

FINAL REPORT

Maritime Connectivity Canada-Africa

- ◆ Commercial realities
- ◆ Economic feasibility
- ◆ Strategic opportunities

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KEY FIGURES 2025 - 2026

The Report in Figures

The main figures from the 2025 flow analysis and the shipping service scenarios tested in this report.



PONT-BRIDGE CANADA

Foreword

From ambition to building a Canada-Africa corridor

Economic rapprochement between Canada and Africa cannot rest on a shared ambition alone. It must rely on infrastructure, logistics corridors, trade volumes and, above all, on a rigorous understanding of the conditions required to turn this ambition into lasting trade.

It is in this spirit that Pont-Bridge Canada, through the Canada-Africa Forum on the Port Industry and the Blue Economy (BlueShift), wished to launch this study on **maritime connectivity between Canada and Africa**.

Since the first edition of the Canada-Africa Forum, one question has come up consistently in our exchanges with governments, port authorities, businesses, exporters and supply chain players: can a more direct, regular and competitive maritime link be established between Canada and Africa, with its market of 1.4 billion consumers?

This question is all the more strategic as trade between the two economic areas reached **CAD 18.25 billion in 2025**. Yet the study shows that, beyond this overall value, the very structure of trade calls for a far more nuanced reading, between bulk cargo and the containerized general cargo that can today constitute a potential for a regular line.

We therefore deliberately chose to start not from what we would like to see exist, but from what really exists.

The work carried out by Drs Yann Alix and Jean-François Pelletier sheds essential light on this point. Their analysis shows that a link built exclusively on the current bilateral trade between Canada and Africa does not yet have the critical mass needed for the immediate establishment of a regular shipping service.

But this conclusion does not close the door. It shifts the question.

The issue is no longer simply to ask whether there is enough cargo today to justify a direct line. It becomes one of determining **how to build the volumes, corridors and commercial alliances needed to make it possible**.

Several avenues emerge from the study: the remarkable growth in Canadian exports of used vehicles to Africa; the consolidation of flows on the Toronto-Montréal-Halifax axis; the possibility of attracting certain traffic from the American Midwest and northeast; the potential role of strategic port platforms in the Gulf of Guinea; and, in the longer term, the exploration of new trade triangulations.



The study also identifies a scenario worth exploring further: that of a fortnightly service of limited capacity, making it possible to test the market progressively, rather than seeking immediately to establish a weekly service whose required volumes would today be out of reach.

It is precisely here that, in our view, the next step begins.

BLUESHIFT 2026 must be a starting point, not an end point.

By bringing together in Montréal African and Canadian port leaders, shipowners, rail and logistics operators, governments, financial institutions, exporters and businesses, we wish to use the conclusions of this study as a common working basis. The objective now is to test the hypotheses against operational realities, to identify the additional volumes that can be mobilized, and to determine the commercial, institutional and logistics conditions likely to bring a viable corridor into being.

The conclusion of this study therefore strikes us as an invitation to action: **maritime connectivity between Canada and Africa is not decreed; it is built.**

It will be built through the aggregation of flows, cooperation between ports, the commitment of carriers and shippers, ambitious trade policies and better integration of the maritime, rail and logistics networks on both sides of the Atlantic.

With this publication, Pont-Bridge Canada wishes to place a first analytical basis at the disposal of decision-makers to begin this work.

Because behind the question of a shipping line lies a much larger ambition: **to build a lasting commercial architecture between Canada and Africa and to give businesses on both continents the logistics means to trade more, more directly and more efficiently.**

It is this ambition that we wish to carry to Montréal and, above all, to pursue well beyond the Forum.



Yayé PEUKASSA

CEO Pont-Bridge Canada



INTRODUCTION

Context and stakes

General Introduction

Canada and the African continent are no strangers to one another. This commercial and strategic initiative is not the product of opportunistic positioning in the turbulent context of American tariffs and their harmful consequences for the Canadian economy and society. It forms part of an acceleration of Canada's ambitions to diversify its trade, driven by provinces such as Quebec and New Brunswick. It also reflects the entrepreneurial drive of the African diaspora living in Canada, which counts 1.3 million people claiming origins on the continent.

For Canada, the stakes are high. By its geography, but also by its history, Canada remains structurally tied to the United States of America, the world's leading economic and military power. NAFTA, then CUSMA, institutionalized the integration of value chains that transcend the political border to build interdependent and solid trade relations. The United States of America is the first commercial and strategic partner of every Canadian province.

The deterioration of relations between Canada and the United States of America first appeared in the field of trade. The tariff measures imposed in successive waves by the administration of President Donald Trump have established a climate of uncertainty that Canadian businesses and various administrations can hardly bear. The proliferation of retaliatory instruments and the constant volatility of the trade rules between the two blocs generate tensions that are becoming structural in key sectors such as energy, forest products, aluminum and steel, etc.

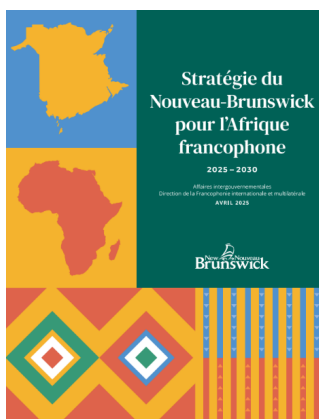
The predictability of how North American markets will evolve has been nil for more than 18 months. This geopolitical state of affairs demands a radical change, expressed at both the federal and provincial levels. The Canadian national economy must urgently begin to diversify its international trade relations, as Prime Minister Mark Carney confirmed in a speech of rupture on August 22, 2026. The arguments are not solely commercial. To a certain extent, Canada's economic and strategic sovereignty is at stake.



