



GLOBAL COLD CHAIN
ALLIANCE®

HARNESSING THE POWER OF
THE COLD-CHAIN TO DELIVER
AFRICAN PROSPERITY,
RESILIENCE AND TRADE

CALL TO ACTION

ABOUT THE GLOBAL COLD CHAIN ALLIANCE

The Global Cold Chain Alliance (GCCA) is an international association representing all major industries engaged in temperature-controlled warehousing, logistics and transportation. GCCA unites all partners to be innovative leaders in the movement of perishable products globally.

Our vision is to establish a universally robust cold chain, ensuring the preservation of quality and safety throughout every link.

Our mission is to foster growth within the industry and attain a leadership position within the cold chain sector.

Our history dates to 1891 for the International Association of Refrigerated Warehouses, 1994 for the International Refrigerated Transportation Association, and 1978 for the Controlled Environment Building Association. In 2007, these organisations came together under the united umbrella organisation, the Global Cold Chain Alliance, to serve as the focused voice of the cold chain industry, providing a platform for communication, networking, and education for every link of the cold chain across the world.

The GCCA also supports the Global Cold Chain Foundation (see p10) which was first established in 1943 and has for more than 80 years promoted the growth of cold chain across the world, with programmes delivering training, research and economic development.

GCCA Africa

The GCCA Africa was established in 2018 and is governed by a Council made up of the leading third-party logistics specialists in Southern Africa, with growing reach and representation across the Continent. GCCA Africa shares best practices, seeks solutions to shared regulatory and operational challenges, and promotes trade links within Africa and between the continent and the rest of the world.



Paul Matthew is the GCCA Africa Director. He joined GCCA after nearly six years as the Chief Executive of the Association of Meat Importers and Exporters in South Africa. Before that, he spent eight years building a humanitarian program tackling epidemic disease in the African road haulage sector.

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THE COLD-CHAIN MATTERS

By safely and efficiently storing and transporting perishable goods, the cold chain feeds a fast-changing population, fuels trade and economic growth, and provides a vital frontline in adapting to the realities of climate change.

The cold-chain story in Africa is one of resilience and innovation in parts, but overall it's a story of unfulfilled potential. That is what must and will change to deliver the foundation for growth and prosperity that the continent deserves. Across the world post the COVID-19 Pandemic there is a new awareness of the importance of cold chain logistics.

The GCCA is the only logistics association bringing together the businesses, that operate, build and supply the perishable products supply chain within, to and from the continent. We seek positive engagement, support and partnership with any government, agencies or other economic actors that share our goals for future success.

This is our Call to Action | August 2024



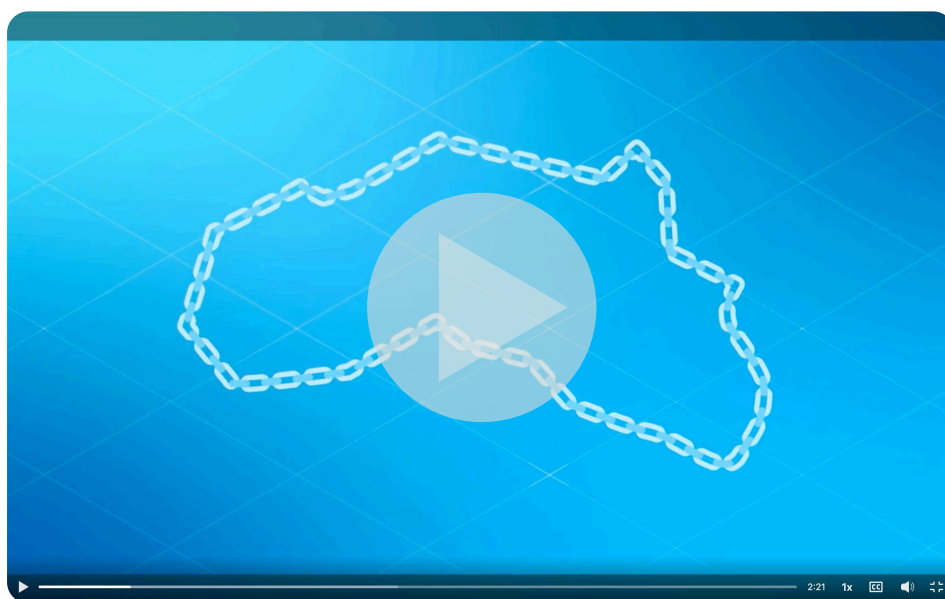
THE COLD-CHAIN EXPLAINED

The cold chain is a network of companies that plan, operate, build, and maintain specialist facilities and vehicles for storing perishable goods in a secure, temperature-controlled environment.

