



**NIGERIAN INTERNATIONAL
TRADE AWARDS**

ORGANISED BY



— THE 2026 PROGRAMME · BROCHURE

2 0 2 6

Celebrating Nigeria's Global Trade Champions

*The first evidence-based recognition programme of the
entire international trade value chain.*

CEREMONY & GALA DINNER

**Saturday
31 October 2026**

VENUE

**Lagos Continental
Hotel, Victoria Island**

THE FRAMEWORK

**12 Award
Groups**

NINTAWARDS.COM

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01

— WELCOME ADDRESS

A vision for trade recognition

Nigeria is at an inflection point. For the first time in a generation, non-oil exports are growing faster than crude oil revenue. In 2025, formal non-oil exports reached US\$6.1 billion, the highest in nearly fifty years, with over 280 products reaching 120 countries.

This is not a fluke. It is the result of relentless, under-recognised work by thousands of exporters, value-adding importers, logistics providers, financiers and policymakers. Yet recognition has lagged behind performance. Generic business awards celebrate turnover and branding, not the gritty realities of cross-border trade: letters of credit, phytosanitary certificates, container tracking and compliance with international standards.

The Nigerian International Trade Awards was created to fill that gap. We are the first and only programme that systematically recognises the entire trade chain, from the farmer in Kaduna who grows premium ginger to the terminal operator who reduces dwell time, from the SME that secured its first export credit to the ambassador who opened a new market.

This brochure is your invitation to join a community of excellence. Whether you enter, sponsor, partner or attend, you become part of
Nigeria's most consequential trade recognition platform.

Obiora Onyeaso

Managing Director & Chief Executive, Podhium

02

— ABOUT NINTA

The definitive trade awards platform

NINTA is a specialist, evidence-based recognition programme designed to identify and reward outstanding performance in Nigeria’s import–export ecosystem. Organised by Podhium, it is the first programme to cover twelve integrated groups under one unified framework.

Every category carries published, weighted criteria, both quantitative and qualitative, ensuring that winners are chosen on merit, not connections. Our judging panel comprises independent trade economists, retired customs officials, logistics veterans and representatives of multilateral trade bodies.

NINTA is neither a gala-only event nor a exercise. It is a rigorous, annual benchmark competitiveness in Africa’s largest economy, designed so that a NINTA win means something to a banker, a buyer and a regulator alike.

12 Thematic award groups across the trade value chain	100_{pt} Published, weighted scorecard for every category	6 Stage, independent and evidence-based judging
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03

— THE NATIONAL IMPERATIVE

Why diversification is Nigeria's future

Nigeria's economic history has been defined by commodity price volatility. The 2014–2016 oil crash and the 2020 shock exposed the fragility of a mono-product economy. The response has been slow but decisive: a national pivot toward non-oil exports.

US\$ 104.28 bn Total international trade, 2025	US\$ 6.1 bn Non-oil exports, an all-time high	+ 11.5 % Year-on-year non-oil export
281 Distinct non-oil products exported	120 Destination countries reached	52.6 % Crude share of exports, down from 80.8% in Q1 2024

Why this matters for your business. Non-oil earnings insulate the naira from oil shocks. The proposed 30% Value Addition Bill and 2026 Fiscal Policy Measures reward local processing. And with Nigeria hosting the 2027 Intra-African Trade Fair, firms that demonstrate export excellence now will lead the continental integration wave.

Sources: NEPC, NBS, CBN; World Bank Nigeria Development Update, May 2025.

04

— BEYOND EXPORTS

Celebrating value-adding imports

A common misconception is that imports are intrinsically harmful to the economy. The reality is more nuanced. Intermediate goods, machinery, industrial chemicals, specialised raw materials and components, are the feedstock of local manufacturing.

A fertiliser exporter relies on imported catalysts and advanced valves. A pharmaceutical manufacturer depends on imported active ingredients. An agro-processor needs imported bottling lines and packaging. Without these imports, Nigerian factories would stand still.

NINTA therefore distinguishes sharply between finished consumer goods, which are *not* eligible, and

value-adding intermediate imports, celebrated in Group 2. Winners demonstrate that their imports create measurable local value: jobs, do production, technology transfer and event substitution. They are the unsung heroes of industrialisation.

“To produce more and export more competitively, Nigerian firms also need to import, including intermediate goods and services.”

World Bank

Nigeria Development Update, May 2025

05

— WHAT MAKES NINTA UNRIVALLED

Five founding principles

01 Comprehensive scope

No other programme in Nigeria covers the entire ecosystem, exporters, importers, logistics, ports, finance, diplomacy and policy, in one framework.

02 Evidence-based rigour

Weighted, published criteria; an independent panel; mandatory verification of every claim; no winner on fewer than six quality entries.

03 Global standards, local context

Criteria benchmarked against international best practice, adapted to the realities of Nigerian ports, regulation and market structure.

04 A learning platform

Winning and shortlisted cases are anonymised and published as best-practice guides for SMEs, researchers and policymakers.

05 Integrity first

Conflict-of-interest declarations; sponsors hold no influence over judging; full methodological transparency on request.

06

— THE VALUE OF A NINTA AWARD

Not a decorative trophy

A NINTA Award delivers measurable commercial and strategic benefit long after the gala, a credential that does work in the market on your behalf.

Market validation

Third-party endorsement of your trade excellence, recognised by banks, buyers and regulators.

Buyer confidence

International partners read NINTA as a proxy for quality and compliance, shortening due diligence.

Talent attraction

Award-winning firms attract higher-calibre talent in logistics, trade finance and international sales.

Trade finance access

NEXIM, the Bank of Industry and commercial banks give preferential consideration to verified winners.

Media visibility

Featured across pre-event campaigns and a commemorative supplement sent to every diplomatic mission.

Benchmarking

The entry process itself reveals strengths and gaps against peers, a strategic audit at no extra cost.

07

— JUDGING & INTEGRITY

How winners are chosen

NINTA's credibility rests on a transparent, six-stage process. All timelines are strictly observed and every claim is independently verified.

STAGE 01**Entry submission**

Eligible organisations submit evidence against published criteria through the online portal.

STAGE 02**Eligibility check**

The Secretariat reviews each entry for completeness and basic eligibility; gaps may be re-submitted within seven days.

STAGE 03**First-round scoring**

A panel of three independent judges scores each entry against weighted criteria; a shortlist of up to five is set.

STAGE 04**Verification**

Shortlisted entrants provide audited records and certifications; background checks confirm compliance and standing.

STAGE 05**Final jury**

A Grand Jury of seven eminent experts reviews the shortlist and decides by majority vote, with a casting vote in any tie.

STAGE 06**Notification**

Winners are notified confidentially eight days before the ceremony and remain under embargo until announced on stage.

Integrity guarantees. Every judge signs a conflict-of-interest declaration. Sponsors receive no access to judging data and hold no influence over outcomes. Any material misrepresentation leads to immediate disqualification. The full methodology and panel biographies are published on the NINTA website.

08

— KEY DATES & VENUE

The road to
31 October 2026

MILESTONE	DATE
Competition opens	Now open
Entry submission deadline	9 October 2026
First-round judging & shortlisting	10–16 October 2026
Verification & due diligence	17–22 October 2026
Finalist notifications (confidential)	23 October 2026
Awards Ceremony & Gala Dinner	Saturday, 31 October 2026

Dates are provisional. Registered entrants will be notified of any change at least 60 days in advance.

— THE EVENING

Grand Ballroom, Lagos Continental Hotel
Victoria Island, Lagos
Red carpet 6:00pm · Ceremony 6:45pm

— DRESS

Black Tie / National Attire
Gala dinner & presentation of awards

09 HOW TO ENTER

Eligibility and procedure

— ELIGIBILITY

ENTRANT TYPE	MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS
Exporters (Groups 1, 3, 4, 12)	Minimum US\$100,000 (or naira equivalent) of non-oil exports in the last financial year; NEPC registration; no major customs violations in three years.
Importers, intermediate goods (Group 2)	Import machinery, industrial inputs or specialised raw materials that undergo local transformation; valid SON/NAFDAC permits where ap
Service providers (Groups 5, 6, 7, 8, 11)	At least two years operating in Nigeria; verifiable trade-enabling servi logistics, finance, legal or technology.
Diplomatic & executive (Groups 9, 10)	Nomination-only; no self-entry.

Register at nintawards.com and select up to three categories. There is no entry fee: entry to NINTA 2026 is free across all categories. Submit before 23:59 WAT on Friday, 9 October 2026.

10

— SPONSORSHIP & PARTNERSHIP

Align your brand with trade excellence

Tiered packages place your brand alongside Nigeria's trade leadership. All sponsors receive prominent placement, speaking opportunities and exclusive networking access, and sign a code of conduct agreeing not to influence judging.

Sponsorship enquiries: Chidozie Anselm Okere, Director, NINTA Secretariat · chidozie.okere@podhium.com · +234 (0) 814 481 2193.

SPONSORSHIP & PARTNERSHIP

Partner packages

Five partnership tiers align your brand with the programme. All figures in NGN. Every partner signs a code of conduct agreeing not to influence judging.

PACKAGE BENEFITS	DIAMOND NGN 60,000,000	PLATINUM NGN 35,000,000	GOLD NGN 20,000,000	SILVER NGN 15,000,000	BRONZE NGN 7,000,000
Logo visibility on nintawards.com until September 2027, by sponsorship category	●	●	●	●	●
Branding on all event signage, marketing collateral and screen presentations	●	●	—	—	—
Premium table seating with dinner, dessert and drinks	Full table of 10	6 seats	4 seats	3 seats	2 seats
CEO quote included in press releases	●	●	—	—	—
Profile in the NINTA Event Programme	●	●	●	—	—
Crystal partner recognition plaque	●	●	●	●	—
Acknowledgement in post-event publicity	●	●	●	●	●
On-stage acknowledgement at the Awards dinner	●	●	●	●	●
Photo booth branding	●	—	—	—	—
Branding of the media interviews stand in the foyer	●	—	—	—	—
Bundle of high-resolution event images for print and digital publicity	●	●	●	●	●
Branding of the food and drinks service area	●	●	—	—	—
Opportunity to place branded materials on tables	●	●	●	●	—
Award visibility on all social media platforms	●	●	●	●	●
Interview with the CEO in TV coverage of the event	●	●	—	—	—
Co-presentation of awards	3 nos. Tier-1	2 nos. Tier-1	3 nos. Tier-2	2 nos. Tier-2	—

SPONSORSHIP & PARTNERSHIP

Promotional packages for award entrants

Promotional packages convert a NINTA 2026 entry into commercial and reputational returns. They are purchased independently of the entry, after submission; winner-activated benefits unlock on ceremony night if your entry wins its category. Purchasers hold no influence over judging outcomes.

PACKAGE BENEFITS	CHAMPION NGN 35,000,000	LEADER NGN 25,000,000	DISTINGUISHED NGN 15,000,000	RECOGNISED NGN 10,000,000	FEATURED NGN 7,500,000
EDITORIAL AND CONTENT					
Profile in the NINTA Awards Supplement	4-page spread	Double page	Full page	Half page	Quarter page
Advert in the NINTA Awards Supplement	Inside front cover spread	Full page	Full page	Quarter page	Logo listing
Citation and judges report on the basis of your selection, in the post-Awards Supplement	●	●	●	●	—
CEREMONY ACCESS					
Gala table seating with dinner and drinks	Full table of 10	6 seats	4 seats	3 seats	2 seats
Professional event photography bundle	●	●	●	●	Digital only
FUTURE PLATFORM					
Priority consideration for speaking at future NINTA-organised events	●	●	●	●	—
WINNER ACTIVATION (UNLOCKS ONLY IF YOUR ENTRY WINS ITS CATEGORY)					
Personalised winner trophy on ceremony night	●	●	●	●	●
Team on-stage award presentation	Unlimited reps	4 reps	2 reps	1 rep	1 rep
Case study on nintawards.com	Business-school grade, charts and photography	Long-form with photography	Standard with photography	Standard profile	—
CEO video interview for NINTA TV coverage	●	●	—	—	—
Press release distribution via NINTA media partners	●	●	●	—	—
Official NINTA winner social media announcements	6 posts	4 posts	3 posts	2 posts	1 post
Personalised digital winner tombstone and social card: high-resolution trophy likenesses with your company name and award title, a purposed NINTA logo with the award won, and an email signature	●	●	●	●	●
12-month digital asset licence, unlimited use	●	●	●	●	●
UNIVERSAL RECOGNITION (ACTIVATES ON PAYMENT, REGARDLESS OF WINNING)					
Crystal partner recognition plaque	●	●	●	●	●
Framed certificate of partnership	3	2	1	1	1

SPONSORSHIP & PARTNERSHIP

Choosing your tier

Five tiers move from broad brand presence (Featured) to a flagship commercial platform (Champion). Every tier includes gala attendance, digital assets and framed certification. Investment scales with visibility depth, editorial treatment, VIP access and B2B matchmaking allowance. Each tier describes what you get, not who you are: an entrant of any size may choose any tier.