The policy of “Canadian geostrategic resilience” is taking shape through the multiplication of new economic partnerships, which are themselves part of an ambition, asserted as early as 2025, to consolidate new relays of growth and trade. With the reference document *Canada’s Africa Strategy: A Partnership for Shared Prosperity and Security*, published in March 2025, the message is clear: the African continent appears as a new market area to invest in. And one of the keys to consolidating future trade relations lies in building new freight transport corridors.

Diversifying supply chains with the African continent requires efficient and competitive overseas trade routes. The provinces of New Brunswick and Quebec see in this strategic trajectory real opportunities for their respective port networks.

As early as 2021, the Government of Quebec had identified African markets as promising in this perspective of trade diversification. A new geopolitical diplomacy is already in place, with a general delegation in Dakar and a Quebec office in Abidjan whose mission is to support Quebec businesses and investors in African partner markets while facilitating the initiatives of economic operators in favour of Quebec and Canada.



The case of New Brunswick is just as remarkable, since the provincial government was one of the key partners in holding the first edition of the Canada-Africa business forum in November 2025 in Moncton. This exceptional platform was the occasion to move forward with the signing of numerous agreements between New Brunswick and African stakeholders. Only 6 months after its official launch, it brought to life the ambitions set out in the New Brunswick Strategy for Francophone Africa 2025–2030.

One of the main conclusions of the Moncton meetings insists on a clear idea: diversifying markets and developing new trade with Africa presuppose building together the fundamentals of tomorrow’s maritime and logistics routes between the two great economic blocs.



This explains why the blue economy and the sustainable development of port activities were at the heart of the discussions, and why they remain the keystones of the exchanges at the second edition of the Canada-Africa forum on the port industry and the blue economy, BlueShift 2025. But to move forward, we need to know which potential flows we are talking about. We need to understand the current economic and commercial drivers that link Canada and Africa. We must qualify and quantify the potential while delivering a realistic simulation exercise on the winning conditions of a future maritime route that would connect Canadian markets to those of the African continent.

This report starts from the commercial realities identified for the year 2025 in order to rigorously extrapolate the main conditions of a future direct shipping line between the markets of West Africa and those of Eastern Canada. It is a working document intended to support all economic and institutional actors in their commercial and strategic co-construction. It is only one more piece in the informed planning of the future commercial and strategic relations between Canada and Africa.



01

PART 1

Flows, sectors and corridors



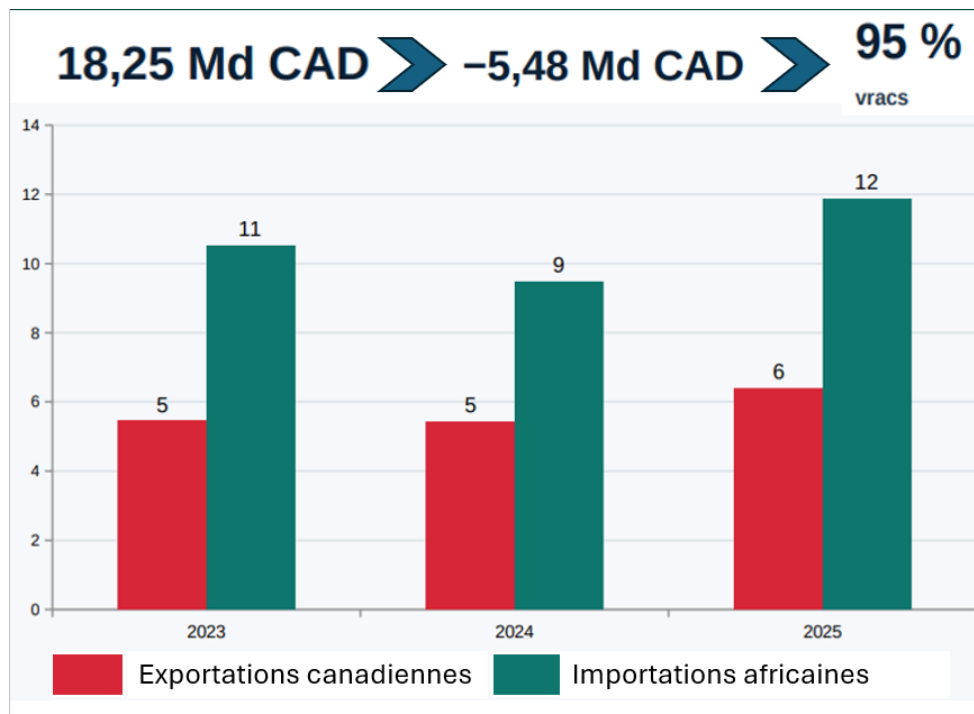
Mapping trade flows between Africa and Canada

1-1 Working to rebalance the existing general cargo flows

According to Canadian trade and customs statistics, trade between Africa and Canada reached about CAD 18.25 billion in 2025, with an increase in total imports and exports over the last three-year period. Canadian exports now exceed CAD 6 billion, while African imports approach CAD 12 billion (Figure 1). This highlights a genuine imbalance in the trade balance, but also in the logistics structure of the flows imported and exported between the two market areas.

