

Air Cargo

A Strategic Investment Opportunity
in Cape Town & the Western Cape

March 2026





Cargo in the belly of an aircraft

Sector Overview

The Western Cape's air cargo sector is a high-growth component of the region's logistics ecosystem, enabling the efficient movement of time-sensitive and high-value goods between the province and global markets.

Anchored by Cape Town International Airport, the region is one of South Africa's fastest-growing international air cargo gateways. Air freight volumes have increased in recent years, driven by strong demand from export sectors such as agriculture, pharmaceuticals, advanced manufacturing, electronics, jewellery, and premium perishables. Expanding international passenger connectivity has further strengthened cargo capacity through increased belly-hold availability on long-haul routes.

The rapid expansion of e-commerce and express logistics is further strengthening demand for air freight. Both cross-border and domestic e-commerce are accelerating the movement of high-value, lightweight, and time-critical goods by air.

Cape Town's global connectivity, reliable airport operations, and proximity to export-oriented producers position the region as a natural hub for e-commerce fulfilment and distribution, supporting both inbound consumer goods and outbound exports.

As global supply chains increasingly prioritise speed, reliability, and resilience, air cargo is becoming a central pillar of the Western Cape's trade and logistics system. With strong growth fundamentals, expanding connectivity, and opportunities across infrastructure, services, and operations, the region is well positioned to strengthen its role as a leading air cargo gateway for sub-Saharan Africa.



Cape Town International Airport



WHY CAPE TOWN & THE WESTERN CAPE

1. Strategically Located Gateway

Cape Town International Airport, located approximately 20 kilometres from the city centre, is South Africa's second-busiest airport and a critical gateway for passenger and cargo traffic, with well-developed infrastructure supporting efficient air freight operations.

2. Strong Global Air Connectivity

Direct routes to Europe, the Middle East, North America, and Africa provide consistent belly-hold cargo capacity, ensuring reliable global market access and competitive uplift options.

3. Expanding Air Cargo Capacity

The region offers cost-competitive facilities suited to high-value, time-sensitive, and e-commerce shipments, with significant opportunities for future expansion of cargo infrastructure and value-added logistics services.

4. One of South Africa's Fastest-Growing Air Cargo Gateways

The Western Cape has recorded sustained double-digit growth in international air cargo volumes, reflecting strong demand and the region's growing importance within continental trade networks.

5. Integrated Multimodal Logistics Ecosystem

Efficient road networks, proximity to port infrastructure, and growing intermodal developments support seamless cargo movement across air, sea, and land, enhancing the competitiveness of air freight operations.

6. Operational Reliability and Climate Advantage

Stable weather conditions and strong airport performance contribute to high schedule reliability and predictable cargo handling, reducing disruption risk for time-critical supply chains.

7. High-Value Export Profile

Key exports include jewellery, pharmaceuticals, electronics, biotechnology inputs, and premium perishables, supporting strong yield potential and sustainable air cargo growth.

8. Strong Public-Private Collaboration

Coordinated partnerships involving provincial authorities, industry stakeholders, and airline partners support route development, cargo growth, and ongoing logistics engagement.

9. Global Tourism and Investment Destination

Strong visitor flows support international route growth, strengthening cargo capacity and global connectivity.

10. A Broader Logistics Opportunity

For more in-depth insights into the Western Cape logistics ecosystem, scan the QR code.



Air Cargo Companies Shaping Cape Town and the Western Cape



Contact us for more information

For further information on setting up or expanding your business in Cape Town & the Western Cape please contact Wesgro's Investment Team

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