CHAMPION

NGN 35,000,000

Flagship amplification. Full commercial platform: unlimited stage presence on winning, documentary case study, full VIP allocation, sustained digital and editorial presence.

LEADER

NGN 25,000,000

Premium editorial and access. Sustained visibility, CEO-level thought leadership and priority networking.

DISTINGUISHED

NGN 15,000,000

The balanced choice. Strong editorial, meaningful access and full digital footprint.

RECOGNISED

NGN 10,000,000

Networking-led package. Focused on relationships, gala presence and baseline visibility.

FEATURED

NGN 7,500,000

Essential recognition, digital assets and gala attendance.

TERMS

All figures in NGN, exclusive of VAT. Package purchase is independent of entry submission and takes effect once payment is confirmed. Sponsors and package purchasers hold no influence over judging outcomes; every purchaser signs a code of conduct to that effect. A branded booth or stand at the event, to create awareness of your products and services, is available on request to purchasers of any package; set-up arrangements are the responsibility of the company.

ENQUIRIES

Chidozie Anselm Okere, Director, NINTA Secretariat · chidozie.okere@podhium.com · +234 (0) 814 481 2193

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— FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Everything entrants ask

Can I enter more than three categories?

No. To maintain focus and data quality, each organisation may enter a maximum of three. Choose where your competitive advantage is strongest.

How do you verify export values?

Through audited statements, NEPC documentation (Form NXP, NXPC) or Nigeria Customs entry summaries. All data is confidential and destroyed after the cycle.

Are government-owned enterprises eligible?

Yes, except the executive categories in Group 10, which recognise individuals. State-owned free zones and port authorities may enter Groups 5 to 7.

Is there an appeals process?

Yes. Within 14 days of the announcement an entrant may request a procedural review confirming the published process was followed.

Can I attend the gala without entering?

Yes. Tickets from NGN 250,000; tables of ten from NGN 2.5m. Contact chidozie.okere@podhium.com.

When are winners announced?

Live, on stage, on 31 October 2026, and published on the website and in a press release the next business day.

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— CONTACT

The NINTA Secretariat

SECRETARIAT

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— PART TWO · THE AWARDS FRAMEWORK

Twelve groups. One standard of excellence.



*Thematic award groups
across the trade value
chain*

100pt

*Published, weighted
scorecard for every
category*

6

*Stage, independent and
evidence-based judging*

01 Export Excellence by Region

03 Sector Export Champions

05 Trade Advocacy & Chambers of Commerce

07 Shipping, Freight & Logistics

09 Diplomatic Corps & Embassy Excellence

11 Trade Finance & Fintech

02 Value-Adding Importers

04 Overall & Special Export Achievements

06 Ports, Terminals & Free Zones

08 Trade Enablers & Technology

10 Executive Leadership & Policy

12 Agricultural Commodities & Raw Materials

— THE NINTA STANDARD

How to read this framework

Every award is governed by the same published, 100-point scorecard. No award is decided on reputation or relationship. Each is scored against fixed, weighted criteria and verified against documentary evidence, so that a NINTA win carries the same meaning in every category.

A

The award

What each award recognises and the kind of organisation it is intended for.

C

Criterion

The dimension of performance assessed, from export growth and market penetration to compliance and innovation.

E

Verification

Shortlisted claims are checked against audited records, customs documentation and recognised certifications.

B

Weighting

Every criterion carries a fixed percentage. The five to six criteria always sum to exactly 100 points.

D

Indicators

The specific, evidence-based measures judges examine under each criterion, drawn from audited and third-party data.

F

Independence

Judges sign conflict-of-interest declarations. Sponsors receive no access to scores and hold no influence over outcomes.

P 01

Export Excellence by Region

International trade is not a uniform endeavour. Success in Sub-Saharan Africa demands mastery of AfCFTA rules of origin; the European Union demands sustainability and food-safety compliance; MENA requires halal certification and disciplined letters of credit. This group recognises exporters that have built durable, scalable and compliant commercial bridges to a defined region.

EACH AWARD JUDGED ON A PUBLISHED 100-POINT SCORECARD

WHY THESE CRITERIA

Regional success turns on market access as much as volume, so growth is balanced against compliance with rules of origin and regional protocols. Logistics and product adaptation are weighted because the real barriers differ by region, border management, certification and non-tariff measures, not price alone.

1.01 Exporter of the Year, Sub-Saharan Africa

This award honours the Nigerian enterprise that has most effectively leveraged the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and other regional protocols (ECOWAS, EAC, SADC) to grow intra-African exports. Beyond simple volume, judges look for evidence of compliance with rules of origin, successful management of multiple land border crossings, use of regional payment systems (e.g., Pan-African Payment and Settlement System, PAPSS), and the ability to adapt products to diverse consumer and industrial needs across the continent. Winners often serve as case studies for how Nigerian goods can displace extra-continental imports in African markets.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Export value growth (YoY) to SSA Absolute FOB value (NGN or US\$) for last 2 financial years · YoY percentage growth (minimum 15% to qualify) · Consistency across at least 3 SSA countries	
20% Compliance with AfCFTA / regional trade rules Percentage of shipments with valid AfCFTA or ECOWAS Certificate of Origin · Zero customs rejections on origin disputes in last 2 years · Evidence of using PAPSS or other intra-African settlement mechanisms	
20% Market penetration & diversification Number of distinct SSA countries exported to (minimum 3) · Presence in at least one non-ECOWAS SSA market (e.g., Kenya, South Africa) · Evidence of local distribution partnerships or warehousing	
20% Logistics & border management Average transit time from factory to customer (days) · Reduction in port-to-border clearance time (YoY) · Use of accredited Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) or transit bond regimes	
15% Product adaptation & non-tariff barrier management Evidence of packaging/labelling adapted to regional standards · Successful resolution of SPS or technical barrier complaints · Certifications: SONCAP for re-export, ISO, or regional mark (e.g., ARSO)	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

1.02 Exporter of the Year, Middle East & North Africa (MENA)

The MENA region, comprising the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries, Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, and others, demands a unique combination of quality, certification, and financial discipline. Exporters to MENA must routinely provide halal certification, comply with SASO (Saudi) or ESMA (UAE) standards, and navigate letters of credit issued by government-linked buyers. This award recognises the Nigerian exporter that has not only achieved high sales volumes to MENA but has also built repeatable, trusted relationships with buyers who value supply chain reliability over lowest price. Winners typically demonstrate a deep understanding of cultural business practices, including Ramadan logistics, and have successfully managed currency fluctuations (e.g., Egyptian pound volatility).

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Export value to MENA Total US\$ or NGN equivalent FOB value (last 2 years) · YoY growth (minimum 15%) · Share of non-oil exports to MENA vs. industry average	
25% Certification & standards compliance Valid halal certification (e.g., ESMA, SFDA, or recognised body) · SASO (Saudi) or ECAS (UAE) product registration · Zero customs holds on quality or documentation in last 2 years	
20% Trade finance & payment risk management Percentage of transactions using confirmed, irrevocable L/Cs · Average L/C negotiation time (days from presentation to payment) · Evidence of forfaiting or export credit insurance usage	
15% Customer concentration & repeat business Number of distinct MENA importers (minimum 3) · Repeat order rate from top 3 customers (>70%) · Average contract duration (>12 months)	
15% Logistics & lead-time reliability Average door-to-port transit time to Jebel Ali, Dammam, or Port Said · On-time delivery performance (>95%) · Use of consolidated shipping or warehousing in Jebel Ali Free Zone	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

1.03 Exporter of the Year, Asia-Pacific (APAC)

Asia-Pacific markets, including Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and Southeast Asian nations (Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia), present Nigerian exporters with both enormous opportunity and severe competitive pressure. These markets are served by efficient, low-cost suppliers within the region. Nigerian success therefore depends on long-haul logistics mastery, premium product positioning (e.g., solid minerals, specialty agriculture), and the ability to meet extremely high-quality standards (e.g., Japanese food safety, Korean industrial specifications). This award recognises the Nigerian exporter that has consistently delivered defect-free products to APAC, managed the complexities of trans-shipment (often via Singapore or Port Klang), and built a reputation for supply chain integrity in a part of the world where late delivery is unacceptable.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Export volume & value to APAC Total tonnes or cubic metres (for commodities) or FOB value (manufactured) · YoY growth (minimum 20%, given long distances) · Value per unit (premium achieved vs. competitors)	
25% Long-haul logistics performance Average total transit time (port of loading to destination) in days · Trans-shipment reliability (% cargo re-routed without delay) · Container detention/demurrage charges per shipment (lower = better)	
20% Quality & compliance Certifications specific to APAC (e.g., JAS for organic, Halal for Indonesia/Malaysia, DAFF for Australia) · Zero rejections at destination port for phytosanitary or quality reasons · Evidence of third-party pre-shipment inspection (SGS, Bureau Veritas)	
15% Competitive positioning & pricing Comparison of landed cost to regional competitors (e.g., Brazilian vs. Nigerian soya) · Evidence of long-term off-take agreements with APAC buyers · Use of hedging or forward contracts for currency (USD/JPY, USD/KRW)	
15% Customer relationship management Number of APAC buyers (minimum 2 distinct countries) · Buyer retention rate over 2 years (>80%) · Evidence of after-sales support or technical liaison	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

1.04 Exporter of the Year, South Asia

South Asia, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, represents one of the fastest-growing import regions for Nigerian agricultural commodities (sesame, ginger, shea, soya) and industrial raw materials. Indian buyers in particular are sophisticated, price-sensitive, and volume-oriented. Success in South Asia requires high-purity product, consistent container loading, and the ability to navigate Indian customs and fumigation requirements. This award recognises Nigerian exporters that have built enduring, high-volume relationships with South Asian importers, often through collateral management arrangements or back-to-back letters of credit. Winners typically demonstrate a strong grasp of Indian quality standards (FSSAI for food, BIS for industrial inputs) and have successfully managed the competitive pressure from East African and Southeast Asian suppliers.

JUDGING CRITERIA

WEIGHT

30% Export value & volume to South Asia

Total FOB value (US\$) for last 2 years · YoY growth (minimum 15%) · Share of company's total exports going to South Asia

25% Quality & purity standards

Compliance with FSSAI (food) or BIS (industrial) specifications · Purity level (e.g., 99.5% for sesame, oil content for shea) · Aflatoxin or pesticide residue results (pass rate >99%)

20% Trade finance & payment security

Evidence of using escrow or collateral management for high-value shipments · Payment within L/C terms (average days from negotiation to credit) · Use of export credit insurance covering South Asian buyers

15% Logistics & port operations

Average evacuation time from Nigerian port to vessel readiness (days) · Container stuffing quality (no contamination, accurate weight) · Use of direct vs. trans-shipment routes to Mundra, Chittagong, or Karachi

10% Relationship longevity & diversification

Years of continuous supply to same buyer(s) (>3 years) · Number of South Asian buyers (minimum 2 countries) · Evidence of joint quality improvement initiatives

TOTAL

100 POINTS

1.05 Exporter of the Year, China

China is Nigeria's largest trading partner, but for decades the flow has been overwhelmingly one-way, Chinese manufactured goods into Nigeria. This award celebrates Nigerian exporters that have successfully pierced the Chinese market with non-oil exports, particularly solid minerals (zinc, lead, limestone), agricultural commodities (sesame, ginger, soya), and niche manufactured goods. Exporting to China requires registration with the General Administration of Customs of China (GACC), adherence to Chinese phytosanitary protocols, and often the ability to work through Chinese trading companies or bonded zones. Winners demonstrate genuine commercial relationships with Chinese end-users (not just traders), have achieved consistent year-on-year volume growth, and contribute to narrowing Nigeria's bilateral trade deficit. This is one of the most challenging export destinations; success here signals world-class capability.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Non-oil export value to China Total FOB value (US\$) of solid minerals, agricultural, or manufactured exports · YoY growth (minimum 20%) · Evidence of direct contracts with Chinese factories (not intermediaries)	
25% GACC registration & regulatory compliance Valid GACC registration for relevant product category · Successful clearance of Chinese customs inspections (zero rejections in 2 years) · Compliance with Chinese heavy metal or pesticide MRLs	
20% Logistics & supply chain Average voyage time from Nigerian port to Shanghai/Ningbo · Use of direct vessels (avoiding trans-shipment risks) · Container sealing and anti-tampering measures	
15% Pricing & competitive positioning Price realisation per tonne compared to competing origins (e.g., Ethiopia, Sudan) · Evidence of long-term supply agreements (≥12 months) · Use of RMB-denominated payments or hedging	
10% Trade balance contribution Reduction in the company's own import-export gap (if also importing) · Evidence of promoting Chinese investment in Nigerian processing · Public recognition from NEPC or Ministry of Industry on China trade	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

