

# COMESA - South Africa

## Trade Relations



## 1. INTRODUCTION

South Africa is the second largest COMESA export market after the European Union. In 2018, COMESA exports to South Africa grew market share by 3 percentage points from 10% in 2017 to 13% in 2018. On the other hand, COMESA sourced goods worth US\$ 10,2 billion, occupying 7% import market share.

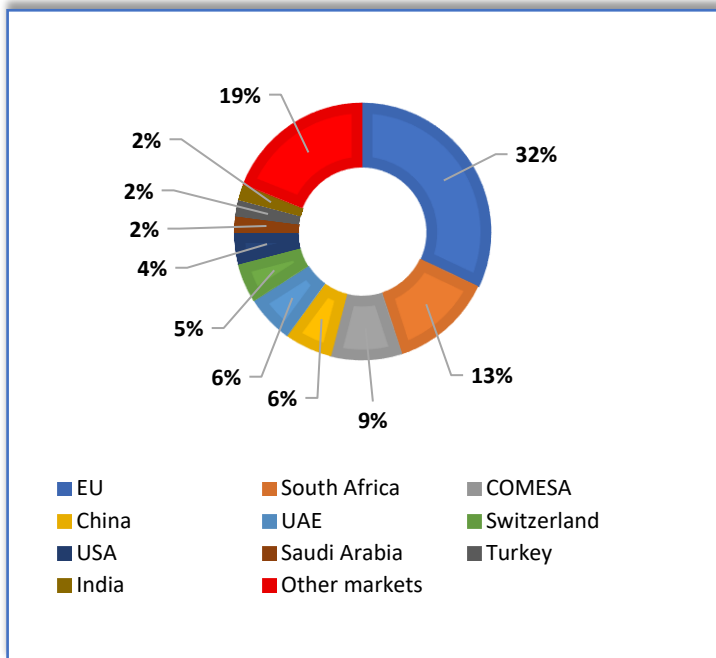
The Tripartite Free Trade Area TFTA was launched on the 10th of June 2015 bringing together the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) with the main objective of strengthening and deepening economic integration. South Africa signed the Tripartite Agreement in July 2017, but the agreement is yet to enter into force.

South Africa's trade with TFTA countries represents about 16% of South Africa's trade with the world.

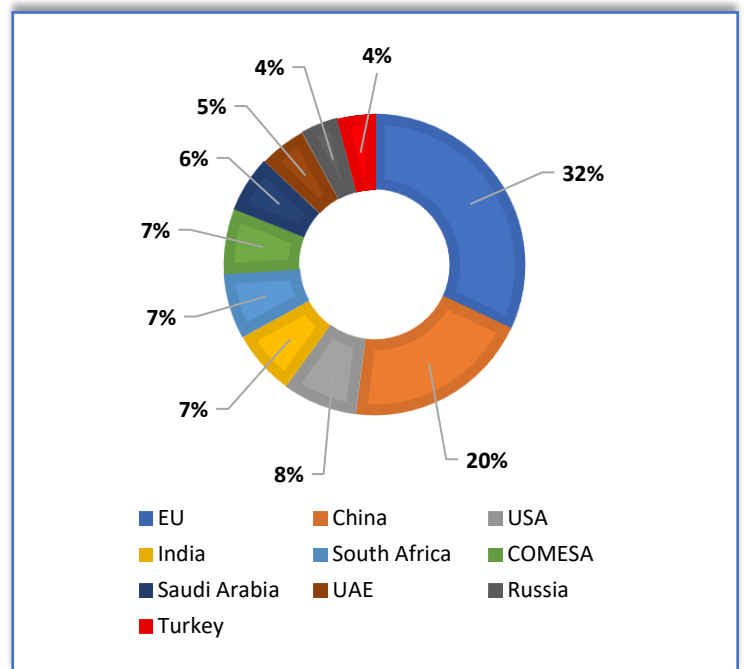
Furthermore, seven countries are members of both COMESA and SADC (Comoros, DRC, Eswatini, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Seychelles, Zambia and Zimbabwe).

