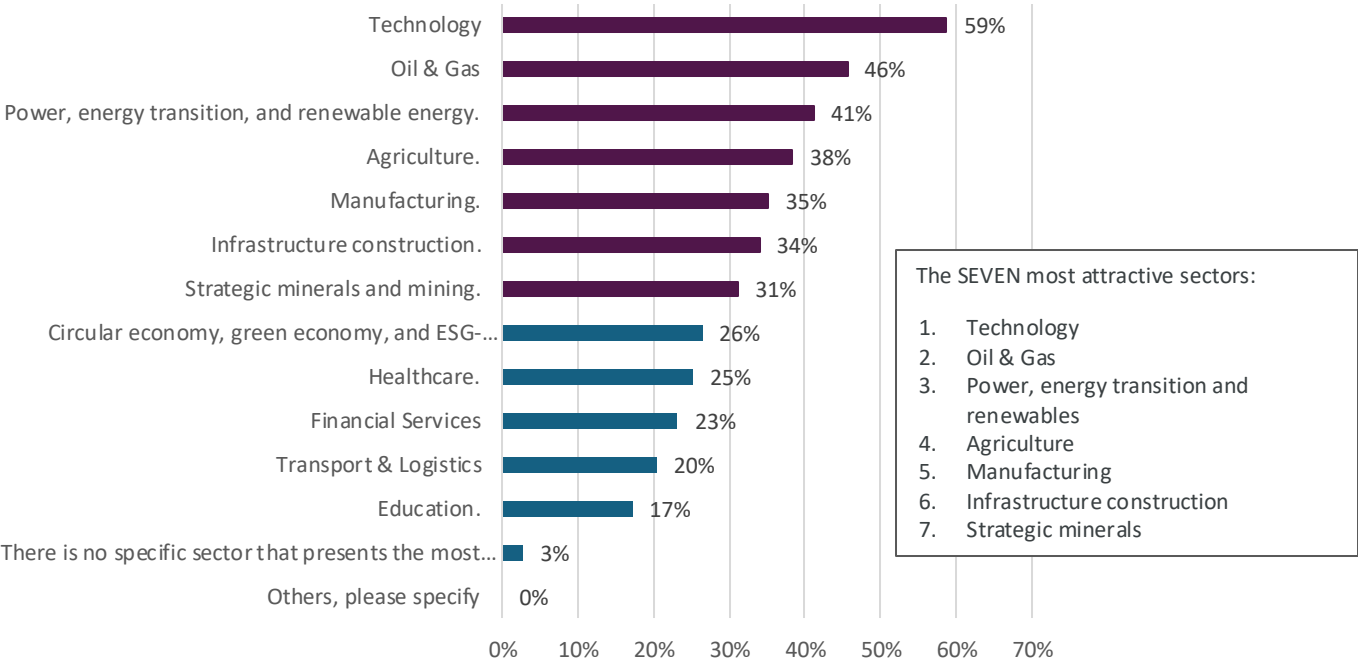


Opportunity Africa: High-Impact Sectors for International Business

Sectors that are particularly attractive in Africa are those that harness the continent’s strategic strengths: abundant mineral reserves, fertile arable land for agriculture, a rapidly growing and vast population — a youthful, energized demographic of digital natives, and significant opportunities to bridge infrastructure gaps.

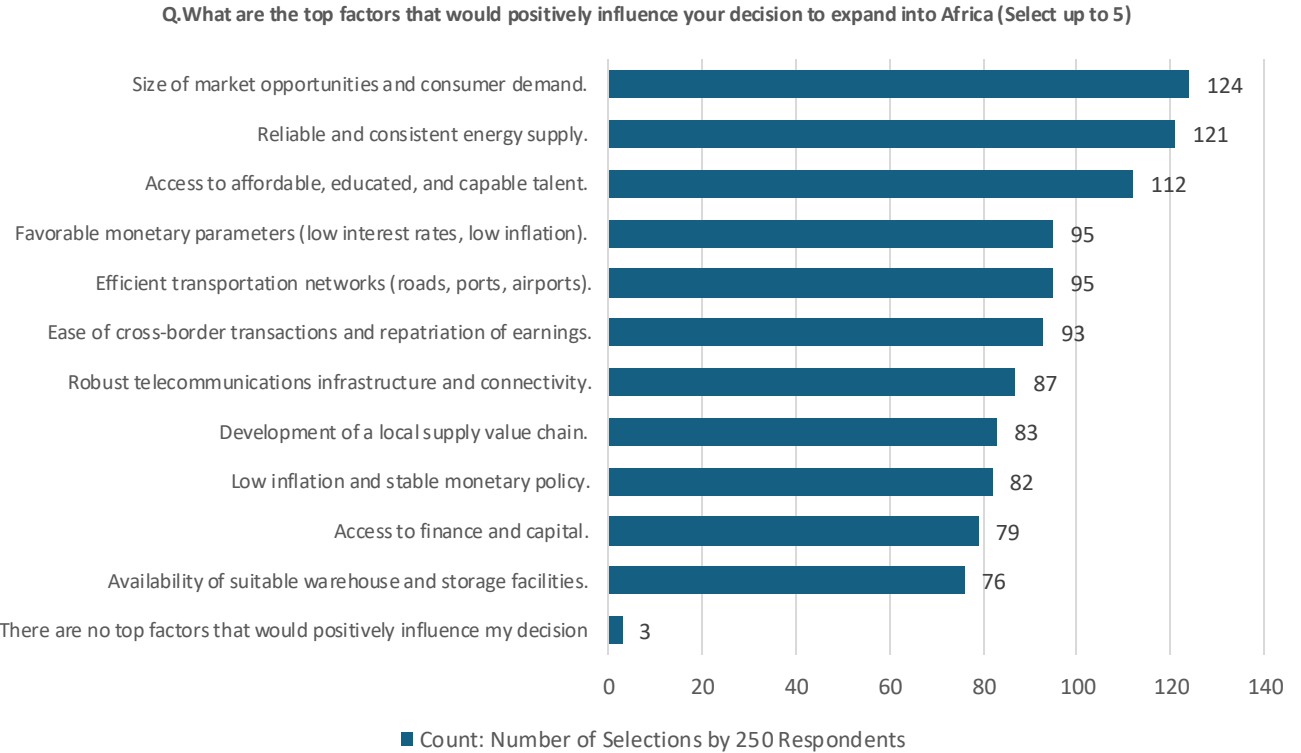
Together, these factors create fertile ground for innovation, digital services, construction, scalable consumer-based industries, manufacturing and value-chain eco-systems across many sectors.

Q. In your opinion and/or experience, which sectors in Africa present the most opportunities for investment and/or business opportunities (Select up to 5)



Africa's Demographic Advantage is a Key Factor of Attraction

By 2035, 1 in 4 people globally will be African, positioning the continent as the world's largest working-age population hub. This demographic shift presents a unique advantage for labour-intensive industries and drives rising demand for consumer goods, digital services, housing, and transportation. This demographic potential is echoed in the findings of a survey of 250 respondents, where the most critical factor influencing decision-making was identified as the "Size of market opportunities and consumer demand", selected by 124 respondents.



However, for companies looking to invest or expand into Africa, success also depends on key **enabling conditions**:

- **Reliable and consistent energy supply**
- **Access to affordable, educated, and capable talent**
- **Efficient transportation infrastructure** — including roads, ports, and airports
- **A favorable macroeconomic environment**: low interest rates, low inflation, stable exchange rates, and seamless cross-border transactions and repatriation of earnings

How governments across Africa respond in reforming critical enablers including governance, legal frameworks, and the mobilization of domestic capital for infrastructure investment will determine readiness for success.

Leaders' Motives for Engagement in Africa

As global interest in Africa continues to rise, understanding the motivations behind corporate and engagement is essential. The key drivers influencing leaders' decisions to invest or operate in Africa was explored.

Leaders engaged in the study cited a range of compelling factors driving their interest in Africa.