1.06 Exporter of the Year, European Union

The European Union is not a single market, it is a regulatory fortress with 27 individual enforcement regimes, all underpinned by EU-wide directives on food safety (EFSA), chemicals (REACH), general product safety (GPSR), and soon the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM). Exporting successfully to the EU requires deep, sustained investment in traceability, accredited laboratories, environmental compliance, and often third-party certification (BRCGS, IFS, GlobalG.A.P.). This award recognises the Nigerian exporter that has not merely sold to the EU but has embedded EU compliance into its core operations. Winners typically have a dedicated export quality manager, conduct regular mock audits, and have weathered at least one full EU border inspection without detention. They understand that selling to a German retailer is fundamentally different from selling to a Greek wholesaler, and they adapt accordingly.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
20% Export value & growth to EU Total FOB value (€ or US\$) for last 2 years · YoY growth (minimum 10%, reflecting mature market) · Number of EU member states supplied (minimum 3)	
30% Regulatory compliance & certifications Valid certifications: BRCGS (food), IFS, REACH compliance (chemicals), or CBAM readiness plan · Zero RASFF (EU rapid alert) notifications in last 3 years · Successful completion of a customer-led audit (e.g., SEDEX, SMETA)	
20% Sustainability & carbon footprint Evidence of Scope 1 & 2 GHG measurement · Reduction in carbon intensity per kg of product (YoY) · Participation in EU Green Deal or deforestation-free supply chain requirements	
15% Logistics & cold chain (if applicable) Use of qualified cold chain providers with temperature monitoring · Average transit time to Rotterdam/Hamburg, with deviation rate <5% · Documentation accuracy (commercial invoice, phytosanitary, EUR.1)	
15% Customer concentration & brand presence Number of distinct EU importers (minimum 5 for volume, 3 for specialised) · Evidence of Nigerian brand presence in EU retail (shelf photos, listings) · Repeat order rate from top EU customers (>80%)	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

1.07 Exporter of the Year, United Kingdom

Post-Brexit, the United Kingdom has its own regulatory regime (UKCA, UK REACH, FSA) while maintaining strong cultural and commercial ties to Nigeria. The UK market is particularly accessible for Nigerian value-added products, packaged foods, beauty products, leather goods, and textiles, served by a large Nigerian diaspora that acts as a tastemaker. This award recognises the Nigerian exporter that has successfully scaled the British retail and industrial landscape, winning listings with UK supermarkets (Tesco, Sainsbury's, Waitrose) or specialised distributors. Winners demonstrate mastery of UK import procedures, including pre-notification to the Port Health Authority, use of the UK Trader Scheme, and compliance with The Food Information Regulations. They also understand the importance of brand story, packaging aesthetics, and consumer trust in the UK market.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Export value to UK Total FOB value (GBP or US\$) for last 2 years · YoY growth (minimum 15%) · Share of value-added products (processed, branded) >50% of total	
25% Regulatory compliance Valid FSA registration for food products, or UKCA mark for non-food · Successful UK Port Health checks (zero detentions) · Compliance with UK plastic packaging tax (if applicable)	
20% Retail & distribution penetration Number of UK retail chain listings (e.g., Tesco, Sainsbury's, Morrisons, Ocado) · Evidence of distributor agreements in the UK · Diaspora marketing initiatives (events, influencers)	
15% Logistics & lead time Average transit time (Lagos to Felixstowe / London Gateway) in days · On-time performance for retail delivery windows (>95%) · Use of UK bonded warehousing for faster replenishment	
15% Brand & consumer engagement Evidence of UK consumer recognition (reviews, social media, press) · Premium price achieved vs. comparable products · Adaptations for UK taste (e.g., reduced sugar, allergen labelling)	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

1.08 **Export Excellence, North America**

North America, particularly the United States, offers the world's largest consumer market, but also one of the most demanding regulatory environments (FDA, USDA, FTC, EPA). For Nigerian exporters, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) provides duty-free access for over 1,800 product categories, but only to companies that comply with strict rules of origin, visa requirements, and annual eligibility reviews. This award celebrates the Nigerian exporter that has maximised AGOA benefits while building reliable supply chains to the US and Canada. Winners typically have a dedicated US import compliance officer, maintain recalls insurance, and have successfully handled a US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) audit. They understand that North American buyers prioritise liability protection, traceability, and consistent labelling over lower prices.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Export value to North America Total FOB value (US\$) for last 2 years · YoY growth (minimum 15%) · Percentage of exports covered by AGOA preference (target >90%)	
30% AGOA & regulatory compliance Valid AGOA visa (product-specific) for applicable goods · FDA registration (for food, cosmetics, or medical devices) · Zero FDA import alerts or CBP detentions in last 2 years	
15% Food safety & quality (if applicable) FSVP (Foreign Supplier Verification Program) compliance · Third-party laboratory testing for pathogens, contaminants · Recall plan and liability insurance evidence	
15% Logistics & supply chain resilience Average transit time to Newark, Houston, or Long Beach (days) · Use of consolidated containers or LCL services · C-TPAT or other supply chain security certification (preferred)	
15% Customer diversification Number of US importers (minimum 3 distinct) · Evidence of Canadian market entry (CFIA registration) · Repeat business rate from top customers (>80%)	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

1.09 **Export Excellence, Latin America**

Latin America (LATAM) remains an under-penetrated frontier for Nigerian exports. Countries such as Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, and Mexico have large agricultural, industrial, and energy sectors that could absorb Nigerian solid minerals, fertilisers, processed foods, and specialty chemicals. However, distance (west coast of Africa to east coast of South America is shorter than to Europe), language barriers (Portuguese/Spanish), and unfamiliar documentation requirements present real challenges. This award recognises the pioneering Nigerian exporter that has successfully opened or significantly expanded trade corridors to LATAM. Winners demonstrate strategic foresight, often using trade fairs (e.g., APAS in Brazil), local agents, and compliance with Mercosur or bilateral trade agreements (Nigeria has a framework agreement with Mercosur). Judges look for evidence of first-mover advantage, volume growth from a low base, and successful navigation of LATAM customs, which can be notoriously complex.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Export value & growth to LATAM Total FOB value (US\$) for last 2 years (absolute growth, not just percentage) · YoY percentage growth (minimum 30% to reflect frontier status) · Number of LATAM countries reached (minimum 2)	
25% Regulatory & documentation compliance Compliance with specific LATAM requirements (e.g., ANVISA for Brazil, SENASICA for Mexico) · Certificates of origin under Mercosur-Nigeria framework · Zero customs holds for paperwork errors in last 2 years	
20% Logistics & route innovation Average transit time to Santos, Callao, or Cartagena · Use of West Africa-South America direct feeders or trans-shipment via Tanger Med · Evidence of reduced logistics cost per unit over time	
10% Language & cultural adaptation Spanish/Portuguese labelling, websites, or technical data sheets · Local agent or representative in LATAM · Participation in LATAM trade missions or virtual matchmaking	
15% Strategic partnerships Off-take agreements with LATAM state enterprises (e.g., Petrobras, CODELCO) or private groups · Joint ventures or distribution agreements · Evidence of LATAM investment in Nigeria (reciprocity)	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

1.10 Best Use of Large Enterprise Export Finance

Large-scale exporters require sophisticated trade finance: confirmed letters of credit, forfaiting, export credit insurance, working capital facilities tied to purchase orders, and often commodity-linked structured finance. This award recognises a large enterprise (annual turnover >NGN 5 billion or equivalent) that has strategically deployed one or more trade finance instruments to de-risk, accelerate, or scale its international transactions. Judges are not simply looking for the highest volume of finance used, but for innovative structuring that reduced costs, unlocked new markets, or enabled a step-change in export capacity. For example, using a pooled L/C guarantee facility to consolidate shipments, or securing pre-export finance against a multi-year off-take agreement. Winners can demonstrate a clear return on financing costs and improved cash conversion cycles.

JUDGING CRITERIA

WEIGHT

25% Scale & complexity of finance facilities

Total value of trade finance facilities utilised (US\$ or NGN) in last 12 months · Number and types of instruments (L/Cs, guarantees, forfaiting, credit insurance, pre-export finance) · Involvement of multiple financiers (syndication, club deals)

25% Risk mitigation & insurance

Use of export credit insurance covering political/commercial risk (e.g., ECX, Atradius, Coface) · Reduction in days sales outstanding (DSO) for export receivables · Successful claim or avoidance of a default

20% Cost efficiency & leverage

All-in cost of finance (margin + fees) vs. benchmark · Leverage ratio (export revenue increase per NGN 1 of finance) · Reduction in reliance on expensive overdrafts

15% Innovation in structuring

Examples of non-standard structures (e.g., warehouse receipt financing, blockchain L/Cs, supply chain finance) · First-of-its-kind facility in the Nigerian market · Use of Afreximbank or other multilateral programmes

15% Impact on export growth

YoY increase in export value directly attributable to finance · New markets entered using trade finance support · Employment or capacity expansion linked to financing

TOTAL

100 POINTS

1.11

Best Use of SME-Targeted Export Finance

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) face the greatest barriers to trade finance: limited collateral, shorter track records, smaller ticket sizes, and higher perceived risk. Yet many Nigerian SMEs are globally competitive if given access to the right financial tools. This award recognises an SME (≥ 200 employees or turnover ≥ NGN 5 billion) that has masterfully leveraged export finance, such as NEXIM's Export Credit Rediscounting and Refinancing Facility, the Bank of Industry's Export Expansion Facility, or private sector L/C confirmation lines, to overcome liquidity constraints and achieve international sales. Judges look for resourcefulness: using invoice discounting, packing credits, or even fintech-based trade platforms. The winner demonstrates a clear before-and-after improvement in export capacity and a sustainable business model.

JUDGING CRITERIA**WEIGHT****25% Type & accessibility of finance used**

Specific trade finance instruments accessed (e.g., packing credit, post-shipment finance, L/C discounting, credit insurance) · Source of finance (NEXIM, BoI, commercial bank, fintech, cooperative) · Whether the SME was a first-time user of formal trade finance

30% Tangible impact on export ability

Increase in export value (absolute and %) within 12 months of accessing finance · Reduction in payment-to-delivery cycle (days) · Ability to accept larger purchase orders previously impossible

20% Affordability & financial discipline

Effective interest rate or fee paid vs. alternative informal sources · Repayment track record (no defaults, late payments <5%) · Evidence of improved credit rating or follow-on facilities

15% Innovation & collateral substitution

Use of non-traditional collateral (e.g., warehouse receipts, receivables, assets) · Participation in de-risking programmes (e.g., Afreximbank's AfTMFA) · Digital onboarding or fintech platform usage

10% Replicability & SME ecosystem benefit

Willingness to mentor other SMEs on trade finance · Evidence that the finance enabled local employment or backward linkages · Nomination by a trade support institution

TOTAL**100 POINTS**

1.12

African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) Exporter of the Year

The African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) remains the most significant unilateral trade preference programme for sub-Saharan African exporters, offering duty-free access to the US market for over 1,800 product categories. However, actual utilisation by Nigerian exporters has historically been low. This specialist award recognises the Nigerian exporter that has maximised AGOA benefits, whether in apparel, agricultural products, processed foods, or manufactured goods. Winners demonstrate complete compliance with AGOA visa requirements, rules of origin (with a focus on local content), and US customs entry procedures. They actively promote US buyer awareness of AGOA, have successfully renewed their product-specific visa, and can show a clear AGOA-driven increase in exports. Judges also value advocacy for AGOA extension or improvement.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% AGOA export value & growth Total US export value claimed under AGOA preference (last 2 years) · YoY growth (minimum 20%) · Percentage of total US exports using AGOA (target >90%)	
30% Visa & rules of origin compliance Valid AGOA visa (product-specific) renewed without interruption · Local content percentage (must exceed AGOA minimums; higher is better) · Zero CBP penalty or visa revocation proceedings	
20% US market access & buyer engagement Number of US importers using AGOA preference for Nigerian goods · Evidence of buyer training or AGOA outreach (seminars, fact sheets) · Success in categories where AGOA utilisation is rare (e.g., processed foods, handicrafts)	
15% Traceability & record-keeping Production records linking inputs to finished exports · Ability to produce origin documentation within 48 hours of CBP request · Use of digital record-keeping for AGOA compliance	
10% Advocacy & ecosystem contribution Participation in AGOA reauthorisation campaigns · Mentorship of other Nigerian exporters on AGOA procedures · Recognition from US Embassy or NEPC	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

02

Value-Adding Importers

The most strategically important imports are intermediate inputs: machinery, chemicals, components and technologies that Nigerian manufacturers transform into higher-value goods. This group celebrates importers whose activity creates jobs, local content, technology transfer and eventual import substitution.

EACH AWARD JUDGED ON A PUBLISHED 100-POINT SCORECARD

WHY THESE CRITERIA

Because these awards reward imports that build local capacity, the heaviest weights fall on downstream value creation, local content and technology transfer rather than import volume. Compliance and verified end-use ensure the goods genuinely feed Nigerian production.

