



TRANSPORTATION & INTRA-AFRICA TRADE

Expansion of Pan-African Payments and Settlement System (PAPSS)



The Pan-African Payments and Settlement System continued its expansion with increased onboarding of commercial banks and financial institutions across the continent. In Q1 2026, PAPSS partnered with Pesalink, Kenya's instant payment network, to facilitate faster and more cost-effective cross-border payments across Africa. The platform enables cross-border

payments in local currencies, significantly reducing reliance on foreign exchange and correspondent banking systems.

This development is expected to enhance the efficiency of intra-African trade transactions, lower transaction costs, and mitigate currency volatility risks for businesses engaged in cross-border trade.

Comment

This creates an opportunity for businesses to optimise cross-border payment structures, reduce foreign exchange exposure, and improve liquidity management. Companies engaged in regional trade should consider integrating PAPSS-enabled payment solutions into their operations.

For more information, please click [here](#).

Lobito Corridor Records Continued Implementation Progress Across Region

The Lobito Corridor recorded continued implementation progress in Q1 2026, following coordinated commitments from Angola, Zambia, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, alongside development partners including the World Bank, European Union, and African Development Bank.

The project focuses on a 1,300-kilometre integrated rail and logistics network linking mineral-rich regions in Central Africa to Angola's Port of Lobito, providing a strategic export route to global markets. Recent developments include the establishment of a regional coordination framework to align financing, harmonise technical standards, and sequence infrastructure investments across participating countries. The corridor

is expected to significantly reduce transport costs, improve cross-border connectivity, and support trade across key sectors such as mining, agriculture, and logistics.

Comment

This presents significant opportunities for investors, logistics operators, and infrastructure developers to participate in a major regional trade corridor. The project is also expected to enhance export efficiency and diversify trade routes for landlocked countries, while supporting broader regional integration. Businesses should monitor emerging opportunities in rail services, port operations, and ancillary logistics infrastructure.

For more information, please click [here](#).

Nigeria Launches Phase 1 of National Single Window for Trade

Nigeria has officially moved its National Single Window (NSW) platform into full-scale operation in Q1 2026, marking a major milestone in the country's trade facilitation efforts. The platform enables importers and exporters to process licences, permits, and certificates through a single digital portal, reducing reliance on manual and fragmented processes.

Phase 1 focuses on core functionalities such as electronic submission of trade documents, integration with select regulatory agencies, and real-time data exchange across the trade value chain. Early deployment includes participation from customs authorities, port operators, and logistics providers, with initial transactions already completed. The initiative is expected to enhance transparency, reduce

cargo clearance timelines, and improve overall efficiency in Nigeria's import and export processes, while positioning the country to better leverage opportunities under the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Comment

This represents a significant opportunity for businesses to streamline compliance processes, reduce administrative delays, and improve supply chain efficiency. The shift to a unified digital platform also enhances transparency and predictability in trade operations, which may reduce operational risks and costs. Businesses engaged in cross-border trade should consider adapting internal processes to fully utilise the platform's capabilities.

For more information, please click [here](#).

AGOA Extension Highlights Shift Toward Trade Diversification

In Q1 2026, the United States extended the African Growth and Opportunity Act by one year, maintaining tariff-free access for eligible African exports to the U.S. market until 31 December 2026. The extension, granted with retroactive effect following the programme's lapse in September 2025, provides short-term relief to African exporters, particularly in the textiles and manufacturing sectors. This development comes amid increasing emphasis on intra-African trade under the AfCFTA framework. However, the shortened extension, reduced from an initially proposed three-year period, introduces continued uncertainty regarding the long-term future of U.S.-Africa trade relations. U.S. trade

authorities have also indicated plans to review and potentially restructure AGOA to secure greater market access for American businesses.

Comment

This presents a mixed outlook for African businesses. While the extension preserves immediate market access, the limited duration may constrain long-term investment planning and export expansion. It also reinforces the need for businesses to diversify export markets and increasingly leverage opportunities under the AfCFTA to mitigate external trade policy risks.

For more information, please click [here](#).

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