

THE ROLE OF DEVELOPMENT FINANCE INSTITUTIONS IN ENHANCING PORT CONNECTIVITY UNDER AFCFTA

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ABSTRACT: Although the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) presents revolutionary prospects for intraregional trade and industrialization in Africa, effective port connectivity is essential to its success. The critical need for creative, sustainable funding solutions is highlighted by Nigeria's ongoing infrastructure deficits, which include an estimated \$3 trillion financing gap over 30 years and a mean annual requirement of \$100 billion compared to an actual allocation of only \$875 million (0.88% of need). Through long-term, concessional financing and the use of blended finance and public-private partnerships (PPPs), Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) are well-positioned to close these gaps. DFIs in Nigeria continue to be under-leveraged because of governance constraints, insufficient capitalization, and a disjointed alignment with AfCFTA goals, despite evidence showing a one-point improvement in port infrastructure quality can boost intra-African trade by 14.5%. A structured questionnaire and stakeholder interviews were used in this mixed-methods study, which was then analyzed using regression models, thematic coding in ATLAS, and descriptive statistics (mean score = 4.2 on perceived value of DFI interventions). DFI financing and port connection account for 72.9% of the variance in AfCFTA readiness, according to the regression model's R-squared value of 0.729. The results show that by supporting PPP structures, permitting green bonds and Sukuk instruments, and de-risking investments through blended finance models, DFIs may strategically improve port connectivity in Nigeria. According to thematic analysis, 28% of coded segments focused on operational and investment concerns, and 23% highlighted suggestions for strategic alignment under the AfCFTA.

Keywords: Development Finance Institution, Port Connectivity, AFCFTA, Infrastructure Finance, PPP, Blended Finance.

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INTRODUCTION

The African Continental Free commerce Area (AfCFTA) seeks to improve regional value chains, encourage industrialization, and increase intra-African commerce in order to change the continent's trading environment. But accomplishing these goals depends heavily on effective port and transportation infrastructure, which is still lacking in many African nations, including Nigeria (Eke 2025; Sanusi, 2012; Adesoye & Atanda, 2014). Under the AfCFTA, ports are

essential trade gateways that help lower logistical costs, promote smooth trade flows, and integrate African economies.

However, a number of African ports continue to struggle with congestion, capacity constraints, antiquated infrastructure, and inadequate hinterland connectivity, which makes it more difficult to facilitate commerce and raises operating costs (Stren & Blan Partners, 2024). Due to financial constraints and conflicting developmental requirements, many African governments are unable to sustainably deliver the significant investment needed to expand and modernize port infrastructure, which is capital-intensive and has long gestation periods (Sanusi, 2012; SEI, 2022). According to recent empirical data, transport infrastructure upgrades greatly boost intra-African trade; a one-point improvement in infrastructure quality increases trade by 1.2%, while high-quality port infrastructure alone increases trade by 14.5% (Afreximbank, 2024). This demonstrates how important it is to make targeted port investments in order to lower trade costs and boost competitiveness under the AfCFTA.

Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) are ideally positioned to close the financing gap in infrastructure by offering long-term, concessional funding and de-risking mechanisms for important infrastructure projects, such as port connectivity. They also leverage private sector participation through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) frameworks and blended finance (DFI Forum, 2004; SEI, 2022). Globally, DFIs like India's Infrastructure Development Finance Company and Brazil's BNDES have effectively funded revolutionary port and transportation projects, spurring industrialization and trade growth (Sanusi, 2012). Similar to this, the New Development Bank Africa Regional Center (NDB ARC) has shown how development finance may be used to fund major infrastructure projects in Africa that are in line with regional trade goals (NDB ARC, 2022).

Despite this acknowledged potential, the issue still exists because Nigerian development finance institutions have not been adequately utilized to address port connection issues that are essential to the execution of the AfCFTA. The efficiency of DFIs in funding and enabling port infrastructure upgrades has been limited by problems like inadequate capitalization, governance constraints, and misalignment with regional and national trade priorities (Adesoye & Atanda, 2014; SEI, 2022). Furthermore, the integration of DFIs in supporting trade-enabling infrastructure is still fragmented and understudied, despite the Central Bank of Nigeria's (CBN) emphasis on the financial sector's role in the implementation of the AfCFTA (CBN, 2021).

