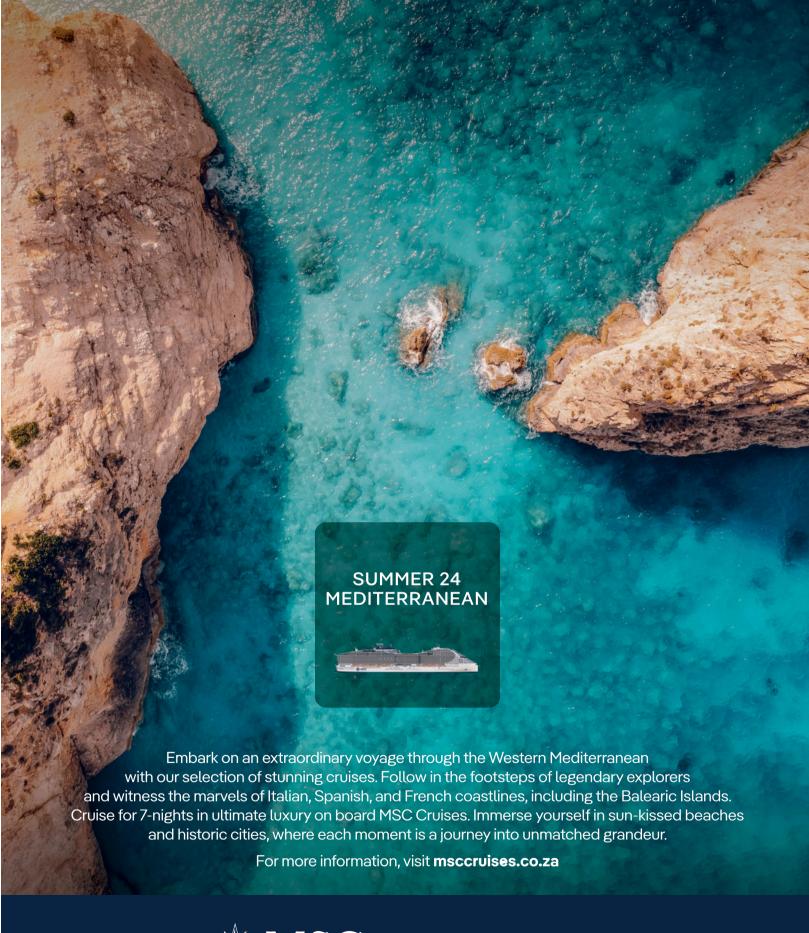


# DIRECTORY 2024/25





CAMERA DI COMMERCIO E INDUSTRIA ITALO-SUDAFRICANA





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# SG'S

# **OVERVIEW**

The Italian South African Chamber of Trade and Industry (ItalCham) continues to evolve and thrive, reinforcing its commitment to promoting bilateral trade and investment between Italy and South Africa. This year has been particularly notable with several significant developments and achievements.

We are honored to welcome the new Ambassador of Italy to South Africa, His Excellency Alberto Vecchi. We look forward to a fruitful collaboration with Ambassador Vecchi, especially through joint projects at the Embassy's spacious new premises in Pretoria. These initiatives promise to strengthen our "Sistema Italia", enhancing collaboration at local level between the various institutions (governmental institutions and business associations) representing Italian interests, business and culture in South Africa).

One of our standout successes in the last two years has been the ItalChannel initiative. This brand promotion and market penetration effort, powered by AI-enabled digital marketing strategies, has greatly benefited our members and Italian businesses and brands. ItalChannel has proven to be an efficient and cost-effective solution for creating demand and visibility for Italian companies in the South African market, and we will continue to drive this initiative which makes bilateral business more efficient and successful.



PAMINA BOHRER

Our ongoing visa advocacy remains a critical aspect of our work, ensuring smoother and more efficient processes for businesses and individuals traveling between our countries. We have also embarked on several new projects based in Cape Town, together with the Consulate of Italy in Cape Town and local Italian–South African community organizations, further solidifying our presence across South Africa and demonstrating our commitment to regional development.

The expansion of the SMILE network has been another significant milestone. This free network supports local Italian South African entrepreneurs and job seekers, providing them with valuable resources and opportunities to connect and grow. The SMILE network exemplifies our dedication to fostering a supportive and thriving business community.

This year, we had significant changes within our Board, with four directors stepping down due to their mandates ending. We extend our heartfelt thanks to them for their invaluable contributions and dedication. The Board continues to work with excellent synergy, focusing on assisting Italian companies looking to explore business opportunities in South Africa and vice versa, including reviving relationships with Italian exhibitions disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

As we move forward, my focus will be on the consistent implementation of our strategic plan, always with a keen eye on cost management to ensure the financial sustainability of the Chamber. We are confident that the strategic initiatives and collaborations underway will bring us closer to our goals and enhance the value we provide to our members and stakeholders.

We acknowledge that 2024 and 2025 will be challenging years. With the recent South African elections in May 2024, we are prepared to navigate a changed political environment. However, with the hard work and strategic direction in place, ItalCham is well-prepared to face these challenges and continue fostering robust economic ties between Italy and South Africa.