- ✓ **6 in 10** cited the **size and potential of consumer markets**.
- ✓ **6 in 10** also pointed to **rapid technology growth and adoption**.
- ✓ **5 in 10** were motivated by the **opportunities presented by the young population**.
- ✓ Only **4 in 10** highlighted **higher returns compared to other regions**.
- ✓ Just **2 in 10** were driven by **philanthropic objectives**.

The findings suggest that leaders view Africa primarily through a strategic growth lens, rather than as a region for short-term gains or philanthropic engagement.

The dominant motivations — large consumer markets, rapid tech adoption, and a youthful population — reflect a strong belief in Africa's long-term economic potential. In contrast, fewer leaders are driven by comparative returns or charitable aims, indicating that interest in the continent is increasingly rooted in sustainable, market-based opportunities rather than altruism or opportunism.



Key Risks Limiting Market Attractiveness in Africa

Despite growing optimism among business leaders, several critical risks continue to constrain the attractiveness of African markets. Addressing these top barriers especially political stability, regulatory clarity, and ease of cross-border transaction are essential for fully unlocking the attractiveness.

While Africa presents compelling opportunities, business leaders remain cautious due to persistent structural and regulatory challenges.

The top four challenges are:

- **Political and country risk**
- **Safety and security concerns**
- **Tariffs, duties, and regulatory hurdles**
- **Cross-border transaction complexity**

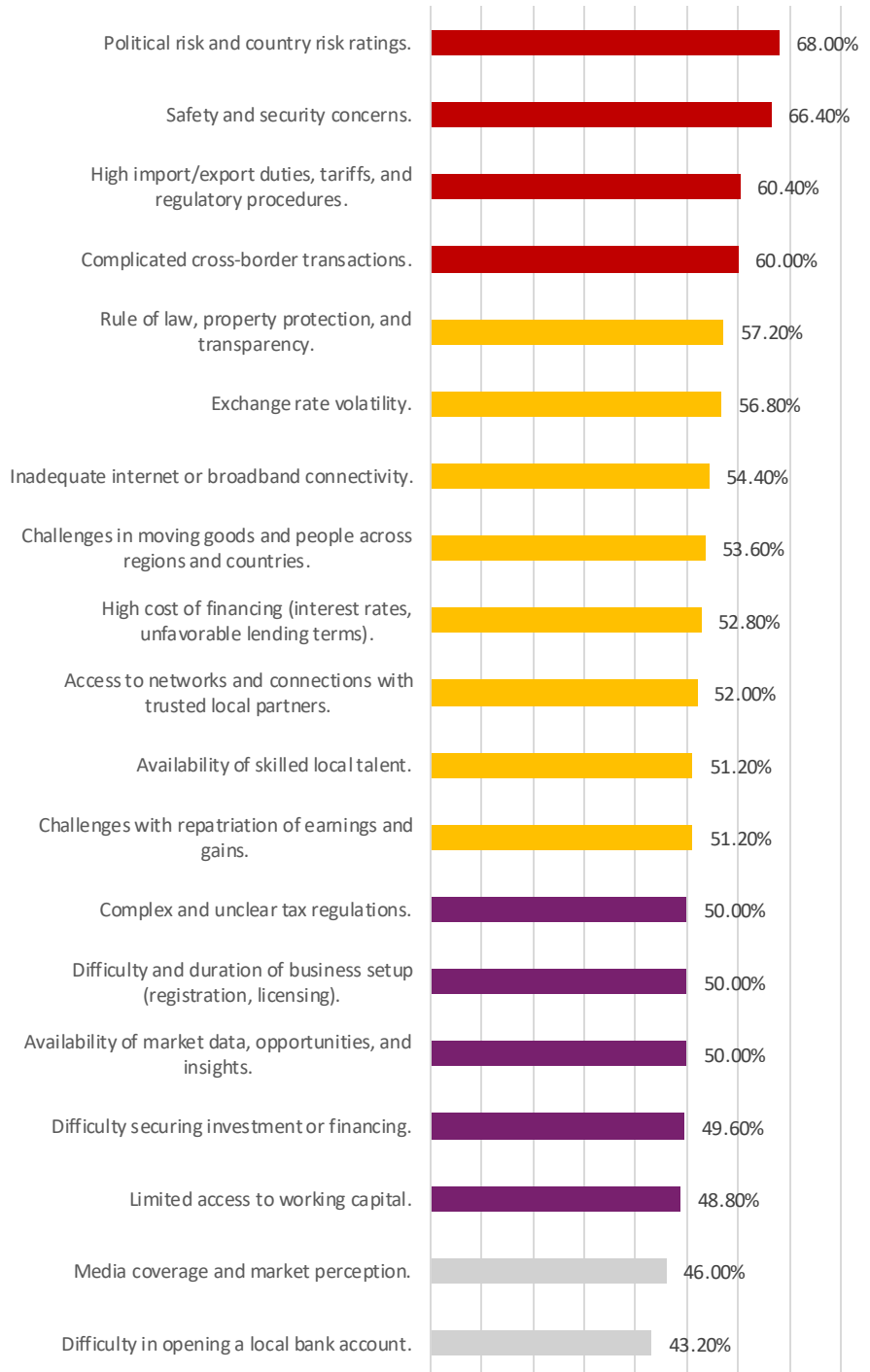
In addition, other significant concerns include:

- Weak rule of law and property rights protection
- Exchange rate volatility
- Unclear or inconsistent tax frameworks

Interestingly, some risks often associated with Africa were seen as less significant in practice, such as:

- Challenges in opening local bank accounts
- Negative media perception
- Difficulty accessing working capital
- Issues with securing financing

Q. What challenges limit the attractiveness of African markets for your business?



Rated from high to very high

Africa's Growth Dynamic: Capitalising on Strategic Advantages, Confronting Structural Hurdles



Africa is home to about 1.5 billion people, in 54 sovereign nations. The continent is home to the youngest population in the world; 70% are under the age of 30

Africa is a continent of 54 distinct sovereign states. This section of the report provides an overview of Africa. It is important for business leaders looking to expand in or enter the African market to deepen their understanding of target markets and ensure proper due diligence.

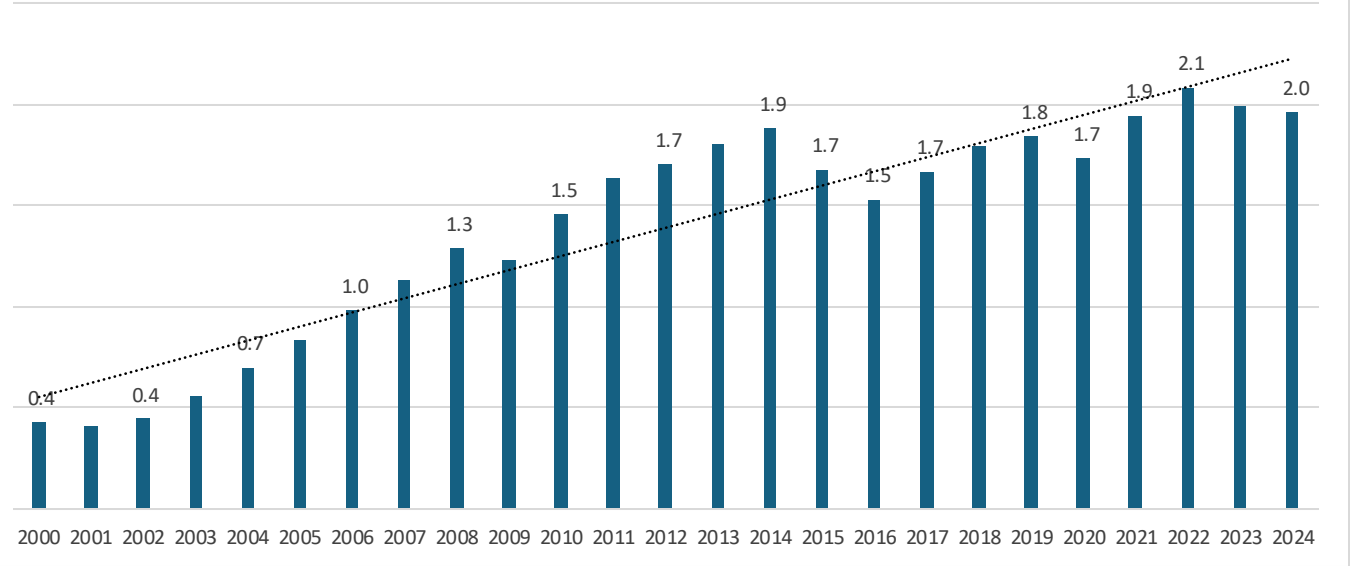
Each country has its own government, legal system, policies, regulations, and rich cultural and historical identity. Despite diverse economic dynamics, African countries share key strengths: abundant natural resources, a large and growing youth population, and a technological awakening that is driving innovative solutions to address social and economic challenges.