Cold chain exists at every stage of the supply chain, from the point of production to manufacturing and storage and ultimately on to retail or catering establishments and people's homes. Managing goods through the chain is a highly specialised job, undertaken by dedicated and skilled professionals. The overriding priority is to ensure product safety and quality; by achieving this, the cold chain provides certainty to producers, maximises availability, and protects consumers.

In the agricultural sector, the cold chain is the first defence against post-harvest food loss, ensuring most of the food produced is delivered to consumers. This maximises the opportunity to bear down on food loss and reduces the burden on agricultural production.

The cold chain has been a transformative force in the economic prosperity of countries across the world. In Europe and North America starting in the early twentieth century, across parts of Asia and especially China in the past 40 years, but so far Africa's ability to harness its potential has been inconsistent. This is a signal of concern, but also of opportunity and one that everyone from private industry to governments and consumers have a shared stake in taking hold.



[**WATCH OUR COLD-CHAIN EXPLAINER VIDEO**](#)

COLD-CHAIN IN AFRICA

\$40B

**TOTAL VALUE OF
FOOD EXPORTS**

Every year ^[1]

\$50B

**TOTAL VALUE OF
FOOD IMPORTED**

Every year ^[2]

5%

**AFRICAN
EXPORTS ARE
PROTEIN** ^[4]

1.7 Billion

**POPULATION WITHIN
AFRICA FREE TRADE ZONE** ^[3]

14%

**AFRICAN EXPORTS
ARE FRUITS, VEG
AND NUTS** ^[5]

\$8 Billion

**IN TRADING BETWEEN
MARKETS IN AFRICA** ^[6]

545%

**PROJECTED GROWTH
IN INTER AFRICA
FOOD TRADE (AfCFTA)** ^[7]

3x Increase

**POTENTIAL FOR AGRICULTURAL
PRODUCTIVITY** ^[8]

^[1] African agriculture and COVID-19 | McKinsey

^[2] African agriculture and COVID-19 | McKinsey

^[3] How Africa's AfCFTA Agreement will boost its agriculture | World Economic Forum (weforum.org)

^[4] African agriculture and COVID-19 | McKinsey

^[5] African agriculture and COVID-19 | McKinsey

^[6] African agriculture and COVID-19 | McKinsey

^[7] Agriculture under the African Continental Free Trade Area - ALN

^[8] Seizing the Agri-Food Opportunity in Eastern and Southern Africa

COLD-CHAIN IS VITAL TO A RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEM

Security of food supply is at the root of a secure economy and society. Africa, as a continent, has experienced more insecurity than any other geographic or economic region of the world. More than 800 million Africans are moderately to severely undernourished; its agricultural economy is dominated by fragmented and underproductive land uses, it is overly reliant on imports of food and feedstuffs, and worst of all, suffers in many parts from catastrophic levels of post-harvest food loss. However, it is also resilient, with areas, industries and pockets of world-leading innovation and above all, it has massive potential to drive economic growth and deliver security.

McKinsey has shown how rapidly the African economy could harness the power of its agricultural economy. It identifies several key areas where this can be achieved, most notably through investment in food storage and transport infrastructure. The Global Cold-Chain Alliance is ready to work with governments across Africa, international economic and development bodies, and business partners at every level to realise Africa's potential.

We call on policymakers to endorse these objectives in future strategy and policy-making:

- Cold chains are the first line of defence against post-harvest food loss. We seek partnerships that will facilitate investment in infrastructure, especially logistics hubs and corridors in key locations across the continent.
- Cold chain is central to delivering African food security, by preserving more of what is produced on the continent and by opening local, national and regional channels of trade we will increase resilience in access to food for all.
- Clear, consistent and proportionate regulations on food safety, health and safety and environmental standards are vital to the success of Africa cold chain – logistics businesses must have a seat at the table wherever policy changes are considered.
- Businesses, academics and development agencies play a key role in building the cold chain across the world. African governments must work with them to support investment in infrastructure, common standards, and skills.