Pamina Bohrer Secretary General Italcham





# Anytime, Anywhere, Any Mission

Engineered and designed in Italy, TVECO combines technology and style to bring you a full range of powerful versatile vehicles to meet your business's transport needs. Each vehicle is meticulously crafted to deliver outstanding results even in tough African conditions. IVECO believes in the local industry and is cementing our commitment to this growing market through the innovation, sustainability, and durability of our wide range of versatile cost-effective light, medium, and heavy-duty vehicles – all to help boost your productivity and profit ability. Contact your nearest dealer for a quote, call our National Sales Line on 011 243 6065, or visit www.iveco.co.za to find out how to make IVECO a part of your local fleet.

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Dear Members,

As I am embarking on the last year of mandate as Chairman of the Chamber, I wish to reflect on where do we currently stand as an organisation. In a nutshell, trying to answer a key question: how are we performing?

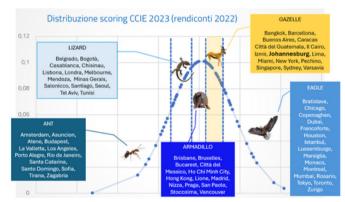
The most effective way to assess performance of an organisation is to compare it against similar organisations. In our case, thanks to Assocamerestero, we have the opportunity to compare ourselves against all the other 85 Italian Chambers which are part of the global network spread across 64 nations in all five continents. In particular, Assocamerestero has recently implemented a revised *Score Camerale*, a scorecard which is based on 16 Key Performance Indicators across four performance areas: financial sustainability, operational efficiency, governance and structure, and contribution to the Assocamerestero network.

Besides being used as a coefficient to determine the allocation of funding from the Italian government, the results of the *Score Camerale* for the year 2022 have also allowed Assocamerestero to introduce a new concept of "clusters" based on performance, basically the identification of five categories of Chambers which are defined as follows:

- Ant: moving slowly but very industrious and always looking for new opportunities
- Lizard: moving faster, some times they hurt themselves but then they auto recover
- Armadillo: very robust and moving at constant speed but able to accelerate
- Gazelle: moving fast and forward with big leaps
- Eagle: moving very fast, flying high and looking far away in the future



VIRGILIO DA MOLO



As can be seen in the figure to the right, our ItalCham has been classified as a Gazelle, the second-best performance tier, and is therefore in the same cluster with Chambers from much more developed and dynamic economic areas such as Barcelona, New York, Beijing and Singapore. This is a big achievement and something to be proud of, and I believe is a well-deserved reward for the excellent work that the staff of the Chamber has been doing consistently over the years.

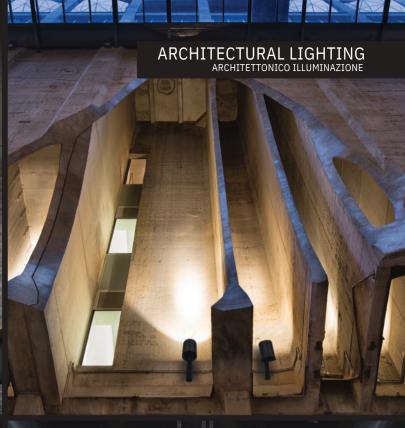
In closing, as usual, a special vote of thanks goes to all our members, our lifeblood and reason for existence. May 2024 be a productive and prosperous year for all of you.

Virgilio Da Molo President ItalCham

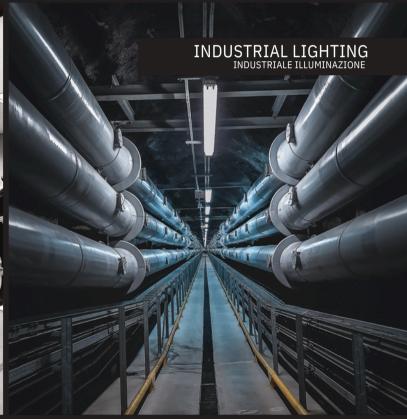














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# AMBASSADOR'S ADDRESS

Dear Entrepreneurs,

I am particularly honoured to address you during my first year as Ambassador of Italy in South Africa. I arrived in December in this beautiful country, almost 20 years after my previous posting as Consul in Cape Town.

South Africa is Italy's most strategic partner in Sub-Saharan Africa and a commercial and cultural doorway to the continent.

Despite persistent challenges at the international and national level, the bilateral trade between Italy and South Africa maintains a substantially stable trend.

According to ISTAT, Italian exports to South Africa in 2023 amounted to  $\[ \epsilon \]$  2.2 billion (around R 43 billion), almost at the same level as the record previous year, consolidating our position as South Africa's 9th supplier in the world. Imports from South Africa reached  $\[ \epsilon \]$  2.3 billion (R 45 billion), bringing the total exchange to  $\[ \epsilon \]$  4.5 billion (R 89 billion). These data confirm the significant resilience of Italian products in the South African reality, starting with the industrial machinery sector, the first category of our export.