Resilient Africa

The African economy has demonstrated remarkable resilience and adaptability over the years. With a GDP of approximately USD 2 trillion in 2024, the region has maintained steady growth - since 2020 economic momentum has been evident, with an average annual GDP growth rate of 3.52%.

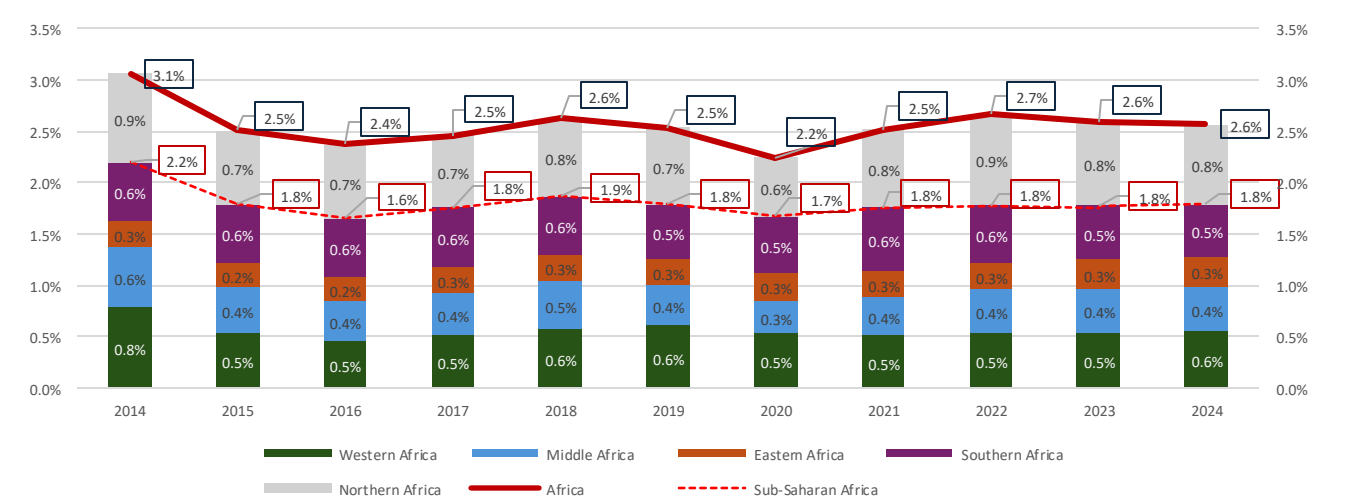
Sub-Sahara GDP (Current USD Trillion)



Source: World Bank Data

Africa’s share of global trade has remained low, at around 2.5% to 3% for decades. This is primarily due to heavy dependence on primary commodities, which increases exposure to price volatility, as well as structural challenges and often unfavourable trade terms. Most significantly, weak industrial capacity, poor infrastructure, high trade costs, and limited access to trade finance continue to undermine competitiveness. Tariff and non-tariff barriers have further constrained intra-African trade.

Share of World Trade (Merchandise only)

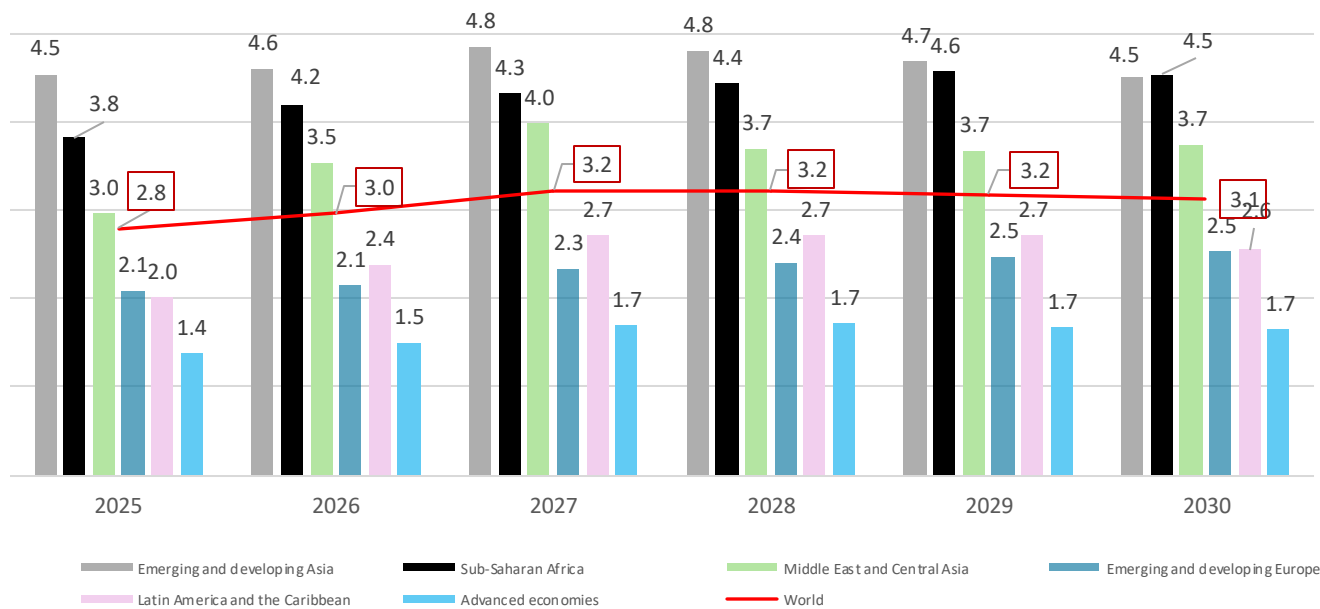


Source: UNCTADstat Data

Emerging Economic Momentum: from Resilience to Acceleration

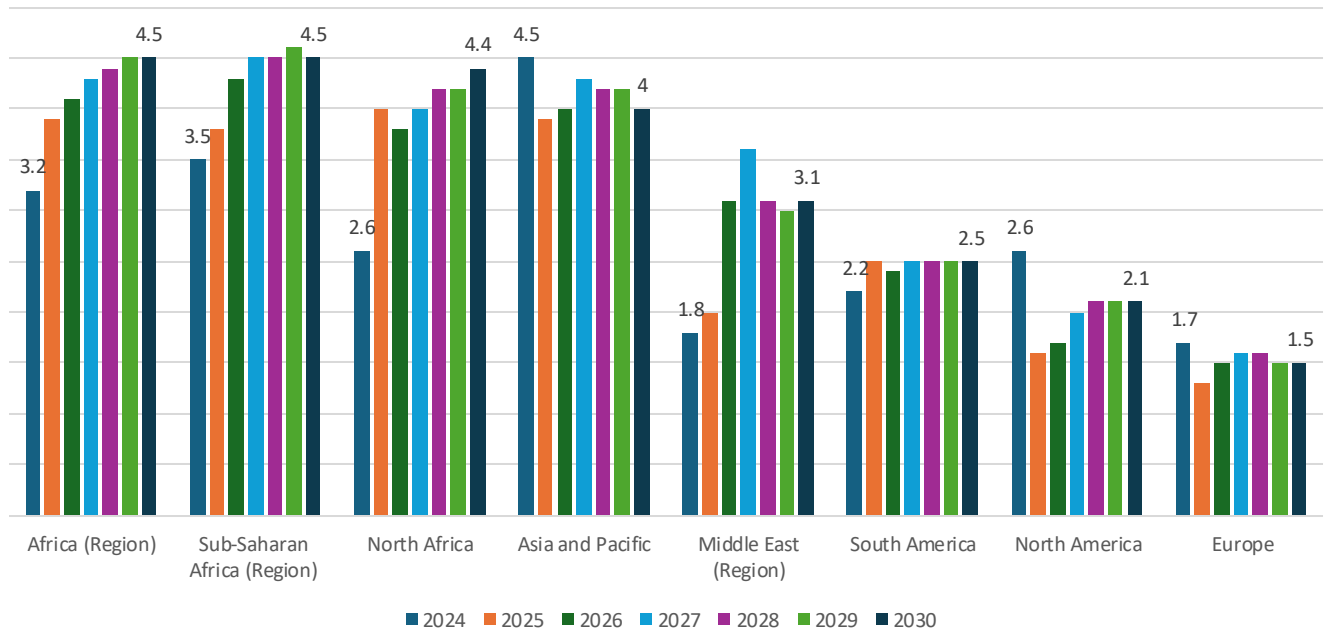
The outlook is more promising, between 2025 and 2029, the region is projected to become the second-fastest-growing globally, with average growth of 4.3%. By 2030, it is expected to be the fastest-growing region in the world.

