

# The South African Market: A Local Perspective

Live from the Market Webinar

27 May 2025





# A multi-ethnic & multi-cultural society



© Johnny Miller/Millefoto/REX/Shutterstock



- 12 official languages (35+ in total)
- English: primary language used in parliament and business
- Various ethnic groups

# South Africa at a glance

Land Area (km<sup>2</sup>)

GDP (current US\$ bn) (2023)

GDP Growth (annual) (2023)

GDP Growth Forecast 2025

GDP per capita (US\$) (2023)

Inflation, average consumer prices (%age change) (2021)

Imports of goods and services (current US\$ mn) (2023)

Exports of goods and services (current US\$ mn) (2023)

Population (mn) (2023)

Urban Population (% of total) (2023)

South Africa

1.2 mn km<sup>2</sup>

380.69

0,7

1,5

6,022

6,1

123,443

124,696

63,2

69

Brazil

8.5 mn km<sup>2</sup>

2,193,67

2,9

2,2

10,294

4,6

342,214

393,656

211,1

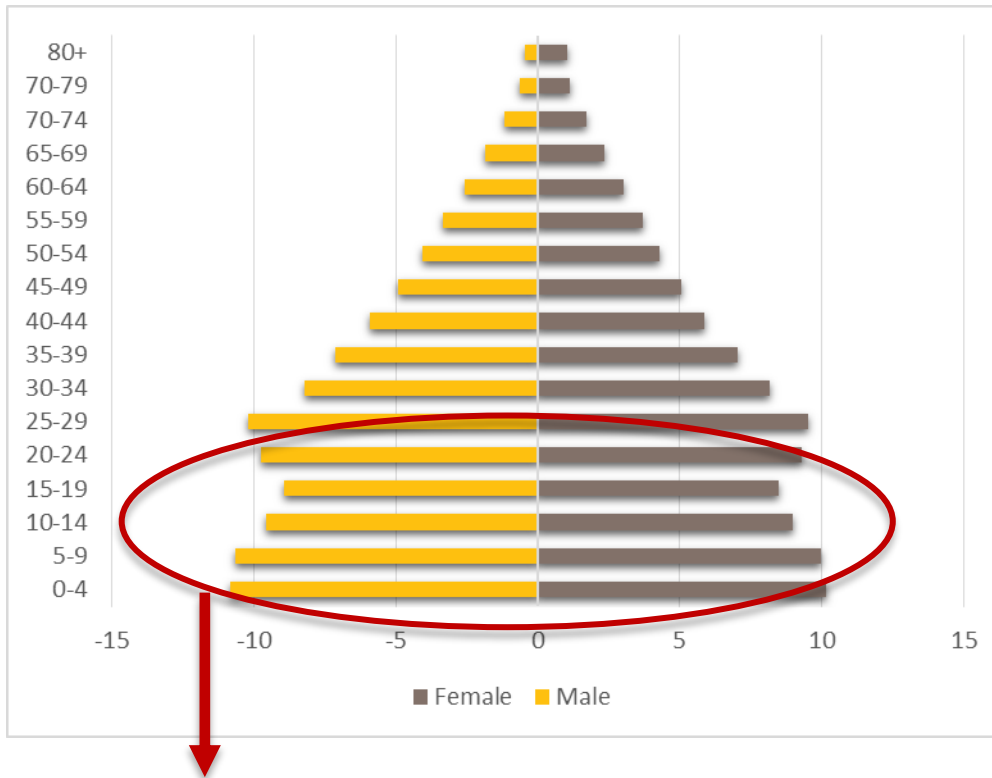
88

# A unique yet complex space

- South Africa is a complex market: some elements are very European, and some are very African
- Great disparity between rich and poor, and their buying power.
- It takes time, requires attention and patience, but the rewards will be worth it.
- Network into the regional / Southern African market.



# Understanding the demographics



## Highly unequal society

Pietermaritzburg Economic Justice & Dignity group estimates that:

- Approximately 30.4 million people live below the old upper-bound poverty line of about USD85.
- 13.8 million people live below the food poverty line of about USD40.

- 37% of the population is under 20 years old
- 58% is under 30 years old
- 45,5% unemployment rate among young individuals (aged 15-34 years), in contrast to the national average of 32,9% in the first quarter of 2024



# Common distribution channels

- Retailers, supermarkets, hypermarkets, cash & carries, wholesalers
- Specialty stores, distributors & service centres
- Independent stores and family-owned stores
- Informal markets
- E-commerce

The route to market greatly depends on the product or service offered.