2.01 Importer of the Year, Agricultural Machinery & Equipment

Recognises the importer that provides advanced tractors, harvesters, irrigation systems, and post-harvest equipment to Nigerian farmers and agro-processors. Winners go beyond sales, offering operator training, local spare parts inventory, and maintenance partnerships that demonstrably increase agricultural productivity.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
20% Value of agri-machinery imported (CIF) Last 2 years total · Preference for high-value, precision equipment	
25% Local support infrastructure Number of service centres, trained technicians · Spare parts availability rate >95% · Average response time to breakdown <48 hours	
25% Measurable productivity impact Client testimonials with data: hectares/hour increase · Yield improvement · Post-harvest loss reduction	
15% Compliance & standards SONCAP, NAIC registration · Emissions compliance for tractors	
15% Local assembly or partnership Evidence of semi-knocked down assembly · Joint ventures with Nigerian firms · Technology transfer agreements	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

2.02 Importer of the Year, Automotive (CBU & CKD)

For importers of passenger and commercial vehicles, whether fully built or completely knocked down. Winners demonstrate structured OEM partnerships, robust after-sales service networks, warranty fulfilment, and alignment with the National Automotive Industry Development Plan (NAIDP) 2023, including local assembly commitments.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
20% Import volume & value Number of CBU units or CKD kits · CIF value, last 2 years	
25% After-sales & service Number of authorised service centres · Warranty claims honoured percentage >98% · Average part delivery time <72 hours	
20% NAIDP compliance Local assembly percentage (CKD) · Use of local content credits · Evidence of domestic paint or trim shops	
15% Customer satisfaction Survey of fleet owners/dealers · Complaint resolution rate	
20% Safety & recall management Number of safety recalls initiated and completed · SON compliance for all imported units	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

2.03 Importer of the Year, Industrial Machinery & Manufacturing Equipment

Honours the firm that supplies the plant, machinery, and production lines that power Nigerian manufacturing, from food extruders and packaging lines to CNC machines and injection moulding presses. Winners excel in commissioning support, local technician training, and uptime guarantees.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
20% Total value of industrial machinery imported CIF, last 2 years · Preference for multi-plant contracts	
30% Local manufacturing enablement Number of Nigerian factories made operational · Jobs created in those factories · Percentage increase in client production capacity	
20% Technology transfer Evidence of training programmes for Nigerian engineers · Local maintenance capability established · Software licenses transferred	
15% Uptime & support Average machine uptime >95% · Technical response time <24 hours	
15% Customs & logistics efficiency Average clearance time from port to installation · Use of bonded terminals to reduce demurrage	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

2.04 Importer of the Year, Industrial Chemicals & Catalysts

For the safe, compliant, and consistent importation of industrial chemicals, from caustic soda and sulphuric acid to specialty catalysts for fertiliser and pharmaceutical production. Winners manage hazardous logistics, maintain buffer stocks, and support Nigerian manufacturers with just-in-time delivery.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
20% Volume & consistency Tonnes imported per quarter, standard deviation <10% · Zero stockouts affecting client production	
30% Safety & compliance NESREA hazardous waste permits · SON compliance · Spill prevention plan; safety drills conducted; zero reportable incidents	
20% Client enablement Number of Nigerian manufacturers supplied · Evidence of enabling local production of paints, soaps, agrochemicals	
15% Logistics innovation Use of ISO tanks versus drums · Average port-to-warehouse time · Demurrage cost per tonne	
15% Pricing transparency Pass-through of global price changes · No hidden surcharges · Long-term supply contracts	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

2.05 Importer of the Year, Plastics & Polymer Resins

Recognises the importer that supplies polypropylene (PP), polyethylene (PE), PET, PVC, and other polymers to Nigeria's packaging, construction, and consumer goods sectors. Winners manage global petrochemical price volatility, secure reliable allocations from producers, and often support local recycling initiatives.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Annual tonnage imported Total tonnes of polymers, last 2 years · Growth YoY	
25% Supply reliability On-time delivery rate >95% · Ability to secure resin during global shortages · Buffer stock policy	
20% Local manufacturing impact Number of Nigerian plastics manufacturers supplied · Evidence of enabling export of finished plastic goods	
15% Circular economy support Investment in recycling schemes · Off-take agreements with local recyclers · Reduction of virgin resin footprint	
15% Compliance SON prohibition on banned grades · NAFDAC food-grade certification where applicable	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

2.06 Importer of the Year, Primary Metals & Special Alloys

For the importation of steel billets, coils, rebar, aluminium ingots, copper cathodes, and specialty alloys that fill gaps in local smelting capacity. Winners facilitate Nigeria's construction, fabrication, and power transmission industries, often working with bonded terminals and inland ports.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Tonnes imported Total by product type · YoY growth · Preference for value-added alloys	
25% Local industry supply Number of Nigerian fabricators, foundries, or construction companies supplied · Evidence of reducing project delays	
20% Quality & certification ISO 9001 for trading · SONCAP certificates for each grade · Mill certificates provided with each shipment	
15% Logistics & cost efficiency Use of inland dry ports · Average port clearance time · Competitive landed cost vs. alternatives	
15% Import substitution support Evidence of working with Nigerian steel plants to improve local quality · Reduction of own imports over time	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

2.07 Importer of the Year, Pharmaceuticals & APIs

This award honours the importer of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), excipients, and finished essential medicines. Winners demonstrate unbroken cold chain integrity (for biologics and vaccines), WHO-GMP warehousing, NAFDAC compliance, and the ability to supply public health programmes and private hospitals without interruption.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
20% CIF value of pharmaceutical imports Last 2 years · Differentiation between APIs and finished drugs	
30% Cold chain & storage integrity Temperature excursion rate <0.5% · Real-time monitoring for all cold products · GDP certification	
20% Regulatory mastery NAFDAC Good Storage Practice · WHO-prequalified warehouse · Zero import alerts or product seizures	
20% Public health contribution Supply to national immunisation programmes · Emergency tenders fulfilled · Reduced stockouts of critical medicines	
10% Local manufacturing support Supply of APIs to Nigerian drug manufacturers · Technical assistance with formulation	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

2.08 Importer of the Year, Healthcare Equipment & Diagnostics

Recognises the importer of high-value diagnostic and therapeutic equipment, MRI, CT, X-ray, ultrasound, linear accelerators, laboratory analysers. Winners provide installation, commissioning, training, and long-term maintenance, ensuring that Nigerian hospitals can keep equipment operational.

JUDGING CRITERIA

WEIGHT

25% Value of equipment imported

CIF, last 2 years · Preference for state-of-the-art technology

30% Technical support infrastructure

Number of biomedical engineers on staff · Average response time to breakdown <48 hours · Spare parts availability for 5+ years

15% Training & knowledge transfer

Number of Nigerian radiographers or lab scientists trained · Certification programmes conducted

15% Equipment uptime

Average uptime across installed base >95% · SLA compliance

15% Partnerships with Nigerian health institutions

Contracts with teaching hospitals · Referrals from Ministry of Health

TOTAL

100 POINTS

2.09 Importer of the Year, Telecommunications & Data Infrastructure

For the importer of fibre-optic cables, base station equipment, switches, routers, and data centre hardware that powers Nigeria's digital economy. Winners work with NCC-approved vendors, maintain local spares, and support the National Broadband Plan.

JUDGING CRITERIA

WEIGHT

20% Value of telecom infrastructure imports

CIF, last 2 years · Preference for 5G or fibre-to-home equipment

25% Network uptime contribution

Evidence that imported equipment enabled >99.9% network availability · Reduction in service complaints

20% Local content integration

Use of Nigerian civil works, tower erection, or local integration partners

20% Compliance

NCC type approval for all active equipment · SON approval for passive infrastructure

15% Spare parts & support

Local spares holding · Average repair turnaround time

TOTAL

100 POINTS

03

Sector Export Champions

Nigeria's non-oil export basket now spans over 280 products, from processed cocoa butter to assembled vehicles. The most comprehensive pillar of NINTA, Group 3 honours product- and sector-specific excellence: world-class manufacturing, processing, certification and quality.

EACH AWARD JUDGED ON A PUBLISHED 100-POINT SCORECARD

WHY THESE CRITERIA

Sector awards weight verified export volume alongside product quality and certification, the two things international buyers test first. Traceability and standards compliance carry real weight because market access in regulated sectors depends on them.

3.01 Exporter of the Year, Processed Food & Beverages

For finished, packaged, shelf-stable food and drink products (e.g., juices, snacks, seasonings, confectionery) exported to international retail and food service chains. Winners demonstrate international food safety certifications, extended shelf-life validation, and attractive export-ready packaging.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Export FOB value US\$/NGN, last 2 years · YoY growth	
25% Food safety certification BRCGS, IFS, FSSC 22000, or equivalent · Number of customer audits passed	
20% Retail/distribution penetration Number of international retailers (e.g., Carrefour, Walmart, Tesco) or distributors listing the product	
15% Shelf-life & packaging Evidence of shelf-life extension for tropical-to-temperate supply chains · Packaging integrity tests	
15% Consumer acceptance Repeat order rate · Online ratings · Diaspora market share	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

3.02 Exporter of the Year, Automotive Parts & Components

Recognises Nigerian manufacturers of wiring harnesses, brake pads, suspension parts, lighting, or interior components that have integrated into global OEM supply chains. Winners hold IATF 16949 certification and demonstrate near-zero defect rates.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
20% Export value of components FOB, last 2 years · Growth	
30% Quality & defect rate PPM defect rate <500 · IATF 16949 certification · Zero major customer complaints	
25% OEM or Tier-1 supply contracts Contracts with global automakers or Tier-1 suppliers · Length and value of agreements	
15% On-time delivery OTD >98% · Evidence of logistics planning for just-in-time delivery	
10% Local raw material sourcing Percentage of Nigerian steel, plastic, or rubber used	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

3.03 Exporter of the Year, Beauty, Wellness & Cosmetics

For Nigerian brands exporting skincare, haircare, colour cosmetics, and wellness products. Winners combine effective formulations with sophisticated branding, comply with EU or FDA cosmetic regulations, and have secured international distribution.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
20% Export value FOB, last 2 years · Growth	
25% Regulatory compliance EU Cosmetic Regulation (EC 1223/2009) notification · FDA MoCRA listing · Other relevant market approvals	
20% International distribution Number of countries · Presence in physical retail or major e-commerce platforms (Amazon, ASOS, Zalando)	
20% Brand & consumer engagement Social media following from target markets · Influencer partnerships · Press mentions	
15% Ingredient sourcing & claims Local natural ingredient use · Evidence of dermatological testing · Cruelty-free certification	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

3.04 Exporter of the Year, Building Materials (Cement, Glass, Ceramics, Steel)

Honours the producer of construction materials that meet international ASTM, EN, or BS standards. Winners consistently supply cross-border infrastructure projects and manage bulk logistics efficiently. The strongest entries demonstrate export volume (tonnes), certification & quality and large project references.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Export volume (tonnes) Last 2 years · YoY growth	
25% Certification & quality SONCAP for re-export · ISO 9001 · Product-specific marks (e.g., CE for cement)	
20% Large project references Supply to international contractors (e.g., China Harbour, Julius Berger) for projects outside Nigeria	
15% Logistics cost per tonne Reduction YoY · Use of rail or inland ports	
15% Sustainability Carbon footprint per tonne · Use of alternative fuels or clinker substitution	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

3.05 Exporter of the Year, Chemicals & Petrochemicals (Urea, Methanol, PP, PE)

For large-scale producers and exporters of basic and intermediate chemicals. Winners dominate specific product categories, operate world-scale plants, and have diversified export destinations. Judging weighs export volume (tonnes), product quality and destination diversification, each criterion verified against documentary evidence.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Export volume (tonnes) Absolute and share of national exports for that product	
20% Product quality Meeting international specs (e.g., ISO 22241 for AdBlue, ASTM for methanol) · Zero customer rejections	
20% Destination diversification Number of countries · Concentration index (Herfindahl) · lower is better	
15% Logistics & terminal efficiency Vessel loading rate · Demurrage per tonne · Use of dedicated export terminals	
15% Environmental & safety Responsible Care certification · Zero major incidents · Emissions reporting	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

3.06 Exporter of the Year, Leather & Finished Leather Goods

For tanners and manufacturers of finished leather (crust, finished) and goods (footwear, bags, belts). Winners have moved up the value chain from raw hides and achieved international luxury brand or retailer approval.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Export value of finished goods Not raw hides · Preference for footwear and accessories	
20% Leather Working Group (LWG) or ISO 9001 certification Valid certification status	
20% International brand partnerships Supply contracts with global fashion brands or retailers	
15% Traceability From abattoir to finished product · No use of protected species	
15% Design & innovation Evidence of in-house design · International design awards	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

3.07 Exporter of the Year, Solid Minerals (Processed)

For mining and processing companies exporting beneficiated or processed minerals (e.g., lead/zinc concentrates, barite, limestone, gypsum). Winners demonstrate transparent supply chains, environmental responsibility, and consistent quality.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Export volume & value Tonnes and FOB value, last 2 years · Growth	
20% Processing level Value added locally: crushing, milling, flotation, bagging	
25% Compliance & traceability Mining Cadastre Office compliance · Evidence of artisanal formalisation · Chain of custody	
15% Environment & community Reclamation plans · Community development agreements	
10% Logistics to export point Truck or rail evacuation · Port loading efficiency	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