H.E. ALBERTO VECCHI

In the past year, the Italian South-African Chamber of Trade and Industries has confirmed its key role in the promotion of Italian companies and brands in the region. Many were the initiatives realized, among which, we recently honoured the Italian South African business community with the significant 25th edition of the Business Excellence Awards. The community meets regularly at the trademark events, "Aperilinks", for the first time also launched in Port Elisabeth, and the established collaboration between the Chamber and the Italian diplomatic network for the "Week of the Italian Cuisine" made possible, once again, to celebrate the Italian food and wine and highlight the benefits of the Mediterranean diet. Last but not least was the joint work with The European House Ambrosetti for the realization of the milestone 10th "Southern Africa – Europe CEO Dialogue" last November, with leading Italian and South African businesses and relevant political talks that set the tone for the most recent actuality.

I am glad to underline that the Italian-South African Chamber of Trade and Industries has operated once again with great effort and consideration in carrying out its mandate, using innovative and forward looking methods, continuing to provide the Italian and South African entrepreneurs with essential support. The Chamber – in close contact with the shareholders of "Sistema Italia": the Embassy, the Consulates in Johannesburg and Cape Town and the Italian Trade Agency – remains your point of reference for access to knowledge, assistance, brand promotion and networking.

Pretoria, 26th July 2024

Honorary Chairperson Alberto Vecchi Ambassador of Italy to South Africa







#### Overview

The EU Chamber in South Africa plays a pivotal role as the unified voice for European bilateral chambers operating within the country. Our core mission is centered on advocating for an optimal business and investment climate that supports EU-based companies. By bringing together and coordinating bilateral chambers, we strive to develop cohesive strategies that not only benefit our members but also contribute significantly to the broader economic landscape of South Africa. Through advocacy, networking, and strategic partnerships, we aim to create opportunities for growth and sustainability in the region's business community.

At the heart of our strength lies a robust and diverse membership base, encompassing a majority of EU bilateral chambers active in South Africa. Recent expansion efforts have welcomed Business Netherlands into our ranks in August 2022, marking a significant step towards enriching our representation and enhancing collaborative endeavors. Continued partnerships with chambers from Austria, France, Germany, and others ensure comprehensive participation across various industries and geographical regions, fostering a dynamic exchange of ideas, resources, and expertise.

### **Achievements and Initiatives**

The past year has seen the EU Chamber achieve notable milestones despite facing operational challenges. Key highlights include the successful expansion of our membership base, strategically designed to amplify our collective impact and outreach. Events such as the EU Chambers' Golf Day have emerged as pivotal platforms for fostering meaningful connections and facilitating business networking opportunities among our members. Additionally, proactive engagements with the Department of Home Affairs have addressed critical visa challenges, ensuring smoother operations for EU-based businesses operating in South Africa.

Our flagship event, the EU Chamber Trade & Investment Business Breakfast held in Cape Town, stood out as a cornerstone event, attracting key stakeholders including Premier Alan Wiinde. This gathering not only facilitated insightful discussions on investment prospects but also laid the groundwork for strategic partnerships aimed at enhancing economic cooperation.

Looking forward, the EU Chamber remains steadfast in its commitment to delivering tangible benefits to our members. Planned initiatives include focused sessions on navigating EU global funds to unlock financing opportunities for our stakeholders. Furthermore, strategic workshops tailored for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMMEs) will empower local businesses with essential tools for sustainable growth and market resilience. The upcoming European Chambers' Golf Day events in Johannesburg and Cape Town are poised to continue our tradition of blending professional networking with leisure, fostering a conducive environment for forging enduring business relationships.

Operated by a dedicated board of volunteers and supported by a diligent part-time Chamber manager, the EU Chamber maintains a resilient organizational structure. However, the conclusion of the EU-SA Partners for Growth project has presented challenges, particularly in sustaining comprehensive research initiatives and advocacy campaigns. Financial sustainability remains a critical area of focus, as our operational capabilities often surpass the financial support provided by bilateral chambers, necessitating prudent resource allocation and strategic planning to maximize impact.

In summary, the EU Chamber in South Africa stands as a cornerstone of support and advocacy for EU businesses, navigating challenges while championing for favorable conditions and fostering robust relationships within the local business community. We extend our sincere appreciation to the EU Ambassador, the EU Delegation team, our dedicated board members, and all stakeholders who continue to demonstrate unwavering support and commitment to our shared goals. Together, we look forward to advancing our mission of driving sustainable economic growth and prosperity in South Africa.