GDP Growth Forecast 2025-2030)



Source: IMF WEO

Economic Outlook: Real GDP Growth (Annual Percentage Change)



Source: IMF World Economic Outlook Data – April 2025 Edition

Trade Dynamics: A Turning Point

Africa is starting to offer the world a new value proposition rooted in sustainability, innovation, and human capital

Greater integration into global value chains, coupled with a focus on producing higher-value goods and diversifying exports, is essential to improving Africa’s trade performance and long-term economic resilience.

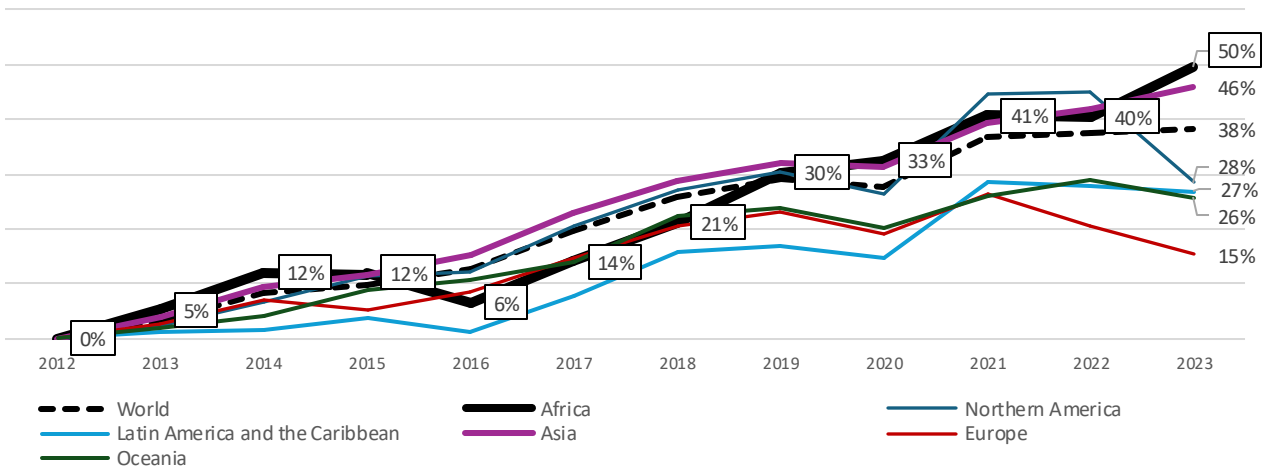
Across the continent, many countries are undergoing a quiet transformation, driven by technology, renewable energy, intra-African trade, and the demographic dividend of a young and ambitious population.

Governments are advancing industrialisation strategies to promote local processing and manufacturing, particularly in key sectors such as battery production, electronics, and agribusiness. These efforts are supported by:

- ✓ Special Economic Zones
- ✓ Strategic infrastructure investments
- ✓ Policies to attract international partnerships and shift from extractive to value-added production

These initiatives aim not only to expand GDP, but also to create employment, retain talent, and encourage homegrown entrepreneurship in high-value sectors.

Container Port Throughput - Growth Trend Since 2012



Source: UNCTAD

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) marks a watershed moment in the continent’s economic transformation, connecting 54 countries and 1.3 billion people under a single market. The benefits are beginning to materialise: as of 2022, it had contributed 0.5% to GDP growth, and intra-African trade is showing marked improvement. By 2035, the AfCFTA is projected to have a cumulative GDP impact of at least 10%.

However, the full realisation of these gains hinges on addressing non-tariff barriers (NTBs), including regulatory inconsistencies, logistical bottlenecks, and limited access to administrative and financial systems. Notable developments, such as South Africa’s trade concessions in 2024 and Nigeria’s in April 2025, reflect accelerating momentum. As of April 2025, 23 countries have implemented preferential tariffs, signalling tangible progress towards a more integrated trade and investment framework.

In addition, China’s recent elimination of tariffs on imports from 53 African countries is expected to reshape Africa–China trade dynamics.