3.08 Exporter of the Year, Pharmaceuticals (Finished)

For Nigerian drug manufacturers exporting finished pharmaceutical products (tablets, capsules, syrups, injectables) to other African countries or beyond. Winners hold WHO-GMP, have product registrations in multiple markets, and supply public health programmes.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
20% Export value FOB, last 2 years · Growth	
25% Regulatory approvals NAFDAC plus at least two other national regulatory authorities (e.g., SAHPRA, TFDA, ZAMRA)	
20% Quality systems WHO-GMP or PIC/S certification · Stability study data · Zero recall in 5 years	
20% Market penetration Number of countries · Percentage of revenue from exports	
15% Access to medicines Supply to UN agencies, Global Fund, or government tenders	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

3.09 Exporter of the Year, Plastics & Rubber Finished Products

For manufacturers of finished plastic goods (pipes, crates, household items, tyres, hoses) that have successfully exported to regional or global markets. Winners use locally compounded materials and hold relevant product standards.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Export volume & value Tonnes or FOB, last 2 years	
25% Product certification ISO, ASTM, SON for re-export · Pressure rating for pipes	
20% Local raw material use Percentage of Nigerian-sourced polymers or rubber	
15% Export diversification Number of ECOWAS or other African countries	
15% Innovation Recycled content in exported products · Proprietary designs	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

3.10 Exporter of the Year, Furniture & Woodwork

For finished furniture (wood, metal, or composite) and home décor items exported to international retail or hospitality sectors. Winners manage timber legality (FSC/PEFC) and durability testing. Winning organisations evidence export FOB value, legal & sustainable sourcing and design & finish quality.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Export FOB value Last 2 years · Growth	
25% Legal & sustainable sourcing FSC or PEFC chain-of-custody · CITES compliance for endangered species	
20% Design & finish quality Evidence of international design standards · Client photos	
15% Logistics & packaging Container loading efficiency · Damage rate <1%	
15% Repeat international contracts Hotels, retail chains, contract furniture buyers	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

3.11 Exporter of the Year, Textiles & Apparel

For finished garments, African print fabrics, or technical textiles exported under AGOA or other preference programmes. Winners demonstrate social compliance, fabric quality, and on-time delivery. Excellence is assessed through export value, social compliance and product quality, among other indicators.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Export value AGOA-eligible percentage a plus	
25% Social compliance SMETA, SA8000, or BSCI audit score · No child labour	
20% Product quality Fabric strength, colour fastness tests · Zero buyer rejections	
15% AGOA utilisation Valid visa · Rules of origin compliance	
15% Lead time & flexibility Average order-to-shipment days · Ability to handle small orders	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

3.12 Exporter of the Year, Motor Vehicles & Heavy Machinery (Assembled)

For CKD assemblers of vehicles (cars, trucks, buses) or heavy machinery that have begun exporting to other African countries. Winners meet AfCFTA rules of origin and provide after-sales support in destination markets.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Number of units exported Last 2 years · Growth	
25% Local content percentage Exceeding AfCFTA thresholds · Use of local tyres, batteries, seats	
20% After-sales network Dealer or service centres in destination countries	
15% Warranty & parts support Warranty claims rate <2% · Parts availability	
15% Certification SON approval for exports · ISO 9001 assembly plant	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

3.13 Exporter of the Year, Electricals & Electronics (Cables, Switchgears, Appliances)

For manufacturers of electrical products that have achieved international safety certifications (IEC, CE, UL) and export to industrial or utility buyers. Winning organisations evidence export value, safety certification and large project references.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Export value Last 2 years	
30% Safety certification IEC, CE, UL, or SON for re-export · Test reports from accredited labs	
20% Large project references Supply to utilities, telecoms, or construction firms abroad	
15% Local value-add Assembly of imported components vs. local raw materials	
10% After-sales support Technical support availability in export markets	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

3.14 Exporter of the Year, Cocoa Beans & Derivatives

Specialist award for cocoa exporters, recognising quality (fermentation, cut test), volume, and progress in exporting cocoa butter, cake, or powder. The strongest entries demonstrate export volume, bean quality and value-added share.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Export volume Tonnes, last 2 years	
25% Bean quality Average cut test score >75% · Low mould percentage	
20% Value-added share Percentage of exports as processed derivatives	
15% Certification Fairtrade, Rainforest, UTZ, or direct trade verification	
10% Traceability Farmer cooperative link · Geolocation of farms	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

3.15 Exporter of the Year, Cashew Nuts (Processed Kernels)

For raw and processed cashew exports, with emphasis on kernel quality, grade A percentage, and direct supply to global snack manufacturers. Judging weighs total volume (raw + kernel equivalent), kernel out-turn & grade and processing level, each criterion verified against documentary evidence.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Total volume (raw + kernel equivalent) Last 2 years	
25% Kernel out-turn & grade Percentage grade A kernels · Whole kernel percentage	
20% Processing level Local steaming/peeling · Value added	
15% Food safety Aflatoxin tests · BRCGS or FSSC for kernel facility	
15% Direct buyer relationships Supply contracts with global snack brands	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

3.16 Exporter of the Year, Sesame Seeds

For food-grade sesame exporters meeting EU, Japan, or US purity and aflatoxin standards. The strongest entries demonstrate volume (MT), purity level and aflatoxin compliance.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Volume (MT) Last 2 years	
25% Purity level ≥99.5% purity · Low foreign matter	
20% Aflatoxin compliance Consistent <4 ppb for EU · Lab reports	
15% Traceability Farmer group records · BCI or sustainable sesame certification preferred	
10% Export diversification Number of destination countries	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

3.17 Exporter of the Year, Shea Butter & Oilseeds

For shea butter (raw or refined), groundnuts, soybeans, and other oilseeds. Winners demonstrate quality consistency, organic certification where relevant, and cosmetics/food industry acceptance. Excellence is assessed through export volume, quality parameters and organic / Ecocert certification, among other indicators.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Export volume Last 2 years	
25% Quality parameters Free fatty acid (FFA) ≤2% for shea · Moisture content · Peroxide value	
15% Organic / Ecocert certification If applicable	
20% Processing level Mechanical extraction vs. manual · Refined shea	
15% Gender-inclusive sourcing Women's cooperative involvement · Evidence of fair payment	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

3.18 Exporter of the Year, Beverage Manufacturing (Non-Alcoholic & Alcoholic)

For Nigerian-produced beverages (soft drinks, juices, beer, spirits) exported to international markets. Winners manage excise taxes, labelling regulations, and shelf-life for tropical products. Excellence is assessed through export volume (litres), international regulatory compliance and shelf-life & packaging, among other indicators.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Export volume (litres) Last 2 years	
25% International regulatory compliance Alcohol/tax stamps · Country-specific ingredient approvals	
20% Shelf-life & packaging Stability under varied temperatures · Carbonation retention	
20% Distribution penetration Number of export markets · Retail listings	
10% Brand recognition Social media mentions in target markets	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

3.19 Exporter of the Year, Fabricated Metal Products (Structural, Tools, Hardware)

For Nigerian metal fabricators exporting structural steel, hand tools, locks, or custom engineering products. Winners hold welding certifications and supply international construction or mining projects. Judging weighs export value, welding & fabrication certification and large project supply, each criterion verified against documentary evidence.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Export value Last 2 years	
25% Welding & fabrication certification ISO 3834, AWS D1.1, or equivalent	
20% Large project supply Contracts with multinational contractors	
15% Corrosion protection Galvanising or coating standards · Salt spray test results	
15% Custom design capability Engineering drawings approved by international clients	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

3.20 Exporter of the Year, Healthcare & Medical Supplies (Consumables)

For manufacturers of medical consumables (gloves, syringes, masks, gauze, disinfectants) exported to African or global health systems. Winners hold ISO 13485 and relevant CE or FDA approvals. The strongest entries demonstrate export value, quality & regulatory and sterility assurance.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Export value Last 2 years	
30% Quality & regulatory ISO 13485 · CE mark · FDA 510(k) if applicable	
20% Sterility assurance Ethylene oxide or gamma sterilisation validation · Batch records	
15% UN/WHO tenders Winning bids for global health procurement	
10% Local raw material Use of Nigerian latex, cotton, or chemicals	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

04

Overall & Special Export Achievements

The pinnacle of the awards. These categories are neither sector- nor region-bound; they recognise the flag-bearers whose performance, growth, brand power or lifetime contribution sets the benchmark for the entire trade community.

EACH AWARD JUDGED ON A PUBLISHED 100-POINT SCORECARD

WHY THESE CRITERIA

These flagship awards weight scale, growth and brand strength, the marks of a national champion, while reserving room for trajectory and innovation so that emerging and fast-growing exporters can compete on merit, not size alone.

4.01 Commodities Exporter of the Year (Bulk Raw Materials)

Reserved for the heavyweight in bulk raw material exports (agricultural commodities, solid minerals, petrochemical feedstocks). Recognises unmatched scale, supply consistency, and logistical mastery. Not for value-added processed goods.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
40% Annual export volume (tonnes) Absolute tonnes · Peer comparison within same commodity	
20% Supply consistency Monthly volume variance <10% · No contract defaults	
15% Logistics efficiency Cost per tonne delivered to export destination · Demurrage rate	
15% Compliance & transparency PSC, NEPC registration · Zero major customs infractions	
10% Market reach Number of destination countries · Top customer concentration <40%	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

4.02 Global Exporter of the Year (Flagship)

The single highest honour for any Nigerian exporter. Awarded to the enterprise that represents the gold standard of Nigerian trade on the world stage, based on export volume, market diversification, quality reputation, and compliance across multiple continents.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Total non-oil export value (FOB) Top 5% of all Nigerian exporters	
20% Geographic diversification Exports to at least 3 continents · Number of countries	
20% Quality & compliance record Major international certifications · Zero major recalls or import bans	
15% Growth trajectory YoY growth in value over last 3 years	
15% Brand & reputation Evidence of international media coverage · Industry awards · Customer testimonials from multiple regions	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

4.03 Value-Added Exporter of the Year

For companies that have successfully moved up the value chain by processing raw materials locally before export. Winners demonstrate a clear strategy of import substitution, job creation, and technology adoption, with at least 40% of export value coming from processed (not raw) goods.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
35% Value-added share Percentage of exports that are processed or manufactured, not raw commodities	
20% Local employment impact Jobs created in processing facilities · Ratio of processing to raw jobs	
15% Technology transfer Investment in processing equipment · Local R&D	
20% Export growth of value-added products YoY growth in value-added export revenue	
10% Backward integration Percentage of raw material sourced from Nigerian smallholders or mines	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

4.04 Emerging Exporter of the Year (≤5 years since first export)

Celebrates the “rising star” that has commenced export operations within the last five years and already achieved significant market share, rapid scaling, and innovation. Judges look for exceptional growth from a low base and a clear pathway to becoming a major exporter.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
Pass/ Fail Time since first export Must be ≤60 months	
35% CAGR of export value Minimum 50% year-on-year to be considered	
20% Absolute export value in most recent year Demonstrating scale, not just percentage	
20% Innovation in market entry Novel distribution, digital marketing, packaging, or financing model	
15% Potential for sustainability Repeat orders · Quality systems · Management depth	
10% Mentorship / ecosystem contribution Willingness to share learnings	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

4.05 Fastest Growing Exporter of the Year (Government-Promoted Sector)

Recognises the highest year-on-year export value growth within a sector explicitly prioritised by the Nigerian government (e.g., agro-processing, solid minerals, petrochemicals, automotive, pharmaceuticals). Winners align with national export diversification goals.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
50% YoY export value growth (%) Highest percentage among entrants · Verified by NEPC or customs data	
20% Absolute growth (NGN/US\$) Meaningful scale, not just from a tiny base	
15% Alignment with NEPC priority products List of government-promoted sectors	
10% Sustainability of growth Second year of growth · Not a one-off contract	
5% Job creation per unit export Employment intensity	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

4.06 Export Brand of the Year (Indigenous)

Awarded to an indigenous Nigerian company that has successfully transformed a local product into a recognised global brand. Winners demonstrate international trademark protection, consumer recognition in target markets, premium pricing, and cultural authenticity.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
15% Trademark registration Registered in at least 3 export countries	
25% International consumer recognition Social media following from target markets · Media mentions · Independent reviews	
20% Premium pricing achieved Price per unit vs. category average in export market	
20% Distribution reach International retail listings or e-commerce availability	
20% Brand story & authenticity Nigerian origin clearly communicated and celebrated · Packaging design awards	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

4.07 SME Exporter of the Year

Recognises a small-to-medium enterprise (200 full-time employees or turnover NGN 5 billion) that has overcome scale limitations to compete effectively in global markets. Winners demonstrate resourcefulness, use of SME trade finance, and measurable export success.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Export value as % of turnover Minimum 30% preferred	
20% YoY export growth Absolute and percentage	
15% Use of trade finance BoI, NEXIM, or bank facilities specifically for SMEs	
15% Operational innovation E-commerce, consolidators, shared warehousing	
15% Quality / certifications ISO, organic, or product-specific marks	
10% Employment generation Jobs added in last 24 months	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

4.08 Lifetime Achievement in International Trade

A tribute to an individual or institution whose career-long dedication has fundamentally shaped Nigeria's international trade profile. Judges look for decades of leadership, mentorship, policy or infrastructure contribution, and a legacy of enabling other exporters.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
20% Length of service Minimum 25 years in international trade	
30% Measurable impact Evidence of trade policy influenced · Infrastructure built · Export volume enabled	
25% Mentorship & ecosystem building Number of individuals or companies mentored · Legacy of export champions	
15% Integrity & recognition No adverse findings · Recognition by government, trade bodies	
10% Continued relevance Still actively contributing or advising	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

4.09 Export Supporting Agency of the Year

Presented to a government agency or parastatal (e.g., NEPC, NEXIM, NAFDAC, SON, Nigeria Customs, NPA, NESREA) that has demonstrably improved the volume, value, or ease of Nigeria's non-oil exports through policy implementation, incentives, or infrastructure.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Measurable improvement in non-oil exports Under the agency's direct programmes or influence	
25% Implementation of trade facilitation initiatives National Single Window · Export desk · Reduction in clearance time	
25% Private sector satisfaction Survey of exporters · Reduction in complaints	
10% Innovation Digital platforms · Risk-based inspections · Export trade houses	
10% Transparency & fairness No allegations of corruption · Published service standards	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

05

Trade Advocacy & Chambers of Commerce

Chambers, associations and advocacy groups are the institutional backbone of trade. This group recognises bodies that deliver measurable outcomes: signed MOUs, higher member export volumes, successful advocacy and tangible SME support.

