

During the [5th Africa Business Forum](#) organized on 7 February 2022 by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the findings of a report titled “Implications of the African continental free trade area for demand for transport infrastructure and services” were revealed. The report, [now available online](#), argues that the implementation of the Agreement will lead to an increase of the demand for freight transport services in the continent by about 50 percent. To accommodate such an increase, it will be necessary to upgrade and expand logistics infrastructures in Africa, but also transport services. If these two conditions will not materialize, the realization of AfCFTA’s benefits will be compromised.

For transport and logistics companies, upgrading and expanding transport services primarily means to invest in new trucks, vessels, railway wagons and aircrafts. Investing in new trucks is critical as currently 76,6% of intra-African trade moves via road (against the 22.1, 0.9 and 0.3 percent moved, respectively via maritime, air and railway transport). Road transport will therefore continue to be used as the prevalent mode of freight transport in the continent. Because of this, the study estimates that more than two million additional trucks (1,945,141 to be used for bulk transport and 268,438 for containerized traffic) will be needed. The largest demand for new trucks will come from West Africa (39.3%), the smaller from Central and East Africa. In West Africa, the increase of demand in new means of transport is expected to come from operators carrying out transport operations within this region, while another 19.8 per cent of the demand will come from transport companies in West Africa serving Southern Africa countries and another 9.9 per cent from Southern African logistics companies transporting to West Africa, as shown in the following figure:

Figure 1: Truck fleet needs by African regions

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