Rui Marto Chairman EU Chamber of Commerce



# Membership Options

# Champion Package

500+ Employees

- All Benefits of the Patron Membership
- Two seats at our annual Business Excellence Award

# Patron Package

101 - 500 Employees

- All Benefits of the Funder Membership
- Permanent Inclusion of Logo in selected Publications
- Your Logo on Our Website
- Consulting Session to Identify Your Business Requirements
- Increased Discounts on Chamber Services
- Access to Interns from Italy's Top Universities

# Funder Package

**21 - 100 Employees** 

- All Benefits of the SME Membership
- Presentation of your Company at Events
- Publication of Advertisements, Press Releases
- Increased Discounts on Chamber Services

# **SME Package**

1 - 20 Employees

- Contact in Directory
- Copy of Annual Directory
- Company Logo and Description Publication
- Introduction to Other Members
- Preferential Rates on All Services Offered by the Chamber
- Tracking of Relevant Business News on All Major Channels
- Information Regarding Sector Related Exhibitions in ITA & SA
- Engagements with South African & Italian Institutions
- Engagements with Chamber and Other Industry Institutions
- Access to Classified Information







# Market Research & Feasibility Study

Import/export statistics, information on customs duties, competitor analysis, comprehensive evaluation of your company's suitability to the market.



# **Contact List**

With the support of specialised databases, we identify importers, distributors, suppliers and possible partners for Italian and South African businesses.



# Scouting & B2B

We scout for your next potential customers, investors, joint venture partners, licensees or technology transfer agents.



# **Event Management**

The Chamber provides bespoke event management services to its stakeholders by organizing dozens of events per year.



# **Advertising & Promotion**

Market entry into South Africa requires marketing!
Through both our extensive database and our ItalChannel
joint venture, we ensure enhanced visibility among your ideal
target businesses and customers.







CAMERA DI COMMERCIO E INDUSTRIA ITALO-SUDAFRICANA



# Farete - Bologna - September 2023

Farete, organised by Confindustria Reggio Emilia, is a multi-sector regional exhibition showcasing companies from the Reggio Emilia region. Thank you to Southtrade, Cheristone, Carbon Neutral Energy Systems, Jamsco Automotive and GM Boilers for







# Ecomondo - Rimini - November 2023

Ecomondo is the leading expo in Europe for technologies, services and industrial solutions in the green and circular economy sectors. It was incredible to host East 4 Holdings, Chemical Brothers, Marope Group, Muvigo Africa Solutions and Flex-O Pack at this cutting edge expo



# SIGEP - Rimini - January 2024

This was the 45th edition of the most important International Trade Show for Artisan Gelato, Pastry, Bakery. Italcham hosted representatives for: Doppio Zero, Pizza e Vino, Ciccio Restaurant, Settebello, Cheristone Products







# KEY - Rimini - March 2024

K.EY - The Energy Transition Expo showcased the incredible developments in renewable technology. There to view these technologies and assess their potential for bringing them to the South African market were Bundu Power, The Solar Cafe, Muvigo Africa Solutions and Totai



# EXHIBITIONS 2024/2025 SOUTH AFRICA

# SEPTEMBER 2024











## OCTOBER 2024









## **NOVEMBER 2024**



# JANUARY - APRIL 2025













# MAY - NOVEMBER 2025

















The Chamber offers an opportunity to collaborate with the organizers of expos in Italy and South Africa. If you are interested in participating in any of the above or other expos as an exhibitor or buyer, contact us at italy@italcham.co.za or desk@italcham.co.za





# EXHIBITIONS 2024/2025 ITALY

## SEPTEMBER 2024













# OCTOBER 2024













## NOVEMBER 2024









# JANUARY - APRIL 2025























## MAY - NOVEMBER

















# IMBOKODO TRUST



## ItalCham's Contribution to Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment

The Italian-South African Chamber of Trade and Industries has founded the Imbokodo Trust, a Broad-Based Ownership Scheme that assists companies to actively participate in

South Africa's transformation agenda.

The purpose of this Trust is to promote and fund activities that benefit South African Black People, specifically women under the age of 35. The Trust aims to support Training and Skills Development, as well as provide Educational Bursaries. Companies may contribute to the Trust to further the objectives of education and learning in South Africa.



The Trust can acquire shareholding in a member entity and use the proceeds from dividends for the benefit of its beneficiaries. Though this shareholding, the measured entity increases its ownership score.

The Trust has signed an MOU with SEIFSA, the Steel and Engineering Industries Federation of South Africa, in order to allocate funding to motivated female candidates at SEIFSA's Benoni based Skills Centre.



# Benefits to the members when engaging with the Trust

The phrase wathint' abafazi, wathint' imbokodo has come to represent women's courage and strength in South Africa. Imbokodo means rock, and the phrase means "if you strike a woman, you strike a rock".



## **Ownership Element**

The structure of the Trust is such that, providing it holds the minimum shareholding percentage, it will facilitate access to all 25 ownership points in the scorecard.

## Benefits to participating companies

Participating in the Trust offers several benefits to companies. Firstly, the Trust's structure, given it holds the minimum shareholding percentage, ensures access to all 25 ownership points on the scorecard. This Ownership structure allows companies to achieve a level 4 rating or above without facing the contribution penalties associated with the absence of an ownership transaction. This is particularly beneficial for industries with specific licensing criteria.