EACH AWARD JUDGED ON A PUBLISHED 100-POINT SCORECARD

WHY THESE CRITERIA

Advocacy is judged on outcomes, not activity: signed agreements, measurable increases in member export volumes and successful policy interventions carry the most weight. Reach and SME support are rewarded because the true test of a chamber is the trade it enables.

5.01 SME Export Trade Support Initiative of the Year

Recognises the most impactful programme (run by a chamber, association, or trade hub) that helps small local businesses become exporters. Winners provide more than information, they offer toolkits, mentoring, shared logistics, or matching with international buyers.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Number of SMEs that started exporting Through the programme, with verification	
25% Total export value generated by participating SMEs Attributable to programme	
20% Depth of support Training hours · One-on-one advisory · Pilot shipments	
15% Sustainability Programme continued beyond pilot · Alumni network	
10% Measurable cost reduction for SMEs Lower freight · Shared containers · Group certification	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

5.02 Trade Mission Facilitation of the Year

For the most strategically executed international business delegation organised by a chamber of commerce. Winners demonstrate pre-mission preparation, high-level B2B matchmaking, and post-mission tracking of MOUs and contracts.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
35% Value of signed MOUs or contracts US\$/NGN, attributed to mission	
25% Number of participating companies with follow-on deals Over 12 months	
15% Quality of pre-mission market intelligence Customised buyer lists · Regulatory briefings	
15% Government / diplomatic co-ordination Embassy involvement · Minister-level attendance	
10% Post-mission support Tracking system · Dispute resolution · Feedback loop	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

5.03 Bilateral Chamber of Commerce of the Year, Collaboration with Business

Awarded to a bilateral chamber (e.g., Nigerian-German, American, British, Chinese chambers) that creates high-value networking, B2B matchmaking, and tangible business opportunities for its members. The strongest entries demonstrate member satisfaction score, number of B2B matches leading to trade and member retention rate.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Member satisfaction score Annual survey · Response rate >50%	
30% Number of B2B matches leading to trade Verified contracts or shipments	
20% Member retention rate >80% year on year	
15% Trade advisory services Webinars, market reports, legal clinics	
10% Events quality Speaker calibre · Attendance · Post-event outcomes	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

5.04 Bilateral Chamber of Commerce of the Year, Collaboration with Government

Honours the chamber that has most effectively bridged private sector and public authorities, aligning trade objectives with national policy, simplifying administrative processes, and fostering collaborative trade environments.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
20% Number of joint policy submissions To ministries, NASS, NEPC	
30% Evidence of government action on chamber recommendations Specific regulations changed · Circulars issued	
20% Participation in government trade committees NEPC council · Customs consultative forum	
15% Co-organised trade forums With NEPC, NEXIM, BoI, or ministries	
15% Measurable reduction in member complaints About specific regulatory issues	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

5.05 Bilateral Chamber of Commerce of the Year, Policy Advocacy

Recognises the chamber that serves as a powerful voice for structural change, using research-backed advocacy to lobby for trade-friendly legislation and removal of red tape. Judging weighs specific regulatory or legislative change achieved, quality of research and coalition-building, each criterion verified against documentary evidence.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
40% Specific regulatory or legislative change achieved Documented before/after	
20% Quality of research White papers · Economic impact studies · Surveys	
15% Coalition-building Alliances with other chambers, CSOs, media	
15% Media visibility Number of articles, interviews, op-eds on trade issues	
10% Testimony before government Invitations to hearings, technical working groups	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

5.06 State Chamber of the Year (Export Initiatives)

Awarded to a sub-national chamber that has demonstrated localised impact, taking export education and market-entry support to businesses in smaller cities and rural areas. Winning organisations evidence number of exporters trained / facilitated in the state, total export value generated from state-based members and partnerships with state government.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Number of exporters trained / facilitated in the state Verified attendance	
25% Total export value generated from state-based members Tracked over 12 months	
20% Partnerships with state government Ministry of Commerce · State investment agency	
15% Coverage of LGAs Number of local government areas reached	
10% Innovation in local outreach Trade clinics · Mobile advisory · Local language materials	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

06

Ports, Terminals & Free Zones

Seaports, dry ports, free zones and terminals decide whether Nigerian goods compete on speed and cost. This group recognises facilities that achieve verifiable efficiency gains: faster vessel turnaround, lower dwell times and transparent administration.

EACH AWARD JUDGED ON A PUBLISHED 100-POINT SCORECARD

WHY THESE CRITERIA

Infrastructure awards weight verifiable efficiency, vessel turnaround, dwell time and throughput, because competitiveness is decided in hours and naira saved. Investment, transparency and safety are weighted to reward facilities that improve sustainably, not momentarily.

6.01 Free Trade Zone (FTZ) of the Year

Recognises the economic zone that best leverages fiscal incentives and infrastructure to attract FDI, boost non-oil exports, and simplify the ease of doing business. Winners show growth in zone-based enterprises, exports from the zone, and employment.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Value of exports from zone US\$/NGN, last 2 years · Growth	
20% Number of operational enterprises Increase YoY	
15% Employment generated (direct) Jobs · Local preference percentage	
20% Ease of customs clearance Average hours from arrival to exit · Single window integration	
20% Infrastructure quality 24/7 power, water · Road condition · Security	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

6.02 Inland Dry Port of the Year

For dry ports that successfully extend seaport efficiency into the interior, reducing congestion at coastal ports and lowering logistics costs for hinterland traders. Winners demonstrate customs integration, rail connectivity, and fast evacuation.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Container throughput (TEUs) YoY growth	
25% Average clearance time (arrival to exit) Hours; reduction YoY	
20% Rail utilisation % of volumes moved by rail vs. truck	
15% Cost reduction for traders Estimated NGN savings per container vs. going to seaport	
15% Customs compliance Zero major infractions · Authorised Economic Operator status	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

6.03 Most Improved Port Terminal (Reducing Congestion)

Highlights the terminal that has made the most significant year-over-year strides in operational fluidity, specifically measurable reduction in vessel turnaround times, truck waiting times, and container dwell times.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Reduction in vessel turnaround time Days, YoY	
25% Reduction in truck waiting time at gate Hours, YoY	
20% Increase in crane productivity Moves per hour, YoY	
15% Implementation of technology TOS · Appointment system · OCR gates	
10% Dwell time reduction Import / export containers	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

6.04 Seaport of the Year (Overall Efficiency & Infrastructure)

The premier award for maritime gateways, recognising the seaport that demonstrates the highest level of overall efficiency, safety, infrastructure reliability, and administrative transparency. Judging weighs average vessel turnaround time, berth availability & draft and security & safety, each criterion verified against documentary evidence.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Average vessel turnaround time Benchmarked against global averages	
20% Berth availability & draft Dredging schedule · Berth occupancy <70% is positive	
20% Security & safety ISPS compliance · Accident rate	
20% User satisfaction Survey of shipping lines, forwarders, terminal operators	
15% Digital integration Port community system · Paperless trade	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

6.05 Terminal Operator of the Year, Containerised Cargo

Awarded to the terminal operator with the highest TEU throughput and handling precision, distinguished by crane productivity, TOS sophistication, and commitment to minimising dwell times. The strongest entries demonstrate annual TEU throughput, crane productivity (moves per hour) and average import dwell time.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Annual TEU throughput Absolute and YoY growth	
20% Crane productivity (moves per hour) Average gross crane rate	
20% Average import dwell time Days, lower is better	
15% Equipment availability >95% uptime	
10% Customer service Tariff transparency · Dispute resolution	
10% Safety record Lost time injury frequency rate	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

6.06 Terminal Operator of the Year, Bulk & Break-Bulk

Recognises excellence in handling non-containerised cargo (grains, fertiliser, steel, machinery). Winners demonstrate specialised equipment, storage integrity, and rapid discharge / evacuation. Judging weighs annual tonnage handled, discharge rate (tonnes/hour) and storage capacity & preservation, each criterion verified against documentary evidence.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Annual tonnage handled Last 2 years	
25% Discharge rate (tonnes/hour) Average across cargo types	
20% Storage capacity & preservation Silos, sheds, grain aeration	
15% Environmental management Dust suppression · Spill control	
10% User satisfaction Survey of bulk cargo importers / exporters	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

6.07 Terminal Operator of the Year, Oil & Gas / Liquid Bulk

For operators of jetties and terminals handling liquid bulk (crude, refined products, chemicals, LPG). Winners show high environmental safety standards, metering accuracy, and efficient vessel turnaround. The strongest entries demonstrate annual volume (cubic metres), metering accuracy & calibration and vessel turnaround time.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Annual volume (cubic metres) Last 2 years	
20% Metering accuracy & calibration Third-party verification	
20% Vessel turnaround time From berthing to sailing	
25% Environmental compliance Spill frequency and volume · OGP standards	
10% Safety record Lost time incidents · Near-miss reporting	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

6.08 Terminal Innovation of the Year

Reserved for the port or terminal that has redefined operational efficiency through cutting-edge technology, AI logistics, automated container handling, seamless customs integration, or blockchain documentation. Judging weighs measurable operational improvement from innovation, novelty of technology and integration with national systems, each criterion verified against documentary evidence.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
35% Measurable operational improvement from innovation e.g., 40% reduction in gate time	
25% Novelty of technology First in Nigeria · Global benchmark	
20% Integration with national systems Single Window · Customs · Shipping lines	
10% Scalability Potential to replicate elsewhere	
10% User adoption Percentage of users actively using new system	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

P 07

Shipping, Freight & Logistics

Airlines, carriers, forwarders and cold-chain specialists determine whether exports arrive fresh, on time and competitively priced. This group honours providers that deliver reliability, visibility and resilience under disruption.

EACH AWARD JUDGED ON A PUBLISHED 100-POINT SCORECARD

WHY THESE CRITERIA

Logistics is judged on reliability and reach: on-time performance, network coverage and cargo integrity carry the most weight, since an exporter is only as competitive as its weakest link. Resilience and technology are rewarded for keeping goods moving under disruption.