FIGURE 1

Trade flows between Canada and Africa between 2023 and 2025



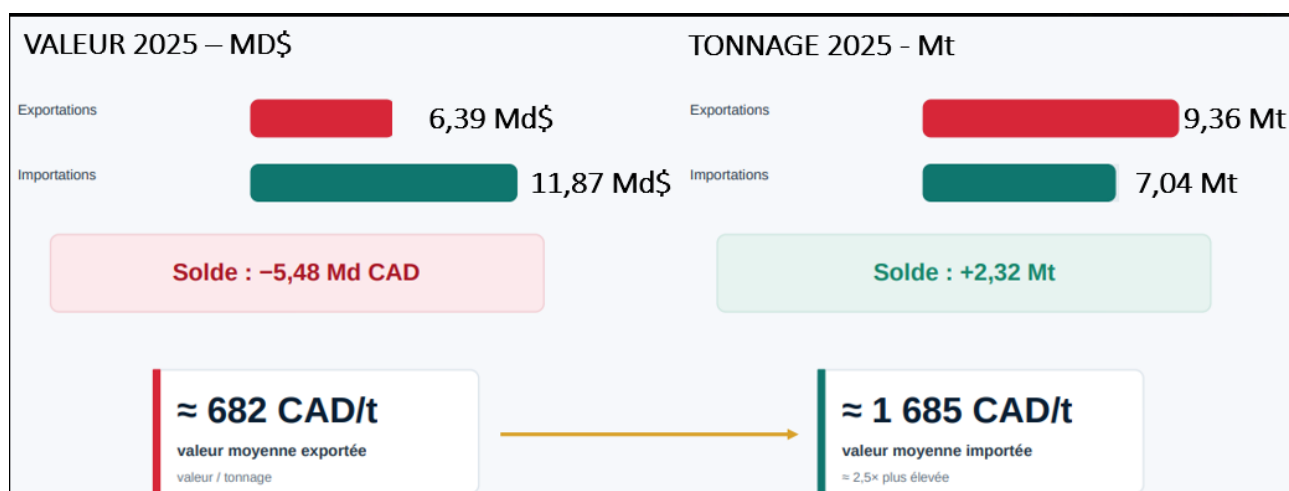
Source: CPCS, based on Statistics Canada data Prepared by: The authors

The first finding to retain reveals a Canadian trade deficit of CAD 5.48 billion with Africa. The second essential element to take into account at this stage is that 95%

of the volumes are bulk cargo. In the framework of our reflection, this means that the value of Canada-Africa trade cannot be directly translated into traffic potential for a regular direct shipping service. In other words, and given the current state of trade between the two markets, only 5% of the traded value could represent a potential for a future direct line.

FIGURE 2

A trade asymmetry between the values and tonnages exchanged between Canada and Africa in 2025



Source: CPCS, based on Statistics Canada data Prepared by: The authors

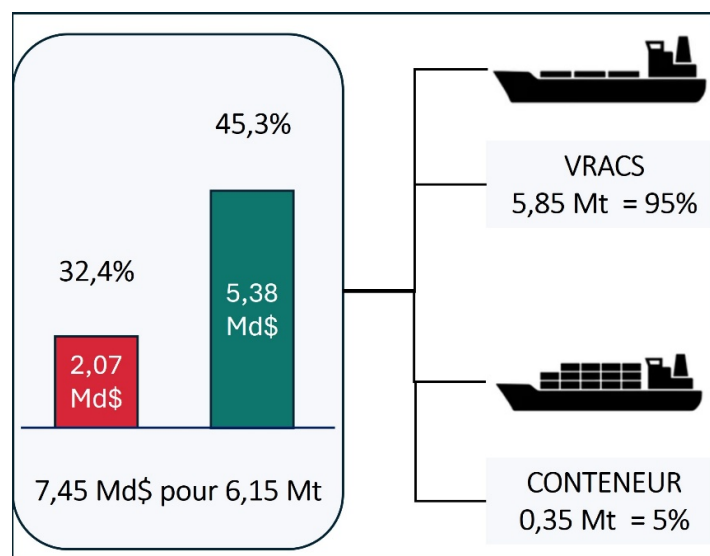
In 2025, Canada exports about 9.36 million tonnes to Africa for a value of CAD 6.39 billion, whereas it imports only 7.04 million tonnes for CAD 11.87 billion (Figure 2). A particularly interesting paradox emerges: Canada remains in deficit in value, at CAD 5.48 billion, but in surplus in tonnage, at 2.32 million tonnes. This situation is explained by a considerable difference in average value, since each exported tonne is “worth” about CAD 682 whereas each imported tonne has a market value of CAD 1,685.

The differential is simply justified by the nature of the products exchanged: Canadian exports consist more of heavy goods of relatively low value per tonne, unlike African markets, which export to Canada products of higher unit value, including precious metals. From the perspective of a direct shipping line, these commercial considerations remain essential, in particular regarding the ability to containerize flows that are transported unpackaged.

Before entering into the more precise typologies of the flows exchanged, it is worth refocusing the scope of the study, because the African continent as a whole is not necessarily relevant to consider. Indeed, with CAD 7.45 billion in trade, West Africa (Mauritania to Nigeria) and Central Africa (Cameroon to the Democratic Republic of the Congo) represent 40.8% of the total value of Canada-Africa trade (Figure 3). The trade imbalance is confirmed here too, since this West and Central African region accounts for 45.3% of the African values exported, against only 32.4% of the Canadian values imported.