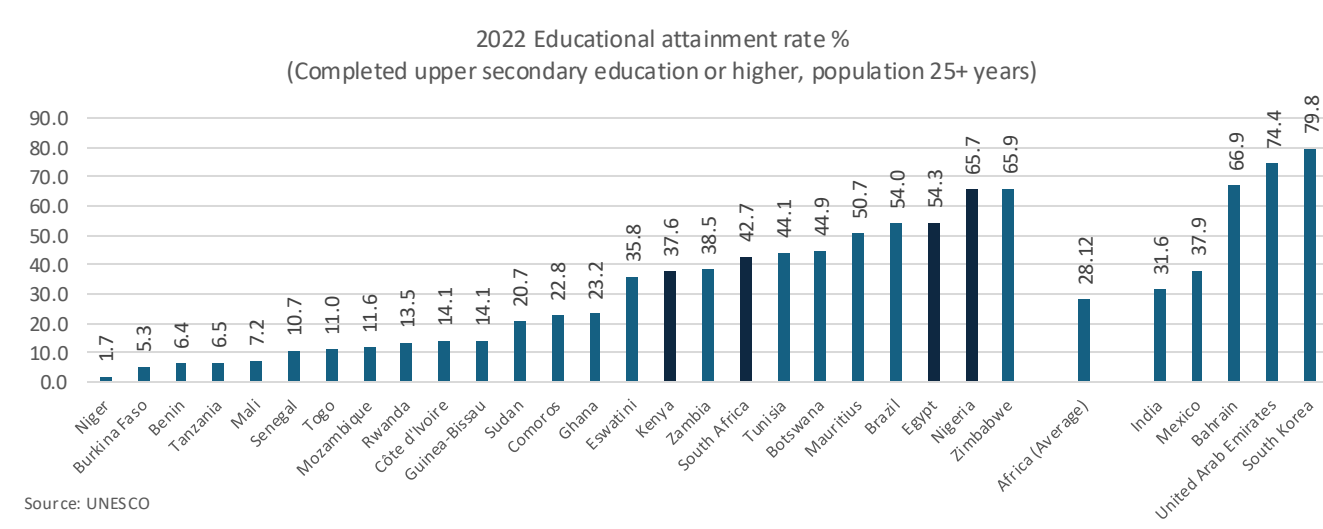
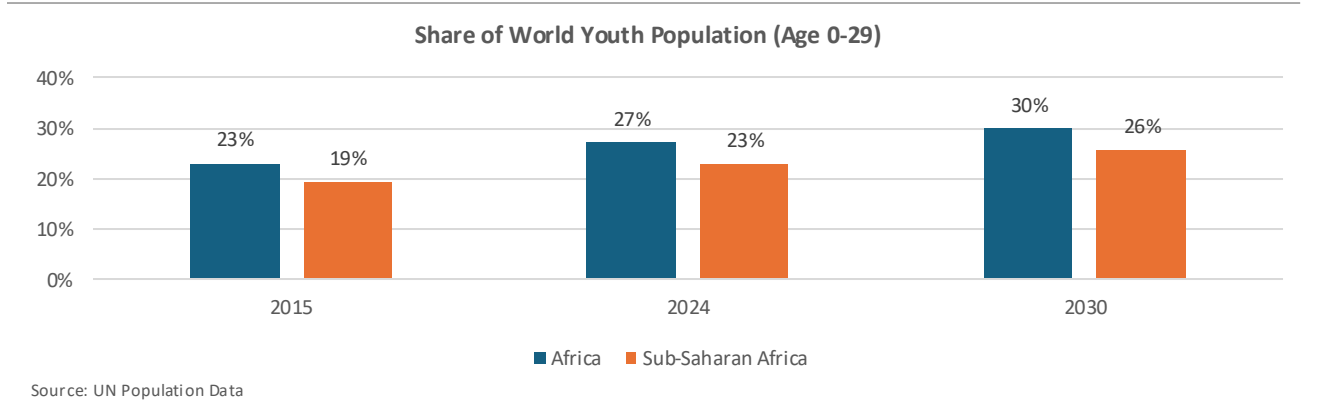
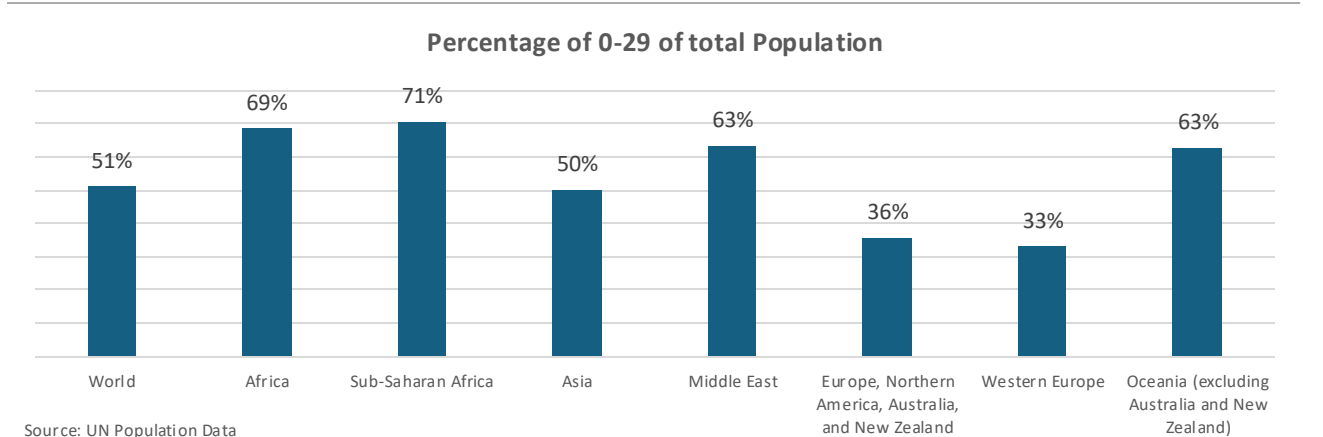
Though Africa has increased its container port throughput by 50% since 2012, it still accounts for only 4.5% of global capacity, with an annual throughput of 38.97 million TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units). A significant expansion in export capacity and capability is required if the continent is to fully capitalise on its trade opportunities.

Strategic Advantages:

Africa's large and growing young population is critical to the future of global workforce

Africa's large and growing young population presents a significant advantage for the future of work; 70% of the continent's population is under the age of 30. Africa is projected to account for 30% of the global youth population by 2030.

South Africa, Egypt, and Nigeria are Africa's largest economies by GDP and together account for about 27% of the continent's population. The educational attainment rates in these three countries are comparatively high. The share of the population aged 25 and older who have completed upper secondary education or higher is 43% in South Africa, 54% in Egypt, and 66% in Nigeria. These rates are on par with, or even higher than, those of other emerging economies, such as India (32%) and the Gulf States (67–80%).



Strategic Advantages:

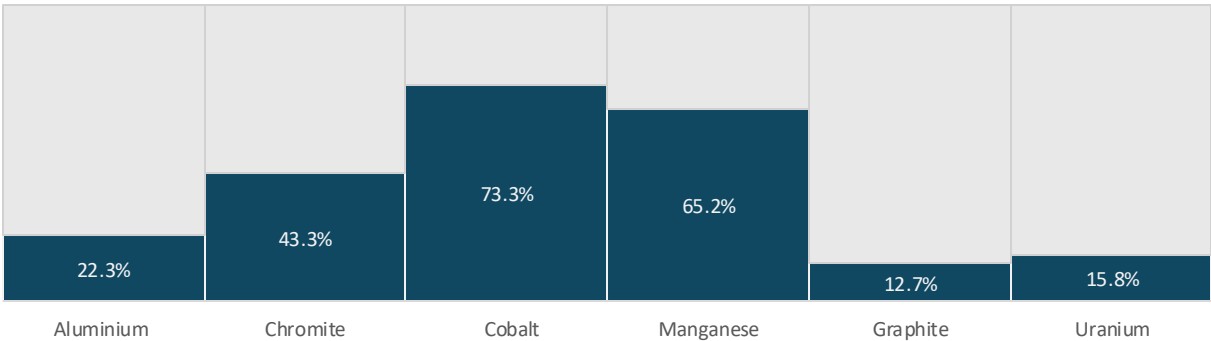
Africa’s share of strategic minerals are critical for emerging and future industries

“Africa is home to some 30 percent of the world’s mineral reserves, eight per cent of the world’s natural Gas and 12 per cent of the world’s oil reserves. The continent has 40 percent of the world’s gold and up to 90 percent of its chromium and platinum. The largest reserves of cobalt, diamonds, platinum and uranium in the world are in Africa. It holds 65 per cent of the world’s arable land and ten percent of the planet’s internal renewable fresh water source.” – UNEP
<https://www.unep.org/regions/africa/our-work-africa>

Africa holds a significant strategic advantage in the global minerals market. It is home to around 30 per cent of the world’s mineral reserves and accounts for a substantial share of production in several minerals essential to clean energy, advanced manufacturing, defence, and technology industries.

The continent produces approximately 73.3% of global cobalt, 65.2% of manganese, over 43.3% of chromite, more than 16% of uranium, over 22% of aluminium (bauxite and primary metal), and 13% of global graphite. These minerals are foundational to technologies such as electric vehicle batteries, renewable energy systems, aerospace components, and critical infrastructure.

Share of Production



Source: USGS

Despite this dominant position in raw material extraction, the majority of these minerals are exported without significant local processing.

For too long, the continent has been viewed primarily as a supplier of raw materials, exporting resources that return as high-priced finished goods. Nearly all of Africa’s cobalt is refined outside the continent. Most manganese and graphite are exported in raw form, with limited domestic beneficiation. Uranium mined in Africa is also sent abroad. While some chromite is processed into ferrochrome and limited aluminium smelting takes place in countries like South Africa and Mozambique, overall downstream processing remains minimal across the continent.

This sector holds significant potential for high-value job creation and enhanced national competitiveness

This imbalance represents both a challenge and a significant opportunity. As global demand for critical minerals intensifies, Africa must seize this strategic advantage to transform from being a source of raw materials into a leading player in global mineral processing.

By investing in local refining, beneficiation, and value addition, Africa can:

- ✓ Capture a greater share of global mineral value chains
- ✓ Create skilled employment and industrial capacity
- ✓ Strengthen its geopolitical and economic influence

African countries are beginning to develop policies and forge strategic partnerships to enable the shift. Achieving this will create stronger economies, more jobs, and a magnetic pull for homegrown talent, while also encouraging the return of Africa's global diaspora. It represents a powerful reimagining of the continent's determination to achieve sustainable and inclusive development.