## 2. COMESA MAJOR TRADING PARTNERS

### 2.1 COMESA Key Export Market Shares (2018)



### 2.2 COMESA Key Import Market Shares (2018)

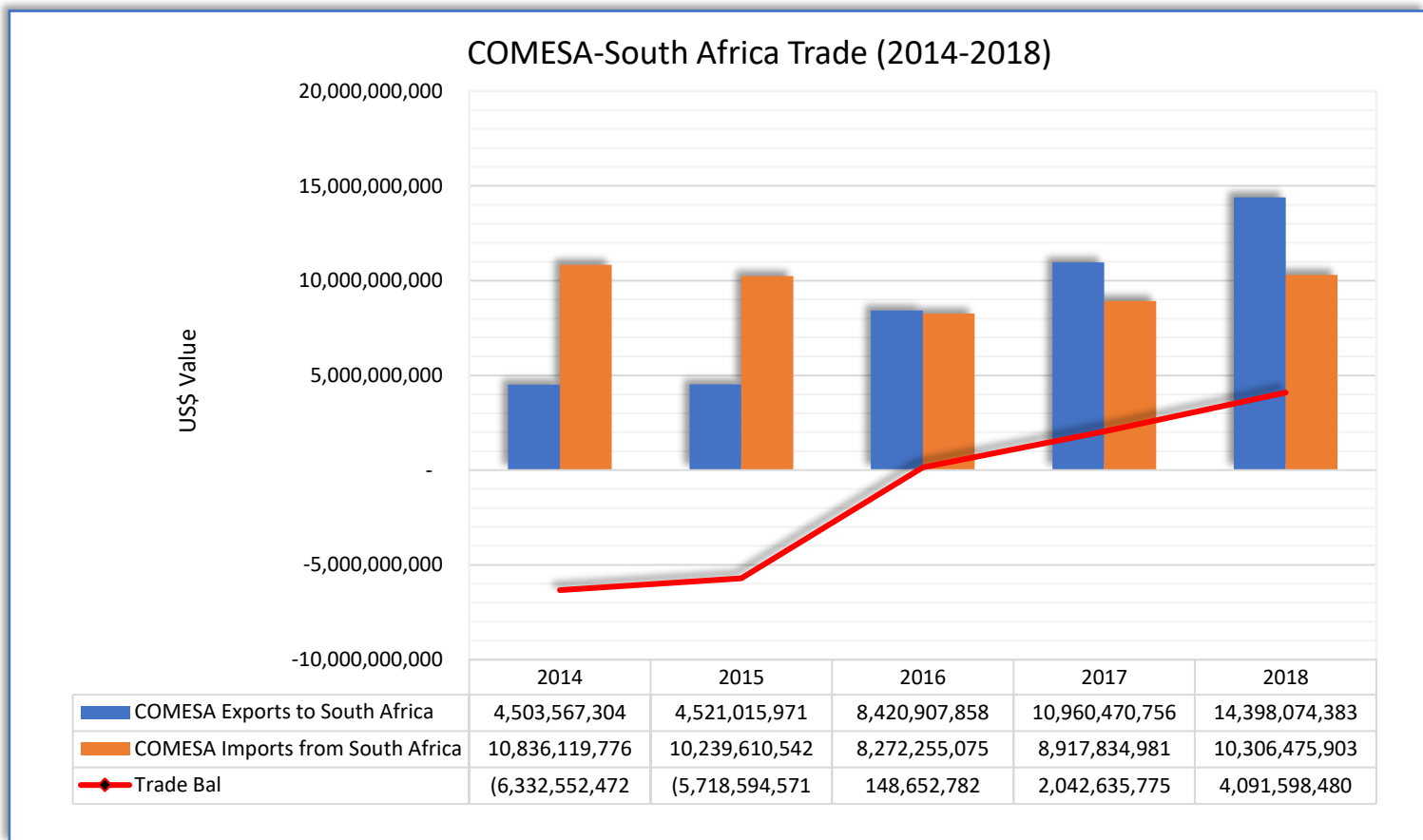


Source: COMSTAT

### 3. COMESA-SOUTH TRADE TREND

COMESA had a \$26 billion in total (two ways) goods trade with South Africa during 2018. Goods exports totaled \$14.4 billion; goods imports totaled \$10.2 billion. COMESA goods trade surplus with South Africa was \$4.2 billion in 2018.