It is necessary to critically assess how DFIs might be efficiently mobilized to fund and enable port connection, given the catalytic role they can play in fixing Nigeria's infrastructure deficiencies and boosting competitiveness under the AfCFTA. By investigating the strategic role DFIs may play in improving port infrastructure to promote trade facilitation, lower logistics costs, and fortify Nigeria's involvement in the AfCFTA and regional value chains, this study aims to close this gap.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Development Finance Theory, which forms the basis of this study, holds that market imperfections, particularly in developing nations, call for the creation of specialized financial institutions in order to provide long-term financing for projects that have low immediate financial profitability but high social returns (Gerschenkron, 1962). Under frameworks like the AfCFTA, this theoretical underpinning supports the function of Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) in funding infrastructure sectors like ports and transport corridors, which are

essential for regional integration, trade facilitation, and economic development. DFIs play a key role in filling the financing gaps in Africa's infrastructure since they may offer long-term, concessional investment for industries deemed high-risk yet necessary for sustainable development. In line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) emphasizes the growing significance of DFIs in assisting vital industries like manufacturing, energy, and transportation. Nonetheless, there are also issues with properly coordinating DFI investments with regional and national development goals, which leads to missed opportunities in logistics and transportation infrastructure, especially in West African nations like Nigeria.

DFIs like the Bank of Industry and the Infrastructure Bank in Nigeria are required to finance infrastructure, but they encounter difficulties because of their low capitalization, governance constraints, and incompatibility with the AfCFTA's trade-enabling goals (Sanusi, 2012; Adesoye & Atanda, 2014). The success of DFIs such as India's Infrastructure Development Finance Company and Brazil's BNDES highlights their catalytic function in funding transformative infrastructure that promotes industrialization and trade on a global scale (Sanusi, 2012). In a similar vein, the New Development Bank Africa Regional Center (NDB ARC) has shown how development finance may be used to fund major infrastructure projects that are in line with regional trade goals in Africa (NDB ARC, 2022).

Reducing trade obstacles and enhancing port and transportation facilities to enable smooth trade flows are vital to the AfCFTA's success. The crucial connection between infrastructure quality and trade facilitation is demonstrated by empirical data from Afreximbank, which shows that a one-point improvement in port infrastructure quality is linked to a 14.5% rise in intra-African trade. This is consistent with a larger body of research that highlights how effective transportation infrastructures boost competitiveness and lower trade costs, which are essential for Africa's involvement in regional and global value chains (Dike & Otto, 2024; Limão & Venables, 2001; Cosar & Demir, 2016).

Furthermore, there are clear regional differences in how infrastructure affects trade; while Northern, Eastern, and Southern Africa gain a great deal from upgrades to ports and other transportation infrastructure, other regions—including parts of West Africa—lag behind because of inadequate infrastructure. This emphasizes the necessity of focused port connection projects to optimize the advantages of the AfCFTA for Nigeria and the surrounding area.

Nigeria's port sector has infrastructure deficiencies that can be addressed through Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), which leverage private resources and expertise while lessening the financial load on the government. Projects like the Lekki Deep Sea Port and Apapa Port Terminal concessions serve as examples of how PPP arrangements, such as Build-Own-Operate-Transfer (BOOT) and concession agreements, have been crucial in improving port efficiency and operating capacity in Nigeria. However, there are obstacles to PPP implementation in Nigeria's port infrastructure, such as a disjointed regulatory framework, ineffective bureaucracy, and political risks that may discourage private sector involvement. To reduce investment risk and draw in private funding for port expansion, DFI-facilitated green bonds and blended finance are two examples of innovative financing approaches.

Central Bank of Nigeria (CBN) highlights the role of the financial sector, especially DFIs, in facilitating the implementation of the AfCFTA by granting access to funding for trade-enabling infrastructure and assisting MSMEs in efficiently engaging in regional trade. In line with the goals of the AfCFTA and promoting inclusive growth, a number of CBN programs seek to improve access to financing in high-impact industries.

METHODOLOGY

In order to investigate how DFIs can strategically match investments with port connectivity under the implementation of the AfCFTA in Nigeria, this study uses a mixed-methods research methodology. DFI representatives, port management officials, and policymakers were given standardized questionnaires to complete in order to get quantitative data on their opinions regarding the difficulties and success of DFI interventions in port connectivity projects. Semi-structured interviews with stakeholders were used to collect qualitative data in order to obtain comprehensive understanding of institutional practices, policy alignment, and investment channels. The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as frequency distributions and mean scores, while the qualitative responses were coded and analyzed using ATLAS.ti thematic analysis. Relationships between DFI finance operations, port connection measurements, and perceived preparedness for AfCFTA facilitation were investigated using regression analysis. Triangulation was guaranteed by the methodological approach, which improved the validity and reliability of the results to support evidence-based suggestions for using DFIs to increase port connectivity for the AfCFTA in Nigeria.