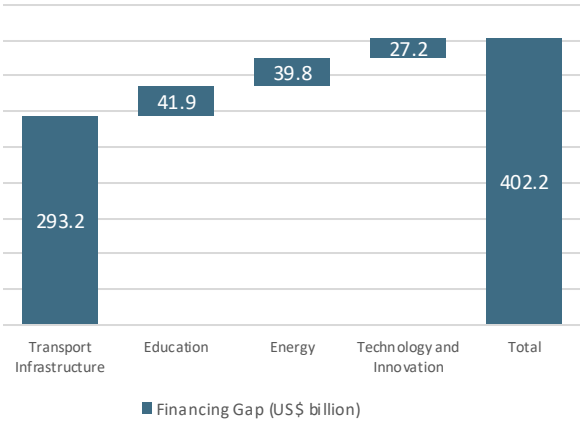
Realising this potential requires coordinated action in policy, infrastructure, regional cooperation, and strategic partnerships. It demands more than investment—it calls for collaboration that combines global expertise with local commitment and impact.



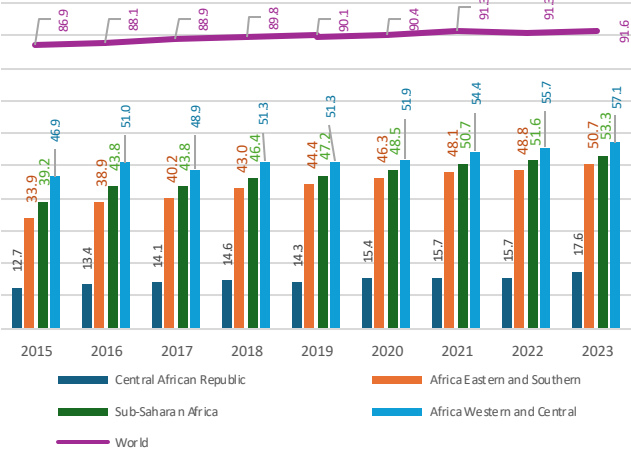
A Highlight of Some of the Structural Hurdles to Navigate

The structural hurdles to navigate include regulations, infrastructure deficits, shallow capital markets, and inflation volatility. While regional data provides a useful overview, Africa’s economies are highly diverse, making it essential to examine country-level conditions for a clearer investment outlook. For instance, inflation rates range from below 2% in some countries to over 20% in others. Similarly, GDP sizes vary significantly—from less than \$5 billion in smaller economies to over \$400 billion in larger ones such as Nigeria and South Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa data serves as a valuable benchmark for regional comparison, but it is not sufficient on its own to support informed investment decisions. A country-specific approach remains essential.

Estimated annual financing gap to fast-track structural transformation in Africa by 2030



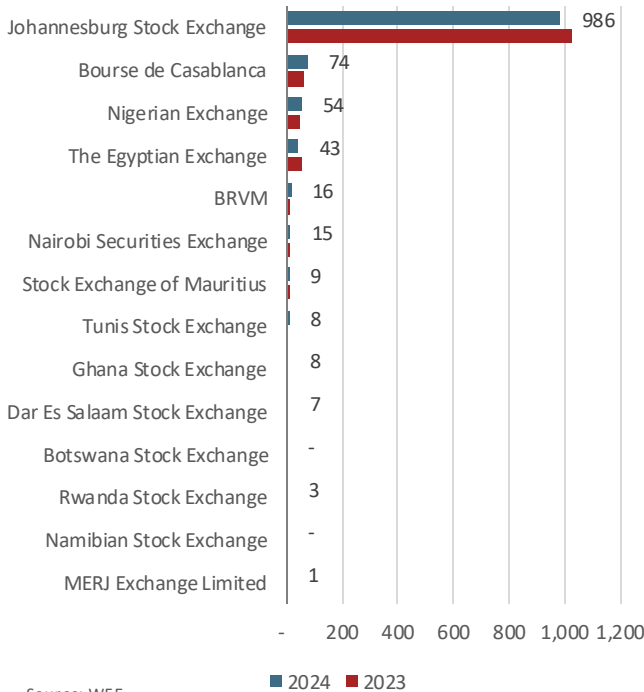
Access to Electricity (% of Population)



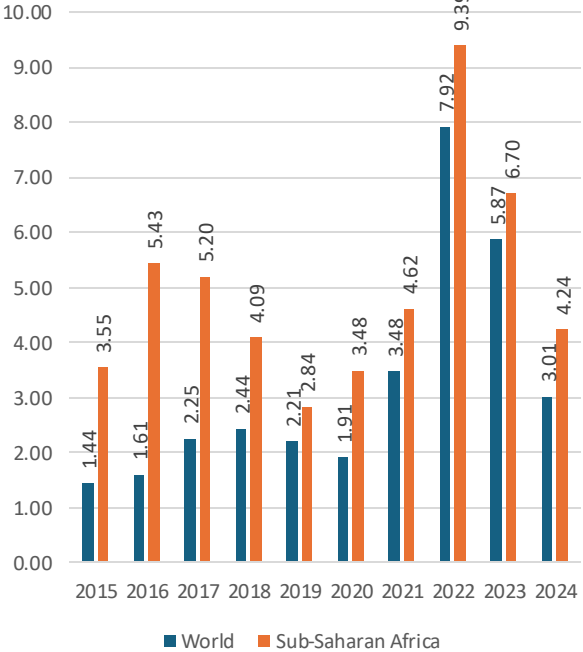
Sources: AfDB

Sources: World Bank

Equity Market Capitalisation (\$'Bn)



Inflation, Consumer Prices (annual %)



Source: WFE

Source: World Bank

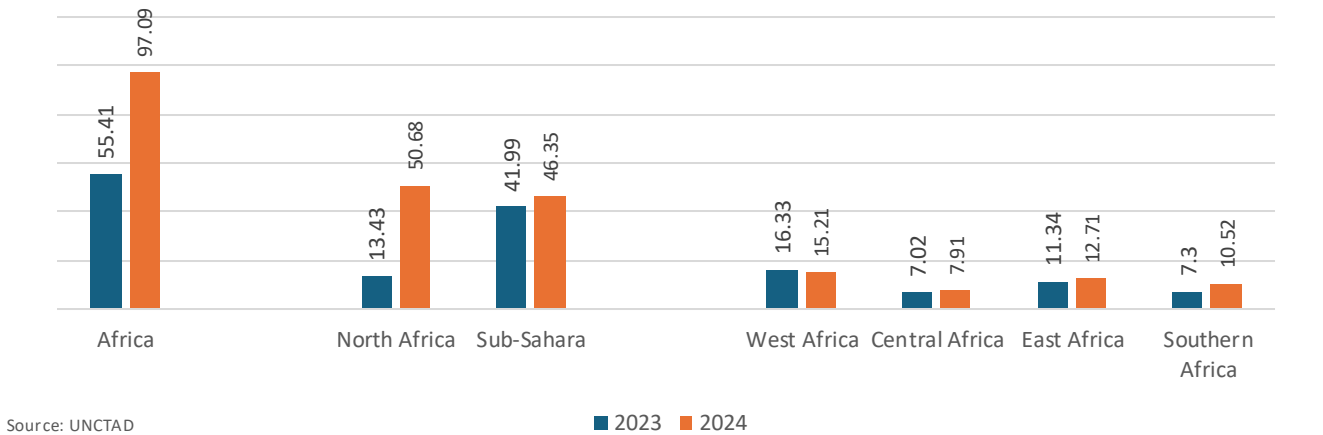
FDI Trend and Estimated Size of Domestic Institutional Capital

Foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows to Africa rose by 75% to US\$97 billion in 2024, largely driven by a 277% surge in FDI to North Africa, fuelled by major energy (including renewables) and transport infrastructure projects. The surge was largely driven by an international project finance deal for urban development in Egypt.

In the period International project finance deals increased by 15%, reflecting investor interest in well structured PPP large-scale development. While overall greenfield investment declined, the construction and metal products sectors saw some growth according to UNCTAD.

Increasing FDI to Sub-Sahara Africa require targeted projects with support reforms that strengthen investment fundamentals, improve regulatory certainty, and deepen regional integration. Complementing these efforts with a stronger focus on mobilising domestic institutional capital for infrastructure development can help finance strategic projects, stimulate investor confidence, and support long-term economic resilience.