**Chart 1: COMESA-South Africa Trade flow (2014-2018)**



Source: COMSTAT

### 4. COMESA-SOUTH AFRICA TOP EXPORT IMPORT PRODUCTS

The top export categories (4-digit HS) in 2018 were: mixtures of odoriferous substances and mixtures, cane or beet sugar, prepared binders for foundry moulds or cores, unused postage and men's or boys' suits. Chart 2 below shows the top COMESA export products to South Africa.

Chart 3 below, shows the top import products (2-digit HS) in 2018 were: petroleum oils, motor vehicles for the transport of goods, coal, flat-rolled products of iron, pumps for liquids, machinery parts, mineral or chemical nitrogenous fertilisers and electrical energy among others.

**Chart 2: COMESA top export products – 2018**

- Mixtures of odoriferous substances and mixtures
- Cane or beet sugar
- Prepared binders for foundry moulds or cores
- Unused postage
- Men's or boys' suits
- Unmanufactured tobacco
- Women's or girls' suits
- T-shirts, singlets and other vests
- Copper
- Wood sawn
- Copper wire
- Ferro-alloys
- Men's or boys' shirts, knitted or crocheted
- Fuel wood

**Chart 3: COMESA Top import products – 2018**

- Petroleum oils
- Motor vehicles for the transport of goods
- Coal
- Flat-rolled products of iron
- Pumps for liquids
- Machinery parts
- Mineral or chemical nitrogenous fertilisers
- Electrical energy
- Structures - bridges, lock-gates, towers
- Motor cars
- Machinery for sorting, screening, separating etc.
- Insecticides, rodenticides, fungicides, herbicides
- Polymers of propylene or of other olefins
- Preparations of a kind used in animal feeding
- Self-propelled bulldozers

Source: UNCOMTRADE, ITC Trademap

**5. COMESA MEMBER STATES TOP EXPORT PRODUCTS TO SOUTH AFRICA**

The top 5 COMESA exporting countries to South Africa in 2018 were: Eswatini, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Mauritius and Egypt. Table 1 below shows the import values from each COMESA country and the top product lines.