FIGURE 3

West and Central Africa as the priority commercial target



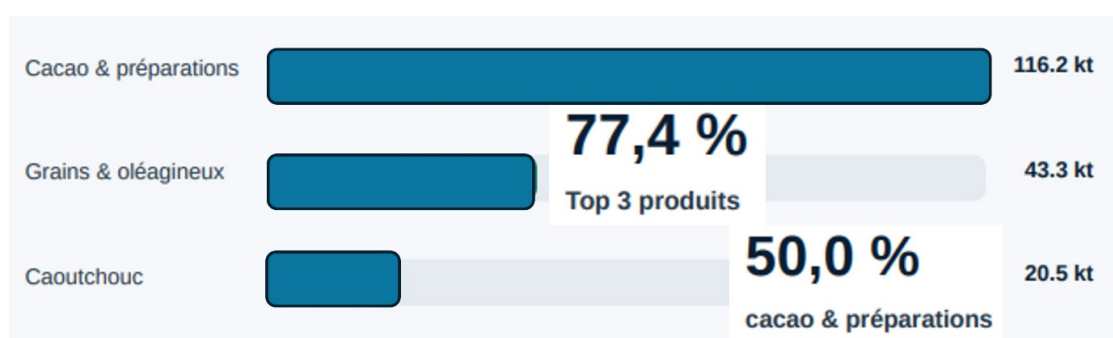
Source: CPCS, based on Statistics Canada data Prepared by: The authors

In total, trade between the two market zones amounts to 6.15 million tonnes, once again with bulk traffic representing 95% of the total against only 5% for general cargo. In other words, 350,000 metric tonnes per year are to be retained as potential to capture in a regular direct liner shipping logic.

The breakdown of the main sectors making up the general cargo tonnage proves interesting. In this respect, Canadian containerized imports are concentrated in 3 main sectors of African export agribusiness (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4

Three agri-food sectors in the direction of African exports to Canada



Source: CPCS, based on Statistics Canada data Prepared by: The authors

Cocoa and its preparations account for 116,200 metric tonnes, that is, by itself about 50% of the tonnage exported to Canada¹. Grains and oilseeds add a further 43,300 metric tonnes and rubber 20,500. In total, these three families concentrate

¹Note that a substantial part of the imported cocoa tonnage does not arrive by container, but rather as ungrouped general cargo.

77.4% of the volumes, which can become a logistics opportunity within the framework of the future direct shipping line. The value and service chains linked to these three major families of agricultural products can be grouped together; that is, producers/shippers as well as traders and transport organizers are clearly identified targets in the context of a future commercial approach. This is all the more credible if regional consolidations allow for consolidation/deconsolidation at a few West African exit ports.

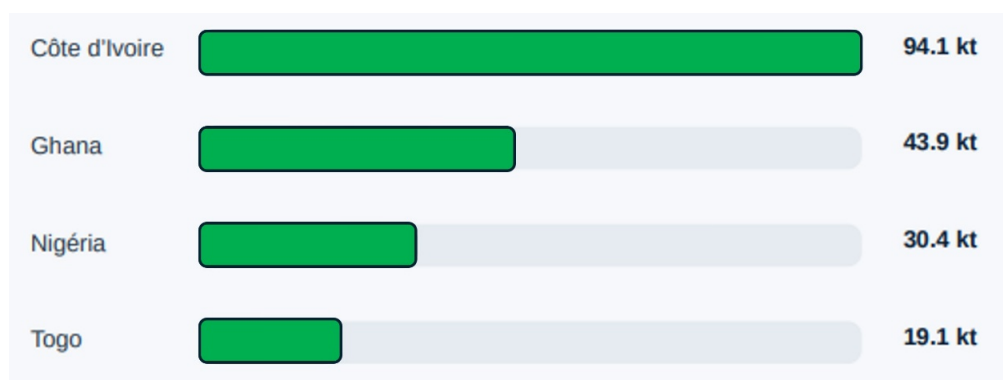
1-2 Facilitating connectivity between West and Central African markets and the Halifax-Montréal-Toronto corridor

Figures 5 and 6 provide other important information in view of this potential structuring and organization of containerized commercial capacities between West and Central Africa on the one hand, and the provinces of Eastern Canada on the other.



FIGURE 5

Four Gulf of Guinea countries as main trading partners



Source: CPCS, based on Statistics Canada data Prepared by: The authors

On the Gulf of Guinea side, it should be noted that 4 neighbouring countries concentrate almost all the volumes identified as destined for Canada in 2025. This geographic concentration includes, first, the Côte d'Ivoire/Ghana duo, which together account for 138,000 tonnes of goods. This is explained by the density of the production basins and, increasingly, of the processing of the cocoa bean. These high-value-added products form a significant base of the flow leaving the Ivorian ports of San Pedro and Abidjan. The economic and demographic importance of Nigeria is not really reflected, with only 30,400 metric tonnes, but growth prospects (between 3 and 4% over the next five years) could well feed volumes bound for overseas markets outside Africa. Togo completes the Top 4, thanks to the key role played by the two containerized port terminals, *Lome Container Terminal* on the one hand and *Togo Terminal* on the other.

Figure 6 shows that 92.5% of African imported flows into Canada are concentrated in two provinces (Quebec with 60% and Ontario with 32.5%), for a cumulative total of 214,200 metric tonnes in 2025. If we add the 11,800 tonnes transiting through the province of Nova Scotia, we obtain a consolidation of freight on a transport axis that connects the deep-water port of Halifax with that of Montréal, which stands out as the multimodal hub serving in particular the Ontario economy and the metropolis of Toronto.

