2.1 Madagascar Port Assessment

Surrounded by 5,000 km of coastline, Madagascar has a network of 17 ports: Toamasina, Antsiranana, Nosy Be, Mahajanga, Toliara, Antalaha, Vohémar, Morondava, Tolagnaro, Port Saint-Louis, Morombe, Manakara, Antsohihy, Maintirano, Sainte Marie, Maroantsetra and Antalaha.
Only five of them (Antsiranana, Toliara, Vohémar, Toamasina, Tolagnaro) have adequate port facilities: wharves, drafts, land, shops, handlers, allowing commercial loading and unloading of goods at the dock.

Even if the 5 previous ports have customs and allowed importation of goods, 75% of freight in Madagascar is made in Toamasina port.

For the 12 remaining ports, access is restricted to small traditional vessels providing regional service or to vessels requiring only a modest draft and limited facilities.

The national agency responsible for port maintenance is APMF (Agence Portuaire Maritime et Fluviale), which was created in 2003 by ministerial decree. APMF is a public institution placed under budget trusteeship of the Ministry of Finance and technical trusteeship of Ministry of Transport.

APMF’s mission is to coordinate the implementation of the National Policy regarding port, sea and river navigation sectors.

Key port information may also be found at: http://www.maritime-database.com

For more information on port contacts, please see the following link: HQ staff will input a link to section 4.4 Port and Waterways Companies Contact List here.

**International shipments**

Most import shipments (containerized) coming to Madagascar are transshipped via Port Louis (Mauritius) or Longoni (Mayotte). This leads to relatively long transit times and – compared to direct calls – expensive services. In case of minor volumes, ports are also skipped from the schedule; minimum requirements for a port call are around 100 full container moves.

The economic downturn of the country lowered demand and produced fewer cargo for export and therefore led to general schedule changes like with MSC who cancelled the port calls of Toliara and Tolanaro (Fort Dauphin) in 2015. MSC considers the suspension of services as temporary and is trying to identify cooperation partners to offer feeder services to Ehoala and the minor ports on the southeast coast. This includes companies such as CFS Fort Dauphin, with its new beacheur (47m long LCT, capacity twelve 20’ Containers).

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**National cabotage**
Since the liquidation of the Compagnie Malagasy de Navigation (CMN), the national cabotage is only operated by private domestic and foreign armaments. The average age of vessels operating in Madagascar is around 20 years.

The density of the Malagasy land transport network remains low, and the seaway opens up several regions even if the quality of the tools used and the services provided do not follow the minimum standards for sea transport.

**Traditional maritime transport**

Traditional maritime transport ensures the movement of passengers and goods in the enclaved areas. Transportation is by non-motorized "sailing boatry" on the West Coast, or motorized "lakana" boats on the East Coast. This type of transport plays an important role in the opening up of un-serviced areas, connected by road infrastructure, the evacuation of local production and the circulation of the population.

**Inland waterway navigation**
Madagascar has no inland waterway for inland waterway transport on a large scale. The “Canal des Pangalanes”, which was natural for most of its length of 650 km along the East Coast, was the subject of extensive renovation work in order to make it navigable to convoys of a draft of 1.40m and a maximum width of 4.5m. For lack of regular maintenance thereafter, the Canal is largely impassable today, due to obstruction of the track by freshwater hyacinths, silting at mouths and degradation of the banks.

As the only means of access to basic services for the riparian population, the Canal continues to be used for the transport of products and people by artisanal canoes and rafts to the main centers of the area.

River navigation by traditional canoeing and craft units (kanota, laka) ensures the circulation of local products and the population and tourists along the rivers of the West Coast: Tsiribihina in Miandrivazo, Sofia in Port Bergé, and Betsiboka in Marovoay.

For information on Madagascar Ports contact details, please see the following link: 4.4 Madagascar Port and Waterways Companies Contact List