**Table 1: COMESA Exports to South Africa and top products traded**

Country	Top Products
Eswatini	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Mixtures of odoriferous substances and mixtures</li> <li>✓ Cane or beet sugar</li> <li>✓ Prepared binders for foundry moulds or cores</li> <li>✓ Women's or girls' suits</li> <li>✓ Men's or boys' suits</li> <li>✓ Wood sawn or chipped</li> <li>✓ Heterocyclic compounds with oxygen hetero atom</li> <li>✓ Fuel wood</li> <li>✓ Sugar confectionery not containing cocoa,</li> <li>✓ Preparations of a kind used in animal feeding,</li> <li>✓ Other sugars,</li> <li>✓ Sacks and bags, of a kind used for the packing of goods</li> <li>✓ T-shirts,</li> <li>✓ Coal</li> <li>✓ Fabrics, knitted or crocheted</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Jams, fruit jellies, marmalades</li> <li>✓ Refrigerators, freezers</li> </ul>
Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Gold</li> <li>✓ Copper, refined</li> <li>✓ Cobalt mattes</li> <li>✓ Copper wire</li> <li>✓ Copper, unrefined</li> <li>✓ Ferroalloys</li> <li>✓ Oilcake and other solid residues</li> <li>✓ Cotton, neither carded nor combed</li> <li>✓ Parts suitable</li> <li>✓ Insulated "incl. enamelled or anodised" wire</li> <li>✓ Bars and rods, of iron or non-alloy steel</li> <li>✓ Cane or beet sugar</li> <li>✓ Oilcake and other solid residues</li> <li>✓ Compression-ignition internal combustion piston engine</li> <li>✓ Hydrazine and hydroxylamine and their inorganic salts</li> <li>✓ Plates, sheets and strip, of copper</li> <li>✓ Transmission shafts</li> </ul>
Zimbabwe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Unmanufactured tobacco</li> <li>✓ Nickel ores and concentrates</li> <li>✓ Gold</li> <li>✓ Ferro-alloys</li> <li>✓ Nickel mattes</li> <li>✓ Platinum</li> <li>✓ Cotton, neither carded nor combed</li> <li>✓ Other raw hides and skins</li> <li>✓ Vermiculite</li> <li>✓ Steam turbines</li> <li>✓ Tea, whether or not flavoured</li> <li>✓ Other nuts, fresh or dried</li> <li>✓ Chromium ores and concentrates</li> <li>✓ Citrus fruit, fresh or dried</li> <li>✓ Men's or boys' suits</li> <li>✓ Cane or beet sugar</li> <li>✓ Granite</li> </ul>
Mauritius	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Men's or boys' suits, ensembles, jackets, blazers, trousers</li> <li>✓ T-shirts, singlets and other vests, knitted or crocheted</li> <li>✓ Women's or girls' suits, ensembles, jackets, blazers, dresses, skirts</li> <li>✓ Men's or boys' shirts, knitted or crocheted</li> <li>✓ Fabrics, knitted or crocheted</li> <li>✓ Jerseys, pullovers, cardigans, waistcoats</li> <li>✓ Monitors and projectors</li> <li>✓ Articles for the conveyance or packaging of goods, of plastics</li> <li>✓ Printed matter, incl. printed pictures and photographs,</li> <li>✓ Men's or boys' shirts</li> <li>✓ Undenatured ethyl alcohol</li> <li>✓ Cotton yarn other than sewing thread</li> <li>✓ Pasta</li> <li>✓ Woven fabrics of cotton, containing</li> <li>✓ Cane or beet sugar</li> <li>✓ Yarn of synthetic staple fibres</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Women's or girls' blouses, shirts and shirt-blouses</li> <li>✓ Fish, fresh or chilled</li> <li>✓ Electric generating sets and rotary converters</li> </ul>
Egypt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Ammonia, anhydrous or in aqueous solution</li> <li>✓ Lignite, whether or not agglomerated</li> <li>✓ Nonwovens, whether or not impregnated, coated</li> <li>✓ Carbonates; peroxocarbonates</li> <li>✓ Grapes, fresh</li> <li>✓ Ceramic sinks</li> <li>✓ Prepared glues and other prepared adhesives</li> <li>✓ Cane or beet sugar</li> <li>✓ Petroleum jelly, paraffin wax</li> <li>✓ Mineral or chemical potassic fertilisers</li> <li>✓ Chocolate and other food preparations containing cocoa</li> <li>✓ Plates, sheets, film, foil and strip, of non-cellular plastics</li> <li>✓ Pasta</li> <li>✓ Fresh strawberries, raspberries, blackberries, back</li> <li>✓ Sanitary towels (pads) and tampons</li> <li>✓ Prepared pigments</li> <li>✓ Paints and varnishes</li> </ul>

Source: UNCOMTRADE, ITC Trademap & COMSTAT

## 6. COMESA MEMBER STATES TOP IMPORT PRODUCTS FROM SOUTH AFRICA

The top 5 COMESA importing countries from South Africa in 2018 were; Zambia, Zimbabwe, Eswatini, DRC and Kenya. Table 2 below shows the import values by each COMESA country and the top product lines.

**Table 2:** COMESA Imports from South Africa and top products sourced

Country	Top Products
Zambia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Mineral or chemical nitrogenous fertilisers</li> <li>✓ Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals (excluding crude)</li> <li>✓ Sulphur of all kinds</li> <li>✓ Motor vehicles for the transport of goods</li> <li>✓ Pumps for liquids</li> <li>✓ Parts</li> <li>✓ Flat-rolled products of iron or non-alloy steel</li> <li>✓ Structures and parts of structures - bridges</li> <li>✓ Trailers and semi-trailers</li> <li>✓ Mineral or chemical fertilisers</li> <li>✓ Parts and accessories for tractors</li> <li>✓ Polymers of propylene or of other olefins, in primary forms</li> <li>✓ Machinery for sorting, screening, separating, washing, crushing, grinding</li> <li>✓ Insecticides</li> <li>✓ Tractors</li> <li>✓ Palm oil and its fractions</li> <li>✓ Motor cars and other motor vehicles principally designed for the transport of persons</li> <li>✓ Refrigerators, freezers</li> </ul>