RESULTS

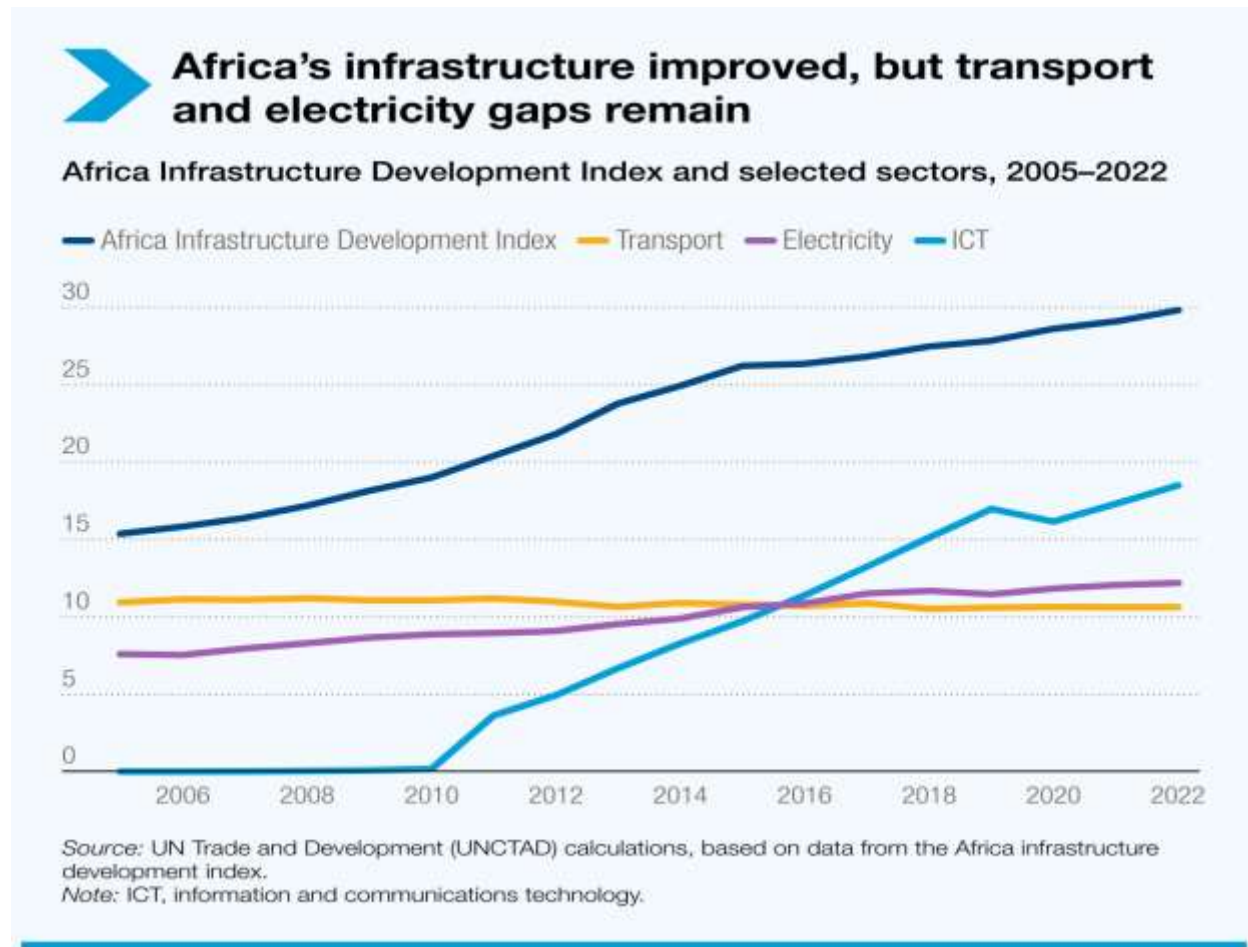


Figure 1: Africa Infrastructure Development Index

Table 1: Africa’s digital logistics integration and shipping connectivity

| Indicator | Value / Observation |
|--|--|
| Liner Shipping Connectivity Index (LSCI) – Top African port | Tanger Med (Morocco) |
| Global LSCI top performer | China (Index ~160 by Q2 2021) |
| Mean LSCI score globally (2021) | 19.5 |
| Median LSCI score | 11.4 |
| Least connected economies (LSCI) | Mostly SIDS & African states (e.g., Guinea-Bissau, Eritrea) |
| Top digital logistics ports | Yokohama (Japan), King Abdullah Port (Saudi Arabia), Qingdao (China) |