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THERE IS NO FOOD SECURITY WITHOUT ENERGY SECURITY

Cold chains rely on a secure, consistent, affordable energy supply. The ongoing energy crises across Africa showed the vulnerabilities of our existing networks. We have to plan for these disruptions to continue. Therefore, prioritising continuity of energy supply to food and pharmaceutical supply chain infrastructure is vital in resilience planning and we must incentivise cold chain operators to invest in energy efficiency, renewable energy generation and smart grid integration.

We call on policymakers to endorse these objectives in future strategy and policy-making:

- Cold-chain is critical infrastructure and must be prioritised during energy shortages. Energy must remain consistently available and affordable for cold-chain users.
- Energy efficiency provides significant opportunities for increasing resilience and reducing emissions in cold-chain operations; it must be encouraged and incentivised.
- There are major opportunities for energy generation (solar, wind, anaerobic digestion, hydro) and storage to be co-located with cold-chain infrastructure. Barriers to making this possible, such as zoning restrictions, should be reduced and removed across Africa.
- The inadequacy of the energy grid is holding back cold-chain innovation and growth across Africa. We will champion investment in upgrades to energy infrastructure wherever opportunities arise.



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COLD-CHAIN ENABLES AFRICAN TRADE AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

The African Continental Free Trade Agreement provides the foundation for a transformation of the African economy. It will shape the future of African cold-chain. By increasing flows of temperature-controlled products between the countries, urban centres and communities within Africa, the cold chain can be the arteries of the renewed life system of the African economy.

Cold-chain businesses must be consulted as African governments consider the next phase of their food and trading relations. In recent years, we have seen how global trade is susceptible to geopolitical and other disruptions; it is, therefore, vital that food security and resilience are critical features of future trade policy.

This must include properly appreciating the capacity and quality of maritime, road, rail, air freight, and warehousing infrastructure to transport and store food and pharmaceuticals and ongoing efforts to reduce the non-tariff barriers to safe, legal trade flows between markets across the world.

We call on policymakers to endorse these objectives in future strategy and policy-making:

- Cold-chain provides a gateway to the world for African food and pharmaceutical importers and exporters.
- Too much food trade is slowed down or prevented by trade frictions, particularly the implementation of sanitary and phytosanitary rules. We will promote digitization and 'trusted trader' ecosystems.
- We will promote the improvement of cold-chain infrastructure, from reefer plug-in points to warehouse construction and transportation hubs across Africa's port network.



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COLD-CHAIN PROVIDES JOBS FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

Cold-chain, as a specialist part of the logistics and the food and pharmaceutical supply chains, providing a variety of rewarding, skilled and reliable work. The African cold-chain delivers supports hundreds of thousands of jobs and continues to grow.

From operational roles driving trucks and operating warehouse equipment, to systems, computing and management roles, a career in logistics is a great choice for people of all ages.

We call on policymakers to endorse these objectives in future strategy and policy-making:

- The food system, including agriculture, is the dominant source of employment for people across Africa, especially women. Cold-chain advancements will have a direct impact on hundreds of millions of lives.
- We will champion opportunities to improve productivity, particularly by transforming manual work and adopting new automation and artificial intelligence across cold storage and transport.
- We must ensure that people are aware of the range of fulfilling lifelong careers available in cold-chain and that they have access to quality education and practical training in all aspects of supply chain operations and management, both before and during their working life.



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WORKING FOR THE SUCCESS OF COLD CHAIN IN AFRICA

For more than 80 years, the Global Cold Chain Foundation (GCCF) has worked alongside the GCCA to deliver training, education, and research services to companies that produce, process, ship, transport, and store goods requiring temperature control across Africa.

Development Projects

GCCF manages over 110 donor-funded projects supporting investment in cold chain facilities businesses and people in 65+ countries, with services such as training, market assessments, consultations, local association development, and construction advice.

Food Loss and Waste

Launched in 2022, the Food Loss and Wastes Initiative aims to reduce food loss and waste in the cold chain, support food redistribution, increase access to resources, resolve donation challenges, and raise awareness about food insecurity.

Training & Education

Operating across six global locations, the Cold Chain Institute provides a 3-year Cold Chain Certificate Program. It encompasses 40+ specialized courses in food science, toxicology, operations, and legal affairs, developed by industry experts.

Resources & Market Data

We support ongoing research to enhance industry knowledge, provide benchmarking data, storage capacity assessments, and transportation best practices, and collaborate with the GCCF Council for Scientific Advisors to continuously develop resources.

FIND OUT MORE BY VISITING

www.gcca.org/regions/africa
Or get in touch info@gcca.org





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