Furthermore, companies can contribute positively to the socio-economic environment, enhancing the longevity of their business. The Trust reduces the cost and administrative burden of management for members, as broad participation can create economies of scale, further decreasing management expenses. Additionally, the Trust simplifies the process of identifying, screening, and performing due diligence on suitable partners for shareholding, thus providing strategic advantages in terms of B-BBEE compliance and operational control.



Should you require further information, please email sg@italcham.co.za





The Business Excellence Awards 2024, an esteemed annual event organised by ItalCham, took place on the 16th of May at the @Sandton Hotel in Johannesburg.

One of the highlights of the evening was the standing ovation given to Mirella K. Corsetti in Kaliazin, recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award. This award was testament to her remarkable journey and her perseverance in the face of adversity, highlighted by Cavaliere Maurizio Mariano's poignant presentation, encapsulating the essence of her life's work. Mirella's story inspired all present, especially women, with her message of empowerment.

Among the evening's other highlights was the recognition of top-performing small to medium enterprises with the **SMILE SME of the Year** Award, rightfully bestowed upon **Slingshot Consulting** for their exceptional growth and strategic vision as specialised project managers. Their success story, marked by significant revenue growth and expansion into global markets, exemplified the spirit of innovation and resilience.

Logistics company **Savino Del Bene South Africa**, recipient of the **Enterprise of the Year** award, stood out for its significant contributions to economic advancement and trade, showcasing operational excellence and strategic foresight in the freight forwarding industry.

The acknowledgment of **Matteo Brambilla**, CEO of **Red Rocket**, as **Business Person of the Year** underscored his visionary leadership in the renewable energy sector, with groundbreaking projects redefining industry standards and pushing the boundaries of innovation.

As the evening concluded, attention shifted to philanthropy, with the Little Eden Society receiving generous support from the community, facilitated by key contributor MSC.

The over R160.000 raised throughout the evening reflected the collective commitment to supporting those in need.







# ITALCHAM BUSINESS

**EXCELLENCE AWARDS** 



















HONOR





**ITALTILE** 

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POWER IS NOTHING WITHOUT CONTROL

# SOUTH AFRICA - ITALY OVERVIEW

## Reasons for Cautious Optimism in both South Africa and Italy

While there has been hope that South Africa's 2024 election results, and the resulting political cooperation, may improve the growth prospects of the country, it is also worth noting that for the last ten years the country has endured a period of serious economic stagnation. Despite being hailed as a new dawn, skepticism remains about the Government of National Unity's (GNU's) ability to deliver substantive change amidst entrenched governance challenges.

The declined African National Congress (ANC) still remains by far the country's biggest party. This and its historical experience in negotiation and coalition-building maintains its position as a central player in shaping South Africa's political and economic future. As the ANC adapts to new coalition dynamics and societal demands, its ability to navigate complexities and deliver on promises, to both its constituents and governing partners, will determine its ongoing influence and leadership in the country.

One fact that deserves acknowledgement is that the ANC has a long history of coalition-building similar to its recent establishment of a GNU. Originating as a liberation movement, the ANC has evolved into a dominant political force in South Africa, which has reproduced its power while navigating diverse economic interests and ideological factions within its ranks.

In a 1990 interview, Nelson Mandela characterized the ANC as more of a coalition than a political party, underlining its internal diversity, encompassing liberal, socialist, and free-market orientations. That being said, the formation of the GNU represents a significant departure in South African politics, mandating governance across racial lines and potentially transforming participating parties.

Economically, the ANC's governance has oscillated between developmental state policies and free-market approaches, accommodating varied interests such as corporate South Africa and socio-economic groups. There is yet to be a clear reason to believe that both policies and implementation will not again be dragged in differing directions by various interest groups. However much remains to be seen. A stable political environment and coherent policy direction could strengthen the Rand, while also attracting foreign investment and promoting economic growth and imports. Conversely, political uncertainties or policy inconsistencies within the coalition may lead to currency volatility and economic instability which will hamper its growth as a small and open economy.

Meanwhile under the right-wing coalition led by Giorgia Meloni's Fratelli D'Italia, the Italian government has faced a series of economic challenges while also achieving significant outcomes, shaping the national economic landscape in notable ways. From a GDP perspective, Italy recorded a value of \$2,05-trillion in 2022. During the initial period of Meloni's administration, up to the first eighteen months of 2024, GDP grew by almost 1%. This growth is complemented by a significant reduction in the unemployment rate by 3.8% and an increase in the employment rate by 2%, indicating a more dynamic and resilient labor market.

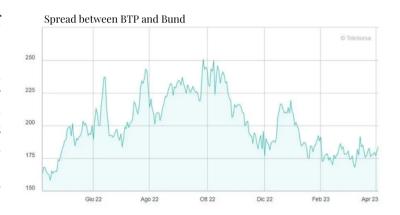


# SOUTH AFRICA - ITALY OVERVIEW

However, the economic evaluation of Prime Minister Meloni also highlights an increase in total indebtedness from 2.766 to 2.87 trillion euros within her first year and a half in office, representing a growth of 106 billion euros. This increase is likely motivated by strategic investments within the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP), aiming to promote economic growth and innovation in key sectors.