7.01 Air Cargo Carrier of the Year

Recognises the airline (passenger or freighter) that provides the most reliable, time-sensitive airfreight service for Nigerian exports and imports. Winners show consistent belly-hold or freighter capacity, low claims ratio, and cold chain capability.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Annual cargo tonnage to / from Nigeria Last 12 months	
25% Schedule reliability On-time performance >90%	
20% Claims ratio % of value claimed; target <0.5%	
15% Cold chain capability Active containers · Temperature monitoring	
15% Ground handling partnership Investment in Nigerian cargo terminals	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

7.02 Air Cargo Terminal Operator of the Year

For the facility manager that masters airside logistics, efficient cargo processing, security screening, and seamless transition from tarmac to warehouse. Judging weighs cargo throughput (tonnes), average cargo release time (post-landing) and security compliance, each criterion verified against documentary evidence.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Cargo throughput (tonnes) Last 12 months	
30% Average cargo release time (post-landing) Hours; reduction YoY	
20% Security compliance AVSEC, TSA, or equivalent audits passed	
15% Perishable centre / cold room Capacity and temperature performance	
10% Digital manifest & tracking Integration with airlines and customs	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

7.03 Cold Chain Logistics Provider of the Year

Honours excellence in temperature-controlled logistics, from farm or factory to export destination. Winners ensure an unbroken cold chain for pharmaceuticals, perishables, and chemicals using real-time monitoring and redundant equipment.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
20% Number of temperature-controlled vehicles / containers Fleet size	
25% Real-time monitoring penetration % of shipments with live tracking	
25% Temperature excursion rate <0.5% of shipments	
15% GDP or ISO 22000 certification Valid audit	
15% Client retention rate >90% year on year	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

7.04 Freight Forwarder of the Year, Enterprise (Multinational)

For large-scale or multinational agencies providing end-to-end global logistics solutions for corporate clients. Winners offer single-point accountability, multimodal expertise, and advanced client visibility platforms.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
20% Total TEUs / tonnes handled Last 12 months	
20% Geographic network Number of countries with owned or exclusive agents	
20% Client visibility platform Real-time tracking · Document management	
20% Customs clearance performance Average clearance time <48 hours for compliant shipments	
10% Claims ratio <0.5% of value	
10% Client testimonials Net Promoter Score or similar	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

7.05 Logistics & Haulage Service Provider (Sea-to-Land)

Recognises the firm that provides the essential road-to-sea link, evacuating containers from ports and delivering to industrial zones or inland destinations. Winners excel in fleet maintenance, GPS tracking, and safety.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Number of containers / tonnes evacuated Last 12 months	
25% Average turnaround time (port to warehouse) Hours	
15% Fleet size & maintenance Mean distance between failures	
15% GPS tracking & ETA accuracy Deviation <30 minutes	
15% Safety & compliance Road transport permits · Driver hours · Accident rate	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

7.06 **Logistics Service Provider (E-commerce)**

For the innovator facilitating cross-border e-commerce, last-mile delivery, returns management, and integration with online marketplaces. Winners enable Nigerian brands to sell directly to international consumers. Judging weighs number of cross-border e-commerce parcels shipped, last-mile delivery success rate and average transit time (days) to top 5 markets, each criterion verified against documentary evidence.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Number of cross-border e-commerce parcels shipped Last 12 months	
25% Last-mile delivery success rate In destination countries	
20% Average transit time (days) to top 5 markets Deviation rate	
15% Returns processing efficiency Time to process · Cost	
15% Integration with e-commerce platforms Shopify, Magento, WooCommerce plugins	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

7.07 **Logistics Service Provider (Express Courier)**

Honours the masters of urgency, courier and express cargo firms providing fastest transit times for documents and small parcels, with robust global networks and tracking. The strongest entries demonstrate average transit time to top 10 destinations, tracking accuracy and customs clearance for courier.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Average transit time to top 10 destinations Days	
25% Tracking accuracy Real-time, proactive alerts	
20% Customs clearance for courier Average release time	
15% Claims rate <0.3% of shipments	
10% Global network coverage Countries served	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

7.08 Logistics Service Provider (Warehousing) of the Year

Recognises excellence in inventory management and storage infrastructure, scalable, secure, and technologically integrated warehousing that serves as strategic buffer in the trade cycle. The strongest entries demonstrate total warehouse capacity (sqm) & utilisation, inventory accuracy and WMS or automation.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
20% Total warehouse capacity (sqm) & utilisation Square metres · Occupancy	
30% Inventory accuracy >99.5% cycle count accuracy	
20% WMS or automation RFID · Barcoding · Pick-to-light	
15% Bonded warehouse licensing Customs licence · Compliance record	
15% Value-added services Kitting · Labelling · Light assembly	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

7.09 Shipping Line of the Year

Recognises the ocean carrier that provides the most consistent and reliable service to Nigerian importers and exporters, vessel frequency, transit time reliability, equipment availability, and transparent pricing. Judging weighs vessel frequency (calls per month), transit time reliability and equipment availability, each criterion verified against documentary evidence.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Vessel frequency (calls per month) Last 12 months	
25% Transit time reliability On-time arrival vs. schedule	
20% Equipment availability Containers, chassis · Shortage frequency	
15% Demurrage / detention fairness Time allowance · Dispute resolution	
15% Investment in Nigeria Local office · Technology · Training	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

08

Trade Enablers & Technology

Behind every transaction are the enablers that reduce friction: trade lawyers, inspection companies, B2B platforms and settlement technology. This group celebrates the firms, often invisible, that make trade faster, safer and more transparent.

EACH AWARD JUDGED ON A PUBLISHED 100-POINT SCORECARD

WHY THESE CRITERIA

Enablers are weighted on the friction they remove, transactions secured, time saved and disputes avoided, rather than on profile. Demonstrable client outcomes and adoption matter more than scale.

8.01 International Trade Law Firm of the Year

Honours the legal practice with peerless expertise in cross-border contracts, trade treaties, arbitration, and dispute resolution. Winners assist Nigerian exporters in navigating international trade law, including WTO disputes, investment treaty arbitration, and AfCFTA rules.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Number of cross-border trade contracts advised Last 2 years	
30% Successful dispute resolution Arbitration or litigation outcomes · Value at stake	
20% Expertise in trade treaties AfCFTA, WTO, bilateral investment treaties	
15% Client repeat rate >80%	
10% Pro bono or policy contribution Trade law reform · SME clinics	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

8.02 Quality Assurance & Inspection Company of the Year

Recognises the vital “gatekeepers”, firms that provide pre-shipment inspection, testing, and certification, ensuring Nigerian exports meet international standards and imports comply with domestic safety regulations.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Number of inspections conducted For Nigerian import / export trade	
20% Turnaround time for certificates Average hours from request	
20% Detection of non-compliant shipments Percentage of inspections finding issues	
20% Accreditation ISO 17020 · ISO 17025 · Or equivalent	
15% Digital reporting QR-verified certificates · Online portal	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

8.03 B2B Trade Technology Platform of the Year

Awarded to the digital marketplace or platform that connects Nigerian suppliers directly to international buyers, using AI, blockchain, or advanced analytics to create transparent, efficient trade. Excellence is assessed through value of transactions facilitated, number of Nigerian suppliers listed and number of international buyer matches leading to orders, among other indicators.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Value of transactions facilitated US\$ or NGN, last 12 months	
20% Number of Nigerian suppliers listed Active	
25% Number of international buyer matches leading to orders Verified deals	
15% Use of technology AI matching · Blockchain provenance · Trade finance integration	
10% User satisfaction Supplier surveys	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

8.04 Trade Facilitation Enabler of the Year (Flagship)

The premier recognition for the organisation (public or private) that has most significantly reduced the “friction” of cross-border trade, lowering transaction costs, streamlining processes, or influencing policy. Judging weighs measurable reduction in trade friction, evidence of policy or process change and scalability, each criterion verified against documentary evidence.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
40% Measurable reduction in trade friction e.g., days saved, cost reduction per container	
20% Evidence of policy or process change Adoption by government or industry	
15% Scalability Replicable across ports or sectors	
15% Stakeholder adoption Number of traders using the solution	
10% Innovation First-in-Nigeria solution	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

09

Diplomatic Corps & Embassy Excellence

Embassies and high commissions are gateways to trade and investment. This group recognises missions that make trade promotion core to their work, with measurable outcomes in bilateral trade value, investment flows and exporter satisfaction.

EACH AWARD JUDGED ON A PUBLISHED 100-POINT SCORECARD

WHY THESE CRITERIA

Missions are judged on measurable economic outcomes, bilateral trade value, investment facilitated and exporter satisfaction, rather than the number of events held. The weighting rewards diplomacy that translates into deals.

9.01 Most Business-Friendly Embassy of the Year (Flagship)

The highest diplomatic honour at NINTA, presented to the embassy that has most holistically integrated trade and investment into its mission, supporting Nigerian and home-country businesses, reducing administrative bottlenecks, and fostering commercial growth.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
20% Business visa processing time Average days · Priority service availability	
25% Responsiveness to Nigerian business enquiries Survey response rate · Average reply time	
20% Number of trade / investment events hosted Annually, with Nigerian participation	
15% Market intelligence availability Website resources · Sector guides	
10% Resolution of trade disputes Assistance with customs or contract issues	
10% Bilateral trade growth YoY under the embassy's tenure	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

9.02 Embassy of the Year, Economic Diplomacy

Recognises the mission that has strengthened macroeconomic ties through high-level dialogues, trade agreements, and stable frameworks for long-term bilateral prosperity. Excellence is assessed through number of high-level economic dialogues, trade agreements / MOUs signed and economic policy engagement, among other indicators.

JUDGING CRITERIA

WEIGHT

25% Number of high-level economic dialogues

Ministerial, presidential

30% Trade agreements / MOUs signed

Preferential trade · Investment protection

20% Economic policy engagement

Frequency of meetings with Nigerian ministries

15% Support for Nigerian export diversification

Technical assistance for standards

10% Cultural / economic branding

Country brand campaigns in Nigeria

TOTAL

100 POINTS

9.03 Embassy of the Year, Trade Promotion

Honours the embassy effective in negotiating trade protocols, tariff reductions, or market-access agreements that directly benefit the flow of goods and services. Excellence is assessed through trade facilitation agreements concluded, trade promotion events and direct support to Nigerian exporters, among other indicators.

JUDGING CRITERIA

WEIGHT

35% Trade facilitation agreements concluded

Tariff cuts · SPS equivalence · Customs cooperation

25% Trade promotion events

Expos · Buyer-seller meets · Pavilions

20% Direct support to Nigerian exporters

Market entry advice · Partner search

20% Success stories

Documented Nigerian export wins with embassy help

TOTAL

100 POINTS

9.04 Embassy of the Year, Investment Promotion

Recognises the embassy that has been most successful in channelling FDI into Nigeria's key sectors, organising investment forums, connecting capital to local opportunities, and serving as a credible bridge for investors.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
40% Value of FDI facilitated US\$ in last 2 years, attributable to embassy	
20% Number of investment forums / site visits With Nigerian participation	
20% Investor satisfaction Survey of companies that invested	
10% Sector focus Alignment with Nigeria's priority sectors	
10% After-care support Post-investment services	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

9.05 Embassy of the Year, Export Incentives

Honours the mission that has created or facilitated effective frameworks for Nigerian goods to enter its home market, promoting duty-free schemes, trade preference programmes, and educational initiatives. Judging weighs utilisation of preference programmes, exporter training & awareness and duty-free coverage, each criterion verified against documentary evidence.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Utilisation of preference programmes Percentage increase in Nigerian exports under AGOA, GSP, etc.	
25% Exporter training & awareness Seminars · Webinars · Guides	
20% Duty-free coverage Number of Nigerian products eligible	
15% Customs cooperation Advance rulings · Post-clearance audit support	
10% Feedback from Nigerian exporters Survey	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

P 10

Executive Leadership & Policy

Policy matters. This group recognises executive leadership, ministers, governors and senior officials, whose vision and implementation tangibly improved Nigeria's trade performance. Nomination-only, judged on third-party evidence.

EACH AWARD JUDGED ON A PUBLISHED 100-POINT SCORECARD

WHY THESE CRITERIA

Leadership is assessed on implementation and impact, not announcements. Third-party evidence of policy delivered and trade performance improved carries the weight, and these categories are nomination-only to preserve independence.

10.01 Trade Policy Leadership Award (Minister / Senior Official)

The premier executive honour for policy architecture, presented to a federal minister or senior official whose strategic vision has resulted in a more competitive national trade framework. Judging weighs policy document or reform initiative, measurable trade impact and stakeholder consultation, each criterion verified against documentary evidence.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Policy document or reform initiative Specific policy introduced; e.g., Nigeria Industrial Policy 2025	
35% Measurable trade impact Non-oil export growth · Import substitution · Reduced trade deficit	
15% Stakeholder consultation Evidence of private sector engagement	
10% Implementation & enforcement Degree to which policy was executed	
10% Recognition by trade bodies NEPC, MAN, NACCIMA endorsement	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

10.02 Governor of the Year, Export Promotion

Recognises a state governor who has turned their sub-national territory into an export powerhouse, proactively marketing state resources (agricultural, solid mineral, industrial) to international investors and buyers.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
35% Increase in state-originated non-oil exports Customs or NEPC data, YoY	
20% International investment attracted to state US\$ / NGN	
15% Creation of export facilitation desks or one-stop shop Operational	
15% Partnerships with NEPC, NEXIM, or development banks Documented MoUs	
15% Media visibility of state as export destination Trade missions · International press	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

10.03 Governor of the Year, Export Strategy Implementation

Recognises the governor who delivers results, effective execution of a state-level export plan, with measurable growth in local businesses scaling from domestic to international. The strongest entries demonstrate number of state-based SMEs that commenced exporting, growth in state export value and infrastructure support.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Number of state-based SMEs that commenced exporting Under governor's tenure	
30% Growth in state export value Absolute and percentage	
20% Infrastructure support Roads to farms / mines · Export processing zone	
10% Ease of doing business reforms State-level permits · Single window	
10% Evidence of private sector testimony Surveys · Letters of support	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

10.04 **Export-Promotion Partnership of the Year (Public-Private)**

Celebrates a specific collaborative project between a government body and a private entity that successfully unlocked a new trade route, simplified a regulatory bottleneck, or opened a major international market. Judging weighs tangible trade outcome, scale of partnership and sustainability, each criterion verified against documentary evidence.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
40% Tangible trade outcome New export corridor · Reduction in clearance time by X days	
20% Scale of partnership Resources committed by both sides	
15% Sustainability Institutionalised beyond initial project	
15% Replicability Potential for other sectors or states	
10% Recognition Award or citation from trade body	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

10.05 **Export Infrastructure Investment of the Year**

Recognises the executive or administration responsible for the most strategic investment in physical infrastructure (specialised roads, rail links to ports, energy-integrated industrial parks) that directly lowered export production or logistics costs.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
35% Infrastructure asset completed Road, rail, power, park	
35% Measurable cost reduction for exporters NGN per tonne or per container	
15% Timeline & budget discipline Completed on time / within budget	
15% Job creation impact Direct and indirect	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

OUP 11

Trade Finance & Fintech

Letters of credit, export credit insurance, pre-shipment finance and cross-border payments are the lubricant of commerce. This group recognises banks, development institutions and fintechs that close the financing gap with speed, access and innovation.