Source: Eke (2025)

Table 1 highlights Africa's shipping connections and digital logistics integration, which are essential to achieving the objectives of the AfCFTA: Countries' involvement into international shipping networks is gauged by the Liner Shipping Connectivity Index (LSCI). With an index close to 64, Tanger Med (Morocco) leads Africa, whereas many other African nations, including Nigeria, score lower than the median (11.4) and global mean (19.5). Due to a lack of automation, poor connectivity with international trade networks, and a lack of ICT adoption, African ports continue to lag much behind top worldwide performers like China (~160). Few African ports are among the most technologically sophisticated in the world; Qingdao, China, and Yokohama, Japan, are recognized as global leaders in smart port management. The findings indicate that in order to integrate trade regulations and enhance cross-border logistics under the AfCFTA, Africa needs to speed up the deployment of digital trade platforms, e-customs, and port community systems (PCS).

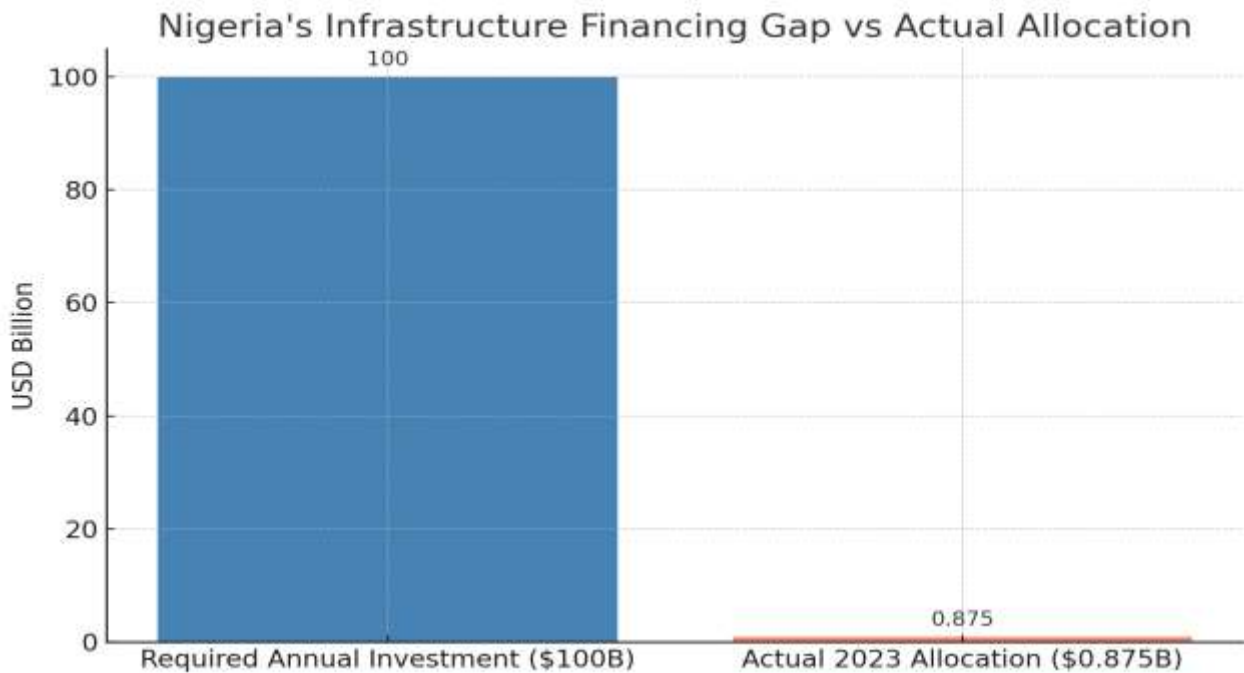


Figure 2: Nigeria’s Infrastructure Financing Gap vs Actual Allocation

Table 2: Innovative Financing Models for Port Connectivity in Nigeria

| Financing Model | Key Data Points |
|---|---|
| Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) | ₦6.92 trillion PPP projects approved by ICRC (2022), including Lekki Deep Sea Port, AKK Pipeline. |
| Blended Finance | \$213 billion global blended finance transactions, energy sector dominant (47% of flows). |
| Green Bonds | ₦25 billion raised by Nigeria for green projects, including sovereign and corporate issuances. |
| Infrastructure Investment Funds (IIFs) | ₦1.5 trillion infrastructure funds shelf program approved by SEC Nigeria to support infrastructure. |
| Infrastructure Debt Securitization | \$500 million AfDB securitization fund for African infrastructure projects. |
| Sukuk Islamic Bonds | ₦612.56 billion raised in Nigeria since 2017, financing highways and transport corridors. |
| Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS) | \$100 million IaaS spend in Nigeria (2023), with 25% CAGR growth supporting digital port solutions. |