FIGURE 6

The Halifax/Montréal/Toronto axis as a multimodal corridor for Canadian exports to Africa



Source: CPCs, based on Statistics Canada data **Prepared by:** The authors

It can reasonably be added to the logistics equation of the commercial potential between the two economic blocs that 66% of Canadian containerized exports to the markets studied come from Quebec and Ontario. The caveat is that the goods exported to Africa remain modest, since no sector exceeds 25,000 metric tonnes in 2025 (Figure 7).

FIGURE 7

The Halifax/Montréal/Toronto axis as a multimodal corridor for Canadian exports to Africa



Source: CPCS, based on Statistics Canada data Prepared by: The authors

4 of the 5 destination countries of Canadian shipments are found around the Gulf of Guinea, even though the leading partner lies further south in Central Africa (Angola, with a little over 20,000 metric tonnes in 2025). The statistical results compiled in Figure 8 show that the Côte d'Ivoire/Nigeria corridor accounts for *more or less* 30,000 metric tonnes of imports from Canada.

FIGURE 8

Four Gulf of Guinea countries as Canada's main trading partners for general cargo



Source: CPCS, based on Statistics Canada data Prepared by: The authors

In other words, the feasibility of a regular shipping line becomes more complicated, since consolidating a return load from the Canadian provinces proves impossible given the current state of knowledge on 2025 trade.

By way of summary of this first part, the identified total of 350,000 annual tonnes of containerized general cargo appears clearly insufficient for the launch of a direct shipping line. Taking an average weight per 20-foot container of 10 to 14 metric tonnes, the total barely reaches 25,000 TEU, to which one can reasonably add 5,000 TEU of empty containers in the context of the proven imbalance of flows on the Canada/Africa trade corridor. Shipping lines are not mistaken: they

structure their rotations between the two economic blocs according to a dual logic deployed on either side of the transatlantic shipping services:

- The aggregation of identified flows via consolidation/break-up services that include a major strategic transshipment port such as Tanger Med in northern Morocco or the major ports of the North European range such as Le Havre, Antwerp, or even Rotterdam.
- The diversion of consolidated flows via the major United States port gateways, foremost among them New York / New Jersey.

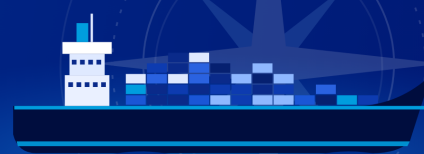
By no means is the critical mass needed to feed a regular shipping service reached. The current configuration of the markets is insufficient. Hence the second part of the analysis, which identifies several working hypotheses to structure a realistic shipping scenario.



02

PART 2

Working hypotheses and scenarios



Critical argument on the feasibility of a direct shipping service between Canada and West Africa

The tonnages and values identified in the macroeconomic analysis prove largely insufficient and too unbalanced to consider operating a regular shipping line between Canada and the markets of West and Central Africa. In this second part, several hypotheses were tested to consider the realistic arrangements for a consolidation of sea freight that goes beyond the production and consumption dynamics of the two blocs alone.

2-1 Considering Eastern Canadian ports on direct services with West Africa through the potential of the used Ro-Ro flow

A first reality emerges from reading the current services leaving West and Central Africa for North America. In the figure below, two regular services were identified because they do not follow the classic transatlantic dynamic that links West and Central African markets via Mediterranean and Western European port connections.

FIGURE 9

Main direct shipping services between North America and West Africa in 2025



Source: Websites of the companies MSC Shipping and GRIMALDI LINE Prepared by: the authors

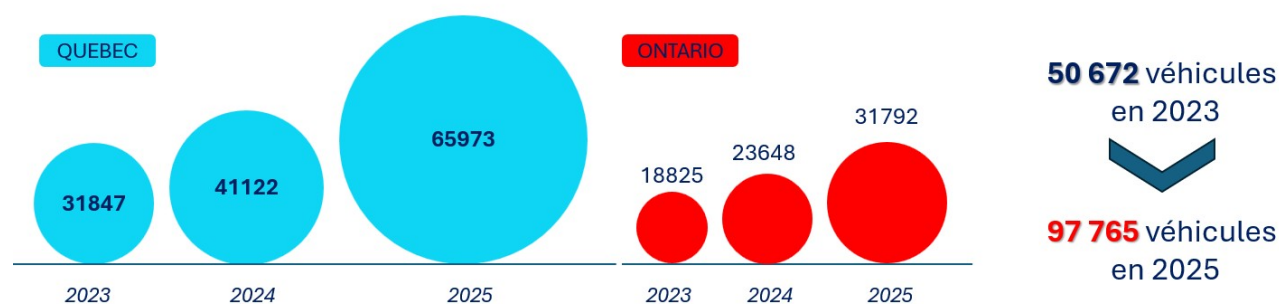
In both cases, the African ports called at are concentrated in the Gulf of Guinea, with the exception of South Africa in the case of MSC Shipping and Dakar for Grimaldi Line's Con-Ro service. Both rotations serve containerized terminals on

the United States East Coast, in particular the largest of them, New York/New Jersey, which acts as a gateway for flows from and to the eastern part of Canada. In other words, the insufficient volumes of the Canada/West and Central Africa trade corridor are thus captured by the consolidation/deconsolidation carried out from United States traffic. In view of the customs situation imposed by the Trump administration over the last two years, another angle of strategic reading can be considered, with the addition of Canadian port connections that would complement the current rotations in the northeastern United States. This looks rather interesting if one considers the addition of Ro-Ro flows from eastern Canada, and the fact that the Grimaldi Line/ACL company already calls at Halifax on a regular service, but from its Med/North America service.