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows USD'Billions



The region currently holds over \$1.5 trillion in domestic institutional capital. This includes approximately \$0.4–0.5 trillion in pension assets, \$0.3 trillion in insurance assets, and at least \$0.2 trillion held across 32 sovereign wealth funds. South Africa accounts for the largest share of this capital. Other countries with sizeable domestic capital bases include Libya, Algeria, Morocco, Nigeria, Egypt, and Ethiopia.

Source: SWFI, Collation of Selected Pension Assets



Making the Transition:
Some Considerations for Business Leaders
and Policy Makers

Africa's Mission: From Extraction to Equitable Value Creation

Africa's economic narrative is evolving from one defined by resource exploitation to one centred on inclusive industrial development, local value addition, and strategic partnership. This shift embodies the continent's ambition to participate more fairly in global markets as a producer, innovator, and equal economic actor.

Across Africa, governments and businesses are refocusing to attract strategic investment and private-sector participation. For business leaders, success will rest on purposeful engagement, a deep understanding of local dynamics, and long-term partnerships grounded in mutual benefit. Those who act boldly and responsibly today will be best placed to be part of shaping Africa's next phase of transformation, in a manner that generates shared and sustainable value.

SMP STAMP Framework™ sets out FIVE essential imperatives for companies seeking to expand successfully in Africa.



STRATEGY: Develop tailored, actionable market entry strategies
Africa is a continent of 54 distinct sovereign nations. Each country has its own government, legal system, policies, regulations, and rich cultural and historical identity. It is important for business leaders looking to expand in or enter the African market to deepen their understanding of target markets and ensure proper due diligence. Success depends on navigating realities and having a clear understanding of both the opportunities and the risk environments.



TARGET VALUE CREATION: Focus on where and how to create value beyond extraction
Identify gaps in supply chains, understand product–market fit, and focus on the real needs of local consumers and potential for scalability beyond initial boundaries. Success depends on purposeful engagement, a deep understanding of local dynamics, and long-term partnerships grounded in mutual benefit.



ALLIANCES: Build strong, mutually beneficial partnerships and networks
Understand that solutions developed elsewhere will not translate directly. Build and leverage partnerships to navigate. Engage broadly and build trust, from government institutions, companies already operating in the market, to professional firms, and community stakeholders. Leverage networks to better understand and execute. These relationships are key to navigating complexity and creating lasting impact.



MOBILISE CAPABILITIES: Invest in local capabilities and execution readiness
Be intentional in recruiting, developing, and building strong local talent and capabilities—this is essential to long-term success. Strengthen connectivity across your organisation, especially if operating in multiple countries; doing so will help capture synergies and foster stronger collaboration. Integrate cultural and market insights into your business model, and build execution readiness to better navigate complexity and adapt with agility.



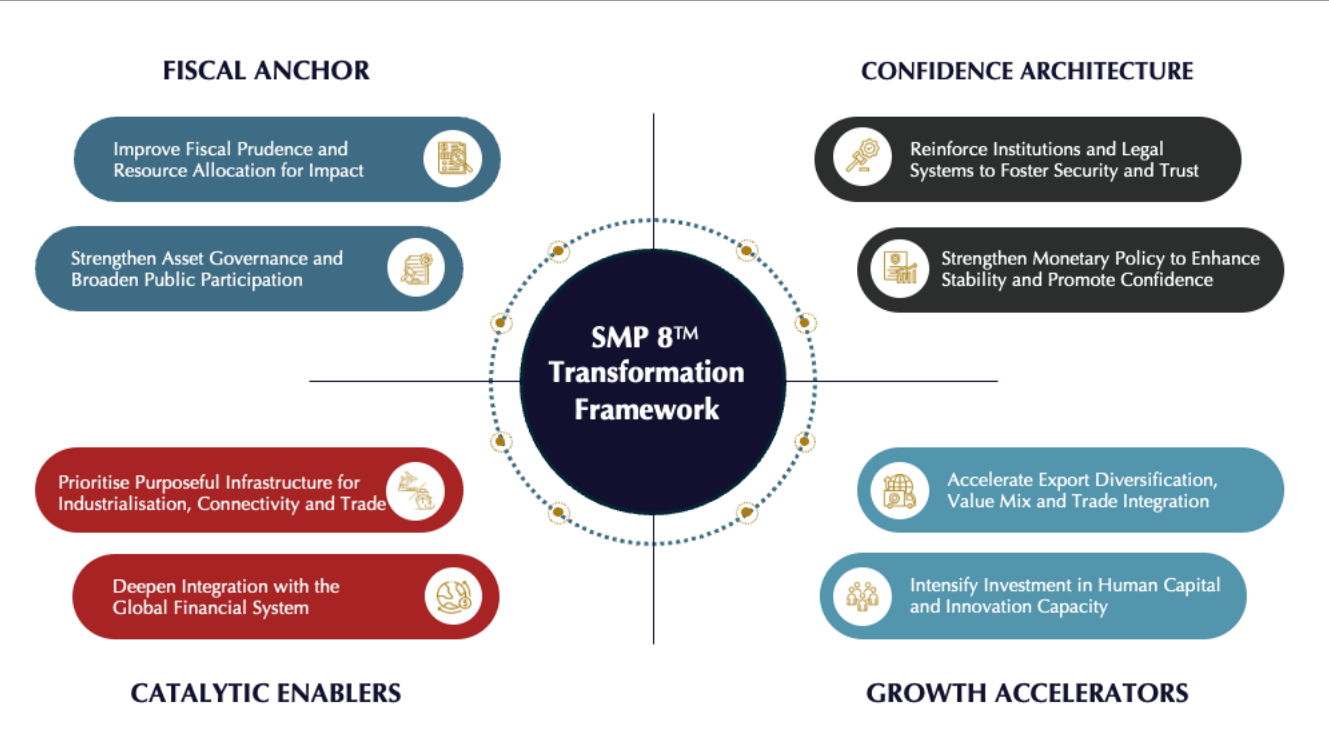
PRUDENCE: Ensure sound financial management, governance, and regulatory compliance.
Understand local financial regulations, tax policies, and reporting requirements in each market. Establish internal controls, maintain board oversight, and adhere to disclosure and compliance standards. Aligning with local governance frameworks helps mitigate risk and meet statutory obligations.

Disclaimer: The SMP STAMP Framework™ was independently developed by Strategy Management Partners (SMP) as a practical guide to support business leaders navigating expansion and market entry into Africa. The five imperatives are derived from SMP's expertise in strategy, execution, and experience in emerging markets, alongside in-depth knowledge of the African context. While every effort has been made to ensure originality, any resemblance to other frameworks, models, or intellectual property is purely coincidental and unintentional. SMP respects all intellectual property rights, and any concerns regarding potential overlaps or attributions can be directed to us for prompt review and resolution.

Accelerating the Transition: EIGHT Levers of Consideration

Policymakers can unlock sustainable and inclusive growth by building on their economy’s competitive advantages while addressing fiscal, structural, and monetary challenges.

The **SMP 8™ Transformation Framework** below provides a guide for policymakers. It highlights eight actionable strategic levers that can be used to unlock sustainable and inclusive growth by aligning each economy’s competitive advantages with targeted fiscal, structural, and monetary reforms. The appropriate starting point will depend on the specific current realities



FISCAL ANCHOR

- I. **Improve Fiscal Prudence and Resource Allocation for Impact**
 - I. Promote fiscal responsibility and sustainability by reducing the cost of government, enhancing revenue generation, maintaining sustainable debt levels, and strengthening financial discipline across government departments and agencies.
 - II. Strengthen budget planning and execution frameworks to prioritise the allocation of public resources towards high-impact, transformative, and inclusive development initiatives.
 - III. Enhance domestic revenue mobilisation without overburdening taxpayers, while fostering voluntary compliance.
 - IV. Promote transparency in the use of public funds to build trust and reduce reliance on costly enforcement.
- II. **Strengthen Asset Governance and Broaden Public Participation**
 - I. Avoid policies that enable political capture or concentrate natural resource rents.
 - II. Link contracts and concessions to clear performance metrics and channel rent revenues into enabling sectors such as SMEs, education, innovation, and infrastructure.
 - III. Create enabling conditions for private sector partners to list mature concession assets.
 - IV. Ensure any sale or concession of public assets or infrastructure services includes time-bound, performance-linked milestones; step-in and buy-back clauses; mandatory performance bonds; and an eventual public listing requirement as a lever for deepening the capital market.