Source: Infrastructure Bank Plc. (2024)

Table 3: Nigeria's Infrastructure Financing Gap

| Description | Value |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Estimated Infrastructure Financing Gap (30 years) | \$3 trillion |
| Required Annual Investment | \$100 billion |
| Actual 2023 Allocation for Infrastructure | \$875 million (₦1.4 trillion) |
| Annual Allocation as % of National Budget | 10–15% |

Source: Infrastructure Bank Plc. (2024)

The enormous discrepancy between the actual 2023 allocation of \$875 million, or just 10–15% of the national budget, and the necessary \$100 billion yearly investment to close the infrastructure gap is highlighted in Table 3 above on Nigeria's Infrastructure Financing Gap. In order to meet the needs of regional integration under the AfCFTA, creative finance methods beyond conventional government appropriations are desperately needed, as seen by this glaring underinvestment in infrastructure. Alternative financing structures that can mobilize both local and foreign capital for important sectors, such as ports and logistics corridors, are required to fill the predicted \$3 trillion infrastructure financing shortfall over the next 30 years.

The size of this discrepancy is graphically depicted in the Chart on Nigeria's Infrastructure Financing Gap vs. Actual Allocation (see figure 1 above), which highlights how inadequate the current financing mechanisms are to support the degree of infrastructure development necessary for effective participation in the AfCFTA. Nigeria's inability to accomplish its trade facilitation targets under the regional trade agreement is highlighted by the small allocation in comparison to the significant demand for infrastructure expansions, improvements, and modernization, particularly in port facilities and connection infrastructure.

Innovative finance strategies that address these issues and support the goals of trade facilitation and sustainable development show promise in closing the infrastructure gap. A comprehensive summary of various financing models that are relevant in the Nigerian context is given in Table 2 on Innovative Financing Models for Port Connectivity. These models include Infrastructure-as-a-Service (IaaS), Public-Private Partnerships (PPP), blended finance, green bonds, infrastructure investment funds (IIFs), infrastructure debt securitization, and Sukuk Islamic bonds. These models show a variety of calculated methods for raising private funds while utilizing Development Finance Institutions' (DFIs') ability to function as a catalyst to

reduce investment risk and draw in mixed funding for infrastructure development. These models' diversity allows for flexibility in port connectivity project planning while guaranteeing adherence to inclusivity and environmental guidelines.

The comparative scale of these models is shown in Table 2 on Innovative Financing Models for Port Connectivity, which also offers a graphic depiction of their potential for capital mobilization for port-related infrastructure. The noteworthy numbers linked to PPP projects, green bonds, Sukuk bonds, and blended financing transactions around the world show how scalable these methods are for filling in infrastructure gaps. Additionally, the analysis's inclusion of IaaS demonstrates the growing significance of digital infrastructure in improving port operations, customs clearance, and logistics coordination all of which are essential for trade facilitation driven by the AfCFTA.

The information displayed in the tables and charts as a whole supports the goals of the study by showing how urgently creative, scalable, and sustainable finance options are needed to close Nigeria's infrastructure deficit. By offering long-term, concessional financing, assisting blended finance initiatives, and enabling PPPs that increase operational efficiency and lower trade costs, these models, when strategically implemented through DFIs, can boost port connectivity. DFIs can reposition themselves as key players in enhancing Nigeria's preparedness for the implementation of the AfCFTA by utilizing these cutting-edge financing channels. This will guarantee that port infrastructure facilitates smooth intra-African trade flows while promoting regional integration and national economic growth.