No “one-size fits all” approach.



# Getting product into the market

- The major retailers are moving towards a more **direct relationship** with international suppliers, cutting out the middle man and increasing their margins.
- **Private Label** is becoming more important as retailers are trying to gain market share by setting themselves apart from their competitors.
- **Marketing support** is important to potential clients
- The **informal FMCG market** is big and growing, extremely price sensitive, and often sell by single unit serving hand-to-mouth customers. This market is largely supplied by the formal independent trade (i.e. unlisted retailers and wholesalers), some corporate chains and, to a smaller but growing degree, directly from suppliers. Formal independents made up 33% of the total South African FMCG market in 2023.
- **Commodities, inputs, ingredients and machinery** are important as South Africa is a manufacturer, producer and processor of a variety of products.
- **Market research and immersion:** South Africa has a number of industry specific **trade shows**, and it might be worth the time to visit to see the competitors and opportunities in your sector. It is important to see the market and conditions for yourself and ApexBrasil or industry specific trade missions are a good opportunity.



Request a copy of the list of trade shows from us



# Ear on the ground

Opportunities	Challenges
Our vibrant and multi-ethnic population	Brand-loyal consumers / Proudly SA
Importers looking for alternative suppliers to Chinese and others	Pricing & Exchange Rate Fluctuations
Increase in demand for Private Label products, especially for the large retail groups and stores	Unfamiliarity with Brazil as a possible supplier in some industries as South Africans tend to follow European and North American trends
Unique Brazilian products not already on our shelves to set apart from competitors	Communication: English, email vs WhatsApp. Marketing materials: catalogues, pricelists, etc. must be available in English
Exporta Mais projects and incoming missions are promoting Brazil as an alternative supplier	Labeling & packaging
Brazilian reputation in certain industries, such as agriculture, furniture, haircare, wood, etc. opens a way for additional product discussions	Certification & local regulations
Repeat visits and interaction with buyers introduced to are important to build the relationship	Marketing support & follow-through, samples & testing
South Africa's distribution network into Sub-Saharan African countries	Minimum Order Quantity (MOQ)

# ApexBrasil Desk in Johannesburg

Services & Local Support  
to Brazilian Companies

# Services

## Market Intelligence, Research & Information

- Market and Sector Briefings
- Preferred Service Providers
- Calendar of Sectoral Trade Events

## Business Matchmaking Services

- Onsite / in-country
- Online: Matchmaking on Demand

Register here:

[ApexBrasil | Matchmaking on Demand](#)

## Direct Introductions to Buyers (“Trade Enquiries”)

- Local buyers are introduced to potential Brazilian suppliers following a direct enquiry from a local buyer (ad-hoc)



# Services

Incoming Trade Missions promoting Brazilian export products or sectors:

- Onsite
- Online
- Business Matchmaking, B2B meetings & technical visits
- Database development

## 2025 Calendar

- ABIHPEC Beautycare Brazil Trade Mission: Johannesburg & Cape Town: February
- ABIMAQ Pavilion: NAMPO Agricultural Trade Show: May
- **ApexBrasil Pavilion: Africa Food Show: Cape Town, 10-12 June**
- **Think Plastic Brazil Trade Mission: Johannesburg, 17-20 June**



# Services

## Outgoing Buyers Missions to Brazil

- ApexBrasil-supported sector specific B2B events (“Exporta Mais”) - 33 Southern African buyers sent to Brazil to date
- Identify suitable buyers to participate in meetings with Brazilian participants - in Brazil

2023	2024	2025
Coffee (Specialty)	Anuga/Health Foods:	Anuga/Health Foods
Cosmetics	APAS Show	APAS Show
Natural Stone	Fashion Underwear	<b>Fresh Fruits</b>
Furniture	Leather & Tanneries	<b>Vessels &amp; Nautical</b>
APAS Show	Processed Wood	<b>Fashion</b>
	Cacao & Chocolate	<b>Agricultural M &amp; E</b>
	Building Materials	<b>Amazon Products</b>
	Fashion Resort Wear	<b>Coffee (Specialty)</b>
	Cosmetic Ingredients	



# Contact us!



Sue Bowden: [sue@africainfo.co.za](mailto:sue@africainfo.co.za)

Lindi Coetzer: [lindi@africainfo.co.za](mailto:lindi@africainfo.co.za)

- Should you be interested in any of the services offered, please send us an email outlining your request.
- We will arrange a virtual meeting to discuss your company, products/services, objectives, and how we can be of assistance.



**Obrigada!**