



TAZARA vs. Lobito Corridor: Shaping Africa's Mineral Flows and Global Power Struggles

Two rival rail corridors are reshaping Africa's mineral flows. China is revitalizing the Tanzania–Zambia (TAZARA) Railway under its Belt and Road Initiative, securing access to the Indian Ocean through Dar es Salaam. Meanwhile, Western-backed partners are advancing the Lobito Corridor, linking Central Africa's copper belt to Angola's Atlantic coast. Together, these competing routes underscore intensifying geopolitical rivalry and a strategic race to control the infrastructure that moves Africa's resources to the world.

BACKGROUND

The TAZARA railway, built in the 1970s with Chinese support, links Zambia to Tanzania's Indian Ocean port, aiming to reduce dependence on what were then hostile white settler regimes.



The Lobito Corridor aims to link Zambia and the DRC to Angola's Atlantic coast, building on and modernizing the historic Benguela Railway first laid during the colonial era.



Source: [The American Ceramic Society](#)

LOBITO CORRIDOR

Western-led initiatives: G7's Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII), United States, European Union, and the African Development Bank (AfDB).

Funders



Strengthens a westward trade route to the Atlantic, providing easier access to European and American markets. Represents a multilateral, transparent governance model.

Geopolitical Implication



Angola's section is partially operational and rehabilitated. Zambia's portion is still in the planning and financing phase, creating uncertainty for miners. The DRC section operates only partially and remains in poor condition, with major upgrades still in early planning.

Current Status



TAZARA RAILWAY

China (via the Belt and Road Initiative - BRI). Historically backed by China, Tanzania, and Zambia.

Strengthens an eastward route to the Indian Ocean, providing trade links with Asia (particularly China). Represents a bilateral, state-driven model.

Operational but aging. \$1.4 billion dollar agreement signed on November 20, 2025 to revitalize the regional transport corridor, unlock new trade opportunities, and quadruple cargo volumes.

Lobito Corridor and Tazara Railway Infographic Bibliography

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