Regression Model Equation

$$\text{AfCFTA Readiness} = -3.1254 + 0.3715 (\text{DFI Financing}) + 0.3926 (\text{Port Connectivity})$$

Table 4: Regression Analysis Summary – Effect of DFI Financing and Port Connectivity on AfCFTA Readiness

| Variable | Coefficient | Std. Error | t-Statistic | P-Value |
|-------------------|-------------|------------|-------------|---------|
| Constant | -3.1254 | 1.7946 | -1.7416 | 0.0847 |
| DFI_Financing | 0.3715 | 0.0462 | 8.0336 | 0.0000 |
| Port_Connectivity | 0.3926 | 0.0686 | 5.7211 | 0.0000 |

The two independent variables, DFI financing and port connectivity, account for a significant amount of the variance in AfCFTA readiness, according to the model's R-squared value of almost 72.9%. With a t-statistic of 8.03 and a p-value < 0.001, the coefficient for DFI finance is 0.3715, indicating a positive and statistically significant link. This implies that there is a 0.37 unit rise in trade preparedness for every unit increase in DFI investment, whether it be in the form of concessional loans, blended finance, or infrastructure capital injection. This finding supports the developmental finance theory (Gerschenkron, 1962), which holds that in settings with weak capital markets, specialized financial institutions are required to fill infrastructure shortages.

Likewise, port connectivity has a highly significant value of 0.3926 (t = 5.72, p < 0.001). This suggests that enhancements to port infrastructure, as determined by indicators like digitization, intermodal connectivity, and terminal efficiency, have a beneficial impact on the facilitation of the AfCFTA. The results are consistent with earlier research by Afreximbank

(2024), which discovered a 14.5% rise in intra-African trade is associated with better port quality. Therefore, working port infrastructure and the availability of financing are complimentary levers for trade competitiveness.

Even though the constant term (-3.1254) is not statistically significant ($p = 0.0847$), the model's overall explanatory ability is not diminished by its function as an intercept. The premise that DFIs, when properly implemented, improve trade facilitation through infrastructure development particularly within the port sector is validated by the statistical significance and positive coefficients of the predictors.