Zimbabwe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals (excluding crude)</li> <li>✓ Electrical energy</li> <li>✓ Soya-bean oil and its fractions</li> <li>✓ Motor vehicles for the transport of goods</li> <li>✓ Medicaments</li> <li>✓ Insecticides</li> <li>✓ Tractors</li> <li>✓ Self-propelled bulldozers</li> <li>✓ Mineral or chemical nitrogenous fertilisers</li> <li>✓ Parts</li> <li>✓ Polymers of ethylene, in primary forms</li> <li>✓ Flat-rolled products of iron or non-alloy steel</li> <li>✓ Mechanical appliances</li> <li>✓ Machinery for sorting, screening, separating, washing, crushing, grinding</li> <li>✓ Petroleum gas and other gaseous hydrocarbons</li> <li>✓ Screws, bolts, nuts, coach screws, screw hooks, rivets</li> <li>✓ Automatic data-processing machines</li> <li>✓ Trailers and semi-trailers</li> </ul>
Eswatini	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals (excluding crude)</li> <li>✓ Electrical energy</li> <li>✓ Motor vehicles for the transport of goods</li> <li>✓ Maize or corn</li> <li>✓ Cement</li> <li>✓ Motor cars and other motor vehicles principally designed for the transport of persons</li> <li>✓ Waters, incl. mineral waters</li> <li>✓ Rice</li> <li>✓ Parts and accessories for tractors</li> <li>✓ Packaging material</li> <li>✓ Oilcake and other solid residues</li> <li>✓ Insecticides, rodenticides,</li> <li>✓ Prepared foods obtained by the swelling or roasting of cereals</li> <li>✓ Flat-rolled products of iron or non-alloy steel</li> <li>✓ Cartons, boxes, cases, bags and other packing containers, of paper</li> <li>✓ Medicaments</li> <li>✓ Beer made from malt</li> <li>✓ Structures and parts of structures - bridges</li> <li>✓ Mineral or chemical nitrogenous fertilisers</li> </ul>
DRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals (excluding crude)</li> <li>✓ Parts</li> <li>✓ Pumps for liquids</li> <li>✓ Machinery for sorting, screening, separating, washing, crushing</li> <li>✓ Structures and parts of structures - bridges</li> <li>✓ Sulphur of all kinds</li> <li>✓ Sulphuric acid; oleum</li> <li>✓ Tubes, pipes and hoses, and fittings</li> <li>✓ Taps, cocks, valves and similar appliances for pipes, boiler shells</li> <li>✓ Insulated wire, cable</li> <li>✓ Transmission shafts</li> <li>✓ Motor vehicles for the transport of goods</li> <li>✓ Parts and accessories for tractors, motor vehicles</li> <li>✓ Self-propelled bulldozers, angledozers, graders</li> <li>✓ New pneumatic tyres, of rubber</li> <li>✓ Boards, panels, consoles, desks, cabinets</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Centrifuges, incl. centrifugal dryers</li> <li>✓ Electrical transformers, static converters</li> </ul>
Kenya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Flat-rolled products of iron</li> <li>✓ Coal</li> <li>✓ Semi-finished products of iron</li> <li>✓ Motor cars and other motor vehicles principally designed for the transport of persons</li> <li>✓ Motor vehicles for the transport of goods</li> <li>✓ Polymers of propylene or of other olefins, in primary forms</li> <li>✓ Bars and rods of iron or non-alloy steel</li> <li>✓ Wine of fresh grapes</li> <li>✓ Apples, pears and quinces, fresh</li> <li>✓ Medicaments</li> <li>✓ Ferrous waste and scrap</li> <li>✓ Angles, shapes and sections of iron or non-alloy steel</li> <li>✓ Insecticides</li> <li>✓ Telephone sets</li> <li>✓ Parts and accessories for tractors, motor vehicles</li> <li>✓ Acrylic polymers, in primary forms</li> <li>✓ Aluminium foil</li> </ul>