Significant improvements in the Italian economic outlook are reflected in greater stability in financial markets. One key indicator of this stability is the bond yield spread which refers to the yield difference between Italian government bonds (BTPs) and German government bonds (Bunds). An increase in this indicator represents a higher perception of risk associated with Italian government bonds compared to German bonds which are generally considered safer.

For example, if Italian bonds offer a yield of 2.5% and German bonds offer a yield of 2%, the spread would be 0.5% (or 50 basis points). In the last year and a half, the bond yield spread has significantly decreased from 237 basis points in October 2022 to 135 basis points in 2024, it means Italian government bonds have a yield that is 1.35% higher than German government bonds. This difference reflects market sentiment and risk perception towards the respective countries.



# Relations Between Italy & South Africa

### South Africa Imports from Italy: Trends and Economic Impact

Over the past twenty years, imports into South Africa have seen significant growth. This increase in imports is evident when considering imports from Italy, where the annual increase in US dollars was 3.49%. However, when expressed in South African Rand, the increase was more pronounced at 8.84% annually. This difference highlights the importance of exchange rates in international trade dynamics, directly affecting the value of imports. Despite the depreciation of the Rand making trade more challenging, the substantial growth in imports from Italy highlights the importance South Africa places on its trade relationship with Italy.

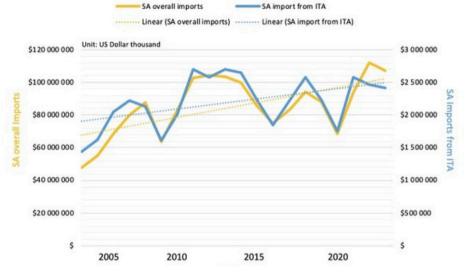


# SOUTH AFRICA - ITALY OVERVIEW

In 2023, total imports into South Africa amounted to \$107-billion. Among these, imports from Italy reached \$2,4-billion, representing 2.25% of the country's total imports.

In conclusion, the dynamics of South Africa's imports reflect a complex array of economic and geopolitical variables, influenced by internal economic growth and international trade agreements. These factors continue to shape the country's commercial landscape, defining its economic interactions with Italy and the rest of the world.

# SA imports from ITA and SA overall imports by Year



# Relations Between Italy & South Africa

## **Italian Imports from South Africa**

Italian imports from South Africa have seen notable shifts over the past two decades, reflecting global economic changes and specific dynamics within the South African market. The analysis conducted reveals a downward trend of South African exports to Italy, despite an increasing trend of global South African exports. Having reached a peak in the mid-2000s, there has been a significant decrease in Italian imports of precious materials such as diamonds and gold, as well as fossil fuels and steel from South Africa. This decline began around 2008, coinciding with the global financial crisis and subsequent currency fluctuations.

The steady depreciation of the South African Rand is one major cause behind the dollar value of South Africa's exports to Italy failing to grow. When measured in South African Rands, South Africa's exports to Italy show an increasing trend, but one which is nevertheless outstripped by other trading partners, posing the question as to why Italy has not kept abreast in the demand for South African goods.

One significant contribution to this downturn is in Italian imports of steel, dropping from \$614 -million in 2008 to \$206-million by 2023. This decline mirrors ongoing challenges in South Africa's monopolistic steel industry, which has struggled to recover from various setbacks, and in the process moving from being the thirteenth largest exporter of steel to Italy in 2008 to the twenty-sixth in 2023.



# SOUTH AFRICA - ITAM OVERVIEW

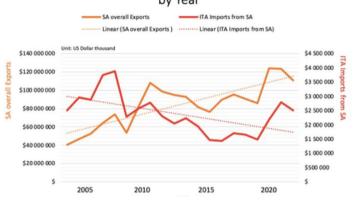
Despite a slight recovery in Italian imports post-2020, driven by geopolitical shifts like the Russo-Ukrainian conflict prompting diversification away from Russian energy sources, overall import volumes have not rebounded to previous highs. This is reflected by the spike in Italian imports from South Africa in 2022 and 2023 whose increase is almost entirely constituted of coal.

These data underscore the crucial role that Italy plays in the landscape of South African imports, despite the long distance between these two countries. Among the main goods imported by South Africa are machinery and mechanical appliances, mineral fuels, electrical machinery and vehicles. These sectors indicate a variety of industrial and technological interests, reflecting the diversification of the country's economic needs.

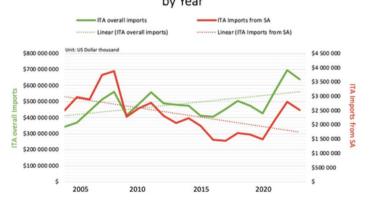
The growth in imports in South Africa can be attributed to the country's gradual economic expansion and increased integration into global markets through strategic trade agreements. combined factors have contributed to a bourgeoning services sector, which in turn facilitates South Africa's access to a wider range of products and technologies necessary to support its industrial and infrastructural development.

above-mentioned The raw material product groups make up approximately 80% of Italy's imports from South Africa. Excluding these raw materials like precious materials (including gold, platinum and diamonds), coal, and iron and steel Italian imports from South Africa have shown relative stability over the past two decades, albeit without growth or diversification. These facts point to weaknesses relating to South Africa's manufacturing capacity, but also opportunities, given the fact that Italy is not taking advantage of South Africa's competitive advantages in the same way that other countries are (see below graph), including other members of the EU.