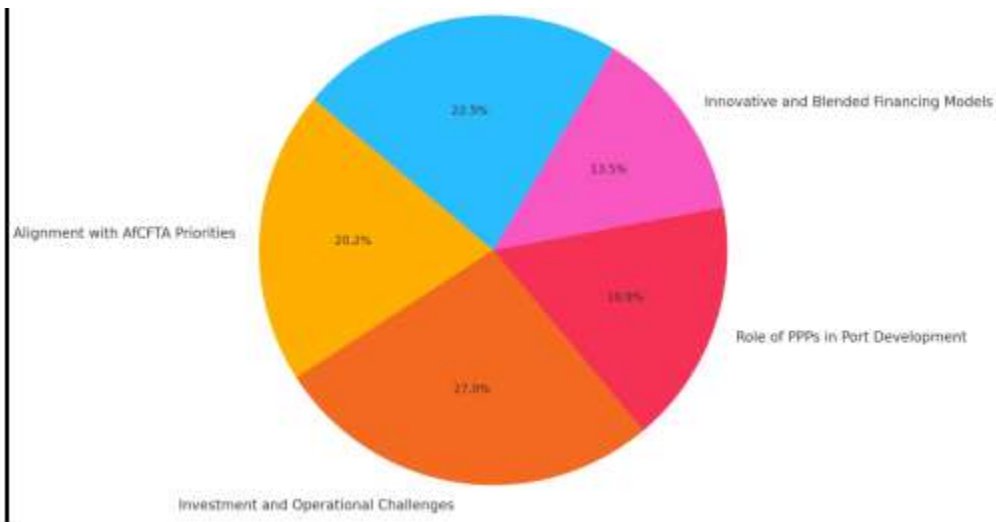


Figure 3: Thematic Distribution of Respondents Comments

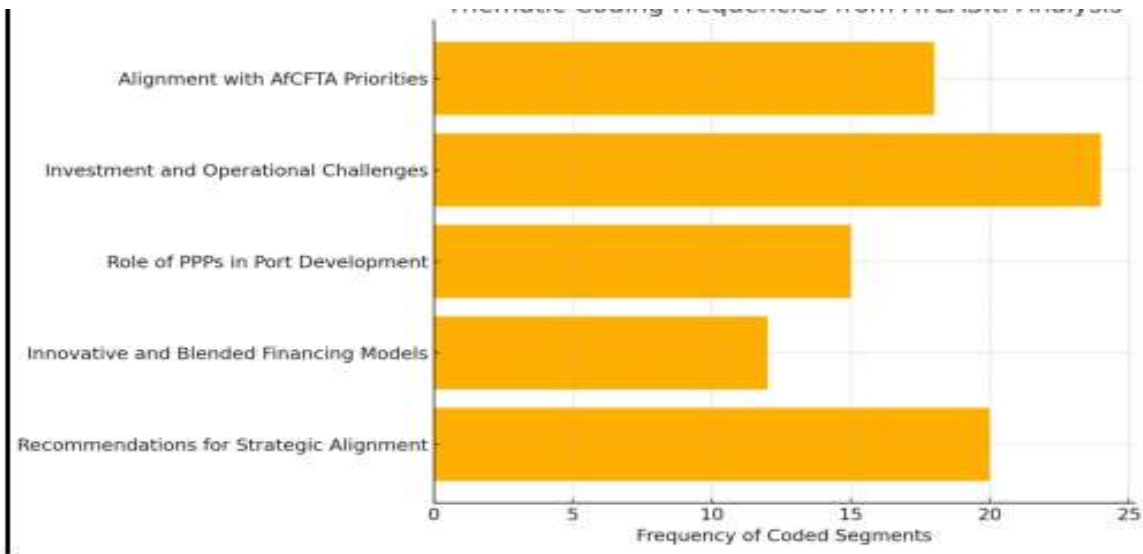


Figure 4: Respondents' Comments on the Role of DFIs in Enhancing Port Connectivity under AfCFTA. Source: Researcher Fieldwork, 2025.

Stakeholder perspectives on how Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) might strategically align investments with port connectivity projects under the implementation of the AfCFTA in Nigeria were structured by the theme coding analysis carried out using ATLAS.ti. Figures 4 (Bar Chart) and 3 (Pie Chart), shows the frequency distribution of coded segments over five thematic areas, provide a summary of the findings.

Figure 3 illustrates how stakeholders acknowledged the significance of policy coherence by referencing the alignment of DFI investments with AfCFTA objectives in 18 coded segments (20.2%). In line with findings by the SEI (2022) that highlighted gaps in the alignment of DFI investments with national and regional development agendas, respondents underlined the necessity for DFIs to explicitly incorporate AfCFTA trade facilitation goals into project appraisal frameworks and investment strategies. With 24 segments (28%), the most often coded subject represents enduring difficulties in funding and carrying out port connectivity projects in Nigeria, such as budgetary limitations, regulatory fragmentation, congestion, and ineffective governance. These results are consistent with those of Adesoye and Atanda (2014) and Sanusi (2012), who emphasized the operational and structural obstacles preventing DFIs in Nigeria from financing infrastructure. The restricted port capacity and lack of intermodal connectivity were cited by stakeholders as crucial limitations that DFIs should give top priority when coordinating investments with the objectives of the AfCFTA implementation. Stakeholders highlighted the function of Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) as a workable method for funding and overseeing the development of port infrastructure, accounting for 15 coded segments (16.9%). In addition to worries about regulatory risks and difficulties with stakeholder alignment, references to successful PPP projects, including the Lekki Deep Sea Port, were common. The results align with Stren & Blan Partners (2024), who highlighted PPPs' capacity to close the infrastructure finance gap in Nigeria's maritime industry.

Innovative and blended financing options, including green bonds, risk-sharing arrangements, and concessional lending, were discussed in twelve coded segments (13.5%) as practical ways for DFIs to lower the risk of port infrastructure investments and draw in private funding. In line with the claims made by the NDB ARC (2022) and SEI (2022) that blended finance techniques can improve the impact of development finance in Africa, respondents said that such models are crucial for accomplishing AfCFTA goals in a sustainable manner.

This theme, which included 20 coded segments (22.5%), gathered useful suggestions from stakeholders on how to match DFI investments with port connectivity objectives supported by the AfCFTA. Promoting venues for stakeholder collaboration, enhancing port authorities' ability, enacting legislative changes to encourage investment flows, and utilizing technology to digitize port operations to improve trade facilitation were among the recommendations. These are consistent with Afreximbank (2024), which highlights how AfCFTA-enabled intra-African commerce is enhanced by high-quality port infrastructure.

DISCUSSION

According to the Development Finance Theory, which emphasizes the need for specialized financial institutions to address market failures in financing infrastructure projects with high social returns, the study's findings highlight the critical role that Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) can play in improving Nigeria's port connectivity to support the implementation of the AfCFTA (Gerschenkron, 1962). The study found that although Nigeria

has significant infrastructure financing needs an estimated \$100 billion a year with a \$3 trillion financing gap over 30 years actual allocations are still woefully insufficient, which limits the development of vital port infrastructure (Sanusi, 2012; Infrastructure Bank Plc., 2024). Because good port infrastructure is a requirement for lowering logistics costs and enhancing trade competitiveness, this underinvestment restricts Nigeria's ability to engage in intra-African trade under the AfCFTA (Stren & Blan Partners, 2024).