The statistical data of Figure 10 reinforce this hypothesis of grouping Ro-Ro flows, in line with massified shipments from the originating provinces of Quebec and Ontario. Going from 50,672 units to 97,765 units between 2023 and 2025, an export sector to Africa is consolidating and can clearly constitute a “backhaul” for maritime solutions that could consider a Ro-Ro service as much as a containerized service with “stuffing” of the used vehicles. The ports of Montréal and Halifax become two possible options to feed a direct service that would save several days of transit by avoiding the transshipments carried out in the United States and/or the Mediterranean.

FIGURE 10

Doubling of Canadian shipments of used cars to Africa between 2023 and 2025

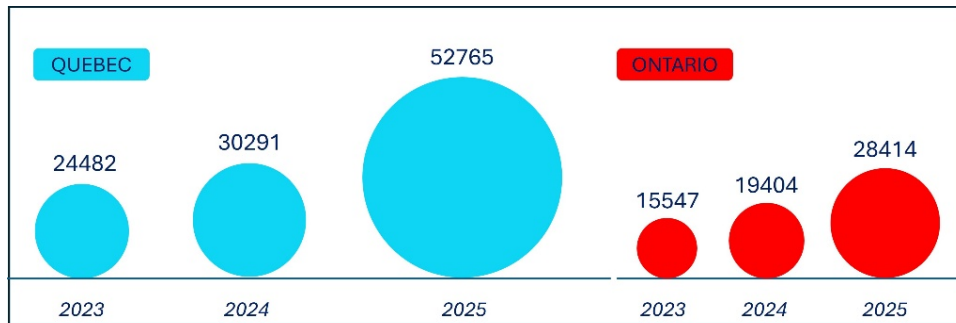


Source: CPCS, based on Statistics Canada data Prepared by: The authors, 2026

Particularly interesting is the fact that if we isolate the statistical data for West and Central African destinations alone, more than 80,000 vehicles are shipped, almost all of them from the originating provinces of Quebec and Ontario (Figure 11).

FIGURE 11

Canadian vehicles exported mainly to the markets of West and Central Africa



Source: CPCIS, based on Statistics Canada data Prepared by: The authors, 2026

Within the logistics consistency of consolidating regular cargo bases free of seasonality, this sector is a serious avenue to explore so that Canadian port and logistics attractiveness becomes competitive in view of a direct shipping connection. Grimaldi/ACL has proven logistics expertise on the Toronto-Montréal-Halifax rail corridor, and the draining of flows is already under way. The hypothesis retained here is to consider these flows as feeders for a new direct regular service that, in a way, “short-circuits” the port calls in the United States and/or the Mediterranean.



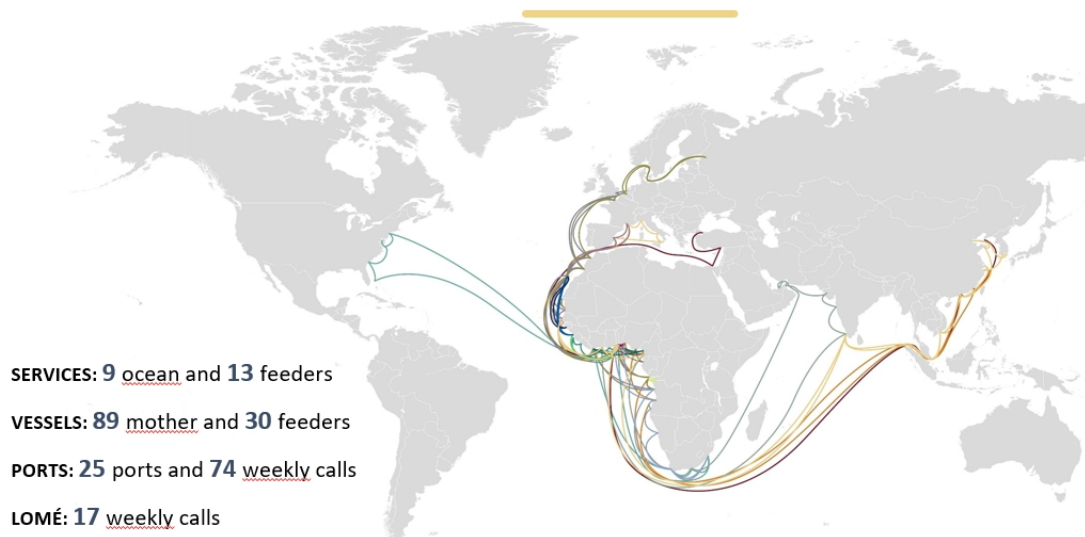
2-2 Capturing Asian flows through maritime triangulations that make the Gulf of Guinea a strategic transshipment point bound for Eastern Canada.

The second working hypothesis changes the current geographic and logistics organization of flows bound for the port markets of Eastern Canada. The reflection starts from the intrinsic growth driving the trade routes between Asia and the Gulf of Guinea. Over the last 18 months, flows have been consolidating that are driven as much by the international geopolitical situation as by macroeconomic dynamics. According to *Alphaliner* data issued in August 2026, 185 container ships representing about 1.4 million TEU of capacity were deployed on the Asia-West Africa shipping route as of July 1, 2026. This represents an increase of nearly

30% in one year, after an increase of about +40% between July 2024 and July 2025. Put differently, the capacity deployed on this corridor has almost doubled in just two years, and competition between carriers keeps rekindling with the launch of weekly services mobilizing 10,000+ TEU ships, like the world and African leader MSC Shipping (Figure 12).