CONFIDENCE ARCHITECTURE

III. Strengthen Monetary Policy to Enhance Stability and Promote Confidence

- I. Strengthen the independence of the monetary authority, embed data-driven decision-making, and enhance professional institutional capacity to increase policy credibility and public trust.
- II. Ensure effective monetary policy that promotes price stability and maintains interest rate levels conducive to expanding access to capital, stimulating private sector investment, and improving credit access for the real economy.
- III. Manage market expectations through clear, consistent communication to reduce uncertainty, guide investor sentiment, and enhance overall market stability.

IV. Reinforce Institutions and Legal Frameworks to Foster Security & Trust

- I. Identify and address gaps in regulatory and legal frameworks to secure property and intellectual property rights, strengthen consumer and data protection, uphold the rule of law, and create a robust yet enabling environment.
 - II. Strengthen judicial efficiency and independence to ensure timely, impartial resolution of disputes.
 - III. Promote transparency and anti-corruption mechanisms to build institutional integrity and trust.
 - IV. Provide clear legal identity systems and reinforce legal certainty to attract and protect investors.
 - V. Ensure that legislation keeps pace with digital transformation.
-

CATALYTIC ENABLERS

V. Prioritise Purposeful Infrastructure for Industrialisation, Connectivity and Trade

- I. Prioritise infrastructure development in transport, energy (including power), and logistics to support industrialisation and enhance regional and global trade.
- II. Strengthen and broaden physical and digital connectivity.
- III. Leverage public–private partnerships, sovereign guarantees, and enhanced credit risk instruments to de-risk and structure private sector participation in priority projects, including infrastructure and service delivery.
- IV. Strengthen capital markets and financial mechanisms to mobilise domestic institutional and diaspora capital for long-term investment and sustained economic growth.

VI. Deepen Integration with the Global Financial System

- I. Enable currency and financial instruments convertibility.
 - II. Deepen domestic capital markets.
 - III. Ensure and sustain interoperability of financial infrastructure.
 - IV. Broaden market access for foreign investors by simplifying regulations, enhancing investor protections, and promoting transparent capital flows.
 - V. Strengthen financial integrity by ensuring FATF/AML compliance and adopting global disclosure standards.
 - VI. Strengthen ESG readiness
-

GROWTH ACCELERATORS

VII. Accelerate Export Diversification, Value Mix and Trade Integration

- I. Strengthen structural enablers to support export diversification.
- II. Develop robust value-chain capabilities and foster an enabling environment that encourages research and development, promotes experimentation and innovation, and builds the capacity to produce complex products and high-value services for export.
- III. Fast-track the implementation of AfCFTA through preferential tariffs, policy harmonisation, and integrated digital customs systems to accelerate intra-African trade. Expand export-related infrastructure, capacity, and capabilities to facilitate smoother cross-border trade.
- IV. Align legal and regulatory frameworks to global standards by streamlining and harmonising systems to strengthen regional value chains and enable deeper integration into global markets.

VIII. Intensify Investment in Human Capital and Innovation Capacity

- I. Prioritise STEM education, vocational training, and entrepreneurship.
- II. Attract broader diaspora participation to complement local capabilities and accelerate knowledge exchange through targeted engagement and retention strategies.
- III. Promote equality-driven policies that unlock the full economic potential of women by ensuring equitable access to education, finance, land ownership, and leadership roles.
- IV. Foster a culture of invention and innovation, supported by strong business skills and enabling inputs.

ADVISORY NOTE

This is not a one-size-fits-all approach. The SMP 8™ Transformation Framework serves as a tool to guide a holistic and objective review of the current position, and to support the definition of development and growth aspirations. It helps inform the formulation of coherent strategies aligned with clearly prioritised focus areas.

To translate ambition into results, it is essential to establish an execution model that secures adequate resources, ensures access to the right capabilities, and is anchored in a strong governance mechanism to monitor progress, maintain accountability, and enable timely course correction.

Disclaimer: The SMP 8™ Transformation Framework was independently developed by Strategy Management Partners (SMP) as a practical tool to support policymakers navigating complex development and growth challenges. While informed by global best practices, it is an original construct grounded in SMP's knowledge and experience of African and global economic dynamics. It does not replicate or represent any proprietary models. References to international standards, frameworks, or initiatives (e.g., AfCFTA, AML/FATF, ESG) are included solely for contextual relevance and do not imply endorsement or affiliation. Any similarity or overlap with existing frameworks is purely coincidental and not intentional. SMP respects all intellectual property rights, and any concerns regarding potential overlaps or attributions can be directed to us for prompt review and resolution.

About Strategy Management Partners (SMP)

At SMP, we partner with visionary leaders, boards, and organisations to craft bold strategies, accelerate execution, and elevate leadership performance in complex and dynamic environments.

We bring over 20 years of international experience advising clients across financial services, energy, utilities, healthcare, and public institutions throughout EMEA and Asia. Our expertise spans strategy development, governance, ESG transformation, performance improvement, and economic regeneration —enabling clients to achieve measurable impact where it matters most.

Our Services

- **ADVISORY**
Strategy development services designed with integrated execution frameworks to ensure coherence between ambition, design, and implementation.
- **ACCELERATION LABS**
Expert-led, problem-solving sprints that break through execution bottlenecks, co-creating practical solutions tailored to your organisation's realities.
- **MASTERCLASSES**
Bespoke and immersive learning experiences that build strategic, execution, and leadership capabilities across teams and functions.
- **STRATEGY & EXECUTION HEALTH CHECK**
A targeted diagnostic to assess organisational alignment, strategic clarity, execution effectiveness, and leadership coherence.
- **ENHANCED BOARD OVERSIGHT**
Advisory and facilitation support to strengthen collaboration between Boards and Executive Teams, enhancing governance, risk oversight, and strategic foresight.
- **EXECUTIVE COACHING**
Focused, high-impact coaching to sharpen strategic judgement, enhance leadership effectiveness, and improve organisational influence.

We are increasingly called upon for transformative, high-stakes initiatives at the intersection of strategy, governance, and finance. With unique experience working with central banks, regulators, financial system architects, utilities, energy providers, and development institutions, we help clients navigate moments of transition, complexity, and opportunity, particularly in emerging markets.

Our strength lies in our people. Each member of our team brings an average of 20 years' cross-sector, cross-border experience, combining sharp strategic insight, operational pragmatism, and a collaborative ethos. We operate as true partners committed to unlocking momentum and delivering measurable breakthroughs.



About the Author

Muibat Ijaiya is a strategy, governance, and execution advisor with over two decades of experience supporting policymakers, regulators, financial institutions, and business leaders across emerging markets and advanced economies. She brings sharp insight into aligning ambition with delivery, navigating complexity, and designing interventions that unlock transformative growth and sustainable impact. A trusted board member and strategic advisor, Muibat is Co-Founder and Partner at Strategy Management Partners (SMP).

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Sources & further reading

Sources for our report:

In writing this report, apart from SMP Research, we leveraged our experience across countries on the continent, publicly available information as well as data and insights from the following institutions:

World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), United Nations – Population Division, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Sovereign Wealth Fund Institute (SWFI), United States Geological Survey (USGS), and the World Federation of Exchanges (WFE).

Additional credible sources:

The credible institutions that may offer valuable insights into African nations and sectors include the African Development Bank (AfDB), the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat, and the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), as well as various nations' Central Banks and National Bureau of Statistics (or equivalent agencies).

The following reports may also be of interest:

[IMF Regional Economic Outlook for Sub-Saharan Africa – October 2024](#)

[Mo Ibrahim Foundation – Minerals and Resource Governance Report \(2022\)](#)

[Africa Finance Corporation – State of Africa's Infrastructure Report \(2025\)](#)

[UNCTAD – Africa Foreign Investment Hits Record High \(2024\)](#)