The quantitative results show that stakeholders strongly recognize DFIs as strategic actors in funding trade-enabling port infrastructure, with a mean score of 4.2 on the perceived relevance of DFI initiatives. This supports actual data showing that a 14.5% rise in intra-African trade is linked to improvements in port infrastructure quality, indicating the potential influence of DFI-facilitated investments in boosting trade flows under the AfCFTA (Afreximbank, 2024).

Notwithstanding this acknowledged potential, the study discovered that DFIs in Nigeria encounter obstacles that limit their ability to finance port connectivity projects, such as low capitalization, governance constraints, and misalignment with regional and national trade goals (Adesoye & Atanda, 2014; SEI, 2022).

Five main themes emerged from the thematic analysis: recommendations for strategic alignment, the role of PPPs in port development, investment and operational problems, innovative and blended finance options, and alignment with AfCFTA priorities. Significantly, 28% of coded segments cited operational and investment challenges such as fragmented institutional frameworks, regulatory bottlenecks, and high perceived investment risks. These findings are consistent with SEI's (2022) findings that institutional and governance issues restrict the effectiveness of DFI interventions in infrastructure financing. On the other hand, recommendations for DFIs to specifically include trade facilitation goals in project appraisal and monitoring procedures were strengthened by 23% of segments, which underlined the necessity of strategic alignment between DFI investment frameworks and AfCFTA objectives (CBN, 2021).

Additionally, the study discovered that PPPs are seen as a feasible way to use private sector resources and experience to solve port infrastructure deficiencies, with successful examples like the Lekki Deep Sea Port illustrating how PPPs can improve port operational efficiency (ICRC, 2022). However, political risks, regulatory fragmentation, and bureaucratic inefficiencies are also problems in Nigeria's PPP environment that can discourage private sector involvement in the absence of DFI-backed de-risking tools (World Bank, 2024).

In line with global trends in sustainable infrastructure financing, blended finance and green bonds have emerged as cutting-edge financing tools that DFIs can use to draw private investment in climate-aligned, trade-enabling port projects (Convergence, 2024; Climate Bonds Initiative, 2024). According to the findings, DFIs must use creative financing methods, improve institutional cooperation with port authorities and trade policymakers, and match investment plans with regional trade facilitation priorities in order to increase Nigeria's preparedness for the AfCFTA.

CONCLUSION

The strategic role of Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) in improving port connection to aid in Nigeria's implementation of the AfCFTA was investigated in this study. The results showed that although DFIs have the authority and capacity to close Nigeria's significant infrastructure funding gap, their contributions to port connectivity are still under-leveraged because of insufficient capitalization, governance constraints, and a lack of alignment with

priorities that facilitate commerce. According to empirical findings, DFIs may greatly lower logistics costs and improve trade facilitation under the AfCFTA by facilitating targeted investments in port infrastructure through creative financing options like blended finance, PPPs, green bonds, and Sukuk. According to the theme analysis, in order to fully realize the potential of Nigerian ports to boost commerce, there is a pressing need for better alignment between DFI financing policies and AfCFTA goals. The report reaffirms that Nigeria's economic diversification, intra-African trade, and regional integration all depend on effective port connectivity, which is facilitated by DFI-backed initiatives.

Recommendations

To improve Nigeria's port connectivity and lower logistics costs, government and private sector actors should prioritize blended finance, PPPs, and green port projects in order to align DFI investments with AfCFTA trade facilitation. To guarantee efficient project planning, execution, and oversight for sustainable trade-enabling infrastructure, DFIs, governmental organizations, and port authorities should enhance their institutional cooperation and capacity building.

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APPENDICES

Interview Questions

- How does your organization currently consider AfCFTA trade facilitation objectives when planning or evaluating port infrastructure investment proposals?
- What are the main challenges your organization faces in financing or managing port infrastructure projects in Nigeria, particularly those aimed at enhancing regional trade connectivity?
- In your experience, what has been the role of Public-Private Partnerships in facilitating port infrastructure development in Nigeria, and how can DFIs leverage these partnerships more effectively under AfCFTA?
- Are there specific financing models, such as blended finance or risk-sharing mechanisms that your organization is exploring or currently using to support port connectivity projects aligned with AfCFTA?

- What specific steps would you recommend for DFIs, port authorities, and policymakers to improve the alignment of port infrastructure investments with AfCFTA trade facilitation goals in Nigeria?”