FIGURE 12

West and Central Africa at the heart of MSC Shipping's growth strategy – Situation observed at the end of 2025



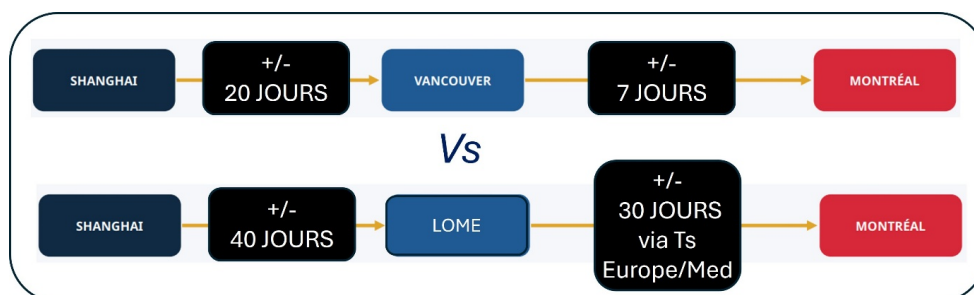
Source: MSC Shipping, 2026

The intensity of port connectivity between Asia and West and Central Africa does not necessarily concern Canadian flows and the opportunity to build a reliable direct commercial route. However, this is the context of our third working hypothesis. It has been shown that bilateral Africa-Canada-Africa trade alone was largely insufficient. So, how can the addition of Asian flows via strategic transshipment ports in the Gulf of Guinea constitute another source of freight, this time in a triangular maritime logic, or even a quadrangular one if one adds the possibility of stretching the service by adding one or more complementary calls in the United States? This highly hypothetical projection rests on several realities illustrated in Figures 13 and 14.

First, transit times, with a particularly unfavourable situation, since Montréal (and all of Eastern Canada in general) remains served primarily via Transpacific shipping services that continue logistically with transcontinental block trains (Figure 13).

FIGURE 13

Comparison of overall transit times between Shanghai and Montréal via two distinct maritime and multimodal routes



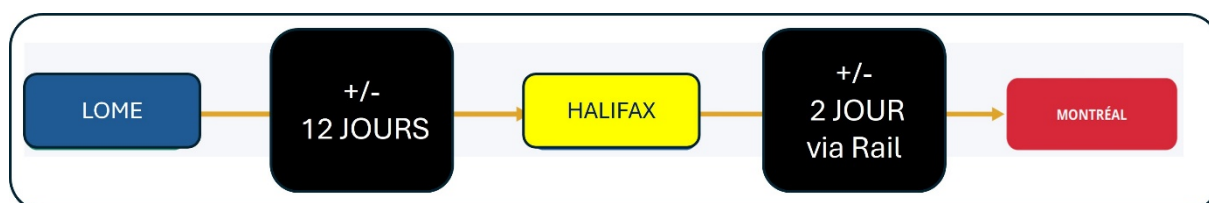
Source: Authors' calculation, 2026

Taking current port congestion into account, a reasonable range puts a complete service between Shanghai and Montréal at around 30 days. By comparison, the same Chinese flows transiting through Lomé in Togo would require *at a minimum* a total transit time of more than 70 days. Given the current state of shipping services and North American rail solutions, the ability to divert Asian flows via Africa is not a serious option to consider.

With Figure 14, a transit time is simulated that includes a direct service between Lomé and Halifax, considering the 4,100 nautical miles at a commercial speed of 13/14 knots.

FIGURE 14

Simulation of total transit time between Lomé and Montréal via a direct shipping service

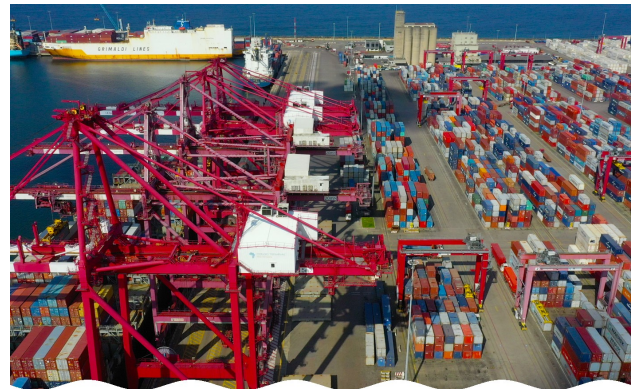


Source: Authors' calculation, 2026

The result is that a shipping service of about a dozen days, to which the rail transit is added, places Montréal less than 15 days from West African markets. In the context of capturing potential Asian traffic via Lomé, Montréal is henceforth 55 days away, a reduction of at least 15 days. At this stage, this simulation makes it possible to consider only containerized products of low added value and low sensitivity to transport time. Removing one or more transshipments at the intersections of regular lines surely saves a few more days while reducing logistics risks and the extra costs linked to repositioning the boxes.



Port of Lomé



Port of Pointe-Noire (Congo Terminal)

That being said, it is worth considering the nature of the direct shipping service and setting the conditions that would make it possible to control the total costs to be allocated to Asian flows bound for Canada (we have not simulated the return of Canadian freight bound for Asia via West Africa). Figure 15 provides a compilation of simplified data to make them comparable.

