# Ghana's ambitious port expansion plans aim to enhance regional logistics capabilities



Ghana is currently undertaking significant efforts to expand its port capabilities as part of a broader strategy to enhance its status as a regional logistics hub. The country is focusing on two major projects aimed at modernising its port infrastructure, with completion dates set for 2025 and beyond.

The first initiative is the Phase Two expansion of the Tema Port, which carries a projected cost of US$ 1.5 billion. This project, managed by Meridian Port Services (MPS)—a joint venture involving APM Terminals, Africa Global Logistics (AGL), and the Ghana Ports and Harbours Authority (GPHA)—will increase the terminal area by 27 hectares and bolster its annual throughput capacity from 2.5 million to 3.7 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEU). The expansion is specifically designed to cater to landlocked countries in West Africa, such as Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali, and is expected to be completed by September 2025.

In addition to the Tema Port expansion, there is also an ambitious US$ 98 million project underway for an Oil and Gas Services Terminal at Takoradi Port. Funded by GPHA, the new terminal aims to create a regional centre for oil and gas services and will include a 21-hectare area, a 550-metre quay, and a 10-metre draft.

In an interview with WorldCargo News, Stanley Ahorlu, CEO of Prime Meridian Docks and a maritime lawyer, spoke about the importance of modern infrastructure amid West Africa's shifting maritime landscape. He emphasised that strategic investments and planning are critical for improving Ghana’s logistics networks. Ahorlu drew attention to similar initiatives taking place in neighbouring countries, citing Senegal’s Ndayane Port, developed with DP World, and Nigeria’s Lekki Deep Sea Port, which opened in February 2023. Both serve as models of high-capacity terminals attracting global shipping clientele.

Ahorlu highlighted the impending role of digitalisation, automation, and decarbonisation as crucial for enhancing Ghana’s competitive edge. Ghana has already initiated Single Window Systems at Tema Port, aimed at streamlining customs processes to alleviate congestion and improve efficiency. The implementation of automation technologies is anticipated to significantly tackle urban congestion surrounding the ports, further enhancing operational efficiency.

Despite welcoming substantial investments in its ports, challenges persist. Ahorlu acknowledged that the high cost of major capital expenditure, often financed in foreign currency, can strain local budgets. To address these financial constraints, Ghana’s port authorities have partnered with multinational corporations, occasionally ceding operational control for investment. While such partnerships effectively expand logistics networks across the continent, they may also increase dependency on port-generated revenues—which currently account for over half of Ghana’s tax revenue.

Moreover, Ahorlu pointed out that many port developments proceed without corresponding improvements to the surrounding infrastructure, such as roads and railways, which can diminish the economic impact of increased port throughput and keep freight costs high.

To boost regional connectivity and operational cost efficiency, Ahorlu suggested that ports should transition from merely generating government revenue to serving as engines of economic growth. He urged the integration of port expansion strategies with comprehensive maritime plans that connect ports to production centres and establish necessary industrial or free trade zones to facilitate export activities.

Ahorlu is also an advocate for the proposed African Continental Maritime Corridor, designed to create a cohesive maritime transport market across the continent, enhancing coastal shipping and intra-African trade. He asserted that regulatory alignment and the development of a sustainable network of maritime routes are vital for the corridor's success. This would entail developing protocols that standardise practices and provide a supportive regulatory framework to attract private investments.

As Ghana competes against neighbouring ports in Senegal, Ivory Coast, Togo, and Nigeria for dominance in serving landlocked regions, Ahorlu expressed concern over the rivalry that prioritises national interests over practical economic efficiencies. He proposed a more collaborative approach to optimally utilise resources and foster regional integration, benefiting the broader West African corridor.

In his vision for sustainability in Ghana's port sector, Ahorlu noted the Shiprite project— a US$ 137 million facility at Takoradi Port set to launch in 2025. This initiative aims to retrofit older vessels' engines, preventing an estimated 179,536 tonnes of carbon emissions annually. With backing from institutions, including the African Export–Import Bank and the African Development Bank, Shiprite is positioned as an example of how economic growth can align with environmental objectives.

In summary, Ghana's ambitious port expansion initiatives are designed to enhance its logistics capabilities and position the country as a key player in the regional maritime industry. However, for these projects to be successful, they must be supported by strategic investments in infrastructure, digitalisation, and sustainability, while navigating the competitive dynamics of West African ports.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

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