UNCOMTRADE, ITC Trademap & COMSTAT

## 7. COMESA EXPORT POTENTIAL TO SOUTH AFRICA

The products with greatest export potential from COMESA to South are;

- ✓ Unrefined copper
- ✓ Copper Cathodes
- ✓ Aluminum – not alloyed unwrought
- ✓ Gold, semi-manufactured, for non-monetary purposes
- ✓ Ferrochromium
- ✓ Platinum
- ✓ Motor vehicles for the transport of persons
- ✓ Cane Sugar
- ✓ Grapes fresh
- ✓ Oranges
- ✓ Apples

## 8. SOUTH AFRICA MEMBERSHIPS TO REGIONAL GROUPINGS

South Africa is well integrated into regional economic infrastructure as formalized by membership in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). In addition, the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) agreement with Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, and Swaziland facilitates commercial exchanges.

South Africa is a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), the G20, and BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa).



## 9. EXPORTING TO SOUTH AFRICA

Import licences are required for a certain number of products (Schedule 1 of the Import Control Regulations Act). These licences are delivered by the following authorities (as per the nature of the product): the [Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries](#), the [Department of Water and Sanitation](#), the [Department of Environmental Affairs](#), the [Department of Trade and Industry](#), the [Department of Energy](#) and the [Department of Health](#).

Some products are subject to specific controls (caution: the below list is not exhaustive):

- A phytosanitary certificate is required for vegetables and related products, as well as animal products such as bacon, hides and honey. It is delivered by the Ministry of Agriculture from the country of origin.
- A veterinarian certificate is required for the import of living animals and fresh, frozen or canned meat.
- A certificate of disinfection is necessary for the import of wool products, cotton, clothes, etc.
- A certificate of inspection by a recognised institute is required only for exporters who export for the first time in South Africa, it is not required when a good business relationship has been established.
- A quality certificate may be asked for fruits and vegetables.

Type of products that are not allowed into South Africa and here are some examples:

- Second-hand cars
- Certain pharmaceuticals that is not approved by South Africa's medical council
- Plant materials that don't have a license
- Certain animal products including animal skins
- Certain liquids including alcohol-based ones
- Cigarettes with a mass of more than 2kg per 1000
- Prison-made and penitentiary-made goods

For the entry of commercial samples, advertising materials and professional equipment, South Africa applies the ATA (Temporary Admission) Carnet system. Goods should be adequately marked for identification purposes so as to facilitate their passage through customs. South Africa is a member of the ATA Convention ([ATA Carnet](#)). Goods with an ATA Carnet are exempt from duty fees and VAT.

<https://import-export.societegenerale.fr/en/country/south-africa/regulations-customs>

<https://www.waystocap.com/blog/how-to-import-to-south-africa/>

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/327424>

<https://howtoexportimport.com/Import-documents-required-in-South-Africa-8869.aspx>

## 10. IMPORTANT CONTACTS

### **The Department of Trade, Industry and Competition**

77 Meintjie Street,  
Block A Floor 3,  
Sunnyside, PRETORIA  
Tel: +27 (0)12 394 1481 / 021 464 2820  
Website: <http://www.dti.gov.za>  
Email: [ministry@economic.gov.za](mailto:ministry@economic.gov.za)

### **South African Revenue Service (SARS)**

Lehae la Sars Building  
299 Bronkhorst Street,  
New Muckleneuk  
Brooklyn, PRETORIA  
Tel: +27 (0) 12 422 4000  
Website: <http://www.sars.gov.za>  
Email: [TPA@sars.gov.za](mailto:TPA@sars.gov.za)

### **South African Chamber of Commerce and Industry**

Chamber House  
24 Sturdee Avenue  
Rosebank 2196  
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Website: <http://www.sacci.org.za>  
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### **SADC Business Council**

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