# ITA imports from SA and SA overall exports by Year



# ITA imports from SA and ITA overall imports by Year







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### Findings from our Presenza Italiana Database... and how SMILE made it possible

In a stakeholder's round table held in June 2024, the Chamber of Commerce used the opportunity to present findings from its Presenzaltaliana database for the first time. This database, which is by far the most substantial existing collection of Italian-South African business information, reveals a robust commercial presence of Italian entities in South Africa which encompasses diverse sectors and operational models.

With over 900 unique companies categorized by business size, location, and type of link to Italy, it provides new and detailed insights into Italian-South African business, as shown in the below graphs. This resource presents the opportunity for strategic decision-making and targeted time- and monetary-investments.

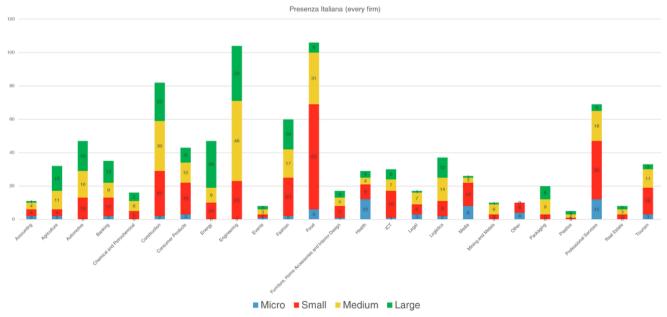
The establishment of this comprehensive database marks significant progress in understanding the Italian-South African business landscape, providing a foundation for more focused conversations on business opportunities. It also provides others with interests in characterising their own business communities with a roadmap.

The database's development was made possible by SMILE (The Small to Medium Italian League of Enterprises). SMILE is a community initiative proposed by COM.IT.ES for collecting critical data on Italian companies in SA and has, amongst other things, thus enabled more focused discussions on specific business opportunities. That being said, it was acknowledged that the data is by no means complete as databases change in real time with the opening and closing of businesses.

SMILE, as a free platform for professionals with Italian-South African business interests, is also a tool for networking and information dissemination. By allowing any Italian or South African with professional business interests between the two countries to sign up and gain benefits related to networking and events, SMILE has enabled new synergies that would not have existed without the initiative.

The data, mapped out in the graphs below, has been carefully categorised to account for the varying kinds of Italian presence that might exist. Consistent with SMILE's data gathering, five types of Italian presence were included in the dataset:

- · Italian Businesses with Offices in South Africa
- · Italian Passport Holders with Businesses in South Africa
- Importers of Italian Products
- Companies with Italian Executives
- South African Businesses with Interests in Italy

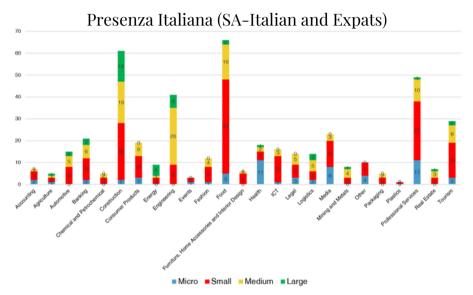




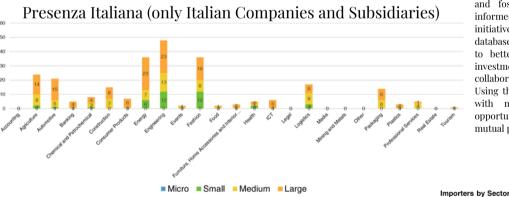




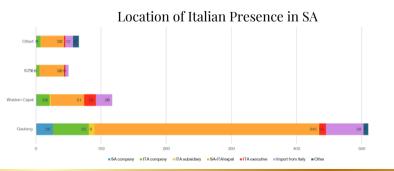
As is visible in the below graph, the local South African-Italian business community is disseminated across the business landscape, operating in many sectors with a varying range of company sizes. Meanwhile in the subsequent graph, which features only Italian companies with offices in Italy, a predominance of large companies is found, with an emphasis on sectors such as energy, engineering and fashion.



As can be seen when comparing the two graphs on the left, certain sectors (such as food and construction) are conducive to players with established local presence, while others are more friendly to direct foreign operators. This is further elaborated on in the below chart which treats companies importing from Italy as their own unique category. Again, food dominates this class of Italian presence, with furniture, fashion and consumer products showing strength too.



The PresenzaItaliana database is a powerful tool that transforms our understanding of Italian businesses in South Africa. It allows us to have focused, data-driven discussions and strategically leverage opportunities within various sectors. The database's development marks a significant step forward in supporting the Italian business community and fostering economic growth through informed decision-making and targeted initiatives. The launch of the PresenzaItaliana database enables the Chamber of Commerce to better support its members, facilitate investments, and promote economic collaboration between the two countries. Using this tool we can approach the future with more clarity, when looking for opportunities of growth, innovation, and mutual prosperity.









