

Unlocking Africa's \$180bn digital trade economy

The future of African trade is digital, and it's unfolding. From Dakar to Durban, a quiet but steady transformation is taking shape.



Container cargo ship in the export and import business. Source: www.africa-newsroom.com

According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), global trade hit a record \$33tn in 2024, with developing economies, including Africa, playing a growing role in that expansion.

The African Free Continental Trade Area (AfCFTA) offers the largest free market, including 55 countries, a population of 1.3 billion and a combined GDP of \$3.4tn. The opportunities are vast, yet the strategies required for industrial players to source, move and manage raw materials and finished goods remain a challenge.

“The continent’s digital economy is projected to reach \$180bn by 2025, up from \$115bn in 2020, thus contributing significantly to Africa’s GDP, creating new job opportunities, and expanding regional trade. Digital trade is transforming the continent’s economic landscape, creating new opportunities for real economic growth, productive job creation, and poverty reduction.” H.E. Dr Jumoke Oduwole, Minister, Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade & Investment

“Building on this rapid expansion, our focus must shift from isolated digital initiatives to a fully integrated ecosystem that streamlines every step of trade—sourcing, supplying, logistics and payments. By integrating these functionalities on a single platform, Matta enables manufacturers to navigate sourcing headaches and suppliers to manage cross-border complexities with confidence and unlocks new markets in Africa in real time. This holistic approach is what will transform digital trade’s potential into tangible, inclusive economic growth across Africa.” Mudiaga Mowoe, founder and chief executive officer, Matta.

Launched to enable sustainable African economies, Matta’s integrated ecosystem — today powered by th

Matta digital marketplace and the Flux logistics management tool, with Oxide Finance (Matta's upcoming trade-financing and cross-border payments platform) arriving soon — empowers manufacturers and suppliers across food & beverage, home & personal care, paints & coatings, agro-processing, automotive assembly, textiles, construction, and beyond with truly end-to-end sourcing, movement, and settlement. Rather than supplanting traditional trade networks, this unified platform amplifies human partnerships through real-time visibility, traceability, and seamless transactions.

This evolution in digital trade and industrial growth is one of the key conversations that will take centre stage at the West Africa Industrialisation, Manufacturing & Trade (West Africa IMT) Summit and Exhibition, set to take place from 21-23 October 2025.

West Africa IMT is a high-level platform for government leaders, investors, manufacturers, and technology innovators to align practical solutions and policy frameworks for accelerating Africa's industrial transformation.

Matta, Africa's integrated ecosystem for industrial trade, will join other industry stakeholders across the continent at West Africa IMT 2025 to discuss the potential opportunities for industrial growth in the West African sub-region.

As manufacturers increasingly seek more innovative, more efficient ways to power production beyond physical infrastructure and policy support, there's an urgent need for systems that simplify sourcing, enhance transparency, and ensure supply chain reliability.

Matta addresses these challenges by connecting African manufacturers directly to verified suppliers of raw materials and commodities, ensuring business continuity in an environment where procurement bottlenecks often slow production timelines.

Digital platforms address multiple challenges simultaneously: procurement complexities, logistics coordination, payment processing, and data-based planning. By integrating these capabilities into industrial operations, West African economies can accelerate development timelines and establish competitive manufacturing centres that participate effectively in global markets.

As African nations chart independent economic paths, digital trade platforms like Matta will significantly influence how quickly and effectively new industrial capabilities develop. The transformation in African trade is already underway, with effects that will continue to reshape economic relationships for years to come.

For more, visit: <https://www.bizcommunity.com>