FIGURE 15

Three configurations of a direct shipping service between West Africa and Eastern Canada

	PC 1500 EVP	PC 2500 EVP	PC 4500 EVP
Navires déployés	2	4	4
Fréquence	2 / mois	Hedbo	Hedbo
Capacité Hebdo/ sens	750	2500	4500
Capacité annuelle/ sens	36 550	130 000	234 000
Taux de remplissage (70% / sens)	25 550	91 000	163 800
Volume nécessaire/ sens	1050 ou 525 /sem.	1750	3150

Source: Authors' calculation, 2026

The simulation compares container ships of 1,500, 2,500 and 4,500 TEU on a Lomé–Halifax route of about 4,100 nautical miles, at 13–14 knots. Two scenarios are

tested: the first takes as its commercial hypothesis a weekly level of service, therefore mobilizing four container ships at a commercial speed of 13/14 knots in order to control fuel costs as far as possible. The other scenario starts from a fortnightly service mobilizing a smaller ship sailing under the same conditions as the other two.

The results are unequivocal. With two 1,500 TEU ships and two departures per month, the theoretical capacity is about 36,550 TEU per direction per year. With a reasonable load-factor assumption of 70%, about 25,550 TEU per direction are needed annually, or on average 1,050 TEU per departure. Moving to a weekly service of 2,500 TEU completely changes the commercial and logistics equation, since 91,000 TEU per direction per year would be needed to reach a 70% load factor. With 4,500 TEU ships, the requirement would rise to about 163,800 TEU per direction per year, which makes it a hypothesis to forget at this stage.

The conclusion is fairly clear: the current market does not allow us to think immediately in terms of weekly services. By contrast, a small-capacity fortnightly service is a much more reasonable hypothesis for testing and building the market. Pushing the scenario-building of the potential service a little further by using the commercial flows identified between the two economic blocs, it emerges that:

- The 16,000 TEU identified in the Africa-to-Canada direction could represent, on a purely theoretical basis, since it presupposes that this shipping service pre-empts the entire potential, about 65% of the annual load requirement.
- The 5,200 TEU identified in the Canada-to-Africa direction prove largely insufficient, because even in the fortnightly configuration, this represents only 20% of the load requirement. The “backhaul” is the real structural weakness of the scenario.

Should low-value Asian flows with no commercial sensitivity to transit time be able to fill the volumes in the Africa-to-Canada direction, the “empty returns” on the Canada-Africa segment would remain problematic. Conservatively, about 9,000 TEU per year in one direction and more than 20,000 TEU in the other direction are what incentive trade policies should seek.



CONCLUSION

Levers and winning conditions



In Conclusion

The theoretical reasoning put forward is clear: a direct and regular shipping line is not viable if it is built on a logic of bilateral Canada–Africa service. We are truly in a chicken-and-egg position, except that the Canadian federal and provincial political authorities (Quebec and New Brunswick at the very least) clearly show their respective will to work on trade and strategic diversification toward Africa. The work of consolidation must not be only political. The proposed scenario-building supports a commercial strategy that could be broken down into several levers to activate simultaneously and/or in a complementary way.

The first lever consists in truly building commercial volumes around those already identified. Reaching a commercial critical mass depends notably on the ability of Canadian logistics and multimodal organizations to attract American flows from the Midwest and the northeast bound for African markets. The proposal of a direct line with a favourable transit time can work in favour of the ports of Montréal and Halifax. This is a known logistics and industrial reality, since the respective hinterlands of the two Canadian ports have included for decades part of the American states across the whole northeastern quarter up to the “Great Lakes” states of the Midwest.

The second interesting dimension lies in the nature of the simulated service. By taking a small container ship and having it sail at a commercial speed of 13/14 knots, the total maritime operating costs could make it possible to offer attractive “return” freight rates, built on the opportunity of a more attractive filling of the capacity available in the Africa-to-Canada direction. At the time of writing, a charter at \$22 M (\$30,000/day for a 1,500 TEU ship) and a total fuel bill of \$11 M (\$710/tonne at 24 tonnes/day) would probably make it possible to position the fortnightly shipping service in an attractive commercial logic.

The equation between total transport cost and overall transit time is the most “critical” hypothesis regarding the ability to attract Asian flows with low production costs and low added value via a strategic transshipment in West Africa bound for Eastern Canada. At this stage of the analysis, additional investigative work must be considered, notably by analyzing customs nomenclatures in depth. From the typology of manufactured products, targeted trade and logistics policies for specific sectors could be extrapolated.

A last consideration that remains, all things considered, plausible is to “invert” the commercial organization of the regular shipping services connecting the ports of the United States East Coast with those of the West Coast of Africa. To what extent can the commercial and political situation imposed by the Trump administration become a lever for the Canadian authorities to activate, so that the Halifax/Montréal duo becomes a “commercial and logistics corridor” serving the trade route with Africa?

In other words, the Canadian political ambitions to change commercial and strategic doctrine in favour of market diversification must serve to build a logistics system for consolidating several markets complementary to the exclusively Canadian one (commercial diversion of flows from the United States bound for Africa via integrated rail and logistics solutions from Montréal and Halifax + rerouting of Asian flows bound for the consumer markets of Eastern Canada via a strategic transshipment in the Gulf of Guinea).

The reasoning must start from the known commercial situation in order to project itself into another logistics and geographic logic. The bilateral vision of Canada-Africa trade remains an economic and logistics dead end. By contrast, with the effective support of ambitious public and trade policies, the Toronto-Montréal-Halifax trade corridor can really consolidate volumes and values that would attract the attention of shipping operators. Diversification toward the African continent is embraced and asserted. What remains now is to deepen the win-win conditions of an attractive and robust maritime commercial solution.



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