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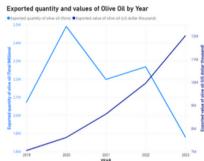


### **Our Favourite Liquid Gold**

Olive oil consumers are becoming clearer as to why the Greek poet Homer referred to it as "liquid gold," now retailing at up to R300 a litre. Under current conditions, only an excellent harvest will stabilize the price, by permitting a greater availability of the commodity. Vittoria Castagnetta, director at Morgenster, a Chamber member and a leading South African company in olive oil and wine production, states that the availability and pricing of extra virgin olive oil worldwide will be influenced by the upcoming European harvest.

According to The Guardian, Spanish consumers who a few years ago were spending less than 5€ (R100) on a litre of high-quality extra virgin olive oil are now spending up to 14€ a bottle. In European shops, olive oil has been reported as the most frequently stolen item. Because of this, there's a greater effort to keep it secure, even using specialized anti-theft containers to make it harder for thieves to steal. A British newspaper has stated that there is an increasing number of criminal gangs focused on stealing the liquid gold, especially in Mediterranean Europe, in order to resell it at higher prices abroad. In December 2023, members of an international gang were arrested, primarily targeting profits from reselling high-quality Italian and Spanish olive oil. Eleven criminals were captured, and approximately 5000 liters of olive oil worth R1,500,000 were confiscated.

Those who have been able to produce olive oil have not necessarily had many complaints. As illustrated by the graph on the right, while the quantity exported has been decreasing over the last five year, the value of olive oil exports increased dramatically. This trend is primarily driven by higher prices resulting from increased demand and reduced supply, largely due to poor harvests and adverse environmental changes.



Price rises are an inevitable consequence of decreasing supply when it comes to a commodity as much in demand as olive oil. Dramatic price increases such as that undergone by olive oil as a commodity causes a chain reaction throughout the oil sector and also affecting those goods that use it. In the face of this, farmers and exporters struggle to meet global demand, even leading to a tendency to lower quality and the spread of counterfeit goods in the market. This problem has arisen mainly due to environmental changes, which has therefore led to a decrease in the quantities of olive oil produced.

These climatic changes, such as temperature anomalies that are difficult to predict, have made the cultivation of olive trees (which take 25 years to mature), using traditional methods, much more difficult. This inconvenience that has occurred in recent years could worsen still, causing a considerable impact on the agricultural sector in the future.

Castagnetta also points out that while climate change certainly plays a significant role, there is also an increase in demand for extra virgin olive oil due to health and lifestyle trends. As evidence of this, during the 10 years before the recent price shock, global olive oil exports rose steadily with little effect on the price. This price buoyancy suggests a demand that kept up with increasing supply.

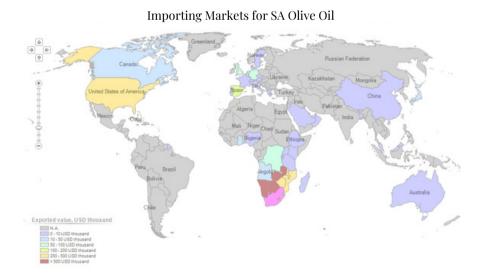


### **South Africa's Current Situation**

The fluctuating prices of olive oil and its derivatives on our local shelves can be attributed to all of these reasons. In 2023, data show that Spain (68.7%), Italy (25.9%), Greece (1.9%), and Portugal (3.1%) were the top exporters of olive oil into South Africa. Major export markets for South Africa's olive oil include during that time were, among others, Namibia (21.3%), Zambia (12.3%), Botswana (17.1%), eSwatini (6.8%), USA (6.7%), Mozambique (5.1%), and Zimbabwe (6.1%), therefore, primarily in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Due to its net importation of olive oil, South Africans are exposed to global price increases. However, Castagnetta highlighted the favourable conditions for South African exports in the coming years, where South Africa can plug the gap of other climate-hit suppliers. However, she also noted a substantial increase in local demand that must be met, particularly due to reduced imports of extra virgin olive oil. A Mediterranean climate is mostly used to grow olives. Due to its Mediterranean-style environment, South Africa's Western Cape region is the primary location for the production of olives required to make olive oil. As a result, it produces 95% of the olive oil produced in the country.

Production remains small-scale. Nearly half of the 200 registered olive growers in the SA Olive Association operate on farms that are smaller than 5 hectares, reflecting the country's continued reliance on small-scale olive farming. Nonetheless, despite the tiny size of their farms, South African olive oil producers have excelled in international competitions, winning top honors in categories that are often dominated by olive oils from Spain and Italy. For this reason, Castagnetta believes that in terms of quantity, South Africa remains a relatively minor producer. However, in terms of quality, South African extra virgin olive oils are already competing with some of the finest in the world.







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			65
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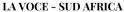
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