EACH AWARD JUDGED ON A PUBLISHED 100-POINT SCORECARD

WHY THESE CRITERIA

Finance awards weight access and speed, the size of the financing gap closed and the breadth of exporters reached, alongside innovation. Risk discipline ensures that volume never comes at the cost of soundness.

11.01 Trade Finance Bank of the Year (Commercial)

Recognises the commercial bank that serves as the premier engine for Nigeria's import-export sector, excelling in L/C issuance, bank guarantees, structured trade facilities, and expert advisory. The strongest entries demonstrate value of trade finance facilities issued, number of exporters / importers served and turnaround time for L/Cs.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Value of trade finance facilities issued US\$/NGN last 12 months	
20% Number of exporters / importers served Distinct clients	
15% Turnaround time for L/Cs Hours from application to issuance	
15% SME share of portfolio Percentage of facilities to SMEs	
10% Innovation Digital L/Cs · Supply chain finance	
10% Compliance & risk management Low default rate · Sanctions compliance	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

11.02 Development Bank of the Year for Trade Finance

Awarded to the development finance institution (e.g., BoI, NEXIM, DBN) that provides patient capital, intervention funds, and guarantees specifically designed to scale local production capacity and bridge funding gaps for emerging exporters.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Value of trade-related disbursements Last 2 years	
20% Number of exporters supported Direct and indirect	
15% Concessionality Interest rates · Grace periods vs. commercial	
20% Impact on export growth Attributable increase in client exports	
15% Technical assistance Export readiness training · Coaching	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

11.03 Multilateral Institution of the Year for Trade Finance

Honours international or pan-African financial bodies (e.g., Afreximbank, IFC, EIB) that have provided significant trade support to Nigeria, credit lines, risk mitigation, and technical assistance. Winning organisations evidence total trade finance commitments to Nigeria, novelty of instruments and leveraged private finance.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Total trade finance commitments to Nigeria US\$	
25% Novelty of instruments First-of-kind in Nigeria	
20% Leveraged private finance Amount catalysed from commercial banks	
15% Capacity building Training for Nigerian banks	
10% Crisis response Support during forex shortages	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

11.04 Non-Interest Bank for International Trade

Recognises the leading Islamic or non-interest finance institution that has effectively used Shari'ah-compliant trade finance instruments (Murabaha, Musharakah, Wakala) to support trade, offering an ethical and risk-sharing alternative.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Volume of Shari'ah-compliant trade finance Last 12 months	
20% Number of clients Importers / exporters	
20% Cost competitiveness Profit rates vs. conventional	
20% Innovation New instruments · Digital platforms	
10% Customer satisfaction Survey	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

11.05 Commodities Trade Finance Bank of the Year

Specialist award for the bank that has mastered structured commodity finance, collateral management, warehouse receipt financing, and end-to-end funding from farm-gate to export terminal. Winning organisations evidence value of commodity finance facilities, number of agricultural / mineral clients and collateral management quality.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Value of commodity finance facilities Last 12 months	
20% Number of agricultural / mineral clients Distinct clients	
25% Collateral management quality Third-party warehouse audits · Loss rate	
15% Price risk management Hedging support · Forward contracts	
10% Outreach to smallholder farmers or artisanal miners Numbers reached	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

11.06 Cross-Border Payment Solution of the Year

Awarded to the fintech or bank that has most effectively solved the “settlement challenge”, offering real-time cross-border payments, transparent exchange rates, and low friction for Nigerian businesses dealing in multiple currencies.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Volume of cross-border payments processed US\$ equivalent	
25% Average settlement time Hours or minutes	
20% Exchange rate transparency Margin above interbank	
15% Number of currency corridors supported e.g., NGN/USD, NGN/GBP, NGN/CNY	
10% User adoption Number of businesses using platform	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

11.07 Tech for Trade Innovation of the Year

Honours breakthrough technology, blockchain for documentation, AI for credit risk assessment, digital trade portals, that has fundamentally modernised trade finance and tracking. Excellence is assessed through novelty of technology, measurable efficiency gain and adoption rate, among other indicators.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Novelty of technology First in Nigeria · Patented	
30% Measurable efficiency gain Time saved · Cost reduced per transaction	
20% Adoption rate Number of users or transactions	
10% Interoperability Integration with banks, customs	
10% Scalability potential Roadmap	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

UP 12

Agricultural Commodities & Raw Materials

From cocoa and cashew to sesame, ginger, shea and hibiscus, this group honours exporters of specific agricultural commodities, maintaining quality, traceability and phytosanitary compliance from farm-gate to global market.

EACH AWARD JUDGED ON A PUBLISHED 100-POINT SCORECARD

WHY THESE CRITERIA

Commodity awards weight verified volume with quality, traceability and phytosanitary compliance, the gatekeepers of export markets for food and raw materials. Sustainability and farmer linkage are rewarded because durable supply chains depend on them.

12.01 Exporter of the Year, Cocoa Beans & Derivatives

Recognises the leader in Nigeria's historic cocoa trade, consistent volume, fermentation / drying quality, and progress in exporting cocoa butter, cake, or powder. Winning organisations evidence export volume (tonnes), quality and value-added share.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Export volume (tonnes) Last 2 years	
30% Quality Cut test score >75% · Low mould · Free fatty acid	
20% Value-added share Percentage derivatives	
15% Certification Fairtrade, Rainforest, UTZ	
10% Traceability Direct farmer cooperative link	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

12.02 Exporter of the Year, Cashew Nuts (Raw & Processed)

For raw cashew nuts (RCN) and processed kernels. Winners demonstrate grade A kernel percentage, out-turn ratio, and food safety compliance. Excellence is assessed through total volume (RCN + kernel equivalent), kernel grade A percentage and processing level, among other indicators.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Total volume (RCN + kernel equivalent) Last 2 years	
25% Kernel grade A percentage >90% preferred	
20% Processing level Local steaming / peeling share	
15% Aflatoxin compliance Pass all tests	
15% Direct buyer relationships Snack / confectionery brands	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

12.03 Exporter of the Year, Sesame Seeds

For food-grade sesame exporters meeting international purity and aflatoxin standards. Excellence is assessed through volume (MT), purity level and aflatoxin compliance, among other indicators.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Volume (MT) Last 2 years	
25% Purity level ≥99.5% · Low foreign matter	
20% Aflatoxin compliance <4 ppb EU	
15% Traceability Farmer group records	
10% Destination diversification Number of countries	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

12.04 Exporter of the Year, Ginger & Spices

Recognises exporters of Nigerian ginger, turmeric, chilli, and other spices. Winners excel in drying techniques, oil content, and meeting importing country MRLs. Excellence is assessed through export volume, quality parameters and pesticide residue compliance, among other indicators.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Export volume Last 2 years	
30% Quality parameters Moisture · Volatile oil · Oleoresin	
20% Pesticide residue compliance Zero EU Rapid Alerts	
15% Processing Cleaned, graded, packaged	
10% Traceability Farmer linkage	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

12.05 Exporter of the Year, Hibiscus Flowers (Zobo)

For dried hibiscus calyces, meeting strict SPS standards for beverage and botanical markets. The strongest entries demonstrate export volume, colour & purity and SPS compliance.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
30% Export volume Last 2 years	
25% Colour & purity Deep red · Low dust	
25% SPS compliance Zero EU border rejections	
10% Processing Cleaning, sorting, bagging	
10% Certification Organic preferred	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

12.06 Exporter of the Year, Soya Beans

For high-protein soya beans exported for animal feed and oil extraction. The strongest entries demonstrate volume, protein content and foreign matter.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
35% Volume Last 2 years	
25% Protein content ≥38% preferred	
15% Foreign matter <1%	
15% GMO compliance Non-GMO certificate for certain markets	
10% Consistency Monthly supply	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

12.07 Exporter of the Year, Shea Butter & Oil Seeds

For unrefined or refined shea butter, groundnuts, and other oilseeds. Winners focus on FFA quality, organic certification, and women-inclusive sourcing. Winning organisations evidence volume, quality (FFA, peroxide value) and organic / Ecocert.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Volume Last 2 years	
25% Quality (FFA, peroxide value) FFA ≤2% for unrefined	
20% Organic / Ecocert Valid certification	
15% Processing level Mechanical, refined	
15% Gender-inclusive sourcing Women's cooperatives	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

12.08 Importer of the Year, Modern Farming Machinery & Tractors

Recognises the strategic importer that mechanises Nigerian agriculture, providing tractors, harvesters, irrigation systems, and after-sales support to farmers. Judging weighs value of agri-machinery imported, number of farmers / farmer groups served and after-sales support, each criterion verified against documentary evidence.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Value of agri-machinery imported Last 2 years	
25% Number of farmers / farmer groups served Verified count	
25% After-sales support Spares · Training · Response time	
15% Financing assistance Lease · Loan facilitation	
10% Productivity impact Documented yield increase	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

12.09 Importer of the Year, High-Yield Seeds & Crop Protection

For importers of certified seeds, fertilisers, and agrochemicals that directly enhance national yields and farmer incomes. Winning organisations evidence volume of inputs imported, compliance and farm productivity impact.

JUDGING CRITERIA	WEIGHT
25% Volume of inputs imported Last 2 years	
30% Compliance NAFDAC / NASC registration · Zero counterfeit seizures	
25% Farm productivity impact Third-party yield data	
10% Distribution network Reach to smallholders	
10% Training & extension Programmes delivered	
TOTAL	100 POINTS

— REFERENCE

Glossary

Key terms and abbreviations used throughout this framework.

AEO

Authorised Economic Operator, a customs status granting trusted traders faster, lighter-touch clearance.

AfCFTA

African Continental Free Trade Area, the agreement establishing a single market across the African continent.

AGOA

African Growth and Opportunity Act, the United States trade preference granting eligible African exporters duty-free access.

API

Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient, the biologically active component of a medicine.

BRCGS / FSSC

Internationally recognised food-safety certification schemes (BRCGS Global Standards; FSSC 22000).

Break-bulk

General cargo handled piece by piece rather than in containers.

CBU / CKD

Completely Built Unit and Completely Knocked Down, fully assembled versus kit-form imports.

Dwell time

The time cargo remains in a terminal between discharge and clearance, a key efficiency measure.

ECOWAS

Economic Community of West African States, the regional bloc and trade area.

FOB

Free On Board, the value of goods at the port of loading, the standard basis for export value.

Form NXP

Nigeria Export Proceeds form, the mandatory documentation for processing a non-oil export.

FTZ

Free Trade Zone, a designated area where goods are handled under relaxed customs and tax treatment.

Letter of Credit

A bank undertaking to pay an exporter once compliant shipping documents are presented.

Liquid bulk

Bulk liquids such as oil, gas and chemicals handled at specialised terminals.

NAFDAC

National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control, Nigeria's food and drug regulator.

NEPC

Nigerian Export Promotion Council, the federal agency that promotes and registers non-oil exporters.

NEXIM

Nigerian Export-Import Bank, the development bank providing export finance and credit insurance.

PAPSS

Pan-African Payment and Settlement System, for settling intra-African trade in local currencies.

Phytosanitary

Relating to plant-health certification required to export agricultural produce.

Rules of origin

The criteria determining a product's economic nationality for tariffs and trade preferences.

SON / SONCAP

Standards Organisation of Nigeria and its Conformity Assessment Programme for regulated imports.

SPS

Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures governing food safety and animal and plant health.

Value addition

Local processing that raises a product's worth before it is exported or used in manufacturing.

YoY

Year on year, a comparison of a metric against the same period in the previous year.

— REFERENCE

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ABOUT THE ORGANISER

The organiser of NINTA



Podhium is the reputation rating institution for structurally opaque markets: environments where transparency is limited, evaluation is complex, and decision-makers must make high-stakes choices about whom and what to trust on the basis of fragmented or performed signals.

We turn fragmented and unstructured information into clear, standardised, decision-ready ratings, at the level of individuals, the platforms that confer authority on them, and the institutions that shape their lives.

Across every market we cover, the same problem repeats:

- Authority and quality are claimed more often than they are verified.
- Brand, legacy reputation and informal networks stand in for comparable evidence.
- Genuinely high-performing actors are obscured while incumbents are systematically advantaged, and capital, talent and trust move on perception, not proof.

Podhium exists to replace those heuristics with structured, comparable, independently audited insights.



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FURTHER INFORMATION

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